

Tracing the social-psychological causality relationships in Stravinski and Shostakovich through the violin chamber music

Maria-Magdalena LAZĂR¹, Stela DRĂGULIN²

Abstract: *The biography of a work of art is always strongly connected to the biography of its creator. This statement is already well-known and it doesn't need further explanation. In the musical analysis tradition, we are more inclined to treat the matter of a work by beginning with the context in which it was created by the composer, but we sometimes tend to neglect the fact that the given work has a biography of its own which, from a counter perspective, speaks of the creator's social and psychological context by itself. In the following article we selected two chamber music pieces by each composer in order to trace through them the causality relationships that connect the works to the creators and their (inner and outer) world and see how the musical material of *The Soldier's Tale* and the *Piano Trio in E minor*, respectively, can bring us to a better understanding of the immanent meanings which they possess.*

Key-words: *context, immanent meanings, recurring elements.*

1. Introduction

In most of the cases, changing the context in which a given piece of music was created brings an alteration of the conclusive statements. So, it is of the utmost interest to properly define from the beginning this context – certainly, from a perspective in keeping with the desired analysis' pattern. There are many similarities between the human being and a work of art, but we can assume that, in the latter's case, the answer to the question that poses the purpose of the existence – the famous *why* – is far more reachable. Considering that we can access a great knowledge of the reasons that justify a piece's existence (more often social and historical reasons), answering to *why a certain piece was created* becomes

¹ *Transilvania* University of Brasov, maria.boros-lazar@unitbv.ro

² *Transilvania* University of Brasov, stela.dragulin@unitbv.ro

appealing as long as it serves to outline the social-historical context. This question always concerns the biography of the piece's creator – in our case, the composer. Moreover, if we extend the question to *why a certain piece was created in a certain way*, therefore touching the individuality of that piece in relation to others, outlining the creation's biography is needed. This context incites the body of the analysis. Given that the conclusions are directed by the context, in order to answer to the second question mentioned above it is imperative in advance to answer to the first one. But here arises another step backwards. Following a deductive reasoning, we'll take into account the following trinity of elements situated in a direct causality relationship: environment – human being – art. Validating an analysis of the violin chamber music repertoire of Stravinsky and Shostakovich is possible if we understand the psychological and affective sides of the human being that resides behind each of the two names. Also, this understanding can happen only if we closely distinguish the social and historical factors that kneaded these human beings. In other words, before discussing *why a certain piece was created in a certain way*, we will try to outline the context that explains circumstances that led to the shaping of the individual and of his distinctive features.

2. Igor Stravinsky

As one of the most mediatised personalities of the 20th Century, Stravinsky crossed over a large range of environments. He always considered any publicity as good publicity and deliberately acted to entice this publicity and to build himself some sort of an ubiquitous image. In truth, Stravinsky's image came to be found in the most diverse and contradictory of instances, from postcards, shows like *Jeopardy*, movies (*Bird*, 1988), to being listed in E. D. Hirsch Jr.'s inventory *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. Moreover, this overdone publicity was always wanted and pursued with interest. It was Stravinsky's desire to maintain a unique standpoint in the cultural landscape of those times, by disengaging himself from any possible association, criticizing any pretence to rightfully understanding his will and exhibiting an opposing attitude towards almost anything. Because of this, every glimpse of opposition towards him was received with total rejection – the opposition itself could not have opposers (Joseph 2001, 3). Thus, we can portray the dimension of his personality about which Nadia Boulanger was saying that it is „so peremptory that when he picks up something, you don't see the object so much as the hand holding it” (Joseph 2001, 2). Of course that this kind of behavior doesn't come from an entirely natural factor. We are discussing a personality permanently grown towards visibility and to a certain excentricity. To

better understand the becoming of such a personal colour, it is mandatory to first name the events that directed Stravinsky's life, notwithstanding the hardships that might arise in our way. Rosamund Bartlett accedes to this idea, taking into account the composer's habit of mystifying matters connected to his private life in order to correspond to a certain image and will and, particularly, to dismiss and deny any possible association with his fatherland, Russia; he never felt inclined to adhere to its traditions and musical heritage, taking into account the delay in its development compared to the West.

