

The music wrote for the puppetry theatre show „Al cui ești tu?”

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Abstract: *The problem of children in needy families whose parents go to work abroad is no longer a novelty. Petre Crăciun's novel “Robert cel cuminte” was the basis of the puppet theater show “Al cui ești tu?” and tells the story of a child, whose parents in Spain, where they encounter serious financial problems. The main character in this dramatization, Robert, serves as a model for the countless children that spend the majority of their time without life’s most important values. From a musical point of view, this show has a music written under the influence of the Wagnerian concept of leitmotif well-known from the film music field. Regarding the instrumentario, we can talk about writing for orchestra combined with musical pieces, specifically for musical films but also for music shows in the music-hall.*

Key-words: *music composition; stage music; incidental music; postmodern ;*

1. Introduction

Petre Crăciun is a Romanian writer specialized in stories for children. The novel “Robert cel cuminte” was published in 2014 and is dedicated to children, parents and grandparents. The action of the book takes place in rural area of Romania where Robert, an eight years old boy, is being raised by his grandfather. His parents went abroad, to work in Spain and they haven’t sent any money in the recent months nor gave any sign of life. The other children are bullying him, saying that his parents have abandoned him and name him Robert the orphan.

He later finds out from a discussion between his grandfather and the postman that his parents have been imprisoned for stealing from a grocery store. This is the intrigue that triggers the whole action of the story. Bullied by his classmates, Robert finds himself in a very uncomfortable position when his grandfather gets sick and his teacher, concerned about him, calls the children protection authorities to put him in a institution. A television station makes an interview with him regarding his experience into a stray children center. The footage is seen by a wealthy business-man that offers to adopt him, an offer that Robert declines saying that he has a family. After that, the business-man says that he will help Robert and his grandfather in many ways, but most important, to meet his impaired family in Spain.

This meeting is a crucial moment in Robert’s story, he makes a promise to his reunited family that he will become an important writer. Later on we find out that he has a new teacher which encourages him to become a writer and he even wins an award for a story that he wrote. The end of the story finds us at the launch of his first book, where all his acquaintancies are present and, at the end of his speech, we find out that his mother managed to attend to the event.

The adapting of the book was made by Georgiana Rusu and the whole puppetry show was produced by “Asociația Culturală Georgiana Rusu”. The show toured in over thirty schools and kindergardens from Constanța and Ialomița counties. It had a very good feedback in most of the places with children and teachers crying at the end of the performances.

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2. The musical themes

For me as a composer is a great joy to work for an interdisciplinary project such as theatre, film or dance/ballet. It is also challenge to create musical identities for each character or situation.

2.1 Main character's musical theme

The show is forty minutes long and for the most part of it has background music and songs. Robert, the little boy which is the main character is warm hearted, very kind and full of good intentions. He wants to become a writer and helps his grandfather the best he can. The most important musical part of him is the piece that he sings in which he express his longing for his parents and wish that the grandfather to be healthy.

The musical theme has three sections:

- First section (the verse) is in ternary measure that sounds like a waltz

Andantino

Șap-te ani eu îm-pli-nesc și de mult mă pre-gă-tesc de cu iar-nă pă-nă-n va-ră cu bu
Și a-tunci când ve-ți veni mân-dri de mi-ne veți fi voi pă-rinți iu-biți de mi-ne știu că

7
ni - cul stând a - fa - - ră Tot să
o să fi - e bi - - ne Voi a -

11
scriu și să ci - tesc tot în - văț nu o - bo - sesc
ca - să veți ve - ni fe - ri - ciți din nou vom fi.

The whole idea of these A section (the was to have a warm, friendly atmosphere organized in a D Major tonality.

- The second section (prechorus) changes the measure (4/4) and it modulates in D major's relative, B minor:

Andantino

A - vră - mu - ță bu - na mea spu-ne tu nu e a - șa? A - șa ș - așa chiar

4
da - că es - te greu nu re - nunț la vi - sul meu al meu meu meu

Through the whole story the cat serves as a storyteller. We perceive her role as a wise and omniscient character, quite an unusual portraying of a cat from the popular point of view. What is more common to the interaction of children and his pet is that she is also Robert's best friend. In this particular moment the cat shows up and answers to Robert's question and underlines the things that he says.

