

## **POLYSTYLISTIC INFLECTIONS IN DIFERENCIAS BY CORNEL ȚĂRANU**

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*Plus Minus Contemporary Music Journal*, *Lirika*, *Euterpe magazin*). Published books: *Articularea formei în creația compozitorilor clujeni* [The Articulation of Form in the Works of the Cluj Composers] (2007), *Cristalizarea formei de sonată în secolul al XVIII-lea* [Crystallization of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Sonata Form] (2007), *Curs practic de analiză a formei muzicale* [Practical Course in Musical Form Analysis], vol. I (2008); *Curs practic de analiză a formei muzicale* [Practical Course in Musical Form Analysis], vol. II (2014); *Piramida cunoașterii* [The Pyramid of Knowledge], chapter in *Educația Muzicală pentru preșcolari* [Musical Education for Preschoolers] (2014); *Fotograme MuzicoLogice – itinerarii subiective în Clujul muzical* [MusicoLogical Photograms – Subjective Itineraries in Musical Cluj] (2018); *Muzicoanalitice – studii și crochiuri muzicologice* [Musical Analytics – Musicological Studies and Sketches] (2019). Edited volumes: *Analele Universității din Oradea – Fascicula Muzică* [Annals of the University of Oradea – Fascicle of Music]; *Francisc Hubic – Slujba Sfintelor și Mântuitoarele Patimi din Joia Mare pentru cor de bărbați* [Francisc Hubic – Holy Thursday Passion Service for Men's Choir] (2014); *Simpozion Francisc Hubic* [Francisc Hubic Symposium] (2015). In 2020, she defended her habilitation thesis entitled *Cercetarea muzicologică între analiza structurală, practica educațională și opinia jurnalistică* [Musicological Research Between Structural Analysis, Educational Practice and Journalistic Opinion]. She is a member of the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists, of the „Sigismund Toduță” Foundation and of the Romanian Mozart Society.

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to highlight some of the functions and symbolic meanings of quotations in 20th-century post-avant-garde music in general, and in Cornel Țăranu's *Diferencias* in particular. The New Historicism was identified and assimilated in music through trends such

as the New Simplicity, the New Consonance and Polystylism, which were weaving their way among the various postmodern *isms*. At the same time, several composers used the stylistic copy, the quotation, or the collage as ways of relating to the historical past, to the “great music”, viewed through the distorting magnifying glass of irony, parody, satire, as a first attitude (of breaking the routine of the public’s mental mechanisms), or as homage, as a second attitude. *Diferencias* for solo saxophone and orchestra by Cornel Țăranu, composed in 2010, is a Remembering Cabezon (1500-1566) homage work in which the composer quotes two different genres from his great forerunner’s oeuvre: *Tiento 1* for organ and *Diferencias sobre un canto llano del Caualliero*. The immersion in the historical time is produced either through a cinematic flash-type glissando, as *Tiento 1* is introduced in the development of the work, a free sonata form with variations (*diferencias*), or through a transition provided by the glockenspiel and celesta, anticipating the “Variations on a Knight’s Smooth Song”. The solo commentary of the saxophone and orchestra that overlaps with the historical quotations constitutes those polystylistic inflections that characterize the semantics of the contemporary musical discourse, endowing it with symbolic values and correspondences. This paper analyses the relationship between temporality and structure-spatiality, highlighting some of the ways in which the composer understands the meeting between the two incompatible and seemingly irreconcilable sound worlds, in a “concerto”-like “confrontation” in which the beauty of ancient music and the virtuosity of contemporary writing come to terms in the realm of compositional mastery.

**Keywords:** *Polystylism, Cornel Țăranu, Diferencias, Tiento, Daniel Kientzy, saxophone concerto*

## Introduction

Between the 1960s and 1980s of the post-*avant-garde* era, music gained new possibilities of reconnecting with the historical past, though not through new referentialities such as those used in modernist neoclassicism, but through the use of quotations, of collage compositions representing a new stylistic consciousness emerged as a result of the destruction of the idea of style through excessive experimentation in the art of sound. The New Historicity was identified and assimilated in music through polystylism, associated with the playful postmodernist spirit, but also with the attempt to re-establish the connections with the audience, lost due to the speed of innovations and abstractism present in experimental music. In those years, several composers simultaneously used the stylistic copy, the quotation and the collage as new ways of relating to the historical past, to the “great music”, viewed this time through the distorting magnifying glass of irony, parody, satire...” which, however, does not dismantle classical music, but rather the listener’s mental mechanisms”<sup>1</sup>. The second function of these historical incursions into the polystylistic quotation is that of homage. Among the contemporary composers who use the cultural quotation in this receptacle of representation of contemporary music by resorting to irony, parody and satire in the polystylistic commentary, we mention:

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<sup>1</sup> Valentina Sandu-Dediu, *Muzica nouă între modern și postmodern* [New Music Between Modern and Postmodern], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2004, p. 59.