2.1. Short biographical itinerary

The time in which Stravinsky was born represents a turnaround in the political and cultural development of the Tsarist Russia and the future Soviet Union. The two elements that contribute to the shaping of a society are politics and culture and they always are interdependent. Considering this, even if we discuss each one of them separately, we won't forget that this is more of a convention than a natural state of matters. Thus, on one hand we have the political, socialist novel of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, *What is to be done?* (1862) and the somehow more liberal directives of Tsar Alexander the 2nd, who was assassinated in 1881. On the other hand, literature has known its so called Golden Age through the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Regarding music, the contributions of Anton Rubinstein led to the opening of the first Russian Conservatoire in Sankt Petersburg (also 1862), projected in a more West-oriented spirit. One of the Conservatoire's first graduates was none other than Tchaikovsky. As for *The Mighty Five*, it is acknowledged that the members of the group deprecated this orientation outside the Russian traditions' borders. Betwixt these factors, in the middle of this period lay the revolutionary intellectuals. With Tsar Alexander's death, repression started to amplify, to the detriment of the former achievements in the liberalisation and minimisation of the tsarist oppression process. When Stravinsky was born, in 1882, such a chauvinistic attitude as the Jews' and other minor religious groups' persecution was in full bloom under the more conservative Tsar Alexander the 3rd. Instead, the national (and, presumptive better said, nationalistic) culture is gaining momentum.

2.1.1. *The childhood*

The father of Stravinski was at the time a principal bass singer at the Sankt Petersburg Opera, who benefited from the policy of stopping the monopoly which the imperial theatres had and of closing the Italian Opera house. Feodor

Stravinski, who was an employee of the Opera since 1876, had a considerable career growth in the 80's, mostly due to the roles from the Russian operas which were starting to flourish. He was also close to Rimski-Korsakov, Musorgski and Borodin, which allowed the young Igor Stravinski to grow up in an environment deeply impregnated with the national spirit, surrounded by the works of Tchaikovski, Korsakov, Glinka, etc., spending most of his time at the Marinski Theatre, which was his father's workplace.

In spite of this thundering upsurge of the Russian music, the singer profession did not yet acquire a reputable position. The fact that Stravinsky was a name among the Russian noblemen wasn't a warrant for other privileges in view of the fact that the family didn't own any property whatsoever, but instead lived in a rented house and lived by fairly modest financial means. Hoping to improve their state of living, Stravinsky studied law between 1901-1906 at the Saint Petersburgs University. At the time he began undertaking music theory lessons with Rimsky-Korsakov and befriended his son. Soon, Korsakov became a pronounced father figure for the young Stravinsky, whose biological father died in 1902 from cancer. Following 1905, Stravinsky developed the habit of attending the weekly musical soirees hosted regularly by Korsakov. In the same year, he married his cousin, Katerina Nosenko.

2.1.2. *The modeling of the creative profile*

After the death of Alexander the 3rd in 1894, the ascension of Tsar Nikolay the 2nd allowed the speed-up of the Russian cultural thinking's modernization process through updates to western values simultaneous with the exploitation of the national ones. Thereby the Russian Modernist movement was born in the last decade of the 19th century – a movement that gradually spanned over all fields of Art. This was possible through some central figures, like Wassily Kandinsky (Abstractionism), Valery Bryusov and Constantin Balmont (Symbolism) and others. Their respective adversaries regarded them as decadentists. Sergey Dyagilev and Alexandre Benois were the creators and leaders of an essential progressive-minded association, called *The New World*. It held a journal with the same name, in which was possible to publish articles on the hottest themes of the time and, also, a series of exhibitions designed to promote the Russian culture on its territory and outside it alike. Since Dyagilev focused his attention on the visual side of Art (as Rimsky-Korsakov discouraged him in his composition ambitions), there are other two members of *The New World* that established a subsidiary branch of the association assigned with music matters – Alfred Nurok and Walter Nouvel. *The Contemporary Music Nights*, as the branched was named, promoted the performance of works by

