

LIED CREATION IN THE FIRST HALF OF XX CENTURY (1)

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Abstract. *This study contains a presentation of the evolution of aesthetics of Romanian lied in its important moments, due to some composers who registered by their writings, different stages and transformations in the dialectic of composition process. The music dedicated to the genre, the lied, was not the result of a long elaboration, of a tradition, it was not completed in a body of musical laws but it was reduced to general-musical or poetic principles of creators, indicating an organic modernization through assimilation of occidental culture on the level of the entire society. The tradition, which includes the precursors, could express the conditions of possibility of construction of modern medical identity, the demarche of a culture in childhood, as Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu presented in the Conference “We and you” of the session of Romanian Athenaeum in December 20th 1892..*

Keywords: *lied, George Enescu, Romanian traditions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The initiative of modernity belongs to George Enescu, which becomes a true centre, with internal resources in being able to distinguish critically among the traditions which worth to be abandoned and those which worth to be maintained. George Enescu and the subsequent composers, manage effectively the report between new and old within its own tradition, the modernization induced by their creations being perceived as a legitimate consequence of an internal process, of encounter of originality of our national music– „...it is very difficult to distinguish this originality. However, it is a general characteristic which characterizes our national music, as the general idea results from our national music: there is sadness even in joy. This feeling is inspired by our valleys and hills, by the special color of our sky, by the thoughts which trouble and determine at the same time the occurrence of a languor in our souls which cannot be explained well. A stranger, who is my friend, hearing me once playing one of my works, told me: „ in this composition is something which cannot be reached”. This „something which cannot be reached” is the original part of Romanian inspiration from my work; this unexplained but deeply moving languor seems to me as being the certain trait of Romanian songs” [1].

The critics and literates followed their way in parallel with artists, following firm and absolute principles in aesthetic judgment. New truths occurred often in the horizon of two distinct but akin disciplines, two structures (poetical – musical) which bring in their evolution games of ideas, rhythm images, rhyme in an emotional structure - the lied.

The process of our musical regeneration under the impulse of new ideals has a dramatic development and includes the most different musical genres, on the one hand, and the revelation of Romanian folklore becomes an inexhaustible source for Romanian musicians and of admiration for foreigners.

„The adoption of European music is performed for simple and unequivocal reason that: the new system offers the possibility to create a professional musical culture which may bear the mark of our nation. The foreseen manner is that of symbiosis between the most authentic and non-dissimulated Romanian musical element – popular song – and the property

of adapting genres and classical musical European procedures. Thus, the adhesion to western style is the only way of assertion of national music, it means progress, it means the raise of musicality of Romanian people in the sphere of music of universal resonance Romanian music appeared as soon as our composers discovered the folklore and matured directly proportional with the appropriation and generalization of huge latent virtues settled out in time in popular repertory” [2].

2. DISCUSSION

The Romanian lied, in course of formation, took over the charge to transpose by sounds the ampleness of metaphors becoming imperiously necessary the encounter of some convincing approaches.

But the musical-creative movement, beside the subjectivism and lyricism specific to it, has the merit to have opened to Romanian music the means to assert the truth and necessary liberty, to determine it to undertake social, civilization functions and why not, even progressive ones, to become a tribune of moral and humanitarian ideas, but mainly, this current has a revolutionary character which announces the main directions of Romanian lyricism in culture.

Therefore, it was not assimilated a musical culture, but it was gathered the valuable elements from everywhere, being kept a certain neutrality. Without intending to treat a complicated issue of interferences, we could appreciate that even this neutrality was one of the factors which insured the development of our composition on an autonomous path. By the reports established during the study years with European musical centres, with great musicians, the relations with western tradition of Romanian musicians were consolidated, being maintained during the following years.

The researches of some composers such as George Dima, Sabin Drăgoi, Emil Montșia, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Mihail Jora, Constantin Nottara, Eusebie Mandicevschi, Constantin Brăiloiu, Marțian Negrea, Theodor Rogalski, Alfred Alessandrescu, Paul Constantinescu and Tudor Ciortea, as they have conceived and performed them, represent the first certain indexes which attest the distinct component physiognomy of our music. Continuing the track of precursors¹, they complete the modest beginnings; they will crown and widen the stylistic horizon inaugurated in such difficult conditions.