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Mauricio Kagel with *Ludwig van* (1970), Luciano Berio with the third movement of his *Sinfonia* (references to Charles Ives, Alban Berg, Gustav Mahler), B. A. Zimmermann with *Musique pour le souper du Ubu Roi* (1968) (Hindemith, Wagner, Mussorgsky), Mauricio Kagel with *Music for Renaissance Instruments*, Alfred Schnittke with *Concerto grosso No. 1* (1977). From the homage category including works with various expressive hues, we mention: Alfred Schnittke's *MOZ –ART*, Anatol Vieru's *Eratosthenes' Sieve* (Mozart, Beethoven, Sarasate, Ionesco), Tiberiu Olah's *Symphony No. 3* (Moonlight Sonata, Schoenberg – Five Pieces for Orchestra), *Obelisk* for Wolfgang Amadeus (concerto for two saxophones *Fantasy in C minor* for piano), Aurel Stroe's *Prairie Prière* (1993) (*Ondine* by Debussy), *J. S. Bach Sound Introspections* (1987), *Mozart Sound Introspection* (1994).<sup>2</sup>

*Diferencias* belongs to the 14 symphonic works composed by Cornel Țăranu between 2005 and 2018, in which he explores various world culture themes: Indian themes in *Saramandji* (2008), Chinese ones in *Yang and Yin* (2013), medieval Western themes in *Cantus Gemellus* (2010), Renaissance themes in *Diferencias* (2010), Baroque themes in *Bachiana* (2016). Added to these are works that pursue the homage theme: *Rimembranza* and *Sinfonia da Requiem*, composed in 2005, in commemoration of George Enescu, *Heraldica*, composed in 2014 and dedicated to the Romanian Academy on the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the service of the country, the symphony *Memorial* (2010) dedicated to the memory of the victims of totalitarianism. The genre of the symphonie concertante is present in the works dedicated to saxophonist Daniel Kientzy: *SaxSynpho* (2006), (*Diferencias*) *Semper Idem* (2015). Archetypal or modern composition techniques are reflected in *HeteroSymphony* (2014) and *Jeux de Palindrome*.<sup>3</sup>

*Diferencias* is a work dedicated to saxophonist Daniel Kientzy, composed by Cornel Țăranu in 2010 for baritone saxophone and orchestra. It is a *Remembering Cabezon* (1500-1566) homage work, as the composer uses two musical quotations as a nostalgic foray into the historical past: *Tiento 1* and *Diferencias sobre un canto llano del Caualliero*. "As a forerunner of the fugue, he did not receive his deserved place in history", the composer confesses. As in *Bachiana*, composed in 2016, the composer uses "slices of historical sonic reality" interspersed within the contemporary musical discourse. "In other words, today's world overlaps with the old world, which appears in its genuine, original, unadulterated form. It is true that I have made an orchestral arrangement of these materials written for organ and I have "assimilated" them in my music which is, as my late friend Doru Popovici said, a harsher, rougher music. He also referred to Liviu Glodeanu and Nicolae Moldoveanu, to the music of the Transylvanian composers in general. We are the post-Enescian school, but the

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<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, pp. 57-66.

<sup>3</sup> Mercean-Țârc Mirela, "Cornel Țăranu – The Symphonics of the New Millenium. Part I –Programmatic Orchestral Works", in *Artes. Journal of Musicology*, vol. 21, 2020, pp. 107-129 (see online at: 10.2478/ajm-2020-0007).

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spirit of our music has a certain roughness that Enescu's music does not have, being permeated by a dreamlike-oneiric spirit. In my music there are also melodic-rhythmic nuclei that occur in several works as a kind of 'small obsessions' that can come from a serial, modal-chromatic music, but also from jazz"<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, from the "traditional props", Cornel Țăranu borrows, as "museum pieces", the two genres composed by Cabezon, which represent two opposite albeit complementary paradigms: Freedom – *Diferencias* and Rigour – *Tiento 1*, "assembling them into a new polystylistic work"<sup>5</sup>.

