

## Innovative Style and Construction Elements in the Creation of Folklorist Sabin Vasile Drăgoi. Divertiment Rustic – Carol 2: Under the Red Sunrise

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**Abstract:** *The structural analysis of the musical work aims to analytically present, under a personal vision, the stylistic, form, harmonic-modal structure, contrapuntal thinking peculiarities that the composer Sabin V. Drăgoi knew how to develop in an unmistakable personal manner. As I have mentioned in other scientific meetings, I aim to present the full Rustic Divertimento through a series of stylistic and musicological aspects as complex as possible. The second carol (Star Song), entitled Under the Red Sunrise, is included in the first folklore collections made by Sabin V. Drăgoi in the winter of 1922-1923 in Lipova, Ilteu and Lejnic, being included in the emblematic volume 303 Carols with Text and Melody published in 1925. Since then, the volume has been reprinted and reintegrated into the national bibliography for the first time in 2024 through the efforts initiated by the undersigned and included like other reference volumes of Banat folklorists in the Banat Collection of Ethnomusicological Restitution.*

Key-words: *restitution, Banat, Sabin V. Drăgoi, composition, folklore.*

### 1. Introduction

Drăgoi's concept of musical thinking and immense folkloric musical resources are inscribed throughout the entire musical score Divertiment Rustic created in 1928, in the line of a modal harmonic polyphony exploited to the fullest by the Banat composer. His merits were soon declared by George Enescu during the Composition Competition, considering Drăgoi for his work, as the opener of the new school of composition.

Sabin V. Drăgoi can be considered an innovator for the inclusion of carols and star songs in choral musicals, symphonic and vocal-dramatic music. By preserving a special sonority in the whole creation, his music preserves over time, as it is

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actually felt today, „uncombined timbres, pure coloristic units” (Rădulescu 1971, 243).

The musical score of the *Divertissement Rustic* includes five representative folk genres, from carols to *doina* to funeral songs, playful moments and the genre of the nuptial repertoire, creating through the unique sonorities, an image of Romanian village life.

Completing the contribution of folklorists from the early 20th century, George Breazul also joined in, integrating carols and star songs into teaching activities as well as through carol collection campaigns for musical activities at the school level. As a huge recognition that we bring to the folklorists of the period, it joins the extremely important contributions to Romanian folklore of Constantin Brăiloiu, Ilarion Cocișiu, Iosif Velceanu, Timotei Popovici, and the younger Nicolae Ursu „recognized for his didactic rigor and the true involvement of a passionate researcher” (Ursu 2022, 9).

Along with George Enescu, Béla Bartók and Igor Stravinsky, the Banat composer Sabin V. Drăgoi can be considered the composer who transformed the thinking of the 20th-century Romanian musical composition school by making the most of the archaic musical background.

*Innovative Style and Construction Elements in the Creation of Folklorist Sabin Vasile Drăgoi. Divertissement Rustic – Carol 2: Under the Red Sunrise*, offers a multidimensional perspective on the compositional development of Sabin V. Drăgoi. In the same context, it also aims to identify, present and raise awareness of the innovative stylistic elements, the compositional principles that govern the entire unique sound discourse. The composer conceived this work as a synthesis of the popular musical tradition, in a cultured form, using the purest means of expression. (Demenescu 2014, 151).

By syncretizing the methods of structural, harmonic and timbral analysis, we can consider the existence of a complex architectural form to be revealed. This demonstrates that the work is an organic synthesis between the rigor of classical forms and the innovative elements of a specific musical language adapted to modernity. Sabin Drăgoi had established himself with impetuosity, early on, as a leading name in the Romanian compositional school. (Constantin-Tufan 2012, IX).

Modal thinking and the inclusion as new compositional principles of diatonic modal harmonic structures specific to Byzantine music, including modal oligochords, will create, as can be observed compared to other creations of the period, unique sonorities. Through his creation, Drăgoi brings a new avant-garde concept, based on a structural methodology, in which the folkloric substance directly generates the harmonic, polyphonic and formal laws that will ultimately create the distinctive sonority of the cult works he created.

The inclusion of such a personal manner will bring to Drăgoi's composition chordal structures that are based on the quartal chord, archaic folk monody and not necessarily the major or minor chord and the principles of tonal-functionalism as was done before him.

The study attests to the fact that Romanian music of the period was in perfect synchronicity with the great universal currents (expressionism, neoclassicism, serialism). The work proves a level of technical refinement absolutely equal to that of Western cultural centers.

