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**THE POETICS OF LAZAR NIKOLOV AND THE TRADITIONS IN
THINKING OF THE TWELVE-TONE COMPOSITION IN
WEST EUROPE**

Angelina Petrova

Summary

The correlation of twelve-tone music – serial vanguard is an area, in which the most radical changes in the aesthetics and composition of XX century occurred. The poetics of Lazar Nikolov situated itself in the opposition 12-tone tradition – serialism, it set its position here, its definitions of certain aesthetic categories.

The study of Lazar Nikolov's 12-tone poetics by necessity interprets the difference between the phenomena of East European and West European vanguard trends. Symptomatically in the Bulgarian 12-tone composition we can talk about the crossroads of traditions: the great symphonic genres have developed in it, but a new, vanguard twelve-tone style has arisen as well. In an artistic and socio-cultural aspect the field of Bulgarian twelve-tone music means a "third area", a place where the intersection of traditions – both of the 12-tone music form the first half of XX century and of the serialism, gives rise to an aesthetics of opposition against the ideological dictate, against officiously replaced cultural values.

Lazar Nikolov defined himself in the aesthetic situation of the 1950s in Bulgaria through the concept of pure or absolute music. The concept was introduced in the same way he had adopted it from the West European aesthetic tradition from the beginning of the century: with the term "pure or absolute music". Lazar Nikolov's conception of pure music confronts to some extent with the wrong interpretation of "l'art pour l'art" in serialism. There abstraction is something different, it has become the only medium, it exhausts the entire content of the aesthetic. There are some common grounds in the poetics of Lazar Nikolov with the interpretation l'art pour l'art and serialism, but he did not accept the dictate of the construction by itself as a moment that exhausts all contents of the aesthetic message. From the above stated we understand that the idea of pure music is something which is his view is opposed to the repressive metaphors of progress. One of the codes, which differentiate him in the context of the second half of the century, was his connection with the tradition of expressionism. We have to take into consideration all the complexity, metaphorism and multi-layers of the poetic conception of Lazar Nikolov. He himself, as late as in the 1980s, defined his music and his works as "athematic". Now the principle of metamorphosis rather means a moment of merging the aspects of pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamic. Consequently, here the sound matter and its development are transferred into a free territory where the associative, the metaphoric and the logically structural lose their clear outlines. The logic of metamorphosing now is being sought in merging the sensory with the associative, the metaphor and music structure.

**HARMONIOUS THINKING IN THE GROTESQUE SUITE
"BAI GANIU" AS MUSIC-LINGUISTIC MANIFESTATION OF THE
COMIC IN VESSELIN STOJANOV'S MUSIC**

Marijana Buleva

Summary

The humour in Vesselin Stojanov's music is usually connected with the plots and the program headings of the works, but his music manifestations on the level of sound height thinking have not been studied so far. The problem of humour in music is in itself very complicated and it is connected with the specifics of the music language as a secondary modeling system. The comparison as the inner essence of the funny is observed in the second half of the Grotesque suite "Bai Ganiu", where a comic genre antithesis is realized (Vienna waltz – Bulgarian ruchenitza) and thus by musical means the effect of comedy of circumstances is achieved. In creating humorous imagery in the suite the possibilities of comic contamination are used, which on the basis of formal external signs unites specific national and romantic classical sound pitch and metro rhythmic means. The composer does not strive for internal transformation of the tonal sound height thinking, but combines simultaneously typically expressed musical and language components, which are the product of various types of music cultures. On the level of artistic suggestion, the national sensitivity with its traditional indices for modeling the music space and time is included directly in the stream of the European linear idea of time and in its tempered sound space. The connection with Aleko Konstantinov's literary work is discovered in the composition conception, in the dramaturgic solution, in the changeable close-ups of the author's attitude to the hero. But the positive artistic conception of the music work provides a new creative perusal of the most popular Bulgarian literary character, affirming the vitality and ability of the Bulgarian national spirit to be recorded in the European civilization, to declare its own cultural value.

