

## **A sample Sonata in the choral genre: "Green Violet Leaf" by C. Palade**

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**Abstract:** *This paper focuses on morphology and syntax musical coordinates contributing to a special formal construction in the choral piece "Foaie verde viorea" ("Green Violet Leaf") by the Romanian composer Constantin V. Palade. It is demonstrated how the composer achieves a sonata like version in the miniature choral genre, a form by excellence dedicated to the instrumental music due to the wide opportunities it offers to the composers. The study shows how, using the limited resources provided by the lyrics related music in general and the choral one, in particular to build a form of antithesis and synthesis, the composer C. Palade uses the folkloric genres, the tonic-modal and rhythmic-metrical dimension of folkloric type to present a rhapsodic like type in a renewed formal appearance.*

Key-words: *choral music, folklore, formal layout, sonata, Palade*

### **1. Introduction**

Like other European composers of the early XX<sup>th</sup> century, the Romanian composers were concerned about the relationship between the classical music and folklore, about the possible options of processing the folklore by the means of the scholar music, so that it constitutes the symbol of the national identity and the stylistic enrichment of cult music. Moreover, there has been a major debate regarding the possibilities of including the folklore in the well known classical-romantic forms, which has resulted in the creation work for a long period of time.

The present paper is meant to demonstrate the way in which the composer Constantin V. Palade (Cosma 2004, 229-232) managed to achieve a sonata like form, using the authentic folkloric input in the choral piece *Foaie verde viorea/ Green Violet Leaf* (Palade 1957, 51-62).

The Romanian composer's Constantin V. Palade (1915-1974) choral piece is an important contribution to the capitalisation of the national folkloric music through classical choral music. Meanwhile, Constantin V. Palade's choral piece was also a refined means through which the folklore included could be known by the professional and amateur choral ensembles performing this repertoire, as well as by the music lovers who enjoy listening to it.

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## 2. The sonata form in the piece *Foaie verde viorea*

The sonata form is considered by many historians and theorists of music as "the most developed and complex compositional design, one in which the composers show their highest technical skills and the expressive potential" (Caplin 2013, 261). These qualities lead to the formation of a musical mosaic – formed by combining the themes and the thematic processing, varied in terms of configurations and expression – difficult to obtain even starting from the composer's musical idea. But difficulty increases due to the decision of using the input taken from folklore, which is the case of the piece analyzed.

### 2.1. The themes of the *Exposition*

The first theme, A (T<sub>1</sub>), of *The Exposition* consists of mentioning the melody of the folkloric song itself *Foaie verde viorea* (*Green Violet Leaf*), in measures 3-15 – at the top voice in measures 3-6, doubled at lower third - which also gives the name of the entire choral piece (example 1):

Tenor

*mf* m1 Foaie verde viorea, măi! nici o boală

m2

m3 nu-i mai grea Ca dorul și dragostea Ca do

m4

-rul și dra-ga- stea,

Example 1. *First theme*

The thematic idea shows that love and longing – a feeling of melancholy and longing for the beloved one – are the most serious diseases (we have numbered verses in parenthesis, at the end of them, for easy tracking their musical distribution):

*Foaie verde viorea, măi!* / *Green violet leaf* , hey (1)

*Nici o boală nu-i mai grea* / *There's no such a bad disease* (2)

*Ca dorul și dragostea, măi!* / *Like longing and love, hey!* (3)

This theme is developed in *Ionian A*, augmented (the term *agreemented* is used with the meaning of the french word *agrémenté*, similar to the term *embellished*, the past participle in english, and similar to the term *agrementat* in romanian language) with Lydian modal element (example 2):

Example 2. *A Ionian mode with Lydian agreement*

The second theme, B (T<sub>2</sub>), which appears soon after T<sub>1</sub> ends, is represented by the melody of the doina *Cucușor de pe ogor/ Little Cuckoo on the Field* (example 3):

Example 3. Theme II – *Cucușor de pe ogor/ Little Cuckoo on the Field*

This is developed in major pentachord on *A*, agreed in Lydian mode also with *D #* (measures 15-18), then it switches in the chromatic mode (chromatic mode includes one or two augmented 2<sup>nd</sup> in scalar structure) *4a* on *F #* (Oprea and Agapie 1983, 127), of minor status, with Dorian modal agreement (*D #*), with deeply depressive expression due to the Phrygian cadence resulted as the appearance of the modal agreement *G natural* (example 4):

