

## 8. STRING QUARTET NO. 3 OP. 73 IN F MAJOR BY DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH. MUSICAL LANGUAGE AND EXPRESSIVENESS

Sebastian Vîrtosu<sup>58</sup>

**Abstract:** *This quartet was composed in 1946 and followed a Symphony censored by the Soviet authorities, Symphony no. 9. The first audition took place on December 16, 1946, in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, by the Beethoven Quartet, to whom the work was dedicated. The composition has been brutally denounced as a result of the horrors it portrays and also for the fact that it ends in an unclear, unusual way.*

**Key words:** *Dmitri Shostakovich's creation, 20th century, chamber music*

### 1. Introduction

Dmitri Shostakovich was one of the most prolific composers of his generation. In terms of musical forms, Shostakovich innovates little, wishing to maintain a stronger connection with Tradition. In fact, his innovations are improper, because like Handel, Shostakovich is not a trailblazer or innovator, but he does use modernist elements discovered by other composers to perfection, clearly draped in his distinctive personality. The same does not happen with his musical language, which starts from Tradition, but then enriches it, transfigures it, renews it.

### 2. Part I

The first part of the quartet is in Allegretto, in the key of F major, with a 2/4 measure and a sonata form in which the development is a fugue, while the exposition and the recapitulation have three different themes.

#### Exposition

It begins with the first theme in the first violin, the tonal center being F major; the theme has eight measures, starts with an anacrusis, and has a lively, cheerful, optimistic, and delicate character (Ex. no. 69). Measures 2-4 can be considered belonging to the key of F major, but the 5th measure, through E flat, A flat, and D flat, belongs to the tonal center B flat. However, the accompaniment of the other three instruments (Second Violin, Viola, Cello) is in the basic key of the part, F major. Therefore, in the 5th measure there is an example of polytonalism. The natural B from the Second Violin in the 5th measure is just an inferior embroidery (C - B natural - C), but with a harmonic role, the modified fourth step.

Another thematic motive begins in the 6th measure, with the sixteenth-note triplet, and ends in the 7th measure, on the eighth note in the second beat. This new motive is reproduced, in a non-modulating progression, in the 7th measure, starting with the sixteenth-note triplet and the two eighth notes in the first beat of the 8th measure. The E flat and D flat in the 8th measure do not show a specific tonality, but have a melodic, chromatic, and ornamental role. The same can be said for A flat in the 9th measure, and G flat in the 10th measure at the First Violin, which only have a chromatic, melodic role. Similar to what was said earlier, the A flat in the

---

<sup>58</sup> Associate Professor PhD. hab., "George Enescu" National University of Arts, Iași, România, e-mail: sebastian.virtosu@yahoo.com

10th measure of the Cello. The conclusion of this first theme is found in measures 8-10 (reference 1-2). Being sixteenth notes with dots above, they will be performed with the help of a bowing feature, called in musical practice, above the string, meaning a feature in which the bow touches the string at a point, otherwise, the bow is in the air, above the string. In other words, before touching the string, the bow is in the air, above the string, then, after touching the string, the bow is in the air, above the string again. Therefore, this bowing feature requires two beats in the air, and one beat on the string, which is why it is called above the string. This theme is preceded by two introductory measures in the Cello, Viola, and Second Violin. These introductory measures become the accompaniment of the first theme: Ex. no. 1 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, Part I.



The introduction, as well as the accompaniment, have a musical character similar to the first theme. The eighth notes have dots above them for both Violin I and Violin II, Viola and Cello, which means they must be performed with staccato bowing, above the string, at half-height, in a semi-staccato manner. In measure number nine, the Cello imitates the conclusion of the first theme in Violin I, so the sixteenth notes, also with dots above them, must be extremely agile, light, airy, and precisely executed with the right hand, just like in Violin I (example number 1): Ex. no. 2 - *String Quartet No. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part I.



After several varied appearances of the first theme, followed by a conclusion (measures 44-45, reference 5-2), a bridge follows (measures 46-53, reference 5), a distant mixture of two octaves between Violin I and Cello. This bridge serves to somewhat change the scene from the somewhat cheerful and carefree mood that accompanied the first theme and to link to the second theme, which begins at measure 54 (reference 6) in Violin I. This second theme has a sad, dark character. An exception to this character is made by the measures that conclude the four-measure phrases; these are composed of only two dotted eighth notes, and their role is to suggest a only partially successful attempt to bring back the optimism and cheerfulness of the first theme. This second theme begins with an anacrusis of two sixteenth notes in Cello and Bassoon and is also structured in eight measures. Note the octave mixtures between Violin I-Cello and Violin II-Bassoon. After several variations of the second theme, and a short bridge of three measures, the third theme follows, in Violin I. A theme with a determined character, the dynamics being forte (measure 81, reference 8).

