

## ***RESTITUTIONS: VASILE HERMAN, "FORM AND STYLE IN ROMANIAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC"***

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Written as a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of the eminent professor Sigismund Toduță, the paper entitled *Form and Style in Romanian Contemporary Music* is a broad-ranging and well documented analysis of the evolution of art music in Romania, from the dawn of its emergence to the 1970's, which was also the period in which the thesis was elaborated. The paper was published by Editura Muzicală, in 1977. Far from being a purely historical approach, this theoretical work combines elements of synchronic and diatonic perspective in an attempt to create a model of contemporary music analysis and, at the same time, a picture of the Romanian musical landscape.

The paper is structured in two major sections: part 1: *Premises and Anticipations* and Part 2: *Emancipation and Plenitude*.

The first chapter, entitled *The Relationship Between Style and Form, a Premise for Analytical Investigation in Contemporary Musicology*, holds a major importance in the general economy of the work. It outlines to a certain extent Vasile Herman's musicological "creed". It also includes the author's view on the musicological (especially analytical) approach of a musical work. Herman starts from the recognition of the necessity to establish an effective and concrete method of analysis of modern music. In order to "accurately determine the main qualities of music", two notions are essential: "form" and "style". With Vasile Herman, these notions are integrated into a coherent system of thinking, which recurs throughout his entire career as a researcher.

After establishing that form is the first phase of analytical research, Herman proceeds to its definition, by presenting the evolution of the views on the concept of musical "form"

until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a consensus was reached that it is not an abstract scheme and does not say anything in itself, but results from the interpretation of the correlation between its constituent elements.<sup>99</sup> Substantiated on the basis of German musicology, Herman's construal of the notion of "form" is associated to those of "style" and "content"<sup>100</sup>. Vasile Herman focuses less on the relationship between form and content, and more on the form – style binomial. However, some particular methods are identified in which the formal pattern envelops a certain content, and hence the idea of "formal principle"<sup>101</sup>. Adopting the German musicology, Herman defined musical form as a "**coordinating principle** of the whole ensemble of means of sound expression which – in its turn – adheres more or less to the strict scheme, to the absolute modality of a certain general pattern or "model". Here the emphasis falls on the concept of **coordinating principle**, which is rooted in structuralist thinking. We will see how important this model of thinking is.

The 20th century is marked by the strong necessity to establish new methods of research in all the fields of science. This necessity is all the more acute in the art of sound as music development is in full swing and there is a gap between musical reality and the traditional methods of research. Therefore, the 20th century brings about, in the theoretical realm too, a plethora of attempts to establish proper methods for analyzing music. Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea enumerates some of these methods, whose importance was and still is variable: referential-descriptive, positivist-constructivist, hermeneutical, energetic, formal, structural, formal-constructivist and holistic (the Gestalt theory)<sup>102</sup>. In his book entitled *Musikalische Analyse*<sup>103</sup>, Diether de la Motte presents several methods of music analysis, explained and applied to concrete cases. One of them is what he calls "Grossform → Detailstruktur" in which he relates the general form to the small constituent elements of the musical discourse. This is only one possibility of analytical approach, as demonstrated by the other models presented, each with varying degrees of relevance. Some of them contain elements of structural thinking.

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<sup>99</sup> The analysis of the musicological text reveals the importance that Herman ascribes to structuralism, which ultimately determines his entire system of thinking.

<sup>100</sup> "The relationship between form, style and content remains like a constant value that determines, in the analytical field, the essential traits of the object of research" (Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* [Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music], Editura Muzicală, București, 1977, p. 9).

<sup>101</sup> The "formal principle" is related to the longer or shorter distance between a certain work and the predetermined formal pattern.

<sup>102</sup> Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea, *Tratat de forme și analize muzicale* (Treaty of Musical Forms and Analysis), Editura Muzicală, București, 2005, p. 315.

<sup>103</sup> Diether de la Motte, *Musikalische Analyse*, Barenreiter, Kassel, 1968.

Any structuralist conception is based on Aristotle's philosophy stating that an object cannot be explained in terms of something that is external to it. The idea is in the object, whereas the form is in the matter<sup>104</sup>. The concept of "structure" has acquired several meanings over time. Originally, "structure" designated a combination of elements, a configuration, an organization of parts. Towards the end of the 19th century, the term no longer designated a simple configuration, but a whole made up of solidary parts, where each depends on all the others and cannot be what it is but within and through them. Therefore, the system of interdependence of each part with all the others becomes essential. So, if the former concept was referring to a sum, the latter is proposing a whole. A more nuanced approach occurs when, in the realm of the humanist sciences, W. Dilthey<sup>105</sup> replaces the term of structure with *Gestalt*, meaning **form**, i.e. a system whose parts are determined by the whole and which is perceived as more than the sum of its parts.

During the last century, after the historical method had turned out to be incomplete and insufficiently substantiated by scientific data, structural analysis methods gained more and more ground in various research areas, including that of human sciences. Ferdinand de Saussure<sup>106</sup> proposed a synchronic approach to language, based on the relationship between the signifier and the signified within the linguistic sign. The synchronic approach is based on the observation that although the native speakers of a language may know nothing about the history of that language, they may still be able to use the structure of a language as it is at a particular time<sup>107</sup>. After Saussure's linguistic structuralism was generally accepted, the concept of "structure" incorporated both of the aforementioned meanings: that of a united whole, and that of a system of the relationships between the parts<sup>108</sup>. Consequently, structure now refers to an ensemble of relations. The notion of structure can be related to that of model; a model (pattern) is an object, whether real or constructed, serving as means to know other similar, though not identical objects.

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<sup>104</sup> Virgil Nemoianu, *Structuralismul* (Structuralism), Editura pentru Literatură Universală, București, 1967.

<sup>105</sup> His essay entitled *Ideas Concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology* (1894) is still considered of major importance.

<sup>106</sup> The Swiss linguist generated a real revolution in the field, by dissociating the historical perspective on language (that he called diachronic), from the approach thereof as a self-contained system analyzed at a particular point in time (called synchronic).

