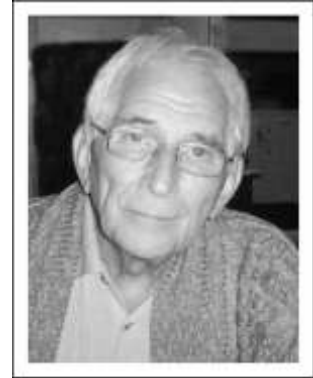


„GIVE ME ALADDIN’S LAMP” - A POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVE OF MODERNISM

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Abstract

Defining the differentiated semantics of *new* and *novelty*, reversing the dictum *non nova sed nove* into *non nove sed nova*, the author of the chamber cantata „Give me Aladdin’s lamp” is based on the rich experience of leading myriad of mid-century modernism. The investigation of the paradigms of new relationships between vocal and instrumental in creation of Dora Cojocaru, is directed in present at the chamber cantata for mezzo-soprano, brass quintet and percussion on lyrics by Emil & Dan Botta, Georg Trakl, Rainer Maria Rilke and Ady Endre (1998). The relations *text - melody* by their phenomenological reduction to fruitful combinations between *poetic word - musical sound* in Dora Cojocaru’s cantatas represent a stylistic-rhetorical subsumption of autochthonous and foreign experiences in promoting new compositional and interpretive skills meant for adaptation of appropriate musical expression in portraying contemporary aesthetic message. They are designed on the wide range of contemporary aesthetic values from the grotesque *in nascendi* to the absurd *in morendi*. As long as the Cantata *Galgenlieder in der Nacht* with lyrics by Christian Morgenstern (1995) is conceived at the grotesquely pole on the axis of the field of contemporary aesthetics, the Cantata *Give me Aladdin’s lamp* is designed in the sphere of the tragic. In the composer’s vocal and instrumental creation (and not only in them) the experiences of today’s musical composition and interpretation are rethought creatively, suggesting in perspective the permanence of modern horizons.



Keywords: Archetype, Cantata, Modernism, Text-melody relationship, Tragic

The considerations about the perspectival aspects of musical modernism in Dora Cojocaru’s compositional and theoretical activity are related to the current state of contemporary aesthetics. The intrinsic and extrinsic relationships identified in the aesthetic realm of today indicate the prevalence of conflictual moments ranging from grotesque to absurd. They also emphasize the spatial and temporal compression of the multifarious correspondences and interferences with other socio-human fields.

The theoretical and practical investigations in Dora Cojocaru’s study *New Aspects of the Text-Music Relationship in the Vocal and Vocal Instrumental Works of the 1955-1970 Period* and implicitly her own musical works reveal the ways in which the modernism of yesterday and today lends new valences to the permanence of beauty in music.

Distinguishing between the semantics of *new* and that of *novelty* by reversing the motto *non nova sed nove* into *non nove sed nova*, the author of the chamber cantata „Give Me Aladdin’s Lamp” relies on the rich experience of the major figures of mid-20th century

modernism. These references are illustrative of the structural and historical changes in the relationship between word and melody in conveying the message¹.

By analyzing Stockhausen's novel experiences, the author shows that they are "on the one hand, attempts to overcome the problems occurred in the serial music for large ensembles, and on the other hand, a reflection of the composer's concern to impose a new musical aesthetics, in which the artistic reality, however unusual or uncomfortable, must identify itself with the beautiful"².

G. Ligeti's critical attitude against a conventional beautiful, wrapped up in a ludic guise, brings us closer to author's musical *ars poetica*: "Music should not be normal" - says the composer - "it should not be properly raised, and its tie should not be nicely done"³. Dora Cojocaru adds: "Hence results also the character of "cold expressionism" of this music, resulting from the exacerbation of feelings beyond their own meaning, where the overly expressive formulation is no more than a heated gesture under a transparent globe of ice. The eternally "illusionist" aspect of Ligeti's music leads to a restoration of the traditional techniques used, in which the already known elements are organically integrated with the original ones, so that whatever in another context would be deemed obsolete, here becomes innovation"⁴. To capture the temperamental polysemy and the emotional characterology of the voices in Ligeti's vocal-instrumental chamber works, the author highlights the works *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures*⁵.

