

Sergei Rachmaninoff & Andrei Tarkovsky: Transdisciplinary Interpretative Perspectives in Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra

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ABSTRACT

The transdisciplinary approach for the analysis of a musical text has an important role in understanding the message of the work. It brings depth to content, reveals elements that escape the specialized analytical scrutiny or that can not usually be observed in an interdisciplinary analysis. These details can significantly influence the performing act, from choosing the tempo to organizing the work's interpretative architecture. In the center of this study is the analysis model used by Dmitri Salînski for the analysis of Tarkovski's movies, model that can be applied in the case of the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* composed by Sergei Rachmaninoff. This type of study consists of a mathematical approach to poetic content. The purpose of this approach is to seek new meaning and connections of a semantic nature that could enrich and transform the interpretative perspective of the work.

Keywords

Composer, director, transdisciplinary, roots, sacrifice, exile

INTRODUCTION

The mission of a performer is to recreate a composition with each interpretation. The destiny of the work itself depends on the interpreter's informational, emotional and spiritual experiential knowledge and how he chooses to use them in the construction of the interpretation of the work. If the author has the role of transmitting a "seed" from the Creation to the others, receiving information "directly" from an intuitive source, for the interpreter the mission of recomposing the message in a form as close as possible to the original is very complex and often, tedious. In the case of the creator, it is a top-down journey from essence to materialization in a form understandable to the majority. In the case of the interpreter, it is the reverse, bottom-up journey in which, through the musical materialization of a musical page, he seeks the way to the essence, to the Source. Romanian pianist Gabriel Amiraș asserts that everything that needs to be known about the interpreted music is included in the score, there is nothing to add, it is only the "musical text" that must be read correctly. This means the correct decipherment of the code, of the message behind the musical signs, and for this it requires exhaustive knowledge, experience, wisdom, imagination, talent, patience and discipline.

This article proposes an approach to interpreting *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* by Sergei Rachmaninoff using a transdisciplinary comparative method based on elements

from the film director Andrei Tarkovsky's creation. The image, the rich symbolism of Tarkovsky's films and the ideas the director exposed on various occasions (interviews, books, diary etc.) can make an important contribution to understanding and rendering the message contained in Rachmaninoff's music. The analysis within urges incursions into the artist's own universe, exploring the depths of soul, music being the one that can establish the common points of resonance between the creator and the performer.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research develops by "mirroring" the two artists: Serghei Rahmaninov and Andrei Tarkovski. By mirroring, common elements are reflected while hidden elements are revealed, where one occults, the other brings to light. What Tarkovsky has managed to convey through image and words casts a revealing light on what Rahmaninov expressed through sounds and vice-versa. The two artists have many elements in common, from their native lands or "roots" and living in exile or "uprooting" to symbols, compositional structures and artistic and spiritual aspirations. For fundamenting the research, printed materials (books, articles, scores), video (films, documentaries) and web resources were used. In the analysis of Rhapsody on a Paganini theme, the model used by Dmitri Salinkin for the analysis of Tarkovsky's films will be applied.

Roots

Born in Russia, one beside Novgorod (Rachmaninoff), the other by Lurievez (Tarkovsky), at a time span of 59 years apart of each other, in two different periods: Rachmaninoff during the time of the Russian bourgeoisie, Tarkovsky under communism already well implemented, they had a similar childhood experience – an idyllic paradise that links the beginning of the first existential coordinates. Both places have an abundant history behind, Novgorod being recorded somewhere in the 9th century, and Lurievez, the town near the village where Tarkovsky was born, in the 13th century. Both places had periods of flourishing, and Lurievez was said to have had at some point sixty churches, compared to the present time when there are only three left (Dulgheru, 2014, p. 19).