<sup>107</sup> Saussure's ideas were published posthumously based on the notes taken during his courses at the University of Geneva (1906-1911). His work is entitled *Course in General Linguistics*.

<sup>108</sup> One should not forget that Ferdinand de Saussure did not use the term of structure, but that of system. His conception, however, led to the development of structural linguistics after it was taken over by the representatives of the Prague Linguistic Circle, and especially by Trubetzkoy and Jakobson. With Jakobson, the distinction is made not between *language* and *speech*, but between *code* and *message*.

In a structural method of analysis we are interested in the arrangement of objects, in how the real is organized, in how facts are arranged, in their inner mechanism and, therefore, in their structure. In structural thinking, each episode is linked to all the others through numerous threads, enlightens them and becomes fully intelligible only when related to all the others. According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the united whole should be the starting point that would eventually lead, through analysis, to its constituent elements<sup>109</sup>.

In agreement with Saussure's ideas, Claude Levi-Strauss came up with a few methodic principles of application of structuralism: the economy of explanation, the unity of solution, the ability to reconstruct the whole from the fragment.

It has been found that a simple transposition of the linguistic and structural models in music analysis is not enough, for, despite many common elements, there are also divergent areas between the natural and the musical language. Research has demonstrated that the synchrony-based structural method is effective when combined with the diachronic approach. Structural and systematic analyses cannot ignore the historical evolution of events. This is also the reason why many attempts have been made over the past decades to find ways to harmonize the two aspects: diachronic and synchronic.

Mention should be made here of musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez's tripartite semiology, borrowed from Jean Molino, which can be seen as a prolongation of the structural methods. He starts from the idea that a structuralist view of the musical work must be completed with questions about the compositional strategies used in it, and with others regarding the perception of the work. Nattiez therefore proposes a tripartite approach to the musical work, organized on three levels: the *neutral* level, revealing the immanent structures of the work, the *poietic* level, dealing with the creation strategies lying at the origin of the work, and the *aesthetic* level emphasizing the perceptual strategies it generates. The analytical model proposed by Nattiez also takes into consideration the extrinsic references of a musical work, integrating the two facets of the musical fact: creation and perception. This is just an example of how structuralism offers new openings for the elaboration of relevant methods of music analysis.

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<sup>109</sup> An idea applied by Diether de la Motte in the aforementioned analysis, starting from macro form to the detail elements of the structure.

Although neither exhaustive, nor even presented by a structuralist, but by an adept of hermeneutics, the structuralist principles set forth by Paul Ricoeur can be edifying for an application. Ricoeur mentions<sup>110</sup>:

1. work on a corpus already constituted, finished, closed, and, in that sense, dead;
2. establish inventories of elements and units;
3. place these elements or units in relations of opposition, preferably binary opposition;
4. establish an algebra or combinatory system of these elements and opposed pairs.

This brief excursion into the universe of structuralism is justified by the attempt to understand Vasile Herman's way of thinking and to emphasize the context in which his analytical conception came into being. Although, apparently, his sources of information on structuralism were often meager, we note the consonance with the ideas and models of analysis specific to the 20th century.

We were mentioning earlier the concepts of "pattern" and "coordinating principle", the origin of which is by now well established. These ideas also occur in the thinking of many influential music analysts and philosophers of the 20th century. Such is the case of Leonard B. Meyer<sup>111</sup>, whose conceptions are in consonance with Herman's thinking. As we look through Meyer's works, we notice, in the discussions about form and style, the same interest in structuralism substantiation: "the concept of form involves abstraction and generalization. Out of this experience the class concepts which we label as this or that form are developed. Once a work is recognized as being **a type** (our underlining) for which an abstract, normative class concept has been evolved, then that "ideal type" becomes the basis for expectations"<sup>112</sup>. At the same time, form and style appear as indissolubly linked, forms being "special aspects of style, alternative probability groups, each of which exhibits its own special probability relationships within the total stylistic context"<sup>113</sup>. At the same time, musical styles are presented as "complex systems of probability relationships in which the meaning of any term or series of terms depends upon its relationships with all other terms possible within the style system". Meyer emphasizes the role of probability on form and style, noting that in the case of form repetition is unknown (the type of fugue is not of this or that particular fugue but is based upon our experience of a multitude of fugues, the irregular aspects being viewed as

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Lupta dintre Cronos și Orfeu*, eseuri de semiologie aplicată (*The Battle of Chronos and Orpheus. Essays in Applied Musical Semiology*), Editura Artes, Iași, 2007.

<sup>111</sup> See the works *Music, the Arts and Ideas* and *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, both published in the mid 20th century, i.e. about one decade before the elaboration of Vasile Herman's doctoral dissertation.

<sup>112</sup> Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956, p. 57.

<sup>113</sup> *idem*.

deviants), while, in the case of style, habit responses and probabilities are established by exact repetition<sup>114</sup>. Consequently, musical styles can be viewed as more or less complex systems of sound relationships, understood and used in common by a group of individuals or by a particular individual<sup>115</sup>.

These aspects are emphasized by Vasile Herman in displaying the relationship between form and style, two "entities from which the entirety of the musical work results"<sup>116</sup>. Since there is an interdependence relationship between style and form, the very definition of style is conditioned by that of form. If form is the principle that coordinates the entirety of means of sound expression, style represents "the mode of coordination of the means of expression and of the form elements, the relationship amongst them, the preeminence of some or of others"<sup>117</sup>. The Romanian musicologist conceives of these two notions as part of a system, a "circuit" emphasizing the work of art in its integrality.

