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THREE-PART POLYPHONIC CYCLE AND NODAR MAMISASHVILI'S "PRELUDE, CHORALE AND FUGUE"

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Abstract:

Small polyphonic cycle represents one of the most important phenomena of the musical art of Baroque epoch. Its main variety is "Prelude/Toccata/Fantasia and Fugue" that is so well known for everyone. Its creation was connected with the formation and development of diverse instrumental genres and forms. When talking about the traditional small polyphonic cycle, first comes to our mind its binary variant "Prelude and Fugue" with free improvisational and rational-intellectual parts. Such a small cycle has become a foundation for a greater polyphonic cycle, too. Small cycles occur in the art of many composers of the mentioned epoch; in this respect, certainly, J.S.Bach's creations are outstanding. In Baroque epoch, though rarely, there were still created samples of three-part small polyphonic cycles. We encounter various combinations of various parts in them, mainly, containing the fast and slow parts and, necessarily, the fugue. Tradition of small polyphonic cycle goes on through the further epochs, too. In this respect, the 20th century is especially important.

It is remarkable that small three-part polyphonic cycle in the form of "Prelude, Chorale and Fugue" occurs in the Georgian music, too. The report is devoted to the continuation of the tradition of small three-part polyphonic cycle and an interesting sample of its occurrence in the national music; This is the piano opus "Prelude, Chorale and Fugue" of Nodar Mamisashvili, one of the exceptional Georgian composers.

In reference with the mentioned composition, there is discussed the heredity of small polyphonic cycle and its organic blending with peculiarities of the national music. There are drawn parallels with the analogical polyphonic cycles occurring in the European professional music. The main accent is made on the compositional aspect, as well as on the original occurrence of fugue in comparison with other similar samples.

Key words: *Nodar Mamisashvili, polyphonic cycle, three-part cycle, Prelude, Chorale and Fugue.*

Small polyphonic cycle represents one of the important phenomena of the art of Baroque epoch, and its principal variety is universally known as "Prelude and Fugue." Its creation was connected with formation and development of diverse instrumental genres and forms. While talking of a traditional small polyphonic cycle, first its binary version comes to our mind, in the form of "Prelude and Fugue"/ "Fantasia and Fugue"/ "Toccata and Fugue"/ "Passacaglia and Fugue." It is

remarkable that this very form (small polyphonic cycle) has become the basis of a great polyphonic cycle.

The above-mentioned micro-cycle occurs in the legacy of many composers of Baroque epoch; in this respect, obviously, J. S. Bach's compositional output is outstanding. It is remarkable that in this and following epochs, though rarely, there have been created the samples of three-part small polyphonic cycles, too. We encounter in them various combinations of pieces, mainly, these are quick and slow parts, and fugue being a necessary element. [1-9].

A sample of the lesser polyphonic cycle is found in the Georgian music, too. This article is dedicated to the above-mentioned issues exactly.

As I have mentioned, formation of polyphonic micro-cycle is connected with the Baroque epoch. Wasn't it the epoch of great renovations? Music here took the form of the independent branch of art, thinking in fields of harmony was renewed considerably, the genre spectrum was broadened significantly, and polyphony of the deliberate style was getting established. Such characteristic features were remarkable as putting together incompatibles, anti-thesis and synthesis, blending of the opposite origins, content-wise contrast good balance, a wide diapason of expressiveness, and so on.

Small polyphonic cycle is a clear revelation of the esthetics of Baroque epoch. A free improvisational prelude (fantasia, toccata) is opposed, we dare say, by an ordered fugue; the emotional origin of the former is dominated by the intellectual rationalism of the other; flooding improvisation is opposed here by a distinct and organized structure. Compositional complementarity forms a pure polyphonic or homophonic-polyphonic cycle. The highest expression of polyphonic thinking – fugue – represents an inseparable part of such a cycle and is very important in terms of dramaturgy (here we can mention J.S. Bach's small three-part polyphonic cycle "Toccatina, adagio and fugue" for organ, belonging to the Baroque epoch).

It must be noted that in small polyphonic cycles occur, on one hand, the ordinary completed pieces and, on the other hand, those having contrastive-compound ratios between its parts.

The first piece of such cycles can be presented non-homogeneously: 1) by figurative unwrapping-development, improvisational manner, by the lack of caesuras, though with the presence of certain harmonic borders, also by structural non-homogeneity as a continuous process of formation of the material; 2) or: by the manner of free narration, sharp sudden contrast alterations, with textural, metric, tempo oppositions; during this process, even compound compositions can be formed; 3) there are also such samples that are quite clearly organized structurally; 4) lastly, there occur such variants, too, when the first piece of the small cycle is itself built upon the principle of fugued development.

Such an internal diversity of the first piece of the cycle, respectively, is a carrier of a great genre potential. The fugue itself represents the complementary continuation of all this, as a dramaturgical core of the cycle. In a polyphonic micro-cycle, the tonal unity of the pieces is opposed by the contrastive nature of the expressive means; it is the very thematism, metrics and rhythm, texture, genre, tempo that shape its diversity. It is interesting that thematic links in the pieces of the cycle are revealed mainly in the post-baroque epochs.

