

Musical languages of the 2th century in globalization

Limbaje muzicale ale secolului XX în contextul globalizării

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Abstract

The 20th century brought new orientations in art, met in all its forms of manifestation. All great creators have invented languages that square with their own conceptions, and thus being molded new modalities of expressing, which would materialize in the creation of that period by innovatory musical elements, organized in three large directions as follows: atonalism, neomodalism, and neotonalism.

Key words: *art, musical languages, national schools of composition*

Cuvinte cheie: *artă, limbaj muzical, școala națională de compoziție*

“The idea of using the popular Melos in cult creation represents a very complex issue (...) the idea of using popular structures in creation must shape more styled, sublimate forms, for the respective paper, touched by the autochthonous spirit, be able to express the great musical ideals in a generalized, synthesized manner.”

Dan Buciu

The aspect to be analyzed in this study is about the development of modality, which has marked a great moment of prosperity of the European national musical cultures. Keeping track of the evolution of musical language, I will point out some directions for the beginning, which belong to the creation of the turn of the 20th century, where the importance given to the folkloric essence - as results from Bella Bartok's creation (1881-1945) or Igor Stravinski's creation (1882-1971) - represents a modality through which the national element gets high aesthetic-musical valences, which leads to the enrichment of the universal musical language. [1]

As regard the replacement of tonal centre, Igor Stravinski used the polarity of the sound, naming it “the essential axis of music”[2]. Aleksandr Skriabin (1872-1915) brought as a new element *the mystic accord*, made of six quarts that utter by development specific melodic segments. Bela Bartok brought in the principle of organization of widened tonality on axes, where there were two series of axes grouped in three circles. For the enlargement of tonal concept, Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) suggested a new succession of relationship of tonalities based on the phenomenon of natural resonance, exemplified in *Ludus tonalis*.

The complexity and the multitude of new elements would create a modern musical language, where the agogic, metric, and sometimes rhythmic uniformity is replaced by the metro-rhythmic liberty, of folkloric inspiration, valorized to maximum in the new national musical cultures.

As regards the importance of the activities in the national schools of composition concerning the development and diversity of the musical language, Gheorghe Dumitrescu made the following

estimation: “Each people has its own folk music, characteristic, shaped by hundreds of generations of folk artists, perfectly matching with a nation’s soul, with its sensibilities, aspirations, and history. These creations, immortal masterpieces, are a living example and represent at maximum the national specific of a nation. The national schools of composition have brought each of them, assimilating this art, a considerable and a distinctive contribution to the universal music thesaurus. Various creative personalities knew how to create immortal masterpieces, a glory for the universal culture, basing on traditions, on atmosphere and on their national specific”[3].

Complex chromaticisms, the insertion of archaic modes, bring music new dimensions and colors that form in a new source of inspiration for modern composers. The creation of a musical execution suggests the using of a language to express a sensitive content, where one could see, y harmony connotations, an archaic folkloric sensitiveness.

Tone-modal synthesis of the musical creation of European composers in the first half of the 20th century determine its particularities of musical language, subordinated to new aesthetic directions in European creation. The tonal way, consecrated by classical tradition, makes room to an evolution that regards polyvalent structures, where functions are invested with multiple roles, and where dominates the “tonal” ambiguity.

The chromatic proceedings, related to harmonic structures, with modal elements inserted in their widened sphere, set their starting point with the orientations of composers belonging to national schools of the 19th century, but also with the orientations of “French impressionists”.

Although we not be able to cover all language particularities, I thought useful the presentation of European composers representative for the theme proposed in this chapter, analyzing their belonging to a “school” or to a “current”, and synthesizing by short exemplifying or argumentative analysis, the main directions that lead musical creation of the first half of the 20th century.

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The multitude of artistic currents affirmed at the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, appeared in the forms of manifestation of contemporary art. From the wide range of musical languages found in the creation of European composers of the first half of the 20th century, in the first decades were developed and affirmed the currents: impressionist, expressionist, neoclassical, and neofolkloric, joined by individual musical languages of that era’s representatives. The orientations appeared in musical creation of the first half of the 20th century developed the folkloric element as element of musical expression.

The musical language, delved from the *impressionist* current appeared in French plastic art - at the end of the 19th century, the name of the current belonging to art critic Louis Leroy, referring to a painting by Claude Monet titled *Impression, sunrise* - is characterized by color. Claude Debussy (1862-1918), followed by Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), were the first who brought in music the impressionistic sonorities, the new terms used indicating tendencies regarding the coloristic using of pedaling harmonies, of new timbre effects - see Claude Debussy – *Sonata in F Major for flute, viola and harp* – 1916; Maurice Ravel – *Introduction and Allegro for harp, string quartet, flute and clarinet* – 1906 - of Gregorian modes, or of the modes specific to Extreme Orient.

In harmonic plan, the novelty is given by the replacement of tonal relationships with modal relationships, by frequent use of tierce and second successions between the fundamentals of accords, by the preferential use of pylon-sounds or static harmonies. In the impressionist musical execution appear preferential intervals of second and tierce, the chromatic colors with attached augmented and diminished intervals. The suggestive character of melody results from the frequent comings and goings to harmonic flux, associated with the arabesque of plastic arts.

