

Folklore and Its Influence on the Musical Creativity of Albanian Composers during the Communist and Post-Communist Periods

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Abstract: Albanian folk creativity has a wide and diverse wealth of means and expressive forms, structures and styles, melody and harmony, rhythms and gamma timbres and ways of singing, musical accompaniment and fioritura, etc. which created and still create foothold opportunities, quotes, elaborations, creation of winds, sounding and functional, etc. It must be admitted that the connection and support of Albanian composers in Albanian folklore used to have and have continuity until today, of course, in certain sizes and technicalities. During the monistic period prevailed for all composers, but not only, as a requirement of the party-state, relying on folklore, its use as one of the separators and sign-criterion of Albanian national identity in the works of artists in all fields of art. Already been exceeded the spirit and the indispensable requirement that folklore was the supportive base also of composers, to bring works with national content and spirit, to preserve and emphasize the Albanian national identity in the works of various types and genres of Albanian cultivated musical art. Nowadays there are different views about the necessity or not of composers, in our case, of the folk creativity. But we think and believe that this does not mean that we should give up completely, or of all creators and composers, by this collaboration of their work with folk creativity. World experience shows or even brings exactly this interaction, as one of ways to the success, of welcoming and evaluation of each creation.

Keywords: folklore, cultivated creativity, Albanian composers, folk music.

INTRODUCTION

If Albanian composers have demonstrated clearly, in their entirety of technicalities and the constituent elements of their own creations, that created works based on the requirements of the soul, the world, and Albanians' nature, by using for this purpose aesthetic experiences of folklore, of means and its tinkling since the beginning of the Albanian compositions, of course, in certain proportions, even under the influence of the requirements of the time, the same cannot be said as regards to the study of Albanian folklore reports – Albanian composers. If we divide articles in the size of a newspaper, some considerations of ratios to Albanian composers with folklore, or their lying in folklore, the only more extensive treatment, mostly of a theoretical nature about these reports, conducted by Prof.Dr. Fatmir Hysi, can be said that lacks of reviews and analysis in-depth, generalizations about positive experiences, affirmations or critical attitudes for musical works of various kinds, or even of a particular composer.

Our study aimed to highlight, through selection, analysis and concrete breaking down, bringing examples, which are the forms and ways of using creative aesthetic experience of folklore for different composers, in different periods and different musical works. Trying to bring a more complete experience, seeing actually broken down, through various musical transcripts of concrete musical works of different composers, the concrete analysis of folkloric fact and its treatment by the composer, we have managed to compare and then bring the way followed by Albanian composers, as an experience that can be best be applied, but brought in time even for today's composers.

The beginnings of cultivated Albanian music could not be and indeed without direct links to Albanian folk creativity, by imitating, citing, processing, or developing on themes, folk motifs. This had to do mainly with the fact that to be accepted by the creative composers had to liken their creations with the tastes, already embedded and transmitted from generation to generation of the folk creativity. Only in this way could be accepted and liked the creativity of a new art form to Albanians from different strata of the population.

The musicologist Albert Papparisto writes: *“In these works, folk genres have also been extensively elaborated, especially increasing pictures of our landscape and lively and festive folk tableau.”*¹

Following in his writing, he adds: *“...but even though they have served as a great laboratory to elevate our folk motifs and melodies to high artistic forms, and also the elaboration of the means of expression of our music with folk foundations and with one real Albanian taste. In these works, we come across the great richness of our rhythms, the colorful modes of our folklore, the efforts of composers to imitate popular instruments (especially the lute and couplet) and beautiful Albanian harmonic and orchestral combinations and effects.”*²

The procedure followed to carry out this work, in not limited dimensions, hopefully will serve not only to researchers from various fields (ethnomusicologists, musicologists etc.), but we believe, firstly, to composers, especially those younger ones who, by knowing the experience so far, have the possibility, according to their wishes or creative goals, to convey the experience so far, by appreciating and well-accepting or denying its various elements. To express it differently, through this work anyone interested, beginning from researchers, composers, and finishing with students of music, but also others sympathetic to musicologist problems in its entirety, for its current way followed by Albanian composers in the Republic of Albania regarding their use of folk creativity, so they can have in a more general way, but also more summarized, the experience until now.

Our study's central issue, which pertains to its thematic dimension and the extensive repertoire of composers and their diverse works across various genres and types, remains unresolved and warrants further exploration through more specialized and comprehensive approaches. Due to limitations, this research work could not encompass all creators and their works, hence preventing a comprehensive examination of the interconnected and interaction phenomena between them and Albanian folklore creation. The composers and their compositions were selected based on a single guiding principle:

By examining the creative path of the musical culture cultivated by the composers in Albania, not only a kind of short history would be realized, how folklore has been, not only the basis on which different creators have relied in their beginnings, but also to see the continuation of this phenomenon. Bringing the most positive experience in this aspect, the ways and paths that have been followed by the creators of cultivated Albanian music, with the aim that it can serve for successive generations of creators, stand out.