- The third section of the song (the chorus) is, as we know from many musicals and popular music form, the most obvious musical sequence of a song. It has to be either simple or straight, easy to be remembered to inform the listener about the general mood and so on. I have opted for a very melodic line that expresses the main character's wish for simple yet important things in his life: having his grandfather healthy, a schoolbag, a pair of boots. For this section I have modulated back to the root tonality, D Major

Andantino

Dul-ciuri n-am ca alți co - pii și n-așvrea nici ju - că - rii te - le - foa - ne sau ta

6
ble - te n-am ne - vo - ie eu vreau ghe - te lem - ne pen - tru toa - tă iar - na și - o vor - bă

11
dul - ce de la ma - ma un ghioz dan aș vrea fru - mos și pe bu - nul să - nă - tos

The coda of Robert's song consists of the last four measures from the B section.

2.2. The mother's musical theme

„Al cui ești tu ?” starts with Robert dreaming of his mother. She sings to him a lullaby, he is smiling and is happy about it, since his mom is far away from him. I wanted to write this as a light single section musical theme in relation with Robert's theme. There are multiple studies that confirm how strong is the bond between a mother with her son and of a father with his daughter. In relation to that I wanted to create a musical theme that could suggest that

Andantino

Na - ni na - ni dormi u - șor dra - gul ma - mii scump o - dor să crești mân - dru și vo - ios pu - iul ma - mii dormi fru - mos Vi - se - le să - ți fi - e toa - te ca iz - vo - rul de cu - ra - te să crești mân - dru și vo - ios pu - iul ma - mii dormi fru - mos

Later on I will explain how I blended this leitmotif with cells from Robert's musical theme so that I could express their interaction.

2.3. The friendship musical theme

The only friend that Robert has in the class and in his neighbourhood is Florin, who is a child that wants to become a great football player. They become good friends from the first day at school. Robert helps him with the homeworks and they play football in their spare time. Both are bullied by their teacher for the fact that they are poor. Florin encourages Robert

to pursue his dream of becoming a famous writer and says that one day they will meet again, when they will be both famous in their field of activity, football and literature.

Their song is portaying a football playing scene, so the musical theme is happy, optimistic and spreads a good feeling

Allegretto

U-nu doi trei pa-tru cu pi-cio-rul și cu ca-pul cinci șa-se șap-te opt toa-tă zi-ua fa-cem sport

No-uă ze-ce un-spre-ze-ce și min-gea de ba-ră tre-ce hei, pri-e-te-ne ce bi-ne

c-ai ve-nit să te joci cu mi-ne că te ve-de o-mul rar nu mai știi ce e pe afar'

These are the musical themes that I have used as leitmotifs through the whole show to accompany the the scenes where the main character feels his parents longing, when he is happy or bullied by fellow classmates and teacher.

3. The use of musical leitmotifs throughtout the show

Right after Robert's dream of his mother and her lullaby, the first scene accompanied is the one where Robert talks with his grandfather and when he decides to help him by going to the drugstore with an enthusiasm that is characteristic to the youth, without waiting for the grandfather to finish his word and not knowing that the drugstore is closed and opens only in certain days. I have written a joyous musical theme in mixolydian mode inspired from the friendship leitmotif, although this is more obvious at the second phrase of the theme. The musical theme is performed by a B flat clarinet.

Andantino

p *giocososo*

Regarding the accompaniment I have opted for a still like texture played by the flutes and strings. The next scene is the one where Robert is being bullied by some children on the street. He then decides that he will go at the edge of the village, to avoid them, even if that will take longer. I have tried to express the feelings of him in this scene and I have founded appropriate to use the B section from his theme, transposed in E flat minor. The theme is firstly played by the piano

Andante Moderato ♩ = 70

Later on, the violins take the lead role and it starts a polyphonic interaction at the strings that ends in the major relative, G flat Major

The reason why I have found appropriate the use of a polyphonic texture for this particular scene was the need of illustrating the struggle that he feels when the other children mock him and how he feels regarding the distance and longing for his parents.

Right after this scene and Robert, the postman comes to their house and delivers a bad news to the grandfather, his daughter and the son in law, Robert's parents, are imprisoned in Spain. They were sentenced to jail because of a robbery. Now we find out that the grandfather was worrying about their fate and why they weren't giving any sign in the recent months. While the two are talking, Robert overhears the whole discussion. This delicate scene, about the worried grandfather and scared Robert is accompanied by the first section of Robert's theme, performed by the harp. The resumption of the theme is doubled by violins and the cellos that play a long note on overtone

2

Hp.

Vln. 1

Vc.