Sergei Vasilenko, Rachmaninov, Glazunov, Debussy, Schoenberg and Reger. Stravinsky had his debut within this branch and was soon to become the central figure of the Russian avant-garde. But, before identifying himself with this group, we must specify that Stravinsky was more attached to the conservative Korsakov (from a musical point of view). He took part regularly in Korsakov's famous soirees every Wednesday. Soon though, in 1907, Stravinsky openly affiliated himself with *The Contemporary Music Nights* by composing the *Two songs* op. 6 on Sergei Gorodetsky's lyrics – one of the first examples for the Slavic folklore-inspired modern poetry. Korsakov accused these songs of incorporating a contemporary „decadent-impresionist lyricism” (Taruskin 1996, 352). Even more after Korsakov's death in 1908, Stravinsky was able to dissociate himself from the other, in order to develop the composition based on folklore at leisure. This was a relatively new concept for the Russian artistic creation procedures.

2.1.3. *Ballets Russes*

This way began the collaboration with Diaghilev, and its first result was *The Firebird*, which brought to Stravinsky a fast success that was followed by the composer's sudden fame. One year later, *Petrushka* was performed in Paris – a work that portrays the pagan holiday Maslenitsa. In 1911, *Petrushka* was the first work to treat the folk elements as a primary source for the elaboration of an entirely new and innovative style. As it is known, two years later followed the emblematic *Rite of Spring*, which was the turning point and the main agent in the process of cultural development of the century and, additionally, the peak of the Russian neo-nationalism. Even though at the time Stravinsky denied the presence of the Russian folk elements in the ballet's musical substrate, today it is well known the thorough research done by the composer in order to incorporate these elements as accurately as possible. Taruskin points out a few of its distinctive features, such as the work being a sum of the constitutive parts rather than developed from a prevalent and primary idea (Taruskin 1996, 18); the cumulation of static individual units in surprising juxtapositions (Taruskin 1996, 954); the reduction of any organic development between the different sections of the work, in order to give a feeling of immobility (Taruskin 1996, 1450), contrary to the continuous development specific for the previous composition methods.

2.2. **The Soldier's Tale**

The family spent the years during the First World War at Morges, in their new residence. After the October Revolution, the return in their native country became

impossible. Also, their financial means decreased notably because Russia did not adhere to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. Thus, *The Soldiers Tale* was created in 1918. It was rather a necessary compromise for the sake of a better mobility of the performers (players and actors) and the reduced costs that the performance of the work implies. The financial support in this period came from a Swiss philanthropist reached by Stravinsky. Werner Reinhart sponsored him for *The Soldiers Tale's* premiere in Lausanne (1918) and a series of chamber music concerts following the next year.

2.3. Overview

The work has structure of two parts and 11 scenes (three and eight, respectively). Being a realivly small work, the instrumentation is rather tenuous, including seven instruments: violin, A clarinet, cornet, basson, trombone, double-bass and percussion – specifically, side drum with snares, two side drums without snares, small drum with snares, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine and triangle. The libretto includes the following characters: narrator, the Devil, the Soldier and a ballerina. The scene placement is as follows: the orchestra and the conductor in right back part, the narrator to the left, while the action takes place in the middle of the stage.

2.3.1. The rythm

Fig. 1. „The Soldier’s March”, mm.14-19.

One of the elements that bring unicity to the work is the emphasis on the rythm, mostly the one inspired by ragtime and jazz, which at that time were in full bloom. Even though Stravinsky had not heard until then either one of them in an authentic

American performance, he got in touch with many scores of the genre and this allowed him to make an accurate enough idea about the style and sound. The rhythmic complexity of the work is enhanced by the use of irregular meters. The work's originality is clear from the start, through the *Soldier's March*. This part has a distinctive impact because it superimposes constantly changing meters over a binary rhythm in eighth notes with breaks in the double-bass, and the harmony oscillates between the key and the dominant chords (Figure 1). At a semantic level, the moment is a musical representation of the soldier's steps. Also, the score hosts numerous sections with syncopated rhythms – a composing procedure that was gaining terrain under the influence of jazz music (Figure 2).