I would like to note that the first half of the 20th century is characterized by a musical output that exhibits a new working concept regarding the development of rhythm and is simultaneously strongly influenced by the rhythms of folk music, as is the case in the works of numerous well-known composers, such as Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartok, George Enescu, Maurice Ravel, and Manuel de Falla, among others, which led to the development of many new compositional techniques (Roșca 2011, 10).<sup>2</sup>

Fig. 1. Carol 2 – Sub cel roșu răsarit (Drăgoi 2024, 61)

All of these are included and developed by Drăgoi as a syncretism of sound elements that intertwine with the contrapuntal element, of dynamics, not lacking modal harmony from the great diversity of traditional Romanian music. Let's start on the path of the second Carol at Lipova.

## 2. L'istesso tempo

<sup>2</sup> Schließlich möchte ich noch vermerken, dass sich die erste Hälfte des XX. Jahrhunderts durch ein musikalisches Werk auszeichnet, das ein neues Arbeitskonzept die Entwicklung des Rhythmus betreffend aufweist und gleichzeitig stark von der Rhythmik der Volksmusik beeinflusst wird, wie es der Fall in den Werken zahlreicher bekannten Komponisten ist, wie zum Beispiel bei Igor Stravinski, Bela Bartok, George Enescu, Maurice Ravel und Manuel de Falla u.v.a., wodurch viele neue Kompositionsverfahren ermittelt wurden.



Fig. 2. C major melodic scale with raised II and IV steps, resulting in a chromatic mode

The theme of the carol is melodically presented by the viola, cadencing on C in the eighth measure. The meter alternates between 3/8, 5/8, 4/8, with a giusto syllabic rhythm.

### Harmonic structure:

#### P. I, Phrase 1, Phrase 2 + Phrase 3

The first two phrases are based on imitations of thematic cells

VI7 – V | I – V | III – II# | V | III – I | VII – V – I |

Lo stesso tempo  
senza sord.

senza sord.

senza sord.

mf senza sord.

V.II.

A.

C.

con allegrezza

Fig. 3. Carol – *L'istesso tempo*, P. I, Phrase 1 + 2, measures 66-83

The contrapuntal line has a strong contour, like an accompanying theme, bringing, in the fourth measure, a cell generated by the theme cell, formed by seconds, in both ascending and descending motion. The cell is repeated, varied in measures 5-7, identical in measures 8-9, with a transient ascending passage. In the seventh measure the cell appears as an imitation of the violin II, after the end of the Carol theme. The cadence of the two voices, the theme plus the countersubject, is achieved on the VI step with a dominant seventh.

The third phrase is conclusive, with contrapuntal melodies that bring cells from the theme: in measures 1, 3 and 4 on the violin, in measures 2, 3, 5 and 6 on the viola.

An imitation appears in measures two and three between the violin and viola, with an allusion to heterophony.

The cello has a counterpoint in a triplet, on ascending fourths and descending fifths, then, cadentially, on descending seconds and a fourth.

**Harmonic structure:**

P. II, Fr. 1, Fr. 2 + Fr.. 3  
 I | VI | III III IV6 | III2 | II VI |  
 V | V6 | VII | VII2 | IV | IV | VI6/4 | V |  
 I – III7 | IV | VI6 | III III4/3 | VI | III II VI | V | V |

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: violin, viola, and cello. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains two staves, and the second system contains three staves. The music is written in 6/8 time and includes various chords and melodic lines. Dynamics such as *mf* and *f* are indicated throughout the score.

Fig. 4. *Carol 2 – L'istesso tempo, Part II, Phrase 1 + 2, bars 89 – 106*

Sabin Dragoi's concern to determine the ethnic specific of the Romanian folk music, which can be achieved only by comparative-historical research, is not a goal in itself, but rather a factor which must serve practically at establishing and strengthening a national cult music school, and the stylistic matrix which has a generative ethnos meaning, in its typical sense, is a form and style creator and it stands at the origin of the folklore creations (Rucsanda 2012, 65).

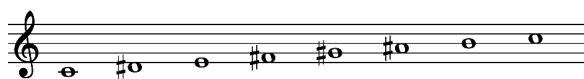


Fig. 5. *C major scale with raised steps II, IV, V, VI*

The theme is taken up by the first violin. The contrapuntal melody accompanying the theme is presented in full by the second violin. The bassoon and viola present an identical melody, in triplets and fourths, descending, then ascending, as a counterpoint to the second theme and countersubject. The cadence is on the

second and sixth steps in inversion 1, and the measures alternate between 3/8, 4/8 and 5/8.

