

INTERFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE SYMPHONIC AND CONCERTO WORKS BY ADRIAN POP – (1) THE CELLO CONCERTO

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SUMMARY. The present study marks the beginning of a series of analytical undertakings focused on the symphonic and concerto works by the Cluj composer Adrian Pop. Following the pieces' chronological line and keeping as a reference their common source of inspiration – the Romanian folklore – the conclusions aim to reveal the way in which the author's individuality relates to the tendencies of contemporary language, as well as the European music tradition, without overshadowing our autochthonous stylistic matrix. Starting from a carol taken from Sabin Drăgoi's collection of *303 Carols*, the discourse of the *Cello concerto* provides a masterly example of how the variational technique is applied in the processing and development of microstructural elements, whose archaic essence is preserved and amplified both at the moment of the explicit exposure of the original melody in the second part (following its „genesis” throughout the first part), and during the effervescent unfolding of the final movement.

Keywords: folklore, carol, variation, development, tradition, modernity

Adrian Pop. Originality sources and resources

The creation of Cluj composer Adrian Pop finds itself under the mark of the variety and complexity born at the junction of his inspirational sources (of which the poetic one and the Romanian folklore are prevailing) and the

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language resources used in their musical transposition, from the genre framing, textual support, to stylistic and aesthetic correspondences, techniques, and expressive parameters. His access to the universal poetic background in the original language, coupled with his own sensitivity to the classical values of naturalness, balance and beauty “in its most traditional, most beneficial, most gentle and simple terms” has found an expression, throughout the years, in masterly translations, musical-poetic embellishments, “refined sound synonyms for the lyrics of Lucian Blaga, Pablo Neruda, Salvatore Quasimodo, Christian Morgenstern, Rainer Maria Rilke, Tristan Tzara, Paul Celan, Tudor Arghezi, Alexandru Macedonski, Ion Minulescu, Alfred de Musset”² etc. The genres that the author considered appropriate to encompass the richness of lyrical meanings are both choral, vocal-instrumental, or vocal-symphonic, and purely instrumental.

Moreover, applying his characteristic process of revaluating pre-existing themes or works (in many cases school works or old sketches) and integrating them into new sound or structural versions, “without overshadowing their original position, but seeking a broadening of meanings, an enhancement of the transmission of the artistic message in revealing and complementary perspectives”³, Adrian Pop has developed valuable reorchestrations, such as the *Opt bagatele pentru cvartet de coarde* (*Eight bagatelles for string quartet*) series on verses from Christian Morgenstern’s *Galgenlieder* (1996) – a work awarded the Romanian Academy Prize, preceded by a version for mixed choir (1986), whose material was later included in the *Triptic* (*Triptych for orchestra*, 1998, rev. 2013). Another suggestive example is the *Mătasea și metalul* quartet (*Silk and Metal*, 2010), written almost four decades after the *Cinci lieduri* cycle (*Five Lieder*, 1973) on the same verses by Pablo Neruda, while *Fünf Liebeslieder* for voice and piano (*Five Love Lieder*, 2006) on lyrics by Rainer Maria Rilke succeeds the *Lieben* (*Loves*, 1988) choral series on the same texts and a 1997 version for voice, clarinet and piano, but is followed in turn by a version for voice and string quartet (2013). Extremely relevant in this regard is also the tripartite choral work *Les voix de la nuit* (*Voices of the Night*, 2010) on verses by Alexandre Macedonski and Alfred de Musset later expanded into a vocal-symphonic version (2016) with the addition of a fourth part and a baritone (eventually, replaced, for pragmatic reasons, by a narrator).

² Țiplea-Temeș, Bianca. “Ricorenze – de vorbă cu compozitorul Adrian Pop, la 70 de ani” (*Ricorenze – Conversation with Adrian Pop at his 70th anniversary*). In *Muzica* journal, no. 8/ 2021, p. 18.

³ Șandor, Paula. *Aspecte stilistice în creația camerală a compozitorului Adrian Pop* (*Stylistic aspects in the chamber works of Adrian Pop*). MediaMusica Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, p. 161.

Another major source of inspiration in the creation of the Cluj composer is the Romanian traditional folklore⁴, a background that Adrian Pop had the opportunity to approach ever since his studies with the folklore teacher Traian Mârza, by meeting the old ritual customs and layers. A close knowledge of the characteristics of folk songs (as a result of research and the process of collecting and systematizing the oral repertoire in our country), of the folkloric *ethos*, as well as his receptivity to the Blaga concept related to our stylistic background and space-matrix, mainly the “indefinitely undulating”⁵, mioritic landscape enabled the composer to create original choral, chamber or symphonic works of folkloric essence, by using both the technique of processing folklore quotations and that of writing “in folk style”.

In fact, the first acknowledgments of Adrian Pop’s creative talent were made in the field of choral music⁶ built on the folkloric quotation and starting from the composer’s favorite genre – *colinda* (the carol). It is the case of *Vine hulpe di la munte* for mixed choir, originally known as *Colindă de pricină* (*Satirical Carol*), whose humorous touch, skillfully transposed into writing by means of the heterophonic technique – starting from the original melody taken from the village of Treznea, Sălaj county – enchanted the audience from its first audition. Its performance by the “Cappella Transylvanica” choir at the Concorso Polifonico Internazionale “Guido d’Arezzo” in 1978, under the direction of the composer’s father, conductor Dorin Pop, was awarded the grand prize in the “mixed choirs” section, doubled by the prize in the section of “folkloric reworkings”, while other titles in the same choral segment of traditional carols, such as *Slobozi-ne gazda-n casa* (1975), *Fata dalba de-mparatu* (1975), *Trecu-mi-si mai margu-si* (1978), have gained international recognition.

Deeply impressed by the unique technical and expressive ways of processing the folk quotation in the series of secular carols, which includes choral pieces written between 1974 and 1978, and by the symphonic work *Etos 1* (*Ethos 1*), which is part of the same sphere of the autochthonous

⁴ Local folklore is not the only traditional cultural universe accessed by Adrian Pop. In his choral creations, for example, we also find marks of Italian, Spanish or Greek folklore, along with the presence of traditional Latin or Hebrew songs. The phenomenon is more poignant in his works dedicated to the male choir.

⁵ Blaga, Lucian. *Trilogia Culturii* (*The Trilogy of Culture*). Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011, p. 141.

⁶ The choral work of Adrian Pop includes more than 80 titles, either individual or grouped in series, dedicated to the mixed configuration (which predominates), male voices or equal voices – women or children. In the interview with Andra Apostu, *De vorba cu Adrian Pop* (*Conversation with Adrian Pop*), *Muzica* journal, no. 3 / 2017, Adrian Pop talks about his natural approach to the choral genre, driven by the model of his father, Dorin Pop, dedicated and passionate conductor of the “Cappella Transylvanica” choir, and about the familiarity acquired during his years of study for the sonority of the choral apparatus.

universe, the Hungarian composer György Kurtág (b. 1926, Lugoj) consistently turned to the advice of composer Adrian Pop during the elaboration of his piece *Colindă-Baladă* (the *Ballade-Carol*), which was subsequently presented for the first time at the 2009 edition of the Cluj Modern Festival.