2.3.2. Cyclic elements

Another means of composition that Stravinsky developed in *The Soldier's Tale* is the use of a common theme throughout more parts of the work. A good example is the theme from which originate the three parts with dancing features: *Tango*, *Waltz* and *Ragtime*. The recurrent theme was altogether borrowed from the *Ragtime* composed a year before and the one used both in the *Soldier's March* (Figure 3a) from the second part and in the *Little Concert* (Figure 3b).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for 'The Devil's Dance'. The first system, labeled '54', includes staves for Clarinet (Cl.), Flute (Fl.), Cor Anglais (C. à P.), Trumpet (Trb.), Horns (Gr. C.), Violin (Vl.), and Cello/Double Bass (C. B.). A boxed number '7' is placed above the first measure. The second system, labeled '55', includes staves for Clarinet (Cl.), Flute (Fl.), Cor Anglais (C. à P.), and Violin (Vl.). A boxed number '8' is placed above the first measure. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including syncopation and changing meters. Performance instructions such as 'Solo', 'préparez la sourdine', and 'poco meno f (ma arcco)' are present.

Fig. 2. „The Devil's Dance”, mm. 51-52 and 54-55.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Soldier's March". The score is written for a woodwind and brass ensemble. The instruments listed on the left are: Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cornet in A (C.à P.), Trombone (Trp.), Euphonium (Tde B.), C. clarinet (C. cl.), and Grand C. (Gr. C.). The Clarinet part is marked with a box containing the number 11 and a "Solo" instruction. The Cornet and Trombone parts are marked with "Solo" and "f". The Bassoon part is marked with "f". The Euphonium part is marked with "f". The C. clarinet and Grand C. parts are marked with "f". The Violin (VI.) part is marked with "f". The C. Bass (C. B.) part is marked with "f" and "sempre stacc.". The score is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Fig. 3a. The theme in the „Soldier’s March”, in clarinet, cornet and trombone, mm. 64-70

2.3.3. Extramusical connections

Likewise we can find in this work elements of the imaginary and symbolism (Figure 4). Such an example is again the *Tango* scene, at the beginning of which the score indicates the start of the princess’s dance dance simultaneously with the clarinet tune that accurately and effortlessly portrays the princess dancing. Moreover, the violin and the percussion are used to symbolically represent the Devil, considering that, during the story, he always used the violin to manipulate the Soldier (Figure 5). Thereby it becomes very appropriate to include in the last section (*The triumphal march of the Devil*) some episodes dominated by violin and percussion.

Cl. 20 *pp* (*possible*)

Fg.

C. à P. *p, staccatissimo*

Vi. *pp*

C. B. *pp* *pizz.*

Cl. 21 *pp sub.*

Fig. 3b. The theme from „Little Concert”, in the clarinet, mm. 95-99

Cl. *p*

Vi. *p*

C. cl.

Gr. C.

Cymb.

La princesse se lève du lit
Die Prinzessin erhebt sich vom Lager
The Princess rises from her couch

4 Elle danse
Sie tanzt
She begins to dance

Cl. *saltando*

Vi. *saltando*

* Glissez avec l'archet de toute sa longueur jusqu'au signe ☒
Sur la corde Ré jusqu'au même signe ☒

Fig. 4. „Tango”, mm. 30-37

Fig. 5. „The triumphal march of the Devil”, mm. 20-27

2.3.4. Jazz elements

Even though the influence of jazz can be felt more at a rhythmical level, as we have seen, and less at the melodic and harmonical one, a short glimpse over the two chorals (especially *The Great Choral*) proves that Stravinsky encisioned jazz harmonies (Figure 6); almost every chord in the first musical exposition of the section implies and demonstrates the use of a previous aquired knowledge on the jazz theory, through the seventh and ninth chord recurent throughout the work.

Fig. 6. First four bars of the „Great Choral”, portaying the progression
 $G-A2-G9-F9-C^{6/4}-D-C^{7/2}-D9-G^{4/3}-C^{7/2}-A9-E.$