The third theme is modal in Violin I, specifically in the Aeolian mode on A. However, the accompaniment from Violin II and Bassoon suggest the basic key of F major. The note G in Cello, instead of F or C as would be normal for F major, brings a dissonance in this tonal harmonic context from Violin II and Bassoon, altering the common, easy, tonal character. Through that G in Cello, Dmitri Shostakovich discreetly avoids conventional tonality and moves towards the dissolution of tonality. It follows with a passage in canon between Violin I and Cello, after which the second theme is brought back in two varied ways. A short bridge of three measures, in Violin I, leads to the Development.

### Development

This Development, beginning at measure 103 (reference 11), is structured in the form of a Fugue with three obligatory countersubjects, in which the first theme becomes the Subject of the Fugue: Ex. no. 3 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part I.

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the Development section. It consists of four staves: Violin I (top), Violin II, Bassoon, and Cello (bottom). The Violin I staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The music begins with a series of eighth notes, marked with accents and a dynamic of *p*. There are tempo markings: *poco rit* and *a tempo*. The other staves show accompaniment for Violin II, Bassoon, and Cello, with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

This first Subject is stated by V.I on F natural, in the basic tonality of the part, F major. The first Countersubject appears on F natural, at V.II (measure 111, reference 12+1) and is derived from the 3rd theme of the Exposition. This Countersubject is preceded by the imitation of the conclusion of the first violin, at V.II (measures 109-110, reference 12-2), and is built on two structures comprising of a diminished fifth. The first structure, gradually descending, is fa-mi-re-do sharp-si flat - diminished pentachord (measure 111), and the second descending structure is fa-mi-re-do sharp-sol sharp - pentatonic, in measure 112. Measures 112-118 (reference 12+2) and 118-120 (reference 13-2) show abrupt modulations prefiguring discreet atonalism.

The Subject reappears at Vlc. (measure 110, with anacrusis, reference 12-1), on B flat, in the key of B minor, while V.II has the first Countersubject. The second Countersubject is stated also at V.II, in measure 120 (reference 13), in the time of two, on F natural, in the key of B minor (measures 120-126, reference 13) and F sharp minor (measures 127-132, reference 14-1). Vlc. has the first Countersubject on B flat (measure 121), preceded by the imitation of the second violin (measures 119-120). Br. states the Subject, on E in the key of E major (measure 120 with anacrusis, reference 13-1). V.I has the Subject (measures 126-132, reference 14-1) in the key of B major, as with Vlc (measure 109, reference 12-1).

We have, thus, in these passages, simultaneously, pentatonics and pentachords (measures 111-112, reference 12+1) and politonalism (measures 119-131, reference 13-1). It is a fragment that contains many modern techniques in a space of only 23 measures. The stretto of the fugue appears at measure 159 (reference 18), in the key of B flat major (the subdominant of the basic tonality of the part, F major), followed by a conclusion (measure 165, reference 19+1), a codetta (measure 167, reference 20-3), then the double augmented Subject at V.I and imitated at V.II (measure 170,

reference 20), in the key of F major (the basic tonality of the part). Vlc. has a thematic ending in the key of A flat major (measures 170-175, reference 20). The Subject appears augmented and imitated in canon by V.II, then the Recapitulation from measure 177 (reference 21).

### **Recapitulation**

It starts at measure 177 (reference 21), at Vlc., with the first theme. This theme is double augmented, with the tonal center being F major. V.I reprises the first theme from the Exposition, with the same playful and optimistic character, in contrast to the troubled and tense Fugue from the Development, a fugue that requires both physical and mental effort from the performers. At measure 199 (reference 23), the second theme reappears at V.I, with the same somber character, modulating to phrygian on B (in the Exposition it was authentic phrygian on E); then, at measure 226 (reference 25), the third theme arrives at V.I in a new, much faster and cheerful tempo. The tonal center of measures 226-231 suggests, at V.I, the key of E minor, with a cadence on the half-phrase (the dominant B major) in measures 228 and 231 (reference 25+2).

The accompaniment tells a different story; V.II, Br., and Vlc., seem to be in the tonal center of D major, with the mention that the third of this D major chord is absent, being replaced by the note G, in Br., evoking a delayed third through a long *appoggiatura*, according to the canons of classical harmony. The key of the subdominant, G major, at the halfway point of measure 228 is preceded and followed by A major, the dominant key; the note B from V.II and the note D from Vlc. (measure 228) are passing notes. Therefore, in measures 226-231, we have an overlay of a modal passage at V.I, over a tonal passage of the other three instruments.

At measure 232 (reference 25+6), the third theme, which is also exposed by V.I, undergoes some melodic and harmonic variations. Although not atonal, the tonality is greatly diluted, making it difficult to identify a precise tonal center or an unequivocal tonality (we believe this was the composer's intention, namely, to avoid clear tonalities that would place him in a common area of music, in the midst of the 20th century modernist era). The third theme is repeated at Vlc., in measures 238-243 (reference 26), with the tonal center being D minor. V.I, V.II, and Br. belong to the basic tonal center of F major. Measures 244-247 (reference 26+5) bring back the third theme at Vlc. through a progression, in the tonal center of E minor. V.I, V.II, and Br. have passages in sixteenth notes preparing for the appearance of the Coda.