Equal importance is given to the syntax and polyglot semantics in Lucoano Berio's vocal scores. „Refusing to deal in mechanic manipulations with the sounds of the series, he will try to create a different type of musical grammar, based on *controlled improvisation*, montage or collage (emphasis added, St.A.)” In his works⁶... „the text is actually the starting point of the work. It is broken down into syllables and phonemes, or mixed with its own

¹ Dora Cojocaru, *Noi aspecte ale relației text-muzică în creația vocală și vocal instrumentală a anilor 1955-1970* in the *Muzica* Journal, Bucharest 1997/1, pp. 74-100

² *Idem*, p.16

³ *Idem*, p.40

⁴ *Idem*

⁵ The idea from "Artikulation" is taken in "Aventures" and in "Nouvelles Aventures", both written for three voices and seven instruments, and representing, no doubt, brilliant examples of instrumental theatre, in which the music, and not the imaginary text, has the utmost importance.

While working on "Aventures" and on "Nouvelles Aventures", Ligeti was interested in writing works resembling prosodies, having an emotional content, but semantically meaningless.⁵⁰ At text level, this is achieved by choosing the appropriate structures of phonemes or syllables for the emphasis of the emotional level, consisting of 5 characters: scorn, sadness, joy, love and fear. See Dora Cojocaru's stylistic monograph....

⁶ These three aspects find their clearest expression in the works "Sequenza III" for solo voice/1965, "Thema - Omaggio a Joyce" for voice and tape/1958 and "Sinfonia" for 8 solo voices and orchestra/1969.

machine-aided translations into other languages”⁷. Extending the period investigated by D. Cojocaru – the 1950s through the 1970s – we will continue with the structural-historical changes occurred in the word-sound relationship. Here are a few examples.

In his stage compositions, Aurel Stroe often creates metaphorical transgressions between vocality and instrumentality.

In *Oresteia II* (1984), Oreste's voice is likened to the sound of the *bucium*, mainly in terms of the message content. The *bucium* is designed to issue contact signals, to fulfil certain phatic functions⁸, meant to ensure the maintenance of communication. Berlioz sensed something similar when he conceived the dialogue between the two English horns in the fourth part of the *Fantastic Symphony*, suggesting the shepherds' distant dialogues in the mountains. The carriers of the *bucium* and of the English horns are metaphorically embodied by lonely shepherds from mountain pastures. At the beginning of both acts of the opera, Oreste manifests his struggle to transcend from the tragic hero's loneliness to the safety of the lost community. So he uses the metaphor embodied in certain instrumental calling signals first to ask for the gods' help⁹ and then to request the opening of the city gates. The calling function of Oreste's last arioso becomes more evident when correlated with the night guard's speech, rendered by blending a whistling sound with that of the trombone that, eventually, introduces Oreste's commanding voice: „Portar, deschide, n-auzi că bate cineva la poartă?” (Guard, open, can't you hear someone knocking on the gate?)

Aurel Stroe - *Orestia II* - *Hoeforele*

Actul II – 1. Introducere și arioso

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a Trombone (Trb.). The first system is in bass clef and contains four measures. It starts with a circled '6' and 'a tempo', followed by a 'rit.' marking, then 'a tempo', and ends with another 'rit.'. Dynamic markings include *ff*, *mp*, and *sp*. The second system is in treble clef and contains four measures. It begins with a 'Vivo' marking, followed by 'rit.', and ends with 'affacca'. Dynamic markings include *p* and 'suf. ruvido'. A fingering 'VII' is indicated at the end of the second system.

⁷ Dora Cojocaru, *Noi aspecte*, p21

⁸ Maintaining contact in communication; cf. the phatic function of language, in: R.Jakobson, *Linguistics and Poetics. Style in Language*, New York, 1960

⁹ Oh, Hermes, god of the dead, protector of the Heavenly boundaries, hear my prayer
Be my companion in arms and saviour

ARIOSO

Molto andante

ORESTE *drumatico*

Por - tar, des - chi - de,
 Por - tier, ou - vre,

CEMBALO

VOLINO *pizz.* *ben sonoro, marc.*
arco sul tasto *mp*



OR.

— n-a-uzi că ba-te ci-ne - va la poar - tă?
 — n'en-tends-tu pas que quel-un frappe à la por - te?

Vno *marc.* *pizz.*



B Poco meno mosso *p* poco accel.

OR.

