

MODAL CONFIGURATIONS IN *CONCERT FOR CLARINET* BY T. CIORTEA

Petre Marcel VÂRLAN¹

Abstract: *The paper depicts the modal substrate in “Concert for Clarinet and Orchestra” by Tudor Ciortea (1903-1982). The composer is one of the worthy musicians of the Romanian composition school in the second half of the XXth century. A thorough analysis emphasises the use of some modern proceeding in the world musical creation, like the system of the symmetry axes, the geometrical harmony and the modes with limited transposition. Besides these, the presence of the diatonic and chromatic folkloric modes are also pointed out.*

Key words: *Ciortea, mode, concert, clarinet.*

1. Introduction

Concert for Clarinet and Orchestra was composed for the clarinet in *B b* and ample orchestral formation. The piece was finished in 1972 [1] or in 1974 [2] and it was awarded *The Composition Award* by the Union of Composers from Romania.

This paper is meant to investigate the harmonic dimension of the musical piece under discussion to point out the ways in which the composer employed the harmonic composition proceedings specific to the XXth century, embodied in the proceedings of the geometrical harmony as well as in folkloric modes with limited transposition.

2. Modal configurations

One first usage of the system of the symmetry axes appears at the orchestral debut, where the composer disseminates the elements of the modal construction in the whole instrumental apparatus. The

climax of the formal moment also underlines the harmonic completion of the stratifications of the *alfa* segments of *Aγ/Cγ* type [3]. Through this, the composer achieves an over positioning of the axes of the Dominants and the Tonals:

la b γ
do γ

Fig. 1, Bar 4, chords

The nuancing of the axial rapports through stratifications with tonal accords confer a much ampler expressive display, like in the bar 117, where one can notice the stratification of *la γ/Bb – D – Bb*. As

¹ Faculty of Music, *Transilvania* University, Braşov.

regards the inferior layer, one can notice the harmonic relation in succession of twins type (*zwillinge*) [4], through the third:

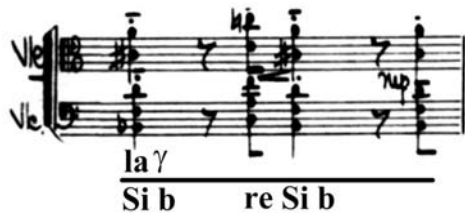


Fig. 2, Bar 117, viola and cello

The complexity of the diverse expressiveness determined the composer to introduce in the musical construction associations of the tonal accord layers with layers of *alfa* segments, both geometrical and gravitational rapports. In the following example, one can notice the creation of geometrical rapports between certain layers (3, 11) and also the creation of tonal rapports between others (4) of *re -3- B - 11- axial C - 4- A b axial* type (the numbers between the layers show the geometrical or gravitational rapports):



Fig. 3, Bars 100-101

In all his musical work, the composer T. Ciortea preserved the connection with the folkloric music, as a permanent reference to the eternal inspiration source of the Romanian music. Within the content of this concert, the thematic input is also adapted to the pattern of some heptatonic

modes, of folkloric origin. By resorting to these modes, the composer planned to induce reflexes of the expressiveness specific to the folkloric music in the musical expression.

Within the secondary thematic group of the first part of the concert, the first of the

themes – B_1 – is created by means of the intonational elements of both the axial system and the Lydian mode on $B b$ (bars 59-60), on D (bars 60-63) and of the A acoustic mode (bars 64-66):



Fig. 4, bars 59-66, clarinet solo

The stratifications of the *alfa* segments appear again in *the Reprise* in repetitive motive like configurations, the so called "spinning motives" [5]. We would add the fact that, as regards the modal aspects, the stratification of the segments $C\ alfa\ \# \beta/D\ \beta$ is followed by the existence of the $E\ b$ at the trombone, $F\ natural^2$ in the trumpet score as part of the inferior layer:

The composer develops the modal background by introducing some strange sounds, which do not produce modal mutations, the so called *Aeolian* modal agreements, like the sixth ($G\ natural$) and the seventh ($A\ natural$) and the *Phrygian* development which has already been mentioned. With their help, T. Ciortea achieves an expressive melodic line with folkloric echoes:



Fig. 5, Bar 99, flute, oboe and clarinet

The beginning of the IInd part of the Concert presents a first theme (bars 5-8) in which a multitude of modal characteristics are blended. The modal cadence on the Vth step of the B acoustic 5 mode, after it gives the impression of closure by the ($A-B$), Phrygically slides to $F\#$.