The Cluj composer's ability to synthesize is also unique, manifesting itself in the fusion of Romanian folkloric essences with the marks of the Western European music tradition. *Cântecele de stea* (*Star Songs*) for soprano and instrumental ensemble (recorder, baroque flute, cello, and harpsichord) written in 2006 and dedicated to the members of the Transylvania Baroque Ensemble are suggestive in this respect. Although in six of the eight parts of the work – architecturally configured according to the typology of the suite –, the composer applies techniques of valorization of folkloric quotations originating from the genre of carols (star song) and the practices that accompany the celebration of Christmas, the series is not limited only to the Romanian folkloric background, but “considers the atmosphere of Christmas in a broader stylistic perspective, worthy of the diversity of orientations that have marked the history of European culture and music.”⁷ We will, therefore, find fragments built in a clearly neo-baroque manner, but also a church song in Byzantine style, and a polystylist approach that “aims, more than highlighting the implicit contrast, to reveal the correspondences between highly individualized manifestations of language, which have proven, over the centuries, their perennality in the European, Romanian and, especially, Transylvanian space”⁸.

Another example of synthesis, this time between the folkloric dimension and the new scientific methods of investigation, can be identified in *Colinda soarelui* (*Sun Carol*, completed in 1974 in the studios of Bayreuth), in which Adrian Pop “treats the popular quotation starting from mathematical models, employing a series of new sonorities, born from the osmosis of the archaic, Romanian modal language with the electronic technique.”⁹ Referring to the same work, the Cluj composer Cornel Țăranu appreciated in a *Tribuna*¹⁰ article the way in which “Adrian Pop uses mathematics and probabilistic laws with ease, without ever giving the impression of dryness or of any sonic aggressiveness that would never be characteristic of him”.

Adrian Pop demonstrates the same refinement in the construction of the “imaginary folklore”, by configuring the “popular character” in the absence of quotations from the local repertoire. Engaging specific language techniques, such as the “intonational matrix” of modalism, symmetrical or asymmetrical

⁷ Șandor, Paula. *Op cit.*, p. 125.

⁸ *Ibidem*

⁹ Sandu Dedi, Valentina. *Muzica românească între 1944-2000 (Romanian Music between 1944-2000)*. Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2002, p. 130.

¹⁰ Țăranu. Cornel. *Muzica tinerilor (The Music of Youth)*. In *Tribuna*, no. 44 (984) / 1985, p. 7.

rhythmic systems, the *parlando rubato* style, improvisational spirit, heterophonic writing, original ways of sound articulation and specific timbre effects, the author renders with great suggestive power the Romanian folk universe in “new perspectives and angles of approach less explored by other authors”¹¹. Representative in this regard is the piece *Țiituri* for violin and cello (2006), whose name points directly to one of the typical accompaniment techniques used in traditional Romanian fiddlers’ ensembles (“tarafuri”). Here “the musical ideas are expressed with a phenomenal power of invention, and the structural conception of the work resides in the improvisational capacity of the violinists, who are able to create infinite variations by stringing them together in a polychrome tinsel”¹². The author’s ingenuity finds its application through contemporary techniques such as the organic development of motivic material and the application of the cyclical principle in the elaboration of discourse with a strong improvisatory character – based, however, on an “undeniable cohesion, logic and clarity of construction”¹³, the chromatic coloring which accompanies specifically folkloric sound juxtapositions, rhythmic structures which are both symmetrical and asymmetrical, the presence of the *parlando rubato* style, the shifting of metrical emphasis, a wide variety of timbres based on effects from traditional organology and various sound articulations, etc.

The music of Adrian Pop could not be more in line with his personality: the same serious humor and lyricism, the same almost childlike seriousness with which he gathers and organizes his data, attesting from the beginning a substantial thinking, driven by a solid and rigorous mathematical training. The creative path that Adrian Pop has followed so far goes through different stages in terms of the treatment of folkloric material, be it the transfiguration of some formulas, or the unaltered preservation of the folkloric quotation that he treats with clearly contemporary means, as he does especially in choruses, or in the Christmas carols built by electronic means. This, in a diverse language in terms of means and concerns, which includes the wide area of music organized on mathematical calculation, music obtained on electronic bases, or the polyphonic music developed from its simplest forms to the most complex, probing into the sphere of something new that speaks directly about the originality of the composer. An originality that is unquestioned, and therefore always authentic, because his

¹¹ Silaghi, Nicușor. *Caracterul popular în violonistica românească din Transilvania – teză de doctorat (The Folk Character in the Romanian violin art from Transylvania – doctoral thesis)*. The National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima”, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, p. 149.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 150.

¹³ Șandor, Paula. *Op cit.*, p. 122.

*various searches are centered on finding his own mode of expression, where he can then move freely, unrestrained.*¹⁴

The works based on the folkloric quotation, as well as those written in Enescu's manner of the "imaginary folklore" confirm, therefore, the individuality with which Adrian Pop assumes the resources of contemporary composition, the diversification of working means, the full maturity on the technical-expressive level of the Romanian school that the Cluj musicologist and composer Vasile Herman¹⁵ attributes to the inspired use of the local substratum. His symphonic and concerto works are no exception.

Adrian Pop. Symphonic and Concerto Works

If in the choral or chamber music genre, more consistent from a quantitative point of view, Adrian Pop employs both the Romanian or universal poetic sources, and the autochthonous assets, his symphonic-concertante creation seems to be entirely dedicated to the folkloric vein. This affiliation, however, does not exclude the poetic substance, which is easily identifiable in the lyricism of the popular universe and is in full agreement with the sensitive side of the author (also specific to Enescu). Making reference to the qualities of the Cluj composer, composer Dan Dediu emphasizes his vigorous compositional talent and mind "fascinated by balance, tradition and classicism", as well as the foundation of his musical vision on the compositional craft, which "manifests itself in the concern for the judicious rhythm of the syntactic categories of music within the musical discourse, in the assumption of melody as the essence of music and in the option for continuous and permanent narrative", a phenomenon also visible in "the poetic opuses *Etos I* (1976) and *Solstice* (1979)"¹⁶.

The elaborations of Adrian Pop's concert or symphonic discourses start from folkloric carol quotations (*Cello concerto*, *Solstice*), or melodies collected and integrated in folkloric collections (*Etos I*, the *Triptych*), which are then treated by appropriate contemporary means to enhance the rhapsodic character and adjacent meanings. An analytical study of the opuses in this sector is therefore necessary to reveal and deepen the process.

¹⁴ Caranica Fulea, Mihaela. *Creații de compozitori clujeni (Cluj composers and their works)*. In *Muzica* journal, no. 8 / August 1976, Bucharest, p. 9.

¹⁵ Herman, Vasile. *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească (Style and form in the new Romanian music creation)*. Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1977, p. 137.

¹⁶ Dediu, Dan. *Meșteșugarul dibaci: Adrian Pop (The Skillful Artisan: Adrian Pop)*. In *Siluețe în mișcare. Eseuri despre compozitori români (Moving Silhouettes. Essays on Romanian Composers)*. Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2021, p. 178.

