

RHAPSODIC CHARACTER IN *SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO* BY TUDOR CIORTEA

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Abstract: *The appeal to the neoclassic form and language is constantly felt in all Tudor Ciortea's creation, regardless of the period whereto the respective musical works pertain. This way, his creation of this orientation (more or less explicit) comprises: sonatas for piano, violin and piano, violoncello and piano, flute and piano, clarinet and piano, trumpet and piano. The sonata for violin and piano, written in 1946, opens the series of instrumental sonatas in the composer's creation. It attempts to conciliate the two apparently opposite tendencies: a folklore-inspired content and the classical form. Hence the necessary enrichments or adjustments: the rhapsodic appearance, parlando-giusto rhythm and, especially, that "fairy-tale" atmosphere, which confers Enescu's mark to the sonata.*

Keywords: *Tudor Ciortea, sonata, violin, folklore.*

1. Introduction

Attentive observer and fine connoisseur of Enescu's creation, Tudor Ciortea not only dedicates to the latter a series of studies, analyses and syntheses – having become fundamental works for the contemporary musicological research – but also applies a series of Enescu's principles in his own creation, especially in the sonata we have approached and dealt with. Musical piece of onset, it comes to light in a relatively short while as compared to Enescu's 25 opus, after approximately 20 years, inscribing in the first musical works of this genre within the Romanian creation

(it succeeds to P. Constantinescu's *Sonatina*, which dates from 1933). This way, it attempts to conciliate the two apparently opposed tendencies: a folklore-inspired content and the classical form. Hence the necessary enrichments or adjustments: the cyclic principle (from Enescu's essence), modally-profiled themes, the rhapsodic, improvised appearance, parlando rhythm, combined with giusto and, especially, the atmosphere that Ciortea himself calls to be "fairy-tale"-like [2] and that most adequately transfers Enescu's character upon his sonata. However, in general, a retention of the formal benchmarks within the limits of the

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traditional patterns may be noticed. Paraphrasing the author, we may define his sonata by adapting his conclusions in relation to Enescu's Sonata III: "There is obviously about a form adapted to the content of a new language - «in the Romanian popular character» - as the author himself specifies in the score, [which, our note.] has succeeded in moulding, from a pre-eminently rhapsodic style, an equilibrated construction, based on the sonata form" [2]. The creative application of these assertions most clearly reveals itself and is enhanced in the very title (and subtitle) that T. Ciorteia confers to his work - *Sonata for Piano and Violin in Romanian Rhapsodic Style*.

2. Tudor Ciorteia's Sonata for Violin and Piano – "expression of the rhapsodic style"

After a brief introduction wherein arpeggios with unresolved delays and with elements *ajoutées* are figured, the main theme is exposed, which presents a few common characteristics with the main theme of Enescu's Sonata III: the same modal-chromatic sphere, which reflects upon the melody and harmony (oscillation between A chromatic - E chromatic) and the repetitive structure whilst exposing the integral theme, with its passage from violin to piano.

Ex. 1:



The structure of the theme follows the model of the tripod period, which displays contingent asymmetry, presenting an antecedent (a) of four measures, a median segment (m) and a consequent one (c), both of five measures. The antecedent phrase conforms to a chromatic tetrachord placed on A, the same tetrachord exposed in the "fairy-tale file" of the piano from the debut of Enescu's Sonata III for Piano and Violin, which may signal the composer's purposeful reference to this model.

Most often, the harmonic language is within the scope of bi- and poly-modalism (tonalism), recording, in this sense, various phases in rendering complex the multi-vocal discourse. These aspects render

themselves conspicuous, *in nuce*, ever since the introduction and the first exposition of the main theme, much as a motto for the harmonic sphere of the entire sonata.

The cadence of the first thematic exposition is uncertain through the harmonic procedures that the composer resorts to. This way, doubling and tripling in mixtures of quints the Frigic cadence (inverse to Machault cadence) enhances, once with the linear cohesion, the modal ambiguity (result of the polyvalence), giving the impression of temporary stops on several sonorous centres.

