

Music for the Piano - Evolution and Modernity, the Walz Genre, in the Creation of the Composers F. Chopin, B. Smetana și M. Ravel

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Abstract: *The present research is referring to the creation of music for the piano, the waltz genre, by the composer B. Smetana, in comparison with the same genre creation of F. Chopin and M. Ravel. Since entertainment music has been a concern throughout the ages, salon music, also integrated into this category, has concentrated much of the piano creation. Romantic composers included the waltz in their creation, a genre that highlights a permanent evolution of language elements in Romanticism and Modernism. The primary element of the waltz remains the highlighting of emotion, through the ternary meter and flowing melodic lines. Each of the three analysed composers have different methods of expression. B. Smetana composed a cycle of waltzes which represents a plea for proven musicality, in any musical culture. F. Chopin remains the composer whose work is well known for its original language peculiarities, through lyricism subject to romanticism. And years later, M. Ravel's creation of waltzes is clearly modernist, with unusual harmonic developments.*

Keywords: *dance; waltz; harmony; F. Chopin; B. Smetana; M. Ravel;*

Introduction

Gradually, over the millennia of musical existence, the art of sounds has been divided into sacred music (which shaped the first genres and musical forms, archetypes) and secular music divided into vocal and instrumental music, according to social and emotional needs. So, this vigorous and varied trunk of religious music intertwines and maintains the two dimensions, with canonical functions, the sacred and the popular music, at first of popular origin. Cult music, in its multiple dimensions, for instance, classical music has the well-defined role of creating art, culture, education, evolution. The flamboyant and destructive socio-political context made possible the higher stage of music, that of the 19th century, in which the key to understanding was freedom of: expression, harmony, colour, lines, structure, thinking. Thus, **musical romanticism** was the artistic period in which, for the first time, creative imagination, inner reverberations, turmoil, passions manifested themselves with much greater freedom and intensity. The socio-political emancipation determined by the elevation of human consciousness led to a metamorphosis of musical thinking, of all elements of language, of genres and forms. In this context, large-scale, and often bloody social events determined major transformations in the dimension of music.

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1. Conceptual space

National schools. The musical trend of the mid-nineteenth century, known as the First Flowering of the National Schools, was actually a revolution in musical thinking. Rediscovering and reconsidering the popular essence, the ethos of the national culture, made possible the integration of cultures collateral to those in the West, in musical Europe. The Romanian, Russian, Czech, Norwegian, Bulgarian and Greek cultures elevated their musical thinking, perfected and exhibited their musical genres through the young native composers, to the point of equalization with the West, already cultured for hundreds of years.

Dance is an ancient method that has gone through successive phases of ritual, magic, familiar communion in the hearth of the village, of choreographic expression at noble weddings, reaching the phase of enjoyable shows. Over time, people have discovered and learned to express their emotional reactions, interweaving corporeality on the elements of music. Moreover, "Il ne fait pas d'ailleurs oublier que les membres de la société bourgeoise d'alors aimaient passionnément la danse, qu'ils trouvaient dans la danse une réelle et joyeuse satisfaction de leurs désirs et que la danse était à cette époque une des principales formes de la vie mondaine, fournissant surtout aux jeunes gens l'occasion de ce connaître."² (trans. Aut. *Let us not forget that we are forgetting that the members of the bourgeois society of the time passionately loved dancing, that they found in dancing a real and joyful satisfaction of their desires, and that dancing was at that time one of the main forms of worldly life, offering in especially young people with the opportunity to know this.*)

Psychologically, dance is a manifest and visible release of emotions, in which the expressiveness of the body is significant. The child has body awareness from the age of two. Gradually, in the development of the being, at different ages, once the human personality takes shape, the movements of the body are more and more conscious, and can submit to rhythmic pulsations, of melody and harmony. Thus, dance is a detachment from material reality and yet through the body, it is a necessary reverie through movement, which is often healing.

