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Introduction

Though being enormous and deep, the universe of the Romanian carol, with origins found in the archaic mentality, shows the existence of spiritual goods which are still active and kept in the passive memory of the people who conceived them and established them in time. The specific form and the functions achieved by these cultural relics have determined comparative and interdisciplinary researches of the melos of the carol. The conclusions of these studies confirm the attention that the composers have given to the valorization of the artistic capacity of the carol. The total amount of these attitudes has taken part in setting the basis of some aspects of the national musical culture which are specific to the Romanian spiritual word.

Without having exhaustive intentions, this study is coming with a synthetical way of treating the problem of the carol. It is fair to say from the beginning that the analysis on which we support our comments and conclusions are based on choral creations in which we find only the genuine folk statements that are made in a harmonic-polyphonic manner, and not the star songs or those with a folk character belonging to the composers, the reason motivation is based on the fact that including these types of creation would have as a result an enormous increase that will reach beyond the limits of this study and also the fact that these subject may also be the purpose of some separate detailed analysis.

To illustrate the musical analysis I used examples taken from choral scores and collections of carols, diagrams in which we present the circumstances of the evolution of the carol as a representative category of the Romanian spirituality, the analysis of some elements of musical language which belong to folk

carols and ways of dressing them in a harmonic-polyphonic manner.

Part I

The carol – a representative category of the Romanian spirituality

1. The archaic mentality – the spiritual space of the carol

The concept of mentality, seen from a new perspective, shows a relation between the function of the imaginary – whit representations and cultural symbols that are specific to a large group of people – and the function of the attitude – showing the individual agreement to all these. This cognitive ecuation is illustrated by mythes and archetypes.

The carols bear very old elements of an archaic mentality and are born in an archetypal environment. In its evolution this mentality crystallized into a mentality of a folk kind in which the carol, as a custom, took elements of the Roman spirituality and later took elements of the Latin Christianity.

2. From the Roman calends to the Romanian carol

The researchers show as a source of the Romanian carols, the Roman celebrations that marked the end and the beginning of a new year. In the Roman world it meant a ritual that had the purpose of using the magic force of the word which uttered became a deed; therefore could favorably influence the temporal cycle. In time, from the stage of the magic ritual with a symbolic

character, the carol reached a stage where the practice was associated with the utterance of wishes followed by the receiving gifts. Later, the magic ritual decreased in favor of the utterance of wishes, reaching to a form which evolved diachronically into the real carol of the Roman type. The reasons of this custom as a social manifestation have a single purpose fully accomplishing the desires, just as the carols predict. This means that both carol singers and the carols have magic virtues. The expansion of the Roman Empire was also associated with the export of the spiritual traditions. The cultural circumstances that had a contribution of the creation of the Romanian carol are set in the same period with the creation of the Romanian language and the Romanian people, activities that took place simultaneously and followed the same stages.

3. Etymological features

The opinions concerning the etymology of the main terms that are strictly connected to the tradition, aren't all the same in every aspect. If, for example, we are sure about the Latin origin for carol ("colindă") and Christmas ("Crăciun"), the researches argue about establishing how the terms were borrowed. The most controversial situation was establishing the etymology of the word "Ler". Alexandru Rosetti came with an assumption which initially was unanimously accepted but, by the end of the XXth century, was contested by the other researchers who couldn't come up with another theory.

4. Historic attestation

The maintenance of the folk traditions that marked the temporal cycle was recorded in clerical documents or chronicles of diplomats who were in transit in the Romanian Countries. Even though, officially, the Christian religions celebrations were superposed on the pagan ones, they couldn't substitute the latter by edictual forms. The documents say that not even the radical attitudes of the clerical authorities could erase the custom of going from house to house to sing carols from the folk tradition.

5. Pagan and Christian thematic interferences

The theme of the carols is reach in relicts and symbols that constantly take us to its ritual origin chronologically, there is a parallel between the Christianization of Dacia and the ethnogeny of the Romanian people. Together with archaic mythological elements, also with the influences of the migrations, with the heretical and apocryphal sources, with a Byzantine hagiographic writings, gradually set the basis of the "Romanian folk Christianity" with more roots than other people. These phenomena of polisyncretism generated but steel keeping the main tracks of the official theology.

That is why, we find cosmogonical elements, motifs, cosmical and astral images about the regeneration of time and the regenerative sacrifice, mythical and ritual motifs of the initiatory hunting.

The gods of the lost religions have become folk characters, and the myths to which they belong have turned into folk creations.