Claude Debussy is interested in the new of sonorous image, which is rendered by the suggestive language that catches the essence of the emancipation phenomenon of harmonic fact by enlarging or removing the functional concept. New sonorities imposed by hexatonic scale, the diversifying of harmonic connections, the frequent use of parallelisms, the insertion of some new

rhythmic and coloristic elements, tempo variations, the development of instrumental effects, forms a large scale of compositional means for Claude Debussy's music.

As regards the architecture, it gets a new look, structural varieties delve from the continuous character of instability at harmony, melody and rhythm, monothematic structures being the most important reference point in musical constructions of the impressionist style.

In contrast with impressionism, which aimed the bringing back of the contemplation states, of luminosity, the new current in art, the *expressionist* current,

A plastic and explanatory definition of musical expressionism we can find at Clemansa Firca: "Considering it from the angle of its intrinsic data and yet without removing the analogies – which we place at the level of aesthetic attitudes, and not at the level of content or at a technical level – the musical expressionism seems to us as the revealing by excellence of a process of alienation of the musical figurative (of thematic drawing) its manifestations, like those belonging of plastic expressionism, gravitating around the alternative: to thicken in a hypertrophic way the figurative representation in order to intensify the expression – to a transcendence of motive – or, on the contrary, to sublime the motive, to abstract it or even to abolish it, to free the expression." [4]

approaches themes meant to cause strong emotions. The traditional modalities of expression are abandoned, making room to music where images are invaded by suffering, violence, anxiety, morbid obsessions. The expressionism "develops excessively a single side of affectivity, meaning of psychological panic, giving human being a monochrome, unilateral image." [5]

At the level of melody and harmony, we seize new modalities of transformation, as well as the deliberate avoidance of tonal logics, by using a new harmonic language instable and chromatised to saturation [6]. This leads to the denying of tonality, and the atonalism evaluate to the serial organization that rigorously aims the creation of any sonorous configuration from a basic series constructed according to the 12th sounds of a temperate octave.

The expressionist idiom, "invented" by the representative figures of the second Viennese school, use the obsessive formulas, the athematism, and the division of melodic frame, rhythmic complications, intense cultivation of dissonance in harmony, and the invention of timbre melody - proceeding met in Arnold Schonberg's entire creation, but especially in *Five musical plays for orchestra*, Op. 16 (1909), of which *Color* is the most representative musical execution - ***Klangfarbenmelodie*** - in translation from German *timbres melodies*, name given by Arnold Schonberg to the relation that sets the pitch of the sound and its color, the melody becoming a consequence of timbre's incidence with frequency, being distributed to various instruments that undertake the sounds describing the melodic frame. [7]

As regards the rhythm, it is treated as a particular element of the expressionist language, developing under the aspect of serial organizations (Alban Berg (1885-1935) – *Wozzek – Invention on one rhythm* from the third act, Igor Stravinski – *Le Sacre*) or being undertaken from the folkloric ancestral mainspring (Bela Bartok).

Expressionist music highlights the powerful contrasts between the traditional forms, adapted to the new language, (sonata, rondo, theme with variations, and canon) and constructions with free forms, resulted from a blending of the traditional forms and genres - for example, between the genre of theme with variations and the form of sonata by Anton Webern (1883-1945) in *Variationen fur Klavier*, op.27, or between the form and the genre of sonata by Arnold Schonberg in *String Quartet nr.1*, op.7 – monopartita paperwork in form of sonata, which includes the parts of a traditional quartet.

In the same temporal frame of the turn of the 20th century, we assist to the reflecting of expressionist echoes in the creation of some composers like Bela Bartok (in *The Miraculous Mandarin*), Paul Hinemith (in *The assassin, hope of women*), Serghei Prokofiev (1891-1953),

Dimitri Sostakovici (1906-1975) - which used expressionist elements to show the violence of feelings in *Katerina Ismailova*, Edgar Varese (1883-1965).

Neoclassical direction in European music debuted in the third decade of the century, as an extension of the tendencies of manifestation in the previous century.

By neoclassicism, we understand the artistic current that aims the revalorization of preclassical and classical traditions, the neoclassical attitude aiming the tendency of bringing back in the centre of attention above all, the genres of instrumental music.

Musical neoclassicism was created by the declared will of the composers who had joined that stylistic orientation, to reevaluate the ordering principles of forms, making room for a new topic on new techniques, and proceedings. It could be evaluated in musicological plan by the “four specific semantic levels” [8]:

- evaluative axis – which regards the “reinvention” of classical model;
- temporal axis – in which manifests the predilection for “old” and from which delves the constructive opposition classicality-modernity;
- aesthetic art (represented by two characteristics) – which regards the following aspects:
 - a) Objectivity, unity, balance, imitative creative meaning, naivety to the apparition of gallant joke;
 - b) Development of relational structures, geometry miming, massiveness, gravitation, and symmetry.