The waltz is a dance, a musical genre that outlines the history of universal music and dance, through its primordial melodic elements: the supple, fluid and engaging melodic line, the ternary metro-rhythmic dynamics that drive the dance steps. We find different opinions about the origin of the, but somehow the information is chained from one culture to another, suggesting the permanent need of man to enjoy the benefits of the dance. Even from very distant times, the Middle Ages, we have precious information which mentions that: "A manuscript from the twelfth century mentions that this dance was danced for the first time in Paris on November 9, 1178."³ The same author, Bălan Magdalena, pencils the route of the waltz in time, which was initially called *Volta*, and was known in Provence, then in Paris, and in the Germanic regions. Dumitru Bughici believes that the waltz "Appeared in the second half of the 17th century as a town dance, v., having roots and lineages in some folk dances of Austria and Germany..."⁴. In the 19th century, the waltz was an already known, practiced ballroom dance, sometimes admonished for its emphasis on the freedom of movement and physical closeness.

Several **characteristics of the waltz genre** outline its musical expressiveness and proven vitality: ternary metric, meaningful melodic line, with supporting harmonies which often determine outline modulatory close or distant transitions, contained in lied forms, simple,

² Karásek, Bohumil. 1967. *Bedřich Smetana*. Praha, Bratislava: Editio Supraphon, p. 15.

³ Bălan, Magdalena. 2012. *Course of Historical Dance*. Bucharest: Musical Publishing House, p. 261.

⁴ Bughici, Dumitru. 1978. *Dictionary of Musical Forms and Genres*. Bucharest: Musical Publishing House, p. 366.

complex or free. "The measure of $\frac{3}{4}$, the right tempo, a singable and expressive melody."⁵ Other characteristics refer to the aesthetic peculiarities which maintain the distinction of the genre: playful character, aesthetic-artistic character, formal educational character (in specialized educational institutions) and non-formal education (in education centres). The dynamics of the ternary music of the waltz is conditioned by corporeality which grows until reaching unity, the harmonious agglutination of the partners. The swing that tends toward detachment from materiality, even flight, reveals the human nature of being equally in communion and freedom.

2. The waltz genre in universal musical creation

Over time, many composers have given the waltz genre, a precious place in their creation. We find the most notable creations in the 19th century, when the rush of romanticism took over the spirit of artists, especially due to the fact that "la musique que l'on cultivait alors dans les familles bourgeoises était le reflet des anciennes habitudes de la haute aristocratie."⁶ (trans. aut. *the music cultivated then in bourgeois families was a reflection of the old customs of the high aristocracy*.) C. M. Von Weber, F. Schubert, F. Chopin, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Ch. Gounod, J. Brahms, M. Balakirev, P. I. Tchaikovsky, F. Liszt, J. Strauss-son, M. I. Ivanovich, Ravel, R. Strauss, I. Stravinsky, D. Shostakovich, are among the most important composers who spread in salons and concert halls, the exuberance, melodiousness and lushness of the waltz, as "the waltz became in the 19th century, a theatrical performance."⁷

3. Originality elements in F. Chopin's creation of waltzes

F. Chopin (1810-1849) was a romantic composer who originally and distinctly outlined a special style, a real poeticization of the musical discourse, defined by his sensitivity, by the intensity of his feelings. A poeticization of the musical discourse arose from his sensitivity and from the intensity of his feelings, determined either by the exuberance of youth, or by the melancholy of unrequited love, or by. His musical thinking proved a permanent renewal of musical ideas, determined either by the melancholy of unrequited love, or by exuberance, or by homesickness. Each and all attracted an extensive creation, oriented towards his favourite instrument, the piano which allowed him to unleash his inner self.

In Chopinian creation, the waltz is a celebration of melody, of melodic scrolls of great virtuosity, ternary meter and harmonic ingenuity. There are known to be seventeen waltzes, some with no opposite number, others being posthumously catalogued. His waltzes contain the imprint of the pianist who performed instrumentally, being a virtuoso, recognized both in his country, in the Parisian world, in the British world (it is known that he was even invited to the court of Queen Victoria for a recital.)

