

The evolution of a musical work from idea to interpretative act. The *Acamas* paradigm by Vasile Herman

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Abstract: *The present paper tries to briefly present a perspective on what is called an interpretative act. It starts with a theoretical approach, from the appearance of the musical idea, its implementation in written form its transformation into sound, as well as the integration into the auditor's consciousness, and then presents a practical example from the personal experience of the author, the first absolute audition of the work "Acamas" by Vasile Herman – composer, musicologist, important representative of the school of composition founded by Sigismund Toduţă.*

Keywords: *violin, Acamas, Vasile Herman, interpretation*

1. Communication through music

Like in theater, the scenic art where the word and its expressive potentials are the source of creating emotions, the art of the sound, the music, awakens into the auditor not so much pictures, but sensations and feelings. In other words, music becomes a stimulus to evoke inner feelings, capable of generating emotional alternations of the most complex. This phenomenon should not be regarded with a pejorative point of view, but the capability to touch one's soul without using anything concrete represents one of the highest forms of communication. Music has nothing concrete. It is by excellence an abstract art. But of an apparent abstractionism, because music represents a language, that of the soul. And like any language, its goal is to deliver messages. These are addressed to the soul by the soul. "Essentially, communicating artistically means establishing a certain type of human contact. But it is a special kind of communication, unreducible to the usual one, having other parameters and aiming other effects" (Iorgulescu 1991, 19).

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The interactions which occur in the musical communication, but not only, are dynamic operations which „lead to the manifestation of complex temporal transfers between the author and the work, between the work and the performer, between the performed work and the admirer, in a word, between the inner selves of the ones who create it, express or assimilate it [...]. A communication takes place in a determined time, possesses a duration, the the message descends and is addressed – like time – from «the interior of a soul unit» (H. Bergson)” (Iorgulescu 1991, 12).

2. The evolution of a musical work

Every musical work develops on two co-ordinates: that of the correctness of the structure, which includes all that is related to stylistics of musical creation, or, as Pascal Bentoiu expresses, “the logical congruence, that of the grammatical consistency and the perfection of the construction (so it will take into account the structure of melody, harmony, polyphony, as well as the musical form, in a word, everything related to accepted or acceptable patterns of thought)” (Bentoiu 1973, 32) and the emotional coordinate, in terms of the stylistic of interpretation, where the subtle effect of the musical work on both the consciousness of the performer as well as that of the auditor is aimed, „of direct psychic efficiency (hence will pursue the expressive power of the newly created sound images, their quality of enforcing the listener’s attention and memory, their uniqueness). [...] The two issues are mutually dependent, but still can not be confused” (Bentoiu 1973, 32). In other words, musical construction and expression.

“By construction, the musician suggests the idea of order, that is, on one hand, the fact that he scores his communication in the data of a possible musical order, intelligible as such to the listener; and on the other hand, he realizes through the object created by him a mirror (more or less faithful) of the created cosmos of sound” (Bentoiu 1973, 35).

Thus, as Pascal Bentoiu concludes so beautifully, each musical work is „a galaxy of man’s thinking through the sound figures” (Bentoiu 1973, 35). Just as every man is unique and perfect, in the same way each work is unique and perfect. With its completion, with the ending of the creative process, the work acquires its own identity and unique destiny. The stages through which it has to pass start from the appearance of the idea in the composer’s mind, when the opera does not exist physically, but it penetrates in the creative consciousness in a project phase. Then the moment of actual composing comes, when the work gets the first physical form, namely that of a system of written codes and symbols. At this point, it exists

at the physical level, but it can only be accessed by a small number of people who know how to decode this system of coded signs, namely, the musical writing.

Its complete manifestation and its *birth*, the transition from the imagined to the real world, takes place only when it is played by an interpreter and received by the auditor. It is only then that the sound phenomenon takes place and is complete. Moreover, only now, and in this way, that of interpretation, the work acquires one of the most important attributes, that of the flow of time.