Fig. 6, Bars 5-8, oboe

The modal polyvalence of the musical statement in the previous example consists in setting up a consistent section from the *mode 2 with limited transposition* [6] in transposition 2 which, at the end of the theme passes to *transposition 1* through $A\ natural$, which causes the appearance of the alternance of the minor and major thirds (m3-M3) [7] by relating $G\# - G\ natural$ to B or E , which represents a

potential reference point, especially in the light of the cadence of the introduction which is achieved on this sound.

Until this moment of the Concert, the modes with limited transposition have appeared within the bars 63-66:

The musical substance of the Concert also provides the background of stratifying the tonal layers with *alfa* segments, which are pointed out in tonal background through the melodic rapports of β type, with a geometric rapport of 11. For example, in the bar 18, at the beginning of the second part, against a minor focus on *E*, there appear *alfa* segments (one can also notice the tonal cadence which precedes the appearance of the new sonorous centre):

In the end part of the Concert, the theme of the refrain of the *de rondo* (bars 13-20) develops in an *acoustic I G, A #* (enharmonic with *B b* in the last bar of the theme) which is an agreement originated from *fiddler G major*.

The way in which the theme of the couplet develops (bars 38-46) is *Mixolydian G* which turns into *chromatic E I structure a*, towards the end (bar 44) in which cadence is also achieved.

The recurrent appearance of the theme of the refrain (*Avar.*) is done in *chromatic A I* with the VIth step mobile, then it turns to a new mode, *chromatic B I a*.

The theme of the formal C section oscillates between the modes *Mixolydian* and *acoustic I*, by the sounds *B natural-B#* (bars 78-82).

The last appearance of an axial stratification takes place in the bar 136 – *E β /F β* .

2. Conclusions

As regards the modal formations present in *Concert for Clarinet and Orchestra* by T. Ciortea, the whole musical piece is composed by a rich modal display, in which one can find

both harmonic geometrical axial constructions as well as gravitational, tonal constructions. Against the modal background, one can find both diatonic and chromatic folkloric modes, besides modes with limited transposition. The employment of these modes is in the service of the musical expressiveness, which makes reference to the Romanian folklore.

References

1. Marinescu, M.: *Concertul instrumental românesc contemporan (1950-1980) – (The Contemporary Instrumental Romanian Concert [1950-1980])*. Bucureşti. Editura Muzicală, 1983.
2. Raţiu, H.: «Concertul pentru clarinet și orchestră» de Tudor Ciortea - Concert for Clarinet and Orchestra by Tudor Ciortea. In: *Muzica* 5 (1976), p. 14.
3. Terényi, E.: *Armonia muzicii moderne (1900-1950) (The Harmony of the Modern Music)*. Cluj-Napoca. Editura Media Musica, 2001, pp. 85 sqq.
4. Firca, Gh.: *Structuri și funcții în armonia modală. (Structures and Functions in the Modal Harmony)*. Bucureşti. Editura, 1988.
5. Firca, Gh.: *Asupra unui enunț enescian. (Over an Enescian Statement)* In: *Simpozionul Internațional de Muzicologie “George Enescu”*. *George Enescu și muzica secolului XX. (The International Musicology Symposium “George Enescu”. George Enescu and the music of the XXth century)* Bucureşti. Editura Muzicală, 1998.
6. Messiaen, O.: *Technique de mon langage musical*. Paris. Editions Musicales Leduc, 1944.
7. Bentiou, Pascal: *Capodopere enesciene (Enescian Masterpieces)*. Bucureşti. Editura Muzicală, 1984.