The Coda of the part appears at measure 251 (reference 27), at Vlc., having a thematic head of the first theme (only measures 2-4 are taken), with the tonal center being F major. Part I ends in a brilliant *accelerando*, optimistic, with a *fortissimo* dynamic.

### **3. Part II**

This second part of the quartet is in *Moderato con moto*, in the key of E minor, 3/4 time signature, with a form of a pentastatic lied + coda.

#### **Section A**

It starts with two introductory measures at Br., in fourths forming a “broken” (melodic) E minor chord. The dynamic is *forte*, but it would be a mistake for the

performer or listener to think of this as a belligerent passage. Instead, we should feel determination and weight, in contrast to Theme A, which will begin in the third measure at V.I and will only bring a grotesque reminiscence; a reminiscence of a joyfulness that, now, no longer smiles. Therefore, it is important to differentiate well the smooth legato features, from the ones above the string, in semi-spiccato, of the separate eighth notes with dots. This theme perfectly illustrates the composer's desire to constantly avoid the principle of a clear, safe, and stable tonal center, using different tonal aggregates that succeed abruptly, creating a state of tonal instability close to atonality.

It is not pure atonality, Dmitri Shostakovich constantly avoids this compositional technique as much as tonalism. These tonal aggregates are brought to distant and unrelated tonalities. For example: in the third measure, it can be considered an aggregate with the tonal center in F sharp major, C flat having the role of chromaticism and, enharmonically, can be assimilated to D sharp with the function of the leading tone, B sharp, the eighth note in the second half of measure II. We can also analyze this passage from a different perspective, in a different level of perception, as follows: on an ostinato of E minor (arpeggio), and before a cadence to D minor, a melodic line with multiple tonal-modal centers is superimposed; the ambiguity of the writing in two voices sustains the grotesque character of the melody.

The charm lies in the lack of concern for harmonic superimpositions (for now), but for the melodic state. In fact, there is a play between the upper and lower leading tones for E (D, E flat = D sharp; F flat – lowered second step) and modified tonal-leading steps. We can observe a strong contrast, typical of Dmitri Shostakovich, between static and dynamic, that is, between ostinato and melody. The surprise comes at measures 13 and 14 (reference 30-2) when, abruptly, the main tonality of the part, which Br. has echoed relentlessly all this time and that is, the tonal center E minor, is conclusively reinstated: Ex. no. 4 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part II.



After several varied appearances of theme A, theme B appears at bar 32, preceded by an introduction of the other three instruments as follows: Violin I and Violin II accompany in parallel perfect fourths, suggesting two bi-chords, F sharp B and B, A sharp D, respectively. The appearance of the note C sharp on beat 1 in bar 32 by the cello serves the purpose of canceling, according to the laws of atonality, the B at Violin II, inducing the necessary dissonance (the law of atonality prohibits the appearance of two identical notes at different octaves or in succession, as it would lead to consonance and tonality). The movement in parallel fourths between Violin I and Violin II does not alter the tonality too clearly. The cello, through C sharp, brings atonality more safely.

The cellist's care in accompanying the dotted quarter note followed by three

eighths, apart from not being too loud compared to the main theme at bar 32, is also that of not mixing different bowing techniques; thus the dotted quarter note must be played with the bow “on the string,” meaning the right arm is relaxed, un-tense, and unsuspected, whereas the eighths with dots above must be played with the right arm tense, suspended at a semi-height and executed with a spiccato bowing stroke in the “C2” area of the bow (immediately below the middle of the bow, towards the frog).

These sudden and natural changes between the two types of bowing strokes require a lot of practice and attention in their execution, as the change is quick, the relaxation and tension of the arm and forearm being cursory. Reversing the techniques leads to the technical-interpretative failure of the passage in question, indicating a weak knowledge of the basic hand technique on the part of the respective cellist: Ex. no. 5 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part II.



### Section B

Appears at measure 70 (landmark 36), at V.I, in the key of F sharp major, quietly entering into the pianissimo nuance, with dotted eighth notes on each beat (Ex. no. 74). The accompaniment in V.II, Br. and Vlc. will shift, in measures 74-82 (landmark 37-2), to the tonal center of D major, the inversion I. Exactly in the same measures, V.I is in a completely different tonal center, namely, in C sharp major melodic (through the note B natural). Without wanting to repeat ourselves, we can affirm that even in this passage, from measures 70-82, the polytonalism is used predominantly.

The bowing technique in this spot is at the tip, or at least in the “C3” area of the bow (that is, above the middle of the bow) and executed in the style of getatto. Therefore, section B begins at measure 70 with theme C in V.I and V.II. After a few variations, theme D follows in Br. (measure 101, landmark 40), with a thematic leitmotif suggesting, in measures 101-102, a tonal center on A flat. Measures 103-104 (landmark 40+2) have the tonal center of E minor (the notes G-E). Vlc. and V.II have a tonal aggregate on G minor (measures 99-101, landmark 40-2), which slowly leads to a dissolution of tonality. Then follow several more variations of theme C: Ex. no. 6 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part II.