Adrian Pop. The *Cello concerto* (1975)

The *Cello concerto* was written in 1975, the original version (two movements performed in *attacca*, awarded the National Prize of the Institutes of the Arts that same year) being later expanded by the addition of a third movement, with some changes in the orchestration (1986), and completed in 2015. Throughout its “genesis”, the work enjoyed notable performances, such as its first audition in 1975 featuring the soloist Imre Kostyák, accompanied by the student orchestra of the “Gheorghe Dima” Conservatory under the baton of the late conductor Petre Sbârcea, then the second version performed by the famous cellist Marin Cazacu alongside the Cluj Philharmonic conducted by Edward Tchiwjel, and the most recent version heard during the Cluj Modern Festival (2017 edition), presented by the “Transilvania” State Philharmonic under the direction of Horia Andreescu and featuring Diana Ligeti as soloist.

The concerto’s discourse is built on an archaic Romanian melody taken from *Colinda no. 180 (Poruncit-a poruncit)* found in the collection *303 carols with text and melodies collected and notated by Sabin Drăgoi*, originating from the village of Petreni (Pădurenilor County, Hunedoara County).

E.g. 1

Allegro. (♩ = 144). 180 Petreni, jud. Hunedoara.

Po - run - cit - o, po - run - cit - o,

Dom - nu - lui, Doam - ne, Dom - nu - lui no - stru.

The original carol theme

The display of the carol melody is, however, explicitly made only in the second movement of the concerto, after the completion of an ample process of “accumulation” of the rhythmic-melodic material with the help of cellular-motivic variations. Thus, the dialogue between cello and orchestra marks, throughout four evolutionary phases, the “search” for the carol theme, starting from the “embryonic stage of the thematic material”¹⁷. The employment

¹⁷ Pop, Ciprian Gabriel. *Dialogul violoncel-orchestra în viziunea compozitorului Adrian Pop (The cello-orchestra dialogue as envisioned by Adrian Pop)*. In *Intersecții în componistica românească (Intersections among Romanian compositions)*, Proceedings of the 2021 SIMN Conference titled “2021 – Intersecții în componistica românească – Mihail Jora. Myriam Marbé. Dan Constantinescu, Adrian Iorgulescu, Doina Rotaru, Adrian Pop” (“2021-Intersections

of chromatic elements and various types of writing that ensure the substance of the improvisatory character, crucial in the soloistic plan, will not overshadow the melodic pillars of the original line, articulated both by the duration pedals, in the moments of sonorous culmination, and in the figural layers.

1st Movement (*Allegro moderato*). Even from the first evolutionary phase of the thematic material (m. 1 – 28), opened by a cluster-type chordal structure in the parts of the strings and wind instruments (from the totality of which the C will be preserved in the pedal), the importance of the percussive compartment in the shaping of the archaic universe is obvious. The incisive interventions of the *Gran cassa* drum, *tom toms* and timpani, moderated along the way by the triangle, cymbals, maracas, bongos and wood blocks / temple blocks ensure the potentiation of the culminating moments – which in the first part also delineate the stages of the thematic profile, in addition to their essential role in the diversification of timbral shades.

The percussive instruments will also initiate the successive waves of accumulation by articulating isorhythmic pedals (sixteenth notes), structures on which the other orchestral parts will later be grafted as they mark, in an extended ambitus and preserving the chromatic essence, the pillars of the beginning of the carol melody (C – D – F), suspended in chordal pedals in the moments of culmination (m. 1, m. 9, m. 19). Dynamics, coupled with the crowding or thinning of the orchestral texture, play a key role in this segment, as the sudden increases amplify the tension that anticipates the first, imposing cello intervention in the second phase.

The powerful appearance on arpeggiated lines of the solo instrument, seconded by the timpani (m. 29 – 32) will give way, in the second stage (m. 29 – 57) to a free, improvisatory (*Meno mosso*, *Libero*, *Rubato*) and virtuoso discourse, consisting of a monody sporadically accompanied by some of the orchestral parts, whose role is undoubtedly to further diversify the sound effects of the protagonist instrument – resulting from the application of articulation techniques such as *pizzicato glissando* transformed into *pizzicato arpeggiato*, *pizzicato mano sinistra*, *flageolet*, *arco* or *arco gettato* – through muted sounds, delicate *glissandos* (strings, m. 35 – 36), or bright sonorous touches (winds, m. 38, m. 40). The waving line of the cello, alternating chromatic nuclei with intervallic leaps is often suspended, like the orchestral discourse of the previous segment, in rhythmic pedals (here laid to the tonic of the mode), which dominate the modal-chromatic unfolding. Also, on the tonic of the

among Romanian compositions – Mihail Jora. Myriam Marbé. Dan Constantinescu, Adrian Iorgulescu, Doina Rotaru, Adrian Pop”), edition coordinated by Olguța Lupu, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2022, p. 193.

mode is built the figurative motif α , of a strong archaic essence, based on intervallic structures of minor second and major sixth, arranged alternately, in symmetry, with descending-ascending direction. In fact, this figural motif, which will be repeated in other formal segments of the work, is initially introduced on the subsemitone – B flat, and only then transposed by ascending sequencing on the tonic B. The free style, parlando rubato, is strikingly manifested by the contrast between the speed of the “melodic arches” and the rallentando attached to the rhythmic pedals, in a totally impartial, non-defined metrical context.

E.g. 2

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a Violin solo. The first system includes instructions such as 'pizz. mano sinistra', 'arco ord.', 'arco gettato ord.', 'non vibr.', 'vibr.', and 'sul A:D'. Dynamics range from *ff* to *p*. The second system features 'espr. ez.', 'rit.', 'in tempo', 'subito veloce', and 'rit. molto', with dynamics like *f subito* and *p*. The third system includes 'poco rit.', 'veloce', 'scherzando', 'rit.', and 'scherzando', with dynamics like *sf*, *p*, *f*, and *pp*. Performance techniques like 'secco' and 'p dolce' are also indicated.

The improvisatory discourse of the cello. Figural motif α

The end of the improvisatory solo section and the return to the *giusto* system is made by the cello using the same rhythmic pedal structure – now on the key of C, in the lower register – which will gradually be taken over by the whole strings part, as the solo instrument evolves towards the middle-high register by sequencing the ascending β motif, culminating on a chordal structure in *sforzando* at the end of Phase II (m. 56), in which both the winds and the percussion section (cymbal, maracas, triangle, marimba) are engaged. The consistently accumulated tension, however, is extinguished soon after the climax, both by the sudden return – served by descending octave leaps – in the winds register and by the actual “dissipation” of the sound with the help of the dynamic decrease and the successive descending “slides” of the strings, articulating here an aural effect of great expressive impact, frequently found in the works of Adrian Pop in cadential moments and which can be invested with the state of stylema.

