

CLASSICAL ARCHETYPE IN *SONATINA* FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO BY PAUL CONSTANTINESCU

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Abstract: *Focusing his entire creation on the enhancement of the folkloric lode and Byzantine psychical melos, Paul Constantinescu, disciple of Mihail Jora composition school, takes withal forward the path opened by George Enescu, as regards the autochthonous “transformation” of the classical forms of the sonatina.*

Key words: *sonatina, cyclical reasoning, miniature aspect.*

1. Introduction

The third decade of the year 1900 is the auspicious period for the looming of genuinely creative personalities, in our great George Enescu's sphere of influence: Mihail Jora, Sabin Drăgoi, Marţian Negrea and so forth; or, the younger Paul Constantinescu, Tudor Ciortea, Sigismund Toduţă. Chronologically, the genre of sonata is successfully approached, after Enescu, by Paul Constantinescu, whose *Sonatina for Violin and Piano*, composed in 1933, marks an initiatory moment. Vasile Tomescu, the author of the monograph on Paul Constantinescu's creation, states the following: “So much Romanian musical poetical life throbs in the pages of the *Sonatina* by Paul Constantinescu that we dare say it gracefully opens the path for this genre in our country, along with the great Enescu's sonatas” [5].

From his first compositions, conceived by the year 1930, Paul Constantinescu defines two sources of paramount interest

for his creation: psaltic music and folk song. Pertaining to the compositions from the first creative stages, *Sonatina* reveals the expressiveness of an original musical language, “adequate to the requirements of the genre, which bestows on it, the interest of a qualitative leap, within our national creation” [5].

The contact with popular music, drawn from the collections made by Bartók, Breazul, Brăiloiu, Drăgoi and, especially, Anton Pann, enabled the composer to penetrate ever more thoroughly into the phenomenon and to continuously enlarge the modal-processing resources. The first and most important source of Paul Constantinescu's themes - Anton Pann's melodies - which crosses his overall oeuvre like a read thread, is a unifying model for the composer's entire creation. The Oriental coloratura of his melodies, which illustrates the “prevailing” modern Greek culture (increased or decreased intervals, melismatic aspect and so on), shines through P. Constantinescu's overall style, closely influencing the folklorically

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conjunctively [...] or disjunctively [...] we obtain a manifold of combinations which, whether being simple melodic combinations, or suggesting modulating changes, may be used in the music with

modal aspect [...]. To a lesser extent, however in the same way, either trichords, or pentachords, or hexachords may concatenate" [1].



Ex. 2

The main theme is characterized by V. Tomescu: "In a giusto rhythmic frame, of a rigorously measured dynamism, the I-st theme stands out robust, voluntary, and fairly directly suggests the grafting on the stem of the Romanian melos, of the procedures characteristic of Bach's art" [5]. Hence, by the enhancement of the metric rhythm and by the accent symmetry and the uniform pulsation whereto the rhythmic pedal of the bass contributes (m. 1-8), tangent with the popular figuration, the first theme unveils one of its

neoclassical facets. The takeover of the theme in the dialogue of the two instruments (m. 16), with imitations in the octave and the quint likewise signifies the remembrance of the procedures of Baroque essence.

In contrast, the II-nd theme is attacked through a plagal relation of descending second. This one breaks the rhythmic rigour of the I-st theme and evokes, by its melismatic profile and modal mobility (locric quint), the picturesque of Anton Pann's music.



Ex. 3.

This way, some rhythmic-melodic profiles of the themes of this origin prove a common root, by the close intonation aspect, sometimes reaching similitude, as

shown by the comparison between the II-nd theme of the sonatina and the I-st theme, part I, of the *Quintet for Violin and Wind Instruments*.



Ex. 4.

The rigour of the harmonic-polyphonic scoring, whilst playing the I-st theme, changes and acquires lightness in the case of the II-nd theme, in terms of plan intertwining. The voices display reductive heterophony aspects (the pianist performs

a simplified form of the melody played on the violin) and quasi-imitative (by the delay of the piano play, with stationing on augmentative durations, compared to the main plan in the violin play).

Ex. 5.

The stop on *D* with the second and seventh *ajoutées* marks, once with the end of the exposition, the moment of *suspense* for the attack of the development.

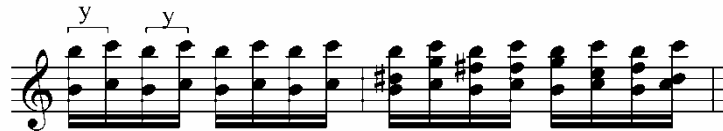
The development first highlights separately, the valences of the main theme and thereafter confronts them, in a synthesis, with the valences of the secondary theme. This development plan is achieved along three stages, this way: in the I-st stage (m. 46-53), on the tonal frame of the exposition, two thematic replays occur, first on the violin, in *chro-*

matic D minor, with piano response, in *chromatic A minor*, in incomplete thematic form; in the II-nd stage (m. 54-73), continuing an entrance in *stretto* at the octave, in *chromatic E*, the theme suffers sequential external expansions of the final cell (in anapaest rhythm) of its first phrase, reaching a pedal of *B major-minor*, with enlarged quart *ajoutée*, and ending in a chromatic manner on the same centre - *B* in the variant *chromatic 1d*, specific to the urban folklore, the melodic inspirational source of the sonatina.