Example 4. *F# chromatic 4a mode*

The theme song itself (T<sub>1</sub>), is exposed by the tenor, after two introductory measures, thus gaining a more vigorous expression, firmer in accordance with pace, which is strict, *giusto-syllabic*. Otherwise, the exposure is also entrusted to the male tenor voice. The second theme (T<sub>2</sub>), the *doina*-theme has the whole rhythmic profile more varied, free, with extensive breaths, marked by moments of pause; thus, expressiveness becomes full of lyricism, to which the rather extensive, melismatised sections at the end of the lyrics contribute to this feature. The *doina*-theme is a *lamento* of the female character, used to ask the cuckoo not to curse of death, because there is no one to long for her and ask why she dies:

- Cucușor de pe ogor, / Little cockoo on the field* (4)  
*Nu mă blestema să mor, măi! / Don't curse to die, hey!* (5)  
*Că n-am pe nimeni cu dor, / As there is no one to long for me* (6)  
*Să mă-n-tre-be de ce mor, măi! / To ask me why I die, hey!* (7)

At the same time, the *doina*-theme is even more adorned melodically, the intonational drawing being more varied and from time to time depicting the repetition of the same sound, all these features reinforcing the idea that the first theme is *a song itself*, while the second presents the traits specific to the folkloric genre – *the doina*.

A minor aspect, of equal expressive importance, in motive 9, the last one of the *doina* (T<sub>2</sub>) (example 2), one can notice the motive also used by G. Enescu in *Rapsodia a II-a/ The Second Rhapsody* (measures 53-54), also taken from the folklore (encrypted here as motive *e*) (example 5), originated from the song *Văleu, lupu mă mănâncă / Oh, God, the wolf is eating me!* (Bentoiu, 1984, 56 and 62]:



Example 5. G. Enescu, *Rapsodia a II-a/ The Second Rhapsody*, measures 53-54

The thematic contrast, initiated by the modal differences mentioned above is first ensured by the specific character of the dance melody of the first theme as compared with the free, *doina* like character – both intonational and rhythmic - of the second theme as well as by the tempo differences (*Moderato / meno mosso*), metrical differences (2/4 – 4/4), the vocal exposition – of the male voices, in a band (tenors) as opposed to the female one (soprano solo) - which is different as regards the timbre.

Another important means of differentiation between the two themes is also the musical syntax: in T<sub>1</sub> it is monody accompanied by double pedal, and in T<sub>2</sub> it is monody accompanied by a homophonic-polyphonic structure, which amplifies the mournful expression. The second theme is separated from the second background of the accompaniment by the homophonic support in the development of the motives interleaved with harmonic pedals and by the insertion of some imitative motives, drawn from T<sub>2</sub>.

Completion of *The Exposition* comes after four measures, after the end of T<sub>2</sub>, the passage achieving a short modulatory conclusion in *G Ionian*, by the tonal cadence of the homonimic major tonality, using the seventh accord of the dominant of this new tonality.

## 2.2. The second section, *The Development*

*The Development* (B) begins with T<sub>1V1</sub> (measures 33-44), is adorned harmonically in mode *G Ionian*, enriched chromatically with the depressive inferior mediant (*E b*) in the depressive accord of chromatic passage of the subdominant – brought through a proceeding specific to the tonality – in measure 36, as well as in the altered chord,

by association with the modal agreement *C#*, of the counterdominant, in measure 38. The element *E b* brought in a modal manner only in measure 41, with long and depressive appoggiatura of the fifth in the chord of the tonic.

The sonority of the ensemble is ampler, both due the involvement of the mixed ensemble in homophonous exposition – giving up the dynamic pedal used in the Exposition -, and the higher nuance (*f*), coming back to the initial tempo and the 2/4 measure.

The appearance of the second theme (measures 45-60) exploits only the expression contrast between the *song itself* and the *doina*, also capitalised by the more reduced tempo like in the first exposition of the theme (72 bpm). The lyrical expression is also deepened by the thinner sonorousness of the ensemble, based on the imitative exposition of the varied motives and the support of the pedals, as opposed to the homophony of exposing  $T_1$  at the beginning of *The Development*.

