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THE PERIOD, A THEME DERIVATION OF THE FOLKLORE IN THE CLASSICAL SYMPHONIES

“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”¹.

After the quote by Th. W. Adorno, we will start 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:

1. The complex sentence and the period in music;
2. The initial forms of the period in music;
3. The period in classicism/**The period and the folk melodies in the classical symphonies**

As an introduction we would like to refer to some studies/lectures that related language with music, such as:

““The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard”², 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 appointed in his book “Language and Mind”. In the first three lectures, Bernstein

¹ Th.W.Adorno; S.Gillespie; “Music, language and composition”; The Musical Quarterly, Vol.77, No.3 (Autumn 1993) 401-414

² Bernstein, Leonard “The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard” (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures) Series: The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures (Book 1992) Publisher: Harvard University Press (April 15, 1981) ISBN-10: 0674920015 ISBN-13: 978-0674920019

analyzes the music from a linguistic aspect: phonology (sound), syntax (structure) and semantics (meaning), pinpointing the music of the classical period.

We came across a binding between music and rhetorical linguistics in the book by the semiologist and musicologist Eero Tarasti “Semiotics of Classical Music - How Mozart, Brahms and Wagner Talk to Us”, where in one of his chapters he generates a comparison of how the rhetorical figures in linguistics apply in music³.

Further on, Aniruddh D. Patel⁴ in another field of research, through his study in neuroscience shows interest in music - language relations, dividing it so in six chapters.

1. The complex sentence and the period in music

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”.⁵

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**.

³ Tarasti, Eero “Semiotics of Classical Music -How Mozart, Brahms and Wagner Talk to Us”/Kapitulli 11/ Semiotics, Communication and Cognition (Book 10) Publisher: Mouton de Gruyter (August 15, 2012) ISBN-10: 1614511543 ISBN-13: 978-1614511540

⁴ D. Patel, Aniruddh “Music, Language, and the Brain” Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (June 1, 2010) ISBN-10: 0199755302 ISBN-13: 978-0199755301

⁵ Akademia e Shkencave, Gramatika e gjuhës shqipe II, Sintaksa, Tiranë, 1997, f. 61

In the beginning of the XX century, Schoenberg⁶ specified that the period resembles the case of the antecedent recurring the consequent initiated by the same melodic – motivic idea.

W.E. Caplin in his book “Analyzing Classical Form”⁷, 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.

2. 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

⁶ Schoenberg,Arnold” Fundamentals of Musical Composition” /Kapitujt 6 dhe 7 /Faber & Faber; New Ed edition (March 15, 1999) ISBN-10: 0571196586 ISBN-13: 978-0571196586

⁷ W.E.Caplin“Analyzing Classical Form” Oxford University Press; 1 edition (November 5, 2013) ISBN-10: 0199987297 ISBN-13: 978-0199987290

the surprising thing is that this antiphonal melody with that certain text belongs to a great number of antiphons with the same exact melody”.⁸

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 mediant cadence and the second phrase in final cadence.

Example 1. “Suscepimus Deus” psalm 47 from the “Christmas Mornings”

The image shows a musical staff with two lines of text below it. The staff is divided into sections by vertical lines. Above the staff, labels indicate 'Intonation', 'Reciting note', 'Mediant cadence', 'Reciting note', and 'Final cadence'. The first line of text is: '1. Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis ní - mis, in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto é - jus.' The second line of text is: '2. Fundatur exultatione universae terrae mons Sí - on, latera Aquilonis, civitas Regis má - gni. (etc.)' The musical notation consists of a single melodic line with square notes and rests.

