

## The Arias of the Musical *Adio Chiustenge!*: Stylistic and Genre Aspects, Vocal Techniques, Interpretative Difficulties

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**Abstract:** The novelty of this article lies in the fact that, for the first time in Romanian musicology, a detailed analysis of the musical-theatrical creation *Adio Chiustenge!* by Dumitru Lupu, stylistic and genre procedures used by the composer are highlighted, aspects related to vocal interpretation are studied. For the first time, the sound heritage of the composer D. Lupu, author of many hits, musical-theatrical creations and other *musical* genres, is in the sights of scientific research. In the given article, we proposed the analysis of two areas: the architectural one and the interpretive difficulties, of the *Poetul* and *Bertha* characters from the Romanian *musical Adio Chiustenge!*

**Keywords:** *non-academic musical theatre; Dumitru, Lupu, Letter to Veronica, I Would Like to Live Here, is Bertha's aria;*

### Introduction

The score of this *musical* comprises 5 distinct arias: No. 5 *Scrisoare către Veronica* No. 8 *Aș vrea aicea să trăiesc*, No. 11 *Mare de argint*, No. 17 *Mă-ntorc la tine iar*, No. 18 *Ce-am avut și ce-am pierdut*. For this article, we propose to analyze two areas: *Scrisoare către Veronica (Letter to Veronica)* and *Aș vrea aicea să trăiesc (I Would Like to Live Here)*.

No. 5 *Scrisoare către Veronica (Letter to Veronica)*, is an aria sung by the character The *Poetul* and is part of Act I, Scene 12.

This musical number also involves other protagonists, such as *Poetul*, *Deniz*, and *Mocofanul*. The action takes place along the seashore, where *Deniz* and *Poetul*, two melancholic lovers, stroll, engaged in a dialogue about the poet's latest creations, with the latter taking care to read the letter. Being considered the prototype of *Poetul*, there is a reference to the period when the great poet stayed in Constanța, from where he wrote one of his letters to his muse, Veronica. Returning to the documentary sources of the composer Dumitru Lupu and librettist Carmen Aldea Vlad, we access again the personal archive. The document in question is entitled „Chiustenge Information”: „The letters are very important for our city, because, besides the fact that here we find his love for Veronica Micle evoked, it is proof that Eminescu lived, for a period, in the city by the sea. He said about Kustenge, the old name of Constanța, that it is a small but neat city, and the houses have a pleasant appearance”.<sup>2</sup>

Within this aria, a remarkable lyrical intensity is revealed, with imposing increases in the melodic line and the attainment of a specific lyrical culmination characteristic of the *Romanian romance* genre, where the characters' emotions reach their climax. The instrumental introduction is entrusted to the electric piano and synthesizer with the timbre of string instruments (note the electric piano and strings). From the first measures of this piece, a stylistic closeness is observed, constructing an imaginary bridge that confirms the perpetuation of love

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix From the composer's personal archive „Chiustenge information”.

experiences throughout generations. The composer introduces us into the lyrical and delicate sphere through the varied repetition of the opening phrase, with the ascending minor second intonation in the minor octave and the pause on the first dominant – *G* as a pedal. Therefore, the composition evokes an intimate and rarified atmosphere, similar to the *perfume of love* in which the character *Poetul* envelops himself.

The architectural structure of the piece is a complex bipartite **A+B**, each section having two contrasting periods **a+b**, in which the author maintains to some extent a stylistic *arioso* through asymmetric inner sections. Thus, part **A** consists of an introduction and two periods **a+b**, the first of which includes both the introduction of five measures together with the period of eight measures (mm. 5-13, consisting of two phrases), forming thirteen measures in total.

### Ex.1. D. Lupu *Adio Chiustenge! Nr. 5. Scrisoare către Veronica* (mm.5-14)

We observe the rhythmic structure of the phrases in the first three measures (mm.5-7, Ex.2) which reflects the turbulent state of the character, and the ascending movement of the melodic cells leads to a climax. The following section, part **b**, is instrumental, and the only vocal expression is an exclamation (mm.18-19). The invocation of the name *Veronica* illustrates the depth and intensity of the feelings experienced by the *Poetul* towards his beloved. The lyrical connotation of this moment is reinforced by the change from duple meter to triple meter (m.15, Ex.3), thus highlighting the intimacy of the feelings and bringing variation to the entire rhythmic and intonational structure.