The beginning of the century is the field which belongs to the new generation, led by George Enescu. They were animated by modern currents, by new aesthetic and stylistic ideals, meant to open more the way of immediate ancestors. The new line indicates two direct aspects: the adoption of consecrated musical forms and the taking over of some stylistic procedures specific to a composer, able to aureole the creations by their force of penetration and vitality in time. Inevitably this adoption imposes the conjugation of classical forms with the ethos of music of folkloric provenience and of individual loading, the only one which may guarantee originality. A perspective over the content and form of music resides from the research of its sources, encountered in reality: life, nature, culture. One may distinguish thus between musical sources (work of a predecessor, folklore) and non-musical sources (literary, plastic, philosophic, even scientific) of some compositions. It may be essential the fact that the musical or non-musical sources do not explain as fully the content or the form of a creation. We encounter here that „ineffable”, untranslatable issue, the resort to folklore not being able to explain entirely the work of George Enescu or of the other Romanian creators.

¹ Gold period of the precursors of Romanian music, 1878-1898, the most fertile century which defines their style and aesthetics.

Searching and picking up a national substance in a stock is possible in vocal and vocal-instrumental forms, sensitive forms upon sublimation of popular song. It is understood that this is the only way to avoid the taking over of schemes with the style of composers and epigonism. Thus the brilliant debut of George Enescu is marked by a range of folkloric works inaugurated by *Romanian sequence* (1897) and it is completed by *Romanian poem*, op. nr. 1.

The discovery of the repository hidden in folklore is valid after a range of composers were won by this idea, by its promotion. A plentiful activity in the field was developed by Tiberiu Brediceanu, Sabin Drăgoi, Emil Monția, and Constantin Brăiloiu, gathering hundreds of popular songs and processing them. One may speak about a scientific research of popular music at the beginning of XIX century, of the songs gathered with the phonograph². In order to approach the composers to folklore it was essential to know it, the collection in terms of a scientific method and the study of stylistic and compositional traits. The modernization of composition school, by Enescu is a *sine qua non* condition for the creation of an original national music which may be completed by a strong connection with traditional art and spiritual values of Romanian people. Constantin Brăiloiu, who has contributed to theoretical foundation of Swiss national school, formulates his theory: „There is only one way that a young school acquire its independence and craft, namely to use the popular sources ...it may not be imagined an international music; *le style c'est l'homme* and the man is not an abstraction but the product of a soil and the reflex of a sky”. The theoretical activity in the field of composition school determined him to neglect his works which registered a great success in the country and abroad, lieds, popular songs with accompaniment of piano or reduced orchestra.

The composition process focuses on a particular tone which may assign music a distinct stylistic personality, suggesting a new individuality by taking over directly some motifs from folklore, harmonic particularities or popular melodic cells: „*The indestructible connection with folklore is not presented uniformly and simple...it is outlined a polychrome range of means of valuation of from direct quotation to essence of parameters, allowing a visible alienation opposite the leaving point*” [3].

Each creator, who uses popular song, or who writes in popular style crosses stages which include the simple harmonization of popular song, passing to processing and development of the popular theme with additions, as proper as possible for the song and up to works conceived in popular spirit with a thematic created by composer. This last study involves the knowing and feeling of the particularities of popular music, of specific musical language.

In cult Romanian music appeared the first popular songs under the form of simple harmonisations, being at most framed by a small *prelude* or *coda*, signed by Tiberiu Brediceanu, Sabin Drăgoi and Emil Monția.

Within an upper stage, we encounter popular songs developed by composer, diversified by a harmonic or rhythmic variation, combining eventually two or more popular songs contrasting as movement and genre (*Doina* and *Învârtita* or *Cântec* and *Joc*), procedure encountered more often in popular literature. A superior processing of popular song is encountered mainly in the forms of ballades, lied, oratorios and cantatas.

² Romanian Academy publishes in 1913 a great collection of popular songs from Bihor and Maramureș. The acoustic phonograph is turned– with craft means – into electric phonograph by Gheorghe Abălașei, called by C.Brăiloiu « Edison », accomplishing a dream of the professor. Within the future Folklore Institute, he would realise for field the magnetophone with batteries, before this appeared on market. Gh.Abălașei was not musician, he was a modest man, without a special degree, but endowed with unusual natural qualities, gathering in the same person the sound engineer, the technical service and he was an excellent musical calligraphic.

The need of creating the national music imposes the premises of adapting its creative technique on the structure of folklore, those who managed to use it successfully are also the best knower of popular song: Mihail Jora (the ballet *When the grapes ripe*), Teodor Rogalski (*Three popular symphonic dances*), Sabin Drăgoi (*Rustic divertissement, Rhapsodies* and the work *The Bane*), Paul Constantinescu (*Dances and symphonic rhapsodies*, the ballet *Wedding in Carpathians*, the work *Pană Lesnea Rusalim, The concerts*), quoting as well beyond the lied creation.