Musicologists and musical analysts often emphasize the interdependence between form and style, although the way in which they define the two notions differs from case to case. André Hodeir, for example, in his book entitled *Les formes de la musique*, first published in 1951<sup>118</sup>, dedicated a whole chapter to explaining certain frequently used terms in music analysis: genre, style, form and structure. He also notices the connections that exist among them. Hodeir defines musical style according to two coordinates: in terms of the creator of the work and in terms of the genre to which the work belongs. According to Hodeir, each genre, each form, conforms to a style that is particular to it. In the last analysis, form is viewed as a manner or method in which a work tends to become an entity. To make the distinction between form and structure, Hodeir borrows Boris de Schlöezer's point of view, according to which **structure** means the employment of several segments in order to obtain a whole, whereas **form** is the same "whole" here in question, in all of its wholeness. Thus, the idea of form is much broader than that of structure. At the same time, Hodeir speaks of the association of the ideas of form and style in a vague, almost confusing way: form is associated to genre, and each genre makes use of a particular style<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Ștefan Niculescu emphasized the same thing in one of his studies published in the volume *Reflecții despre muzică* (Reflections on Music) (p. 293): the scheme of a form cannot be confused with the form itself of each individual part.

<sup>115</sup> Leonard B. Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>116</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>117</sup> *idem.*

<sup>118</sup> André Hodeir, *Les formes de la musique*, Press Universitaires de France, Paris, douzième édition, 1993.

<sup>119</sup> *ibidem*, pp. 7-19.

A few years later, another musicologist by the name of George Sherman Dickinson<sup>120</sup> stated that style is the reflection of the individual essence of a work of art, which gives it its own identity. Identity is the result of a distinctive conjunction of the components, doubled by a certain emphasis of some of them<sup>121</sup>. At the same time, style occurs as a product of the intersection between time, place and the creative temperament. The concept of style is related to that of model or type, seen as an imaginary arrangement of the mutual relations between the style components.

Dickinson's definitions are used in part in Willi Apel's *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. In its reviewed edition<sup>122</sup>, style was associated to the features characterizing the musical works or performances of a period, region, genre, or individual composer or performer. The attempt to define a style requires consideration of all aspects of the music under study. A form is defined by a loose group of general features shared in varying degrees by a relatively large number of works, no two of which are in fact exactly the same. We notice above the common area shared by the notions of form and type (model), with no clear-cut demarcation line.

The *New Grove* music dictionary<sup>123</sup> synthesizes the discussions on musical style, emphasizing that style manifests itself in characteristic usages of form, texture, harmony, melody, rhythm and ethos and is presented by creative personalities, conditioned by historical, social and geographical factors, performing resources and conventions. If style and form are approached separately, then style can describe the ordering of details, while form refers to the whole.

Musicologist Helmut Degen dedicates a subchapter of his book – *Handbuch der Formenlehre*<sup>124</sup> – to the analysis of the concept of "style" and its placement in the same context with the musical "form". According to him, a scientific musical analysis is only possible if each element of a work is viewed as a component part of that work, playing a functional role in the attainment of the final form. Consistent with the structuralist perspective, style is viewed as a totality and, at the same time, as a sum: the totality of the vertical functions and the sum of the constant horizontal connections of the music work. At the same time, style is equivalent to the standardization of all the generally valid constant values of a period, individual, work or nation. Vasile Herman takes up the German musicologist's conception of style and form, emphasizing their relationship and mutual

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<sup>120</sup> George Sherman, Dickinson, *A Handbook of Style in Music*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1969.

<sup>121</sup> *ibidem*, p.3.

<sup>122</sup> *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, editor Don Michael Randel, Harvard University Press, USA, 1986, reviewed edition of the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* originally edited by Willi Apel.

<sup>123</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, vol. 24.

<sup>124</sup> Helmut, Degen, *Handbuch der Formenlehre*, G. Bosse Verlag, Regensburg, 1957, p. 45.

conditioning. Thus, form is the **coordinating principle** of the totality of means of sound expression, while style is the **mode of coordination** of the means of expression and of the form elements.

Returning to Vasile Herman's definitions, we notice that form and style, in their interdependence relationship, are influenced by several external factors (which is generally mentioned in the studies on style). Some of these factors are pointed out: time, social order, geographical area, people, individual, conscience. These factors justify the emergence and manifestation of certain forms, at a given time, while also lending a certain stylistic unity to the works of art of a given area or time. This stylistic consonance is all the more reduced temporally, as we approach our days; however, due to the modern broadcasting techniques, the geographical area covered by the new means of expression and their coordinating principles is larger.

Emphasizing the relationship between the two, Vasile Herman proposes the following definition of form: "**a sum of relationships established between all the components and which differ in the mode and degree of morphological and structural organization**"<sup>125</sup>. In the light of a structuralist approach, this definition clearly outlines the very fact that the wholeness of the work is given not by the sum of its components, but by the sum of the relationships between the elements.

This redefinition of the musical form introduces two notions that require special attention for the broad understanding of Vasile Herman's musicology: **morphology** and **structure**. A disciple and successor of Sigismund Toduță in the teaching of musical forms, Vasile Herman borrowed in part the maestro's system of approach and terminology. In trying to understand the source of certain conceptions and notions, we should therefore resort to Toduță's writings to see the extent to which they occur in Herman's works. Upon reading his volumes on musical forms in the Baroque period<sup>126</sup>, we notice that in the course of his musical analyses, the morphological level is assigned elements of musical language that range from the least to the most extended. For example, in the footnote on page 38 of the first volume, he explains the "morphological nomenclature" used in the notation of formal units, from musical stanza to sub-motif. The pieces comprised in *Album for Anna Magdalena Bach* are subjected to a thorough "morphological" analysis. Upon reading Toduță's texts, one notices the frequent use of the term "structure" with reference to the internal organization of

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<sup>125</sup> Vasile Herman, *op. cit.*, p.12.

<sup>126</sup> Sigismund Toduță, *Formele muzicale ale barocului în operele lui J. S. Bach* (Baroque Musical Forms in the Works of J. S. Bach), vol. 1-3, Editura Muzicală, București, 1969, 1973, 1978.

musical stanzas. For example, the analysis on page 80 of the first volume of *Musical Forms...*, indicates two motivic levels – discant and bass – structurally organized as 2+2, 2+2; page 81, on the other hand, presents "the new structural feature of the period"; another notion is that of "motivic structure"<sup>127</sup> of the period. These few examples should suffice to suggest that Toduță's school provided Herman with a good starting point for his analytical terminology. In Herman's case, however, this terminology crystallizes, so that "structure" consistently defines the micro units of the construct, whereas "morphology" is used for larger ones.