The work chosen for analysis, Waltz op. 64, no. 1, is composed in the key of D flat major. Its structure is of tripartite lied, **ABA**, an aspect that is felt in the interpretation, through the balance of the return of section A, with its brilliant characteristics. The tempo draws our attention, which is why it is mentioned " *The Waltz in D flat major (Valse-minute-op.64, no.1)* will also circulate under evocative title, but this time its name is to be connected with the molto

⁵ Bughici, Dumitru, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

⁶ Karásek, Bohumil, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁷ Bălan, Magdalena, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

vivace tempo of the music."⁸ The main motif, a continuous embroidery, suggests the dizzying turns of a waltz. It is the left hand that imprints the rhythm and harmony, but it happens gracefully, through the simplicity of the chord progressions:



Fig. 1. F. Chopin. Waltz, op. 64, no. 1, measures 1-5

Section **B** temporizes the rush of eighths, allowing melodic chaining in fourths only. But, new elements surprise in the musical discourse: chromaticisms, as well as melodic notes are insistently inserted, and short appoggiaturas and trills, prove intensively support the creative fantasy:



Fig. 2. F. Chopin. Waltz, op. 64, no. 1, measures 56-62

Section **A** is almost identical, differing from the first part by the extension of the left hand towards the high octave, an aspect that amplifies the sonority, as we approach the end.

In the last measures we emphasize a passage of great virtuosity, a *flourish*, with conclusive role, located between the note F3 and central D:



Fig. 3. F. Chopin. Waltz, op. 64, no. 1, measures 120-125

⁸ Ștefănescu, Ioana. 1998. *A History of Universal Music. From Schubert to Brahms*, vol. 3. Bucharest: Publishing House of the Romanian Cultural Foundation, p. 237.

4. Originality elements in B. Smetana's creation of waltzes

Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884) was a truly romantic composer which contained with strong essences of his national, Czech culture. "il était aussi le témoin des premiers signes de la renaissance de la culture nationale tchèque."⁹ (trans. Aut. *he witnessed the first signs of the revival of Czech musical culture*). He was a valuable personality, who undertook the mission of reconfiguring the Czech musical culture, overcoming his avatars and human suffering, first through self-education, then education, and especially through creation. Therefore, his musical expansion was constant, manifesting his growth and success as he capitalized on every educational and artistic opportunity. B. Smetana found musical joy and fulfilment in his own, petty-bourgeois family. His father, František Smetana, an innkeeper with musical concerns, an amateur violinist, used to organize original and enjoyable musical meetings, inviting artists of the time: "Chez les Smetana, on organisait fréquemment de petites séances musicales où l'on jouait des duos et des quatuors dans lesquels le chef de famille tenait la partie de violon."¹⁰ (trans. Aut. *In Smetana's house, frequent musical meetings were organized, where duets or quartets were sung, and where the head of the family played the violin.*)

"Dès son adolescence, Smetana était sans aucun doute doté d'un tempérament extrêmement excitable et impulsif et d'une sensibilité particulièrement intense"¹¹. (*Even since his adolescence, Smetana was undoubtedly an extremely excitable and impulsive temperament, with a particularly intense sensitivity.*) which also explains why he displayed the supreme artistic impulse. His evolution was commensurate with his studies, and in 1843 "il était en mesure de jouer un instrument. Il était alors déjà un très bon pianiste, mais quoique âgé de dix-neuf ans, un autodidacte absolu en matière de théorie et de composition."¹² (trans. aut. *was able to play an instrument. He was then already a very good pianist, but at nineteen, an absolute autodidact in theory and composition.*)

Thus, B. Smetana devoted his entire youth and maturity to music, proving a rich sound imagery. The obstacles were not few, but they always motivated him. For this reason, B. Smetana was the pianist who had to rent an instrument for daily study when he moved to Prague (1843). He was refused by the Conservatory, because of his age, and his parents' approval to dedicate himself to music, came quite late, in 1843, at the age of 21, although he had made this decision at the age of 19. However, he was given the permission of studying with Joseph Proksch, a German teacher who supported and appreciated him, also as a pianist, and encouraged him to pursue composition. The composer settled for a while in Gothenburg, Sweden, becoming known as a pianist, conductor, composer. But the return to the country in 1860 was beneficial to him, his creation being recognized and appreciated. The romantic and patriotic breath is felt in the forty piano works, in four chamber works, in ten choral works, in twenty-two choral pieces, in the singular Czech Cantata, in the eight opera creations. His inspiration oscillated between the lyricism of Czech music and the romantic breath, between popular music and established canons of universal music.

⁹ Karásek, Bohumil, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 21.