The image shows a page of a musical score, likely from a symphony or concerto, with multiple staves. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 45-54) includes staves for I. Timpani, Violoncello solo, Violin II, Violin, Violoncello (1. solo and 2. solo), Violoncello (gli altri), and Contrabasso. The second system (measures 55-64) includes Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, Clarinet in B-flat 1 and 2, Bassoon 1 and 2, Cor in F, I. Timpani, 3. Triangles/Percussion II, 4. Percussion/Membranes, Horn, Violoncello solo, Violin I, Violin II, Violoncello, and Contrabasso. The score contains various performance markings such as *poco a poco cresc.*, *tutti*, *pp*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*, *rit.*, *allargando*, *ritardando*, *dim.*, *sfz.*, *stacc.*, and *presto*. Several passages are highlighted with blue boxes: two in the Violoncello solo part (measures 45-48 and 50-53), a large section in the Piccolo and Flute parts (measures 55-60), and a section in the Violoncello solo part (measures 61-64). A green arrow points from the Violoncello solo part towards the Violoncello and Contrabasso parts in the second system.

Culmination of Phase II following ascending sequencing of the β motif and immediate subsequent “sound dissipation” via descending *glissandos*

also from a timbral point of view, the alternation of the two parts producing the effect of birdsong. The palette is extended by the addition of percussion, which inserts, in a more or less similar version, timbral touches consisting in sound pairings. Everything takes place on the background of pedals successively maintained by wind and string instruments, which, despite the dissonant language, succeed, together with the soloist instrument's interventions, in highlighting the fundamental of the mode, namely the B note. The first segment of the phase will end, similarly to the previous articulations, on a chord pillar prepared by the ascent of the orchestral apparatus in the high register, concomitant with an increase from *pp* to *sforzando* and through *accelerando* (m. 71 – 77).

The development towards the final climax of the third phase takes place, during the second segment (m. 78 – 94), based on the dialogue between soloist and orchestra, which variously resumes, in a more articulated setting, the sequential motif β , first displayed by the strings (m. 81 – 86), then by strings and winds (m. 90 – 94). The protagonist's layer impresses, again, by its improvisatory, virtuosic character, governed by various articulations of sound, and incisively complemented by the interventions of the timpani. The writing in the accompaniment remains mainly homophonic, with the ascent to the middle-high register achieved again through the varied β motif, played in unison or in octave intervals, on rhythmic structures alternating ternary (triplets) and binary structures. There is no lack of duration pedals on pillars taken from the carol melody (E flat, B flat), and the climax (m. 93) is consonantly built on the F sound. Unusual here is the "withdrawal" of the soloist just before the installation of the pedal on the climax, i.e., the long note, by means of descending, successive glissandos, which suggestively express the sound "deconstruction" / "disintegration".

The beginning of the last phase (m. 98 – m. 128) is supported by the "echo" of the pedal that marked the end of the previous section. On this background, the solo instrument marks, in *espressivo dolente* and with a free agogic, a dissonant intervallic line (m. 95 – m. 97), resumed shortly afterwards in a varied instance, which integrates the main steps of the original carol, marked by the string divisions into polymeter layers. The resulting effect corresponds, to a certain extent, also to a movement of sound "deconstruction" (in the absence of descending *glissandos*, however) ending with a cluster (m. 102) and concluded with a "burst" of the cello supported by wood blocks and triangle (m. 103). The structure of the phase features a mirror symmetry, the solo-orchestral discourse being, in fact, "flanked" by two polymeter moments built on the sounds of the carol melody, the first of them with a generally descending sense, the second, as we have already become accustomed to, aiming at stabilization in the medium-high register.

Libero (Adagio molto) 13

Fl. 1, Fl. 2, Ob. 1, Ob. 2, Cl. 1 in sib, Cl. 2 in sib, Fg. 1, Fg. 2, Cor. in F, I. Timp., 3. Mar., 4. T. trom. p. G. cassa, Vln. solo, Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vcl., Cs. I

glissandi intensi quasi grufi
Phase IV
espresso dolore

lungo lungo

mf *f* *mf dim.* *sf* *mf*

The end of Phase III – “disintegration” / “deconstruction” of the cello sound through descending *glissandos*

88 [E] Andante (♩ cca 66)

2. Trgl. 1/2

3. W-blocks 1,2 T-block

2 Trgl.

W bl / a

mf

[E] Andante (♩ cca 66)

Vlc. solo

fp

Vln. I part 1 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. I part 2 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. I part 3 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. I part 4 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. I part 5 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. I part 6 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. II part 1 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. II part 2 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. II part 3 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. II part 4 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. II part 5 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. part 1 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. part 2 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. part 3 *pp non vibr.*

Vln. part 4 *pp non vibr.*

Vlc. part 1 *pp non vibr.*

Vlc. part 2 *pp non vibr.*

Vlc. part 3 *pp non vibr.*

Cb. 1 *pp non vibr.*

Cb. 2 *pp non vibr.*

Cb. 3 *pp non vibr.*

1. solo

2. solo

3. solo

f

The beginning of Phase IV, polymetric layers in the string compartment in divisions

Keeping as a foundation the cluster resulted from the suspension of the polymeter layers from the strings, the central section of the final phase will essentially consist of a process of latent timbral “exploration”, in which the rubato discourse of the cello brings back the archaic varied motif α (m. 106), then simple and chordal pedals. Everything is grafted onto the *ostinato* background of percussion (piatto, maracas and triangle), and amplified by the resonances of the two flutes that “accompany” it, in a discreet imitation, also through pedals. The archaic essence of the fragment is confirmed on the intonational level as well, with the cello line running through a segment of perfect fourths overlapping, thus highlighting a specific interval of the Romanian folklore universe, which also concludes the theme of the original carol.

The steps of the original carol are explicitly resumed in the last “period” of the final phase of Part I (m. 119 – m. 128), built in symmetry, from the point of view of writing, with the first section, namely in polymetric overlaps in the strings section, which follows, this time, a general ascending trajectory intended to prepare the climax and the final chordal pedal. Contrary to expectations and the usual mobility towards the medium-high register, the “climax” of the stage occurs in *pianississimo*, a nuance that facilitates the auditory reception of the ancestral vibrations, but also the unprecedented intervention of the bells, announcing the long-awaited appearance of the carol theme. Not missing from the palette of timbral effects is the *glissando* for the concluding gestures, this time articulated by the accompaniment apparatus and completed on a *vibrato* pedal, but still on the cellos portative.

2nd Movement (*Molto andante*). The first full exposition of the carol melody, “in almost original form, played by the solo cello in a unique combination of sound and distant flageolet, with slightly distorted contours and rhythms, ornamented with dreamlike glissandos”¹⁸ is made in the beginning of Part II (m. 129 – 271), constructed as a theme with variations – eleven in number – arranged, according to Ciprian Gabriel Pop, in “two waves, delimited by the fifth variation – of the solo cello.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Pop, Adrian. *Concerto for cello and orchestra*. Presentation U.C.M.R.

¹⁹ Pop, Ciprian Gabriel. *Op cit.*, p. 195.

The 1st Variation (m. 137 – 151) takes up the tempo (*Lo stesso tempo*) and the incipit of the carol theme, which is initially set out in a heterophonic overlay, and then during the segment, its melodic cells appear in polyphonic dialogue or polymeter textures. Dynamics are kept in a reduced nuance as the strings partition articulate their interventions either in *sordo / senza sord*, *sul tasto* or *ordinario*. The abrupt rise at the end of the section resembles the configuration of the cadenzas in the first part, only on a reduced scale, being prepared by gradually ascending lines of chords arranged heterophonically.