The meanings Herman assigns to these terms can be found in others of his works, too, among which *Bazele teoretice ale studiului formelor muzicale pentru secțiile muzică din Conservatoare* (Theoretical Basis for the Study of Musical Forms for Music Conservatories), a course conceived in 1985 only for internal use and published in 2009 by the Editura MediaMusica<sup>128</sup>. Here, Herman offers a clear explanation of his views: structure and morphology are basic components of the musical form. The structural level includes "the smallest sections in which a musical discourse can be divided"<sup>129</sup>, the foundation stones that lie at the base of the musical structure. Here the author refers to the micro elements lying at the base of the type (especially the musical figure and motif), seen as analytical limits at this level and as generators of form and style<sup>130</sup>. By morphological level, Herman understands "elements of a larger extent, determining the typology of certain sections or even of form in its entirety"<sup>131</sup>. In other works,<sup>132</sup> Herman refers to morphology in terms of the correct determination of the symmetrical or asymmetrical fragments from the concatenation of which the musical pattern emerges. The basic components of morphology are the period and its subdivisions, the musical phrases. One of the criteria used in the analysis of the musical period, besides the thematic and harmonic ones, is the structural criterion, which refers to the mode in which micro units are combined on the motivic level within the periods, subject to the number of bars over which they extend (an idea most probably borrowed from Sigismund Toduță). Hence, two possible variants arise: structural periodicity and structural contrasts<sup>133</sup>.

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<sup>127</sup> The first volume, p. 139.

<sup>128</sup> The course on *Theoretical Basis* was published along with those on musical forms corresponding to different stylistic epochs and was launched on the 80th anniversary of the musician's birth.

<sup>129</sup> Vasile Herman, *Bazele teoretice ale studiului formelor muzicale pentru secțiile Muzică din Conservatoare* (Theoretical Basis for the Study of Musical Forms for Music Conservatories), "Gh. Dima" Music Conservatory, Cluj-Napoca, 1985, p. 47.

<sup>130</sup> *ibidem*, p. 48.

<sup>131</sup> *ibidem*, p. 47.

<sup>132</sup> Vasile Herman, *Originile și dezvoltarea formelor muzicale* (Origins and Development of Musical Forms), Editura Muzicală, București, 1982.

<sup>133</sup> *idem*.

Consequently, we witness an original example of approaching of a work in terms of the forms involved.

In his coursebook *Morfologia și structura formei muzicale* (The Morphology and Structure of the Musical Form)<sup>134</sup>, Valentin Timaru offers an image of the present day manner of operation with the aforementioned notions. In the configuration of sound events, Timaru identifies the morphological level (the structuring of semantic units) and the syntactic level (the articulation of a certain type or the combination of several types within the framework of a musical genre). As the author himself points out, the terms morphology and syntax have been taken from linguistics, and there is no attempt to impose them in music in a strict sense. There are, nevertheless, certain obvious similarities. According to the explanations given by the grammatical or linguistic dictionaries, morphology deals with the organization of words into lexical-grammatical classes characterized by distinct features (parts of speech), studying the forms, senses, functions and rules by which forms can be modified.<sup>135</sup> The syntax is that part of grammar which studies the functions performed by the parts of speech in sentences, and of the functions performed by clauses in compound or complex sentences. It establishes the rules whereby words are combined to form simple, complex and compound sentences.<sup>136</sup>

Starting from the observation that there are obvious resemblances between the two types of language (verbal and musical), the use of the terms morphology and syntax according to Valentin Timaru is perfectly justified: morphology – referring to the micro-units of language – and syntax – referring to the larger units (phrase, period) and to the rules whereby morphological elements are combined in the syntax. Worth noting is that in musical language, just like in verbal language, morphological elements can be invested with syntactic functions, while syntactic units also have morphological characteristics. Hence, confusion may arise over the understanding of the methods of defining the micro units and the larger units of the musical discourse<sup>137</sup>.

Timaru is not singular in his way of using this linguistic-sounding terminology. This approach is, in fact, the most widely used and occurs frequently in musical language analysis.

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<sup>134</sup> Valentin Timaru, *Morfologia și structura formei muzicale*, Curs de forme și analize muzicale (The Morphology and Structure of the Musical Form, A Coursebook on Musical Forms and Analysis), vol. I, Academia de Muzică "Gh. Dima", Cluj-Napoca, 1990.

<sup>135</sup> Gheorghe Constantinescu-Dobridor, *Dicționar de termeni lingvistici* (Dictionary of Linguistic Terms), Editura Teora, București, 1998, p. 221.

<sup>136</sup> *ibidem*, p. 293.

<sup>137</sup> For example, it is in the aforementioned sense that Timaru speaks of phrase and period as morphological units of language. A brief skimming through the coursebook on forms could create certain confusions. In a context, however, we understand that morphology is related to microstructure, while syntax is related to larger units, whose articulation is subject to certain specific rules.

By structure, most analysts understand the delimitation on several levels of the elements of a musical construct, from macro structure to micro structure. The relations and rules whereby units are combined are also included here.

For example, Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea defines musical structure as an "ensemble of constant relations per unit of musical text"<sup>138</sup>. Thus, a structural musical analysis attempts to identify the structural units and their interactions. Structure therefore appears as a "closed network of interacting elements whose informational content is higher than the sum of its component parts"<sup>139</sup>. Hence, segmentation of the musical discourse emphasizes the structural units, their hierarchy and subordination to each other. The form, the part and the section belong to the macrostructural level; the period and the phrase are considered intermediate structures, whereas the motif, the submotif and the cell pertain to the microstructural level<sup>140</sup>. Regarding musical syntax, the author is under the influence of Ștefan Niculescu's ideas on syntactic categories. Niculescu defines syntactic phenomena as relationships between sound objects, attempting to delimitate them from the very nature of the objects. Hence, monody, homophony, polyphony and heterophony appear as musical syntactic categories (or "ways of organization of sounds in time, on the axis of successiveness and of simultaneity"<sup>141</sup>). However, the chapter on morphological and syntactic analysis speaks about „emphasizing the structural units and subunits – from periods, phrases to microstructures like motifs, submotifs, cells – and their hierarchical relations”<sup>142</sup>. Hence we infer that the term of syntax is used to define different types of relations that may arise in the creation of a musical discourse. This is a return from Niculescu's somewhat abstractive theory, to the much more common meaning of morphology and syntax.

