

FORMAL CONFLUENCES IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SONATINA FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN BY DINU LIPATTI

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Abstract: *The architecture of the Sonatina for Piano and Violin by Dinu Lipatti (1933) includes sections that refer to other (pre)classical formal patterns: the first part includes a treatment in the polyphonic-imitative spirit of an invention, and the other two parts join in a theme with variations. A quasi-cyclicity unites the themes of the overall work. Moreover, the sonatina stands out through the concentration of the form and language, through the thematic and architectonic precision and clarity, following the path opened a decade ago by Marţian Negrea, with his Sonatina for Piano (1922).*

Key words: *Dinu Lipatti, sonatina, variation, invention, fugato.*

1. Introduction

The fourth decade of the XX-th century identifies, in the Romanian composition, with the assertion period of the declared neoclassical trends, specific to composers such as Zeno Vancea, Sigismund Toduţă, Ludovic Feldman, Dinu Lipatti.

Resorting to (pre)classicism justifies itself, in most cases, in Romanian music, as anti-romantic or anti-impressionist reaction. The thematic loans or influences from the characterological sphere, pertaining to folklore, add thereto, imprinting a Romanian content to some specific genres/forms, such as the sonata. Thus, certain works, such as *The III-rd Sonata for Piano and Violin* by George Enescu, or *Sonatina for Violin and Piano* by Paul Constantinescu, are expressively situated at the border between picturesque

and pure musical expression, between folkloric and neoclassic. It is not the same for the *Sonatina for Piano and Violin* by Dinu Lipatti. In this case, two apparently contradictory tendencies join: a stylized folkloric tint of the set of themes – recreated – and a treatment in the rigor of the neo-baroque polyphonic spirit of this set of themes, however in a polytonal contrapuntal vision.

As regards the language of Dinu Lipatti's *Sonatina*, a relative distinction between the tonal-harmonic and the modal planes may be noted, or between diatony and chromaticism. As Clemansa Liliana Firca noted with respect to Mihail Jora, and in the case Lipatti "although combining and completing, [these planes, nn] do not fuse, do not mutually infuse their elements, as we noticed with respect to Enescu" [3]. A "cold" introspection, a prevalence of

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reason over feeling, a release of pathos, a technique decantation, oriented towards the contrapuntal tradition, here are a few particular aspects of this sonatina.

2. Part I or confluence between the sonata-form and invention

Part I is written as sonata, reduced to its essential segments. Theme I (consisting in

two periods) is a bi-strophic with the reprise of structure **A** (a+b) – **Av** (c+b1). Its characterizing clarity is the result of using a certain tonal frame – *I Aeolian* – and the modality of presentation – in *unison* – experimented in Enescu’s well-known models (*Prelude in Unison* and *The II-nd Sonata for Piano and Violin*).

Ex. 1:

From the very second phrase of the first theme, the equilibrium disrupts and the symmetry breaks by interpolation of sequential-imitative moments at the junction of the phrases and by the ramification of the melody, which brings

several superposed tonal-modal planes. The main melodic thread becomes hardly recognizable and enables a poly-melody [5], as resultant of the polyphonic linearism.

Ex. 2:

The melodies of the participating voices will simultaneously evolve in an autonomous manner, both in phrasing, due to the micro-imitations, and in the “tonal-influence fields”, with reference to Paul

Hindemith’s enlarged tonality.

The passages from one segment to another (musical phrase, period, sentence) are dimmed by the juxtapositions of motives and by the musical punctuation,

which reveal the deliberate lack of strong cadences. The musical articulation is thus subject to an open rhetoric.

This happens, for instance, at the

junction between the bridge and the secondary theme.

Ex. 3:

If, in terms of intonation, from the main theme, vague folkloric hints echoed, the secondary theme is clearly attached to a neoclassical specificity, by the language which deals with neoclassical techniques: imitation, sequence, pulsating rhythm in combinations of eights with sixteenths. This theme consists in three sentences based on the varied reprise, in free imitations, of a motive, that the entire secondary section is polyphonically built on. From the all traditional procedures, the dialogue *Theme-Answer* is taken, on a tonal plane characteristic to a free *fugato*.

Ex. 4:

As one may note, the tonal trajectory specific to the bi-thematic sonata – from the basic tonality of the theme I to the tonality of the dominant for the II-nd theme – are not observed, being transferred on the second theme, in the framework of its processing procedures. Instead, the expressive contrast is kept, emphasized through the opposite character of these two

themes: theme I - *dolce e legato*, II-nd theme – *scherzando*.

In terms of polyphonic treatment, the development of the Sonatina (measure 64), enhances the neobaroque aspect of the work. It starts with a free *fugato*, based on overlapping motives of the two themes, whereto a new melodic element attaches. The free *Fugato* of this stage develops in mobile counterpoint, both on the horizontal and on the vertical. The place of voice entering displays elasticity, and the number of voices likewise varies, displaying double, triple, multiple-counterpoint aspects. The three super-ordinate contrapuntal plans evolve in stretto-es grouped in culminating waves.

In the second stage of the development (measure 83), an acceleration of the rhythm is registered, through introducing new manners of counter-pointing the theme, in rhythmic continuum on values of sixteenths. This stage constitutes the culmination of the entire development. The third stage (measure 93) reduces the tension through conclusive fragmentations, preparing the apparition of the reprise.

Therefore, although component part of the whole, represented by the sonata form, the development detaches as form in itself – a specifically polyphone form. One may

conclude that the manner of enclosing the microstructure in the macrostructure, or of the form in form is resorted to.

In the reprise (measure 101) abbreviations are operated in the two themes, also noticing the lack of a segment corresponding to the bridge.

