

CONCERTO NO. 2 IN F MAJOR, OP. 102 FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA BY DMITRI SOSTAKOVICI

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Abstract: *Composed for his son Maxim, the second Concerto for piano and orchestra in F major, op.102 is apparently presented as a work detached from the master's symphonic approach. Shostakovich builds the character of the themes based on the parody of the Russian patriotic song and of the march. The concerto reflects the composer's joy of life, hope and youth. Concerto no. 2 for piano and orchestra in F major, op. 102 is designed in the traditional three-part form: the first part, Allegro, the second Andante and the third part, Allegro. The inflections of the oriental folklore are evident, together with the dancing feature of the gallop rhythm and the 'stage music' feature of some themes expressed on the solo piano.*

Concerto no. 2 for piano and orchestra is a concerto addressed to youth and to paternal, tender and serene love. The soloist score of the concerto is very well revealed through the striking rhythm and the suggestiveness of the themes, through the parts full of virtuosity which integrate into the orchestral ensemble and through the amplification of the dynamic sonority and of the timbral brightness.

Key words: *concert, harmonically supports, enharmonic modulation, thematic motif.*

1. Introduction

Concerto no. 2 for piano and orchestra in F major, op. 102, composed for his son Maxim, is apparently presented as a work detached from the master's symphonic approach. Shostakovich builds the character of the themes based on the parody of the Russian patriotic song and of the march. The concerto reflects the composer's joy of life, hope and youth.

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Allegro, the second Andante and the third part, Allegro. The inflections of the oriental folklore are evident, together with the dancing feature of the gallop rhythm and the 'stage music' feature of some themes expressed on the solo piano. The large orchestra composition includes: 1 piccolo flute, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B flat, 2 bassoons, four horns in F, timpani, side drums and the strings quintet – violins 1, second violins, violas, cellos and contrabasses. The solo piano is integrated to the symphonic discourse.

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2. Formal aspects of *The Concerto in F major, op. 120*

The first Part

The first part, Allegro (F Major "alla breve") begins with a brief introduction of the bassoon (bars 1-2), the oboes and the clarinets (bars 2-6). The introduction is based on themes such as divisions of time, syncopations and has the characteristics of

a march. The themes are so striking in terms of rhythm (also in staccato) that they manage to dominate the entire first part and they are at the foundation of the main themes. The exposition part runs between bars 1-88. Theme I is interpreted by the solo piano. The theme melody is rendered in octaves and has a playful feature, maintaining the allusion of a march:

Theme I is made up on two symmetrical periods (4 phrases of 4 bars each). The singing and merry melody will be enriched by ornamental cadence passages and alternating between equal times and the dotted rhythm. Although it begins with a downward arpeggio (three D notes), the theme I melody is expansive, ascending, in descant, up to the 3rd and 4th octave. The accompaniment belongs to the woodwind instruments (oboe, clarinet, and bassoon) on the same dotted rhythm that the bassoon imposed from the beginning. The F major tonality appears generically. The bassoon supports harmonically the tone pillars (I - IV - V - I = F - B flat - C - F). The oboes and the clarinets bring alternations which

are also found in the piano score. The tonality, as shown also by the key signature, as well as the tone pillars supported by the bassoon, is F major. The theme of the song brings about the version of a mode on F with steps VI and VII lowered (B flat, E flat) and step IV raised, chromatic passages (G - F sharp - F natural - E). If theme I is accompanied by the wind instruments quintet: oboes, clarinets and bassoon, the bridge (measures 23-36) will be dominated, in C major, by the piano on melodic-rhythmic themes, such as the toccata. The dominating rhythm is also marked by the intervention of the side drum, with an exceptionally divided rhythm on the first notes of the bars

(starting from the bar after the piano introduction - bar 24). In bar 36, theme I returns to the whole assembly, supported by the solo piano. The theme is supported, in chords on dotted rhythm, by the brass and woodwind instruments (with piccolo flute and horns), together with the piano, the strings playing sixteenths and quavers

passages (in staccato), pizzicato chords. Here, the area of chromatic modulations is rich (bars 41-48): D flat, G flat with harmonic inflections (A major, F), enharmonic modulations, to reach bar 49 in D minor and the introduction of the second theme:

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piano introduction. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef and the lower in bass clef. The music is marked with a piano dynamic (*p*) and the instruction *legato*. Above the first staff, there is a dashed line with the marking '8va', indicating an octave transposition. The melody in the upper staff features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with some chromatic movement. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system continues this musical texture, showing further chromatic and rhythmic development.

Theme II is played by the solo piano on a double octave (a process commonly used by Shostakovich within the piano concerto). Unlike theme I, theme II is lyrical, but it keeps the rhythmic beat.

