

## 6. STYLISTIC AND TECHNICAL ORIENTATIONS IN ROMANIAN CREATION FOR CLARINET OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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**Abstract:** *A controversial period in humanity's evolution is the previous century, the 20th, viewed both from a constructive and a destructive point of view. Technical progress and scientific discoveries led the human dimension towards a huge leap of civilization. But this computerized trajectory holds unlimited possibilities in creating balance or chaos within the human. The multiple effects of modern technology on human life can affect, even completely change, interpersonal communication. In the thinking of Romanian composers, especially in the second half of the 20th century, new concepts and working techniques are designed. Among these, we mention dodecaphonic serialism, integral serialism, heterophony, rhythm with added values, texture, aleatoric, etc., all leading to a totally new, experimental acceptance.*

**Key words:** *Romanian music, clarinet, modernism, effects*

### 1. Introduction

The integration of the Romanian school of composition into modernity is a reality, occurring despite many barriers related to the expression of spiritual identity. This fact was an act of own will to integrate the European cultural orientation. The modernism of the first half of the century imposed rapid, radical changes on all social levels: national consciousness, and science, but especially in arts and literature. European models from that period contaminated the elite of Romanian music and inspired their stylistic orientations and languages.

### 2. The evolution of style

The generation of the beginning of the 20th century was able to recover the lost time and join the universal culture through sonorous names such as: Alfonso Castaldi, Ion Nona Ottescu, Alfred Alessandrescu, Mihail Jora, Mihai Mihalovici. The artistic personality that dominated this school of composition, the most modern of the moderns, was George Enescu, the one who managed, through his integrative spirit, to accumulate science and musical culture, to filter and reformulate it in a personal style. Enescian style synthesizes the two musical and spiritual worlds - Romanian and European.[6]

The following decade has as a landmark in musical culture the establishment of the Society of Romanian Composers, with George Enescu as its president. Under this tutelage, the Music Magazine was born, which runs in its pages an investigation aimed at the creation of a National Music School with a folkloric orientation.[1] In this way, composers of the Enescian generation will choose to express their national identity, but also their entry into modernism through an innovative concept, that of putting the compositional act, together with the techniques of musical exposition, at the service of the original, authentic, folkloric material.

The third decade constitutes, for the Romanian school of composition, a

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platform for the development of a palette of concepts, styles, techniques whose degree of originality and imposition on the European scene is measured in the ability and value of the artists to think and process the musical phenomenon from the perspective the substance of Romanian folklore. The next decade consists in emphasizing the tendency to build an own language, in parallel with the increasingly strong attraction towards polyphonic art, together with its modern polytonal side.

The Romanian avant-garde from the middle of the 20th century proclaimed the need for a reform of musical language and aesthetics through eccentric orientations, apparently broken from grounded tradition. Thus, names like: Anatol Vieru, Ștefan Niculescu, Aurel Stroe, Adrian Rațiu, Cornel Țăranu, Carmen Petra-Basacopol, Myriam Marbé and others were concerned, despite the limits imposed by the political regime, to outline their own style, a personal way of artistic expression. Radical modernism appears in the sixth decade and has various repercussions in the approval or disapproval of the guild colleagues and not only. It is the period when concrete music, electronic music, noise music, archetypal music, conceptual modalism, spectral music break the tradition making way for new aesthetics.[5] Representative personalities are: Ștefan Niculescu, Anatol Vieru, Aurel Stroe, Tiberiu Olah or those of the new generation: Liviu Glodeanu, Mihai Moldovan, H. Rădulescu, C. Cazaban.

During the same period, the modern-moderate orientation is imposed, which brings visible traditional inserts. Most of the representatives are established from the ranks of the teaching staff of the conservatories with the authority and desire to train other disciples, but also a different compositional vision: Sigismund Toduță, Ludovic Feldman, Tudor Ciortea, Liviu Rusu, Wilhelm Georg Berger, Carmen Petra-Basacopol, Alexandru Pașcanu, Pascal Bentoiu and others.[3] At the beginning of the 1970s, another orientation made its way in Romanian compositional creations, structuralism, with a mathematical and abstract language, which is based on modern, increasingly advanced technology. Octavian Nemescu, Dinu Ciocan, Aurel Stroe, Anatol Vieru are the composers who bring a fresh, seemingly glacial air to Romanian music.

The 80s brought with it the new wave of postmodernism, an orientation that calls into question an aesthetic dualism, because, etymologically, postmodernism would be the period that naturally arises from modernism, although there are certain polemics vis-à-vis this term. The possibility and way of approaching composers regarding the compositional technique related to electronic music, the reinterpretation of modes, the reinvention of own systems, the insertion of neotonal or neomodal routes, minimalist techniques, the theory of probabilities - these are challenges that have permeated postmodernist thinking.

