

Theme-period, as the basic compositional form during the first movement of Isak Shehu`s Symphony "Illyrians"

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Abstract

The traditional doctrine of musical forms has its sentence, phrase, period and punctuation. Questions, exclamations, subordinate clauses are everywhere, voices rise and fall, and, in all of this, the gesture of music is borrowed from the speaking voice" (Adorno, Gillespie, 1993). Based on the quote of Adorno (1993), we will analyze this paper with the purpose of answering a few questions concerning the already designated thesis "The theme – Period, a fundamental compositional form in the first movement of the symphony by Cesk Zadeja", talking through the period from different perspectives as follows:

The complex sentence and the period in music;

The initial forms of the period in music;

The period in classicism/the period and the folk melodies in the classical symphonies;

Theme-period, as the basic compositional form during the first movement of Isak Shehu`s Symphony.

As an introduction we would like to refer to some studies/lectures that relate to language with music, such as: "The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard"(Bernstein, 1981) where Bernstein in his opening first lecture clarified the significance of "the interdisciplinary strategy by saying that "...the best way to 'know' a thing is in the context of another discipline". Within these six lectures, Bernstein explains his ideas regarding the universality of music drawing analogies to other disciplines such as linguistics, philosophy, aesthetics, acoustics and history of music. As the primary interdisciplinary subject, Bernstein chose the recent work of Noam Chomsky on linguistic theories about "Language and Mind". In the first three lectures, Bernstein analyzes the music from a linguistic aspect: phonology (sound), syntax (structure) and semantics (meaning), pinpointing the music of the classical period.

Keywords: theme period, music, Isak Shehu, symphony.

Introduction

To begin with, we perceive the definition and features of the complex sentence given by the Grammar of the Academy of Sciences: -"A complex sentence is a whole unit of concept, structure and intonation, consisting of two or more clauses in a sentence with defined reference among them. It is portrayed by a sole line of intonation, an ending intonation noticed in the last sentence" (Akademia e Shkencave, 1997).

There are similar definitions concerning the period originating since the middle of the XVIII century. Theoretically it is described as a thematic complex ending with a cadence. Halfway through the XIX century, Adolph Bernhard Marx, a musical theorist had a contemporary approach on the period defining it as follows: *the period consists of two symmetrically organized phrases, differing from one another by the strength of the cadence*. According to him, the first phrase is known as *vordersatz* that we will later on refer to as the antecedent while the second phrase is known as *nachsatz* or with

other words, the consequent.

In the beginning of the XX century, Schoenberg (2013) specified that the period resembles the case of the antecedent recurring the consequent initiated by the same melodic – motivic idea.

Caplin in his book "Analyzing Classical Form", defines the period in a more comprehensible manner within the classical Viennese style explaining the end-point of the antecedent with a weaker cadence and the end-point of the consequent with a stronger cadence. In that connotation if the antecedent would have an end-point with a half-cadence, the consequent's end-point would be an imperfect authentic cadence or a perfect authentic cadence. In case the antecedent's end-point would be an imperfect authentic cadence, the consequent must end in perfect authentic cadence. In his theory, Caplin uses the notion "hybrid themes" that in fact represent semblance with the period implicating it consists both antecedent and consequent. The difference among the hybrid theme and the period lies in the substantiality that the period has two cadences (a weaker and a stronger one) whereas the hybrid theme's end-point is with one cadence solely. The similarity between these two definitions rests in the certainty that there is one formal complex (in language and music) corresponding with two or more linguistic units that have main end intonation.

The initial forms of the period in music

The initial forms of the period in the western music, originate among the years 700 – 1000 at the same time when the antiphon was established in sacred music. "The antiphon was a creation based on the narrow liaison amidst the melody and text. Pieces like that were called syllables because every note represented a syllable. The syntax and the prosody of the text are immediate in the musical phrases - as if the melody was written for that same text. In a way, so it was but the surprising thing is that this antiphonal melody with that certain text belongs to a great number of antiphons with the same exact melody" (Crocker, 1986).

A particular interest represents the unfolding of the melody in the psalms of the same epoch, melodies that adjusted a liturgical formula constructed by verses/periods consisting of two symmetrical phrases where the first phrase ends in median cadence and the second phrase in final cadence. Example 1. "Suscepimus Deus" psalm 47 from the "Christmas Mornings".

1. Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nī - mis, in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto é - jus.