2.3.5. Extended interpretation

The First World War played an essential part in shaping the artistic movements of the time. Of all the movements in history, *Modernism* practically defines a wide range of derived movements and there are almost as many subsidiary movements as creative individuals. In the pre-war period, what could somehow define Modernism were the experiments undertaken by the avant-garde artists concerning rather the form than the substrate. What followed can be considered to have as objective the bringing about of artistic products by modernist means that would satisfy the taste of the consumers and could be socially acceptable. To this effect, in order to disguise at a superficial first glance the basic intention, the modernist creative techniques were superimposed in a sophisticated way around the core that was actually a subject with an obvious and popular nature. Christopher Butler places *The Soldier's Tale* in such a category, that he calls „stylistic pluralism” (Cross 2003, 27). Mostly in the *Three Dances* we can identify this disguise of something that is well-known into something that seems hard to recognize (Cross 2003, 101). Withal, at a more general formal level, the whole work represents a superimposition of eclectic elements, which instead of being unintelligible or heterogeneous at first sight, is instead perceived as a natural given. Adorno encircles the work into surreal frames and also finds it a good example of an *authentic work* (*ibid.*, p. 194). What brought him to such a statement is the way in which the eclectic complexion was molded into a coherent and coagulated speech, without changing its fundamental characteristic. Another feature of the post-war Modernism is a kind of humor, a sardonic detachment incorporated in the structural and affective fabric. Walsh identifies this mannerism in the *Choral*, in which transpires a superior sense of knowledge, shaped in accordance with the intention of parodying a state of serious immersion in the contemplation act (Cross 2003, 29).

3. Dmitri Shostakovich – Analysis in the social and psychological context

In which regards Shostakovich, the musical critic tradition in terms of an analytical perspective of a purely musical element – which Jean-Jacques Nattiez considered to be *immanent meanings* (McCreless in Fanning 1995, 117) – proves to be rather barren during the 20th century. Fanning explains this phenomenon by pointing to the unprecedented aversion of the critics towards the existence of this tonal music of his in the 20th century. These critics tend to be more interested in the social, historical and psychological features of Shostakovich's scores. Nattiez names these

features *extrinsic content*. The unprecedented aversion mentioned earlier, willingly or not, has led to categorizing the musical element as uninteresting from a scientific perspective. We must remember that Shostakovich was part of a musical tradition which emphasized the idea of music being the carrier of an extramusical meaning.

Therefore, a pertinent and adequate approach of Shostakovich's work from an analytic point of view needs to contain an equal balance of the two components: the immanent and extrinsic meanings.

3.1. Piano Trio in E minor, op. 67

The average connoisseur of Shostakovich's music has some fixed opinions on op. 67. Ivan Sollertinski died in February 1944, and the second piano trio was finished in August of the same year, being dedicated to him. Furthermore, it is known that *Allegro Molto* from the 8th quartet reproduces the Jewish theme of this op. 67, as a reminder of the situation of the Nazi concentration camps.

3.1.1. The cyclic element

The *Piano Trio* no. 2 is a cyclic piece, but it shouldn't be regarded as one in which there is a certain leitmotif theme which undergoes different kinds of changes, unifying the musical development. The only perpetual element in op. 67 is the funeral mood generated by the minor key and by the themes' homonymous character in each part (Cross 2003, 130). Other contributing factors are both the reusing of the canon from the first part (Figure 9) and the recurrence of the *passacaglia* ostinato from the third part (Figure 12) in the final parts (Figures 7 and Figure 8, respectively). This procedure has the purpose of strengthening the work's unity and providing the entire piece a coherent and cumulative conclusion.

3.1.2. Structural aspects

The trio, according to his creator's preference for the traditional forms, follows the standard structure of the genre. The first part, which comes after the introductory canon that highlights the uncommon flageolet effect on cello, embraces an usual sonata form, with the exposition containing two themes, the main one in e minor and the secondary one in G Major, and with the development's and recapitulation's themes being presented in the original key. The second movement is a scherzo

with a typical *lied* form in F# minor and the third movement is a *passacaglia* in B flat minor. Finally, the last part, *Allegretto* in E minor represents the sum of elements which can be found across the entire piece.

The beginning of the fourth movement indicates a following development which resembles the rondo form – which indeed occurs until the third appearance of the A section. Then, the thematic structure distances itself away from the rondo form by a mix of elements of the A and C sections which are diversely processed until the return to the major version of the initial key. In this return, the piano brings us back the arpeggiated chords that constitute the ostinato progression from the *passacaglia* (Figure 7) and the entire reproduction of the introductive canon (Figure 7). The rondo form is defined at this moment by the arriving of the A and B sections, and so the piece concludes with another recall of the *passacaglia* and A section themes (Cross 2003, 131).