Another important moment from a musical point of view is the dialogue between Robert and his grandfather. His desperation of the idea of his parents might never come back and right after, we see him going to school and how his mood changes, just like any other child would react. I have chosen the first section from the main character's musical leitmotif, interpreted by the bassoon that plays in higher register the melody in A minor. This melody is accompanied by a mixed choir that later takes the lead and plays the modulated musical in C minor. This scene ends in C major as Robert's mood changes while he arrives at school

Andante

Bassoon

p

Andante

Choir

pp

pp

Sadly, the enthusiasm that the little boy has about the first school day is being cut down by his mean teacher that humiliates him. She despise the flowers that he brought for her and questions his grandfather capability of paying the school bills. She treats him and his new friend Florin. For the tension of this scene I have used whole-tone scale and the clarinet plays the first section of Robert's musical theme. The clarinet is accompanied by the harp that plays arpeggios. His grandfather gets sick and Robert, thanks to his teacher is sent to a childcare centre where he interacts with all the ruffians. He gets interviewed by a TV station where he declares his situation and eventually returns home when the grandfather gets well. A well intentioned business man, who saw his footage, offers to adopt him. Robert declines his offer stating that he already has a family. In this case, the business man donates a laptop to Robert. Besides that, he generously gives him a chance to visit his

parents in Spain. From a musical point of view, I wanted to express a little bit of a bitterness with a drop of hope. I have used the main character's leitmotif in different ways. At the beginning of the piece I have used a modified version of the theme played by the flute with a dialogue from the cello. When the business man mentions about going to Spain, the harp plays the C section from Robert's theme. All this is accompanied by high strings and woodwinds. The travel to Spain is musically followed by a waltz mix between Robert's theme and the lullaby from the beginning of the show performed by a female voices choir



The moment when Robert meets his parents is very emotional. After so many months without any contact between them, they have the chance to see, to talk and to hear each other again. Just few seconds before his parents arrive, Robert starts to cry and is cheered up by his grandfather. For the most part of the piece I have used a vibraphone that express the strange of the situation. As in previous piece, I have used a combination between mother's lullaby and main character's theme



This interpretation of the theme can be characterized as a constant shift between E Minor and E Major. When the father starts to talk, I have added a violoncello as a response to the theme



When the main character is speaking with his mother and he springs up optimism I brought a modulated lullaby theme in B major played by the violin and the vibraphone plays a countermelody. This whole situation raised Robert's morale. And now that he has a new teacher who helps him improving his writing skills he can concentrate on that. Robert and Florin can daydream all the night about their most important wishes. From a musical point of view, I have tried to create a cheerful piece using the friendship leitmotif in A major, played by whistling. His new teacher encourages him to start to write about his experiences and he earns a school prize for his work. This particular scene is musically illustrated with first section of Robert's theme played by alto flute in B flat Major with an impressionistic accompaniment by the strings. The next scene, the one where Florin appreciates Robert's work and where they both dream about how their life will be when they will grow up is very happy, cheerfull. The music goes all the way with the scene's mood. So, the friendship

theme is played by the oboe and the strings orchestra accompaniment on pizzicato creates a cartoonish atmosphere. His next literary work is based on his life, as his teacher advised him. Three stories, one about his grandfather, about the immense compromise that he did, to raise him; the second story is about Dan Antoniadă, the business man who helped him and who was an example for him; the third story is about his friend, Florin. From the musical point of view, I have created three distinct pieces. For the first story I wrote a theme inspired by the third section of Robert's theme, played on piano with a cello countermelody and an accompaniment by the flutes. The second story was portrayed by a 5/4 waltz. The third story has a Dixieland interpretation of the friendship theme.

The last scene of the show takes place at the main character's first book launching. He sees all his acquaintances present in the room. Robert is the kind of a child that got mature very fast, because of the experiences that he has been through and now, when he is facing such an important event, he is overwhelmed. The huge surprise for him is when his mother enters the room and hugs him. This whole scene was musically dressed with the theme that suggested the relationship between the mother and child, which is, in fact, a mix between both characters musical leitmotifs. First, it was brought up in D Major played by the vibraphone accompanied by the harp. Then modulated in E Major and played by the violin with an accompaniment by the harp and female voices to express the idea of pure love between the mother and her child. Later on, when the curtain falls, the theme modulated in G Major, is being played by the violin alongside the French horns and accompanied by the string orchestra and with the vibraphone that plays a countermelody.

4. Conclusions

Working for this theatre show was one of the most challenging things to do, because it was the first time that I ever started to work from scratch and I have literally been there and seen how it grew over time. And I say that mainly because, besides the fact that I have written the music for it, I have also did the recording, editing, mixing and the mastering of the whole soundtrack (the voices and sound design). So, my role in this project was substantially more important than other theatre projects I have been involved in.

5. Bibliography

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