**Section B** is stated emphatically thanks to the change of tonality from *C – major* to

*D – flat major*, a typical device in universal and Romanian *pop music* through which another level of emotional impact is achieved. The counterpoint to an ascending chromatic semitone introduces new tonal colors, supported by the following constituent elements: through active octave *tremolo* including both *minor* and *major* octaves, by placing the voice in the high register, through *arpeggio* passages in the left hand (mm. 24-34) signifying the magnitude of the flight of the hero's feelings of love and longing, feelings that predominate in the first section **a** (mm. 23-30).

In section **b1** (mm. 31-42), the *Poetul* invokes the sea ...a boundless realm, which cannot alleviate the hero's feelings, thus maintaining the atmosphere of heightened lyrical experience: *...I miss you, I miss you!* This is also where the climax of the piece is achieved through the exclamatory phrases of the highest tension (mm. 35-42). It is a descriptive section in which from m.34 the orchestra and the vocal line form a vocal-instrumental unison, which conclusively concludes this number:

**Ex.2. D. Lupu, *Adio Chiustenge!*, *Scrisoare către Veronica* (mm.31-42)**

31 *poco rit.* *a tempo*  
 Ma-rea-mi pa-re că e doar Un tă - răm fă-ră ho-tar Îmi e dor, Mi-es-te dor de  
 36 *rit.*  
 ti-nel Îmi e dor, Mi-este dor de ti - nel

In this context, we mention that this technique has a dual origin: on the one hand, it is often used in verismo operas, especially in the climactic moments of arias, and on the other hand, it represents a characteristic device of pop music. The tradition of the lyrical hero is reiterated through the choice of the tenor voice for the character of the *Poetul*. The composer's skill in integrating the stylistic features of *arioso* into a pattern specific to the *musical* genre is remarkable.

We offer some interpretative recommendations. The *Poet's* aria is recommended for a lyric tenor voice: the attractiveness of this musical number lies in the intense musicality of the melodic lines and in the presentation of the character, known as the *Poetul*.

We recommend an academic vocal approach, with clear diction and correct vocal technique to naturally convey the poetry of this moment. The format of the natural ascending sequences, including the octave range from the first measures on the text: *...I'm writing to you now at dawn / You would have wanted to be with me...* suggests phrasing with expressive, fluid articulation of the poetic text.

In section **b1**, on the text: *... I miss you, I miss you!* vocal phrases should be constructed with the support of breath control to sustain the sound of *fa* in mm. 24, 28. It is important to maintain vocal homogeneity across all registers, with supported sounds on the column of air, and the covering and rounding of sounds should be achieved without over-covering them. From our point of view, the main difficulty lies in the inseparable combination of *bel canto* vocal technique and the interpretive nuances of the character of the *Poetul*. We mention, in the same context as the other numbers, that in case the performer does not have classical vocal training, transposition may be necessary.

**Number 8, *Aș vrea aicea să trăiesc (I Would Like to Live Here)***, is *Bertha's* aria, and is part of Act I, Tableau 14, which is sung during a dialogue with her lover *Voicu*: this vocal number aims to reveal her emotional state. The libretto relates: „*Bertha: Shall this be happiness? Is this heaven on earth?! Voicu: I don't know what's happening to me...it's the first time after so much years...when my voice came back! Bertha: And the same thing happens to me...Do you hear how the heart sings? Voicu: (stunned): Oh, yes!*”<sup>3</sup>.

The composer chooses to present a solo number with a mezzo-soprano voice, highlighting a vocal timbre that combines vocal range with the depth of the character's emotional state. This selection is not random, as *Bertha* is one of the three *Plitz* sisters, and her

<sup>3</sup> Appendix From the composer's personal archive „Chiustenge information”.

character denotes a certain maturity compared to her sisters, *Helga* and *Herta*. The text reveals *Bertha*'s somewhat confused state: ...*Perhaps by chance or maybe the sea/Has stopped us here*, but the melodic line, in the major key (*G – major*), reveals her immense joy, as she would not want to leave this beautiful city: ...*I would like to live here*. This statement is repeated in the second section, exactly from measure 25.

The vocal texture, highly effective, makes it suitable for dramatic developments. From the first melodic phrase in the piano score, the affiliation with the *blues* genre with influences of *soul music* is clearly outlined. The tempo is *slow*, the chord structures are simple, and the tonality relationship is *G – major* and *B – major*. The alternation between major and minor thirds not only shapes the somewhat naive lyrical world of the character but also has some direct connections to the so-called *blue scale*, hence, the *blues* mode with the unstable areas around the third and seventh degrees of the mode. As researcher V. Tcacenco asserts „The use of the modal system of the *blue scale* type determines the appearance of the so-called *blue notes*, namely the third and seventh degrees (...), which have been called *blue third*, *blue seventh*, *blue fifth*. These tones are interpreted outside of temperament and represent some unstable intonational areas, within which intonation can be quite diverse depending on the character of the melodic line”<sup>4</sup> [1, p. 27]. These inflections must also be found in the vocal interpretation of this piece. As for the instrumental aspect, the addition of the oboe, doubling the piano melody, contributes to accentuating the lyrical-romantic aspect of the *musical* message.

