

**Camerata XXI – Creating and Analyzing Ballet and Chamber
Symphony as Controversial Genres of 20th Century Classical Music
– Review –**

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The Camerata XXI is a group formed by young composers, musicologists, conductors, choreographers, stage designers and performers, and it represents one of the main cultural educational forums in Cluj-Napoca, the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy. Assuming their role as musical “agents” in shaping the contemporary musical taste in the field of classical music, the members of this group have initiated an investigation which connects two musical genres: *ballet* and *chamber symphony*. Their common aim is to investigate these genres from different points of view resulting on the one hand in new musical works, on the other hand in papers analyzing both universal and national approaches to these genres. A substantial result of their work are two volumes of studies, published by the Media Musica Publishing House in the course of the year 2006–2007, presented in the framework of a symposium entitled *Classic and/or Modern in Musical Creation and Interpretation* organized by the Musicology Department of the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy in Cluj (coordinated by Professor Pavel Pușcaș) on the April 5, 2008.

The two genres and two years of research/creation place the Camerata XXI team among the necessary factors of this venturesome project. Financed by the C.N.C.S.I.S. (National Council of Scientific Research of Higher Education), directed by Assistant Lecturer Cristian Bence-Muk, edited by Professor Ștefan Anghi, Professor Doina Modola and Professor Adrian Pop, these volumes represent an unprecedented teamwork in this restricted research domain. Inquiry, knowledge

acquirement, creative reaction, presentation and exposition were their main objectives. Besides these volumes the most tangible result of the project are two recorded performances, as the products of creative encounters between composers and some genres with an East European intercultural background. Such a predisposition has colourful and unlimited possibilities for creative approaches. However care has to be taken to ascertain that this research does not become chaotic. There has to be the well-determined matrix, “The School of Composition in Cluj”, the name of which is used by many analysts as a trademark (sometimes stigma).

The first volume is entitled *Workshop of Musical Choreography 2006*. It begins with a short introduction written by Professor Doina Modola presenting the group’s ambitious aims: to stage a show called *A Contemporary Ballet-Evening of Cluj* and to stimulate the musicological, historical, aesthetical, theoretical studies. Doina Modola highlights “what these young people have done is practically the renewal (revival) of an attitude, of co-operational spirit, a renaissance opening, which satisfies the needs of information explosion, the exigency of research and the level of references” (p. 5). The volume has two parts, the first presenting studies about the art of choreography in the 20th century (mainly in the ballet genre), the second part revealing some particularities of creation through the analyses of four composers’ works. The appendix contains a general bibliography, abstracts, the Camerata XXI team members’ biographies, and an Epilogue written by Ștefan Anghi entitled *About the Chamber-activity of a Team*. Ștefan Anghi sums up: “these four chamber-ballets realize an expressive and balanced value unity, where from the playful burlesque to the tragic balladesque the presented range of values offers the aesthetical experience of the lyrical moments of beauty and the transcendental, biblical moments of the sublime as well” (p. 172).

The first part of the volume begins with a study by **Lucian Ghișă**: *Ways of Folklore Valuation Reflected by Mihail Jora’s and Tudor Jarda’s Ballet Music Works*. His abstract, presenting typical musical elements created by Romanian composers, reveals aspects of inspiration, means of structure and expression – only generalities, omitting the obvious goal: specific elements in the Romanian national ballet music. The paper begins with a social-historical evolution of dance forms and genres, presenting national dances from Europe as well. We find out that the Romanian choreographic culture distinguishes three main dialects with their collateral zones. After a detailed research of Romanian folk-

dance music characteristics, Lucian Ghișa presents the use of folk elements in Mihail Jora's ballets: *On the Market*, *The Oold Court*, *When the Grapes Season* etc. Tudor Jarda's ballet compositions like *Irinca*, *Daystar* (a revised version of *Irinca*) and *World Scenery* reflect the composer's affinity for static choral sections instead of dramatic orchestra parts, where we can find a constant reset of Romanian folk music. The paper ends with a table including all the ballets composed by Romanian authors.

The study made by **Oana Andreica** focuses on the intercultural factor in 20th century choreography. Freedom of invention, gestures following abstract patterns are key terms in the analysis of the modern choreography characteristic of this century, where we can search for personal style-codes for each modern dancer (illustrative examples of dancers are offered by Oana Andreica: Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Martha Graham, La Meri, Alvin Ailey, Pearl Primus, Anna Pavlova, Maurice Béjart, Michel Lestréhan, etc.). This stylistic freedom is seasoned with the so-called "intercultural trend", elaborating a factor properly denominated by the author as an "inherent opening", which provides a creative dialogue between eastern and western cultures. Finally the paper reveals the importance of an artistic communication (between performer and choreographer), underlining the creative factor of the performer's imagination and personality, because, ultimately, their work relies on an intuitive and creative interchange of ideas.