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece. At the top left, rehearsal mark 91 is indicated, followed by the tempo marking 'a tempo' and a note value of a quarter note equal to 168 beats. The score is written in F# minor and 3/4 time. The lower system shows a complex arpeggiated ostinato in the bass line, with fingerings 8, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 6, 7, 6. The upper system shows a melodic line with a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking and a fermata. The piece concludes with a final arpeggiated chord.

Fig. 7. Recurring ostinato in fourth movement, beginning at rehearsal mark 91

The image displays a musical score for a recurring canon in the fourth movement, beginning at rehearsal mark 92. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line starts at rehearsal mark 92 with the instruction "con sord." and "ff espressivo". The piano accompaniment begins at rehearsal mark 93 with "f legato" and "mp". Rehearsal mark 94 shows the piano part with "tenuto" markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 8. Recurring canon in fourth movement, beginning at rehearsal mark 92

However, in which concerns this Shostakovich opus, an analytic endeavour from a theoretical point of view does not imply a high difficulty. Ultimately, music and its immanent content displays pretty obvious and clear attributes. Nevertheless, we need to point out some aspects of this nature since the music from the second piano trio clearly suggests us to visualize a broader context, surpassing the sphere of "absolute music", and to seek for extrinsic emotional states, which come from a more reachable context.

3.1.3. The death auspice

What strikes and constantly follows the musical development, more or less subtle, is, of course, the death auspice. This aspect is not deductible from the basic knowledge of the circumstances that led to the work's appearance – the sudden death of the composer's best friend. The expressive means attributed to each instrument, the harmonic choice, the micro and macroformal plan are some of the elements with the biggest contribution in consolidating the proper affective state according to the funeral spectrum. These elements make their entrance from the beginning (Figure 9). The first appearance of the canon's melody is introduced by the cello through flageolets – an uncommon technique for this particular moment of the musical development. The second time we see the melody is 6 bars later, brought by the violin. The violin is also suffering some timbral changes through the *con sordino* indication, also present in the cello's score. After 6 bars, the piano inserts the third line in the low end of the register by using only octaves.

The image displays a musical score for the beginning of the first movement, featuring three staves: Violine (Violin), Violoncello (Cello), and Klavier (Piano). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a metronome marking of 60. The Violoncello part begins with a flageolet effect, indicated by 'con sord.' and 'tenuto'. The Violine part enters 6 bars later with the canon's melody, also marked 'con sord.' and 'tenuto'. The Klavier part features a first ending marked '1' and a second ending marked '2' with a repeat sign, playing octaves in the low register, marked 'pp tenuto'.

Fig. 9. Beginning of the first movement

Everything in this section leads to creating a grieving mood, but not in a resigned commemoration sense, but rather conveying a current disorientation, an emotional rupture. On the other hand, the introductive canon serves to focusing the receiver's perspective not only on the first movement, but on the entire piece – a fact that is confirmed by the cyclic character of the final movement. Further on, together with the *Moderato* indication, the body of the sonata form develops in a way that does not actually distance itself from the canon's parameters. During the entire section, the texture shows the density being cut in half and the soul being devastated, mostly due to the piano which displays the main theme on a four octaves ambitus between the right and left hands (Figure 10).

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece. At the top, a rehearsal mark '6' is followed by the tempo marking 'Moderato' and a quarter note with a dotted line. The score is written for two staves: a bass clef staff on the left and a treble clef staff on the right. A large bracket spans across both staves, indicating a four-octave ambitus. The piano part (piano) is marked with a 'p' dynamic. The music features a series of notes that span four octaves, with a final note marked with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 10. Four octaves ambitus, m. 2 after rehearsal mark 6

Moreover, the persistence with which cadenzas on the tonic happen to the theme before even accumulating any density or thematic impact concords with an affective impossibility to carry on with a consistent endeavour, and illustrates an obvious exhaustion which demands an earlier resolution – which is always done on the down beat.

