

Approaching Elements of Folk Music in Romanian Choral Creation (2)

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Abstract: *Most Romanian musicologists believe that Romanian musical creation is based on the folk vein. This, it is true, knew three main approaches that assumed a complexity of procedures through which sublime expressiveness was obtained: the folkloric quote, of moderate folkloric inspiration (in folkloric style), of radical folkloric inspiration (in modern style). Observing and exemplifying the common melodic, rhythmic and architectural structures and their processing, the connection between traditional and scholarly Romanian music must be a continuous concern for all Romanian musicians.*

Key words: *musical folklore; Romanian choral creation; melody; rhythm; architectural form;*

Introduction

The perspective directed towards the modal universe is not unknown, but goes at the same time with other generational concerns oriented towards modern modalism. Thus, in the 20th century, several concepts appear intersected. One is essentially post tonal - neotonal - atonalism, dodecaphonic serialism, polytonality. Another is related to the valorization of popular modes, the interpenetration between tonal and modal, attempts to use modal harmony, the use of partial modes, scales with movable, complementary, octavian or non-octavian steps. Concluding all these processes can be included in the organic modes and result in a complex language of synthesis (as in the creation of Bartok, Enescu, etc.).

1. Ways to approach romanian melody

When we start from the springs of the folkloric complex, supporting - me on the arguments of W.G. Berger² and Valentina Sandu Dediu³ regarding judging the music of the 20th century, we can think of a distribution in the creative concept of Romanian composers, on three levels: 1. the folkloric quote (the theme song comes "ad litteram" from traditional songs belonging to musical folklore; the harmonic plan is supported tonally, modally or tono-modally); 2. of moderate folkloric inspiration (the theme song is created in the style of popular music by referring to "organic" modes (the old modes accepted and imposed by the communities of an era, whose sound content is also found in the harmonic plane); 3.of radical folklore inspiration (creations that are based only on the extraction of compositional principles from the morphology of Romanian folklore, arriving at the definition of archetypes through various ways of integrating

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² Wilhelm Georg, Berger. 1979. *Dimensiuni modale*. București: Editura Muzicală.

³ Valentina, Sandu – Dediu. 2002. *Muzica românească între 1944-2000*. București: Editura Muzicală.

aleatorism, minimalism, etc.; ways obtained through "synthesis" can be applied : the hexatonic range, the chromatic range, the serial range of the chromatic range, Messien's modes etc.).

2. Analytical incursion

2.1. *Mircea NEAGU*, "*Hora mare pe battue*", mixed choir, 4 divided voices: It is a choral piece that has a literary component belonging to folk poetry and an architectural structure of the suite type, also organized on the principle of movement contrast (fast – slow – fast): Fast, Introduction (measure 1-8);

A with a1 (measure 9-24), double exposed period with some variations (the thematic idea played by the Soprano will be taken up by the Tenor), a2 (measure 25-40) which brings another thematic idea in a similar compositional manner and a3 (measure 41-48) - simple concluding period;

B with b1 (measure 49-64) double exposed period, b2 (measure 65-72) - simple period in which the Soprano's melody in phrase 1 is imitated by the Bass in the 2nd phrase, b3 (measure 73-80) and b4 (measure 81-88) are composed of different phrases, b2 varied (measure 89-96), b1 varied and modified at the level of phrase 2 (measure 97-112), b3 varied (measure 113-120), b5 (measure 121-128) – conclusive; Slow, Introduction (measure 129-132);

C with c1 (measure 133-140), c1 varied (measure 141-148); Rapid, Introduction (period re-exposed from the beginning of the piece; (measure 149-156), **A** with a1 different in timbre at the level of period 2 (measure 157-172), a2 diminished (measure 173-180), transitive phrase (measure 181-184) and **Coda** (measure 185-209) consisting of 3 periods, in which the first two are related.

Some landmarks regarding the sound structures show us modal sound scales:

A with a1=hexatony; a2=locric type hexachord in which the second step is mobile; a3=hexachord with major third;

B with b1=Dorian heptachord; b2,3,4=Phrygian heptachord with mobile 7th step; b5=suggests a chromatic heptachord in which the augmented second is between steps II-III;

C has phrase 1 on a pentachord with a major third on "G" and phrase 2 on a pentachord with a minor third on "E" with an undertone; therefore, at the period level, there is a pendulum of the 2 sound centers: G - E which for researcher George Breazu represented the "formative protocell".

The melodic cadences achieved by these melodic structures are predominantly phrygian. Regarding the metro-rhythmic system we encounter alternative measures of 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, which encompass the folkloric vocal rhythmic system of giusto-syllabic and parlando-rubato.