The theme is presented to the cello and double bass, the cadence being a plagal one. The accompanying theme is brought by the oboe and violin I, following the same alternation of measures, with a giusto-syllabic rhythm.

The cello and double bass continue the thematic line, with the modified theme, but still cadencing plagal. The polyphony is achieved by the piano, through formulas of ascending sixteenths, which follow each other through imitation and octaves in triplets. The oboe, bassoon and violin I bring the counterpoint through ascending sixteenth-note passages, while the flute intervenes with the thematic cell in measures 6 and 10, the cello and double bass following this model in measures 8-9. The melodic discourse is dynamized, but, through imitations, reminiscent of polyphonic writing.

**Harmonic structure:**

P. III, Fr. 1, Fr. 2 + Bro. 3

VI6 | III6 | IV | VII6 | III – I |

I6 | III6/4 | IV6 | I6 | VI | VI | VI6 | VI7 |

III6/4 | II7 | II7 | IV | IV | V | V | V | V |

Fig. 6. Carol 2 – P. III, Phrase 1 + 2, measures 116 – 124

In the third period, the melodic scale is in C flat major, with the second degree movable, forming the augmented second, creating the possibility of chromaticization.



Fig. 7. *C flat major with movable second degree*

The main melodic line is brought by the violin, with the second theme worked with inverted motifs, cadencing on the first inversion of the tonic chord, in the first measure of the second phrase. The polyphonic line is supported by a development of ascending arpeggios, in sixteenths, of the harp. The thematic cell appears in anapest, in the oboe, imitated by the clarinet. The bassoon has a contrapuntal melody in dotted fourths, and the horn supports an ison. The cello and double bass have, in the fourth measure, an ascending passage made up of sixteenths, anacruetic, cadential, preparing the harmony of the tonic. In the second phrase, the inverted theme is presented by the flute, with the cadence on the VI with a seventh. The harmonic support is continued by the harp.

The polyphony is outlined on the rhythmic anapest cell, the theme, which is imitated by the second violin in measures 2 and 7, by the viola in measure 3, by the first violin in measures 5 and 7, by the clarinet in measure 5, by the oboe in measures 6 and 8. The descending march in dotted fourths is found in the cello and double bass, the horn supporting an ison.

The descending scale brings the natural C, in a minor, Aeolian mode, with the seventh step raised.



Fig. 8. *Eolian mode scale, with step VII raised*

The melody of the phrase, the concluding phrase, is based on a chain of syncopations, in descending steps, in seconds. The cadence is plagal, followed by an authentic one.

The harp and piano continue the arpeggiated movement. From a rhythmic point of view, it is worth noting the complementary syncopations of the clarinet and the internal rhythmic groupings, through accent, in the strings, binary thinking within the ternary measure, which brings us to the thought of the hemiola.

The oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn keep the gradual, descending march in syncopation. The violin I, violin II, viola and cello keep the gradual descending march, but divided into sixteenths, repeated on the same note. The violin I has the descending march through octaves with an embroidery, and the double bass descends through descending fifths and ascending fourths.

Fig. 19. Carol 2 – P. III, Phrase 3, measures 125-133

### 3. L'istesso tempo (orchestra landmark 8)

We return to the theme scale, the scale on C, but F#, G# and Bb indicate a major with the IV and V raised, and the VII lowered, a Lydian with the V movable.

Fig. 10. C major, with IV, V raised and VII lowered

The horn brings theme I of the carol, while theme two accompanies. The cadence is authentic, and the measure is binary, with triplets.

The harmonic support is provided by the piano-harp, through arpeggiated chords. The second theme appears simultaneously on the oboe and violin I, thematic motifs are brought polyphonically, imitatively, by the clarinet, bassoon and viola.

### Harmonic structure:

#### P. I

V – I | VI | II – V7/6/5/ | I | V | II6 | V | I |  
 I6/5 | V6/4 – 7 | I | V | II6 | III – II7 | I6 |

#### P. II

III6/4 | V | V | I6 | III VII6/5 | IV6 – I | I | VI7 | I |  
 IV9 | IV9 | VII7 | VI6/5 | I7 | II7 | V9 | V | I | IV7 | I |

8 *istesso tempo* (♩ = ♩)

The musical score consists of the following staves from top to bottom: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cor.), Piano (A. P.), Violin I (V.I.), Violin II (V.II.), Viola (A.), Cello (C.), and Bass (B.). The score begins at measure 8, marked 'istesso tempo' with a tempo indicator of a quarter note equal to a half note. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, mf, cresc.), articulation (accents, slurs), and triplets. The woodwinds play melodic lines with triplets and slurs, while the strings provide harmonic support with arpeggiated chords and rhythmic patterns.