### Layers of symbolic interpretation of the meanings

At the level of the temporality and spatiality of the musical dramaturgy there are several layers of symbolic interpretation of the meanings. The first category includes temporal polymorphy, with two alternating and overlapping layers: the time of the historical work, revealed through the quotation of musical objects regarded as "slices of art", and the time of the composer, cast in contemporary language, which "comments" and "interprets", mainly through the voice of the solo instrument, the chosen artistic object. Thus, the Historical Time creates a gap in the Current Time of contemporaneity, determining a decontextualization and a recontextualization of the chosen musical objects.

Exposition		Development			Recapitulation	
Current time		Historical time/ Current time	Current time	Historical time	Current time / Historical time	
T <sub>1</sub> -T <sub>2</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	TIENTO	T <sub>1</sub> / T <sub>2</sub>	DIFERENCIAS	T <sub>1</sub> -T <sub>2</sub> allusion <i>Diferencias</i>	
modal-serial		modal Renaissance		TIENTO	serial / modal	
		commentary	serial-modal	commentary		
		serial-modal		serial-modal		

The spatial-structural coordinates are in a certain correspondence with the symbolic ones, at meaning level. Thus, the free sonata form with continuous variational episodes corresponds to the idea of *Diferencias* (freedom), which in the Renaissance was the genre of variations on ostinato, whereas in this case, of polyphonic variations on a chivalric theme. The strict polyphonic imitative form (which historically precedes the fugue) is *Tiento 1* (rigour), which is fragmentarily quoted in the development of the sonata form and whose symbolic correspondent

<sup>4</sup> Conversation with the composer in October 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Irinel Anghel, *Orientări, direcții, curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX* [Orientations, Directions, Trends in Late Twentieth Century Romanian Music], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2018, p. 118.

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is composer Cornel Țăranu's organization of the modal-serial language according to the "disordered set technique"<sup>6</sup>.

The dramaturgy of the sonic events of the sonata form can be represented graphically as follows:

EXPOSITION		DEVELOPMENT			
T <sub>1</sub> + variational part	T <sub>2</sub> + variational part	stage 1	stage 2 <i>TIENTO 1</i>		
heroic char. (signal)	Lamento ( <i>Molto rubato</i> )	T1 <i>Allegro molto</i>	<b>Quot.</b> <i>Andante</i>		
m. 1	88 133	134-177	177-216		

#### DEVELOPMENT (continuation)

stage 3	transition		Stage 4 <i>Diferencias</i> quotation		
Variations on T <sub>1</sub> and T <sub>2</sub>	quot., celesta + glockenspiel		DIFERENCIAS / TIENTO <i>Andante</i>		
217	299	303	303	323	393

#### RECAPITULATION

T <sub>1</sub>	variation	T <sub>1</sub> var.	T <sub>2</sub>	<i>Diferencias</i>		Finale
<i>Moderato</i>	<i>Andante rubato</i>	<i>Cadenza</i>	<i>Meno mosso</i>	Trumpet – horn		D
394	403	411	425	448	452	455

The fusion of the concertante style with the symphonic one also serves a symbolic function: the concertante saxophone remains "faithful" to the contemporary temporal plane, whereas the other sections are consecutively "absorbed" as in a tunnel of time in the historical language of the two quotations, whose synthesis is achieved as they overlap in an orchestral tutti, at the end of the development.

### Stylistic features in a polystylistic context

The presentation of the work's themes reflects certain hallmarks of the composer's style. According to the technique of progressive sound accumulation used by the composer in all his symphonic works, the first theme gradually emerges from generative thematic motifs with a signalling function and heroic character, until the chromatic total is reached:

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<sup>6</sup> Ghenadie Ciobanu, "Cornel Țăranu. Paradigmele Creației" [Cornel Țăranu. Paradigms of Creation], in *Lucrări de Muzicologie* [Musicology Papers], vol. 36, No. 2, "Gheorghe Dima" National Academy of Music, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, p. 26.

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Example 1. Introduction, mm. 1-4 (strings, trumpets and horns)

The solo role of the saxophone is one of ostinato percussion on the note D on which the work, as well as the historical quotations, begin and end:

Example 2. Introduction, mm. 12-30, page 3 (saxophone excerpt)

The second theme, *molto rubato*, is in the character of a solo in *lamento* style and is marked by *glissandi* and rhetorical pauses that suggest sighing, accompanied by short pedal notes in the strings and special effects in the horn and trumpet:

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The image displays a musical score for a chamber ensemble, specifically Example 3, measures 88-93, page 17. The score is written for eight instruments: Bass Clarinet (B. Cl.), Trumpet in C (Tpt. in C), Cor Anglais in F (Cor. in F), Saxophone (Sax.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score features various musical notations, including dynamics (p), articulation (pizz.), and performance instructions such as 'frull senza suono', 'col palme', and 'div.'. The notation is complex, with many slurs and accents, indicating a highly technical and expressive piece.