To synthesize the above, we notice that the notion of structure is generally understood as a "method of building a system, the abstract model that explains its functioning scheme and the principles at the basis of its internal cohesion"<sup>143</sup>. Musical morphology deals with the sound object (the structure of the basic semantic units), while syntax deals with the relationship between morphological units and the articulation of the pattern.

Vasile Herman has his own particular way of using the terms structure and morphology (structure for micro-units and morphology for more extended elements – phrase,

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<sup>138</sup> Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea, *Tratat de forme și analize muzicale* (Treaty of Musical Forms and Analysis), Editura Muzicală, București, 2005, p. 22.

<sup>139</sup> *ibidem*, p.27.

<sup>140</sup> *ibidem*, p.28.

<sup>141</sup> *ibidem*, p.23.

<sup>142</sup> *ibidem*, p.39.

<sup>143</sup> *Dicționar de filozofie* (Dictionary of Philosophy), Editura Politică, București, 1978, p. 671, cf. Gabriel Banciu, *Gen, opus, formă* (Genre, Opus, Form), Editura MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p.53.

period). The explanation may be found in his penchant for the structurally oriented method of research, which, as we have seen before, characterizes the analytical system of the musicologist of Cluj. A clear understanding of Vasile Herman's terminology and of the specific meaning he assigns to certain common analytical terms is essential to anyone approaching his theoretical writings, from apprentice to researcher. It is also important to note the remarkable consistency with which these terms are used; once adopted, this terminology occurs constantly in Vasile Herman's musicological studies. Even in the studies written after the 1990's, subtitled *Preliminarii la o estetică a folclorului muzical românesc* (Preliminaries to an Aesthetics of the Romanian Musical Folklore), we find the same organization, the same dichotomous relationships between form and style, or between structure and morphology.

We must also note that according to Herman, structural units (in the particular sense he gives to this term) are invested with the potential to continue the musical discourse, to generate form. Thus are explained the frequent associations he makes between structure and form, placing structure at the basis of form. We emphasize the importance of clarifying the terminology before embarking upon the analysis of Herman's works, in order to prevent any incomplete or erroneous understanding of his musicology. Beyond this peculiarity of analytical language, justified by the (probably indirect) influence of structuralism, his theoretical works are full of substance and scientific argumentations, rigorously conceived and coherently thought through.

The same first chapter of the study *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music) brings into discussion a series of binary oppositions. This is another resultant of structuralist thinking which, among others, proposes the organization of the system in terms of opposition. Thus, the notion of "organization" is introduced in contrast with that of "improvisation". The author points out the importance of the "organization" factor in the evolution of the musical form. By comparing the terms "organization", "form", "morphology" and "structure", we notice the relationships that may arise between them. According to Herman, when organization has priority over form, structure has priority over morphology, too (in other words, the microstructural element determines the delineation of the larger units). Conversely, when form (in its meaning of coordinating principle of the means of sound expression) has priority over organization, morphology governs structure. Style is the variable that completes this equation, being under the direct influence of the aforementioned factors and of the creator's personality.

Vasile Herman makes a pertinent observation on the tendencies of valorization of musical styles and forms. He believes that each style contributes to the evolution of musical thinking

and therefore no style can be considered as more evolved than another. Form, on the other hand, undergoes an undeniable evolution, while also reaching terminus points, when all initially promised possibilities are exhausted.

Another observation regarding the opposition between organization and improvisation is that it is only apparently that the sonorous results of pure improvisation are similar to those obtained through thorough organization. Herman remarks that pure improvisation will always generate different sonorous results, whereas organization will always produce music with identical sounds.

The entire theoretical development of this first chapter of the dissertation is justified by the desire to find an appropriate method of research for the evolution of 20<sup>th</sup> century music.<sup>144</sup> According to Herman, establishing the constituent elements of music and the sum of their relations is the most complex and coherent method of analytical investigation. With that in view, the basic elements of music are succinctly presented. The decisive elements of a *melody* are pitch, duration, loudness and quality (timbre), as well as their interdetermination. Other essential parameters and relations contributing to the shaping of the stylistic and formal aspects are: the relationship between polyphony-harmony, continuity-discontinuity and thematism-athematism. Herman emphasizes the importance of the time factor in supporting the complexity of contemporary music, by balancing the aforementioned relationships.

The conclusion of the first chapter of the dissertation provides a list of the necessary steps required to conduct an effective musicological investigation. Here they are:

1. *Careful establishment of all the sound parameters involved;*
2. *Awareness of the preeminence of some over others and of their action over the secondary parameters;*
3. *Their system of coordination and connection, their unifying principle and the formal pattern they create;*
4. *The internal relationships of form, morphology, structure, organization and time of development, the means of development in time;*
5. *Corroboration of the pattern with the relationships within the relevant parts, or of the different sonorous surfaces, description of the nature of relationships between parts;*

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<sup>144</sup> One should note that Vasile Herman's case is not singular among the doctoral dissertations supervised by Sigismund Toduță. In the dissertation entitled *Baze ale unei analize formale a limbajului muzical* (Bases of a Formal Analysis of the Musical Language), Nicolae Brînduș proposes a "general model of analysis of the musical-sonorous phenomenon according to certain spatiality criteria" (op. cit., p. 12). Octavian Nemescu, in his dissertation entitled *Capacitățile semantice ale muzicii* (Semantic Capacities of Music), starts from the same assumption of the necessity of elaborating an adequate methodology for musical investigation. His interest is focused on the substantiation of a structural research starting from the revision of the general semantic theory.