2. Fundatur exsultatione universae terrae mons Sī - on, latera Aquilonis, civitas Regis má - gni. (etc.)

In the first example we have a melody that appeared from the verse formula, meaning

that we have two phrases in one period: "Magnus Dominus et laudabilis ni-mis in civitate Dei nostril, in monte e sancto e-jus". These phrases appoint the symmetrical melodic formula (melody-period), a melody that is suitable for chanting other verses like: "Fundatur exultatione universae terrae mons Si-on, latera Aquilonis, civitas Regis mai-gni". This doxology appraised by a two verse formula is sung the same in all the psalms. Considering the psalms to be abstract formulas, can be used not only in Latin but in other languages however they ought to have the verse form so it can be convenient with the symmetrical form of the period in music.

We can also find the period in the late Baroque, right about the time when harmony was progressing but the polyphony was still very dominant.

As a second example we have a choral from J. S. Bach with German lines, "Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir" (Lord God, we all praise you)[®]. The choral from a linguistic aspect is constructed of four verses that automatically influence the musical form of the choral. Musically speaking we are dealing with a period consisting of a period embracing four phrases divided by a corona in-between. The first two phrases are antecedents (the first phrase ends in imperfect authentic cadence and the second phrase ends in half-cadence) and the last two phrases are consequents (both phrases have an end-point in perfect authentic cadence). Regarding the strategy pattern of composition, the music is dependable on the text and the number of the verses.

Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir

Und sollen billig danken dir

Für dein Geschöpf der Engel schön,

Die um dich schweb'n vor deinem Thron.

Lord God, we all praise you

and must rightly thank you

for your beautiful creation of the angels

who hover about you before your throne.

Example 2. "Cantata No.130" J.S.Bach chorale "Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir"

Theme-period, as the basic compositional form during the first movement of Isak Shehu's Symphony

Before the mid-nineteenth century Russia had no consent of symphonic tradition or concert tradition. This situation began to change in the 1830s and 1840s, when strong sense of musical Russian nationalism was developed. Folklore was a key element of national identity in Russian music and as such has been present since its first steps. Composer M. Glinka wrote the first Russian opera "A life of the Tsar" (1836), an opera which was full of folk music themes citations. In the same year Glinka also tried to compose his first symphony. He used two Russian folk songs as first and second theme. He failed protecting the symphony even eighteen years later when it was returned to him for the second time to finish it.

In his memoirs (Layton, 1995) Glinka writes: "Having no power to get out of German line in the processing, I refused efforts." With this Glinka tells us that he does not want to write in "German-style" his processing of themes. Writing in this way it would lead him going against his Russian character. By nature, the processing section means the process of separation and reprocessing of thematic material, material which was presented entirely in the exposition of Sonata form.

The process developed by the German preferences for analysis, analysis of itself, argument and investigation (the analogy of compositional techniques is thematic manipulation, fragmental, the metamorphosis of thematic material, modulation, polyphony, etc.), a process which is far from Russian way of thinking (Greenway, 2004), as well as the rhetoric of mode major-minor that maintains leading role in the development of the Sonata form. Russia themes had modal backgrounds and as such their processing in modal system dur-mol was foreign for them. Adding to this argument the letter that was sent by member of the Russians Five M. P. Mussorgsky to his friend and another member of the Russian five N. R. Korsakov further on makes clear the road of Russian music.

Glinka's tradition also was continued by the Russian five: Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin, composers that took over the development of Russian national professional music.

Analyzing the first M. Balakirev's Symphony we can notice that the entire symphony contains Russian folk themes. The second thing to note in the Balakirev's symphony is lack of Sonata form in one of his movements. Nationalist movement did not escape nor P. I. Tchaikovsky, cosmopolitan composer, who wrote the small Russian symphony (No. 2), contending Russian folk themes.

During the construction of the symphony, Tchaikovsky used varying repeat technique and confronting techniques which avoid processing through motivic fragmentation or "German processing". In his symphony he reached gradation using varied repetition and adding on more instruments for making acoustic crescendo. Using the folk themes which ran from Russian modes (not from tonality) and their not conform structuring of tonal strategy disabled the rhetoric of classical German symphony.

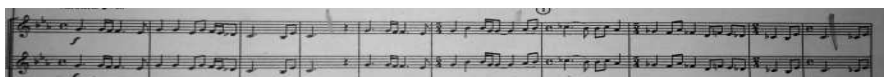
This Russian mentality became dominant in Russian music, it even got more comfortable when Korsakov was hired in the St. Petersburg Conservator, a moment which enabled the Russian Five member directly to affect the future of Russian music,

making road use of Russian music in professional composing. Not forgetting that Korsakov's students were: I. Stravinsky, S. Prokofiev and A. Glazunov, who later on was professor of D. Schostakovich.