### **Section A1**

Here, theme A appears slightly modified at Vlc. (measure 126, reference 43), preceded by two introductory measures in the basic tonality, E minor, of the other instruments, then theme B at V.I, measures 135-140 (reference 44), a theme with a pronounced atonal character. The same thing does not happen with the other instruments, where each quarter note from the previously mentioned measures has a different tonal center. For example, in measure 134, beat I is in D minor, beat II in C sharp minor, beat III in D minor. Measure 135, beat I in C minor, beat II in D minor and beat III in C sharp minor etc. However, if we look at them not vertically, but horizontally, we see chromatic progressions, at V.II, G sharp-G natural-G flat, at Br., F natural-E flat-E double flat and at Vlc., D-C sharp-C double flat. Therefore, we can conclude, for this passage (measures 135-140), a modal simultaneity with an atonal segment. After a short cadential bridge at V.I (measure 152, reference 46+5), which starts in B flat minor (measures 152-153) and in A minor (measures 155-156, reference 47-5), follows,

### **Section B1**

It debuts at measure 158 (reference 47-2), with theme C5 at V.I and V.II, muted, the tonal center being E major.

### **Section A2**

It debuts at measure 174 (reference 49) in a slower tempo, at Vlc., with theme A, varied and muted, the other instruments being stabilized in the tonal center of E minor, the musical character being different from the theme at the beginning. After 4 measures appears the Coda, Piu mosso, at Br. (measure 187, reference 50), formed by thematic motives from theme A. Apart from Vlc., which is in the basic tonality of E minor, V.I has E flat as the tonal center, V.II the tonal center on C, and Br., through the descending chromatic heptachord B flat-A flat-G-G flat-F-F flat-E suggests the harmonic major tonal center of E flat (due to the B flat note). Gradually everything calms down in a morbid, asthenic sigh of the heart, at Vlc., in the tonal center of E minor, and the other voices on the tonal center of C minor. Interestingly, and notable, is still the superposition of the major-minor chord on the tonal center of C (C major and C minor) with E minor on Vlc. and elliptically by fifth for all four instruments.

## **4. Part III**

This third part of the quartet is Allegro non troppo, in the tonality of G sharp minor, measures 2/4 and 3/4, with a strophic form + coda.

### **Section A**

It debuts warrior-like, brutal, with chords in G sharp minor, dry, placated, in fortissimo, at V.II, Br. and Vlc.. Theme A, played by V.I, is a theme with a heroic, strong character, with even aggressive accents in places. This theme follows a sinuous tonal path, different from the accompaniment of V.II, Br. and Vlc.. If in measures 4-8 at V.I we can see a tonal center on E major (with the exception of the 5th measure where the tonality is G sharp minor, as in the accompaniment), in measures 9-12 the tonal center of V.I changes to B major. In this place, related tonalities overlap, B major with G sharp minor.

Theme B, appears at V.I (measure 17, reference 52), and brings a new thematic motif, in the tonal center of G, with an accompaniment in E flat major, elliptical by a third. The tonal center of E flat major becomes clear in measures 21-24 (reference 52+5), at V.I, which brings the mysterious major third. Starting from the 25th measure, the tonal center of E flat major is transformed, enharmonically, into D sharp major, much more graphically related to the basic tonality of G sharp minor. The heroic character becomes more daring, more aggressive and courageously aggressive. The first bursts of machine gun fire are heard in measure 23 (reference 53-6), followed by others in measures 25, 26, 28.

Theme C (measure 55, reference 55), begins with two introductory measures with F minor chords, in all instruments, quasi arpeggiato, suggesting some desperate cries (death mows without mercy from both sides). The harsh, warrior-like, heroic-aggressive character has not disappeared. Measures 57-58 (reference 55+2), at V.I, show us a melodic minor F bachian (a variant of melodic minor that is sung the same way both ascending and descending). In measures 57-59, V.I makes room for a diminished fifth descending F-E-D-C-B flat. Starting from measures 61-64 (reference 56-4) an authentic mixolydian modal structure on G is discovered.

Theme D (measure 64 with anacrusis, reference 56-1), at V.I and then at V.II, begins with anacrusis and has a dark, frowning character, not warrior-like, obtained by bringing the tonal center back to F minor at V.I, with the accompaniment of Br. and Vlc. extracting from the pentachord at measures 59-60 (reference 55+4) the middle notes, leaving only the B flat and B natural with a dramatic role and generator of instability (Ex. no. 75). Let's also note the hexachord from measures 68-77 (reference 56+3), at V.II, which in turn overlaps the previously mentioned bitonality, and the F minor tonality from V.I. An interesting, and peculiar at the same time, example of the overlap of polytonalism and polymodalism. Starting from measures 76-81 (reference 57) the tonal and modal overlays have the following unfolding: at V.I we observe a triad B flat-C-B double flat, which could be part of an authentic Aeolian mode on A (measures 77-80, reference 57+1); at V.II we have a triad C-B-A, which could also be part of an authentic mode on C (measures 77-78, reference 57+1); at Br. and Vlc. we have a tonal center on E minor (measures 77-78, reference 57+1), and an authentic Ionian mode on C (measures 79-81, reference 57+3): Ex. no. 7 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part III.