6. *Comparison of the qualities of a piece with the qualities, construction, and style of other pieces of similar nature written by one or several authors;*

7. *Given the necessity of an overall view over the entire musical phenomenon, the general features of certain categories of works will be established, along with their formal filiation, stylistic category, the ways in which they serve a similar, related or different content;*

8. *When analyzing a wide range of expressive possibilities with a common ethos, a comparison will be made with other similar areas having different ethoses.*<sup>145</sup>

We witness a reassertion of the structuralist ideas. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the importance of approaching music as a system of relationships in which musical parameters interact in terms of equality or of subordination. Equally important within the musical form is the pattern as model for the infinitude of original variants that shape the creator's personal style. Herman proposes two stylistic approaches: one referring to the internal relationships of the work of art, up to the smallest details, and one that relates the work of art to others, thus creating another level of connections. The route proposed does not contradict the previous assertions: musical style and form are integrated in an algorithm, interacting and conditioning each other.

It should be noted that the separation of the musical work into component parts and the detailed delimitation of its smallest structural units are not goals in themselves, but are seen as opportunities to understand the mode of functioning of the system by the connection of its elements. Consequently, an effective analysis will focus on the restoration of the whole, thus offering a general view, enabling the understanding of the mode of functioning of the system. From this perspective, the study of the musical form against a predetermined model (pattern) is required in order to provide essential data for a possible stylistic categorization of the work. Musical form analysis is not a terminus point or a goal in itself, but a part of a chain pursuing the revelation of the whole through the parts. This vision places musical form analysis among the fundamental disciplines and justifies the acquisition of the required skill, while also offering new perspectives by stimulating the musician to find connections with the other musical parameters. This observation is important, considering that for a long time Herman taught musical forms to the students of the Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca. Herman, however, did not limit himself to the structural approach of the score, but permanently aimed at obtaining stylistic data by interlinking the details of different musical parameters. In the last

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<sup>145</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), op. cit., p. 24.

analysis, the purpose of musical analysis is related to the musical style, while integrating and being determined by the aspects of form.

The second chapter of the doctoral dissertation makes a foray into the music before the 20th century, going beyond the purely historical perspective. Herman focuses on a few important moments in the evolution of European music. His intention is to demonstrate the continuity of the different stages of music development. Herman starts from the idea that "there will never be something entirely new, for all that is new emerges from the past, like a transformation, or an evolution of the ancient states"<sup>146</sup>.

The French musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez treats the problem of musical *evolution*, a term that he prefers to *progress*. This latter term implies a valorizing attitude towards a certain style or system. Or, every musical style represents a precious moment in itself, thereby invalidating any comparison (in terms of value) with other styles. The difference between Nattiez's<sup>147</sup> and Herman's opinions is related to the application of the idea of evolution to what we call musical style. According to Herman, style is a constant, while musical form is in evolution, determining the possible *fluctuations* of the constant. Nattiez<sup>148</sup> on the other hand, speaks of the potentiality of a system, referring sometimes even to musical style and to a certain limit of its development potential. This is explained through the particular application of the concept of "style": Generally, Nattiez speaks of the tonal-functional system as of a style in its own right, and it is in this context that his statements should be understood. According to his perspective, which was influenced by Leonard Meyer's, the tonal-functional system seems to have reached its limit at one point. Nattiez has no doubts about the connection between the innovations made by the 20th century composers and tonality, in which he sees a natural evolution of music.

In the second chapter of the dissertation, Herman synthetically extracts essential data related to the European music, emphasizing the anticipation phenomena that generated a new music in the 20th century music, such as the reorientation towards the sphere of the modal with all its resultants, the enrichment of rhythmicity and the increased use of chromaticism. Herman's conviction is that the "great leap" of the 20th century music was in fact "a thickening or an absolutization of certain sides that were little, not at all or only incipiently

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<sup>146</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>147</sup> who in this context borrows Leonard B. Meyer's ideas.

<sup>148</sup> in the essay *Boulez în epoca post-modernă: timpul lui Repons* (Boulez in the Postmodern Era: the Time of Repons) included in the volume *Lupta dintre Cronos și Orfeu* (The Battle of Chronos and Orpheus), Editura Artes, Iași, 2007, p. 181. The original texts this essay was based on were written between 1980 and 1995.

used by predecessors"<sup>149</sup>. In his opinion, the leap was just an illusion created through the derived use of the means of the old music.

Regarding the Romanian music up to Enescu, the author of the dissertation points out two tendencies: compensation and affirmation. Compensation refers to the recovery of certain elements of European culture and their integration in the local culture. Affirmation refers to including the values of folk art into music and placing them among the world's art treasures. Herman remarks that "the incompatibility between the bases of the internal structures of the Romanian folk song and the characteristic forms of the West-European elevated musical culture are style creators"<sup>150</sup>. Mention should be made here of the tendency to shift from the fiddler's music to peasant music, from the urban folklore to the rural one. In the structure of small forms in Romanian music, the musicologist remarks the influence of the European Romantic spirit, associated with an incipient stage of exploration of the local folklore. In large musical forms, Herman remarks the short-lived rhapsodism born of the combination of fiddle or folk tune arrangements. The typical aspect is that of a potpourri. The musicologist explains these tendencies through the then meager knowledge of the potential that musical folklore was offering, both on a national and on a European level. At the same time, a harmonization of the folklore data with the European musical technique was a real Gordian knot at the time for the Romanian composers.

Regarding the music of the first half of the 20th century, presented in the third chapter, Vasile Herman divides it into three stages, marked by the evolution of Enescu's art: 1899-1920, the period when the first elements of a mature autochthonous style could be detected; 1920-1949, a period of consolidation of the style, of accumulation of new techniques and of a boost of folklore research; 1949-1955, a period marked by the "full compensation of all the traditional forms and styles, from neo-Baroque to the folklorism of the national schools"<sup>151</sup>. The analysis of the three stages includes works by Romanian musicians, approached in terms of harmonic evolution and form crystallization. In Enescu's case, the analyses are comprehensive, without insisting on already known details. For example, regarding the *Prelude in Unison*, Herman remarks the pentatonic substratum, as well as the novelty of using monophony in a fantasia-like form whose typical feature was the figural or fugued-polyphonic construction. The author also deals with the works of other Romanian composers

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<sup>149</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>150</sup> *ibidem*, p. 31.