Example 3. mm. 88-93, page 17

Each of these thematic segments is followed by transformational waves of the thematic material achieved through transpositions, inversions, retrogrades, permutations, rotations, insertions, melodic, rhythmic and textural mirrors, representing just as many structural archetypes used in all of Cornel Țăranu's works.

*Tiento* makes a sudden appearance in the second stage of the development through a *glissando* suggesting the temporal immersion in the historical past. The way out of it is also "glissed", like a slash, a cinematic *flash* suggesting a return to the present time. The "contemporary" commentaries of the solo saxophone superimposed over the historical quotation create that polymorphism of language defined as polystylism.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Irinel Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

ANTONIO DE CABEZON: TIENTO Renaissance modal language

177 Andante con moto 3/4

C. A.  
B. Cl.  
P. no.  
Sax.

Cornel ȚĂRANU “commentary”, serial-modal contemporary language  
**Example 4.** Mm.177-187, p. 33 (English horn and clarinet; piano and saxophone)

*Diferencias sobre un canto llano del Caualliero* is the second quoted segment. This time the reappearance of the Renaissance time is anticipated by symbolic timbral colours: celesta, glockenspiel and strings, as well as by the persistence of the note D played by the solo saxophone, like a kind of “call”, or attraction, or perhaps a struggle, or an aspiration to... the ideal of a long-lost beauty.

Cl.  
Fag.  
Ob.  
Cl.  
Fag.

**Example 5.** A. de Cabezon, *Diferencias*, quotation orchestrated by Cornel Țăranu

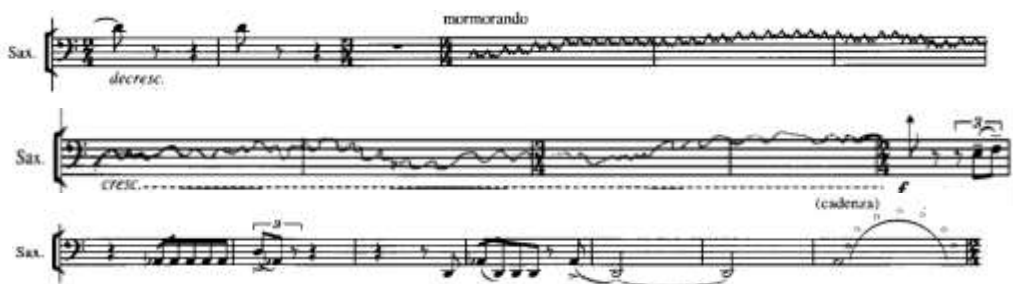
Consonance, balance, ideal beauty. The solo and orchestral interventions on clusters become fainter, culminating with the engagement of the entire orchestra in the Renaissance finale of an apotheotic solemnity as the two quotations are wrapped in a modern orchestration. A new beginning, again on the note D, heralds the varied recapitulation.

The recapitulation is a tour de force of the soloist: it contains *mormorando* effects in the saxophone tube, on the pedal notes of the strings and *glissando* on the piano strings, which prepare a short cadence spectacularly achieved solely through multiphonics:



The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Piano (Pno.), Vibraphone, Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), and Viola (Vla.). The Piano part is marked 'gliss. s. corde' and 'Andante rubato'. The other instruments are marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The score illustrates 'mormorando' effects, which are tremulous, wavy lines in the piano and string parts, and rhythmic patterns in the vibraphone.

**Example 6.** *Mormorando* effects, mm. 403-405, p. 67  
(piano, vibraphone, violin 1, violin 2 and viola)



The image shows three staves of saxophone music. The top staff is marked 'decrease.' and 'mormorando'. The middle staff is marked 'cresc.' and 'cadenza'. The bottom staff is marked 'cadenza'. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings.

Multisonics

**Example 7.** *Cadenza*, finale

The last occurrence of the quotation in the coda, along with the unison finale on the opening note D, seem to symbolize the ideal of unity of languages standing on seemingly irreconcilable historical positions, or perhaps "a nostalgia" for the primordial sound vibration embodying the divine beauty from which and in which

we will reunite. A cyclical return that reunites the present, past and future in a polystylistic work with multiple hidden and revealed meanings.

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