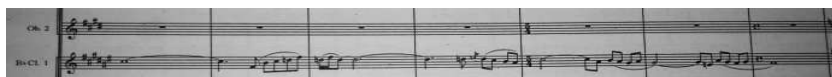
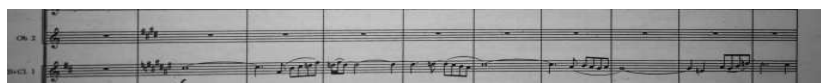
Equivalent with Korsakov's work in Russia, in Albania can be count work of Albanian composer Cesc Zadeja. Albanian symphonic music begins with his Symphony which was a graduation project in the Moscow Conservatory "P. I. Tchaikovsky ", leaded by the Russian pedagogue M. I. Cullaki in 1956. Cesc Zadeja has also been the main teacher of composition class in Tirana (Kol, 2004). Known names came from his class like: Th. Gaqi, K. Lara, Sh. Kushta, A. Peçi, I. Shehu etc. In the only book in Albanian literature for compositional techniques "Vetëparja e procesit", authored by Cesc Zadeja rightly by Prof. Dr. Vasil Tole, in the preface, they call Zadeja the "Dean" of Albanian composition class (Zadeja, 1997). Analyzing the book we notice the compositional rules which he followed throughout all his life. There we note that folk music played a major role in his professional music. This impact was inherited in the next generations of Albanian composers such as Isak Shehu.

How did this folk music affect the composition strategy of the last Albanian symphony? Noticing the themes and their processing in Isak Shehu's symphony, everything is clear when compared with an example of folk songs, with what we see similarity in formal structure. So we are dealing with theme-period in all three cases. We will see this symmetric period consisting of two phrases also in the other themes of the Symphony "Iliret".

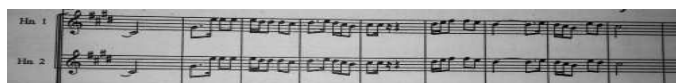
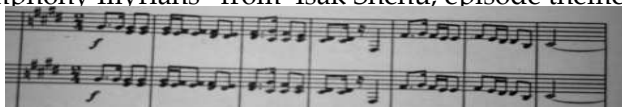
Example 3: "Symphony Illyrians" from Isak Shehu, first theme



Example 4: "Symphony Illyrians" from Isak Shehu, second theme



Example 5: "Symphony Illyrians" from Isak Shehu, episode theme



If we consider the justification of R.Sokoli, we quote: "Folk songs cannot be understood or may not be seen through unless they are analyzed entirely. To divide poems from music is like tearing up an altogether. From the formal analysis of the

first theme it appears that we are dealing with a non-symmetrical period, where the first phrase is constructed from four measures and the second phrase is constructed from six measures. Melodic line is influenced by folk intonations, and the tonal center is always the note C, and the mode is almost chromatic. "The balance of all synthesis modal system gets concerned if the melody concept is extended in order to endorsement all semitones as equals within itself or is based as modal melody in tones and semitones in non-classical order and this is precisely what happens in the first and second theme from the mode view in relation with tonality. Also, if we look it from the metrical point in the first movement often we have change from 4/4 to 5/4 meter, irregular rhythm, which is more characteristic for the Eastern than the Western music. Similarly, the example of Russian literature is Korsakov's Symphony No. 3, also written in irregular rhythm in 5/4.

"Repetition of the same theme, but with a different color, power and some other element, sometimes can even present a development impact". This compositional technique, present at the Tchaikovsky symphonies, was carried also in I. Shehu's Symphony, while making the symphony; Shehu used the variation repetition technique of the thematic and overlapping techniques which avoid the processing through motivic - fragmentation (German processing). This is probably one of the reasons that instead of expanded processing we have combined processing with "episode".

Modal structure of folk modes has close relation with phonetic features of people's language." "It's to be noticed that many popular modes, especially older ones lead in descending direction, to the sensible sound and the semitones move down and not uphill". It is worth mentioning also the character of first theme, of second theme and the episode that have basically descending principle.

Conclusions

Period theme as linguistic and musical formal element, along with other folk features of the themes of I. Shehu's symphonies had a decisive role in the final carving of the first movement. Lyrical form, which is contrary to the German classic dramatic symphonic development, is a direct reflection of the use of folk thematic material. But that does not make Shehu's symphony less valuable or less loved from classical symphony, but this element is an authentically expression and identification with tradition of the Albanian symphony which sees its bases in combination of classical form with national folk elements (Albanian). "Every era is understandable; it brings with itself different problems about creating. Among the most durable problems I think remains the relationship between folk and professional music. For transparent evaluation it is necessary to analyze these phenomena not just from technical aspect, but entering even deeper and revealing the essence, both in the creative and relevant means of expression that reflect these basic principles, as well as the aesthetic, in order to know better the psychology of people."

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