### **3. Sound effects and clarinetistic techniques in modern performance**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the means of the classical compositional technique received a new refreshment through the novelties brought in, by the adoption of communication channels embellished with a series of sound effects, which surprised both the music-loving audience and the specialists in the field. These effects are a cause of compositional experiments, with the idea of diversifying the sound space, thus creating differentiated expressions of the melodic material, a fact that led to the broadening of the possibilities of musical expression. The

composers concerns consisted in trying to transform the sound from its depth, making an intervention at its natural level. In this way, all the characteristics of the sound were metamorphosed: the duration, the intensity, but especially the height and timbre were acted upon.

The appearance of these effects was determined by the development and broadening of the sound spectrum of other musical genres, such as jazz music, where the timbral *glissando* effect comes from. In the case of the clarinet, the process is carried out by modeling the air column, but also by the progressive sliding action of the fingers on the keys and glasses of the instrument. The glissando is used, in particular, to create comic effects, it induces a state of joy, of a musical joke executed for short, repeated, dynamic durations, but it can also create the image of internalized, sentimental, sad, sometimes grotesque moments in the execution at low speed and in a downward direction.[2]

Another transformation at the timbral level would be the one caused by the *tremolo* effect, which "although it appeared in Romanticism, in contemporary music acquires important expressive and coloristic values"[4]. According to the same source, this effect can have three different executions: *vibrato*, as a repetition of the same sound on a simple, double or triple articulation of a series of sounds, having a pulsating effect, of uncertainty; *related* or *interval*, as a repetition of two sounds of different pitches, applicable only to woodwind instruments; *dental* or *frullato*, which produces a transformation at the intonation level through a special technique of the tongue that continuously pronounces the letter *r* simultaneously with the introduction of the air column. When produced, the effect changes the pitch of the sound, with a slight intonational lowering. It is especially used to emphasize a tense moment, with an emphasis on extreme sound expressiveness.

A special effect of contemporary music that uses an extended technique is the specific form of tremollo, called *Yellowtremollo* or *Bisbigliando*. This effect is achieved by a normal emission of sound, regardless of register, with the specification of closing and opening a digital clarinet key at the same time. This oscillation between open and modified sounds causes the color of the sounds to change and results in a fluctuation of the sound in intonation.

The most important musical effects specific to the first decades of the 20th century are the *slaptongue*, the *frullato*, the *molto vibrato*, which in the last century were considered distortions of the purity of the sound, now, in the new century, they come to diversify the technical arsenal considered modest. The first of them, *slaptongue*, produces a modification of the sound that consists in the effect of popping, made with the help of the tongue. The result of this procedure is a short, even violent sound in high intensities (*f*, *ff*) like a crack.[2] This effect is achieved by creating a vacuum inside the mouthpiece and blocking the vibration of the tongue with the tongue, in order to release it violently afterwards. The effect creates states of tension through a sequence of inputs with pauses between them. As a particularity of the sound, the timbre will be the modified one. There are several types of *slaptongue*: *slap* without sound, *poco slap* and *slap* with sound. In the case of the silent *slaptongue*, only the tongue is retracted, without emitting air inside the mouthpiece, and the effect achieved is similar to a crack.

The *molto vibrato* technique compromises the sound by targeting the

particularities of height and intensity. The effect consists in the amplification of sound waves, produced at equal distances, until their deformation. The performer has the ability to control the abdominal muscles because by tensing the air is sent into the tube of the instrument at high speed and by relaxing them it is sent at a lower speed. Of course, in short it could be explained by the action-relaxation game of the performer. It can be obtained both in large dynamic plane (*f*) and in small shades (*p*, *mp*, *mf*). An effect that derives from the one presented previously is *wide vibrato*, which has the same characteristic of coloring the sound space. It is based on the same principle, with the difference that the amplitude of the sound, of the oscillating wave, is wider. For this reason, it is impetuously necessary for the interpreter to differentiate the two sound effects, delimiting the number of vibrations, which can be decreasing or increasing, and their amplitude being maintained at the same level. In the case of this effect, attention must be paid to channeling the pitch of the sound, as the pressure of the blown air can result in the intonation rising, which is not desirable.

As a result of compositional research, new sound effects appear through the discovery of new means of musical expression. Thus, an effect, we can say, of the last generation is the *growl* often found in the creations of contemporary music, more precisely after 1980. It is obtained by obturation of the oral cavity and by a prolonged support of the air column a sound is emitted from the throat modifying the normal vibration of the ancia through the simultaneous pronunciation of the letters *h* and *r*. In this way, the *frullato* effect is also produced by superimposing the sound emitted by the performer's resonator cavity over the normal sound of the instrument, creating new ways of expression in the sound system. The effect is used in the creation of excessively tense images, in the accumulation caused by the climax of a work. Of course, it can also have the character of a melodic murmur, being approached in small nuances, in segments of an internalized nature.

