

Conductor – score – composer. Connections and interdependencies

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Abstract: *In a score, music exists only potentially; it only comes to life through the decoding of the score by the performer (in this case, the conductor, through the ensemble). In addition to this first observation, we can also notice the existence of several differentiated relationships between the ensemble and conductor on one hand, and ensemble and composer on the other. Even if the ensemble is the sum of some performers, for the conductor it is, essentially “an instrument” of expression as performer.*

Key-words: *Conductor, ensemble, score, interdependencies*

Our paper wishes to reach one of the problems that still arise discussions, which is that resulting from the mutual conditioning between conductor-score-composer. This problem appeared gradually, with the emergence of the art of classical music, more specifically when there was a need that music be written down. Basically, the score will develop from music notation, naturally, over time.

Another decisive moment in the deepening of this issue was the separation of the conductor from the performer, each becoming the representative of another profession. This separation, happening somewhere in the interference area between Classicism and Romanticism, will become even more obvious in the 19th century Romanticism. Nowadays, it has become an indubitable reality.

During the Baroque, that time of the complete musician who took on multiple responsibilities in the creation of the live music performance, the score was a guide for the composer-performer’s collaborators (instrumentalists and vocalists).

The issue we want to approach is highly current, therefore only during the modern time we distinctly find the composer on one side and the performer (conductor) on the other, between them the score. In a score, music exists only potentially; it only comes to life through the decoding of the score by the performer (in this case, the conductor, through the ensemble).

In addition to this first observation, we can also notice the existence of several differentiated relationships: between the ensemble and conductor on one hand, and the ensemble and the composer on the other.

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For the conductor, an ensemble is essentially “an instrument” of expression as performer. Just like a pianist doesn’t exist without a piano, a violinist without the violin, nor can a conductor exist without a musical ensemble. The difficulty of the conducting profession occurs where it needs to "build" each time its own "instrument".

For a composer however, the ensemble is an “area” of sound sources, where he tries to imagine his music (Timaru 1999, 53), hence a certain independence of the composer from the ensemble.

Of course, in principle, the composer wants his music to be viable and he is interested in all the practical problems of the assembly, through which he wishes to express himself; so the relationship with it is not vital, only optional. However, there is a concrete manifestation between composer and conductor, named score.

„ ...*The score, with its frozen signs, is the only immutable landmark of interpretation: it represents a set of necessary, but not sufficient indications*” (Vieru 1994, 287).

We dare to believe that the relationship between composer and score is one of internalizing all musical parameters encoded therein, whereas, for the conductor, the relationship with the score is that of externalization, by decoding its musical parameters. The materialization of these ideas is represented in the figure below (Para 2015, 64).

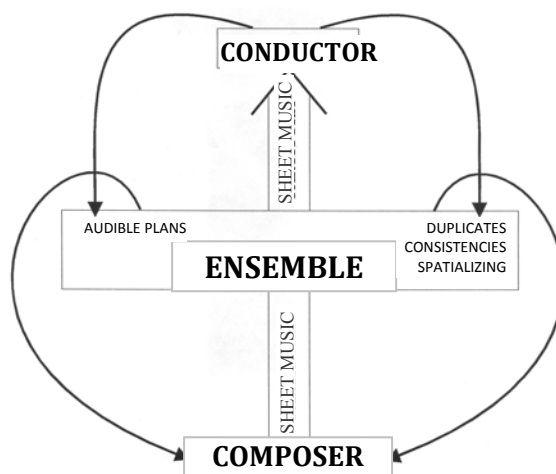


Fig. 1

The proposed scheme shows that the ensemble has a pivotal role in the vitalizing, interpretation and transmission of the musical creation. In this median role, the ensemble and the conductor create a central axis of interpretation, on which the score is placed. One can also notice both the vectors applied to the composer's

creation act, but also the ones that are valid during interpretation. These complete each other harmoniously, having similar trajectories, but in opposite directions:

- 1 The composer offers the musical creation and proposes the directions of its running.
- 2 The conductor accepts these proposals and executes them, the acceptance being a creative moment.

The conductor is not a robot. The creative, personal, artistic and subjective elements, all of them being the conductor's qualities, bring that certain extra artistic value through which the musical creation becomes alive again.

Conductor Ionel Perlea said: "*No conductor is allowed to alter the score, to distort the author's intention. Within its rigorous limits, the score has to be interpreted in such way by the conductor, that everything remain authentic, but out of which he should "bring out" the exceptional, even the extraordinary*" (Rădulescu et al. 1985, 41).

After all, the composer conceives the score from an ideal-abstract position, while the conductor – being pragmatic – accurately detects the discrepancy areas between the written score and sound objective capacity.

Also, the conductor as performer has the chance of creating other interpretative versions, according to his artistic taste, whereas the composer remains confined within the ideal limits of his score. This is why the performer faces a much more practical task, even more than the composer. The performer exposes the score in objective time, balancing it with his subjective time.

Hans von Bülow said: "*The conductor must learn the score by heart, so that he could conduct from memory. Only so is he able to keep an eye on the orchestra.*" (Gâsca 1982, 14).

When a score is considered as learned, especially "from the inside", the conductor can feel less dependent on it, but still remain anchored in its intimacy: this is where the true recreation journey starts. We can say that, after many comebacks over the score, when the conductor has a clear, even "artistic" image, only then has he the feeling that he encompasses the musical time development, certainly mastering all the work. Only henceforth can an own concept of rendering the score can be settled - the guarantee of effective action in order to complete the interpretive act. (Para 2015, 12).

