

FANTASY FOR SOLO VIOLIN BY MARCEL MIHALOVICI

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Abstract: *The author's undisguised passion for violin sonorities is also illustrated in this work, in the approach of the complex writing, for two or three voices, without creating insurmountable difficulties of technical resolution. Nevertheless, the Sonata for solo violin by Marcel Mihalovici dedicated to Conrad Beck is not at all easy.*

Key words: *improvisation, fantasy, rhythm.*

1. Introduction

Marcel Mihalovici had the great chance to inherit, in terms of composition, all the achievements that his predecessors: Beethoven, Reger, Brahms, Enescu and Bartók have made, but he also managed to collect from each what was suitable for him, thus creating his own personality and imposing his own language [1-4].

Thus, in terms of harmony, Mihalovici's personal style is very chromatic, but the introduction of folklore also implies the presence of tonality poles, in a climate which is eventually marked by atonalism [5-6].

Apart from this very chromatic harmony that Marcel Mihalovici uses, there is another element that characterizes him in the composition of his works, and that is represented by the development of the themes with variations [7].

Marcel Mihalovici addresses solid structures, in which the influence of moods and rhythm of the Romanian folklore is felt, being French by training, but Romanian by soul and feeling [15].

However, he managed to give the Romanian folklore a modern musical language, elevated, European, as his great predecessors: Bartók and Enescu had also done [8]. From Bartók, he took the manner to use the "imaginary folklore" and he succeeded in creating his own folklore, using personal formulas, while for Enescu he had a deep respect, being a great source of inspiration for him and a spiritual mentor [9].

2. "The fantasy for solo violin" – general aspects

The *Fantasy* is the first part of the *Sonata for solo violin* by Marcel Mihalovici, a completely atypical Sonata in terms of the sequence of the consisting parts. Thus, we have a first fantasy part, with a deep improvisation atmosphere, which could very well function on its own, without the need to be part of a complex structure, such as a sonata.

The second part is represented by a simple *Fugue*, on three voices, written in the style of J. S. Bach fugues, but

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technically it causes more problems to the violinists who dare to study it.

The third part of the sonata is a *Capriccio*, which is a sound page with a permanent emblematic move, formed of a rhythmic ostinato, based on quavers, on a *pp* dynamic background that creates an alluring atmosphere.

The last part of the sonata is *Elegia*, a part full of musicality, a unique one-party chant, made up of 10 periods.

2. Analysis of the *Fantasy for solo violin*

The solemn archetype, extremely simple, of the *Fantasy* seems to indicate a structure: **A**, **B**, **Av**, **Bv**, where **A** is the long period, extending to *Largamente*. At this point the **B** of the *Fantasy* begins.

At the beginning of the second page, the **A** begins again, this time modified; the rhythmic space becomes very twisted, as it advances the complex structure of the *Fantasy*, the rhythmic formulas, such as triplets, quintolets, septolets, sextolets being very prevalent and in varying combinations. The next *Largamente* represents the return of the **B**, also modified.

Here, music has gained a unique texture, designed to give the work a monumental statute, so specific and necessary at the same time for the end of a *Fantasy*.

The *Fantasy* is monothematic, with an improvisation feature (basically, there is no measure bar, so that it is the pulsation which organizes the body of the work in terms of metric) and the freedom of movement is further exacerbated by the frequent agogic indications.

The beginning of the work is *Lento espressivo* (the quaver = 60), then it goes on as follows: *agitato*, *stringendo*, *largamente*, *pochissimo rit.*, *largamente non troppo*, *senza rigore*, *animando*, *poco allargando*.

The beginning of the *Fantasy* is represented by a double consisting of a 5p interval, which unfolds, as an ornament, into a septolet on small note durations of demisemiquavers, that prepare a chord of quints perfectly superposed. This chord, made up of four sounds, is sweet and very expressive.



Fig. 1. The beginning of the **A** of the *Fantasy*

The **B** of the *Fantasy* starts on row seven, movement two, with the changing of the tempo - *Largamente*, and it is one of the most expressive moments of the *Fantasy*, that coincides with the first highest point from the dynamic perspective (*ff*), of this part.



Fig. 2. The **B** of the *Fantasy*

On the displayed tonal background (E minor chromatic), the composer applies a very rich modal – chromatic structure, from which the intervals specific to the Romanian ethnophonia (2+, 4+) emerge, which gives the music - a novelty due to the unusual harmonic language - an unmistakable feature of shepherd melancholy song [11-12]. In addition to these intervals specific to the folk music, the presence of 9m, 9M and 7m, 7M intervals can be noted, that suggest the similarity of this *Fantasy* to the style of serialism. The 4 + intervals are the most common, however, and remind of B. Bartók, with his chromatic passing chords introduced or solved by a fourth, with its 1:5 mode, and with the expansion of

intervals in both directions - ascending and descending [13-14].



Fig. 3. Mode 1:5

The fourth passing, as seen in Claude Debussy's compositional style is also used by Marcel Mihalovici in this *Fantasy*.



Fig. 4. The third row of the *Fantasy*

The presence of mobile scale degrees is a sign of bimodalism as it can be seen in the second row before the end of the work.



Fig. 5. The two penultimate rows of the *Fantasy*

The rhythmic aspect is to be noted, both in A and in B, proving a wide variety of formulas and exceptional divisions, which abound throughout the *Fantasy*. Therefore, there are sextolet, septolet, triolet, quintolet, nonolet and even undecimolet formulas, with mostly very low values, from quavers going to hemi demisemiquavers. In contrast, there are also the high values (minim and crotchet), which are much less used in the work.

Another important aspect to be noted regarding rhythm is that Mihalovici prefers to use many syncopations.

Moreover, there are long chains of measures connected by syncopations, which run on considerable lengths (e.g. the eighth row of the *Fantasy*, starting from

the third measure until its end, resulting in a whole suite of syncopations extending over a length of nine measures).



Fig. 6. The eighth row of the *Fantasy*

Due to the complex rhythm with an endless variety of duration combinations, the *Fantasy* has received a very troubled feature, reinforced by the dynamic waves of crescendo and decrescendo, generating a sequence that starts from very small nuances of *ppp* and culminating in *fff*.

In terms of timbre, there are indications such as: the mandatory interpretation mostly on the low strings (C3, C4), the flageolets, the glissandos on the sequential intervals, such as the sighs on row four of the second page (on undecimal and decimal jumps) and the chords present on the last line of the *Fantasy* [9-10].

3. Conclusions

The violin sheet music is not at all easy, mainly due to the difficulties created by the harmonic density, the vertical clusters, as well as the capricious modal texture with unpredictable jumps. All of these, together with the unstable theme, in a constant slide through the chromatic modes, gives that touch of improvisation, specific to any *Fantasy*.

This fantasy theme is also supported by the many indications: *calmato*, *tranquillo ma espressivo*, *molto tranquillo*, *ben sostenuto e cantabile*, *dolce*, *diminuendo e calmando*, *fluido ma tranquillo*, *agitato*.

All these musical terms lead us to the general feature of the work, which must be a calm, flowing and fluid one.

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