Aspects of Ballet Development in the Light of the Ancient Greek Model Revival is the title of **Tatiana Oltean**'s research. In this paper the evolution of the genre is centred on the links with and use of Greek art elements throughout the history of music underpinned by philosophical and theoretical trains of thoughts and arguments. Different phases of the evolution of dance are presented including the analysis of specific elements of the ancient Greek tragedy, the poetic genre called dithyramb, medieval farces and mystery plays, English masques, French comedy-ballets, Romantic *ballet blanc* etc. An interesting analytical segment about modern and contemporary ballet explains the differentiated definitions of the terms *ballet* and *modern dance*. A detailed presentation of 20th century ballet history with its representative figures correlated with specific ancient Greek features, making references to several basic dance principles is also given.

Attila Fodor in his paper *Choreographic Exploitation of Instrumental Music in the 20th Century* explores the relationship between *dance* and *music* as a topical problem of 20th century choreographic art.

The analytic approach discovers a quality improvement throughout the history of the 20th century regarding the usage of music in choreography, discussing its various problems and possibilities. Having presented the notable moments of the dance–music relationship in the course of history, the study investigates the analytical context of this relationship by searching means of expression for both artistic fields, and the problems of their relation. The research focuses on the technical aspects of transforming instrumental music into ballet-music (Frederick Ashton *A Month in the Country*), as well as on two dialogues between instrumental music and choreography (*Dancesymphony* by Fedor Lopukhov, based on the 4th *Symphony* of Beethoven, and *Concerto Barocco* by George Balanchine, based on the *Double Violin Concerto* by J. S. Bach). The investigation led by Attila Fodor concludes with the birth of two new choreographic genres: the symphonic dance and the symphonic ballet.

The musical interpretation has always meant the collective collaboration of musicians. After the four young musicologists' analytical approaches, the second part of this volume is a good example of a creative interaction between composers – Ciprian Pop, Șerban Marcu, Răzvan Metea, Cristian Bence-Muk –, choreographers – Daniela Timofte, Gabriela Bátor, Melinda Jakab, Monica Istrate –, conductors – Vladimir Lungu, Cristian Sandu, Zsolt Jankó –, and the scenery of Bianca Imelda Jeremias. The analysers were the few previous authors.

The composer **Ciprian Pop**'s ballet *The Goat with Three Kids* (analyzed by Lucian Ghișa) is based on a tale by Ion Creangă with essential modifications, which introduce humorous accents (tangent with absurd irony), addressed to children (also) thanks to its descriptiveness. The analyst considers that all characters have a musical correspondent, easily recognizable throughout the music. The score contains musical references to other works – such as the Queen of Night's Aria from *The Enchanted Flute* by Mozart.

The Owls and the Ravens by **Răzvan Metea** (analyzed by Oana Andreica) is a ballet structured on an Indian story presenting the *topos* of revenge. The symbolic presentation of the main characters/terms/objects is followed by the morphological and structural study of the work, ending with remarks regarding choreography. We find out from the Abstract of the study, that the conflict between the owls and the ravens does not present positive and negative characters. “One must look beyond its immediate meaning: it can be extrapolated to the opposition light–dark, masculine–feminine” (p. 176).

Arachneia by **Șerban Marcu** (analyzed by Tatiana Oltean) has a mythological subject: the legendary contest between the goddess Athena and the mortal Arachne. The study reveals elements of musical dramaturgy, form-structure strategies, melodic-harmonic constructions and choreographic “visions”. Tatiana Oltean considers that “the ideological and moral content of the subject proves a new level of maturity in the artistic evolution of the composer” (p. 125).

From the paper written by Attila Fodor on **Cristian Bence-Muk**’s chamber ballet *The Incubus*, we find out that mythical elements are used by the composer to create a “dramaturgical playground” which proves to be an adequate situational frame for “transmitting the biblical message of forgiveness through repentance” (p. 176). The composer’s view of a dual universe with characters having superhuman powers makes the Romanian story similar to a modern comic-strip. The confrontation between Good and Evil is represented by contrasting musical languages: “the evil forces – atonal, aggressive discourse; Ionuț and Ileana – discourse based on folk tune quotations; the Hermit – hexatonic structure” (p. 176).