Certain abstract, ideal parameters are provided in the score, but the conductor finds the most efficient practical ways to carry it out, certainly based on a "solid" overall knowledge. The performer is the one that gives expressive personality to a score. It is not enough that the conductor have an interpretative concept, an ideal image of the global expressive effect; he has to also find the most efficient methods to make the ensemble create this global expressive effect. "Expressivity lays in the thrill of "being" (Noica) of the musical phrase, in its making, from the note to the listener, through the performer, who brings it to life. The true expressivity is not an added artifice (an additional embellishment), but the very experience, triggered by

the musical score, whose parameters are exceeded, but not betrayed (Răducanu 2003, 117).

We believe there is a specific expression technique, towards which all musical parameters converge.

The conductor – performer of performers – has a heavy task to assembly and homogenize them in order to reach the desired goals. He can obtain those unique moments of music expression only after he had found all the intermediate steps that must necessarily be taken. It is difficult to convince an instrumentalist or vocalist on building the overall global effect, because, for this purpose, selfishness should be overcome. The music expression technique could be the final stage in configuring an interpretative concept, which should be emphasized during rehearsals, not during the final concert.

Many conductors finalize with a proper, objective execution. However few are those who bring renditions that resonate to the same tune with the public.

Marin Constantin emphasized: “A performance becomes truly remarkable only when the conductor manages to convince the audience of the justness of the proposal, when both the choir and the audience embrace the version, predict the motivation, manage to capture an unlimited number of beauty lovers, likes to vibrate in unison with his sensibility.” (Constantin 1984, 54).

Judging the conductor - ensemble relationship from an artistic point of view, our model above offers a whole series of analytical possibilities, including on esthetic level: which would deserve an investigation of the issues in a different paper.

In this paper, as conclusions, we take the liberty to outline just a few of them: we mention, in the first place, the similarities of our conductor-ensemble-composer axis model and the labor matrix, regarding the means of music expression, represented in the following figure:

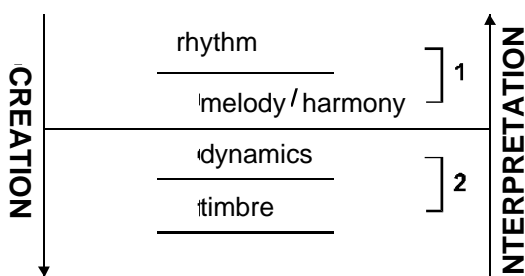


Fig. 2

As shown in this matrix, the components have a relational character: the manifestation of the rhythmic information conditioned by the melodic-harmonic speech and vice versa, such as dynamics, is represented by the timbre and vice versa. In the same time, relationship no. 1 in the matrix is represented by

relationship no. 2. This last inter-conditioning concerns our theme, meaning that the first relationship is the starting point of the composition act, while the second, the starting point of the act of interpretation.

Therefore, the revitalization of the score manifests itself through dynamics and timbre concretization, which, in turn, will carry the message to the metric-rhythmic and melodic-harmonic compartments.

Secondly, we note the fact that the conductor-ensemble relationship has both an internal, as well as an external side; for instance, the conductor not only has to pay attention to the ensemble's intrinsic components' synthetic and analytical division, but also take into account the extrinsic environmental conditions where the performance will take place: concert halls, cathedrals, sometimes the open air.

We mention here just a few aspects regarding the performance mastering by the conductor and some extrinsic sound conditions: all these have stylistic-esthetic character. We will divide them into two: the acoustic environment and the mode of placing the ensemble in this environment.

The acoustic environment is organically connected to the architectural style principles, as follows: a gothic or a baroque cathedral offer one type of sound possibilities, while a concert hall poses other problems. These aspects are not only important for recording, but also raise a primordial esthetic condition in what the public and direct receiving are concerned.

The reverberation is great in gothic cathedrals, sometimes 2-3 seconds, which produces a particular sound effect: "sound waves" envelop the public.

These conditions were favorable for promoting the sacred values of the musical sublime. Baroque vocal and instrumental music claimed a reduction of reverberation, given the faster tempo and musical figuration and that is why the conditions should be abided.

The placement of the ensemble in the acoustic environment is also a decisive factor in finalizing the esthetic experience. Small chamber ensembles are recently more and more surrounded by public (placed in the center).

These endeavors call upon the old syncretism of art, *Musike*, where music, poetry and dance met, as did the creator / creation – performer / performance – public / reception relationships.

The classic placing form is still the concert hall stage.

We end the mentions regarding our model by mentioning its operational quality, even on raising the fundamental esthetic values contained in the message score.

Therefore beauty, the sublime, the tragic etc., are all problematic for the conductor, in transmitting the contents of the music piece (Angi 1979, 13).

The conductor, knowing the timbre-dynamics structure of the esthetic feelings with value and being aware of the composer's metric-rhythmic and melodic-harmonious rendering methods, will be able to perform at the level of esthetic requirements.

And now, at the end of this paper, we wish to make the following remark: the ensemble is the result of assembling multiple sound sources, but it is mainly a “tool” to decode a score, just like the score is the coding of the music imagined by the composer.

We came back this detail because we wanted to highlight the fact that an ensemble depends on a repertoire consisting of several scores meant for it. Furthermore, this issue requires a more detailed discussion and anyway, we think that it should be the subject of a separate investigation.

As a final remark, we would like to emphasize that through everything we have tried to outline in this paper, we but put in order the observations we acquired over time.

Obviously, our main choice is artistic practice, because as we have outlined in the chart on page 2, we believe the role of conductor is different from that of composer, and even more than that of the musicologist.

From the viewpoint of the conductor, our observations stop here. We believe instead that the ideas discussed in this work are worthy of being detailed, both from the point of view of the composer, as well as that of the musicologist.

Although concluded, our research - through its complexity - only now we see open.

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