“The concept of interpretation has at least a bivalent meaning in defining the existing aesthetic relationships between the actual creation and its interpretative appearance in front of the spectators. First, it means the artistic process of *presenting in time* the scheme (the construction) *built in space*, whether it is a poem or a conceived choreography, or a composite score. Of this first sense of *interpretation* are related technical, instrumental and artistic mastery in and through which the creator’s intentions are translated into procedural facts, and become sensitized to their aesthetic reception by spectators. Secondly, the concept of interpretation refers aesthetically to the demonstrative explanation, to the discursive analysis of the artistic phenomenon, thus a bonus contribution of the one who presents the respective artistic work” (Angi 2004, 515).

The premiere of a musical work, or the first contact it has with the audience, is a crucial moment in the existence of each musical opus, Ștefan Angi describing it so beautifully as moment “alpha and omega” (Angi 2004, 331).

Obviously, not all of the created opuses come to survive over time. A very interesting process of natural selection takes place in the auditor’s consciousness as a result of aesthetic experience. A very important criterion which will determine whether or not a work will last in time is that of *accessibility*. Paradoxically, this is a determining factor in establishing the *value* of a work. In other words, a work *is not born* valuable, it *becomes* so. “Accessibility,” as Bentoiu points out, “can not be thought of as a category, it is actually *an effect* of the value concentration achieved in the masterpiece” (Bentoiu 1973, 27).

For a work of art to be considered valuable, the action of time is once again needed. Like water, the flow of time shapes and gently chisels the evolution of the work, which is closely related to the inner universe of the listener.

An interdependence between the composer, interpreter and auditor can be noticed, between the organic development of the psychic structure of each one. The direction towards which each one evolves will always be similar, since the connection between one and the other is established in the psychological pathology. On the one hand, the educational spirit in which it develops, on the

other hand the experience of living, each one creates the communication fund, which can be more accessible or more complex.

The 20th century is a crucial period in the development of national music culture, which was influenced by major changes in social, political, technological plans. The "new" has become a trend and the pace of change has accelerated. But although change is the main feature of life, not just cultural, musical but of life in general, and its integration into the personal evolution is natural, adapting to the new is one of the main goals of man. The composer / creator - performer - public relationship remains thus fundamental today in the evolution of the musical work, creating the optimal climate of communication through the art of sound.

3. *Acamas* for solo violin by Vasile Herman

A personal paradigm is the interpretation in the first absolute hearing of the work *Acamas* for solo violin by Vasile Herman². An original composition that encompasses a powerful archaic substrate rendered by an innovative language. The composer translates into a musical, violinist language a myth of Dacian culture, prefigured by the title of the work itself. *Acamas*, in the dacic language, according to the author, translates into the nouns *pure*, *righteous*. It refers to the pure, righteous young men, chosen to be offered as sacrifice to the supreme deity. The most conclusive words about the work are given by the composer himself, in the hall program of the concert in which the work was played for the first time, alongside the first national hearing of the *Sonata for solo violin* by Cornel Țăranu and the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* by Valentin Timaru, program that we introduce below, in the first figure.

² B. on June 10, 1929 – d. on March 20, 2010. Composer, musicologist, teacher at the Gheorghe Dima Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca. One of the outstanding representatives of the composition school founded by Sigismund Toduță.

Program:

VASILE HERMAN:
ACAMAS - per violino solo *p.a.a*

CORNEL ȚĂRANU:
Solo sonata per violino *p.a.*

VALENTIN TIMARU:
Concert pentru vioară și orchestră

Lamento (Andante)
Melopee (Moderato - Poco rubato)
Varietimi (Allegro vivace)
Epilog (Andante)

Vasile Herman: ACAMAS este un tânăr român
Conceput ca o lucrare de mică întindere, ACAMAS a fost scris
în anul 2006 din dorința de a scrie un cântec alături de
în muzica a Dacor. Titlul ține în sine semnificația
de instrumentul ACAMAS referindu-se la muzica țărănească care se
oferă a fi o sursă de inspirație și muzică modernă.