Theme II is based on three asymmetric periods, the first period having a second augmented phrase, and in the second phrase of the third period it is modulated to D major (bar 80), so that in the last phrase to return to D minor through the leading note (C sharp).

The upward-downward modulation is also preserved in the melodic configuration of the second theme, accompanied here by the strings ensemble in piano, staccato (with quaver syncopations on cellos and contrabasses). In bar 52, the cellos and the contrabasses perform a shift of emphasis and syncopations, from the piano, for effect. Theme II rests on the low chords pillars: I - V - I (D - A - D), with steps VI and VII raised and on enharmonic modulations, such as D flat - C sharp.

A chord of the orchestral ensemble, in *ff*, suddenly brings the development section (measure 88) (B - G - D - F sharp - A - E).

The development is made up on the alteration of the initial theme. It is expressed by the wind instruments, with the short interventions of the strings and the octaves passages, in fortissimo, on the piano. The octaves passages on the piano, with chromatic interval skips, are impressive due to their force. Theme I can be heard on the wind instruments and then on strings, which remind of the thematic motif of the bridge (bar 100). The processing of the theme in the bridge has to be done alternating with the processing of theme I, on passages full of artistic perfection (scales, octaves, chords) on the piano and the syncopation effects on the strings, but also with timbre effects on the piccolo flute. The tension increases during the alteration of the bridge theme (bar 147) on wind instruments, the piano and the strings accompanying the theme on

quavers syncopations; the passages of octaves and chords on the piano is developed towards the culminating point (tremollo in crescendo on timpani and quaver triplets octaves on the piano). The culminating point is reached in bar 173 when the second theme is brought back in D major (fff), augmented (by G sharp as a sensible note of the dominant, and B flat, mutual chromatic of the homonyms D minor - D major). The second theme is rendered through rhythmic augmentation and accompanied in chords by the entire ensemble. The piano serves as ornament through its sixteenths arpeggios passages. The chord in sfff = C sharp - G - D - B flat - F - A - E of the entire orchestra announces the piano cadence (bar 185).

The not very extended cadence runs between measures 185-221 and it is based on the alteration of the first theme. The piano then expresses the two themes in piano nuance and the theme of the bridge in mf. The dynamic palette is very wide. Within the cadence, the composer gives the piano pages to alter the initial theme, in syncopation writing (C minor - A flat, with chromatic harmonic inflections).

The reprise begins from bar 22 (in the F major tonality) by rendering theme me

(conducted on two periods) on the woodwind instruments and horns on the piano arpeggios. The theme of the bridge is reset to F major (compared to the exposition), with the same rhythmic clarity, expressed by the solo piano and the side drum (on the pizzicato quavers accompaniment of the strings). The return of the first theme within the reprise is made in nuances of forte and ff within the theme of the bridge performed on the piano (also in mf) and taken over in forte by the wind instruments. Part I ends on the F major chord, in (ff) fortissimo.

The second part

The second part, Andante (C minor, 3/4), less extensive (103 bars) has the structure of a three-parts two-themed Lied - A - B - B1 (Baarform) and runs like a musical, nostalgic lullaby, with Russian folklore intonations (bars 3-4). The melody of the first theme is simple, cantabile, gentle and discreet, slightly nostalgic. The theme is expressed by the strings ensemble (violins I, violas and cellos), with sourdine, in the C minor tonality, in triple meter. The melody of the first theme develops on a gradual pace of small intervals with an ascending tendency:

The dotted rhythm in triple meter tone hints to a lullaby in piano nuance while the strings with sourdine in the middle and low register, in C minor tonality, give the melody a warm expression, of a sad serenity. The short phrases made up of two

bars (four short phrases) give the theme the clarity and the concision of the noble simplicity (bars 1-8). The second period, av (bars 9-19) asymmetric, is developed on the thematic material, approached from the variations point of view. The sudden

modulation on D flat major and the inflections on A flat major - D major and G major (dominant) represent the alteration of section a; the phrases are equally concise (2 + 2 + 4 + 3), augmenting in the second part of the period, as a transition towards the

introduction of the solo piano (B) with theme II (b). The second theme is expressed on the piano in C major and it develops on a generous melody pace in the rhythm of the exceptional divisions (triolets, bars 20-45):