Nu - e ni - me - nea în ca - sa - as
 N'y a - t'il per - son - ne dans cet - te mai -

Cemb. *(non misurato)* *p*

① pousser la corde avec l'ongle de l'auriculaire (main gauche)

The resemblance of the human voice to the sound of the *bucium* is also reflected in the structure of the melodic discourse. The interval-based construction evokes the instrumental calling technique by making the solo baritone perform leaps of more than an octave, and leads to a change of essence in which the *utterance of the message becomes the message of the utterance*. The essence of the voice carrier turns into the essence of the carrying of the

instrumental message. The extremely wide intervallic leaps hide the latency of some hoquet passages, the typical hiccup of these signals.

The archetypal memories of these changes of essences evoke the *implosion* of G. Enescu's structure when he created the *Prelude in Unison*. The hyperbolization of the discourse trajectory is achieved not on the outside of the melodic line, and not by extrinsic uplifting arches, but through the widening of the intervallic range up to intervals of fifths, octaves, double octaves, or even tenths - intended to fulfil the calling function of certain interrogative discourses. All these happen in the string section. We witness here how the strings (vox humana!) pay the "calling debts" owed by the wind instruments.

In Cornel Țăranu's *Nomadic Songs* (1982), the fourth part, entitled *The Tarot*, is a dramatic and dissonant musical transposition of the words from Cesar Baltag's homonymous poem, highlighting the gruesomely ludic nature of the prophecies and the latent grotesque of the lullaby hidden in the lines *parcă-mi dai carnea cu bobii, / mă desparti și mă apropii*. They are comprised in homophonous blocks, in metonymies declaimed by two mezzo-sopranos and the vocal tutti, intertwined with the piano cluster accompaniment and the faint sounds of the bongos.

Cornel Țăranu - *Cântece nomade* IV. Tarot

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "IV. Tarot" by Cornel Țăranu. The score is written in black ink on white paper. It includes parts for Piano, Bongos, two Mezzo-Sopranos (Mezzo I and Mezzo II), and a vocal tutti. The lyrics are "Parcă-mi dai carnea cu bobii" and "Mă desparti și mă apropii". The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including a 3/4 time signature and a 4/4 time signature. The piano part includes a cluster accompaniment. The string section (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, and Cellos) is also present. The score is marked with dynamics such as pp, mp, and mf.

“*The Tarot* is a complaint in folkloric style - writes Ilie Constantin - a mourning of the precipitate passage: The relationship between the *solomonar* and man is symbolic, while fortune-telling is equivalent to asking oneself the key questions: *Dormi cu fața la pământ / prunc tomnatic și cărunt, / tu albești, eu te descânt, / între noi nici un cuvânt.*”¹⁰

After identifying the paradigms of new relationships between vocality and instrumentality in Dora Cojocaru’s works, we further focus our attention on the chamber cantata *Give Me Aladdin's Lamp*, written for mezzo-soprano, winds quintet and percussion to poems by Emil & Dan Botta, Georg Trakl, Rainer Maria Rilke and Ady Endre (1998). As a motto of the cycle, reiterated at the beginning of each movement, the acclamation - *Oh, mein Bruder* - reveals the grievance pervading the staves of the score and eternally felt and lived by the composer after the tragic loss of her beloved brother in a huge snow avalanche at Bâlea. The futile yet relentless search is illustrated by the symbolic metaphor of the title, *Give Me Aladdin's Lamp*. Of the nine parts of the cantata¹¹ – we shall dwell only on the third and fourth, entitled *The Magician*¹²¹³ and *Oberon*¹⁴ and set to verses by Trakl and Rilke, and, respectively, Emil Botta.

¹⁰ România literară

¹¹ O mein Bruder, Descindere, Magicianul, Oberon, O mein Bruder, Lethe, Mistuire, Liniște, O mein Bruder

¹² after verses by Georg Trakl and Reine Maria Rilke. The fragments quoted from Rilke come from the poems *Der Magier* [The Magician] and *Unstete Waage des Lebens* [Inconsistent Scales of Life].

¹³ The fragmented texts:

Trakl:

O mein Bruder,

Rilke:

Sterne, Schläfer und Geister sind nicht verbunden genug,

Nächtlich ordnet der Meister ihren geplanten Bezug.

Oh, Magier, halt aus, halt aus, halt aus!

Hier ist Magie.

