

# AUREL STROE – COMPONISTIC COORDINATES

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**Abstract:** *Aurel Stroe is one of the most important Romanian composers from the second half of the XXth century, an exceptional complex artist, a complete musician, composer, teacher and musicologist, the composer aware of his responsibility, because the authentic art is a consequence of our deepest beliefs. I expose in this work a summary of his main creative paradigms, with examples and applications, making the connection with its musicological text and concepts, so original and little known.*

**Key words:** *composition, music, musicology, discourse, coordinate.*

## 1. Introduction

Aurel Stroe is an outstanding personality of the modern Romanian music, one of the most important Romanian composers from the XXth century, with a complex and extensive musical work that includes all kinds of the musical composition (symphonic, vocal-symphonic, chamber and choral music, concertos, operas).

Besides his great creative career, Aurel Stroe was an outstanding teacher of the National Academy of Music from Bucharest (Romania), an important member of Composer's and Musicologist's Romanian Union, promoting the active avant-garde in music, reflecting about music through his interdisciplinary thinking.

## 2. Problem Formulation

His creation is so complex precisely because it is based on concepts drawn from many extra-musical areas, which are reflected in his music.

I intend to expose in this work a summary of his main creative paradigms, with examples and applications, making the connection with its musicological text and concepts, so original and little known.

His most important works are: The closed citadel trilogy (Agamemnon, Orestia I - 1973, Choefores, Orestia II - 1983, Eumenides, Orestia III - 1988), Monumentum I, Laude I, II, Canto I, II, Accords et comptines, Preludes lyriques, Mandala on a poliphony by Antonio Lotti, Ciaccona con alcune licenze, Concerto for clarinet and orchestra, Szmpphony-Concerto for saxophone and orchestra (Prairie, Prieres), Concerto for violin and orchestra (Capricii et ragas), Concerto for violin and orchestra, 3 piano sonatas (1955, 1983, 1992).

## 3. Problem Solution

The first quality of Aurel Stroe's art was, according to master Dan Dediu, the vigilance of the message: „his music is

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always active and awake, not a moment asleep. Listening to his music, it becomes consciousness that confesses to you, that you can't stop listening. This happens rarely in the history of music" [1].

The second quality of his art is the bizarre profile of his compositions. Dan Dediu explains this unusual case: „his music is unexpected, full of pitfalls, but also objective, without personal attacks, even when dissonance is full speed. His music promotes unusual combinations of instruments. Deliberately A. Stroe tried to obtain a bizarre effect that sustains the semantic structure of the work" [2].

As an example, we can offer those musical objects or sound matrix that we find in his art, elements that carry an entire musical content through simple structures reduced to an accord or a few sounds.

Another quality notified by Dan Dediu was the capacity to formulate problems followed by an attempt to find an answer: „his music is a reflection in sounds, it transcends stylistic thought, reaching behind the musical material, reaching the theater of opposite principles" [3].

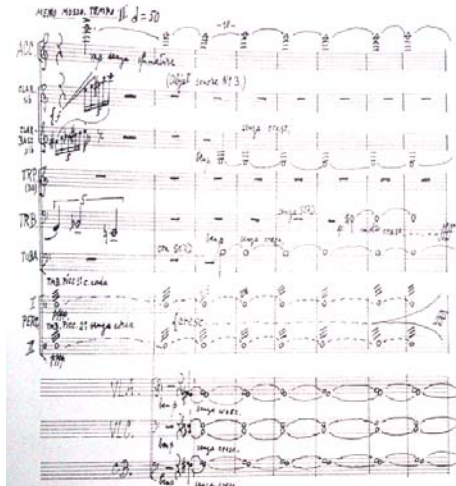


Fig. 1. Aurel Stroe, *Concert for accordion and orchestra*

The intertextuality of many structures that overlap such a palimpsest is a fact we can easily observe in works such *Mandala* (the multiphonic towers in oboe's score) or the *Multimobiles* present in many of his works.



Fig. 2. Aurel Stroe – *Mandala on a poliphony by Antonio Lotti*

This fact is related to the coexistence of incommensurable cultural paradigms that create outstanding stylistic and philosophical problems.

The musical composition with many incommensurable paradigms requires the complex poliphony of the stylistic and ontological levels of the musical work.

The Dyad of Stroe is, according to Dan Dediu, „the formal model that joins and creates bridges between two incommensurable musical paradigms" (as happens in *Capricci et ragas*, in *Accords et comptines*) [4].

Examples for this situation can be found in the *Concerto for violin and orchestra* (*Capricci et ragas*) and in *Mandala on a poliphony by Antonio Lotti*.



Fig. 3. Aurel Stroe, *Concerto for violin and orchestra (Capricii et ragas), Paganiniana I*

Any work of Aurel Stroe involves, beyond the strict sense of the sounding level, a dramatic sense of the musical discourse. Aurel Stroe used, in his music, the morphogenetic theory of disasters.

This theory explains the interruptions of sounding speech depending on the poetic tension, as we can find in *Mandala on a polyphony* by Antonio Lotti (choral, Crucifixus) and in the *Concerto for accordion and orchestra* (choral-insertion).



Fig. 4. Aurel Stroe, “*Mandala on a polyphony*” by Antonio Lotti, choral

In the musical art of Aurel Stroe we can also find certain synthesis composition formula. Compositions with several tuning systems requires increased complexity that comes from the fact that the systems are influenced by their original cultural paradigms (converging systems – that come from the same cultural paradigm, divergent systems – that come from incommensurable cultural paradigms), as in the *Concerto for accordion and orchestra* (the dissipative fugue from the second part, the invention, the chorals).