Ex. 6.

The emphasis on this modal centre, seen as a stop on the *dominant* of *E* – tone of the following stage, is achieved on a rhythmic pedal of ascending oscillation, a

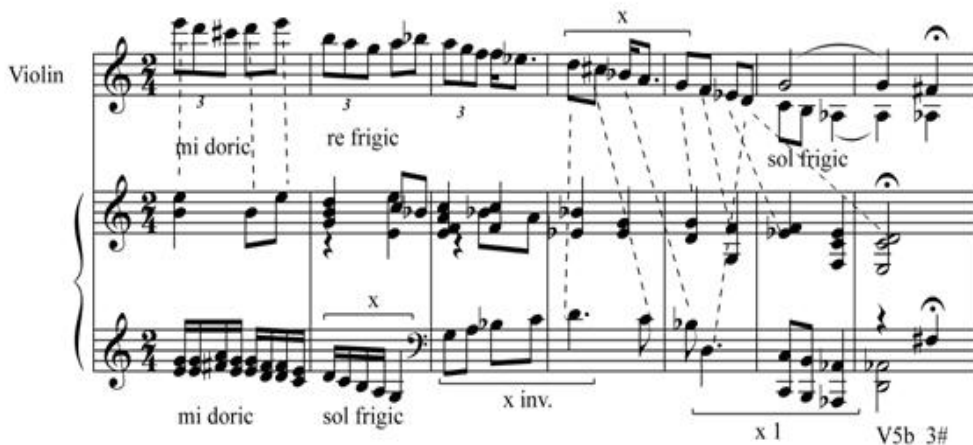
procedure frequently resorted to by the composer in the expansions of his folk themes.



Ex. 7.

The III-rd stage (m. 74-86), in terms of developmental climax, brings the synthesis of the two themes, assigned this way: on the piano, reflexes of the I-st theme, on the violin, the consequent of the second theme. In an uncertain oscillation of the modal

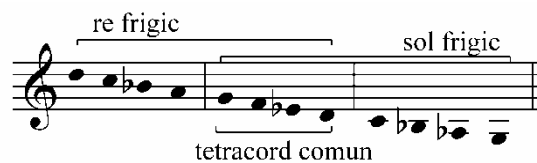
centres (Doric *E*, *Phrygian D/G*) the re-modulation to the tone of the reprise is made (*G minor*), with picardian stop on the V-th stage with the lowered quint, a double sensitisation being thereby achieved for the modal centre *G*.



Ex. 8.

This example also highlights other interesting aspects, such as heterophony, in reductive form on the piano (marked with dotted lines), which emphasizes, by anticipations or delays, the oblique dimension of the musical discourse, as well as the mobility of the tetrachordic

melodic cells, marked with the letter *x*, centred sometimes in the lower pole (*D*), other times in the higher pole (*G*). The modulation by *tetrachord mutation* is made likewise in this case, operable on the level of the common tetrachord to the two Phrygian modes, *D* and *G*.



Ex. 9.

The shortened reprise (m. 87) concentrates the I-st theme to a unique utterance in the basic tonality, *G minor*, this time on the violin; thereafter, on its dynamic replay, the secondary theme overlaps, in octaves, on the piano, likewise in the basic tonality. One may also note the absence of the bridge in the reprise. A rhythmic acceleration (*stringendo*), whereto the fragmented replay of the capo of the main theme contributes, leads towards a *codetta* (*Vivo*, m. 104), which, as cadence appendix on the *tonic*, delivers, in two imitative pairs, the thematic capo, followed by an ascending scale covering three octaves, on the violin, on the range *G minor melodic*. Here it is how the main tonality proves, through the multiple variants of mobile steps, a tonal-modal, diatonic-chromatic symbiosis, centred on the sound *G*.

6. Conclusions

To draw a conclusion, the autochthonous implications of the *sonata* in the creation of the genre for violin and piano are under the sign of that *global aesthetic climate*, defined by the classical “immanence” of the interwar Romanian compositional reasoning, placed in the general coordinates of equilibrium and symmetry, of sobriety and economy of means. Not outdated, the *sonata* form has proved that, far from having run out of resources, it may be refreshed by infusing new elements of language, apparently incompatible with its functioning principles. Moving it away from pure musical expression and drawing it closer to the musical picturesque, this infusion, particularised in a musical characterology specific to folk genres, transmits a specifically Romanian content to the traditional characterological sectors of the form and agogic of the *sonata* cycle [2].

As noted by Mihail Jora at the time, Paul Constantinescu’s *sonatina* finds its

correspondent during the epoch, in Dinu Lipatti’s similar work, issued during the same year, 1933: “This *Sonatina*, which, along with the one of Dinu Lipatti, must underlie the young Romanian musical generation’s literature for violin and piano has, in our light, three essential features: it is musical, it is Romanian and it is destined for violin. The themes are brief and characteristic in the developments strictly limited by the content of the form. Moulded with contrapuntal understanding and arrayed in a modern, vigorously harmonic system” [5].

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