The group of the six French composers would try to achieve new means of expression, opposite to impressionism, as well as to expressionism, so the classic tonality is brought back into attention - the reaffirming of tonality as basic indestructible principle of music, is supported also by the apparition of Paul Hindemith’s work, *Ludus Tonalis*.

The data of this new style are received through a clear difference between step and innovation, the option of the composers who have adhered to this direction being characterized by the profoundness of coming back to preclassicism spirit.

At the level of harmony and polyphony, we met structures that adapt to contemporary musical language, with polytonal moments, diatonic-chromatic-tonal-modal mixtures, religious songs.

As regards the rhythmic aspect, it is refreshed by the inserting thematic constructions, “incisive, vigorous, exact, but yet fluid and mobile, with bold displacements of accents of timbre asperities in soloist detachments, cultivating the character of maliciousness” [8].

The option for neoclassical style is found in the creation of some European composers like Paul Dukas (1865-1953) - *Variations, Interlude and Final on a theme by Jean Philippe Rameau* (1903), Max Reger (1873-1916) - *Suite in old style op 93* (1905); *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue for two pianos op. 96* (1906); *Variations and Fugue on a theme by G.P. Telemann op. 134* (1914), Maurice Ravel - *Le Tombeau de Couperin (The Grave of Couperin* (1917), Manuel de Falla - *Concerto for clavicembalo* (1923-1926), Bela Bartok - *Concerto nr. 1 for piano and orchestra* (1926), George Enescu - *Suite op. 10 for piano* (1901-1903); *Suite I for orchestra op.9* (1902-1903), Igor Stravinski - *Pulcinella symphony* 1919); *Symphony of winds* (1920); *Concerto for piano, contrabassoon and wind instruments* (1924); *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), Serghei Prokofiev - *Classical symphony* (1916), Paul Hindemith - *Klaviermusik op.37* (1926-1927).

Alongside language orientations above mentioned, *the neofolkloric* language amplifies the process of modalism development at the level of national musical schools, marking their prosperity in the European music, thus determining the forming and affirmation of a multitude of individual styles created from the specificity of languages and national particularities, marking a new conception of creation, based on the synthesis between national-folkloric tradition and European musical tradition[9].

The neomodality system that govern the neofolkloric language have at their basis some common principles:

- melodic structuring is accomplished according to some generating archetypal cells, especially oligochordic and pentatonic;
- melodic synthesis, diatonic and chromatic, is accomplished according to some intrinsic laws of folkloric modal; the forming of some melodic microunities by inserting chromatic elements in the diatonic frame on intervals that form oligochordic and pentatonic formations; associations of two or more microunities of disjunction or conjunction to enlarge the diatonic-chromatic space; diatonic-chromatic melodic evolutions on the basis of some attraction poles; melodic of major-minor synthesis; melodic of displacement of intervallic entities;
- there are frequently used melodic constructions formulated based on gold section.

At the level of harmony and polyphony, is aimed the verticality of horizontal, and thus the elements of new on a vertical plan are synthesized as follows:

- accords are made of the melody's sounds;
- new writing down techniques generate superposition bi and polymodal despite some different poles for each voice;
- accords get new major-minor structures;
- modes of the same final generate polyvalent superposition;
- there frequently appear accord structures formed of the "beat of second";
- there are used accord structures formed of the principle of golden section;
- there are frequently used accord structures formed according to the principle of symmetry;
- there appears heterophony, as a modality of vertical dimensioning of melody with its new variants.

In the Romanian music, the process of building a modal harmony has lasted almost a century. If the first composers (Fletchenmacher and Claudella) used for the amortization of folk melody the tritonic tuning and the functional relationships of classic and romantic harmony, Gavriil Musicescu approaches the first intentions of modal amortization, mainly consisting in manipulating the relations between secondary stairs. Thus is eliminated the frequency of dominants that characterized mainly the tonal-functional system. The next composer who follows Musicescu's direction is D.G. Kiriac, who is more determined in using modal accord relations by avoiding dominants.

Enescu, by the variety of synthesis operated in his cameral, symphonic papers, in *Oedipus*, by the originality of his very diverse solutions, can offer us a transferable model in other compositional contexts. Only in another stage of the preoccupations for modal harmony, concurrently on the generation of composers of the 40s-50s (Mihail Jora, Paul Constantinescu, Sabin Drăgoi, Sigismund Toduță), was studied in detail the question of accord treating of folk songs with the characteristic formulas of vertical superposition, as well as in the plan of relations between accords.

In various ways, each of these composers reached a harmony whose modalism reflects the nature of that composer's predilections. What is valuable for all of them is the implying of chromaticisms, which together with a certain liberty of accord successions, shade off the tonal-functional thinking.

The next step to a modal thinking is when a triton (the accord formed of tierce and quint) is eliminated, vertical structures forming on other intervals, as for example accords of quarts or accord formed from other intervals than the tierce intervals (accords of second and tierce, second and quart, second and seventh, or other combinations of intervals).

As far as these combinations of intervals include an intense chromatics, the harmonic discourse becomes extremely colored, conferring the folk melody a special aura.

The defining of problems, as well as its modality of approaching, evoking theoretical, historical, and stylistic connotations, represents the main hints of the present text.

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