Fig. 11. Carol 2 – *L'istesso tempo*, Part I, Phrase 1, measures 134-143

In the second phrase of the period, the harmonic support is carried out by the same instruments, the flute bringing the second theme in the third measure, the cello and double bass entering with the theme in the seventh measure of the first phrase. The oboe has a descending counterpoint, then an ison. The clarinet has a sinuous contrapuntal melody, in eighths. The second violin plays, simultaneously with the oboe, the descending passage. It cadences on the tonic chord, in the first inversion.

Theme I is continued by the horn, with an extension on cadential C. It is a phrase with rich polyphony. The initial motif of theme II is present simultaneously on flute, harp, violin I, and imitated by bassoon, piano, violin II, clarinet and viola. The imitation continues with oboe and piano, violin I and bassoon ending with viola. The imitations of the text create a fugatto. It cadences on the first step.

The second period of theme I is brought, conclusively, by the flute, which ends with an ison on C. The harp and piano bring descending arpeggios and arpeggiated chords. The cello and double bass support a double ison, on the fifth. Violins I and II bring the first motif of theme II in measure 9, and the cello intervenes with the motif in measure 10.

The horn has an ison of four measures, 9-13, and the oboe brings back the descending contrapuntal melody. The cadence is a plagal one this time.

Fig. 12. Carol – *L'istesso tempo*, P. II, Phrase 1, measures 151-159

Sabin Drăgoi's *Divertisment Rustic* is an exemplary work of integrating traditional Romanian elements into the context of classical music. Through melodic simplicity, subtle variation of harmony and texture, and natural rhythm, Drăgoi manages to transpose the essence of a secular tradition into an academic musical framework. This carol is not only a tribute to popular traditions, but also a demonstration of the versatility and universal value of Romanian folklore.

We can find a correspondence between the liturgical and the folklore music in the four states or idioms of the Byzantine melos: recitative, irmologic, stichiraric or papadic, and the musical expression which lies between declamation and singing can also be met in the case of the aforementioned genres (Rucsanda et al. 2011, 218-221).

It is assumed that Paul Constantinescu also takes over the general model of *Divertisment Rustic* from Sabin Drăgoi, in his first extensive work, from the period following the launch of the Banat composer's opus. I am referring here to the *Romanian Suite*, a possible replica of its contemporary's opus.

It is about the *Romanian Suite*, a true replica of the opus of his contemporary in which the musical score has the following five parts: Carol, Carol, Lament, Old Man's Song, The Game of the Călușarilor. The suite is also quoted by Zeno Vancea omitting the last part – The traditional dans of the Călușari (Vancea 1978, 142).

*Divertisment Rustic* (1928), functions as an aesthetic and technical impetus, anticipating the fundamental directions of the Romanian national musical current and the definitive transition to the integration of national folklore as a basic structure in musical creations and only as isolated motifs.

An eloquent example is the *Rapsodia Bănățeană* written in 1942, *Trei tablouri simfonice* (1922), or *Joc din Oaș* (1953), all of which offer openings towards the rhythmic, melodic elements of imitative polyphony as innovative particularities of the Romanian musical school.

#### 4. Conclusions

The inclusion and preservation of the traditional musical sound background and not the deformation of the archaic sonority that would distance us from the arguments are relevant for the Romanian music of the period and is in a synchronic visibility of a high refinement equal to that of Western musical creations.

The *Divertisment rustic*, entertainment composed in 1928 reflects his constant concern for the valorization of traditional Romanian music, based on folklore elements that he integrated into his classical musical language (Roșca 2014, 149).

From the point of view of the aesthetic concept, Divertiment Rustic, represents a break from the tradition signed by the pre-Enescian composers (who brought German or French romantic-type harmonizations to folklore). Sabin V. Drăgoi succeeds here in demonstrating that the archaic Romanian monody possesses sufficient inner resources to generate, through itself, an autochthonous, modern and harsh architectural symphonic form.

The symbiosis between music and plastic arts is by no means a discovery of the contemporary arts; until the end of the 20th century, the various arts were in positions of subordination, and the apparition of the Impressionism also brought the winds of change, on a perceptive level, in the visual arts (Rucsanda 2019, 91).

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