**VESSELIN STOJANOV'S OPERAS IN THE CONTEXT
OF EUROPEAN MUSIC AWARENESS FROM
THE FIRST HALF OF XX C.**

Bojanka Arnaudova

Summary

The aim of this study is an attempt to define the contribution, peculiarities and innovation of the composer in the operas "Women's Monarchy" and "Salambo", to situate "Sly Peter" too, in accordance with their conceptuality, due to the hard times in which they were created, without discrediting the conditions, erudition, experience and, of course, the aesthetics of the composer. Apparently the opera is part of the idea of the Bulgarian intellectual of musical prosperity, of our Europeanization, of musical institutionalization. Naturally, this is not a general opinion, the furious resistance of some of the greatest Bulgarian men against us having opera (both as an institution and as musical scenic art) is well known. Mostly men of letters point out the priority of the theatre. The unique thing is that in this country the theatre and the opera, drama and music, will develop simultaneously – unlike the world practice in this respect. For the trio Vladigerov – Pipkov – Stojanov the problems were not in harmony, polyphony or orchestration. They were masters of that. Their problems were on a conceptual level. The process of adaptation – opera and folklore seemed to be over. They were predestined to create the norms, acquiring the character of presentable tradition and therefore connected with certain intentions of the epoch. These young musicians possessed *macte animo* plus a doze of aggressiveness, thanks to which they would reject most of the old opera models and with the self-confidence acquired in the West (where they studied and became erudite), they would rapidly affirm the new dramatic schemes, dominated by the modern musical aesthetic conception. "Women's Monarchy" was the first attempt to apply modern techniques in the Bulgarian opera, to abandon folklore every day singing and skipping several stages, Vesselin Stojanov courageously attempted to reproduce the rhythm, syllabics and sonority of Bulgarian speech. "Salambo" was undoubtedly the aesthetic manifesto of Vesselin Stojanov and one of the most original operas in Bulgarian music creation. "Sly Peter" cannot fit into the theme that I am interpreting. Because both as dramaturgy and from a purely music aspect "Sly Peter" was a combination of techniques and discoveries, which Vesselin Stojanov made in his previous opera, but it also carried the print of a placard and conceptual ambiguity, i. e. it cannot be defined as innovational/modern work.

VESELIN STOJANOV'S OPERETTAS

Rumyana Karakostova

Summary

The little known and incomplete (as preserved material) operettas of Vesselin Stojanov: "The Sinner from Baghdad", "Hai Linn", "Abdal Firus" and "In the Caliph's Seraglios", aesthetically interpolated in time, place a distance, difficult to surmount, before the contemporary researcher, due to the unreliable oriental genre code as well as to the author's mysterious self-negation. At the same time, their concrete historical belonging (the mid-thirties and the early forties of XX c) directs us straight to the innovational opera works of the composer from the same period: "Women's Monarchy" (1935) and "Salambo" (1940). Moreover, we cannot neglect the historical evidence that, unlike the operas, Vesselin Stojanov's operettas were undeniable and thundering success – acclaimed both by the audience and the journalistic critics of the time. But not only the evaluation of time, but also the creative continuity exclude the possibility for full genre differentiation, irrespective of the individual composition qualities and the different scenic fate of the separate works. The determining factor in this case is that all of them were created for the Bulgarian musical stage by a highly erudite Vienna graduate in a sufficiently original and unified composition style, which preserves its characteristic features in each author's score. Exactly in such a context we can interpret the composer's inclination to symphonize the form and his definite affinity to expanded modality, to intonation stylization of the oriental imagery, as well as his generally recognized sense of humour, which are inevitably present in his operetta works as well. Even from a purely commercial point of view, the commission of the most reputable for the time private operetta theatres to create Bulgarian operettas with oriental stylistics, similar to the European genre model of the period between the two world wars, evidently was addressed to Vesselin Stojanov not by chance. And in spite of the impossibility to "awake" them again for the stage today, mainly because of the incongruity of their librettos and their obsolete late romantic genre aesthetics, the oriental operettas of Vesselin Stojanov have kept the merits of the style characteristics for the composer and the epoch, as evidence of accomplished creative experience in the specific popular music-scenic art.

NOTIONS ABOUT CARTHAGE IN "SALAMBO" – OPERA BY VESSELIN STOJANOV AND BORIS BOROSANOFF

Miglena Tzenova

Summary

Attempts for recovering the notions for Carthage by archeological explorations start officially in 1831 in Paris, more than 30 years (!) before creation of Flaubert's novel "Salambo". Concluding from respectable coincidences of even small details in the novel with inquired historical records, Flaubert had been informed in length about the process of investigations, and probably about ancient historians' notes. In this connection, the opera composer's (and librettist's) decision to stick rigidly to the literature work makes the opera historically reliable.

The plot of the novel, and therefore of the opera is focused on the result of the so called First Punic War, led from 264 b. C. until 241 b. C.

Carthaginians relate even their wartime exploits to all-powerful gods.

Carthaginians' religiousness takes a central place in the opera. Piety is a general part of the main characters, religious ceremonies of the community penetrate into the crowd scenes. Veneration of the Punic gods cruelty might be felt even in the Carthaginian enemies' music cues. After the mid 40s of the XX-th century religious aspect used to be muted and it stays beyond the musical critics' attention – something that cannot change the nature of the work.

The highest goddess – Tanit – combines features of a virgin and of a mother of many children. Among her "secret symbols" in the novel there are many musical instruments: different harps and lyres, tambourines, silver cymbals, holy drums, flutes, etc.

Salambo, the highest priests and priestess, priest-eunuchs and common people sing or whisper hymns to the goddess-mother under the accompaniment on musical instruments – mainly plucked stringed instruments, but also percussion and wood-wind instruments.

The big orchestral stuff includes instruments as English corn, bass clarinet, glockenspiel, celesta, piccolo, tam-tam, triangle, cymbals, bass and small drum, tambourines and some other, which timbres (together with expanded strings and wood-winds) bring spirit of fairy-tale and whimsicality, and suggest an idea of archaism. Special role in the orchestral dramaturgy acts the timbre of the harp.