### Ex.3. D. Lupu, *Adio Chiustenge!, Aș vrea aicea să trăiesc* (mm.13-16)

The musical score consists of two systems, measures 13-16. The key signature is one flat (B major). The time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'Lu - mea pă - nă - măi ieri stră - l - nă de bu - cu - ri - e es - te pli - nă Aș vrea - a - i - cea să tră - iese'.

The establishment of this section in the key of *B – major* highlights it prominently, assigning it the role of the thematic center of the piece. In the score, the composer retains only the piano, with the other instruments resting, thus confirming the importance of the poetic text. From measure 17, this section is repeated but with the use of chords from the II $\flat$  (C $\flat$ ) and VI $\flat$  (G $\flat$ ) degrees, a variation that enriches the harmonic palette of this piece.

The architecture of the piece combines the features of the bipartite monothematic form **a+a1** with the strophic form. However, the form of the period composed of two contrasting phrases **a+b** (mm. 5-12) predominates, and the syncopated rhythm and the use of quintuplets (m. 9) create the sensation of improvisation.

<sup>4</sup> Tcacenco V. *The History of Pop Music and Jazz. Lectures*, p. 27. Retrieved November 25, 2023, from <http://surl.li/qnqqz>.

**Ex. 4. D. Lupu, *Adio Chiustenge!*, *Aș vrea aicea să trăiesc* (mm. 5-12)**

De de-par-te am so-sit Din-tr-o al-tă lu-me am ve-nit

Oa-re-n - tăm-pla-rea sau poa-te ma-rea A - ici ne-a o - prit.

In the second section (**A1**), there is a return to the basic key of *G – major*; however, the text is missing from the first four measures at the beginning of the piece. This absence is compensated by an instrumental conclusion in which the melody is played by all the woodwind and brass instruments (including the trombone), supported by the piano. The melodic line (m. 33), borrowed from the second phrase, confirms the search for an answer to *Bertha*'s question, which made the sisters stop right here: ...*Was it by chance or maybe the sea that stopped us here. Voicu* will engage in *Bertha*'s dialogue through mimetic-gestural actions, reacting actively to key phrases in this piece: ...*I would like to live here* or ...*Thank you, I love you, you gave me a flower*. In the orchestral concluding section of this piece, *Bertha* throws herself into *Voicu*'s arms, confirming that she is already in love: ...*With love, I embrace myself*.

Regarding the vocal interpretation, it is necessary to carefully choose the timbral color of the mezzo-soprano voice; simultaneously, a correct interpretation of the quite complicated rhythmic figures is required, for example, singing the quintuplet accurately in m. 9. It will be necessary to blend the performance style specific to *light music* with that of *classical music*. It may be necessary to transpose the musical material down by a semitone.

**5. Conclusion**

The musical *Adio Chiustenge!* by the composer Dumitru Lupu is a significant example of the Romanian musical genre, created in close collaboration with the librettist Carmen Aldea Vlad, with additional contributions of lyrics by Viorela Filip (in No. 17 *I come back to you again*) and Florin Pretorian (in No. 7 *We love*).

Inspired by the legends of the city of Constanța, this musical is distinguished by an original subject and bears the signature of an experienced composer, recognized both in Romania and outside its borders, for his multiple hits.

The atmosphere of the action is reproduced through music, stage action, scenography, sets, costumes (costume sketches), even if this musical was not staged, the composer left us tangible recommendations related to these aspects that we find in the personal archive.

The polystylistic nature of the musical language in the given creation determines the specific requirements submitted to the performers of the *musical Adio Chiustenge!*. It is about the ability to play different styles of vocal interpretation: *lyrical* and *pop* music.

The *musical Adio Chiustenge!* signed by Dumitru Lupu in collaboration with the librettist Carmen Aldea Vlad falls within the main trends in the development of *musicals* from the second half of the 20th century - the beginning of the 21st century.

**6. References****Electronic sources**

Appendix From the composer's personal archive „Chiustenge information”.

Tcacenco V. *The History of Pop Music and Jazz*. Lectures. Retrieved November 25, 2023, from

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