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)⁹. The choral from a linguistic aspect is construed of

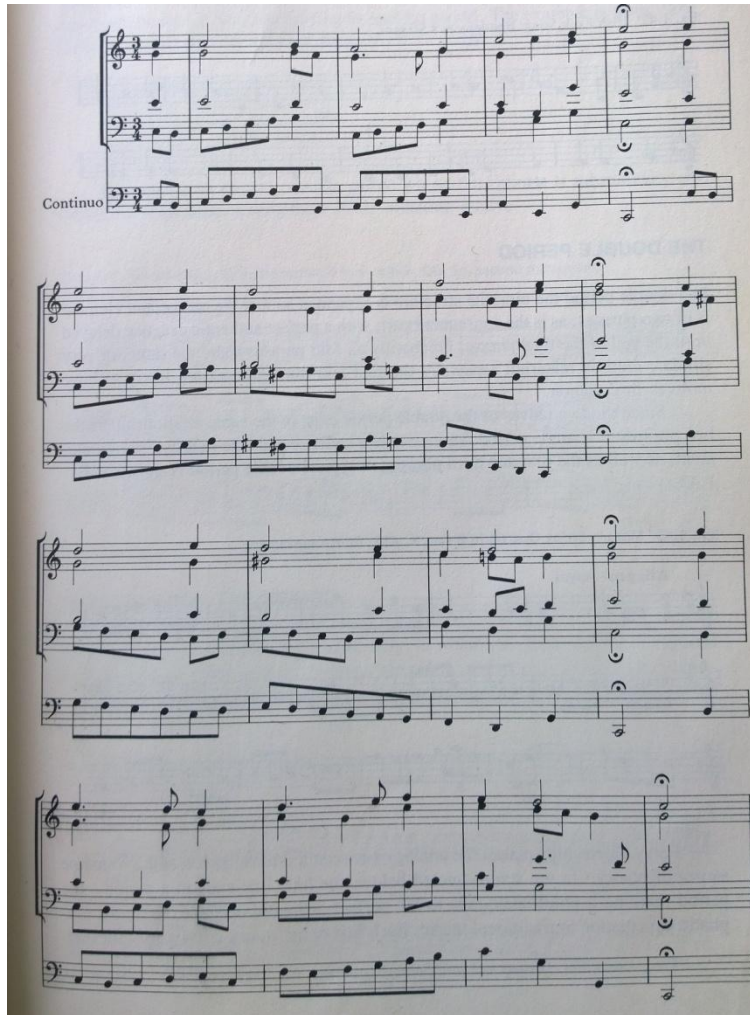
⁸ L.Crocker, Richard “A History of Musical Style”/Kapitulli 1 /Dover Books on Music/Dover Publications; Revised ed. edition (1986) ISBN-10: 048 6250296 ISBN-13: 978-0486250298

⁹ A choral is a melody used for singing of the hymn by the German Protestant Congregational Church

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	Lord God, we all praise you
Und sollen billig danken dir	and must rightly thank you
Für dein Geschöpf der Engel schön,	for your beautiful creation of the angels
Die um dich schweb'n vor deinem Thron.	who hover about you before your throne.

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



3. The period and the folk melodies in the classical symphonies

The period was repeating the initial opinion of resembling the case where the “antecedent repeats the consequent initiated by the same melodic – motivic idea.”

This statement makes the period more solid as a theme leading the elements of the motive to have perception out of the contours making the fragmenting less fitting, advancing to theme extension and building-up of the dramaturgical form, out of the initial thematic unit.

Another issue of the strategy pattern of composition in using the period as a first theme (or second) of the first movement of the symphony as a sonata form, is the unity, meaning that the antecedent complements the consequent (answer-question) and on the other hand, the melodic intensity decreases by the end of the period (end-point with authentic cadence), contributing in the build-up and expansion of the further intensity. Additionally, the sentence and the other hybrid themes matching the compound sentence end with a rising intensity (culminating with a cadence at the end of the sentence) are less compact and further so make the ideal basic up-growing material for the sonata form.

If the main specific in the melodies of the themes in the first movement of the symphony, were themes that became more singular while developing, the folkloric themes usually were homogenous and not suitable for further up-growth.

When the folkloric melody is passed from generation to generation, it varies and gets selected, searching for the ideal melodic and rhythmical unraveling. The time made it possible for these “themes” to become excelling and create a melody convenient enough to remember, a remarkable melody achieved in its rhythmical and melodic contours. These same melodies with their homogeneousness are not satisfactory for the technique of thematic fragmentation, a technique representing the fundamentals upon which the sonata form was created, making it the crucial reason why these themes were not used in the first movements of the symphonies in classicism.

