

COMPARATIVE RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS OF THE CHORUS AND THE TWO COUPLETS IN THE “CONCERTO FANTASY FOR SOLO VIOLIN” BY GEORGE ENESCU

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Abstract: *The rhythmic aspects in Enescu's creation are very important, because of the various combinations of rhythmic formulas and of the exceptional divisions, which offer that improvisation feature that is so specific to the Romanian creations of the 20th century. The comparative analysis of the chorus and of the two couplets, B and C, from the Concerto Fantasy for solo violin by George Enescu will prove the predominance of some rhythmic cells on others in each of the above mentioned stages.*

Keywords: *solo violin, rhythm, rhythmic combinations.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Fantasy for solo violin*, written by George Enescu is, in fact, an attempt to write a Concerto Symphony for violin and orchestra. There are various versions to the pieces, which were decoded by Șerban Lupu with the help of the composer Cornel Țăranu. The complete form, on which the edition written by Șerban Lupu is based, was made at Tescani, in 1932. The manuscript stops abruptly, inexplicably, after 9 pages of music sheet, adapted for orchestra in neat and clear handwriting, finished in the smallest detail by the composer. The rest of the material was taken from two sketches which present different versions. From here, the violinist Șerban Lupu has drawn the conclusion that Enescu has had several stages of creation related to this work.

The part of the solo violin is almost entirely highlighted, the orchestra part being only outlined, by means of harmonies, rhythms and instrumental indications. It is a maturity work, the musical language being closer to the late quartets for strings or piano. Even under this aspect, the violin writing is unique and especially interesting. Șerban Lupu has created a continuous and independent piece, adding and combining the instruments of the orchestra to the solo violin music sheet.

The atmosphere of the work is dark and profoundly tragic, with echoes from the opera *Oedip*, containing a rich sound material and a melody which is often chromatically highlighted with unexpected modulations, reminding of Eugène Ysaye. This piece represents a unique occasion to discover a different style in Enescu's creation, in which the folklore is completely transformed.

2. RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS

As the title itself suggests it, this *Fantasy* is characterized from the formal point of view by a great freedom of movement with a varied and tortuous pace, without pattern,

following the hidden aspects and modulations of the thoughts and of the human, intimate feelings. Consequently, this work is a fantasy with an improvisation effect (in practice, the quarter pulse organizes, from the metric point of view, the sound breath of the text), the freedom of movement being amplified by frequent agogic indications. Nevertheless, trying to make a formal fit, we can identify a *Rondo* of the type A B A C A.

The A is dramatic and dark, based on a rhythmic formula (eighth note with point, followed by a sixteenth), which is repeated sequentially, obsessively, in the entire work. It starts in the fourth measure and goes until the fiftieth measure and through it we can observe a play and an eternal oscillation between chromates, characterized by a strong agitation and restlessness and a dense arrangement of accords or doubles formed most of the time by superposed parallel quints.

The B of the *Fantasy*, which starts from the fiftieth measure and brings a tempo which is calmer and lamented, a measure of three crotchets and a tonality with four sharps (*E major*). This first couplet has a dreamy, pensive feature, bringing the same signal as *the A* here, but in a softer and more nostalgic atmosphere. The composer's indication is *Allegretto lusingando* (enticing, slipping, full of traps).

An interesting aspect in this couplet is represented by the durations, which are enlarged, durations of minim and minim with point appearing for the first time in this paper. Regarding the same perspective of the rhythm, one can notice the very frequent passes from one measure to the other, from a ternary rhythm to binary one and vice-versa. This rhythmic play, which goes on measure after measure, brings a new improvisation feature, on the other hand, the inspiration from the folklore creation making this rhythm always new with fresh and unfinished in the combinations between the binary and the ternary measures.

The third couplet (*the C*), although is shorter than *the B*, is more dramatic and tense.

In the *Fantasy* we encounter a great diversity of rhythmic combinations. One can notice some exceptional divisions which are not occasional, but which can be met in very many passages, both on long values (crotchets), and on smaller ones (eighth notes and sixteenths).













The true skill of the artist is highlighted each and every time when new rhythmic values appear, which seem to be protected against the rigidity of a pre-established meter, which is a sensation created also by the often changes in the measures.

Consequently, we have that freedom which gives the opportunity to break the barriers of the real time and enter an area where fantasy is the best word to describe the easiness and the freedom of the work.

Seen from this perspective, the poetic content is captured in a sufficiently wide variety of patterns, its articulation being made in harmony and, quite often, in rhythms and timbral combinations.


One thing that stands out is the construction of the whole, which confuses, being incredible by its vastness and complexity, its themes always recovering their energies from their own inner beats, and one can be a witness to the miracle of movement, which is permanently auto-generated. Consequently, the passages have, through their rhythmic and continuous variations, and through the infinite combinations of the same formulas, an internal, rhythmic life.