Part II

Elements of musical language in the folk carols

1. Aspects of the ethnogeny of the Romanian folk music

The investigation and the reconstitution of the protomusical phenomenon represent a difficult and complex activity, due to the extension of time from primary musical forms and the late conceiving of notation systems, depriving the scientific research of information which could be helpful in studying the archaic music space. But with the help of indirect sources and deductive associations, researches like George Breazul and Octavian Lazăr Cosma came with the idea of the communion of global structural features, spread on a large geographical area, a fact that may offer an explanation for the maintenance of the stylistic idioms that are common at some Balkan people, even in the Mid-East, North-West Africans and South-East Europeans.

As for the origins of the Romanian traditional folk music scientists claim that they were established at the same time with the process of formation of the Romanian language and the Romanians. According to the ethnomusicologist Gheroghe Giobanu who applied the comparative method, reported the existence of strong connections between the Romanian folklore and that of the Balkan Slaves, thus confirming the existence and the priority of the Thracian music in connection with the Greek and Illyrian ones. Another observation refers to the way of

organizing the rhythm, melody and versification elements, which in different in the Romanian folklore in relation to that of the surrounding countries and which is determined by the structure of the language inherited from the popular Latin.

The possibilities rhythm and melody organization, the flexible architectural structure, the modal system of a diatonic nature, all generated an intern base for the Romanian folklore tradition and which allowed the assimilations of other people.

Therefore, with these musical heritage, the Romanian folk music is Dacian and Latin by means of structural organization of melody and rhythm.

2. Principles of versification

The folk poetry, deals with polysemy of some creations as consequences of orality, also deals with their expressiveness, the presans of the lyrics and of typical statements, the repeating and the fragmentation of the verse and refrain. The action of the carols takes place in an idealized setting which determines a high degree of poetic transfiguration. There are numerous stylistic elements that contribute to these edenic atmosphere, like: the encomiastic, commendatory *epithet*; *the metaphor*, with symbol value, *the allegory* which presents very high aspects and superlative form without comparison in the ordinary life; *the folk hyperbole* in which some characteristics tend to reach the imaginary but are always maintained on the ground. *The euphonic "d"* characteristic to old ritual songs created in group; and another aspect implying the relation between text and the melody is the *fragmentation of the verses* by interior rhymes into hemistiches and pseudo-refrains.

Beginning with the old ritual songs, the structure of *the sung Romanian popular verse* is based on two types of verse: the octosyllabic and the hexasyllabic with their catalectic forms heptasyllabic and pentasyllabic. The system stability in time is based on grammar and phonetic particularities of the language with they derive from the authentic popular verses are isometric which favoures a certain phrase symmetry. The metric organization adepts itself to the rhythm of the life, foreshadowing it. The metric accent prevails the lexical one and by the frequency of its placement, determines the organization of the rhythmic and metric series. Gheorghe Ciobanu found out that along with the fundamental tetrapodic structure of the Romanian popular verse, there are others which he calls “suprastructures”, formed by “stressing” only some of the existing metric accents.

The lexical elements are in favour of adapting different poetic texts by a melody, on condition of keeping the mutual metric pattern and also an relating it to the content. *The refrain* – seen as a melodic and poetic entity – is in direct connection with the melody which determines its dimension, the numbers of syllables and its placement. It has the role of a projector in delivering the songs, making the departure point and the finish point in the forms based on the principle of alternation having a thematic function as a musical section.

3. Melodic aspects

The study of the beginning of the melodic organization and the construction of the systemic structures, led to a plurality and complementarity of conclusions, which cannot offer standard

solutions. In the spatial and temporal successions the durations and accents of intensity have an important role in determining the way of the “melodic system”.

The melodies of the carols analyzed show the prevalent of the pentatonic and prepentatonic structures, the function ambiguity of the steps, the mobility of the piens an interior amplification due to a tendence of affirmation and an exterior one through a melismatic extension to next steps. The superior alteration of the base of the (Gis) picnon or the inferior alternation of the sound in the middle (As) have a result in the tensionate effect of the increased second. “The pentatonnes” which are more numerous have an important role in the appearance of the superior structure. I may draw the attention on the frequency of the 4 and 5 pentatonnes. The chromatic structures that appear are mostly those of chromatic type 1.

A frequent phenomenon met in the Romanian folklore is the change of the modal character, a thing which is due to the interferences of the modal areas or the fluctuation of the intervals, which can be oscillate or with a permanent character, depending on the instability of the pieni and their tendence of affirmation.