The 2nd Variation (m. 152 – 156) takes over the polyphonic writing of the previous one, but increases the flexibility in the arrangement of the cells originating in the carol melody. Although shorter in size, it provides the background for a strong amplification, with the harp and the F horn interventions bringing a significant contribution both dynamically – by gradual amplification and the *sforzando* accents – and in emphasizing the harmonic dissonances. In fact, in addition to the cellular units and second oscillations that dominate the orchestral texture, towards the end of the section we also distinguish the concluding phrase of the original melody, exposed with very slight rhythmic variations by the horn (m. 146 - m. 149). The transition to the next segment is made by the cello, in *precipitando*.

The 3rd Variation (m. 157 – 170) increases the tension on the background of a homophonic writing based on the succession of harmonic pillars in clusters that the orchestra (except for the harp) builds up, compensated melodically by the incisive interferences of the cello. An important role in the amplification is played by the percussive section, represented by tom-toms and *gran cassa*. After reaching the climax in m. 169, the solo instrument will ensure, in *calando molto*, followed by a highly effective ascending *glissando* also taken up by the harp (m. 170), the transition to the next variational segment, very contrasting in terms of orchestral configuration, as well as the attitude of the solo instrument.

The three *Molto Andante, quasi lento* bars of the *4th Variation* (m. 171 – 174) transport us, once again, into the idyllic world of the village animated by birdsong, the figuration in which the flute and harp engage alternatively, together with the clarinet trills – then suspended in pedals – acquiring a pronounced degree of evocativeness. On this idiomatic support, the cello marks, in an extremely homogeneous course, in *mp dolce*, the steps of the concluding phrase of the carol melody, keeping the same modal center on C. The compression of the orchestral apparatus to chamber dimensions, perfectly justified by the finesse and diaphanous sonority of the fragment, finds its natural continuation in the following variational fragment, intended exclusively for the soloist instrument – with a *cadenza* aspect – which marks an axis in the sequence of the evolutionary process, being succeeded by a gradual return to the ample configuration until the end of the second part.

E.g. 8

The augmented display by the cello of the concluding phrase of the original carol melody. Birdsong figurations by the wind instruments

Thus, the **5th Variation** (m. 174 – 180) is entirely dedicated to the cello, free to unfold its *rubato* discourse and, at the same time, to exhibit its multiple technical capabilities (in the first phrase, m. 174) through sound articulations ranging from accents / echoes in *pizzicato* to *glissandos* and melodic arches with refined exchanges between *arco* and *ponticello* touches. In the second “phrase” (m. 175 – 180, *Adagio meditativo*), the soloist highlights, in a pronounced lyrical manner, through overlapping double pedals, steps of the beginning of the carol melody, added as a third – chordal – and wider “arch” is outlined by its melodic climax on G flat in the two-line octave and the return to the starting point – the C in the great octave. There is no lack of ornaments here either, manifested prevalently by melodic oscillations of diminished octave (m. 178) or minor third (m. 179), which lend the discourse a strong improvisational character.

E.g. 9

The solo, quasi-improvisational cello discourse. Melodic / chordal “arcades” built on the steps of the original carol

The **6th Variation** (m. 181 – 188) initiates the reprise of the orchestral accompaniment in a subtle manner, by bringing the cello-bass couple into an extremely static, reduced in intensity (*pp*) chordal background in the lower register, as the cello continues its variations of the carol theme in the same *Adagio* tempo, alternating between *ordinario* and the *al ponticello* articulation, with unusual sound effects. The intervention of the cymbals at the end of the section successfully complements the timbral palette of tragic resonances running throughout the 8 bars of the variation.

The display of the carol melody in the **7th Variation** (m. 188 – 196) is done through *pizzicato* overlaps, interrupted by anacrusis, then alternations between *pizzicato* and *arco* segments. The diaphanous and dynamic discourse (not only because of the rhythm, but also due to the variety of the timbral palette) is complemented by the unusual presence of bells and horns which announce, fulfilling their specific function, the adoption of the pointillistic writing in the following variational segment.

The **8th Variation** (m. 197 - 210) is built on pointillist writing and the *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique, the timbral variety being facilitated by the reduction of the metric-rhythmic parameter which appears concentrated in isorhythmic layers of semiquavers (percussive apparatus) or quavers (strings). The protagonists of the moment are certainly the percussion instruments, placed in dialogue via *crisis* or *anacrusis* structures, while the string instruments articulate the melodic dimension of the fragment through discrete sound points, in *pizzicato*. The cello, on the other hand, is responsible for the long-duration pedals which, together with the flute-clarinet couple, maintain the “support” for the entire discourse. The harp brings an unusual effect, with its brief *glissando* accents that provide reference points to the discreet yet diffuse amalgam of sounds.

The pointillist texture then gives way, in the **9th Variation** (m. 211 – 231), to the dialogue of trills between the solo cello and the string parts, occasionally enlivened by short rhythmic-melodic figurations. The resulting free polyphony can be likened, once again, without the risk of making too much of a mistake, to the idyllic birdsong found, in other timbral and technical guises, in earlier moments of the work (Phase III in the First Movement, Variation IV in the Second Movement).

207 [M] Andantino (♩ cca 132)
9th Variation

Fl. I

Cl. 1 in sib

2. B-ges 1/2

3. W-laks 1/2, T-black

3. Mar

4. T-tom p. G cassa

Hr

[M] Andantino (♩ cca 132)

Vlc. solo

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vcl.

Cvl. I

217 [M] Andantino (♩ cca 132)

Vlc. solo

Vln. I

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vln. II

Vla.

Vla.

Pointillist texture in the 8th Variation and the trill dialogue in the 9th Variation

The **10th Variation** (m. 232 – 253), in a livelier tempo, engages the whole orchestra in a homophonic writing, articulated in *pizzicato* (strings) and *frullato senza suono* – “without sound” (woodwinds), accompanying with anacrusis rhythmic pedals the incisive interventions of the solo cello, which covers generally ascending lines in a *sempre tremolo* (*usual* or *al ponticello*). The maracas have a striking effect. The tension is enhanced by the dynamic amplification, the slight acceleration of the marimbaphone, and not least by the addition of the *gran cassa* drum to the orchestral apparatus, successfully preparing the outburst in the next segment.

The tension reaches its paroxysm in the **11th Variation** (m. 254 – 271, *Molto allegro*), introduced by a sudden acceleration of the marimba (m. 251 – 254). The cello outbursts, driven by appoggiaturas are followed, in the same spirit, by violent increases on the ascending third leaps and the pedals in the wind section (horn, clarinet, bassoon) – which again take on the aspect of a “signal”. The climax of the fragment will be marked by the percussive instruments, which also provide the launching gesture for the last, rapid movement of the concert, “a lively continuation of the previous moments of variation, with cellular processing of the musical material exposed in both the first and second parts, resulting in a quasi-12th variation.”²⁰.