Sunt aspecte muzicale prin care se distinge muzica de
muzică melodică - faptul că este o simfonie simfonică, muzică
clasică și simfonică. Muzica este o muzică expresivă.
Libertatea de formațiune sonoră, precum și diversitatea melodică și ritmică,
muzică, aspectul muzical este o simfonie simfonică și formă ale că-
priea este de o prezentare în detaliu simfonică. Aceasta
este de înaltă calitate din punct de vedere al muzicii, ca și muzică melodică
de o înaltă calitate, alături de intervalele simfonice, ne este
simfonică ca și o simfonie simfonică. Aceasta de simfonie și de
muzică melodică este o simfonie simfonică și de o înaltă calitate
de o înaltă calitate și de o înaltă calitate.

V.H.

Fig. 1. The program of the concert with the presentation of Acamas written by the composer himself

The composer configures in a personal manner, through musical language, a dramatic story for the consciousness of the present but notable in the sense of the archaic character. The highly suggestive way in which Herman describes the intrinsic intimacy of the young man through this experience is translated at the sound level through certain processes with which the composer juggles in a refined way. Captivated in the loneliness of the experiences that accompany the moment, the character goes through different states, which reveal that anxiety described by the author. These are accompanied by the calm of a distinct voice that constantly appears throughout the work, the voice of that higher consciousness which holds everything under control. But it also strains and suddenly bursts like an arrow in the air (example 1).



Ex. 1. Vasile Herman, *Acamas*. Relaxations, stops, which can be compared with moments of restfulness that occur throughout the work, calming the hectic soul of the young one

Another state that the composer includes in an extremely suggestive way is the fear felt in the face of death by introducing a fragment in which he combines several effects: tremolo, glissando, sul ponticello, on the structure of a moving second, in the middle register of the violin (example 2).



Ex. 2. Vasile Herman, *Acamas*

The climax of the work appears at the end, symbolically, namely, the actual death (ex. 3), after the lamentations that seem to allude to the doubt and opposition of the youth (ex. 3A). At an alert pace, the whole moment consumes in a very short period of time (ex 3B), followed by a gradual tranquility that blends with the calm of nature.

A

ord.

mf *f*

B

f

Allegro

Detailed description: The image shows two musical staves. Staff A is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a triplet of chords marked *mf*, followed by a series of chords with a '6' below them, indicating a sixteenth-note triplet. The dynamics increase to *f* with a crescendo hairpin. The section ends with a glissando. Staff B is also in treble clef with the same key signature. It is marked 'Allegro' and begins with a fast, rhythmic passage of chords, all marked *f*. It concludes with a glissando.

Ex. 3. Vasile Herman, *Acamas*; the ending of the work,
the fulfillment of fate

The graduation at the end of the work is extremely expressive. In a downward course, in octaves, the composer returns the attention in the real sphere, for ultimately to disappear into nothingness through a suggestive pizzicato, followed by an ascendant glissando.

perdendosi
non vibr.

vibr. lento

pizz.

pp *f*

Lunga

Fine

Glissando

Detailed description: This musical score shows a single staff in treble clef. It starts with a half note marked *pp* and 'perdendosi non vibr.'. This is followed by a wavy line representing a vibrato, marked 'vibr. lento'. Then, a single note is marked *f* and 'pizz.'. The staff ends with a glissando line, marked 'Glissando', leading to a double bar line labeled 'Lunga' and 'Fine'.

Ex. 4. Vasile Herman, *Acamas*; the end of the work

4. Acknowledgements

The free writing, without measures, which the composer chose in the elaboration of the work, facilitates the temporal juxtaposition prefigured by the chosen subject, and the wealth of dissonances fills and blends the contemporary with the archaic. Vasile Herman's personal way makes *Acamas* a short but very profound work, with a huge emotional substrate that enriches the foundation of Romanian solo violin creation.

References

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