The conclusion of a research study is invariably linked to the author's introspective query: What is the objective of this endeavor? Who is concerned with the content that has been published, organized, addressed, and settled? In our particular situation, this question was unavoidable. Firstly, it is imperative, not just morally, to express gratitude to the creators who have made a lasting impact on the collective memory of certain eras. It is essential to acknowledge their contributions in shaping a distinct creative identity with a foundation rooted in national identity. Furthermore, by explicitly demonstrating the specific methods and approaches they have employed to fulfill a request, not limited to patriotic or nationalistic endeavors, it is possible to achieve the manifestation of their ideas as a comparative or developmental trajectory, incorporating alternative paths and innovative techniques utilized by diverse creators worldwide, resulting in a distinct and prominent expressive character and identity.

As previously mentioned, these themes would be inadequate since we feel that many strata of Albanian society would have an interest in such subjects. By “here,” we are referring not only to composers, lecturers, students, and scholars in the field of musical art, but also to persons who have a genuine passion for the creative process and actively encourage the development of a distinct creative identity rooted in Albanian folklore.

Based on what was mentioned, it must be said that the creative-tradition relationship is not only of scientific interest, but it must be affirmed that it requires a wider space, for more profiled and deeper studies, for any developmental process that permeates the cultivation of cultivated artistic music. On the other hand, other ways can and should be found, to bring out as much as possible the experience of different composers, in relation to the ways and forms used by them for the realization of different works, with obvious support or and less obvious, from folklore. Among them, we would note that a topic of this nature, based on more analytical and more detailed examinations of a single composer, or comparisons between two or more composers, can be taken into consideration, in order to convey a type of typology, which can also serve as an experience for continuity in creativity.

¹ A. Papparisto, The concertal music – an important tool for expressing great emotions, newspaper “Drita”, 1967, 15 October, p. 2.

² Right there

FOLKLORE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MUSICAL CREATIVITY OF ALBANIAN COMPOSERS DURING THE COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST PERIODS

In closing, starting from the inspiration that is created for us in the auditory perception of our music and the experience of its popular spirit and the national features that it manifests, we see it appropriate to add to the lines of the paper, the significant postulate of prof. Zadeja, who, among others, said: “.....folklore has been and remains the “teacher” of professional artists”.³

METHODOLOGY

For more qualitative execution of this paper we are based on some research methods should be mentioned that we had to accomplish initially a scientific research in two areas that constitute the object of this paper, such as folklore and various works of Albanian composers, not few in number. There were provided, not without difficulty, those compositions that were closer or directly to the use or reliance on Albanian folk creativity.

And this was not that easy, because, firstly, there is a lack of a record of this creativity, where you can rely on to get started with the research work. Differently from it in the folklore subject, where must be said that folklore archive in IAKSA⁴ is not only very rich, but there are scientific criteria for collating all recorded folk creations. If this Archive facilitated our work, we cannot say the same for the creativity of Albanian composers, as it can only be found in scattered archives, in any publication, or in the homes of composers. In these conditions, we had to use all possible avenues as to obtain concrete works in audio or transcripts, different publications, by using acquaintances with composers, music professors, critics and scholars.

Despite the hard work carried out in this respect, just so it would be insufficient, could not be taken the development of the research paper. It was imperative that, in addition to security, knowledge, selection and synthesis of works of Albanian composers, to have enough knowledge also of folkloric subject, which was the starting point of their work. And it was a harder job. The consultation was attended by experts of the field; various publications were used by Albanian folk music, various archives and records. Quite fruitful were the discussions with certain composers, which proved their sources of baseline.

It must be said that the research methods used in both cases allowed our work to continue further, to deepen in concrete analysis. Analytical research methods were combined also with the comparative method, because, it had not only to claim the borrowing, support, quotation, reference from composers, but to give the respective folkloric picture, the folk basis for what was said above. The comparison in this case was very fruitful, since it opened up and emphasized more specifically the overall picture of reports of a special creation to a specific composer with its folkloric origin. Based on this case were conducted concrete reviews of the folkloric subject in the works of Albanian composers. We believe that this was the right way to achieve then in a synthesis or generalization, which have been and are the inter-communicative ways of composers with the Albanian folklore. Only analysis and concrete treatises enabled best to achieve more general conclusions, underlining specifically the links on the ways and in various forms of Albanian composers with Albanian folk creativity.