Theme B varied (measure 82) with the canon between V.I and V.II leads to Section B.

### Section B

Which begins with theme F at Br., measure 96 (reference 59), through victorious, quasi-arpeggiated chords, like salvos of cannon fire, with the tonal center being E flat Major. This theme has a victorious, grotesque, mocking character (Ex. no. 76). In this theme F at Br., we observe that in measures 97-101 (reference 59+1)



the tonal center is E flat major, in measures 102-103 (reference 60-3) it is in A minor, in measure 104 (reference 60-2) it is in G minor, then, in measures 105-107 (reference 60) it is in B flat minor, in measures 108-109 (reference 60+3) it is in B flat major, in measure 110 (reference 61-4) it is in E flat minor and in measure 111 (reference 61-3) it is in G minor. Under these sudden, distant and predominantly minor modulations, the accompaniment is structured on the diminished fifth Cb - Gb, with the center on E flat (measures 98-101, reference 59+2), and in measures 106-109 (reference 60+1) on the diminished fifth G - Db, with the center on B flat:

Ex. no. 8 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part III.

A specific characteristic of Dmitri Shostakovich's compositional style is the use of certain techniques with a strong role in creating ambiguous or unstable states. Among these, we can mention the intensive use of harmonic sequences, and harmonic and melodic transpositions at different intervals, usually minor or major thirds, as well as the use of enharmonic scales. Typically, these compositional techniques are not limited to a single instrument, but the sonic material constantly circulates, with modifications and transpositions appearing in the most unexpected registers of the instruments or in passages in octaves. The composer's explicit intention when using these techniques is very clear: to suggest labile, unstable states that induce uncertainty in the listener, who strongly feels the power of Shostakovich's music.

Theme G (measure 126, mark 63) appears on the cello, bringing back the worry that disappears at measure 136 (mark 64-1) when Theme F returns in a varied form on the Violin I and in canon with Violin II, with the support of the viola and cello. This theme G also has a complex modulatory structure, thus: G major, as the dominant, in measures 126-127 (mark 63) on beat I, D minor in measure 127 on beat II, F minor in measure 130, G minor in measures 131-132, G major in measures 132-134, and B flat major in measures 134-136. Note that these tonalities are generally related to each other, in relationships of Dominant, Subdominant (such as G major and F minor for D minor), in relationships of Relativity (such as B flat major with G minor), or in relationships of homonymy (such as G major with G minor). All these relationships truly belong to classical theory and harmony, the novelty lies in the combinations between them that no longer follow the order and rules of classical harmony. The bridge (measure 145, mark 65) links to Section A1.

## Section A1

Begins on Violin I with theme A (measure 154, mark 66-1), which appears varied, with the tonal center being E flat major (with a minor second lower than at the beginning of the section), with the exceptions of measures 155 and 163, which belong to the tonal center of G minor.

### Coda

Appears in measure 219 (mark 72) with three quasi arpeggiated chords in C major, the triumphant character now transforms into an unstoppable cavalcade of madness, ending abruptly in fortissimo. The theme is in canon with Violin I and the cello, and is a varied processing of Theme F from the Bridge (measure 97, mark 59+1). The variation is evident in tonality, C major instead of E flat major as in the theme from the Bridge, and in rhythm, the two repeated sixteenth notes on the note C in the Coda, compared to the simple quarter note in the viola's theme. Therefore, the Coda begins in C major (measures 219-222, mark 72), then A minor (measure 222, mark 72+3 on Violin I and 223, mark 72+4 on cello), G major (measure 223 on Violin I and 224, mark 72+5 on cello), E flat major with minor seventh (measures 224-225, mark 72+5 on Violin I and 225-226, mark 73-4 on cello). The abrupt return to the base tonality, G sharp minor, happens in measure 229 (mark 73).

On the tonal marks on Violin I and cello, in canon from measures 220-226, we have the following tonal placements on Violin II and Bridge: Violin II, C major (measures 219-221, mark 72), F major (measure 222, mark 72+3), C major (measure 223, mark 72+4), E flat major (measures 224-225, mark 72+5), Bridge, C major (measures 219-221, mark 72), D minor (measure 222, mark 72+3), C major (measure 223, mark 72+4), E flat major (measures 224-226, mark 72+5). Vertically, we have the unfolding of the following tonal aggregates: C major (measures 219-221, mark 72), D minor with minor seventh and A minor on the last eighth note of the measure (measure 222, mark 72+3), C major with minor seventh (measure 223, mark 72+4), E flat major (measures 224-225, mark 72+5).