3rd Movement (*Vivace e giocoso*)

Continuing the evolutionary process of the entire discourse of the *Cello Concerto* and keeping microstructural elements of the original carol as generative sources, Part III brings, through its writing and expressive characteristics, relying on an extremely alert tempo – *Vivace e giocoso* –, a replay of the main techniques already found in the preceding phases (Part I) and variations (Part II), in a much amplified – rhythmically and melodically – version.

The interplay of the solo instrument and the orchestra here takes the form of a *perpetuum mobile*, perfectly grounded by the accumulation of energy up to this point and by the architecture of the three parts linked by *attaca*, compensating through contrast the diffuse aspect of the first movement. The forms of the writing and the timbral configuration make it possible to delineate four main phases here as well.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

Making full use of the cello's agility, Phase I (m. 272 – 311) assigns to it the melodic foreground, complementing with two figural lines: of the flute – *piccolo* or *grande* – and the marimba, disrupted, in “strategic” moments, by rhythmic or lasting pedals and unusual timbral accents resulting from the application of various sound articulation techniques (*pizzicato*, *frullato*, *glissando*, *tremolo*). The pedals keep their defining status in the cadential moments. Percussion instruments and woodblocks, which faithfully mark the basic rhythmic unit, in this case semiquavers, have a significant contribution to maintaining the motricity.

There are also jazz influences in the economy of the improvisatory discourse, identifiable on the cello by the shifting of the metric pulse generated by the uninterrupted repetition of a melodic cell of three tones (m. 294 – m. 296, B flat – A flat – C) on a binary isorhythmic structure, in semiquavers. A few bars later (m. 306 – m. 311) we hear a flute displaying its animated line – consisting of simple quaver series and quaver triplets – in *frullato delicato* with *slap tonguing* at the end, a timbral effect typical of the American style which, although it can be spotted in other moments of the concerto, independent of the jazz essence, here shows a clear connection with the previous soloistic moment of the cello. The first phase ends after reaching its climax on dissonant pedals (B – C) in *sforzando* on the winds and their cluster replica (D flat – D – E flat – E) on the strings, with the descending *glissando* of the cello (here in combination with *tremolo molto serrato ed intenso*), a style associated with multiple cadential gestures belonging to Adrian Pop.

The second phase (m. 312 – 362) brings back the “woody”, airy effects of the accompanying layer, which in the string section is built up by means of ascending sequencing of chromatic bi- or tri-chordal cells (violin & cello) and with the help of rhythmic pedals (violin & double bass), in *staccato* articulations – *arco al ponticello* or *col legno battuto*, which provide a discreet *ostinato* background as the solo cello enters into a free effervescent dialogue with the marimba, then with the piccolo flute. One can also note the presence of a well-defined melodic plan, albeit with strong improvisatory tendencies, on the cello (m. 317 – 333), then taken up at the distance of the augmented fourth / diminished fifth, by the piccolo (m. 342 – 358).

E.g. 12

The image displays a page of a musical score for orchestra and solo instruments, numbered 323 at the top left. The score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom: Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Flute 2 (Fl. 2), 3. W-klarinets 1/2, T-block, 3. Mar. (Marimba), Hp. (Harp), Vln. solo (Violin solo), Vln. II (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), Vcl. (Violoncello), and Cb. I (Contrabasso I). The Vln. solo part is highlighted with a blue rectangular box and includes the instruction "sempre al ponticello" above it. The Vcl. part has the instruction "tutti" below it. The Marimba part has dynamic markings *p* and *mp*. The Harp part has a dynamic marking *mf*. The score shows various musical notations including notes, rests, and articulation marks.

INTERFERENCES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY...

The image displays a musical score for Phase III (m. 363 – 416). The score includes parts for Fl. 2 (Piccolo), Fl. 1, Fl. 2, 3. W-bloks 1/2, T-block, 3. Mar., Vlc. solo, Vln. II, Vla., Vlc., and Cb. 1. The melodic plan 'a' is first introduced in the cello part (Vlc. solo) at measure 342, highlighted with a blue box. This melodic line is then replayed by the piccolo flute (Fl. 2) at measure 342, highlighted with a green box. The score includes various performance instructions such as *ppp*, *mp*, *f*, *ord. al pont*, *gliss. continuo*, *arco al pont*, and *natti*.

Melodic plan a (cello) and its replay by piccolo flute (m. 342) at augmented fourth

In Phase III (m. 363 – 416) the texture of the strings in the accompaniment layer is rhythmically processed by increasing the basic value from quaver to crotchet, with crotchets or dotted crotchets interspersed in syncopations and contretemps syncopations, while sound effects include combinations of *pizzicato*, *tremolo* and *arco al ponticello* (violins) or *pizzicato* and ascending / descending *glissandos* on double basses. All the string parts are engaged in divisions, and the metrical and rhythmic variety of the layers is embodied by a complementary structure. A second well-individualized melodic line emerges, distinguished above all by its punctuated rhythmic structure, stated two times by the oboe (m. 363 – 373 and m. 375 – 385) before being exposed by the solo instrument (m. 387 – 397) and resumed in a slightly compressed version by the violin divisions in an imitative polyphonic texture (m. 399 - 405).

The image shows a page of a musical score for E.g. 13. The score is for a symphony orchestra and includes the following parts: Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. 1 in sb), 3. Woodwinds (3. W-blets 1, 2, T-block), 3. Maracas (3. Mar.), Harp (Hp.), Violin solo (Vle. solo), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vle. div.), Violoncello 1 (Cb. 1), Violoncello 2 (Cb. 2), and Violoncello 3 (Cb. 3). The oboe part at the top is highlighted with a blue box and contains a melodic line starting at measure 363. The harp part includes lyrics in Romanian: "măi, lăș", "plăis, col ped.", "dos", "rez, să", and "să", with notes labeled with solfège syllables: (do) (do), (mi) (mi), (re) (re), (la) (la), (do) (do), (să) (să). The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *ppp*, *f*, *mf*, and *pp ma sonoro*. Performance instructions like "arco, con sord.", "arco, al pont", and "pizz." are also present.

Melodic plan *b* (m. 363, oboe)

The dynamic rise prepares, along with the generally ascending chromatic lines found on strings and winds, the climax of the phase marked by long, clustered pedals, recurrently used in the endings of the previous articulations. The only exception is brought by the string divisions (viola, cello and double bass) which maintain their homophonic and airy discourse in a continuous *crescendo*.

The last amplification wave, in Phase IV (m. 417 – 521), is fully manifested in dynamics and tempo, as well as in writing and orchestral configuration. Keeping the construction patterns with which, the listener is already familiar, the opening of the segment is assigned to the solo instrument, whose speed and technical abilities are again brought out during the 8 bars (m. 417 – 424), marked by a certain freedom (*Alquanto libero, ma sempre tempo vivo e strepitoso*). With a decisive effect in triggering the final gesture, the resuming of the incipient motif of melodic plan b, presented in the previous phase, is done in a varied manner, fractioned by measures of pauses that separate the dramaticism of the first cell (m. 421), acted in *forte drammatico*, from the *dubitativo*, hesitant piano of the second cell (m. 423).