4.1. Stylistic and aesthetic aspects of his creation

The educational-compositional approach took place gradually, through the conscientious and rigorous assimilation of the piano technique and repertoire, the rules of harmony and composition, studied carefully and for a long time. B. Smetana cultivated his talent, and especially his will, through his teacher, J. Proksch, but also through the writings of his mentor, the composer, pedagogue and musicologist Adolf Bernard Marx (1795-1866) – the German theorist who gave meaning to the forms and musical genres, existing until the period of musical classicism. Thus, B. Smetana acquired a sound technique of composition, deepening the works of advanced composers - J.S. Bach, W.A. Mozart, L. Van Beethoven, as well as contemporaries - R. Schumann, F. Chopin, F. Mendelshon Bartholdy, H. Berlioz, F. Liszt. ". „En janvier 1847 Smetana rencontra chez le comte Thun Robert, Robert Schumann et sa femme Clara, en 1846 il put réentendre Liszt et assister à deux concerts dirigés par Hector Berlioz; tout ceci contribua encore à renforcer l' impression que l'étude théorique des oeuvres de ces maîtres avait produite sur le jeune compositeur.”¹³ (trans. Aut. *In January 1847, Smetana met Robert Schumann and his wife, Clara, in the house of Count Thun. In 1846, he was able to hear Liszt again and attend two concerts conducted by Hector Berlioz; all that contributed further to strengthening the impression that the theoretical study of the works of these masters produced on the young composer.*)

The composer's creation brings together various genres, in which the virtues of an elaborate, instrumental and vocal writing, are subsumed by the intense emotions and colours of the Czech folklore: chamber music for piano, chamber-instrumental music, chamber-vocal music, choral music, orchestral music, vocal - symphonic music, opera music.

4.2. Music dedicated to the piano

The piano is the instrument to which the entire symphony orchestra, the entire vocal and instrumental palette can be transposed with precision and concreteness. And for B. Smetana, the piano was such a valuable instrument throughout his concert, conducting, and especially creative career. The composer was passionate about playing the piano, then, over time, he had to support himself from the lessons he gave to his students, especially the children of Count Leopold of Thun and of Hohenstein. And, in his adulthood, to achieve the joy of the success of large, orchestral creations, the piano remained his faithful partner in his tours. Gradually, and thanks to the technical possibilities of the instrument, the composer chose for his composition, miniature genres, in accordance with the preciousness and protocol of the frequented salons: "pendant son court séjour durant les années qu'il passa à Plzeň, il s' intéressait presque exclusivement à la musique de danse et à la musique << de salon >>, conforme au gout de la société qui l'entourait"¹⁴. (trans. Aut. *during the short stay in Prague and especially during the years he spent in Plzeň, he was almost exclusively interested in dance music and salon music, according to the taste of the society that surrounded him.*)

In the present research I took as reference the List of the main works, as we find it in the biographical volume, signed by Bohumil Karásek, and ordered by him. So, B. Smetana composed for the piano from the beginning to the end of his life. The creation, gradually expanded from approximately 1832 to 1884, and included forty opuses, some with two, three or

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

more plays. The musical genres are diverse and reflect his evolutionary – compositional approach, from those of his early youth – *Polka, Impromptu, Waltz*, to the most elaborate, lyrical, elegiac or even dramatic – *Concert Studies, Fantasy, Czech Dances*, etc.

In his youth, B. Smetana met his future wife, for whom he had deep feelings, despite the sporadic distance. The composer's biographer points out that all the works, especially from his youth, were actually dedicated to his beloved Catherine. „Toutes les oeuvres de Smetana sont désormais inspirées par son amour pour Catherine...”¹⁵ (trans. aut. *All Smetana's works are now inspired by his love for Catherine...*).

The five-part waltz, the work under my research, is classified as the tenth work dedicated to the piano. The work is complex, in five dimensions, like a large-scale romantic play, unified by the contained waltz genre, but tonally varied. "La pièce constitue avant tout un témoignage de la maîtrise avec laquelle Smetana se mouvait alors dans le domaine de la musique de danse, qu'il savait d'ailleurs toujours enrichir de certains éléments personnels"¹⁶. (trans. aut. *The play is above all a testimony of the mastery with which Smetana moved then in the field of dance music, which he always knew how to enrich with certain personal elements.*)

The work for the piano was composed in 1844, and was premiered "le 4 février 1844 lors d'un bal des artistes de Prague"¹⁷. (trans. aut. *on February 4, 1844 at an artists' ball in Prague.*)

The first part was thought in C minor, with a fiery modulation, in the last measures, to the relative major, E flat major. The structure is of *simple, free lied*, where the sections are built at period level: A, B, C. The motifs are distinct, but with the common element of octaves and chords, sign of the obvious passion for Catherine.