Ex. 2:

The image shows a musical score for Piano in 3/4 time. The top staff is the right hand, and the bottom staff is the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes a cadence labeled 'cad Machault' and a re:VII-I cadence. There are triplets and a 'la: I-I' marking in the right hand.

Although possessing the same intonational origin, the secondary theme (m. 44) succeeds, however, in bringing a contrasting note as compared to the first theme, due to its character which is similar

to parlando rubato, mostly visible in the second phrase, in the duet of the two twinned melodies, of the piano and the violin.

Ex. 3:

The image shows a musical score for Violin (Vln.) and Piano (Pno.) in 3/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The violin part features a melodic line with accents and a triplet. The piano part features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and a 'rubato' marking.

As he proceeded with theme I, the composer resumes the secondary theme in a canonical stretto at the octave, of the piano (m. 54), accompanied by a counterpoint of the violin, wherein all those intonational formulations characteristic to the secondary set of themes may be discerned.

A brief conclusion, attached to the second theme (m. 59) closes the exposition – through cadencial repetitions, with the implication of the sub-tone both in the melody and in the harmony – on the tone E. In fact, the characteristic phenomenon to the exposition consists in the simultaneous evolution, almost constant, of the melodic-harmonic discourse on two modal plans: a mode with various agreements centred on E, situated in the harmonic support of the piano and the mode A chromatic 1, wherein the melodic type developments of the violin are situated.

The first two phases of the development are focused on processing the main theme. Phase I (m. 81) opens in mixolydian D,

which acquires the role of temporary modal centre. From the main theme, apparently new melodic profiles detach themselves, which borrow similar features from some lyrical species of folklore (doina, long song) through the rhythmical aspect more free, slightly melismatic, related, in matter of intonation, to the mobility of certain sounds (B flat - B natural).

The second phase (m. 103) treats in stretto (between violin and piano) a varied form of the main theme, reinstating an old modal centre - E. Phase III (m. 122), with the role of anacrusis of the reprise, develops under the form of virtuosity cadence at the solo violin. Under rhythmical-melodic aspect, the cadence is a variant of the secondary theme, now transfigured in popular dance melody. It is placed in the area of another mode, B chromatic 2, mode of the dominant for E, wherein the reprise will open, a fact that pleads for considering this moment as harmonic anacrusis of the reprise.

Ex. 4



The shortened reprise (m. 137) is based on the exclusive apparition of the first theme; the absence of the second theme is motivated by its recent re-editing in the melodic variant of the virtuosity cadence. The main theme appears, however, in two successive utterances, the first time in E chromatic, in accordance with the mode in whose waters the harmony “bathes”, the second time in A chromatic and in bivalent report with the mode of the harmony, which remains centred on E, similar to the exposition. Both re-expositions bring the theme in integral form. Three measures of external enlargement realize the caesura (with stoppage on the crown) before the attack of the Coda (m. 162-164).

Coda (Vivo, m. 165) is based on the rhythmical variation of the incipient motive of the first theme, in iso-rhythm with its counterpoint.

From the scheme of the form, two contrasting thematic sectors may be detached (A and B), a half-episode (interlude) with differentiated musical substance (C) and the reprise of the first

theme (A), a fact that determined us to place it at the borderline of a form of three-verse lied. Under the appearance of this rigorous organization, the thematic elements differentiate, referring to contrasting folkloric genres, so that the character of this part draws close to that rhapsodic style enunciated in the title of the sonata.

After shortening of more than half the initial number of measures (79 eliminated measures and 59 remaining measures), the main theme of this part, a variant of a carol melody, collected by various folklorists (S. Drăgoi, G .Breazul) [1, 3], also quoted and processed by P. Constantinescu in part III of the *Sonatina*, is abandoned and, consequently, the “face” of the entire part is modified. Thereby, out of the carol theme, a piece remained, with episodic character; that melody (*Andante lamentoso*) turns into main theme which, initially, was seen as secondary theme. The created impression is that the entrance in the core of this part to suddenly done, taking the audience by surprise.