E.g. 14

Molto andante Allegro moderato (♩ cca 116)

421

3. Mar.

Hp.

dos. re. mi. fa
sol. la. si

gliss. ord.

Molto andante Allegro moderato (♩ cca 116)

Vlc. sc.

f drammatico *p dubitativo*

p *f* *f p*

Varied replaying of theme b – incipient motif

Then, adopting a chamber formula, the orchestral apparatus integrates the marimba – with a figuration based on the small second oscillation – and the harp – with chromatic ascending glides, while the cello continues its undulating line that brings back the archaic α motif (m. 437, m. 442), alternated by accents in double and pedals.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: 3. Mar (Marimba), Hp (Harp), and Vlc. solo (Cello). The score is divided into two systems, measures 435-439 and 440-442. The Vlc. solo part features two green boxes highlighting specific motifs. The first box is around measure 437, and the second is around measure 442. The score includes dynamic markings such as *poco f*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *cresc.*, *1^o*, *1^o*, *f*, *p*, *détaché leggero*, and *poco f*.

Varied replays of the archaic motif α (m. 437, m. 442) on the cello

For the last time, the symphonic apparatus is restored to full version as the strings engage, in divisions, in a frenetic free polyphony achieved by overlapping melodic ostinatos (in the strings) – deduced by variation from the β motif used throughout the cadential sections of the first part of the work – and strict or free imitations between divisions of the wind section. The motivic segments follow an ascending sequencing. We are thus witnessing the emergence of a specifically baroque writing style, absorbed however by a chromatic modal system, in which the resulting complementary rhythms – with semiquavers as the basic unit – comprise a varied timbral palette. At the center of the constant amplification is the percussive apparatus, strongly energized melodically by the marimba, and playing a decisive role in anchoring the climax of measures 479 – 484.

The marks of the Baroque style are also preserved in the last interference of the solo instrument, which sketches a moment of latent polyphony (m. 484 – 504) in a basic version, built by the oscillation of the upper leading of the tonic (C) or of the dominant (G), thus reiterating the modal-chromatic context. Moreover, the oscillation at the lower or upper leading notes is a frequent occurrence in the cello's solo moments throughout the work.

Then, the varied return, in unison (m. 505 – 510) of the final cadence of the original carol, transposed, however, to the key of C and found in strict imitation on the strings, the replay of the general ascending melodic figures derived from the cadential motif β , prepare the stabilization, after a pronounced slowing down, on the C tonic marked in *fortissimo*, in the new *Maestoso e pesante character* requested by the composer for the last two bars of the concerto. The rhythmic pedals, so intensely used throughout the work, are also present in the concluding gesture are.

Conclusions

The first work written by Adrian Pop in the symphonic-concertante genre and, moreover, the only opus for solo instrument and orchestra created by the composer to date, the *Concerto for cello and orchestra* (1975) reflects a technical and stylistic approach strongly individualized in relation to the folkloric source and the manifestations of contemporary trends. Its inspiring subject “belongs to knowledge – at the level of research, but also at the level of emotional attitude”²¹ – of the autochthonous background, the melody at the basis of the work and “subjected to a variational labor in a wide range of procedures”²² having its origin in the Hațeg region, in a “carol for a young girl” collected by Sabin Drăgoi and included in the *303 Carols* collection.

The ways of processing the original material make equal use of the technical and expressive possibilities of the soloist instrument – directly highlighted by a complex writing of great virtuosity – and of the accompanying orchestra, engaged in multiple roles and configurations as it supports or dialogues with the cello protagonist, keeping in the foreground the intrinsic values of the folk melody, which the composer “leads to a discourse of a developing type, based on continuous melodic and rhythmic variation.”²³

²¹ Constantinescu, Grigore. *Al 23-lea Concert dezbatere (The 23rd Concert debate)*. In *Muzica* journal, no. 5 / 1976, p. 30-31.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 31.

²³ Herman, Vasile. *Formă și structură în Folclorul muzical românesc – Preliminarii la o estetică a muzicii populare românești (Form and structure in the Romanian music folklore – Preliminaries to an aesthetics of Romanian folk music)*. MediaMusica Publishing House, p. 4.

The three movements of the concerto are developed in *attacca*, ensuring, through the evolutionary and variational principle, the process of accumulation and processing of the carol melody, starting from its cellular elements – the melodic pillars, which in the first part are outlined during four phases of successive accumulations and culminations into clusters, making them recognizable rather in the auditory “subconscious”, as the archaic universe of the “genesis” is highlighted through various compositional parameters: the modal-chromatic universe, the prevalence of duration or rhythmic pedals – which will be maintained throughout the work, the various techniques of sound articulation in the soloistic or accompanying layer, the wide timbral palette, the motivic entities α (essentially archaic) and β (cadential), the *rubato* moments, etc. We therefore witness, in the first movement, a “prefiguration” or “exposition” of the components of the concerto discourse of the whole work and, subsequently, the “deduction” of the macrostructure from the microstructure²⁴, as the variation series in Part II continues the “exploration” of the carol melody essences, after its display in almost original form. Gradually, the lyricism and idyllicism of certain moments is replaced by the effervescence and energy that reaches its climax in the final movement, described by the composer as the “final variation”, whose establishment as a third part imposes itself “in a natural way”²⁵.

The cadential moments play a determining role in the structural plan, which besides the concluding motif of the carol melody – mostly employed at the end of some segments following the exposition of the full theme –, they also feature their own conclusive motifs – β – built by ascending sequences and preparing the climax moments from the first movement, or the gesture of “sound deconstruction” by individual or general glissando in the strings section, a gesture intensely used by the Cluj composer and of great effect. In addition to motivic or timbral entities, the rhythmic or duration pedals, often associated with dissonant or cluster chordal structures, play a significant role throughout the concert. Moreover, the value of the cadential material in the Cello Concerto is reaffirmed two and a half decades after its completion, as the composer integrated it into the piece *Cadenza for solo cello* (2000).

As for the relationship created internally between the phases or variations of a movement, it is often based on the dynamic and writing contrasts generated by the transition from the dramatic, sonorous endings to the often soloistic or chamber-like incipits of the sections, on the differences in timbre, sound articulation, or character (identifiable in Part II). There is no

²⁴ A fact also confirmed by the composer in *Concerto for cello and orchestra*. Presentation U.C.M.R.

²⁵ *Ibidem*

lack of symmetry, even mirrored in the last phase of Part I, initiated by a generally descending polymetric layering and concluded by a generally ascending polymetric overlapping preceding the movement's final cadence. In general terms, however, as we are dealing with a continuous evolutionary process, the formal sub-units follow a progressive, accumulating path whose climax coincides with the end of the movement, the last part of the three reaching its maximum effervescence through the polyphonic writing in which the whole orchestra is engaged.