Section A contains two periods, a₁ and varied a₂, and only the final cadence distinguishes them. Both periods comprise an open opening phrase, with semi-cadence on the fifth step, with an exposed main motif repeated in the upper octave, in an ascending direction. The second phrase is an almost docile, return response from the previous melodic and harmonic winging, ending on the tonic, C minor:

Fig. 4. B. Smetana. *Waltz 1, measures 1-5*

Section B is a more assertive and insistent exposition of his feelings, repeating the same chord four times in the first three measures, with an extended chordal conclusion at the end of the motif. Repetition signifies emotional intensity:

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

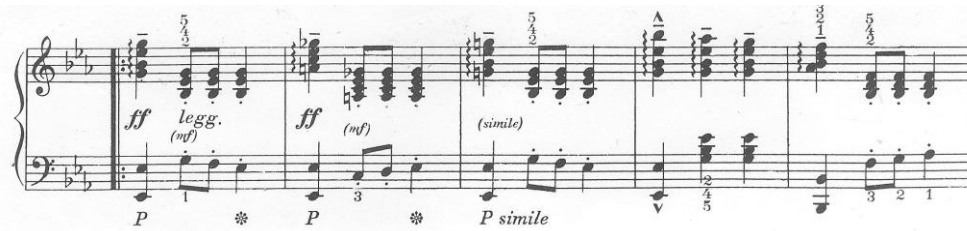


Fig. 5. B. Smetana. Waltz 1, measures 17-21

Section C is apparently distinct, but contains, through the extended and arpeggiated chords, repeated, in the same measure and elements from the previous sections. We detect an association of the preceding motifs; thus, C signifies the ingenious composition of the elements of section A and B:

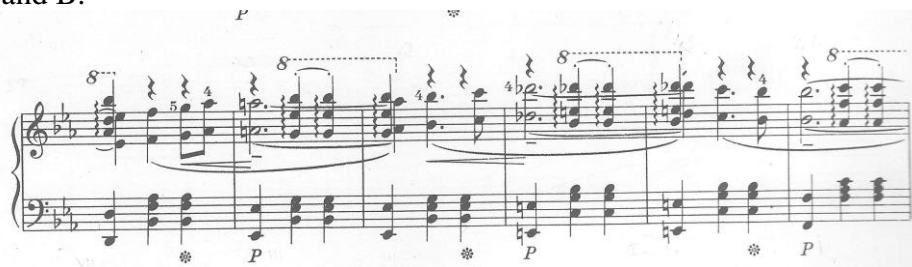


Fig. 6. B. Smetana. Waltz 1, measures 39-44

The second waltz has two sections, A and Av, with an eight-measure bridge with the repeating motif of eighths. The composer thought this part as a reflection of the delicacy and lightness of this dance, through some particularly suggestive elements through which he confesses his feelings: a detached melody in the soprano voice, outlining a latent polyphony, and exposing his feelings, in a confessional way. Also, the accompaniment of this chain is an embroidery of eighths *ossinato* exposed until the end, a sign of the rotational movements of the dance steps, and the accompaniment of the left hand, which contains harmonic expansion but also rhythmic stability, through the equality of fourths:

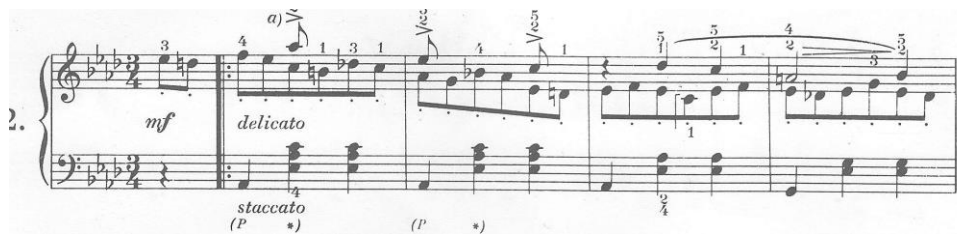


Fig. 7. B. Smetana. Waltz 2, measures 1-5

Also, the terms of dynamics, *delicato*, *mf staccato*, outline the pleasure of dancing, of flying in ternary motion. In the Av section, the composer gives significance to the plan of eighths, which mixes with the determined sonorities of the left-hand chords, outlining a passage of real virtuosity and fluidity.