An effect from the archaic spectrum is *libreanché*, which is quite rare in the period referred to. Casting this effect alters the pure sound by turning it into an unchiseled, de-timbral one. Practically, it retraces the route back to the existential bases of the clarinet, reconstructs the ancestral sound of the *chalumeau*. This effect is more easily obtained by relaxing the lips and the mandible of the interpreter, and the determining element between the mouthpiece and the mouthpiece will be the air. Anacia vibrates freely, without facial control and emits a grave sound, with a dull color.[2] Aiming at the intonation aspect, we encounter, in the current Romanian compositional variety, *microintervals* as a sound effect, which, as we know, are intervals specific to untempered music. The clarinet, being a woodwind instrument with holes, therefore with tempered characteristics, can play sensitively altered sounds, in an ascending or descending direction. This effect is achieved by partially opening or closing the tube of the instrument with the help of the fingers or by preset claws, depending on the execution speed in which it is found. In this case, the sound may oscillate in very small but perceptible proportions.

Of course, out of the desire to enrich the sound spectrum, composers began to use, approximately after 1970, the effect of *multiphonic sounds* consisting of the superimposition of two to four sounds emitted simultaneously. This effect is more difficult to achieve at real pitches due to the characteristics of wind instruments

which are also called monodic. However, the clarinet proves to be able to emit several sounds simultaneously, but with imprecise pitches. This effect can be obtained by two methods: either by exerting pressure on the fingerboard and the fret remains unchanged, or by positioning the fingers with special frets, specific to the heights required by the score. And in this case, there is a change in the pressure of the lips as well as the air column.

The experiment directed towards the area of exploration of new possibilities of expression leads the composers and performers towards a new idea, to superimpose the human voice over the sound of the instrument effect called *sound with voice*. This effect is possible with a limitation due to the closed oral cavity at the moment of blowing into the instrument and forcing the vibration of the vocal cords is more easily achieved in the medium-low register. Emitting this effect needs assiduous practice due to the difficulty of separating the two emitted sounds, in accurately intoning the pitch of the voice, independent of the pitch of the clarinet. Also, the effect of *muffled sounds* is added to this scientific approach, an effect that implies a deformation of the timbre by covering the sound itself, that is, reducing an important part of the upper harmonics. For all brass instruments, but also for bassoon and oboe, it is possible to achieve this by sealing the tube at its extremity (funnel). Instead, in the case of the clarinet, another way to mute the sound is preferred, namely by partially stopping the vibration of the reed, handled by continuously touching the reed with the relaxed tip of the instrumentalist's tongue. Thus, the result is an indistinct sound, but from a dynamic point of view muted, sitting at the lower limit of perception (*ppp - pppp*).

Two other effects that run through profile music are *humming* and *tuksonia*. The first of them involves an interrupted rhythm, like a murmur attached to a sound background. It is obtained by the jerky pressure of the air with the help of the abdominal muscles and the diaphragm. This pulse determines the so-called swing, like an inner pulse that, by superimposing on a sound, results in a melodic segment characterized by vivacity, slightly syncopated. *Tuksonia*, on the other hand, is possible by removing the mouthpiece from the instrument, exercising the same blowing technique directly on the edge of the instrument's barrel. The air introduced inside the tube suggests a sound color that imitates the wind or the folk instrument - the corkless whistle or caval. The *tuku* effect can have variable heights and is obtained by pronouncing the letters tu-ku, achieved with the author of the tongue (*tu*) and the larynx (*ku*).

#### **4. Conclusions**

The development of the musical language, of the instrumental writing through the prism of the new aesthetic visions of the first half of the 20th century brings to the fore a series of transformations of the musical score dedicated to the clarinet. We refer to the profiling of the new intonations given by the modal sound systems or widened tonality, the densification of the rhythmic writing in the direction of increased virtuosity, the breaking of the symmetry of classical-European origin and the support of the speech in a phrase of ample breathing, in a post-romantic manner or through modern fragmentation.

The Romanian creation for the clarinet is represented in the present research by solo and piano works, with an accentuated modernism - which revolutionizes the



technique and expressiveness of the instrument. The density of special effects, glissando, tremollo, molto vibrato, along with the new modes of emission, attack - slaptongue, frullato - or intonation - of microintervals, multiphonics, muffled sounds, etc. - creates a new sound vocabulary, requiring the performer to have an advanced instrumental technique.

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