The phrases adapt to the meaning of the lyrics, which is now either varied, or new:

*Că n-am pe nimeni cu drag, măi! / There is no one who loves me, hey* (6<sub>v</sub>)

*Să-mi pună mâna la cap / To caress me* (8)

*Să mă-ntrebe de ce zac, măi! / To ask me why I am lying suffering* (7<sub>v</sub>)

Consequently, the phrasal structure is the following:

- phrase 1 (6<sub>v</sub>, a lyric retaken for four times) – 6 measures;
- phrase 2 (6<sub>v</sub>, a lyric retaken once; 8, a lyric exposed for three times) – 5 measures;
- phrase 3 (7<sub>v</sub>, a lyric exposed for four times) – 5 measures.

Against a modal background, *G Ionian* is switched with *G Mixolydian*, keeping the *Lydic* agreement appeared previously, which is used sporadically, but only ornamentally (ascending appoggiatura), as well as the *Ionian* agreement; at the end of the first phrase the hexachord *G chromatic Ionian 1c* (example 6a) passes with a Phrygian cadence on *E*, on the tonic of a parallel mode which could be considered *E chromatic 2i with Locrian agreement* (measures 50-51) - (example 6b):

a) 

b) 

Example 6. a) *G chromatic 1c mode*; b) *E chromatic 2i mode*

The phrase begins with *F Mixolydian*, at the end of the phrase it becomes *F accoustic 2*, and the third phrase is included in the mode *E Dorian* agreed *Phrygianly* (measure 57), as the end results in the stratification of *D Aeolian/A Aeolian*, both with a Phrygian agreement, so the cadence chord, the transition one to the next formal segment is placed in the dominant background of the next tonal background *B b major* (VII):

D Aeolian agreed Phrygianly  
 A Aeolian agreed Phrygianly

Example 7. Measures 59-60

The next segment, developed along measures 61-86, brings again the first theme, multiplied polyphonically, into a new variational hypostasis with each appearance ( $A_{V2}$ ). This has a *fugato* layout, in *stretto*, Subject like (tenor and soprano) – Response (alto and bas). The Subject brings a modal variation in the first cell of motive 4 by a digression to the minor homonym ( $B b$  minor), within  $B b$  major, the same variational proceeding being also identified within the Response, in  $F$  major (example 8). The Response appears reduced, as a variation to the thematic exposition, by reduction:

Example 8. Motive 4 varied

The last taking over of The Response (alto) brings just the thematic head, varied, the end being in a recitativic way, by a pedal rhythmically dynamised, a doina and ballad like style (example 9):

Example 9. Pedal rhythmically dynamised

The moment in measures 86-92 has a double function: both conclusive and transitory of the motive "e". The conclusive function consists in resuming in unison the depression like expression, associated with the abandoning of the ardor previously expressed (measures 61-86) of  $T_1$ , with an increased dramatic strength due to the multiplying unison of the expressive force and its finality in reducing the tempo (*rit.*), of its intensity by its extension with *fermata* of the final sound, on the exclamation full of pain *măi* (*Oh, my God*), followed by a general pause (example 10):

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics in Romanian. The lyrics are "Ca do-rul și dra-go stoa, mii!". The score includes a "rit." marking above the final measure. The music is in a 6/8 time signature and features a melodic line with a wide interval and a supporting bass line.

Example 10. Motive "e", measures 86-92

The transitory function is reached by the facilitation to a new segment, with dancing folkloric expression, *hora lentă*/ *the slow Romanian round dance* (measures 93-112), which introduces a new thematic aspect in the whole piece, both from the musical and the ideatic-literary point of view:

- Dragostea unde se pune*/ *Whenever love appears* (9)  
*Face inima cărbune*/ *It turns my heart into coal* (10)  
*Dorul unde se așează*/ *Wherever longing lies* (9<sub>v</sub>)  
*Face inima gălbează*/ *My heart turns pale.* (10<sub>v</sub>)

From the musical point of view, both the metro-rhythmical configuration, in a form specific to the folkloric dance *horă* type (ternary rhythm, included in the composed ternary measure 6/8) and the melodic one, placed in various modal contexts and, in spite of the wide space it is developed and only the two defining phrases. The exquisite length of the phrases (11+9) is due to the motives which, in their turn, are long, dependent on the melodic-support pattern of the lines. This melodic structure is wide, alternating formulae in *giusto-syllabic* rhythm, with rich melismatised sections, to which extended endings are added, similarly to a sigh. From a modal point of view, there are numerous modal contexts covered, shown at melodic level (marked with „\*”) or at harmonic level (marked with „\*”; when the asterisk is missing, the performance is both melodic and harmonic): *B b Ionian* (measures 93-97)~[*G acoustic 5\**](measures 95-96)~*F Ionian-Aeolic (F major harmonic)* (measures 98-100)~*G ac.5\**with Phrygian cadence (measures 101-106)~*F acoustic 5* (measures 107-108)~*E b Mixolydian Lydian* agremntated (measures 109-112)~*F major* (measures 113-114)~*F min.* (measures 113-115) Phrygian thricord on *G* (measures 116-118)~*G Ionian-Aeolic* (measures 119-123) (example 11):