The ambitus of the carols – a determined modal element through its amplitude and frequency of some sounds – usually determines an octavian setting, its increase being caused by the tendencies of the systems beyond the scalar limits.

In the relations that deal with cadence we have the same functional ambiguity, named by Constantin Brăiloiu as “functional indifference”. The evolution of the melodies doesn’t always reach a standard sound from the grave scale with the function of fundamental. Its frame allows a cadence on other steps than the first one. The functional ambiguity seen in the system related to cadence sometimes causes an oscillation in

interpreting the belonging to a system or other, a fact that proves that they are allowed and after the possibility of setting them in different structures.

4. Particularities of the rhythm in carols

The studies about the typology of the musical folklore shows its syncretic character made on the music-poetry-dance triade, in which the point of incidence is the rhythm seen also as a frequent morphological element. Because of the structural characteristics we may speak of a genuine rhythmic system specific to the Romanian popular music. These are determined mainly by the prosodical organization of the rhythm in structured melodic lines invariably on to octosyllabic and hexasyllabic metric patterns applied in the Romanian popular verse which a sung regardless of the rhythmic system. From the analysis presented in this paper here is clearly the fact that also in the case of the giusto-syllabic system – which is frequent and characteristic for the carols – the defining element still remain the metric pattern.

5. Formal structures

The carol as a melodic and rhythmic entity with a fixed form, is based on the possibilities of combining the syntactic unities form the “foot” (podie) to the melostrophe. There is a contrast between the two units that are specific to the typological peasant model – the melodic line and the refrain. By

supplementing the number of melodic lines there is clearly a sign of contaminations with extrafolkloric elements. Their repeating is identical or varied in melody, rhythmic or rhythmical-melodic.

Part III

The melos of the carol in the Romanian choral creation

1. The tradition of the revaluation of the folk music. General characteristics

The interest of the Romanian musicians in recording and valorizing of the folklore tune was inevitably marked from the beginning by conflicts due to the classical and romantic esthetic concepts. In the first decades of the XIXth century – when the historical, social and economical conditions were in favour of the transition from the Oriental culture to the Western one – the setting of building a musical language based on folklore tradition is created. There was still no general agreement in clearly defining the folk song initially associated – by Zeno Vancea – with that type of countryside music, depersonalized and under going a metamorphosed harmonized to its structures in so called “national areas”. The Romanian componistic tend to be launched in the second half of the XIXth century. The most substantial compartments is represented by the choral creation. Its general features represent the variety of styles, genres, the vocal structures for which it was composed, the musical language which is not unitary, paying respect to the tonal-functional concept.

Though dissimilar regarding the ways of approach and transforming the folklore, the choral creation of the early

composers had an important role in setting the basis and motivating the tradition of valorizing the folk melos. Its spectacular evolution in the XXth century is marked by the new compositional concepts which the Romanian composers affiliated to. In this way, the interest for the melodies of carols whose amazing structural variety offers its creators a multitude of artistic treating, was born.

2. Ways of taking over and narrating the folk statements

The folklore quotation, considered as a particular case of the generally musically quotation, has a precised semiological status and results from an intention of artistic communication. We observe from the analyzed papers that the way of taking over the melody of the carols with the purpose of quoting and stylizing them are diverse, the folklore phrase being placed on the same sound or other without being operated sometimes the intentions of a composer are to give up the ornaments, variations of a melodic motif, amplifications between intervals, adapting some tempos or different metronomic values. Other times the changes that take place in the melodic field effects the modal structure through the emancipation of the piens or other sounds from the melismatic extensions, altering sounds that remain stable, introducing the mobile grades. Changes of a metro-ritmic nature vary and encourage the music by a different metric setting or in the same time with rhythmic augmentations and decreases, or by replacing some rhythmic formulae with others, etc.

Even the displays of the folklore phrases are presented in different aspects: they can be brought all together or by thematic

fragments to octave, harmonized, preceded or not by introductions or in imitating writing using the same procedures.

3. Characteristics of the homophonous-harmonic writing

Besides the especially created works for the two vocal structures, we can notice that the vertical interval is episodic in the harmonic and polyphonic environment it has a contextual character and is accomplished through diverse procedures: interval parallelism – as a consequence of the double theme or the some thematic motifs, the horizontal interval progress/development suggested by the vertical incidents, interval successions resulted from the superposition of the theme with its different situations or with free counterpoint lines.