## 5. Part IV

This fourth part of the quartet is in Adagio, the tonality is C sharp minor, in 4/4 time, with a rondo form. Theme A-Chorus begins forcefully, doubled in three octaves on Violin II, Bridge and cello, and has a tragic character, in which the pain leads to a paroxysmal cry. The tonality of this theme (measures 1-5, mark 74) is in C sharp minor, however, it cadences on the Dominant (G sharp major), allowing the first violins to enter the second phrase (phrase B) starting at measure 6 (mark 75). The cadence of this second phrase is also open on the Dominant G sharp major. After two open cadences, the resolution is made by bringing the Chorus back to the tonality of this part, C sharp minor. In the structure of this Chorus, we can observe in-depth the following thematic cells and motives: dotted half note + dotted eighth note and sixteenth note from measures 1-2, quarter notes from measures 3-4, quintuplet as a grace note.

The interpretation should not lead to despair, but to intense pain, doubled by dignity. To achieve this, the performers must support, with the right hand, the sound from frog to tip, without decreasing the intensity of the sound, i.e. without reducing the pressure of the bow on the string and keeping the right arm heavy and relaxed

while the left hand is in full force. Additionally, there should be no feeling of bow changes from frog to tip. The left hand has a constant, wide amplitude vibrato, identical for every finger and regardless of position or change of position. Care must also be taken for intonation and balancing voices in octaves (the lower voices should have a slightly greater intensity than the higher voices).

Theme B - Couplet B (measure 6, mark 76) has a different character, a different image, a different scene and completely different condition from the Chorus. The coupler transfers the tonal center of the Dominant (G sharp major) from the open cadence of the Chorus, resolving to the Tonic (C sharp minor) in the 8th measure. The rhythm is different from the Chorus, there are no dotted rhythms and quintuplets. It can be observed at measure 11 that the B minor chord with minor seventh appears in full, unlike the Chorus where we implied it, missing some tones.

To perform this Chorus, the first violinist must have a clean, pure, warm and imploring sound by semi-suspending the right arm, pulling the bow with slow and steady speed, being attentive not to change the intensity of the sound. The left hand should vibrate very little and uninterrupted even if the fingers and positions change. High positions of the left hand are preferable because warm sonorities are obtained even with little vibrato. Normally, high positions do not favor the pure, crystalline character of passages that are intended this way, but this is an exception (it's the 20th century), the pure, clean, warm character is achieved in this manner. Experience and research of over twenty-five years in chamber music and string quartet has led us to these conclusions. Here, the beginning of the part, the Chorus in octaves, and the Couplet on Violin I: Ex. no. 9 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part IV.

The daydream was abruptly interrupted by the return to reality, through the varied **Refrain** (theme A) at measure 14, reference point 76. The **varied Couplet B** (measure 19, reference point 77) has the same musical character as Couplet B (theme B) at measure 6. The **varied Refrain A** (measure 29, reference point 78) now only returns to Vlc. and no longer has the force from the beginning, but only sketches a prolonged sigh. The transitional role of **Couplet C** (measure 34, reference point 79-6) is already sad, tired, conclusive: Ex. no. 10 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part IV.



The **varied A-refrain** (measure 40, reference point 79) in the V.I, has a somewhat similar character to the theme at measure 29 (reference point 78) in the Vlc. The accompaniment of the Vlc., Br., and V.II creates a sinister image of a funeral procession, implacably moving like Destiny: Ex. no. 11 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part IV.



The **D Couplet** (measure 45, with anacrusis, reference 80-4) appears at the V.I. It is a rhythmic diminution of phrase B (Couplet B) from measures 7-10. The anacrusis gives the character of imploring the character, together with the resignation that appears through the descending succession of notes. Although the dynamics are forte, it is neither tragic nor desperate, but rather suggests a helplessness in controlling the unfolding of events and their finality. Therefore, this passage suggests imploring and resignation. The accompaniment is rhythmically identical to measure 40. Towards the end of the D Couplet, the tension increases, exploding paroxysmally, desperate, at Refrain A.

**Refrain A** (measure 48, reference 80) at V.I, then accelerando towards **varied D Couplet** (measure 53, with anacrusis, reference 80+4), still at V.I. **Refrain A** (measure 57, reference 81) at Vlc.. For the first time in this part, polytonalism appears, D# minor in Vlc. (measures 58 time IV-61, re), E minor in V.I (measures 57-61), B major in V.II, Br. and Vlc. (measure 57), C minor in Vlc. (measure 57 time IV and measure 58 first three beats): Ex.no.12 – *String Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part IV.



And then, the **varied D section** (measure 62 with anacrusis, reference 82-2) at V.I, the **Cadence** at Vlc., (measure 65 with anacrusis, reference 83-3) transitions to Chorus A. **Chorus A**, at Br. (measure 68, reference 83), with a morbid musical character, without vigor. Vlc. accompanies dry, relentless, representing Fate that cannot be swayed. The final pizzicato notes of the cello suggest the sound of clods

of earth falling on the lid of the coffin about to be buried.