As chordal sound structures, there are – in general – "classical" chords with apparently and effectively dissonant melodic notes, in tono-modal relationships: for a1 (measure 10-12) over a melodically and rhythmically figured pedal on "G" we encounter, towards this sound center, as tono-modal relationships, the steps: I (in the 2nd inversion) – V (with minor third, diminished fifth and minor seventh) - III (major chord in the 1st inversion) - suggestion of IV - again V (with minor third, diminished fifth and minor seventh) - IV (with major ninth as the first element) - modulatory inflection towards the tonality of the subdominant C major (in the 2nd inversion) through VII (diminished chord with diminished seventh) which will reappear after I followed by a "modal" dominant – VII (minor chord with minor seventh) at subtone to I (G minor) - II (diminished chord in the 2nd inversion) - I;

HORA MARE PE BĂTUTE
SUITĂ CORALĂ PE TEME MOLDOVENESTI

Prelucrare de MIRCEA NEAGU
Versuri populare

Allegro

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

Și u - na, și do - uă, și trei și pa - tru tot a - șa,
u - na, și do - uă, și trei și pa - tru tot a - șa, și-a -
și u - na, și do - uă, trei și pa - tru tot a - șa, și-a -
Pe bă - tu - te-a - șa mi-i drag, Tro - pa, tro - pa, tot a - șa,
Pe bă - tu - te-a - șa mi-i drag, Tro - pa, tro - pa, tot a - șa,
sa și u - na, și do - uă, Tro - pa, tro - pa, tot a - șa,
sa, și u - na, și do - uă, Tro - pa, tro - pa, tot a - șa,

In section B the sound center moves to a descending major third and to an Eb (major; the major third will constitute a short pedal figured rhythmically and melodically) we encounter the following harmonic relationships:

I - V - VI₄ - VII₄ - VI - II - VI - III clitic de terta

(third-order elliptical)

2.2. Grigore CUDALBU, "Trecui dealul la Băiuș", mixed choir, 4 voices with divided Bass: on folk verses, the Soprano presents six times a main thematic idea which is based on a pentachord with a minor third:

in its first presentation, this is supported by a pedal made by the Alto;

in the second appearance the pedal is doubled by melodic-rhythmic variation by the Tenor, and this ends up, in the end, transforming into a thematic idea;

the next exposition (the third) also involves the Bass voice; now the male voices outline in parallel fifths the same secondary thematic idea;

the fourth exposition is the most complex: by dividing the Bass a substantial sound color is obtained, both timbral and compositional; if the Tenor makes free imitations in relation to the Soprano, one of the Bass voices emphasizes, by descending multiplication, the pedal from the Alto, and the other voice executes a melodically and rhythmically figured pedal;

in the following two representations we witness - in recurrence - a dilution of the sound consistency: now (as in the 2nd representation) only three voices participate (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and, finally (similar to the first appearance), two voices (Soprano, Alto).

Trecui dealul la Băiut

Aranjament de
Grigore Cudalbu

The musical score is for the piece "Trecui dealul la Băiut" by Grigore Cudalbu. It is arranged for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are in Romanian. The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number (5, 11, 17, 23) at the beginning. The lyrics for each system are as follows:

System 1 (Measures 5-8):
Soprano: Trecui dealul la Băiut... A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na... Cu măn-ca-re la dră-gut... A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na.
Alto: U...
Tenor: U...
Bass: U...

System 2 (Measures 11-14):
Soprano: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a... De măn-trea-bă ca-re-ca-re... A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na.
Alto: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Tenor: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Bass: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...

System 3 (Measures 17-20):
Soprano: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a... A - pa-re-ce din o-lu-t... A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na.
Alto: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Tenor: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Bass: A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...

System 4 (Measures 23-26):
Soprano: Pui-ne comp-tă din gră-ut... A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na... A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Alto: A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na... A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Tenor: A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na... A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...
Bass: A - du'i dai-na, a - du'i dai-na... A - di - ir-li, ir-li - a, a - di - ir-li, ir-li - a...

A cadential motif of a modal nature concludes the piece: the Subdominant - Tonic cadence is suggested by a major chord with a major ninth, which "resolves" to a step I, elliptical third.

At the phrase and period level, only recitative melodic cadences are found (obtained by repeating the perfect first interval).

The rhythmic system is typical of cult music – 4/4, over which the folkloric vocal one of giusto - syllabic is superimposed; within it, the binary rhythmic cell 2/4 is highlighted; the scales, for better visual accessibility, will be displayed on an ascending pyrrhic profile.

As chordal structures, the following are observed: if we refer to a heptachord with a minor third, whose sound center is F# (F# minor), in the third exposure a first harmonic relationship appears I (often elliptical of the third) - IV(3#) major (measures 19, 21)... which will be amplified (measures 22, 23): I – IV with a minor seventh in the inversion of 1a - VII (more suggested and located at a subtone compared to I) - I elliptical of the third; in measures 29-30, by dividing the bass the following modal harmonic relationships appear: I - IV3# - V(elliptic of third) – Iv with minor seventh in the 1st inversion - IV(3#) major (false relationship)

- V(elliptic of third) – Iv with minor seventh in the 1st inversion - VII (more suggested and located at a subtone compared to I) - I elliptic of third.