One of the consequences of the evolution of harmony in the XXth century is the creation of new harmonic structures which are no longer based exclusively on the principle of adding additional thirds but on other generating interval or are born from different scales compared to the traditional ones. “The trison” appears in a direct nature or overturn sometimes superposed on the displayed theme on different sound centers or on accompaniment or resulted by accomplishing a chromatic tetrachord without applying the rules of seventh writing having as a result a parallelism on chromatic and harmonic structures.

The increase of the choir allows adding additional chords belonging to the same grade or to different grades, one of the consequences being the creation of the layers of chord. The problem of their origin was analysed in vast theoretical studies by musicologists like Eduard Terényi, Dan Buciu, Gheorghe Duțică. These structural elements are frequently used

in the choral creation of carols belonging to composers such as: Achim Stoia, Tudor Jarda, Sigismund Toduță, Roman Vlad and develops ample polymodal areas.

The layers of accord are structured on diverse combinations, sometimes reaching “the free vertical blocks” or the “tower accords” resulted from fourths that are added additionally. The combinations obtained from mixing the ambiguous sounds of the fourths with the severe neutrality of the fifths – especially in compressed position like in the case of the carols belonging to Roman Vlad, Tudor Jarda, Vasile Spătărelu – with their effect of shading off the personality of the base interval. The combinations of seconds are accomplished by polyphonic exposures in stretto [Sigismund Toduță, *Nainte-mi de curți*, III/5, p. 33] or by a successive, gradual approach of the elements of accord, the sound impact having a global effect [Tudor Jarda, *La casa di peste drum*, measures: 60-65]. The structures of accord of the same nature are to be found in the situations, in which segments of the theme are additionally added in diverse situations, or varied thematical motifs positioned on combinations or combinations found in imitation and are added to the theme.

The usage of the chromatisms diversifies the colors and increases the tension of the harmonic parameter. If the studied works we encounter chromatic passages built after the rules of the classic harmony but also chromatic evolutions inside a chromatic tetracord presented as *passus duriusculus* [Sigismund Toduță, III, 8]. The problem of the phenomenon of the modal oscillation – studied in theoretical works by musicologists like Gheorghe Firca or Gheorghe Duțică – is manifested under the aspect of the fluctuation of the grades by the oscillation of the second under the impulse of the microattractivity. In these cases, the mobile grades generate multipurpose modal structures. When

the distorted sound is imposed by frequency or functional importance, represents a progressive impulse for a new structure. These aspects are illustrated by examples taken from the studied works.

Even the presence of the total number of chromatic element – though sporadically present in the carols for the choir – appears as a natural way of treating the folkloric statements, the chromatism being an additional element of the diatonic, compatible with the serial organization or based on modes. Its presence in some passages from works belonging to Roman Vlad or Sigismund Toduță proves the role of the chromatism as element of musical language specific to choral creation nowadays, facing the modal.

We have noticed aspects of the phenomenon of chromatic disjunction in the choral creation of composers like Sigismund Toduță, Roman Vlad, Vasile Spătărelu, Sabin Pautza, Viorel Munteanu with reserved chromatic formula – based on the oscillation of the interval of the second, the false relation – used in the modal harmony when it is used with the sound material offered by a mode with a mobile grades or when deliberately other sounds are brought than those offered by the context, the small chromatic second – as a result of compressing the reduced octave.

The cadences – fundamental marks in determining the formal articulations – are present not only in classical aspects but also in genuine situations, specific to modal harmony. The plagal relations are frequently used. The analyzed creations offer examples in which we meet authentic cadences treated from the tone and modal points of view in combination with the plagal chainious. The interference of modal planes in cadences is frequent. We also notice situation out of ordinary: accords structured on combinations of fourths and fifths, multipurpose

harmonies in cadences, the use of mobile grades or the gradual walk, the superposition of several melodic cadences, cadences accomplished on structures of layers of accord.

4. Elements of the polyphonic writing

By applying the polyphonic technique, we try to identify the aptitudes and the folklore elements with the purpose of highlighting the specific atmosphere of the Romanian folk song. Taking into account the clarity of the presentation and of the conclusions, we have first presented the melodic aspects that appear in the two fundamental types of imitation and then, separately the metro-rhythmic aspects.

The severe imitation is used in numerous pieces of composers like Achim Stoia, Sigismund Toduță, Roman Vlad, Tudor Jarda, Vasile Spătărelu, Sabin Pautza, Viorel Munteanu. The procedures used consist of imitations of the theme in direct, reversed, recurrent status and are applied separately, successively or simultaneously in canonic situations or in stretto. The polyphony with elements of serial organization – presented in works by Sigismund Toduță and Roman Vlad – represented the object of theoretic studies with authors like Eduard Terényi or Viorel Munteanu. The talking-speaking report valorized in some passages of imitation in sprechgesang from the carols like *Nainte-mi de curți* by Sigismund Toduță or *Junii buni colindători* by Sabin Pautza.