The image shows a musical score for two voices (Soprano and Bass) with lyrics in Romanian. The lyrics are "Dra-go stoa un de se pu ne" and "fa-ce i-ni-ma cărbu-ne". The score includes a tempo marking "Tempo di „horă lentă” (♩. 52)". The music is in a 6/8 time signature and features a melodic line with a wide interval and a supporting bass line.

Example 11. The theme *Hora lentă* (the slow Romanian round dance)

This modal thematic melodic route is supported by a modulatory harmony of tonal characteristic: *B b maj.* (measures 93-95)~*G min.* (measures. 95-96)~*F maj.* (measures 98-101)~*E b maj.* (measures 101-103)~*F maj.* (103-104)~*G* (measures 104-105)~*F* (105-106)~*F min. harmonic* (measures 106-108)~*E b mix.* (measures 109-112)~*F* (measures 113-114)~*F* (measures 114-116)~*G with Phrygian agreement\** (measures 117-118) /*F/C* (measures 117-21)~*G min.* (measures 121-122), the end of the excerpt being achieved on the dominant accord of *G min.* (measure 123) (see the formal scheme, *fig. 1*).

### 2.3. The third section, recapitulative

The last significant segment of the sonata form (measures 124-175) has a reexpositive function, being a *dynamised Reprise* by the variation of the thematic input. This exposes  $T_1$  (measures 124-158) varied, in a polyphonic musical syntax, a chain of phrases in *stretto* with *fugato*, every three measures, in a sequence of timber deepening, from the sharp to the flat notes (S-A-T-B). Every exposition is included in a specific tonal-modal background, which achieves modal stratifications: *G Ionian* agreed *Lydian* (soprano and tenor); *D* agreed *Lydian* (alto and bass).

Within this segment, there is an important part of developing character (measures 137-158), a retake in new variational forms (intervallic extension, doubling at the third of the voice, motivic expositions in intensively polyphonised syntax), in which alternate the two tonal centres (*G* and *D*) of the modal formations mentioned above).

A weakness of the sonata form consists in the development plan, where the variations cannot affect the motivic integrity due to the fact of having built them on the relation with the lyrics.

Here, the lyrics musically adorned are 1<sub>v</sub>, 2 and 3.

The tempo is flexible, pointing out the message of the lyrics: *Tempo I* – 88 bpm (lyrics 1-3 – measures 124-158,  $A_{V_3}$ ); *Largo* – 48 bpm (lyric 3 – measures 158-161, transition); *Andantino* – 63 bpm (lyric 2 – measures 161-175,  $B_{V_2}$ ), the tempo switches are marked by agogical abeyance by *fermata*.

*The transition* has an homophonous, achordic musical syntax, as compared with  $A_{V_3}$  and  $B_{V_2}$ , which are polyphonic, the latter ones ending on a long pedal and dynamic descending, to the bass towards the last segment, *the Coda*.

### 2.3. The end section, *The Coda*

The short final segment (measures 176-184) takes over the lyric 1, in *stretto* exposition (T-B, S-A) of the thematic input A, the vocal bands gathering together in the last four measures, in homophonic exposition of the final cadence, the whole



#### 4. Conclusions

The choral piece *Foaie verde viorea* (*Green Violet Leaf*) is a success in integrating the folkloric input in terms of the folkloric enunciation, the metro-rhythm and the modal-folkloric integration in the sonata like form, preserving its main coordinates: the thematic contrast in *The Exposition* and in *The Reprise*, the variational process in *The Development*.

Still, there are some limitations caused by the specifics of the vocal music, related to the background created by the lyrics.. This explains why the process of processing the thematic input is more reduced, the cell-motivic elements of the musical enouncement cannot be conveyed independently as related to the whole enouncement, the latter one – being related to the lyrics – compelling the preservation of the logical idea expressed.

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