Ex. 5

Developed in an A chromatic 1 d, defective of the IV-th step and stopping on the sub-tone, the theme refers, both through the used mode and through the incipit cell (Enescu's cell x), to the theme I of the first part. Here, the intervallic cyclism is applied, whilst outlining, with

the same intonational elements, some themes of different expressiveness.

Theme II also brings an oriental perfume, through its intervallic, seeming to descend from Anton Pann's collections of Mundane Songs.

Ex. 6



From the intonational standpoint, this theme breathes a Byzantine air.

What follows (m. 39) is an interlude, wherein a differentiated material (noted with C) does not constitute a so-called thematic construction, new, but a new episode with improvising aspect, a reply, in Ciortea's vision, of the "concert in the meadow" from part II of G. Enescu's Sonata III for Piano and Violin. The particular, descriptive note of this sector is achieved on the level of the technical procedures, different from the rest of the part (and even from the rest of the entire work).

The last part of Tudor Ciortea's Sonata for Violin and Piano in E Minor is written as rondo. If the second part is framed in the tonal-modal sphere of the dominant, B minor, the third part develops at the homonymous E major. The tonal plan of the entire cycle enhances, therefore, one of the classical-romantic patterns.

Introduced through the 6 measures, the chorus (A) is underlain by a popular dance theme, symmetrically structured.

Ex. 7

Although framed in the measure of 6/8, the theme reveals and enhances simultaneous poly-metrics, as the rhythmical formulas of the melody are binarily grouped, as a function of their accents (in groups of 2/8). The chorus has the aspect of a small three-verse form, consisting of three periods.

The presentation of the theme of the first couplet (B) is done in the imitative dialogue of the two instruments which, in the second phrase, changes into stretto at three voices, contributing to the gradual rise of the tensional curve. Multiple scordaturas may be noted, which convey a comic specificity to the theme.

The second couplet, C (m. 82) brings a special atmosphere, typical to the folklore from Maramureş. Displaying a small two-verse form, it creates the specific frame of the popular dance melodies within the respective area, through the percussive rhythm of the violin, which doubles the melodic elements of the piano's ostinato. The small, pentachord extension of the major mode placed on A ranges within the ambitus of the violin's debut quint.

The conclusion may be drawn that, through the functions conveyed by the composer to the constituent parts of the rondo, these ones may be grouped into an ample three-verse form, similar to a sonata form, this way: the chorus and first couplet form the exposition, the gradual return of the chorus and the second couplet form the development, the last return of the chorus replaces the reprise.

3. Conclusions

The fact that, to a significant extent, the author resorts to Enescu's thematic cyclism is proved, first of all, by the affinity through derivation of the two contrasting themes (theme I and II) from the first part of the sonata. The prevalence of the gradual progress in conceiving Tudor Ciortea's set of themes reveals and enhances the theme-modal scale identity (a particularity introduced in the universal language by Olivier Messiaen). Through adapting the form of sonata to the new attempts of using the modal language, dated in the first half of the 20th century, Ciortea anticipates the synthesis modalism of the second half of the century – through the chromated aspect of the tune – and achieves contact surfaces with the

traditional, folkloric modalism – which consist in the presence, sometimes, of a specific intervallic: sub-tone, Frigic second, Lydic quart etc.

In this case, we likewise deal with one of the non-traditional hypostases of the mixed form, as we can see in Enescu's *Sonata III for Piano and Violin*, p. III - inclusion of a form of variations within the rondo or, in Dinu Lipatti's *Sonatina for Piano and Violin*, the connection of parts II (slow) and III (swift) in a theme with variations [4]. Thereby, there is acted not only upon the form parameters, but also of the cycle ones of the sonata.

References

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