A long-time work was needed for the musical transcription of very specific materials, as to the composers, when they were not able to have their part, also of the folk creations. Despite that might be needed only a fragment transcript, to be argued, actually the opinion that resulted from dealing with the work of the composer – folklore creation, was needed a greater job, to make it possible the concrete determine of these reports. Through this work was made possible the direct confrontation, comparative review, of the work of a composer or its fragment, with respective folk creation, or a part thereof that served as a starting point or a reference point, at least.

Only after all this research work was carried out, providing the necessary transcripts, we began work on the design of complete working platform. Preliminary work had brought very ease, as it was determined by the content gathered, in a way, the structure of the paper that would be created.

³ Ç. Zadeja, work cited, p. 22

⁴ The Institute of Anthropology and Art Studies in Albanian

ANALYSES

Initially are taken into consideration and are done concrete analysis of several symphonic works of Albanian composers which were significantly oriented more toward folklore. Specifically, it is about two works. First, it is the work “Symphony no. 1” in a- moll of *Česk Zadeja*. This work represents the most serious development in Albanian simphonism.

In evaluating this work, the researcher Albert Papparisto, in the article “*Some thoughts on the first symphony of Česk Zadeja*”, says: “*In the symphony, we see the attempt to use and creatively use folklore, without falling into vulgar quotations, which is very valuable and a good example to follow in efforts to develop our national language*”.⁵

Likewise, the composer Akil Koci, speaking about Zadeja’s symphony, among other things, says: “*He speaks with his own musical language, coming from his head and his great artistic soul, expressing the evolution of feelings, to present it as best as possible the internal coherence of the fantasy so sensational, so blissful and so challenging, without being based on the scholastic rules that make his music likeable, as with the melody, rhythm and harmony that carry the great artistic force*.”⁶

Also, the conductor Roland Çene, on the creative individuality of Zadeja, articulates “*the lightness and clarity of his musical language, is completely impregnated by folk melody, maximally evaluable and at the same time communicable to the listener*.”⁷

It is noted for into native and sounding clarity, tight connections to folklore, the wealth of musical expressions, frequent contrapuntist relationship (polyphony tools), in function to the music comprehension and all-inclusive andrationalutilization of orchestra tools arsenal, presenting a wide landscape with rich colorist. Thesymphony is elaborated in four stanzas. Stanza I “*Allegro Moderato*” a-moll, is structured inthe form of the Sonata, with processing and episode (exposition-processing-episode-replay code).

The main topic is discussed in a-moll and has the form of a simple period, consisting of two sentences, the first consisting of 8 measures, where is alternated between 2/4 meter with 3/4 meter, and the second of 7 measures. Topic is followed by clarinet and bassoon in octave and accompanied with harmonic background by the string quintet. It derives from Shkodra folk song “*Buloimalixhanxhafil*.”

Following is reviewed the work “Symphony No. 1” in h-moll, by the composer Limos Dizdari.⁸ This work is the biggest genre, from the dimensions and the most representative of its musical creative

⁵ A. Papparisto: Some thoughts about the first symphony of Česk Zadejës, “Nëntori”, nr. 1, Tiranë, 1958, p. 191.

⁶ A. Koci, Musical bard, composer Česk Zadeja, Newspaper “55”, Tiranë, 2009, 13 November, p. 18

⁷ R. Çene, Cesk Zadeja, the architect of national music, “Albania”, Tiranë, 2007, 14 June, p. 20

⁸ L. Dizdari (1942), “Honoured Artist”, composer. Author of many vocal, instrumental, orchestral, chamber, and film music works. Among them are the “Symphony in.1”, in h-moll, “Concerto for Piano & Orchestra”, fis-moll, ballet “Peshkatarët”, the trio “Këngët e tokës”, “Sonata për violinë & piano”, many

FOLKLORE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MUSICAL CREATIVITY OF ALBANIAN COMPOSERS DURING THE COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST PERIODS

opus. It notes that in general, it stands out for the clarity of organic construction of the cycle, simple language, inspiring sense and its communicative quality with the listeners. The simplicity and clarity of articulation of musical language expressions, harmonies, mainly tonal diatonic, undressed by alterations of dissonance, lyricism, with a sense deeply romantic and optimistic and, in particular, the inspiration from regional folksung music of South of the country with instrumental accompaniment that permeate the symphony throughout all the elaboration, have significantly affected in the character deeply realistic and national of the work. II-nd stanza, “Andante”, with the material where it is based, represents the closest relationship of the composer with the folk music. The well-known song “*Do të mar çiftenë do dal për gjah*”, which constitutes also as the epicenter of the national folk sonnet of the work, comes to this part of it, recreated and redesigned. Example: from the folk song “*Do të mar çiftenë do dal për gjah*.”

