

THE PIANO DUO A. LAPICUS – IU. MAHOVICI IN THE MIRROR OF POSTMODERNISM

DUETUL DE PIANE A. LAPICUS – IU. MAHOVICI ÎN OGLINDA POSTMODERNISMULUI

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In the article written by Victoria Tcacenco are analyzed some basic aspects of the interpretation concept of the piano duo A. Lapidus – Iu. Mahovici. The author reveals some features regarding postmodernism aesthetics in making programs, scenic space organization and other ontological aspects.

Keywords: piano duo, post-modernism, interpretation, bis

În articolul semnat de Victoria Tcacenco sunt abordate unele aspecte de bază ce țin de conceptul interpretativ al duetului de pian A. Lapidus – Iu. Mahovici. Autoarea scoate la iveală unele trăsături ce aparțin esteticii post-moderniste în compunerea programelor, organizarea spațiului scenic și altor aspecte ontologice.

Cuvinte-cheie: duet de pian, postmodernism, interpretare, bis

The existence of classical academic music tradition in the realities of contemporary Republic of Moldova represents an important and interesting topic to research. This area has many particularities. Some of them coincide with the universal trends while others appear as a Moldovan' culture specifics. First of all, we observe a strong conservative trend supported by the state based on the European tradition which has at least two centuries. This conservation trend manifests itself in programs of the National Philharmonic Society and the Organ Hall, in the programs of such collectives as the National Symphony Orchestra, the National Chamber Orchestra, the National Chamber Choir etc. The A. Lapidus-Iu. Mahovici Piano Duo takes part from this trend: their repertoire unites Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism music masterpieces for two pianos as well as some pieces of XX century' universal and national repertoire. The contemporary music in terms of avant-garde opuses, are avoided by the musicians, fact that confirms their *traditionalism* position.

Another important problem is the way who this create unit treat the classical repertoire. In their concerts and programs we can find a classical tradition "reforming" and transformation. Let's study how the classical tradition is enriched by post-modernistic ontological features. The aim of this article is to analyze this features, formulating as a result some important ontological particularities of the *Lapidus-Mahovici piano duo* in his context.

1. The first one is a new *bis* treatment in Moldovan performing arts scene. There are several innovations introduced by this piano duo into Moldovan performing arts practice during last two decades. The first one is a special of *bis*, a new interpretation of this part of the concert musicians in concert programs. This word is used to name an repeated interpretation of the piece which has been accepted with enthusiasm by public. This request an additional performance might take place in two cases having at least two different significations. If one of the pieces during the concert

provoked a fever public reaction the piece might be repeated immediately. Another case is a special short piece performance in the end of the concert as a sign of concert nearing completion or as a sign of gratitude towards the public. Trying to make a classification of *bis* piece, one can identify at least three different types. The first one is a selection of a short spectacular, very famous creation, popular to the public, traditionally performed as an *encore* by different performers. Very often this kind of piece has a virtuoso features, a brilliant musical texture and an advanced tempo. The essence of the *bis* message is to leave a pleasant feeling for public. This tradition went from the Romanticism epoch, with its heroes like F. Liszt or F. Chopin. The second type of *bis* piece is connected with the program itself: many musicians specially offer a *bis* piece selected in advance, very often it is a score which is well aligned with the program stylistically, by genre or other features or representing the composer who's creation has been included in the program. The piano duo Lapicus-Mahovici "invented" on the Moldovan artistic scene a new type of *bis*: very often they perform a piece in a slow tempo of philosophical character aimed to "switch" the listener's perception forwards another dimension, bringing a different perspective of whole concert program. The most representative examples of this approach are A. Schnittke's *Postlude* or the the *Chorale Prelude in f-minor* by J. S. Bach. Psychologically speaking, this tool helps to "remove" the public enthusiasm, the external stir, and to focus them on the essential mission of music.

2. Another important feature of Lapicus-Mahovici piano duo of the impact into national concert scene consists an important theatrical element of their performance. We are talking about some accentuated visual elements of the programs, provoked by the concept and stylistic profile of the program. There are some examples: a conceptual visual look of the musicians as contrasting concert costumes and visual element of black and white colors marks the Debussy's *Black and white* Suite, some elements of theatre scenery in the F. Poulenc *The Human voice* mono-opera in collaboration with Lilia Shalomei (telephone, elements of stage light), glove puppets during the Igor Stravinsky' *Petrushka* concert. All these examples, in my opinion, are just the symbols of a trend, which has to be underestimated.