In accordance with the specific stages of the variational and developmental path, the writing presents itself in numerous aspects, from monody or accompanied monody to free, imitative polyphony, simple or layered ostinatos, discrete heterophonic, pointillist or polymetric textures that highlight the "resonances" of the cellular or motivic components of the original carol. The figural-cellular basis of the discourse (without overshadowing the motivic elements) thus allows for a unique synthesis between folkloric essence, modern language techniques and stylistic marks of musical Baroque, especially in the last part of the work, when the parts of the orchestral apparatus claim their individuality in a final stretto - a gesture specific to polyphonic forms. The Baroque dimension is, moreover, decisive for the "stylistic matrix" of the Cluj school in the second half of the 20th century, "configured at the intersection of tradition and modernity, materialized by a «neo-Baroque ambience»"²⁶, about which Bianca Țiplea-Temeș states the following:

The reference to the Baroque style represented for the Cluj school of composition a way of experimenting with new artistic forms of synthesis, in search of a cultural identity. Far from proposing an absolute innovation, the composers of Cluj in the second half of the 20th century wanted a solid anchoring in the past and resorted to a reinterpretation of the Baroque musical values, configuring them, giving them a modern, personal dimension, in an attempt to create a musical poetics of compensation. The result was the establishment of an interlinguistic space that aimed at a compatibility between a structuralist discipline of thought and an autochthonous musical vocabulary, thus placing the Cluj school of composition in a point of balance between Baroque and Modernism.²⁷

²⁶ Șandor, Paula. *Op cit.*, p. 13.

²⁷ Țiplea-Temeș, Bianca. *Creația muzicală și idiomul baroc. Studiu de caz: „Fantasia e fuga sulle pedale per organo” de Dan Voiculescu (The musical creation and the Baroque idiom. Case study: “Fantasia e fuga sulle pedale per organo” by Dan Voiculescu)*. In *Lucrări de muzicologie (Musicology Papers)*, vol. 26, no. 1 / no. 2, MediaMusica Publishing House, 2011, p. 45.

Another way of highlighting the archaic “resonances” of the original carol is through the timbre and variety of sound articulation. In solo terms, this is the main resource in rendering the improvisatory character and agility specific to the lutenists, the cadential moments, often in *rubato* style, but also the accumulation segments featuring a multitude of effects, successive or even concomitant: *pizzicato*, *glissando*, *flajeolet* – with a sonority appropriate to the exposition, for the first time, of the carol melody at the beginning of the second part, the alternation between *al ponticello* – *ordinario* or *pizzicato* – and *arco*, the tremolo and the appoggiaturas with an important role in increasing the drama brought by some phases of the discourse. The complexity of the cello’s writing betrays a good knowledge of its technical and expressive capabilities, a knowledge acquired by the composer not only in theory, but also in practice, Adrian Pop having studied the instrument privately, before becoming a student of the Cluj Conservatory. The difficulty of the solo performance also leaves room for lyrical or idyllic moments that complete the image of the Romanian folkloric universe, embodied in the perimeter of the village and its ancient customs. As for the timbral dimension of the orchestral apparatus, it is no less exploited. We find it both in the “chamber” version – at the end of the first part, throughout the series of variations in the second movement, and in the fourth part – with an essential role in providing timbral accents, an unfolding “ison” for the solo cello, marking either incipient stages or intermediate stages in the amplification of the discourse – and in the almost complete version, during the concluding and cadential moments. Aware of the determining role of each orchestral component, the composer also reserves for them brief moments or entire sections of sound predominance. The string division is distinguished not only by the special effects it displays along the variational trajectory (significant in this respect is the 10th Variation in the second part with its anacrusis *pizzicato* intermittences, but also by the luminescent layers of *ostinato* that it provides during the first two phases of Part III), but also by its role as a binder of the fragmentary or eccentric discourse of the cello, the discrete length pedals contributing substantially, at times, to the shaping of the spatial and modal-chromatic dimension of the sound universe. Their obvious affinities with the technical and expressive nature of the solo instrument also provide them with the necessary capacity to amplify the lyrical or dramatic ethos they cross.

The contribution of the percussion instruments is revealed from the very beginning of the work, when rhythmic interventions provide a natural impetus for the successive appearances of the other parts in rhythmic pedals, so that later they maintain their role in dynamic amplifications, in the preparation of key moments, or in character segments (the first explicit appearance of the carol melody is announced briefly, but in a symbolic way,

by bells at the end of Part I / beginning of Part II, the big drum contributes to the anticipation of climaxes in clusters, the triangle and the maracas enhance the archaic essence of the static section, dominated by the α motif in the last phase of Part I, the marimba and wood-blocks enhance the motoric but also jazzy character found in the last movement etc.).

As for the wind players, their importance in extending the orchestral ambitus (often covering the medium-high register in the moments of culmination), in building the polyphonic or idyllic moments of birdsong (when the archaic α motif acquires new, brighter resonances) or in the articulation of figural, ornamental layers is defining. In addition to their organic integration into the orchestral sonority, we also observe the fulfilment of specific functions in the discursive economy, such as the appellative function (in the horns) or the insertion of specific marks of jazz style, such as the slap-tonguing *frullato* of the Flute grande, in the final movement.

The musical language falls within the modal sphere, taking over the structures of the original colinda, but the use of cellular and figural processing in the decomposition and “recomposition” of the source melody provides the composer with a proper environment for configuring new sonorities, generated by the superposition of chromatic elements. The refinement of the resulting modal-chromatic universe resides in the fact that, although generously used in the form of leading notes, changing tones (*pieni*) or even in dissonant / cluster-like chords, the accidentals do not cancel the original folkloric essences, both tendencies being integrated in a masterly synthesis of tradition and modernity.

The tempo, dynamics and agogics are also resources intensively exploited by Adrian Pop throughout the concert, as evidenced by numerous indications meticulously stated in the score. In fact, the virtuoso discourse of the solo instrument is not only based on the varied rhythmic-melodic lines, “affected” by the multitude of sound effects specific to fiddlers’ art, but also on agility, the speed required in sudden changes of nuance, the omnipresence of accents, the adoption of the *parlando-rubato* style which, however, often brings along specific requirements, intended to translate exactly the technical and expressive intentions of the composer. On a macro-formal level, one can observe the transfer from the slightly fast tempo of the first part to moderated or slow movements during the later phases (in most of the variations of the second part), with a gradual return to *Vivace*. We can therefore conclude that Adrian Pop’s *Cello Concerto* is quasi-”adherent” to the established *fast-slow-fast* structure, independently of the three movement’s dimensions initiated in the *attacca* and presenting numerous other deviations, assimilated, however, naturally in the series of articulations strongly individualized and built on a figural and cellular basis.

A keen recipient of contemporary compositional trends and a passionate connoisseur of the folkloric source, which he approaches with scrupulousness, Adrian Pop presents in his first concert work an example of fusion between tradition and modernity worthy of national and international recognition granted to him throughout his subsequent creation. Keeping in focus the artistic message and the expressive component that justifies the composer – performer – receiver relationship, without losing sight of the rules of balance and naturalness, the Cluj composer shows with ingenuity, along the evolutionary path that he develops in accordance with the source, various technical and timbral solutions that confirm both the individuality and the relevance of Romanian folklore in the landscape of universal music culture.

Translated from Romanian by Paula Șandor and Roxana-Paula Huza

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