The highest form of use of popular spirit, as expression of affiliation of autochthon creation to popular sap, is encountered at those authors who do not use real popular songs, but they create the song *in popular style*: the greatest part of George Enescu's works and almost the entire work of Mihail Jora. The creation of George Enescu, the language of folkloric inspiration offers a wide stylistic frame, able to contain different means of expression with autochthon characteristic, ranging from fulfillment of popular melodic patterns up to that stylization which determines the connection of cult song to folklore, crystallizes due to the presence of some melodic cells of popular nature, or due only to rhythm. Consequently, the value of a composition is imposed by the expressive force of content and the perfection of form, the popular authenticity and stylisation of folklore not being value criteria but only style criteria. It was truly said that „*in his lieds, Mihail Jora is the most famous harmonist of our music, as George Enescu is the most famous polyphonist*” [4].

The „local” colour searched by musical authors is the order word as well for representation. The place of development of „action” is limited by the nature and poem of Romanian village evoked by Tiberiu Brediceanu in *Miorița* (6 themes of ballade, for vocal quartet with piano, 1955), *6 Doina and Romanian songs* (1953), *Carols, Doina and people songs*, for high voice and piano and Sabin Drăgoi of whose creations we mention: *25 Doina for voice and piano, 13 Songs for voice and piano* (the first ten lines by Heinrich Heine, Romanian version of the poet Ștefan Octavian Iosif), *Chrysanthemums* (1920, lines by Victor Eftimiu), *Hypocorism* (1933, lines by Augusta Dragomir), *White flowers* (1914, lines by Liviu Coman).

The laws of poetry and the laws of music cannot be confused but speculatively, since the performances which they govern use different essential materials – the sound, word – and resort to different senses and faculties. The lied does not depend on the value of poem itself, but on the measure by which it may prove a musical reality. In such situations we are revealed the different nature and also the latent rivalry between poet and musician. It was often commented that the most beautiful poems, for instance those of Goethe, are difficult to adapt to music. The poem itself is so finished, so accomplished, that music, although it does not bring something new, cannot amplify the final impression.

The novelty of the conception of composer George Dima consists obviously in the tenacity and conviction with which he supported the expressivity of song in terms of some immutable rigorous aesthetic laws. His creative individuality is emphasized by duplicative force of his musical demarche, noticed in a musical supplement of the magazine *Le Monde* of April 1911, occurred at Bruxelles: „*George Dima born in a country without musical traditions, where the conditions were unfavorable for the development of this art, by his ardent patriotism followed and reached a purpose: creation of a Romanian music. Leaving from a principle of sound pedagogy, he begins to harmonize popular songs, then he gradually evolves, by a personal selection, sometimes magisterial, up to classical music.*”

We may notice that his entire creation is developed in favor of permanence and continuity of culture, recovery of Romanian musical past (of folklore), in the direction of radical administration of present. The generation of George Dima offers, as the musician and great man of culture Octavian Lazăr Cosma writes, „*Superior means of musical expression, able to stimulate the process of crystallization of his own national physiognomy*” [2].

Popular literature precedes written literature; the analysis of fact material gathered by composer was to show that all these spiritual manifestations are a part of a coherent system, that they are the expression of a life manner as well as answers to fundamental questions of existence, defining the spirituality of Romanian people and his contribution to universal cultural patrimony. Let's not forget that music represents a specific manner of reflection of reality, a factor of knowledge on the way of emotion, of sensitivity.

One may not omit from the corpus of folkloric works the harmonization of popular songs in an entirely superior manner integrated to authentic creation as well as with an efficient valuation of popular element. The power of internalization of creator determines an evolution of melodic conception which is enriched with new images in a full balance. In his creation, George Dima scatters songs during his entire composing activity, his musical creation being developed close to popular poetry and melodic as well as cult one in a long range of works among which: „*Sub fereastra mândrei mele*”, „*Hop, țurcă, furcă*”, „*Jelui-m-aș și n-am cui*”, *Trei cântece slovace*, „*Mândruliță de demult*”, „*Hei leliță din cel sat*”, „*Mugur mugurel*”, „*Cucule cu peană sură*”, „*Hai în horă*”, „*Cucuruz cu frunza-n sus*”, „*Fântână cu trei izvoare*”, „*Ciobanul*”, „*Sus opincă*”, „*Ce faci Ioană?*”, „*Nu-i dreptate*”, „*Trei păstori*”, „*Vai mândruță dragi ne-avem*” .