In the **third waltz**, the composer demonstrates the novelty of his harmonic thinking, argument of an important characteristic of romanticism: distant modulation in four fifths, from E flat major to G major. Its form, AB-AB, is a double bipartite lied, an alternation that suggests indecision about his lover's feelings. The tonality of E flat major, in section A, with its sober colour, inspires the inability to feel the joy of life, while section B, in G major, with the chaining of octaves and chords, shows exuberance and emotional fulfilment:

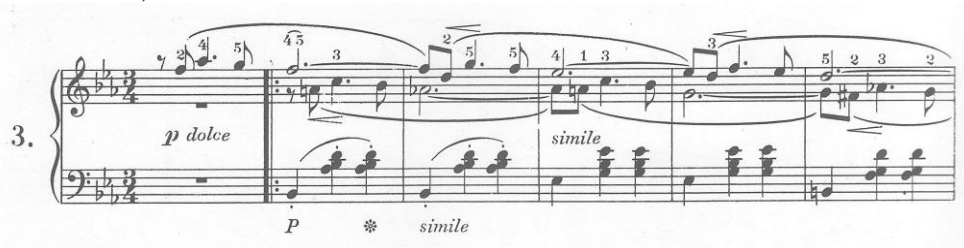


Fig. 8. B. Smetana. Waltz 3, measures 1-6

The **fourth waltz** is a character work of this cycle, with two distinct sections having the form of a bipartite lied AB. Here the composer expressed with musical frankness through the homonymous modulation, C minor - C major. The first musical motif, a lower embroidery, is like a dancing sway, and it is taken up in section B, this time in major keys, conveying confidence and hope:

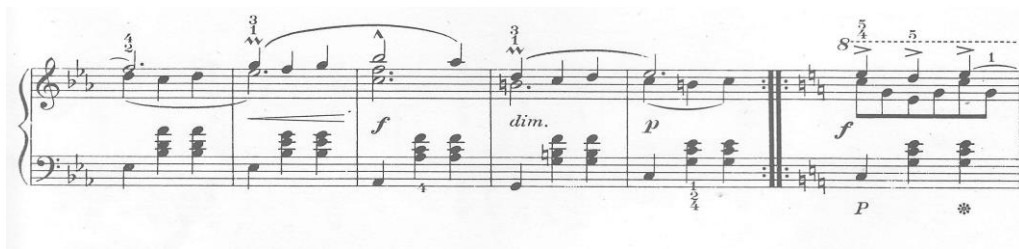


Fig. 9. B. Smetana. Waltz 4, measures 12-17

The **last waltz** of the cycle is tripartite, ABA, suggesting through the symmetry of the parts, balance and the joy of living. In the first section, A, we notice again three plans: the bass that watches tonally through the chords, the undulating middle voice that prints the ternary movement, and the soprano voice, in the shade of *p*, that leads the melodic line with serenity:

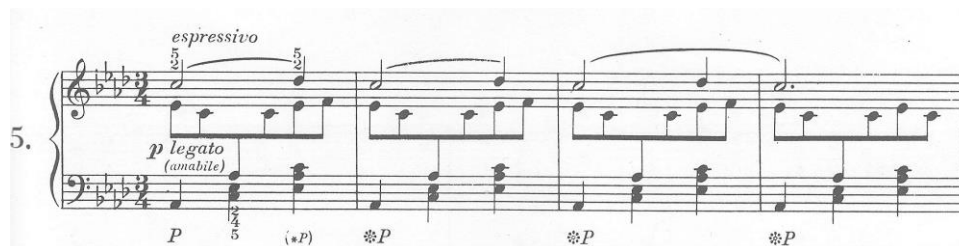


Fig. 10. B. Smetana. Waltz 5, measures 1-4

Section B unfolds in relative minor, F minor, a sign of inner turmoil. The octaves from the upper voice, which outline a simple melodic line, sometimes counter-timed by the eighths from the second voice, the *ff* shade, the *marcato* marks, the bass that follows identically the rhythmic plan of the first voice, are elements that outline the extent of the experience:

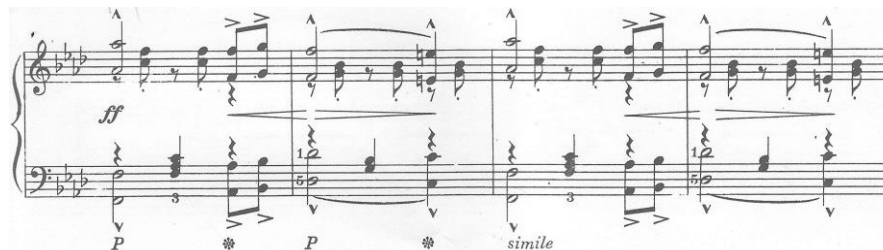


Fig.11. B. Smetana. *Waltz 5*, measures 17-20

The return to section A, through the major key A flat major, is itself a confession of reassurance, of reconciliation with the feelings of his beloved. The constant shade of *p*, as well as the dynamic and agogic mentions of *amabile*, *dolce*, *rit.* and *a tempo*, colour the intensity of his emotions.

The composer's biographer mentions that this fifth waltz inspired the composer in his lyrical creation, *The Bartered Bride*: "Retenons surtout que la cinquième partie de la *Valse* contient la première ébauche de l'idée qui devait plus tard constituer la base de la célèbre cdou d'amour du premier acte de la *Fiancée vendue*."¹⁸ (trans. aut. *Let us especially remember that the fifth part of the Waltz contains the first draft of the idea that will later form the ground of the famous love story of the first act of The Bartered Bride.*)

5. Originality elements in Maurice Ravel's creation of waltzes

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) was a composer who polarized the modernist trends of the early 20th century, foreshadowing the postmodern future. M. Ravel was the composer with a language concerned with modern harmonic expressions, new rhythms, ample chordal chains and multiple categories, juxtaposing the impressionist and the neoclassicism elements. Instrumental and orchestral virtuosity developed both in impressionistic colours and then in the markings of traditional French music, of the genres of the late era, of classicism.

The music for the piano comprises eight revealing opuses, situated at the intersection of the two aesthetics, impressionism and neoclassicism. The cycle *Noble and sentimental waltzes* was composed in 1911, and, according to the composer's confession, "performed for the first time during protests and boos, at the concert without the names of the authors from S.M.I. The auditors voted for the attribution of each play...The authorship of the waltzes was recognized to me, by a slim majority"¹⁹.

M. Ravel was inspired by the lyricism of Schubert's waltzes, keeping their characteristic vivacity and fluidity. But the melodic and harmonic elements are unexpected and modal,

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ Iliuț, Vasile. 1987. *From Wagner to Contemporaries, Music of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 3, part I. Bucharest: Lithography of the "Ciprian Porumbescu" Conservatory of Music, p. 91. Apud. M. Ravel. 1928. *Esquisse biographique, Revue Musicale*, Paris.

transcending the tonal framework of the armour convention. The cycle brings together seven waltzes and an Epilogue. Each of the eight waltzes has a tonal framework established by armour, but the manner of the harmonic clothing is unusual. And he constantly shapes this aspect through the technique of motivic variation and the sequential technique. Motifs of small extent are slid, ascendingly or descendingly, on foreign steps of tonality, building modulating episodes, which support the dynamics of a dance in waltz steps.

Waltz no. 3 has the key of E minor and unfolds on the structure of a complex tripartite lied, ABA, where the middle section has sub-articulations. The melody from the soprano voice gracefully outlines a guiding line around which the unconventional harmonies fold. It remains almost constant, and each time, in the three sections, the harmonies multiply, reaching multiple dissonances, sometimes jazz sounds. In the first phrase, in which the tempo is also announced, *Modéré*, the soprano voice presents the main motif, in a descending direction. The composer thinks for the left hand obstinately exhibits a rhythmic motif, of octaves and intervallic leaps, varied by pauses, which impress fluidity, and the ternary movement which prints fluidity:



Fig. 12. *M. Ravel. Waltz 3, measures 1-6*

In section B, after the double bar in measure 17, we find related motifs in both hands, but the seventh chords heighten the tension:



Fig. 13. *M. Ravel. Waltz 3, measures 14-17*

The bridge between sections B and A, highlight the left hand prints the tonal steps. The right hand, following the pattern of the same motif, intervenes with the amplitude of seventh, of ninth, or added steps, with multiple alterations:



Fig. 14. *M. Ravel. Waltz 3, measures 38-42*

6. Conclusions

In the 19th century, the ballroom dance was a musical genre in which composers displayed their compositional and interpretative mastery. The waltz, a genre that combines music with movement, revealed, in romanticism and modernism, through representative composers, referential works. I have done this research in the perimeter of the creation of three composers, who included in their opuses, the dancing genre of waltz, for piano: F. Chopin, B Smetana, and M. Ravel.

The three composers whose works we analyzed have recognized and performed genre creations, being included in the repertoire of pianists. The originality of these waltzes highlights the stylistics of each mentioned composer, the individuality of thought, the particularities of language. Each waltz is unique, valuable, reflecting the personality type of each composer. The works are part of a growing dynamic of the genre, from F. Chopin, through B. Smetana to M. Ravel, through an ever-developing, transfiguring discourse of all language elements:

- **from melody through line coded melody to harmony;**
- **from brilliant passages, to melodies encoded in complex harmonies;**
- **from the predictability of the speech, to the almost jazz improvisation;**
- **from ninth chords, to chains with added sounds, appropriate to clusters;**
- **from chromaticisms that still cling to the tonality, to distant sounds, from oversized spaces;**
- **and the metric is the only constant, what defines the dance. It always challenges composers to find new solutions, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, dynamic, in the same ternary dimension.**

Thus, the waltz genre knows a continuous evolution, not affecting the quality but reconsidering the elements, outlining another perspective, of modernism, even with jazz elements, appropriate to improvisation. The waltz transforms its substance, from a fluid and melodious one, to a visionary, harmonic, almost orchestral and close to improvisational style.

In the creation of the three composers, the waltz genre transforms its substance:

- **from a fluid and melodious one - F. Chopin,**
- **to a harmonic and passionate one - B. Smetana,**
- **to a visionary, harmonic, almost orchestral and close to improvisational style - M. Ravel.**

Even if **F. Chopin** was not the first creator of the waltz, he still remains a standard of this genre through his elegiac, sparkling contour and incandescent harmonic substance. We draw attention to several features of his creation. **The melodic line**, often brilliant, easy to spot, either in the right hand or in the left hand. It has a substantial, well-defined contour with ascending and descending meanders, suggesting the rotational movements of the partners. The syntax is homophonic, with subtle insertions of latent polyphony. **The harmony** is tonal. **The tonalities** are often with many alterations, especially flats, colours that suggest melancholy, sadness, longing. **The rhythm** is unusual in Chopin's creation, through the three elements, rhythmic, constant meter, and tempos, sometimes alert sometimes slow, but the characteristic element remains *rubato*. F. Chopin often uses exceptional rhythmic formulas, creating rhythm breaks, following the Beethovenian model. Also, melodic ornaments are often inserted, amplifying any emotional experience. But it always tempers the constant $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

B. Smetana, a passionate and conscientious young man in his instrumental, compositional and didactic attitude, composes the suite of five *Waltzes*, proving an original contribution of this genre. Peculiarities of the works are particularly visible in the importance

they give to chaining chords. **The harmony** is also tonal, and the need for a suggestive expression urges him to participate intensively in the musical discourse, through the extensive inclusion of the keyboard. The harmonic development becomes intense, brilliant and prominent. **The melodic line** is intense and prominent. Sometimes, in order to outline highly plastic images, the melody, is often hidden in the construction of these chords, which are increasingly amplified with slight dissonances.

M. Ravel is a modern composer, a seeker of unusual **harmonies**, which go beyond the framework of tonality customs. The characteristic element in the creation of the genre, *Noble and Sentimental Waltzes (1911)*, is **harmony**. The creative imagination leads him to approaching chords with multiple dissonances which remain in suspension for half or full beats. Also, distant modulations are an integral part of his style. Much of the work comprises octaves and compound intervals, extended chains, a sign of full unfoldment through dance.

The three composers remain in the memory of the universal musical culture, through their personal style, but also through the highlighting of a common aspect, that of the exploitation of folklore elements, towards which each of them oriented at a certain moment of creation.

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