<sup>151</sup> *ibidem*, p. 47.

who, although outshined by Enescu, have brought an important contribution to the development of Romanian music. Special attention is paid to the scientific studies on music attempting to reveal the specific aspects of folklore, along with those meant to fill the existing gaps in the field of music theory. Herman remarks the great discrepancies between Enescu and his contemporaries, from the point of view of creation. Ranking among the most illustrious European musicians, Enescu is perhaps the only Romanian composer of that time whose creation is counted among the world's treasures. However, Vasile Herman also analyzes works by other Romanian composers like Filip Lazăr, Zeno Vancea, Mihail Jora, Sigismund Toduță. The conclusion of the first part of the study is that the Romanian music of the early 1950's had already caught up to the level of the European music, the forms based on local intonation were already crystallized, and the musicians' professional level (composers and researchers) was heralding an age of stylistic maturity.

The second part of the dissertation focuses on the music created after 1955. Herman saw George Enescu's music as an engine stimulating the evolution of Romanian music. After his death, the research and study of his legacy opened up, in Herman's opinion, new compositional paths and solutions. Starting from Enescu's music, Herman analyzes the evolution of the modal systems used in Romanian music. Among the essential elements of Romanian music, Herman mentions the persistence of the tetrachord structures (sometimes in latent state or filled with chromatic elements) as well as the preponderant use of modal or premodal melodic formulas.

Romanian music insider and composer in his own right, Herman explains how modal formulas are used: although they have a diatonic origin, they are abstracted through the chromatic movement of certain sounds. Thus, in a melodic formula, sound groups can be integrated in tetrachords from different or transposed modes. Thus a „transfiguration” of the folkloric formulas is obtained.

This explanation is of help to the researchers of Herman's music, in that it can provide a key to the understanding of his works. While working on his doctoral dissertation, the musician also conducted a series of research studies into the hidden facets of the Romanian folklore. His interest was shared by many Romanian composers of his generation who, like him, were looking for a method to integrate folklore elements into the cultivated music. According to his own account, Herman's studies in this field lasted more than a decade. Thereafter, around the early 1970's, he had already framed his compositional ideas and method, by inserting essentialized formulas of folk music into his works. In a burst of creative

egotism, he wished to keep the secret of his compositional method. In a discussion I once had with Herman, he confessed that he had burned all the materials gathered over a decade (his research studies on Romanian musical folklore) and that he had no desire to disclose the method by which he had integrated the values of oral tradition into his music. Therefore, all we are left with are a few paragraphs from his theoretical works, suggesting the directions he pursued in his compositions. The rest depends on the researcher's flair and on a considerable amount of effort to decrypt the meanings embedded in Vasile Herman's music. One thing is however very clear: the research of the old Romanian music was accompanied, in Herman's case, by the immense respect he had for this area of spirituality of the Romanian people.

In an analysis of modalism in the Romanian music after 1950, Herman remarks the importance of the tetrachord as a constituent material of the symmetrical or asymmetrical systems lying at the basis of the discourse. The analysis also enabled the musicologist to determine the ways in which modes or modal structures interact. His ideas are illustrated by many musical examples extracted from Romanian music scores. These examples demonstrate the acuity with which Vasile Herman analyzed his fellow composers' scores, in order to find out how folklore data are integrated in their melodic profile. One of the techniques identified by him is the use of idiomatic folk formula in a new projection, emphasizing the specific features through chromaticization. According to Herman, these formulas are also used in the entirely chromatic or serial musical works of later time, lending them a local color<sup>152</sup>.

In an attempt to classify musical turns, he mentions those with an anhemitonic or pentatonic substratum, but with a chromatic aspect, then those with a modal flavor but with a strong diatonic basis, those with a hemitonic-modal substratum, as well as those of less obvious affiliation but rich in chromaticisms. From here to the conquest of the whole chromatic range is but a single step, which was achieved in the latter half of the 20th century.

In the following chapter, Herman focuses on the compositional technique based on the creation of certain chromaticized melodic formulas, with increased expressivity, derived from the modal diatonic nucleus. Once again, his explanations are relevant in the understanding of his musical language. This chapter also discusses the tendency of Romanian music towards total serial organization. Herman sees this as a consequence of „a more and more intense chromaticization of the modes and of the process of chromatic diffusion”<sup>153</sup>, which is not a

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<sup>152</sup> Later on, Gheorghe Firca also preoccupied himself with modalism in the Romanian musical serialism (his dissertation is entitled *Structuri și funcții în armonia modală* [Structures and Functions in Modal Harmony] and was supervised by Toduță), starting from Vasile Herman's previous research studies.

<sup>153</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), op. cit., p. 103.

terminus point in musical evolution, but, more often than not, a transitory moment. In Herman's opinion, if chromaticism in European music inevitably led to a contradiction of certain traditions, in Romanian music it emphasizes and brings greater subtlety to the traditional national element. This is also possible due to the modal mobility of the melodic turns in the Romanian folklore. Maintenance of the national color in serial music can be explained by understanding the manner of construction of the series. These can include standard formulas, i.e. idioms which, despite their continuous variation, ensure an explicit or implicit modal content. The free series are also mentioned in this context.

Vasile Herman notes that the new chromatic organization leads to differentiated aspects of form and style, from traditional patterns to new forms, or from neoclassical orientations to original solutions. The structure of the musical form is related to the microstructural units of **figure** and **motif**. Borrowing Helmut Degen's conception, Herman relates the figure to the predominantly horizontal and melodic structures generating polyphonic discourses. The motif, on the other hand, emphasizes verticality, due to its harmonic content.

Possible relationships are considered between micro- and macrostructure, working techniques (structural variation) and categories of works extant in Romanian music after 1950: thematic works, in which microstructure is governed by form; thematic works in which microstructure takes on a more important role; works in which microstructure and structural variation hold a priority position, while still adhering to traditional formal patterns; works with new forms, in which microstructure dictates, while form is reduced to structural variation and continuous development. The analyses and examples provided for each category of works are essentialized, deprived of general data, though highly edifying. The material to be analyzed was selected according to a simple criterion: its circulation. Herman selected the already printed works, or works that (at the time) had already entered the Romanian concert circuit. When analyzing the relationship between structure and morphology in Romanian music<sup>154</sup>, the musician identifies a substantial presence of polyphonic elements in works where the structural element is prevalent.