The accompaniment in triolets brings back the albertine bass. The second theme expressed by the piano has as harmonic support the pedal on steps I - III - II - V - VI - II - V, the string orchestra and the horn 1 (from bars 26-38), in pianissimo. It is cantabile, in major tonality with modal inflections and runs on a period (a) made up of three asymmetric phrases, the third one being amplified (2 + 2 + 4). In bar 28, the piano creates a melody, made up of quavers triolets (right hand) and chromatic chords (left hand) on the pedal of the horn 1 (bars 28-38). This moment represents an enhancement and an alteration of the second thematic motif. The fragment between bars 28-38 is an improvised cadence interlude of the solo piano (on the pedal of the G sound of horn 1). The triolets on which the intermediate melodic fragment is developed gives way (after a trill on the pedal F - B - E) to the sixteenth in a transition cadence passage

towards the reconfirmation of the second theme. We also have here a rhythmic diminution of the theme through variation processing. The strings appear in syncopation (on the second movement) in pizzicato. The piano melody (right hand) is taken over, in expressive piano, by the contrabasses and cellos on quavers rhythm, the violas and the violins sustaining the pedal on a rhythm of crotchets and minims (iambic formulas). This represents another transitional intermezzo, which will be continued by the piano on a combination of triolets until the initial theme returns, in C minor on the piano, which sounds now like a sad, overwhelming reminder, a moment which was prepared by the modulating inflections. Theme I (a1v) is played in chords, on the left hand (bar 54) and it is also distinguished at the higher voice of the chords, the right hand doubling the melody of the theme by thirds intervals and triolets in syncopations:

The image shows a musical score for Piano, consisting of two systems. The first system has two staves (treble and bass clef) and includes markings for 'poco rit.' and 'a tempo'. It features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a group of notes) and some syncopated rhythms. The second system continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including more triplets and syncopations, with some notes beamed together in a more complex rhythmic structure.

The composer resumes theme I (a1v) in the middle register of the piano, in which it had been expressed in the beginning (in Section A) by the strings trio. The strings orchestra accompanies with pedals in pizzicato. In bar 66, the strings take over the thematic material (as in section A), making the transition to Section B1, the return on the piano of the second theme (b1). The piano expresses, on the accompaniment of the string instruments, a melody in triplets that develops on repetitions of the motifs with heavy insistence (bars 66-72). Section three - A1v – brings back the second theme, this time in C minor. Theme II has the same configuration as in the first exposition (B), but in the basic tonality of the second part (C minor), with harmonic inflections of the primary and secondary stages. After a short transition, the original theme (a2v) is resumed, in the low register of the left hand (on the initial rhythm), doubling the melody on triplets in syncopation on the right hand and the pizzicato from the strings.

The theme is augmented on triplets formulas, while the strings support the harmony on longer sound pedals (dotted minims).

Part two ends in the high register of the piano, which insists on the sound C (the third octave on triplets with syncopations) preparing the direct introduction of the third part, Allegro.

The structure of the Baar form is the following:

$$A = a+av+B = b+b1+a1v+B1 = b2+a2v$$

The third part

The third part, Allegro (F major - 2/4), has the structure of a sonata and is expressed directly through the transition made by the piano on the note C. It is the most extended part (352 bars). The exposition begins with the introduction of the piano interpreting the playful theme (converting the exceptional divisions in binary rhythm), in staccato. The impression given by the initial theme of the third part is the one of a joke, the melody being carried out in a succession of melodic-rhythmic elements with inflections taken from the entertainment music. The ambitus of the theme is not extended, whilst the rhythm indicates the dancing feature.

Theme I is expressed on two periods. The first one contains an introductory phrase (on the sound C) and an open

cadence of the clarinets and bassoons; the second modulation is followed by the alteration of the first thematic motif. The modulation reaches B major (bar 45); just to return, by means of enharmonic modulation, to F major (bar 59). The bridge is also based on the alteration of the first motif of theme I:

The expression of the main theme is carried out in unison and in octave with the accompaniment of quaver syncopations, on clarinet and bassoon (the first period - bars 1-20) and then on strings (bar 21), until the second theme is introduced. It retains the dancing feature and it is interpreted by the whole ensemble in *ff* (ensemble which was represented until now by strings, clarinet and bassoon). The motif of the second theme proposes a dynamic and metric contrast by using the 7/8 bar. The entire ensemble of the orchestra will present

theme II in C major (the contrabasses and the cellos keep the staccato manner). After expressing the secondary theme by the ensemble, the piano takes over the theme, in the staccato accompaniment of the orchestra. There are thirteenth and sixth intervals in expressing the second theme on the piano. The solo piano insists on the second thematic motif, rendering it through modulating inflections (B – E – D flat – A flat – C – G – C – F – C). The high register is, again, preferred in expressing theme II. The piano interprets the secondary theme

(bars 83) focusing on altering the first motif. The doubling of the wind instruments (bar 103 - flute, clarinet) prepares the transition to the development. The transition is made in alternating meter (after a brief revival of the second thematic motif by the orchestra) by the solo piano, on sixteenths passages that remind of the formulas typical to the piano exercises.