## 6. Part V

The end begins immediately after the end of Part IV. This fourth part of the quartet is in Moderato, the key of F major, measures 6/8, 2/4, 9/8 with a rondo form, bistrophic form (stanza I - section A, section B, section Av + theme G and H, cadence section Bv and coda).

### Section A

Theme A - begins at Vlc., with anacrusis (reference 85), the nuance being pianissimo (Ex. no. 82). The character of the theme is mysterious, dark, even threatening. Br. accompanies in pizzicato. Undoubtedly, this theme A is in the key of F major, but the long appoggiaturas of G flat and B flat in measure 1, and B natural, as a retardation of the fifth C, make this tonal center of F major occulted, bypassed (in the style already mentioned several times so far, that is, always bypassing the tonal system, without completely annulling it, as the expressionists did). C major, the Dominant, appears in measures 3-4 followed by the Dominant of the Dominant, G major (m. 5-6). Measures 8-9 bring F minor, the relative minor, then C major (measure 10), E flat minor (measure 11). We see that these sudden modulations reinforce the above statement regarding the occultation of the F major tonality. The impression left by this passage is of slipping and impossibility of grabbing or holding onto something solid: Ex. no. 13 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



Theme B (m. 21, reper 86+6) throughout the piece, the best legato possible, pianissimo, taking care not to increase or decrease the nuance unjustifiably due to the numerous position changes or string crossings (bariolages). This theme requires a lot of attention from the cellist, especially as the technical difficulty should not be visible in the mimics, gestures or in the two hands (such as their tightening): Ex. no. 14 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



Theme A-varied measure 33 (bar 87) with an anacrusis to V.I. Theme C (m. 71, bar 91) to V.I, in the key of D minor relative to F major, has a musical character distinct from the rest of the themes in part V. The notes in long rhythmic values, tied together, give it a special distinction. It is very delicate, like a discreet perfume of a distant beloved in space and time, like a dried flower caught between the pages of a book. The first violinist achieves this by reducing the frequency and amplitude of vibrato, together with reducing the pressure of the bow on the string through a slight release of the right arm: Ex. no. 15 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



The same theme C appears also in Bar 91, with an anacrusis, reference 93-1, still in the central tonal re minor, the character of the theme gaining, however, more consistency, substance. This is achieved through a tightening and relaxation of the right arm by the violinist, simultaneously increasing the frequency and amplitude of the vibrato in the left hand. After a series of varied appearances of themes A and B, through a short bridge of only three measures (m. 136-138, reference 97-3), we enter Section B.

### Section B

Bar 139 (reference 97), the measure of 2/4, in the key of A major. This section begins with theme D on the Cello, in the central tonal A major, with an anacrusis, preceded by two introductory measures on the other three instruments that will accompany, in dotted quavers in the manner of the similar dotted quavers in theme A of part I, and sixteenths, also with dots, in a ricochet manner. This ricochet gives a slightly ironic character to theme D. Theme D has a pronounced martial, optimistic, determined, and slightly ironic character, parodying a stalinist-communist labor march propaganda. Perhaps this is why the work was denounced as subversive. Here is the passage: Ex. No. 16 - *Quartet No. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



Theme E (m. 164, rep. 99) in the V.I, in the center of the D minor tonality, brings concern through the increase in frequency and amplitude of the vibrato in the left hand, and a slight increase in pressure of the bow on the string (Example no. 87). The eighth notes with dots above them in the accompaniment are not sung as loosely, but gain weight, becoming drier and with a point of string or plucked. Although they gain weight, the eighth notes are still in a semi-staccato manner, at a semi-height, they will not be played on the string. However, the accompaniment is structured polytonally, for the first time in this final part. V.II on the central tonality D (m. 164-173), Br. on B flat major (m. 164, 166, 168,170, 172-173) and on the central tonality E flat (m. 165, 167, 169, 171-173), Vlc. pedal on A: Ex. no. 17 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



The bridge of measure 192 (reference 102-4), at Br., marks the transition to the Av Section.

### Av Section

This begins at Vlc. with the theme A-varied, (m. 196 with anacrusis, reference 102-1), V.I imitates in canon Vlc. The dynamics are no longer pianissimo, but piano, however the mysterious, hidden, and above all threatening character remains: Ex. no. 18 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



After a series of varied appearances of themes A and B, the climax of the last part comes. The mysterious and threatening forces come to light in a real battle. Theme G (m. 235, bar 106) appears in the fortissimo shade, Vlc imitates in canon Br., despair and struggle begin to reach alarming levels: Ex. no. 19 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.