In das Bereich des Zaubers scheint das gemeine Wort hinein gestuft

Unstete Waage des Lebens, immer schwankend, immer schwankend

Drüben die ruhige Waage des Todes.

Hier ist Magie.

In unversified translation:

Trakl: Oh, my brother!

Rilke: The stars, the dead and the spirits are not united enough,

At night, the master arranges their planned gatherings.

Oh Magician, hold out, hold out!

This is magic.

In the realm of magic the hateful word seems overpraised

The inconstant scales of life, always vacillating, always vacillating

On the other side, the peaceful scales of death.

This is magic.

¹⁴ **Oberon**

A spell tells me: Come and let’s die.

the deep forest calls me, hey shadow, hey

brother, let us die, the ghost forest,

behold, calls me.

The tragic note and the tone of agonizing pain illustrate the dramatic and musical intonation of the lines from the quoted poems.

The texts drawn from the poems of G.Trakl, R.M. Rilke and Emil Botta allude to the empire of death - one of the frequent themes of late Expressionism – creating many imaginary relationships with death, from the desperate attempt to avoid the inevitable, to the futile recovery of the irrevocable. The forms they take are usually as ludic as they are gloomy, often even threatening. It is on this frightening and sublimely appalling note that the cantata *Give Me Aladdin's Lamp* was composed, with tragic notes embedded in the musical message. The correlation of the affective ingredient of the musical discourse with the poetic ethos of the verses is achieved through the constant use of modern stylistic elements in various instances of the text-melody relationship.

For example, in the third part, *The Magician*, Trakl's and Rilke's verses are included in the mezzo-soprano part and accompanied by the clarinet group. We witness a very suggestive duo in which the poetic musicality gains a poetic musical appearance along the constant transgressions between vocality and instrumentality.

5 Come to my bosom, tim, tim, tim, it's a bird
calling to its young, an unrest that is
calling for me. Oh, graveyard of my spring
eagle-wood with a dreadful face,
10 leave me, leave me! Your tormenting voices envelop me, hurt
me, benumb me. Come to
my bosom, tim, tim, tim, the cursed wood
calls for me, the symphonic death in the woods
summons me;
15 come already, come and let's die.

Dora Cojocaru - Dați-mi lampa lui Aladin

3. Magicianul

♩ = 60
 uita minima
 stropi, fessate

Metro

mf

Steer-me,

Cl. b♭

mp < sf > f sf < sf > mf

Memo

Schla-fer und Geis-ter

mp

sind nicht ver-bun-den ge-nug,

Cl. b♭

M.F. (p)

Memo

mp

Prick-lich nach-lich an-und-der Meis-ter

Cl. b♭

mp

vibr. M.F.

Memo

in-ten ge-Plan-ten Be-zug

mf

0 Man-ge-er, halt aus, halt aus, halt aus!

Cl. b♭

mf

Memo

mp

Halt aus Halt aus

Cl. b♭

ord. mf

ord. mf

(10)

(15)

During the allegorical dialogue with death, the inherent hiccup of the hocket occurs, carrying the weight of the sigh, moan and lament. From its originally vocal stance, it is transferred to instrumental form. The hocket-intonations of the clarinet are reminiscent of that generic phase of the melody in which the sounds *still* retain their ornamental, often anacrusic value, while *already* predicting their soon becoming parts of the melody. This middle stage of the *not yet* generates the recurrence of the hocket over the melodic line of the mezzo-soprano.

The mezzo-soprano's intonation recreates the original sonority of the declaimed verses by dramatizing their expressive potential in the melodic *regnum* of the cantata. Their expression in *Sprechstimme* abounding in repressed screams, resembling E. Munch's famous Scream, reflects the fear and anxiety of the bereaved sister in desperate search of her dead brother. Calling for the magician's help, she whispers mysteriously "Aici e magie" (This is magic):

The score develops the conflict through the poetic acclamation *O, Magier halt aus, halt aus, halt aus!* [Oh Magician, hold out, hold out], as the critical ideogram of the section, and thus heightens the lamenting atmosphere by intensifying the feelings attached to the irrevocable and unrepeatable...

In the fourth part, *Oberon*, the magic experience of the events – replacing the finding of the lost brother with the illusion of this finding – enters the realm of archetypal myths.