Out of the small polyphonic cycles, the greatest part is binary, though there occur three-part versions, too. It is remarkable that in three-part polyphonic cycles the above-listed peculiarities are preserved as the main principles; at the same time, the contrastive ratio is intensified.

It can be also noted here that establishment of the three-part small polyphonic contrastive-compound cycle is connected with the name of the composer César Franck. He has written “Prelude, Choral and Fugue,” “Prelude, Aria and Finale” – for the piano, “Prelude, Fugue and Variation” for the organ. Yet, we encounter as early as with Dieterich Buxtehude the contrast-compound cycle such as “Prelude, Fugue and Ciaconne.”

After the retrieval of varieties of three-part cyclic compositions, there has been shaped quite a diverse picture. It is true that all the samples were loyal to the main principle for cycles of this type, yet, they have still attracted our attention by the genre characteristics of its pieces as well as by its compositional variants.

It is interesting that this, kind of a polyphonic triptych has been written by up to 30 different composers; amongst them, we can name list Abert, I.S.Bach, Bertini, Böhm, Busoni, Buxtehude, Ferrari, Fischer, Franck, Honegger, Pachelbel, Reger, Reinhold, A.Scarlatti, etc. [10]. As we can see, the area is quite wide, starting from Baroque, there are composers mainly active in the 19th-20th centuries, including, by the way, quite a large number of organist-composers; respectively, the main part of such compositions are written for the piano and for the organ.

The spectrum of form-genres in cycles stands out by a great diversity: indeed, what can't we encounter here: prelude, passacaglia, ciaconna, fantasia, toccata, jig, preamble, chorale, arioso, capriccio, introduction, postlude, tarantella, variations, and so on, naturally, along with fugue! It is remarkable that fugues occur both in the second piece as well as (most frequently) in the third piece of the cycle; in the first piece, fugues occur in almost none of the cases. It is interesting that in various pieces we can encounter, just like the fugue: passacaglia, ciaconna, fantasia, chorale, canon, allegro.

It is remarkable that relative multitude of three-part small polyphonic cycles can be explained by the renewed interest towards polyphony in general in the previous century, as well as by the renaissance of the tradition of polyphonic cycles. It must be also mentioned that until now, there are created much more examples of two-part cycles, though three-part small polyphonic cycles have richer (more diverse) blending of pieces.

It is worth noting that Nodar Mamisashvili's composition “Prelude, Chorale and Fugue” represents a sample of small three-part polyphonic cycle occurring in the Georgian professional music. César Franck (1884) and Kakhi Rosebashvili (1962) have created exact compositional analogues of three-part small polyphonic cycle of the mentioned composer. Though, the first cited cycle has a contrastive-compound form, as distinct from the second cycle. [11-14].

Nodar Mamisashvili's characteristic features, as those of a composer and a scientist as well as of a “grand teacher” are as follows: diversity of the interests and spheres of activities, fusion of the creative fantasy with system thinking, inventiveness initiated by the research of the truths of the universe, constant aspiration towards the unattainable, fascination with the depths of acoustics, original transformation of the Georgian national elements in combination with modern means of expression.

The composer has created opuses of various genres; amongst them we can cite symphony and chamber, solo and ensemble, choral, opera and ballet examples; he has written music for drama spectacles and fiction films.

In the oeuvre of the composer, the polyphonic origin is revealed through the complementary-contrapuntal, imitational, ostinato episodes, which are matched with the fragments of non-polyphonic structure. At the same time, finished polyphonic forms themselves are rare.

The theory of “Three-phase musical system of composition” (1978), elaborated by Nodar Mamisashvili, is based upon the method of polyphonic thinking; according to this theory, the principal lines or layers in opuses are interconnected by the principle of complementarity: melody-theme, counterpoint and background reveal consecutively their leading dramaturgic functions [15].

Nodar Mamisashvili has written the piano triptych “Prelude, Chorale and Fugue” in 1964 (published in 1965). The opus, in one hand, is a continuation of a rare tradition of three-part polyphonic cycle and, on the other hand, stands out with original features.

What does each part of this contrastive-compound composition represent?

The cycle is opened by a prelude. Decorated melodious lines of ostinato pulsation of the eighths spread along the whole piece as well as analogical background pulsations blend one another with modal and thematic complementarity. In a singing sorrow-tinted melody and in a melodious line furtively appearing in ostinato accompaniment, there is reached a calm dialogical development.

The tune that is grown variably according to the principle of melody-ostinato forms three wave-like couplets that are crescent dynamic-wise and register-texture-wise and aspire to the culmination. In these ostinato variations the development is achieved, on one hand, by the imitational duet of the theme (in the second couplet) and, on the other hand, by means of contrast made in the low register (in the third couplet).