The end of the section continues this idea by portraying on the violin and cello the *urlinie* composed by the IV, III, II and I degrees. This figure is repeated six times and it goes downwards on the violin register, while the piano plays eight notes and half notes at the end. Therefore, before the final chord, the E tonic can be heard six times (Figure 11). This first part sums up a series of feelings that one can experience in that specific situation – the initial shock, the attempt of accepting

the loss, the continuance of existence without the one who passed away and finally, the failure of this attempt (the tonic being sounded almost desperately, on a down beat, six times in a row).

Fig. 11. *The urlinie of the first movement, m. 2 after rehearsal mark 26*

3.1.4. Clashing elements

Besides splitting the register, by portraying the theme on the piano two or more octaves lower than the other melody, the second part – *scherzo* – does not seem to fit into the psycho-affective spectrum of the piece. Fanning sees it as an image of a memory. The next part is in a deep contrast with the *Scherzo*, as it follows closely the *passacaglia* structure. The ostinato (Figure 12) which the piano strictly maintains reminds us of the rhetoric figure of the lamento, with the only difference being that the stepwise descending line is anticipated by the upper melody of the right hand of the pianist. The *passacaglia*, which is situated in the core of the piece, carries the weight of the leading affect. The chord progression that constitutes the ostinato resolves only on the first chord of the next section, which follows *attaca*.

The image displays a musical score for the first eight measures of the third part. The top system features a vocal line in G major, 3/4 time, with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction *espress.* (espressivo). The bottom system shows the piano accompaniment, also in G major, 3/4 time. It begins at measure 57 with a *Largo* tempo and a forte (*f*) dynamic, then transitions to a piano (*p*) dynamic at measure 58. The piano part consists of chords and arpeggiated figures in both hands.

Fig. 12. *The first eight measures of the third part*

3.1.5. Cumulative meanings

Finally, the end of the piece has the purpose of summarizing the essential elements earlier accumulated. However, in the development of the trio, this finale wears a secondary extrinsic meaning, given by historic reasons. It is about the Red Army releasing a number of concentration camps from the territory of Poland: *Horrified by the stories of the SS troops forcing their victims to dance around their own graves, Shostakovich created a direct program music image. This section, brutally realistic, has been designed to shock the listener and (...) the image of someone who trips because of exhaustion is painfully live* (MacDonald 1990, 173).

Hence, the final section of the second piano trio becomes Shostakovich's first work of jewish inspiration (Figure 13). The abundance of jewish folklore influence in the thematic fundament and in the expressive resources which are used to craft the three instruments' timbre provides this fourth movement with a distinct footprint inside the trio.

Fig. 13. *The Jewish theme in the fourth movement, beginning at m. 2 after rehearsal mark 66*

4. Conclusions

The process in which we come to the understanding of a musical work has at first glance a few precise coordinates designed to ease its unfolding. These coordinates originate from the musical research fields that Victor Giuleanu accurately systematizes right from the introduction of his *Music Theory Treatise* (Giuleanu 2013, 10-20). By following them, the research developed over the object that is the musical work can be concluded based on several results that seem to reach a desirable all-encompassing knowledge. Just as the human being, that constantly thrives under the reign of some ontological questions, the musical work (or any artistic work, by the way), is analysed through the same questions. The only distinction is that we can identify the creator's identity concerning the musical work – which cannot be said about the human being. Even though this fact considerably reduces the amount of the unknowns and questions such as *why* and *how* are easier to combat with apposite answers, we have to keep in mind the fundamental ambiguity that resides in the fibre of the human nature and everything that descends from it in a more or less articulated form (Beauvoir 2000, 2-3). Thus, most of the assertions made in the aftermath of an analytical process owes its validity to a tight dependence of the context from which the respective analysis was developed.

References

- Beauvoir, Simone de. 2000. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. New Jersey: Citadel Press.
- Cross, Jonathan. 2003. *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fanning, David. 1995. *Shostakovich Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Giuleanu, Victor. 2013. *Tratat de Teoria Muzicii*. București: Grafoart.
- Joseph, M. C. 2001. *Stravinsky Inside Out*. London: Yale University Press.
- MacDonald, Ian. 1990. *The New Shostakovich*. Boston: Northeastern University press.
- Taruskin, Richard. 1996. *Stravinsky and the Russian traditions: a Biography of the Works through Mavra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.