The most beautiful musical pages are dedicated to voice – maybe due to his initial formation as well as to the friendship with the great singer Dimitrie Popovici-Bayreuth and Nicolae Popovici.

Most of vocal works are original, being maintained closed to melodic forms asserted by German lied as well as to the lyricism of the lines of Mihai Eminescu: „*Ce te legeni codrule*”, „*La mijloc de codru des*”, „*Și dacă ramuri bat în geam*”, „*Somnoroase păsărele*”, „*De ce nu-mi vii ?*”, „*Dorința*”, „*Peste vârfuri*”. His art culminates in ballades, *Ștefan Vodă și codrul*, and descriptive works *Curcile* and *A venit un lup din câng* as well as in the cycle *Din lumea copiilor*³.

Groza, epic songs on lines by Vasile Alecsandri⁴, impresses by dramatic accents and by melodic line of the theme submitted permanently to tone, harmonic and rhythmic transformations in order to be able to render the accents specific to popular ethos. It must be observed that in the peasant environments, the epic songs circulated under the name of olden, ancient, teasel or hood songs. Wishing to promote over the borders of the country the beauty of these patriotic songs and bearers of humanistic message, Vasile Alecsandri baptised them „ballades”, borrowing the term *ballade* from French. The word was imposed mainly among the intellectuals fact which explains its taking over by George Dima.

The variety of technical means which George Dima uses in his works present a great richness of feelings which he cultivates with a high competence in all genres approached, either epic, lyric songs or dramatic songs. By its narrative and declamatory character, the ballade is drawn up only to be listened by others – opposite to doină which is sang „for self” – , being characterised by cantability, wide melodic breath and by an intense melody.

³ Formed of the works : *Îngerelul* (Rugăciune), *Copilul și floarea*, *Cântecul melcilor*, *Cântecul iezilor*, *Plugul și Albina*.

⁴ V. Alecsandri with A.Russo have the merit to discover the popular epos. After the promotion of the work *Provincialul* by A Russo, who, in terms of the appreciations of authorities, « *tried by their advices to place instead the trouble of the collective tranquillity* », he is hanged at Soveja, near Focșani. The consequences are major for our folklore, because in the immediate next period, around the date of March 10th 1846, the writer notes the first version of *Mioriței*. The text picked up by A. Russo and amended by V. Alecsandri, will be published in *Bucovina* of Hurmuzaki brothers on February 18th 1850 under the signature of Alecsandri, becoming the reference version of the most known of Romanian epic songs. *Miorița* and then the collection *Balade adunate și îndreptate* (1852), due to V.Alecsandri, volume which includes *Groza* will impose definitively the epic song to those preoccupied of folklore.

The closeness of composer of folkloric sources determines logic of accents, of some rhythmic-melodic elements from fillers music, to this fact being due the melodic variety of popular song. To this variety still contribute, of course, the rhythm, as well as expressive intentions of interpreter. As it may be noticed, the articulations of melodic lines follow closely the structure of lines, regardless the principles on which relay the versifications⁵ and their particular traits

*Galbân ca făclia de galbână ceară ce aproape-i ardea,
Pe-o scândură vechie aruncat afară,
De somnul cel vecinic Groz'acum zăcea;
Iar după el nime, nime nu plângea.
Poporu'mprejuru-i trist,
Cu-n fiorare, la el se uita.*

The melodic recitative from melodic phrases of simple nature, created in terms of motifs, the phrase following to correspond generally to a melodic line. The reduced ambitus of 2-dă, 3-ță, 4-tă, the syllabism, the melodic movement by close steps, assign it a recitative character. The more lyrical phrases are enriched by different procedures: flourishing of melodic ends, fermatas at the beginning or at the end of melodic line, melisms.

The elementary rhythmic cells, formed of quarters, eights, are binary grouped, among the procedures of rhythmic variation, relying on dramatic principle, we signalise: the change of tempo, the amplification of values – to emphasize the dramatic moment, a change of action. George Dima fulfils the differences opposite to real song, using as procedure of expression in interpretation the agonic and dynamic modifications. The tendency of rhythmic plasticisation is obvious being the consequence of influence of accompaniment of piano whose harmonies form a unitary emotive complex, useful under the report of persuasion power.

3. CONCLUSION

We would add to these considerations that for a singer the inclusion, within a wider synthesis, of epic recite and of the style of execution may enrich the artistic experience by the manner of interpretation, by the natural, sincere, expressive and impressive voice.

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⁵ The basic principle of versification is different of that of neighbouring people and partly of the versification of popular Latin of which we retained only trochaic meter.