L. Dizdari

For this value of the work, in “*History of Albanian music*” 2, it is written: “*In the way of using this song, one of the qualities that characterize the symphonic music of the late 60's and early 70's appeared. This quality lies in the decomposition of the ideo-emotional content of the original popular materials. Thus, for example, the characteristic dance rhythm of the folk song, like a continuous pedal, sometimes helps to underline the tense dramatic atmosphere in the introduction and sometimes to give impetus to epic manly outbursts (in the middle). It is no coincidence that the second time begins with exactly this rhythmic figure in the interpretation of the timpani, which is immediately followed by the contrabass and the bassoons to light up the first notes of the theme. They constitute one of the motifs of the second time that takes an active part in the polyphonic interplay of other interplays, including the rhythmic figuration pedal.*”⁹

In addition to the above, following the reading of this text, it continues: “*It can be said that it is the most beautiful time of the symphony and one of the most striking pages in the entire creativity of the composer.*”¹⁰

The second reviewis for big instrumental– concert genres in relation to folklore takes into account three works of the authors Ç. Zadeja, Feim Ibrahim and Thoma Gaqi. Zadeja’s work, “*Concert No.1.*” for piano & orchestra in “*Es*” dur is distinguished for clarity and orientation of north regional folk music of the country.

National sounding in this case does not come just through any distinct quotation from folkmusic, but through the use of its stylistic and tonalo-modal features. Thematic material of the subject of entry constitutes a freely development with lyrical optimistic notes and godly character, which moves in the “*Moderato*” dynamic. It relies on the characteristic pentatonix sound of folk music “*es, f, g, b, c*” (mi, fa, sol, si, do).

While in the “*Concerto No. 2 for piano & orchestra*” in “*a moll*”, by Ibrahim clearly are displayed the close relationships of the composer with folklore. Folklore expressions permeate the concert throughout its length. They come outlined through the use of support in folk vogue, mainly pentatonic, at the stanza I and II, and more directly during the III stanza, where the composer quotes the authentic folk song “*Në një rraste aty në krua*”. Citing as the most tangible aspect and the most important in the relations

mass and light songs, as well as folk arrangements, etc. The composer is the winner of several awards at the RTSH song festival and various national competitions.

⁹ “*History of Albanian Music*” 2, p. 400.

¹⁰Right there. Page 399.

of cultivated music with the folk one, has made it possible for Ibrahim's works have a clear national character and deeply folkloric spirit.

Example: the folk song, "Në një rrasë aty në krua".



Example

The other work, taken into consideration during the fifth chapter is the work of Gaqi, "Rhapsody-concert" for violin, cello & orchestra. It represents one of the most important achievements in the Albanian instrumental-concert music of the period in mid-70s of the last century. Despite all creative artistic values, it constitutes one of the musical models, where relations with folk music are close and have a visible and comprehensive display in the work. The right support in the folk modes and, in particular, quoting the folk songs: "Gjurme te kuqelate mbi debore", of Vlora district, "Po vjen lumi rrema-rrema" and "Erdhi trëndafili me marr borzilok" of Tirana district that are used in a creative way as thematic material, it is the clearest expression of consistent relationship building that the composer has with folk music tradition. Through these relations Gaqi's musical works, fusions clearly national music work.

Regarding the chamber music and folklore, are analyzed the relationships of composers who have written chamber and folk music. It is precisely about two composers. First, it is written for Çesk Zadeja work, "Sonata" for violin & piano. In this work of chamber music, folk-relations consist in seeking a modo-tonal harmonic language, arising primarily from the polyphonic singing of Southern Albania. The composer sets and develops the consonants with dissonant clash organically in a complex way, and more consistently than in his previous creations. As in the first stanza, "Moderato", and in the second one, "Allegro," the harmonic consonance preserves bifunctional features, and modo-tonal crossings and are altered in continuity in continuous elliptical forms, by establishing Septacord (A7) at sixth grade (TSVI7), creating in this way a significant instability, where melodic content flows freely in its modulative way. Displaying densely of chromatic elements in the melody, which in the composer's previous works represent more of an episodic development in this work they are used systematically throughout its expansion.

This feature represents one of the most distinguishing features of the contents of the Sonata entirety. For all these features and many more, "Sonata" for violin & piano by Zadeja marks the beginning of a new road in the chamber music genre with national features.