Vesselin Stojanov's brilliant orchestrating skills not only surround with ancient atmosphere of orientalism in Vesselin-Stojanov-style, but also come into the vocal parts. Also, this instrumental treatment envelops the episodes with a choir.

Different social groups are presented by crowd choral scenes: mercenaries – in first scene; slaves of Carthage – in first scene, too; the priests – in second; fathers – in third and Carthaginian people – in third and sixth scene.

Functions of the orchestra are very large and important – it comments, clears up, explains, emphasizes and grows quiet to listen attentively to the changes of action.

The cult unites the multinational Carthaginian community. And if we imagine Carthaginians as an entire organism and if we put religion at the place of its heart (I will remember here that the highest priest defines Tanit as “the soul of Carthage”), then destruction of temples will cause the fall of Carthage.

While reading the novel “Salambo” it is not difficult to sense Flaubert’s admiration for Carthaginian culture, means of living, wartime exploits, elevated and powerful Carthaginian characters, in the opera “Salambo” Vesselin Stojanov and Boris Borozanoff suffer for the downfall of this majestic ancient city.

CHAMBER AND SOLO PIANO PIECES BY VESSELIN STOJANOV

Dimitar Zenginov

Summary

The text presented is an extract from a monography about the composer Vesselin Stojanov written by the musicologist Dimitar Zenginov. It was finished in 1972, but it remained unpublished. With this publication, the editing board of the journal wants to introduce the name of Dimitar Zenginov into the memory of our historical musicology. Besides, the text shows ingenious and courageous for the time evaluations, made immediately after Vesselin Stojanov’s death (1969). The attention of the musicologist is centered upon several works of the composer, important for the Bulgarian chamber music: Sonata for violin and piano (1934), Third string Quartet – in modo frigido (1935), Suite for piano – published by a reputable Vienna publishing house “Universal Edicion” (1931) and Three pieces for piano – Prelude, Nocturno and Etude (1956).

ON SOME COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES IN VESSELIN STOJANOV'S PIANO CONCERTOS

Nadja Krusteva

Summary

In the three piano concertos of Vesselin Stojanov (First – A-minor, 1951; Second – D-minor, 1962; Third – B-flat major, 1969) one is impressed by the building up of a guiding line in the piano part, the evidence of a certain type of monody. This type of monody in the right hand is frequently lined with repetition i.e. the melody is located in a wider sound space, comprising several registers or it is saturated with massive three-tone and four-tone chords for both hands. The tones of the harmonious filling can be seen as forming short inner melodic lines without that being sufficiently expressed polyphony. The left hand contains harmonious accompaniment, which, however, represents a more broken up melodic line, moving along the tones of harmony and could be considered a more simplified counterpoint of the main melody. In other words – the harmonious movement is in a more static line which counterpoints with the more ornamented melody in the right hand. At the same time the left hand touches upon some inner voices through the hidden polyphony of crucial and leaping tones. I have introduced the working term “arpeggio lines” for this type of structure.

The virtuoso passages take a large space in Vesselin Stojanov's piano concertos. A characteristic feature of the gradual passages is that they correspond with the folklore traditions to such an extent that they can be seen as an original imitation of the folklore instrumental ornamentation. Another tendency is the frequent presence toccata movements. Even metaphorically we could call Vesselin Stojanov's concertos toccatas. In this study I examine all the three techniques, which, in my opinion, are characteristic for the piano thinking of the composer, who is justifiably considered to be one of the classics of Bulgarian piano works.

VESSELIN STOJANOV IN THE MEMORIES OF HIS STUDENTS

(interviews)

Summary

Jule Levi:

For me he has remained the classic, the professional idol, the teacher who taught us dedication and creative integrity, who always had time for his students.

And without giving us ready solutions, he always managed to receive the right answer from us. He was an encyclopedic personality, not only erudite or well informed, a thoroughly knowledgeable man in various fields of science. And at the same time his European spirit or his musical vigour, if you wish, imposed itself in every note he wrote.

Ivan Marinov:

When he built up a form, for him like for any composer, the main problem was the grading in the inner harmonious and polyphonic suspense. But his composition style quite early showed characteristic features such as instead of the traditional relation T-D, he used Lydian scale (with high IV degree), on which the most distant possible chords are built, creating a very specific and melodic order.

Mihail Pekov:

He was one of those persons, who was able to be silent in 3 languages. It was very difficult to make him speak – at least it was very difficult for me. But I remember him once telling me (without having been asked) how when he was a student at the Vienna Higher School of Music, he was one of the two pianists, who alternated in the preparation for the performance of “Pierrot Lunaire” by Arnold Schönberg.

Victor Chuchkov:

On the eve of Vesselin Stojanov's centennial anniversary we awake to remember and to show some of his works which have not lost its value and significance despite the passing of time. It is the recognition that the generations owe to the composer, pianist and pedagogue Vesselin Stojanov.

Written by Rumyana Karakostova