During the performance of *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky the musicians went further" the sound aspect has been completed by a projection of fragments of a famous movie *Baraka*. The film was created in 24 countries. In the picture there are no dialogues, the voice over the usual story. The film concept was aimed to create a continuous narrative chain, open on the screen the whole world combining the most remote places on the planet and industrial objects, the archetypical symbols and ancient rituals, born at the crossroads of cultures, thoughts expressed exclusively cinematographic means. The musicians made their own soundtrack, coming different visual segments of the movie, starting point of this video-concept being Stravinsky's music. It is a not very "legal" way, but the Lapicus-Mahovici piano duo' intentions is clear: through the using of different visual tools this kind of performance realizes several different functions: facilitating music perception, enlighten understanding of mass audience, creating synthetic audio-visual unity, close to the perception of modern and very often non-sophisticated listener. The problem is much deeper and reflects the dissatisfaction of musicians by the traditional, canonized form of concerts in classical music: musicians attract resources of light, stage costumes and visuals effects.

3. An important innovation introduced to the national artistic scene by this duo is some new methods and principles of a concert program completing: for example, their program named the *Ghosts of Dreams* brings together masterpieces of "slow" music of the last three centuries – from Bach's chorale prelude or Mahler *Adagietto* to jazz miniatures like *The Wind* written by K. Jarrett. In the terms of style is important to underline the domination of the deliberated *eclecticism*, the selection is made on the basis of the decision of musicians, often parts of cyclic works have been "removed" from their cycle context and placed in a new concept and sound field. It is interesting to explain the musician's explanations.

This program concept has its own story. It based on the collection of pieces in the arrangement for 4-hands piano made by A. Lapicus and Iu. Mahovici. Musicians have wrote the following: “It can be considered as a collection of pieces, which should be interpreted individually, as well as any combinations and order of performance convenient for you. Nevertheless, this is a peculiar experiment, which we personally have called: “Dream Phantoms” Fantasy. This is a cycle of pieces, arranged in a strictly definite order, the performance of which is possible only in the given succession” [1, p. 20].

This event led us to the “experiment”, which we are describing now. We have decided to arrange a program based on the principle of organic, logical and acoustically reasonable correlation of the composition’s keys, so that every piece would become a “modelling link” of the following piece’s tonality. Thereby there were formed three sets of pieces, surprisingly harmonious and coordinated in their tonal correlations, but bounding them together into an integral construction became a problem. The decision came suddenly after reviewing the film Solaris. The usage of the choral prelude *f-moll* as a refrain (or leitmotif) during the whole program could tie everything together. The prelude as the framing appears twice – in the beginning and at the end of the cycle. In the beginning it has the original tonality *f-moll*, at the end it is transposed into tonality *fis-moll* and sounding as the parallel minor key of the penultimate piece (Sort of reminiscence by N. Metner), created in *f-moll* tonality. The prelude ceases here on Es-dur’ seventh chord (Es7=D7→*as-moll*), after which starts the Lullaby by P. Tchaikovsky – S. Rachmaninov in *as-moll*.” [1, p. 22] (See figure nr.1):

Bach	G.Maler	F. Chopin	Medtner	Bach	Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninov	K. Jarrett	Bach	Medtner	Bach
Choral	<i>Adagietto</i>	<i>Mazurka</i>	<i>Canzona-serenada</i>	Choral	<i>Lullaby</i>	<i>The Wind</i>	Choral	<i>Sort of reminiscence</i>	Choral
prelude				prelude			prelude		prelude
<i>f-F</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>a-F</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>f-Es7</i>	<i>as</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>fis</i>

This approach has some roots in a concert practice of the past of European music. For instance, famous Russian musicologist and sociologist E. Dukov has mentioned, that in real European concert practice until the middle of 19th century multipart orchestral and choral works almost never performed entirely. The main principle of program completing was a collage of fragments of operas or symphonic cycles. It is interesting to mention a special role of the last piece, which has usually assigned the role for a piece for leaving the concert hall. The study on concert life of 17th-19th centuries gave the researchers opportunity to conclude that “conceptually the work itself as a holistic opus provoked a little interest to the public...” [2, p. 182].

Pieces are performed almost without interruption, *attacca*, while applaude are forbidden between movements of this new “cycle”, the tempo and dynamic contrasts are deliberately smoothed. Thus, the perception of approaching is more close to Eastern meditation than to the traditional model of perception of classical music of the European tradition. It seems to me that this aspect of creative duo tends to postmodernism aesthetics, which paradoxically coexists within the classical repertoire framework.

Bibliographic references

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