Fig. 5. Aurel Stroe – *Concerto for accordion and orchestra (fugue dissipative)*

The complex, developed minimalism is another paradigm of the Aurel Stroe’s music. In some segments of his works he uses methods of minimalistic effect, non-evolutive motifs „which are part of anti-structuraliste trends of the 60s and 70s” [5].

Aurel Stroe often insists on some simple formulas, integrated in a repetition process, that articulates the whole discourse, like in the *Concerto for accordion and orchestra* (the

accord matrix and the circular structures with a certain periodicity, called loops).

The most important feature of his componistic art is the modern thought, with spiritual magnitude. Aurel Stroe aims to cultivate a transcendent spirituality, that sustains the high values of the humanity. The modern art lacks the transcendence of the creativity, sustaining a meaningless horizon.

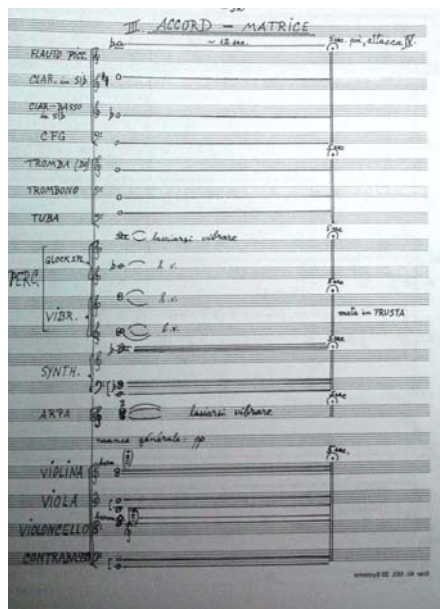


Fig. 6. Aurel Stroe – *Concerto for accordion and orchestra* (3rd part, Accord matrix)

Music has always been a medium through which we can express thoughts, ideas, not emotions – these are the fundamental traces of Prigogine’s thinking (in physics), of Rene Thom and Grothendieck (in mathematics), of Parmenide and Heidegger (in ontology).

Examples for this coordinate are *Ciaccona con alcune licenze* (Epiphany) and the *Concerto for saxophone and orchestra Prairie*, *Prieres* (the last rest, the ascending melody).

Aurel Stroe promoted, through his musical art, a special concept of temporality, an original one, sustained by ontological perspectives.

We can observe the using of a specific modalism, as a reflection of a unique sounding world, beyond its contemporary details. Aurel Stroe prefers an imaginary planetary folklore that simulates some folk sounds of the real world, as in *Mandala* on a polyphony of Antonio Lotti (*Crucifixus*, where Aurel Stroe uses the symbol of the prayer as a spiritual axis).

Fig. 7. Aurel Stroe - *Mandala on a polyphony of Antonio Lotti (Crucifixus)*

Aurel Stroe is an artist who has the courage of his own choices, who does not fear crossroads, unanswered questions or metaphysics.

„Many composers are afraid of the crossroads and make bachtrack, landing at various points of history of art and thought. Few were left who really have vision, who believe in them with a prophetic courage associated with art as conscious or subconscious premonition” [6].

#### 4. Conclusion

Aurel Stroe is one of the most important Romanian composers, musicologists and teachers in the second half of the XXth century and we already celebrated this year the 80th anniversary of his birth (on May 5, 2012) and four years after his death (on October 3rd, 2008).

The musicologists Valentina Sandu-Dediu placed Aurel Stroe in „the radical modernity (whose representatives were, besides Aurel Stroe, Stefan Niculescu, Tiberiu Olah, Myriam Marbe and Cornel Taranu), not in the moderate modernity” [7].

Dan Dediu, composer and teacher of the National University of Music in Bucharest writed about master Aurel Stroe: ”he was always prepared with the gun of metaphor and poetry, to counterbalance the effect of the pure and precise structure” [8].

Dan Dediu presents his own vision about the genesis of the musical universe (based on the concepts of Aurel Stroe’s music): „in the first day, the Composer did the model, but the model was empty of meaning.

The Composer said: let there be paradigm. And saw the composer that the paradigm was good... The Composer said: let there be a split between incommensurable paradigms... and so it was...

Then the Composer said: let there be a gathering of the rules of each paradigm, showing their results. And so it was.

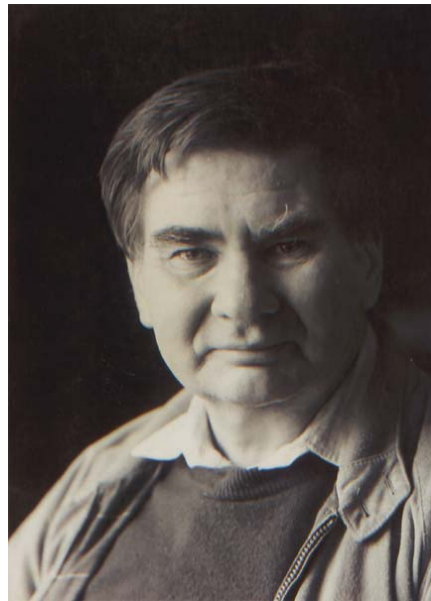
Then the Composer said: let the compositions give processes. And the compositions gave processes like morphogenesis (which made catastrophic effects), entropy (that decays a theme) the palimpsest and the paradigms... And so it was...

Then the Composer said: let there be tuning systems and signs to distinguish the untempered and the tempered tuning.

The the Composer made two great lights: the planetary folklore and multimobiles. And the Composer said that was good.

The Composer said: let there be dyad. And was dyad.

The Composer watched everything he did and here was very good” [9].



Aurel Stroe

Aurel Stroe is the composer aware of his responsibility: „today we have to answer the question on our own faith, not on our knowlegde. Pure knowledge is not enough anymore, because art is a consequence of our deepest beliefs” [10].

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