

" Narrativity, Signification and Performance in Music "

Proposals for themes in this section :

I. Simultaneous analysis of two levels in a musical work : the syntactic, grammatical level (musical structure in a traditional sense) ; and the level of expressive content (" psychological ", semantic or thymic structure, etc.)

II. Definition and use of topics (respectively : intonation, indexicalities, semes, classemes, isotopies)

III. Describing the organisation, the " strategies " of topics within a musical structure (the use of linguistic, literary, rhetorical or other models, etc., or that of new invention)

IV The use of the above mentioned analytical means tools for a better knowledge understanding of different musical (historical) styles, of a whole " œuvre " or of whole entire creative periods of creation of a specific composer;

V. Contribution of these new methods to a better knowledge in different musicological fields : 1/ comparative analysis between works belonging to different artistic domains ; 2/ comprehension of exceptional, " deviating " musical forms ; 3/ possibility to give a more " scientific " explanation of some " cathartic ", " dramatic " musical structures ; 4/ help to evaluate an instrumental interpretation on the bases of a better knowledge of the given musical style.

Since about fifteen years Over the past fifteen years we have witnessed a " change of paradigm " in the field of musicology : the first books of Ch. Rosen (1971), J.-J. Nattiez (1975), G. Stefani (1976), E. Tarasti (1978), J. Kerman (1985), marked a decisive step toward the renewal of musical analysis through the study of signification and , of meaning, through semiotics and narration. A second wave of musicological works – appeared published since 1986 – (by Karbusicky, Tarasti, Agawu, Monelle, Mâche, Grabócz, Hatten, Nattiez, Abbate, Mioreanu, Lidov, and the proceedings of ICMS 1-5, since 1995) – clearly show well that theoreticians, analysts of music are now searching for new models suitable to describe the complex dynamic process constituted by a musical form.

The novelties discoveries and issues of this these processes or trends can be resumed summarised in five points.

I./ We know are familiar with the books and , articles having that have treated the opposing views of ed since 1852, Liszt and Hanslick, and their successors since 1852, and of course, their successors ; the first camp: the representatives of programme music (a tendency toward poetic, hermeneutic methods) on the one hand, and those the other of " pure " or " absolute " music (a tendency to " aesthetic nihilisme ") on the other.

The above mentioned contemporary musicologists have pointed out that traditional musicology developed all its means to describe the "signifier", but ignored the "signified". In our days, new methods have cropped up in order to analyse simultaneously two layers of a musical work : 1/ the syntactic, grammatical level (Schleiermacher), the "form of expression" (Hjelmslev), the interplay of forms (Nattiez), i.e. the musical structure analysed by traditional means, and 2/ the plane of the expressive meaning, the "psychological" substance (Schleiermacher), the "form of the content" (Hjelmslev), the semantic, thymic level (Greimas), etc.

II./ By what means do these new methods intend these new methods to seize this second layer, that of the signified ?

At present, the terminology is still diversified and plural highly varied. In the 1960s-70s, the musicologists of in the East-and Central-European countries used the term "*intonation*" to define the signifying units (Assafiev, Jiránek, Ujfalussy, Karbusicky). In order to speak about "the irreducible character of music's symbolic negotiations with the world's cultural units" (see : R. Hatten, 1996-[1998], after U.Eco), American, Anglo-Saxon musicologists went back to the categories of the 18th-19th centuries, formulated by Koch, Marpurg, Mattheson, A.B. Marx, calling them "*topics*" (see : Ratner, Hatten, Tarasti, Agawu, etc.)

At present, R. Monelle endeavours to extend this field over other periods. In his article on "Textual semiotics in music" (1998), he defines the signified, following Peirce, as "*indexicalities*" of style, of temporality and subjectivity, and as "*symbols*" (=topics, references to the extra-musical world) ; V. Karbusicky too, in his latest books, utilises Peirce's three categories (*icons*, *index*, *symbols*), in view to analyse the signified in music.

K. Agawu speaks about "*topic signs*" and "*structural signs*" (about "exteroceptive" semiosis and "interoceptive" semiosis) ; he thinks that the complex description and interpretation of a musical form is assured by the interplay, the interaction of these two types of topics and analyses. The musicology inspired by Greimas utilizes such categories as "*semes*", "*classemes*", "*isotopies*" to describe signifieds (Tarasti, Monelle, Grabocz, Hauer, Esclapez, etc.) ; these termes distinguish different dimensions, lengths of the signifying units (the smallest=seme, the longest=isotopy), - while the classemes would correspond to the level of the musical phrase, that of the musical period in the classic era.

RThe reference, the recurrence ? return to the ancient *genres*, to the past musical *styles* constitutes the common element connecting all these terms. Rooted by their function in the ancient life of the collectivities, these genres and styles are able to recreate the links – thanks to their means of stilization – with the "cultural units" of every historic epoch. It is this historic, affective, stylistic, gestic, motoric or visual reference, "recurrence", which can bring about the signification in music.(See the chapters of the aesthetics of J. Ujfalussy [1968] and that of the recent book of R. Monelle [2001] on these historical processes.)