The second work included in this chapter is that by Tonin Harapi, titled "Sonatina" for piano. The composer-folk links, densely shown in this work, come mainly through the selection of creative ethos use of folk songs and dances from Albania. The use of folk music is an important aspect of the composer's creativity, which stretches across his creative opus. Harapi has focused these relations as his preferred creative method. "Sonatina for piano" by Harapi is the first work of its kind in the opus of chamber music

FOLKLORE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MUSICAL CREATIVITY OF ALBANIAN COMPOSERS DURING THE COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST PERIODS

genres, and as such it urged the release of all other genres and of chamber by other Albanian composers of the period.

Example: the folk song “*KajrafilatqëkaShkodra*”



From what we explored so far we can conclude that the Albanian cultivated artistic music before the 90s of the last century, known as the period of “socialist realism”, ran through serious effort, continuously to form what is commonly known as the Albanian musical tradition or Albanian music culture.

THE INFLUENCE OF FOLKLORE IN THE POST-COMMUNISM PERIOD

In different periods of human history musical language is enriched and developed in new forms and expressions, which are factored by the degree of civilization, historical aspects and aspirations of the people for further development and progress. National cultures, as is well-known, are part of a whole cultural world, so, consequently, the Albanian artistic music as part of national culture, it is objectively part of the property of world music. Experiments with sound are early but start and are intensified progressively in the early twentieth century, the period when the music feels the need for new linguistic expression, through sound treatment of consonance. The creator of music – the composer, thinks that through the content and format of his work, are displayed through sound processing acts. The music after 90s of the last centuries, known as “New Albanian Music” came as an overlay on previous developments of “socialist realism”.

But it is densely supported in original articulations of folk and contemporary compositional techniques through a combination of sounds launched a new way of its development. Through this direction, day by day and once more, it is enriched with new language expressions, which are launched and represented massively by Albanian composers, like the requirement of contemporary musical development of all humanity. Folk vocation in new Albanian musical creativity is displayed by reflecting the melodic sincerity, rhythmic rhetoric, diverse emotional purity, brightly timbrical brush stroke and a syntactic features row and tonal-modal, by one of the most representative. In this process, the trend for folk creativity support, interacts and is supported by a whole arsenal of new linguistic expressions, obtained by treatment maker treatment of the sound of sounding units. This feature appears in many musical works, participating in the festival concert editions that are realized in our country. From them can be distinguished different works. Among them are: “Epitaphs and Screams” for arches quartet, piano, clarinet and bassoon, by Vaso S. Tole, performed in 1993, where the composer brings in tolling, through vocation, a chromatic scale with ten sounds, formed by three pentatonic cells of an old pagan songs. Likewise, the composer Alexander Peci on his first opera “OIRAT”, appeared in the year 2000, that its title highlights the folk characteristic cry “oiii ...”, the Albanian weepers, in the case of funerals. Dorian Cena’s work, “A” part for a solo violin, is based on pentatonic. Of this nature are other works of Albanian contemporary composers.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of music as a medium for artistic expression is one of the most significant and pervasive aspects of our traditional national culture. The diversity of our people's senses and spiritual sentiments have been represented in Albanian musical art over the ages, contributing to our cultural unity. Over the course of centuries, Albanians have demonstrated that, in addition to being courageous and patriotic, they

also exhibited high moral standards and emphasized spiritual qualities. Albanians are a dynamic people who are brilliant art enthusiasts, as seen by their ability to reflect creatively and communicate the emotional truths of the concluding part of their long and glorious history, as well as their struggles for freedom and survival and social life.

Historically, Albanians have demonstrated individuality by writing song lyrics, performing them on musical instruments, and singing at various points in their civilization's history. Albanians have traditionally enjoyed their song during times of war, labor, and family happiness. Albanians conveyed significant parts of their ancient past through the song.

The folk creativity and cultivated music are two artistic formations, with their own principles of creation, performance and turnover. Each of them has followed their own special ways during historical developments. But it should be stated that among them there were also relations, certain giving-taking ratios. The beginnings of cultivated Albanian music could not be and indeed without direct links to Albanian folk creativity, by imitating, citing, processing, or developing on themes, folk motifs. In this study article, we aim to investigate these relationships in detail in order to identify the most fruitful experiences, rather than merely presenting the historical path that Albanian composers have taken in using folk creativity.

The behavior of previous experience of many composers, through the review and analysis of their works, not only enables the recognition of ways used by them, but also creates opportunities for young artists to develop further this experience. This is why we stopped to work with the works of composers of different generations and experiences, because through this work becomes more obvious for anyone interested in knowing where we have been, where we are and what should be done, also for a profiling within individual creative styles of each composer, of Albanian cultivated music, with national prominent features and characteristics.

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