Table 1: Rhythmic formulas within *the A*






Nr Măs.												
1												
2										X		X
3				X								X
4	X	X										
5	X	X										
6	X	X				X						
7	X	X				X						
8	X	X				X			X			
9	X					X	X					
10	X						X					
11										X		X
12				X								X
13	X	X					X					
14	X	X		X		X						
15	X	X				X			X			
16		X	X			X						
17								X			X	X
18	X	X				X						
19	X				X	X	X	X				
20	X						X		X			
21											X	X
22										X		X
23				X						X		X
24	X	X										X
25												X
26		X						X				X
27	X	X										X
28		X		X				X				
29	X	X						X				X
30		X		X				X				
31	X	X							X	X	X	
32	X	X						X		X		X
33	X									X	X	
34	X									X	X	X
35		X		X						X		X
36												X
37			X								X	X
38				X							X	
39	X	X									X	
40										X	X	
41		X							X			
42		X						X				
43	X			X								
44												
45								X				
46						X						X
47									X	X		X
48												X
49									X		X	







3. CONCLUSIONS

This table will prove a very interesting aspect, which is the prevalence of certain rhythmic cells on the others, within the first stage of the *Fantasy*. Thus:



 appears in 22 out of the 49 measures;






















 also appears in 22 measures;

 - 2;  - 9;  - 1;  - 7;  - 9;

 - 10;  - 5;  - 6;  - 7;  - 14;  - 15.

From these values found in *the A* we will draw the following conclusion:

1. appoggiaturas and the  formula have a prevalence of approximately 50% of the total number of measures of *the A*;
2.  appears in approximately 40% of the total measures of *the A*;
3. the order of appearance of the other rhythmic formulas is the following:



















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


   and                  

From this analysis results George Enescu's preference for appoggiaturas, thus creating the folklore feature of the work; moreover, the formulas derived from exceptional triol values prevale in various combinations.















Within *the B* stage, we will be surprised to see that two rhythmic formulas which appear quite often within *the A*, completely disappear here, not being met at all during *the B*. Moreover, there are also higher values, such as crotchets, crotchets with point and minims. They will hold the rhythmic supremacy in *B*, thus achieving a calm and soothing atmosphere. Thus, we can see how Enescu successfully achieves various moods, using the rhythmic aspect. This is how the situation of the rhythmic formulas within *the B* looks like:




Table 2: Rhythmic formulas within *the B*

Nr. Măs.																			
50						X	X				X								
51							X												
52						X													
53											X								X
54	X			X															X
55						X													
56						X													X
57				X						X									
58	X									X	X								X
59	X									X									X
60						X	X												
61		X	X																
62											X	X							X
63							X												
64				X															X
65						X													



Nr. Măs.													
66							X						
67							X		X				X
68					X								
69									X				X
70												X	X
71		X						X			X		
72		X					X	X					
73		X								X	X		
74													
75			X		X								
76							X						X
77		X								X		X	
78							X						X
79			X		X								
80												X	
81		X									X		
82			X						X				X
83			X				X						X
84	X				X								X
85							X		X			X	
86				X					X				X
87			X							X			X
88		X					X				X		
89			X									X	X
90			X		X		X						
91			X									X	X
92		X								X	X		
93							X						X
94								X					
95			X		X				X				
96				X		X							
97						X							X
98						X							

From the table above, we can infer that:

1.  appears 21 times, representing approximately 50% of the total number of measures of the B;
2.  appears 14 times, representing approximately a quarter of the total number of measures of *the B*;
3. the order of the other rhythmic formulas is the following:  - 10;  =  - 9;  =  - 8;  - 7;  =  - 6;  - 5;  - 4;  - 3.
4. the rhythmic formula  appears 9 times in *the A*, but here it only appears 3 times;

5.  and , the formulas which appeared 5, respectively 10 times in *A* do not appear at all in *B*, but the formula  appears here 10 times, unlike *A*, where it is only found 2 times.

Nevertheless, what is remarkable is that George Enescu has succeeded in organizing very well the melodic and rhythmic material of *the A* and *B*, so as to fit it perfectly in the same number of measures. Thus, we have 48 measures, both in *the A* and in *the B* stage. As for *the C* stage, the situation is different, this being a lot smaller, reduced to half, being formed of 23 measures.

At this point, the basic formula, sequentially repeated, is , which appears in 8 measures and , in various variants, which is found in 7 measures. These two rhythmic variants, although they do not appear in more measures, have a special role in giving the feature of the couplet *C*, because it is repeated very often, in each measure where they appear, these successive measures creating a tense and agitated atmosphere.

Here is how the rhythmic aspects, with their variety and the way they intervene, determine very much the feature of a work, by helping to portray the expressive aspect of the work. Moreover, the fact that certain rhythmic formulas are specific to the folklore music must be underlined, and their predominance doesn't do anything else but highlight their improvisation feature.

Rhythm represents the movement factor of the sound elements, which contributes to the expression: "Melody or harmony cannot exist without rhythm (the impulse of life), a sequence of sounds on the melodic or harmonic plan which becomes intangible, is transformed into an esthetic entity. Through rhythm, the melody acquires: life, poignancy, communicativity".

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Manuscript received: 15.06.2010

Accepted paper: 13.08.2010

Published online: 16.08.2010