Reaching the realm of death, the hallucinating and ghostly dialogue with Oberon, brother from hell, symbolizes the call "to dying". Emil Botta's homonymous poem provides an adequate opportunity for the musical rendition of this dialogue. The poet, by "the internal congruence of his poetic universe – as Cornel Robu characterizes him - is the result of fully assuming the fate of «doomed poet»"¹⁵. The allegorical topos of the motif of the *wood* is the "great tutelary entity of the poetic space that Emil Bota populates with the phantasms of a personal mythology"¹⁶.

Fear and terror are feelings whose metaphors pervade both the voice of the soloist and that of the instrumental accompaniment. The oscillation between vocal and instrumental is dominated by the closeness of the instrumental intonations to the vocal style, of which the former appear as if carved from the stone of pain. The *pity* and *fear* reconsidered by H.G. Gadamer from Aristotle's *Poetics* with their true meaning of *eleos* and *phobos* regain here full power over the heart and soul. "Rather, both are events - shows Gadamer – that overwhelm

¹⁵ *Scriitori români* Scientific management and review by Mircea Zăciu in cooperation with M. Papahagi and A.Săsu; Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică Bucharest 1978, p. 93-93; article signed by C.R. (Cornel Robu)

¹⁶ *Idem*

man and sweep him away. "Eleos" is the misery that comes over us in the face of what we call miserable... The word misery is a good equivalent because it too refers not to a merely inner state, but to its manifestation. Likewise, "phobos" is not just a state of mind, but a cold shudder that makes one's blood run cold, that makes one shiver.¹⁷

Dora Cojocaru - *Dați-mi lampa lui Aladin*

4. Oberon

The image shows a musical score for the piece "4. Oberon" from "Dați-mi lampa lui Aladin" by Dora Cojocaru. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Fag.), Trumpet (Tromp.), and Trombone (Tromb.). The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex, rhythmic melody with many triplets and sixteenth notes. The score is written in a single system with six staves.

¹⁷ Hans Georg Gadamer, *Adevăr și metodă*, Ed.Teora, Bucharest, 2001 (107).

Thus, the words in the lines reflecting these feelings, like death gasps voiced by the sister in search of her brother, "cum mortuis in lingua mortua" – as Mussorgsky said -, are taken over by the instruments to create a panoramic view of Oberon's inferno. The words, split into solitary consonants and inserted among the barely whispered lines, are amplified with similar techniques and adapted to the specificity of the wind instruments. Their intonation appears on shaking rhythms in groups of consonants ... Utterly amazing are the vocal and instrumental imitations of the *tim, tim, tim* onomatopoeias, of the poetic call to dying achieved by frenzied repetitions of consonants performed by the voice, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon, combined with other contrasting ones by the flute and horn.

In Dora Cojocaru's cantata, the relationship between *text* and *melody* is, by their phenomenological reduction to fruitful combinations of *poetic word - musical sound*, a stylistic-rhetorical embrace of certain domestic and foreign experiences in promoting novelty in compositional and interpretive virtuosity, meant to adapt the musical expressive means to the appropriate rendering of the contemporary aesthetic message.

In her stylistic analyses, the author relies on a tacit distinction between *experimental music* and the *accomplished modern works*. Regarding the former category, here is what she writes at the end of the quoted study: “Many of the works considered in our brief analysis are dead-end roads, extremes, which can no longer be pursued on the same technical, aesthetic or emotional grounds. Nevertheless, there are several alternatives for the proposed systems, hence the many means of escape to new stylistic horizons, which is a natural and necessary condition for the evolution of the art of contemporary composition”¹⁸.

Her cantatas (and not only) illustrate the creative development and accomplishment of certain formal experiments that have validated their right to artistic existence. They encompass the wide range of contemporary aesthetic values, from the grotesque *in nascendi* to the absurd *in morendi*. While the cantata *Galgenlieder in der Nacht* to verses by Christian Morgenstern (1995) stands at the grotesque end of the contemporary aesthetic field, the cantata presented herein belongs to the realm of the tragic. The present-day experiences are rethought creatively, suggesting the permanence of new modern horizons. The stylistic and rhetorical origin of the poetic texts and their inspiring effect on the genesis of melodies in her compositions open perspectives on the comprehension of the contemporary aesthetic values, creating hermeneutical paradigms for the contemporary music composed in the country and elsewhere.

¹⁸ Dora Cojocaru, *Noi aspecte...* p.31