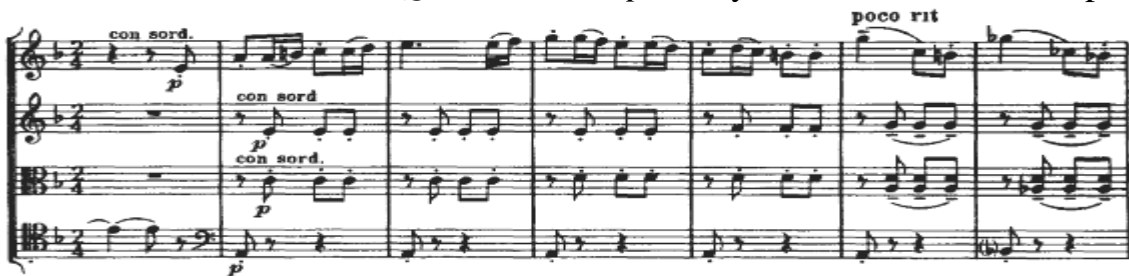


The traits of the bow are in the string, the pressure is strong, the right arm, paradoxically, must be relaxed and heavy in the string, while the left hand must be active, the vibrato must have, where the musical text allows, very high frequency and amplitude. This makes some passages that would otherwise be easy difficult. Theme H (m. 245, landmark 107) (Ex. No. 89), suddenly has a more settled tempo, *Meno mosso*, Br. and Vlc. sing in canon the **Refrain A** from part IV, in the tonal center of D sharp minor. This formal compositional procedure of bringing back themes from other parts of a work is specific to Dmitri Shostakovich, and serves to give unity and cyclicity to the entire work: Ex. no. 20 - *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



Theme I (m. 253, reference 108) repeats in V.I and V.II, in octaves, the **Refrain D** from part IV, still in the tonal center of D sharp minor, this time in fortissimo, the moment when despair and fear turn into heroism. Theme I continues in the Cello (m. 261, reference 109), then, after a short bridge in V.I (m. 265, reference 110-5) the Cadence for the Cello appears (m. 270-291, reference 110) which leads to Section Bv.

**Section Bv** (m. 292 with anacrusis, reference 111-1) Theme D-varied in V.I, in A minor this time: Ex. no. 21- *Quartet no. 3 op. 73* by Dmitri Shostakovich, part V.



The eighth notes with points above will be achieved through bow strokes executed above the string, the right arm slightly tensioned and suspended, in order not to press too hard on the string, and using a small amount of bow, being careful that when the bow hair touches the string, the emission of the sound of the optimized point will be clear and penetrating, without increasing the dynamics. To achieve this, the bow hair must touch the string at an optimal contact point between the Fingerboard and the Bridge. Also, the height at which the bow is positioned above the string must be considered. Too much height will lead to loss of control of the bow, especially since the area of emission for these optimized points is above the middle of the bow, and too little height will lead to the emission of unclear and non-penetrating optimized points, as well as to unjustified increase in dynamics. The left hand should vibrate very little. Successive themes E, D, B, A appear, all varied.

**Coda** (m. 353, refer 118)

On a pedal of Vlc., Br. and V.II on F major, V.I plays thematic heads of theme A from the beginning of the fifth part. The character of these thematic heads suggests unease, searching, entering the zone of the Absolute. Everything ends with the pizzicato chords of V.I that conclude optimistically the quartet, in reconciliation with people and with God, in opposition to the pizzicato notes of Vlc. from the end of the fourth part, which suggested earth clods falling on the coffin, in an attitude of despair and revolt against everyone.



## 7. Conclusions

In quartet No. 3, Shostakovich innovates the traditional Sonata form, bringing in the first part, in the Development, a four-voice Fugue, with Exposition, Development, Stretto and Coda. The second and third parts are pentastrophic and tristrophic *Lieder*; the fourth part a slow Rondo. In the fifth part we have a complex bistrophic form, bringing thematic elements from the first and fourth parts. The quartet is structured in 5 parts: Allegretto, Moderato con moto, Allegro non troppo, Adagio, Moderato.

## References

1. Berger, Wilhelm-Georg, (1979), *Cvartetul de la Haydn la Debussy*, vol. 1, 2, București, Editura Muzicală
2. Bughici, Dumitru, (1978), *Dicționar de forme și genuri muzicale*, Editura muzicală, București
3. Călinescu, Matei, (1995), *Cinci fețe ale modernității – Modernism, Avangardă, Decadentă, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, traducere de Tatiana Pătrulescu și Radu Țurcanu, Postfață de Mircea Martin, București, Editura Univers
4. Cholopow, J, (2002), *Modalitat in den Streichquartetten von Dmitri Schostakowitsch*, in: *Schostakowitschs Streichquartette. Ein internationales Symposium. Schostakowitsch – Studien*, 5, hg. v. A. Wehrmeyer, Berlin (studia slavica musicologica 22), S 121-161
5. Danilevici, L., (1960), *Șostakovici*, București, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R, traducere de Nelson Vladimir
6. Hamza, George, (1977), *Contribuții la interpretarea cvartetului de coarde*, Editura muzicală, București
7. Meyer, Krzysztof, (1994), *Dmitri Chostakovitch*, Librairie Artheme Fayard, Traduit de l'allemand par Odile Demange
8. Prelipcean, Bujor, (2005), *Probleme tehnice și interpretative specifice cvartetului de coarde*, Editura Artes, Iași
9. Sandu-Dediu, Valentina, (1997), *Ipostaze stilistice și simbolistice ale manierismului în muzică*, Editura Muzicală, București