III. How can these signifying units getting be organized within a musical structure ? The linguistic, literary and other models that are used to describe the organization of the signified, are diversified too. J.-J. Nattiez exploited Molino's "*tripartition*" (although he had always been cautious with regard to the "signified"). E. Tarasti referred to Greimas's models (the *generative course* with its three levels ; the *narrative programmes* ; the *system of modalities*, etc.). R. Monelle was inspired by Greimas and Peirce. R. Hatten applied M. Shapiro's *markedness theory* and the system of "*expressive genres*" elaborated by him, and that of *troping*. V. Karbusicky created the evolutionary theory of historic musical forms, and made use of Peirce theories for the signified. N. Meeùs and

J.-P. Bartoli exploited *Hjelmslev's system* in their analyses and theories ; B. Vecchione and other colleagues of Aix-en Provence were inspired by the theoretical systems (in sociology and rhetorics) as well as by Greimas. In my work I have used the elements of Greimas's *structural semantics* and *narrative grammar*, e.Etc.

It is not the will ?It is not our intention to findof finding " a history related in music " that connects all these theories – as presupposed by J.-J. Nattiez (1990, 2001) – but that of finding the rules, the organizational strategies of the signified which vary from one historic period to another, from one style to another, from one integral œuvre of a composer to that of an other, etc.

There is a musical reality presiding,that predominatesing ? in almost all of the above cited models : that of regarding the signified according to *binary oppositions* : opposition by asymmetric markedness (R. Hatten) ; rhetoric rules and oppositions (K. Agawu) ; opposition of structural elements throughout history (V. Karbusicky) ; " relation of coupled contradictory terms " (Greimas's successors = a semantic universe articulated in four different elements, i.e. in four signified) ; diverse oppositions derived from /within Hjelmslev's scheme (N. Meeùs) ; J. Ujfalussy used the distinction of " inner programme " and " external programme " as speaking about 19th century musical works.

As for myself, I have tried to describe in an article (" Composer avec des affects ", 1999 [" Composing with affects "]) the " archetypical " organisations of the expressive content from the baroque epoch until the early 20th century. It emerges from this general idea and from the analytic works of the formerly mentioned colleagues that the " strategy of expression ", the utilization of " expressive types " (R. Hatten, 1996-98), or the form of the content vary from one period to another, according to the type of organization of the units (the signified) presented in binary oppositions.

/In the baroque epoch we mainly see the simple alternation of the contrasting units [euphoric and dysphoric, presented according to a growing, progressing contrast, etc.]. In the classic epoch we mainly find symmetric framework created by three phases : the signifying units connects the beginning with the intrigue of the middle, and with the dénouement of the end. The equilibrium between the euphoric and dysphoric elements is always maintained in accordance with the strict rules of the style. In the 19th century, the dysphoric elements often constitute the starting point in view of attaining the transcendent level (euphory), while in the early 20th century the tragic end, the dysphoric conclusion is emphasized (e.g. in some works of Bartók, Debussy, Stravinsky, etc.)/

IV / In view of acquiring a better knowledge of the historic musical styles, we may use the " expressive strategies ", the analysis of the " forms of content " in the different periods of history, in order to recreate, in our hermeneutic interpretations, the lost competencye ? of in past musical styles. The analyses having already greatly contributed very much to the distinction distinguishing amongwithin the classical, romantic, modern and contemporary styles can be found in the cited works of E ; Tarasti, R. Hatten, R. Monelle, V. Karbusicky, K. Agawu as well as in the proceedings of the ICMS congresses on the more recent and contemporary periods.

V. The utility and the issues of this new approach based on the use of topics and their organization in musical analysis may be summarizd as follows :

1/ the possibility of finding an analytic frame for *comparative work with other fields of art of the same period, of the same style* (e.g. Liszt and Goethe ; Mussorgsky and the visual work utilized as model ; Schumann and the literature, the aesthetics of Witz in Germany, etc.) ;

2/ the possibility of *understanding the exceptional or deviating musical structures* (within the

frame of a style), thanks to an analysis of the influence and importance of the " form of the content " ;

3/ the possibility of acquiring a better knowledge of the " *affective, psychological curve* ", of the " *thymic structure* " in some works called " *dramatic* ", " *cathartic* " - thanks to a model-aided description ;

4/ through the reconstruction of a better stylistic, historic competence ? we may easily venture when *evaluating an instrumental interpretation of historic works*. The publication of John Rink (and his colleagues) in England, and the analyses by E. Tarasti, R. Hatten -going so far as to deal with the instrumental interpretations of works of Fauré's, Schubert's, Chopin's, Liszt's works – prove that the comparison of interpretations by great artists, with regard to a work analysed from this angle, may constitute one of the important examples of how the analysis of " expressive strategy " may be exploited..

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