The architectonic structure is constituted at the level of an asymmetric period - A, subject to variation: A1, A2, A3, A1 varied, A varied.

2.3. *Felicia DONCEANU*, “*Carols, carols...*”, mixed choir, 4 divided voices. Based on the verses of the poem belonging to Mihai Eminescu, this choral miniature has a hybrid architectural scheme: suite / rondo.

The debut is a homophonic introduction at the level of an asymmetrical phrase.

This is followed by a first section **A**, acting as a refrain, built from three articulations:

a1, a symmetrical phrase, of the type of accompanied monody, with the theme evoked by the Soprano;

a2, an asymmetrical phrase whose content is deduced from the first motif, varied, imitated and rendered through imperfect consonances by Alto – Bass, while the Tenor formulates a rhythmically varied pedal;

a3, a phrase formed by - a repeated motif, which is also a melodically and rhythmically varied appearance (augmentation) of the first motif - accompanied monody.

B is presented at the level of intermediate structures in the form of a rondo:

b1 – an interrogative phrase played by the Alto and accompanied by the male voices, through “modern” chord structures (elliptical third chords), on an ascending march of Phrygian tetrachord;

it will be answered by the Soprano - a3 (from the chorus) accompanied by the same male sonorities in double and multiplied pedal posture; this articulation will increase tension by its “ad litteram” reprise for the 2nd hypostase and varied – amplified at the 3rd presentation.

The C, as a whole, represents the culmination of the piece:

c1 is a symmetrical, monodic phrase, diminished in terms of the tonal scale (tricordia) played by the Soprano and accompanied by the divided Alto, through a rhythmically figured double pedal;


in c2 (a repetition, varied in timbre and slightly amplified) the planes are inverted: the Alto holds the main melody, and the Soprano accompanies and is highlighted by an ison of the Tenor;

c3 in the plane of the melody brings to the Soprano an inversion of a sequence of seconds: 2m – 2M for c2 will become 2M – 2m for c3; the accompaniment is achieved through an amplified pedal: the male voices are multiplied by the divided Alto (perfect fifth – a “characteristic” interval for the construction of modal chords);

c2 reappears varied at the level of the harmonic support – through amplification and **c3** varied both melodically (the Soprano is doubled by the Bass) and harmonically (to the pedal divided to a perfect fifth and rhythmically varied by the Alto, the Tenor will respond with a perfect fourth).

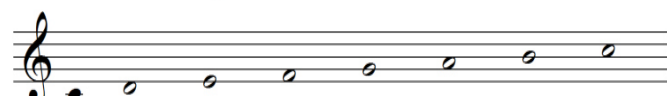
The concluding articulation – The Coda is melodically based on the thematic material in a3 (chorus) presented by the male voices in parallel fourths that are harmonically supported by a rhythmically varied pedal, built on a perfect fifth chord, with 3 elements, played by the female voices. Regarding the sound structures we witness – in the ensemble – a continuous evolution and mobility: for section A

hexacordie de tip lidică



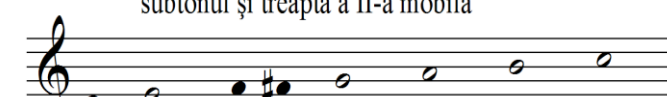
for section A

heptacordie dorică cu subton



for section B

hexacordie cu terță mică în care e prezent
subtonul și treapta a II-a mobilă



for section C

and the melodic cadences are predominantly aeolian (2M descending).

Within the 3/4 measure, the folkloric vocal rhythm specific to the carol unfolds: syllabic giusto.

The layer of chord structures is supported by “traditional” and “modern” chords (elliptical third chords, built on the generator interval of the perfect fifth or by superimposing perfect consonances) in modal chains.

3. Conclusions

The three pieces subjected to analysis demonstrate the interferences that exist between traditional and scholarly music: from the sound scales that are captured through the prism of the profile, the contour, the melodic cadences and the content, to the rhythmic systems in which binary and ternary rhythmic cells of the giusto-syllabic rhythmic system are present which is scholarly treated through the mensural system...; classical and modern chordal structures are added, in tono-modal relationships... and we arrive at the architectonic form in which the form of lied or theme with variations can be assimilated with the fixed one of binary type (from the perspective of traditional music, respectively couplet-chorus).

“The great diversity of modern or avantgarde-orientation, noted in the European West or in the U.S., also exists in Romanian creation...in various degrees of comparison with native nuances. The latter, coming for the main oral tradition – Byzantine peasant and religious music – led the composers to new language solutions”⁴.

⁴ Valentina Sandu – Dediu. 2004. *Muzica nouă între modern și postmodern*. București: Editura Muzicală.

4. References

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