3. Theme with variations

If in the I-st part, the composer had implemented the polyphonic form into the pattern of the sonata, in the other two parts, the phenomenon is opposite: the composer cumulates in a unique form the second and third part of the sonata. This is one of the procedures by which Lipatti ensures the connection between the form and cycle of the sonata. Applying this procedure could be realized in a formal frame displaying elasticity of the component parts: cycle of variations. This way, the theme and the first four variations are grouped in a median part; and the last variation, remaining component part of the cycle, individualizes in a separate final movement. Analyzing the variation cycle by the evolving factor, by the processes occurring within the form, the following may be noted: the theme and first two variations mark an acceleration of the movement, being referable to the variation technique based on the diminution procedure. Under tonal aspect, no contrasts are registered, the modal theme is not

transposable, but remains within the borders of *I Aeolian*. The more pronounced contrast can only be perceived with the third variation, as contrast of character, of (slow) tempo and tonal-modal (the theme appears transposed in *A Aeolian*). The IV-th variation brings new aspects – contrast of motion (lively), character (play), tonal (homonymous manner, *chromatized Lydian A*). the last variation reaches its climax in terms of agogic (*Allegro maestoso*), of neoclassical polyphonic treatment of the theme, conferring a new facet to the tono-modalismo of the part – *Lydian C*. The global and not disparate approach of these component parts, with the subtle connections among themselves, reveals a remarkable phenomenon, namely that the groups and functions that may be attributed to the parts display similarities with the sonata-form! Thus, the theme – *Andantino* may be equated to an introduction, the I-st and II-nd variations, rapid, evince similarities with the sonata *Allegro*, the III-rd variation – *Andante*, replaces the second part, the IV-th variation, in character of play and tempo – *Allegro molto*, can substitute a scherzo, and the V-th variation is attributed the role of the final by the composer himself. To conclude, by the composer's intentions and by other possible associations, such correspondences may be set:

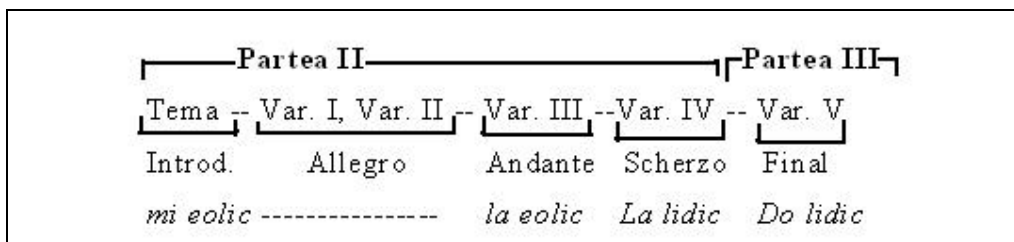


Fig.1. *Interference of the II-nd and III-rd parts*

A more pronounced folkloric tinge detaches from the second part of the Sonatina. The cantabile character of its theme evokes the tender atmosphere of a lullaby, recreated in the spirit of the authenticity of our folklore. The form that this song submits, turned into a theme of a variation cycle, has three-versed structure.

This pattern also perpetuates in the subsequent variations. The square character is kept with certain licences that do not destroy, however, its symmetry. The initial tonality is kept under melodic aspect, the theme cadencing in *I Aeolian*.

Ex. 5:

Violino
p cantabile

Piano
p legato

Do: I -----6-----7 VII 7 V 7 mi: II 7 I 7 - 6# VII 7 I

4 b 4 4 4

The variation I raises the pulsation from two to three eighths, introducing the metric contrast of the ternary measure and the contrast of a character rhythm, which unifies dancing species from various areas of the world, from the Neapolitan *tarantella* to the Romanian *boyar dance*.

The II-nd variation possesses rhythms that give it the character of a Toccata, in close figurations to the dulcimer. Resorting to this procedure that pertains to popular instrumentation, Lipatti draws here nearer the folkloric element, to a higher extent.

Ex. 6:

Vln.

Pno.

An obvious contrast, realized for the first time on the level of all parameters, is achieved once with the III-rd variation. In a tempo *Andante*, under the indication *molto cantabile*, a veritable expression

contrast is born, which makes this variation detach, within the cycle, as segment apart. The IV-th variation, conceived in popular-character dance, might have its origin in *aksak* rhythm

games (*Lame, Rubbish*), adjusted just the way of the metric and symmetric rhythm, so as to correspond the cult-type rigors and the multi-voice writing.

The final, *Allegro maestoso*, also designed as the last variation, the V-th, may be deemed a synthesis of the entire work, despite its lapidary dimensions. Everything rapidly consumes, in a breath, in the writing condensed at the regular motion of sixteenths.

4. Conclusions

Sonatina for Piano and Violin by Dinu Lipatti is, beside *The II-nd Sonata* by Enescu, less subservient to the folkloric models and rather attached to the contemporary universalist currents, especially to the neoclassical-neobaroque one. Both in *The II-nd Sonata for Piano and Violin* by G. Enescu, and in *Sonatina for Piano and Violin* by D. Lipatti, the following may be noted: evasion from the sonata-form, recurrence to a form-pretext for implementing a specific content, investing the form with a certain ethos, which provides and deepens the relation between content and form [1].

In the inter-War musicians' common goal, to militate for a genuinely Romanian art, most composers' preoccupation to resort to rethinking classical patterns in realizing the national-universal fusion is placed. In this context, according to V. Herman's

observation, the "sonata and symphony continue to fascinate many contemporary composers. Each one attempts, according to the strength of his fantasy and technical knowledge, to bring a personal note in the vast and complicate aggregate of elements that contribute to achieving such a form in the writing style and modalities of our days" [4].

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