The melodic line gradually becomes more and more discrete, there is being increased dynamization and dramatism. It is remarkable that the principle of ostinato is clearly noticeable in the prelude at the compositional and structural levels. Amongst them, intonational segments of *krimantchuli* sound in the higher register, especially, during culmination. If initially, while ostinato occurs, the intonational variance/variability was matched with rhythmic homogeneity, gradually, towards the end of the piece, they fuse each other in finishing echo-calls. In the entirety, the prelude is traditionally uniform and is built upon unwrapping and development, according to the principle of growing out.

The mono-typical prelude is organically interchanged by a haughty chorale. It is distinguished by the orderliness spread into layers, thus justifying its genre belonging; frequent fermatas and metric variability (4/4, 3/4, 2/4) contribute to the indicative, phrasal manner of narration. In this piece of the cycle, there is revealed even more actively the principle of variant growing out.

Against the background of the chords, there is unfolding again a singing and melancholic melody, which acquires a strict, morose tint at the culmination, due to the variant growing out and complex chord movements in ascending-tertiary sequencing. Register variation and opposition of the thematic materials is none the less important here, too. In the chorale, there are given two ascending waves that are homogenous intonation-wise; by the end, against the background of an organ point, the choral echo of a crystalline sounding, developing posterior to a fermata, confers a harmonic balance to the piece.

Both, the prelude and the chorale of the polyphonic cycle, more or less, stand out by their united emotional charge. By an attack, we find ourselves in a completely contrastive final fugue. Indeed, it bursts in like a tempest, and brings into the cycle an unprecedented charge, thus justifying the meaning of the original rhetoric figure. There is present the very revelation of the tradition of internal contrastiveness of a small polyphonic cycle.

The dynamized fugue has a three-part composition. The theme, as an intonational ore, has a metrically variable, *toccata-scherzo* character. While exponentially developing the ascending architectonics, on one hand, there is preserved the tradition of a tonal answer and, on the other hand,

there is presented in a renewed form the principle of quartal-quintal imitation (Es, B, G, Es), implying here the “unbound” logic of the tonal plan.

In the fugue, there is especially remarkable the presence of the peculiarities of a reserved opposition. Out of six passages (repetition) of the theme, in five, the opposition has counterpoints only in the main tonality. With this very certain sort of enchainedness of the opposition with the main center, there are revealed the features of discrete ostinato nature. The mentioned phenomenon is emphasized by the fact, too, that the opposition-counterpoint appears for the fourth time (bar.35) even independently, without the theme.

It is also interesting to mention that unusual parameters of a complex vertically moving counterpoint are yielded during the simultaneous ostinato opposition and the altitudinal renewal of the theme (E.g., bar.16. $Iv = -2$, bar.26. $Iv = -1$).

In intermediary intervals the composer reminds us the ostinato intonations of *krimantchuli* that sounded in the first piece of the cycle. In comparison with the former pieces, in the fugue, the metric diversity is considerably deepened (2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4). In the developing part of the fugue, the theme captivates our attention by stretta-canonically (bar.43), amongst them, by direct and reverse passage (bar.54); in the recapitulation, it has layers yielded by doubling of the theme counter-point; the dynamized fugue is performed by the four-fold sounding of the theme at *fff*.

Originality of the presented fugue-ostinato, in comparison with fugue-ostinatos of Hindemith (finale of “Die Harmonie der Welt” – “The Harmony of the World”), Lutoslawski (prelude of “Trauermusic”) and Pirumov (f-moll of Fugue N12 from “Polyphonic Notebook”), is found in creating ostinato sounding by means of tonal autonomy of opposition, which assigns to it a meaning of the second theme, to a certain extent, too.

In Nodar Mamisashvili’s piano cycle “Prelude, Chorale and Fugue”, there were clearly revealed the signs of the composer’s polyphonic thinking, the imitational-contrapuntal unfolding and development of thematism.

The cycle organically matches peculiarities of the national music with European polyphonic means of expression. Ever since the prelude, there are noticeable intonations characteristic for the folklore of the West of Georgia (namely, mimicking of the Gurian “*krimantchuli*”), the use of the principle of ostinato; chromatic tonality dominates in the opus with its organic blending to the diatonic moods (Dorian, Phrygian) characteristic for the national traditional music, along with poly-modality and poly-tonality.

Intensive metric variability is noticed in the chorale and, especially, in the fugue, thus bringing in the impulse of a free development. In prelude and chorale, the principle of variational growing out of thematism is a leading one. It is exactly the dynamized fugue, that represents the culmination of the truly contrastive-compound three-part cycle. It is also interesting that three-stagedness of the cycle or in its any piece becomes a hidden lever for the compositional integrity; the logics of the uniform dynamized development at the levels of micro (piece) and macro (cycle) levels contributes to the above- mentioned.

Thus, Nodar Mamisashvili’s “Prelude, Chorale and Fugue” continues the tradition of a small three-part polyphonic cycle and, at the same time, stands out by the original investigations or findings, habitual for the composer; in the cycle, in all its sounding and acoustic diversity, there is clearly revealed the figure of the composer-intellectualist.

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