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Semiotic Pathways in Romanian Musicology

Beginning with the second half of the 20th century, Romanian musicology has recorded a fast-paced modernization. Parallel with the historiographic direction, a current preoccupied with the problems of musical language itself flourished together with the effort of the coherent and systematic introduction of semiotics into musicological research and academic curricula. In this context, the author's research work aligns with the fields of musical semiotics and narrativity. Three methods of analyzing a musical text from syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels are presented which aim to adapt to the present understanding of the musical phenomenon.

Oleg Garaz

*The European Musical Canon
between Hypothesis and Concept*

As an alternative to the traditional approach to the thematization of the musical canon (Kerman, Weber, Citron), this paper undertakes a cross-section analysis of the archetypal meanings associated with the canonical phenomenon. Even if the formulation of the canon as concept involves at least three constituent elements – the repertoire, the restorative relationship with the past and the normative-referential attitude, this purely technical vision needs to be counterpoised by the elucidation of some epicentral supra-meanings, deeply anchored in the collective imaginary. The focus on the three modernities of the European musical culture – the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and Modernism, reveals a gallery of preferential mythological themes which are respectively and canonically associated to each modernity – the myth of Orpheus, the myth of Prometheus and the myth of Oedipus. A continuation of this emblematic series facilitates the identification of a fourth archetype, of musical postmodernism – the myth of Proteus. The relationship to the archetypal symbolism thus provides an ultimate confirmation of the value of the analytical assertions. By regarding these archetypes as idioms of the artistic language and imaginary of a cultural epoch, as ideological levers and, at the same time, as determinant, generative energies of the thematic choices, the process of formation of the artistic musical canon appears in a much clearer light.

Monica Mihalache

Eduard Hanslick—an Aesthetics of Autonomy?

The majority of Eduard Hanslick's commentators have unfortunately only evaluated and valued his work from the point of view of the author's opposition to the aesthetics of feeling and to the treatment of music as an imitation of affect. He indeed distanced himself from it by way of the position he advocated, according to which every art has its own independence and, for that reason, can only be correctly analyzed through the lens of the form which constitutes its visage. With scientific examination at the core of its preoccupation, the object of aesthetic study, in Hanslick's view, undoubtedly remains the musical work. His writings lie at the intersection of several, sometimes contradictory, influences, as the interpreters have underlined. In contesting the accusation that he was a

“rigid formalist,” I do not aim to reveal a confused eclecticism. For his intentions led, in fact, to an aesthetics of autonomy, one that, as we shall see, called on scientific methods to observe a field that did not belong to the dimension of the real, of the material.

Hanslick’s theory on the autonomy of music, maintained in not always solidly construed argumentation, is inspired not only by romantic precepts, but also by those belonging to scientific objectivism. As I have attempted to demonstrate, analytic modalities offer access to the autonomous musical structure owing to its creation through similar means. The process of composition is thus defined as a spiritual activity made possible through Phantasy, a term which actually points to the creativity of every individual who writes a score. The notion also indicates an essential moment of the autonomy of the musical piece, through the part it plays in delineating a few characteristics of the phenomenon: objectivity, intentionality, temporality, and historical independence.

We are dealing with an analytic perspective that is not in the least speculative, nor, however, strictly formalist. Rigorousness, but also a piquant style, define Eduard Hanslick's writings, this true 19th century practitioner of aesthetics, a personality with an obviously sharp insight into the nature of art. His endeavors certainly represent a first attempt at leading the study of music towards modernity.