The Prologue of the second volume, *Chamber Symphony – Workshop of Research and Creation*, published in 2007, was written by Professor Adrian Pop. After a short presentation of the team, he considers: “...the four musicologists gather in their studies not only numerous indispensable references concerning the matter in question, but pertinent personal reflections too, trying to answer a fundamental question: what is chamber-symphony and which particularities differentiate this genre from other musical genres?” (p. 5)

This volume is similar to the previous one; it has two parts: the first contains studies centred on the genre of chamber symphony brought in relation with several musical creations of reference; the second is dedicated to the analysis of the four composers’ works.

Tatiana Oltean in her study *Guidelines for the Development of the Chamber Symphony Genre in a 20th Century Context* attempts a historical-analytical approach of the chamber symphony genre and intends to identify a historical-evolutional orbit of the interrelated genres as well.

In the paper written by **Attila Fodor**, entitled *Chamber Symphonies by Arnold Schönberg*, the definition of the genre as a frame of appearance is based on the assumption that its origin must be sought in the new social-aesthetical context of the modern artist (regarding human–

environment relationships). This mosaic-like creative-artistic configuration of the 20th century gives us a panorama where composers experiment not only with the musical language experiments, but also with genuine frameworks. After analyzing two chamber symphonies of Schönberg, Attila Fodor emphasizes the main characteristics of the genre in Schönberg's opus.

Oana Andreica's paper, *Symphony for Chamber Orchestra by Anton Webern*, commences with a dynamic presentation of the *Neue Musik* syntagma in the stylistic context of early 20th century music. A foray into the definition problems of the term *chamber symphony* follows a detailed analysis of Webern's work, the paper ending with conclusions regarding the principles of the micro- and macrostructure of form and genre.

Romanian Chamber Symphony by **Lucian Ghișa** is a study which presents early examples of the genre in the history of Romanian music, written by composers such as Mihail Andricu or Dinu Lipatti. The *Chamber Symphony for 12 Instruments* by Enescu is a referential work in this genre, according to the analysis. The '60s were prolific years concerning the genre-representation in Romanian music with works signed by authors such as Alfred Mendelsohn, Dan Constantinescu, Anatol Vieru, Péter Vermesy, Nicolae Brânzeu, Vasile Iliuț, Ludovic Feldman, Mircea Chiriac, etc.

The second part of the volume analyzes works written by the composers of the Camerata XXI. *Style, Structure and Language in the Chamber Symphony "Actaeon"* by Șerban Marcu is a study written by Tatiana Oltean on **Șerban Marcu's** composition. According to the analyst, this work reveals a new stage in the composer's artistic evolution, reflected, on the one hand by an economical usage of means and instrumental apparatus, on the other hand by improving the sense of musical dramaturgy. Inspired by Greek mythology, the subject, as in the case of earlier compositions, is connected with the idea of metamorphoses. Governed by two characters – Actaeon and Diana – the epic line is justified by a musical structure based on two subjects presenting a tragic situation, which is to be expressed musically with a gradual growth of tension brought to the extreme.

The introduction of Attila Fodor's analysis of the chamber symphony *Fun-Land* by **Cristian Bence-Muk**, shows that the composer succeeded in producing a piece of work balanced between craftsmanship and creative imagination, rigour and flexibility, avant-garde musical language and customary sonorities. The chamber symphony, according

to its title, invites us to a musical adventure in an imaginary amusement park. The structure of the work is articulated through alternation of moments of “action” with those of “promenade”, which is folded over a complex sonata form.

The *Chamber Symphony* by **Răzvan Metea**, analyzed by Oana Andreica is characterized by a modal-chromatic musical language coloured by a miscellaneous layout of rhythm formulas. Conceived as a single-part piece, the analyst considers that the work is structured on the sonata form with two subject groups, an introduction and a coda, wedged in a slow segment between the development and recapitulation as the instance, which refers to the slow movement of the traditional multi-movement sonata as a genre.

Lucian Ghișa’s analysis of the *Chamber Symphony* by **Ciprian Pop** quotes the composer’s thoughts: “...the musical discourse is a combination between rhythmic consistency and clarity of melodic lines written in a specific modal language. It is a single movement piece which tries to combine the most beaten tracks of classical forms with a more contemporary view concerning articulation of the musical message” (p. 206). Among final thoughts, the analyst emphasizes the importance of “subject/theme-balance” (generated by the alternation of incisive and lyrical subjects) as an endorsement of the structural and formal balance of the work.

The reader of this high-quality series of studies will be shown a research project investigating two disputed genres of 20th century classical music. However, the present studies differ with respect to their analytical depth. There are also a few misprints which are minor but do not impair the logic of the text and the reading process. Despite these circumstances, our firm belief is that the team of Camerata XXI has produced a valuable research project in this specific domain of 20th century classical music.