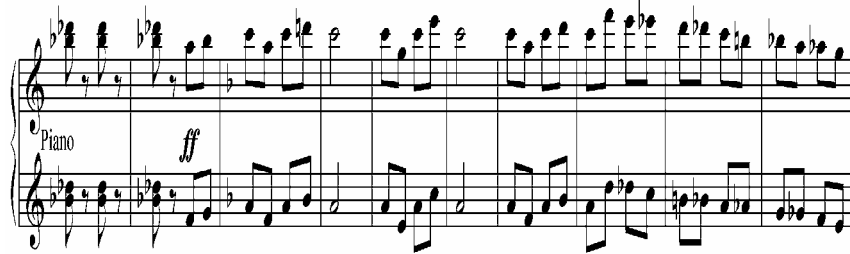
The transition fragment gives the impression of an intermezzo quasi improvisatory (bars 109-135). While expressing and altering the secondary theme on the piano, the strings accompany in staccato. The transition ends with the secondary theme motifs and the cadence of the piano on C:

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system shows two staves with treble and bass clefs. The second system also shows two staves with treble and bass clefs. The music features sixteenth-note passages, triplets, and dynamic markings such as 'ff' and '8va'.

The development (bar 140) is concise (up to bar 236) and it alters the thematic motifs starting from the transition one, in order to later develop the secondary thematic motif. The development section continues with the main thematic motif expressed by the solo piano, accompanied by the divided horns (bar 140). The motif of the transition (bar 152) brings back, on the clarinets, also in piano nuance, the secondary theme motif. The discourse is then based on altering the main theme on the piano, with rhythmic expression on the horns, followed by the piano transition which brings the secondary thematic motif, with the accompaniment in staccato quavers of the wind instruments (clarinet and bassoon) and of the contrabasses; the

transition motif on the piano appears again, in the accompaniment expressed in quaver syncopations of the strings. The rendering of the musical material is characterized by the alternation among themes and between the groups of instruments and the ensemble, the solo piano being the one supporting the thematic effort. The initial thematic motif is revived by the contrabasses (bars 188-193) and followed by the transition motif, which is taken over by the strings; the piano anticipates, by rendering the thematic motifs, the revival of theme I and, also, the reprise.

During the reprise, the piano interprets theme I in an augmented version, while the accompaniment is based on the rhythmic diminution:



In bar 254, the piano proposes a new thematic part, in octaves in trochaic rhythm, in a low register.

The passage develops over two phrases continued by the intonation of the initial thematic motif (augmented, varied), on piano in octaves, accompanied by the strings and the side drum, having a dancing feature with grotesque effect. The motif of theme I is taken over by the horns, directly followed (bars 286) by the alteration of theme II (D flat major tonality supported by the woodwind instruments and the horns, accompanied by the contrabasses and the side drum - nuance *ff*).

The piano takes over the second theme again, in E flat major (the strings ensemble supporting the harmony).

The coda (bar 314) is prepared by the piano (after the conclusive expression of the wind instruments with the secondary thematic motif) based on the transition motif. Here, the alternation between binary and ternary is being kept. The initial thematic motif is supported by the woodwind instruments (with piccolo) and by the piano, accompanied by the strings and timbals syncopations. It is the final moment of the coda (bar 334). The tremollo of the piano, the repeated sounds of the wind instruments and the harmonies in syncopations of the strings, which modulate for the last time (D flat - A flat - B flat - C - F), express the end of the concert, in a *ff* nuance.

3. The Finale and Conclusions

Concerto no. 2 for piano and orchestra is a concerto addressed to youth and to paternal, tender and serene love. The soloist score of the concerto is very well revealed through the striking rhythm and the suggestiveness of the themes, through the parts full of virtuosity which integrate into the orchestral ensemble and through the amplification of the dynamic sonority and of the timbral brightness. The soloist part is, obviously, integrated to the symphonic discourse. This appears from the beginning, in the brief expositional introduction of the wind instruments ensemble. If in the exposition the expression and theme development belongs to the soloist piano (the thematic motifs being also taken over by the groups of instruments), during the development and the reprise, they go back to the ensemble and to the groups of instruments, the piano sustaining the musical discourse through: octaves passages (bars 88-101), scale passages combined with octaves, toccata passages (bars 155-172) and arpeggios expressed by sixteenths. The octaves (alternatives in toccata style) and scale passages predominate.

What gives authenticity and stylistic personality to this concerto is the individual approach, with typical concerto elements, of the instruments in the orchestral ensemble. The primary role belongs to the woodwind instruments that support the themes in alternation with the soloist instrument. The bassoon, the oboe and the piccolo flute

become detached from the ensemble through their thematic interventions. The strings are the harmonic support, being introduced especially with melodic-rhythmic thematic motifs. During the revival of the secondary theme (on D major, in the development), the entire orchestra is committed to the musical discourse, sustaining, at the same rhythm, the theme (augmented), in *fff* nuance. This is the culminating point of the development and of the concerto as well, when the whole ensemble is equally involved (bars 175-185).

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