The free imitation is sequentially accomplished, with passages of varied dimensions of the musical speech sometimes to continue the severe imitation all together with it for different voices in the same fragment. A large usage can find its

polyphonic procedures of folk nature – the accompaniment with continuous sound (ison) or the ostinato.

The metro-rhythmic suggestions given by the folk creation had to polymetric and polyrhythmic procedures of high complexity – applied in the musical discourses not only to polyphonic structures but also to those with homophone or heterophonic character. Among the most frequent used techniques we find: the exposition or the compression of the musical discourse, the juxtaposition of different rhythmic structures to which the same metre is applied the rewriting of some rhythmic drawing, the usage of alternative measurements which ensures the rhythm and melody fluence; the usage of the measures with the same type of metric (symmetric/asymmetric). The continuance of applying these procedures as a result of the global sound effect.

5. Aspects of the heterophonic writing

The phenomenon of sound for heterophony, as a way of organization the musical syntax appears in the same time with all the procedures we've already mentioned with the same importance as monody, homophony and polyphony. As a concept, heterophony was brought into studies belonging to Pascal Bentoiu, Ștefan Niculescu, Dan Buciu, Clemanaș Liliana Firca and others. In the analyzed works the heterophonic moments are helped by: the usage of accompaniments on which there are thematic displays, superpositions of the theme in its different situations, the insertion of some displays of the doubled theme or of some thematic fragments in imitation.

6. Ways of structuring the formal articulation

The structure of the formal articulation is shown by the diversity of applying the transformation and evolution procedures of the musical microstructures. A frequent procedure is the repetition, largely used in showing the microstructures and is about the multiplication of the morphological units by the identical repeat of the motif sometimes followed by the appearance of the morphological units, easily differentiated or contrasting. A particular form of repetition is the variation, seen in many cases, the identify of the initial motif is changed. The international variation has an effect in changing the modal characteristics by structural transformation, and that of metro-rhythmic nature – with its purpose of stimulating the musical speech – is accomplished also by classic procedure with a rhythmic or mixed nature, or by developed procedure in constructing the musical rhythm. The variation of colour is also used by transforming the harmonic plans and presenting them in other situations.

For the formal typologies, we meet forms there result of the juxtaposition or a combination of this procedure with the alternance and variation. In an analytic study dedicated to the Sigismund Toduță creation of carols, Dan Voiculescu identifies one of the complex thematic forms – the fugue.

7. Ways of making evident the musical expression

The dynamics, the tempo, the agogics and the quality in tone come to complete, to give a shape to the harmonic and polyphonic texture. The analyzed works reveal a multitude of possibilities of emphasizing the coral expressivity. The musical discourse is marked by accents or dynamic nuances. The graduation of the intensity has as a result an oscillatory or uniform dynamics; the dynamic contrasts get crenellated, angular or alternating aspects; the progressive dynamics follows ascending, abrupt or ample routs, interrupted or nor by fluctuations; accomplishing the contrasts is sometimes done by imitating techniques; a purpose being the detachment of vocal plans by distributing grades of contrasting intensity.

The relation between rhythm and the speed of its evolution on the temporal axis is adjusted according to the typology of the carols and to the artistic intentions of the composer and is seen through tempo and agogics. The association between agogics and dynamic concepts is reflected in the simultaneous action of increasing or decreasing the intensity according to the desired effect, the two plans being in contrast.

The aspects of the timbre can be watched starting with choosing the vocal structure for which the works were conceived. The contrasts and the variations of the quality of the tone are accomplished by distributing the melodic plans to the different vocal structures, alternations or registers, an increase of quality in tone of the choir, adjusting the relation among types of emission, effects in timbre.

Conclusions

Synthesizing the problems of our study, we can say that the genre of the carol, born in a archetypal centre belonging to a cultural archaic space, crystallized using successive stratifications and became a representative species of the Romanian spirituality. Its structural elements which are one of a kind have offered the status of an endless source of inspiration for the coral creation of the XXth century, whose multidimensional picture is completed and like other forms of art sump up naturally a diversity of styles in an organic unit. This idea makes us think of a true experimental laboratory and in the same time a conclusive synthesis one in which the creators explore endless resources offered by the authentic folklore and in which eternal values are created.