The sixth chapter of the doctoral dissertation dwells on new (at the time) Romanian works, generally composed after 1965, and offers explanations on the techniques used.

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<sup>154</sup> in the sense given by Vasile Herman to these terms

Herman notices the going beyond the totally chromatic zone<sup>155</sup> and the Romanian composers' attempt to find new systems of sound organization, in order to replace the series and its derivatives, while offering instead new ways of arranging elements horizontally and vertically. Here are some of these techniques: interval serialization in folk songs, creation of pre-established numerical relationships, standardization of interval successions, usage of certain groups of folkloric melodic micro formulas. All these can be integrated in a "post-serial" stage, followed by a "rationalization" of permutations and the generation of complex sound structures based on mathematical methods for the control of the essential musical parameters. From the point of view of form, Herman identifies a prevalence of the catena-type structures, or chain forms, with different segment extensions, with certain contrasts and variations of parameters. There is also the category of free or open forms, with a varied improvisational quotient. Vasile Herman repeatedly emphasizes the affiliation of these works of music with a general Romanian "spirit" drawing on the folkloric tradition that the whole structure is based upon.

The conclusions of the doctoral dissertation, summarized succinctly at the end of the chapter, are:

- At the moment of elaboration of the doctoral dissertation, Romanian music had reached its full maturity from a stylistic standpoint and was ready to join the ranks of the world's contemporary masterpieces.
- The unifying stylistic factor in Romanian music is the connection with the folklore.
- The "roughness" of certain sonorities is related to their Southeastern European cultural origins, arising from modal chromaticism and adding an element of "freshness" and originality.
- Romanian contemporary music is an incontestable asset that "is conducive to study and meditation"<sup>156</sup>

The public defense of Vasile Herman's doctoral dissertation took place in 1973, and the documents kept in the archive of the "Gh. Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca provide information on the composition of the examination board. These documents include the Ph.D reports of Sigismund Toduță (doctoral supervisor), Tudor Ciortea, Romeo Ghircoiașiu and

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<sup>155</sup> As demonstrated earlier, we are talking about a modal chromaticism, in which the national character is visible.

<sup>156</sup> Vasile Herman, *Formă și stil în noua creație muzicală românească* (Form and Style in Contemporary Romanian Music), op. cit., p. 160.

Octavian Lazăr Cosma. According to these reports, the dissertation was well received, being considered by the last of the aforementioned reporters as a "unique contribution and the first substantial and meritorious attempt to approach the difficult and hard to encompass (due to its incompleteness) phenomenon of our contemporary music"<sup>157</sup>. As pointed out by Sigismund Toduță in his report, one of the points of interest of this paper is the intersection of the two levels or methods of approach of the creation: exploring the constituent elements of the work (with the professional competence of a composer who has an inner understanding of the musical phenomenon) and "an aesthetic and dialectical vision creating the correlation between the continuous interaction of an irreversible process, governed by the laws of tradition and innovation"<sup>158</sup>. Except for a few recommendations to add some extra emphasis or nuances to the analytical study, the dissertation was unanimously appreciated and seen as essential for the Romanian musicology. Toduță objectively concludes that Herman's dissertation is a work that, "in the general context of the literature on musicology and musical stylistics, can never receive enough appreciation"<sup>159</sup>.

Almost 40 years after the elaboration and presentation of this scientific paper we cannot help noticing its freshness, its relevant ideas and the accuracy with which the central thread of the analysis is followed. We discover Herman as a highly trained musicologist, capable of creating and preserving a system of musicological and analytical thinking, which explains why, though arid at times, his ideas are clearly articulated, stemming from his convictions and hardly artificial.

Despite a seemingly ascetic nature of this musicological enterprise (Herman's discourse is mainly essentialized, non-redundant, deprived of informational overload in terms of both historical retrospect and analytical approach), we notice an intense inner fire and consideration for the work of art and for the tradition of the Romanian people. Hence a slightly "romantic" attitude pervading the approach of the implications and importance of folklore in Romanian contemporary music; the tendency is to emphasize its importance, without, however, disregarding the other contributions to the maturation<sup>160</sup> of Romanian music. To better understand Vasile Herman's position, one should recall that while he was writing his dissertation he was also completing his research on the various aspects of

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<sup>157</sup> Quotation from O.L. Cosma's report on Vasile Herman's doctoral dissertation, kept in the archives of the "Gh. Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca.

<sup>158</sup> Quotation from the report prepared by Sigismund Toduță as Ph.D. supervisor, kept in the archives of the "Gh. Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca.

<sup>159</sup> Quotation from Ph.D. supervisor Sigismund Toduță's report, kept in the archives of the "Gh. Dima" Music Academy of Cluj-Napoca.

<sup>160</sup> as Vasile Herman calls it himself.

Romanian folklore, developing his own musical language rooted right in the folkloric creation. His interest as a composer is therefore also felt in his musicological approach.

The importance of a detailed reading of this theoretical work also lies in the fact that it can enlighten the understanding of Vasile Herman's creative attitude, or at least it can offer some starting points for the investigation of his musical output. Although he did not wish to disclose his compositional techniques, some of them can be inferred from his musicological writings. This proves that although he considered himself primarily a composer, his two main activities, composition and musicology, were interdependent.

One of the merits of Herman's research lies in the fact that his system is anchored in the realities of worldwide contemporary musicology. Beyond an obvious structuralist orientation – which in this case is an advantage in that it integrates ideas and concepts in a system of relationships, while emphasizing their interaction in practice – the notions Vasile Herman operates with also occur in the works of other well-known theoreticians and philosophers of music. We can therefore conclude that his musicological thinking is fully integrated in its time, relying on a terminology and proposing a system of a European dimension.

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