Originating from the vocal music, these melodies are dependable from the verse development and are symmetrical and well ended, where usually the second part is an answer of the first part converting them in theme-periods.

Examples from folk themes that represent periods:

Example 1. Haydn, Symphony No.104, 4th movement, 1st theme¹⁰



¹⁰ Franjo Kuhač *Josip Haydn i hrvatske narodne popievke*, Zagreb, 1880, p.17

As we can see the first theme in the fourth movement is a theme-period, borrowed from Haydn but that can be also found in the Croatian folk song “Oj Jelena, Jelena, jabuka zelena”.

The symmetrical form of this period arises straight from the verse form.

Another singularity of this epoch is the usage of the “bordun” accompaniment as an opening that is a folk preference of that precise epoch, resembling the sustained pedal in bagpipes, a folk instrument used by different nations in Europe.

Example 2. Haydn, Symphony No.103, 4th movement, 1st theme¹¹

a) Simfonija 103, Tema Finala



b) Hrvatska narodna pjesma „Divojčica potok gazi“

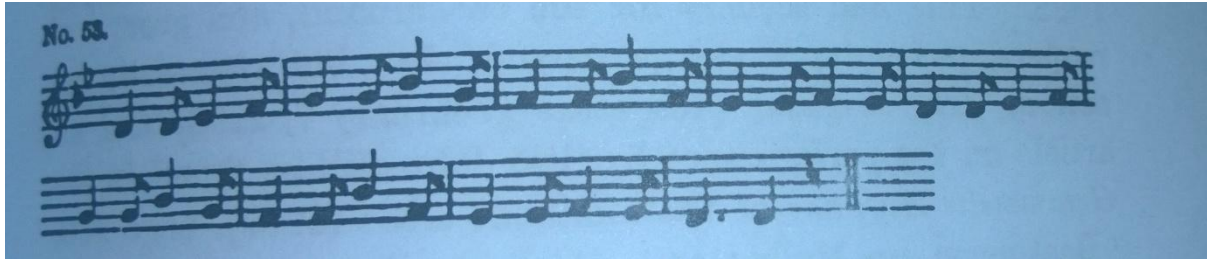


This theme has a symmetrical form also, where the second part is somehow a consequent. The theme is borrowed from the Croatian folk song “Divojčica potok gazi”.

It is very common for the folk song to be identical with Haydn’s melodies but occasionally the version by Haydn (differing from the folk one), is less symmetrical and more suitable for development and as we know by now the symmetrical period is less convenient for development. Therefore, according to Hadow, a musicologist, the two versions are similar at the beginning and differ towards the end.

Example 3. Beethoven, Symphony No.6, 5th movement

¹¹ Kuhač, Franjo, *Josip Haydn i hrvatske narodne popievke*, Zagreb, 1880



This theme originates from a Croatian folk song and if we analyze the theme we will notice the period consisting of two phrases, where the first phrase ends in half-cadence and the second phrase in imperfect authentic cadence.

Conclusion

The symphony was the most embraced form of a certain era while the folklore had a poor influence particularly in music and in art in general. It was a form where the functional and harmonic system achieved the peak of domination in music and imposed as musical grammar (a code), a universal language of signs and gestures, from which came to light: the melody (musical themes), the dramaturgy and the construct of the piece. The music communicated with the auditorium and the whole significance of the musical piece, through the functional and harmonic system.

Being so, the chances of influencing out of this system were impoverished. The folk music being written out of this system was very underprivileged in the pieces of classicism.

Even though, it was not as present as the other musical periods (e.g. in Romanticism), the folk experience was able to leave its mark in the embodiment of the “absolute” genre that was the symphony, allowing the folk themes with the structure of a period and with their homogeneousness to find their way in the third and fourth movements of the symphonies, movements that had a non-developing character.

Reference:

A choral is a melody used for singing of the hymn by the German Protestant Congregational Church

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