Dacha (the estate), the endless fields, the animals around the house and, very importantly, the sound of the bells of the churches, make up the "soul home" of the two artists. The house occupies an important place in Tarkovsky's films. Film critic Elena Dulgheru describes Tarkovsky in her book *Tarkovsky - the film as a prayer* as the archetype of the house in Tarkovsky's creation: "The house defines a space of happy, maternal interior, a territory of safety" (Dulgheru, 2014, p. 91). Rachmaninov speaks of Ivanovka, where his Russian home was and where he composed most of his works, in the following terms: "Every Russian has a close connection with the earth; it may come from the instinctive need for solitude; the endless fields of grains that stretch as far as you can see with your eyes, the smell of the earth, everything that grows and flourishes... I feel so good there, I can work, I can work hard; most of my music is written there and, after I left Russia, the music was inspired from there. There, finally, I found happiness!" (*Harvest of sorrow*, 1998, 00:12:30). It is noticeable that in both descriptions happiness and fulfillment are related to a physical place, to its energy, with all the elements present there.

In order to better understand the importance of the "roots," the extreme, the uprooting, the exile is mirrored. Tarkovsky speaks of the Russians' attraction to their

native places, their culture, their families, their origins using terms like fatal, tragic and impossible. Rachmaninoff is the perfect example of what this inadequacy means: after leaving Russia he wrote six works in twenty-five years, and only two of these works were written in America (*Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 4* and *Symphonic Dances*), the other works being composed in Europe, where he spent his holidays.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia is considered by Tarkovsky, and not only, to be one of the important features of the Russian man. He describes it as a state of mind that affects those who leave Russia as an extremely powerful, fatal attachment. In the past nostalgia was considered an illness from a medical standpoint, described as the pain caused by the longing to return (Dulgheru, 2014, p. 105). Its significance, however, goes much further: "the disease of exile is, after all, the turmoil of a consciousness that has lost the way of returning to its divine origins, is the existentialist syndrome specific to the contemporary man" (Idem).

Thus, from an external administrative conditioning external to the self is the transition to deeper areas, which belong to the interior of each one, aiming at the spiritual area. Russian culture is one of a romantic type in which intuition and the emotional element play a determining role. Intuition is closely tied to faith, and it has been playing an important role in Russian culture since prehistoric times. Dmitri Salinski, in his book *Tarkovsky's Canon*, says of Tarkovsky's work that it "follows the Russian spiritual direction of God's search and the cosmic philosophy of the beginning of the twentieth century" (Salinski, 2012, p. 16).

From Tarkovsky's perspective, the Russian intellectual class was "guided by consciousness, incapable of self-satisfaction, animated by compassion for the decline of the surrounding world and devoted to the search for faith, ideal, good," all of these elements being embodied in the personality of *Gorceakov*, the main character from the film *Nostalgia* (Tarkovski, 2003, p. 208). Of course, these traits represent at the same time the characterization of both Tarkovsky and Rahmaninov.

Tarkovsky was, above all, a spiritual man, an explorer, who had extensive knowledge of the world's religions, from Orthodoxy to Islam, from anthroposophy to distant Oriental religions. This thirst for knowledge was animated by the need to evolve, to "go beyond good and evil." Art is his instrument of probing, the bond between Heaven and Earth, is the one that "makes the infinite tangible" . . . "The absolute can be achieved only by faith and creation" (Tarkovski, 2003, p. 39). The director has always been conscious of his artistic role in the world, and has dedicated his life to fulfilling his mission. He speaks of this in the following way:

In artistic creation, personality does not serve itself, but the other person serves a common higher idea. The artist is always a servant who always tries to pay for the gift, the miracle. Modern man does not want to make sacrifice, although the true affirmation of the ego is only through sacrifice (Tarkovski, 2003, p. 38).

This permanent reporting to something superior, above the human condition, hides in the shade a permanent feeling of self-discontent. This state, which the director describes very clearly in a press conference, is the "golden section" of his personality. Asked by a reporter, where he takes his spiritual energy, the source of his creative work,

Tarkovsky answers simply: "From the fact that I do not like myself" (The exile and death of Andrei Tarkovsky, 1988, 1:14:05). A shocking response, hard to accept and understand, so it must come with explanations: "This discomfort motivates me to be careful about other things, makes possible steps by which I get away from myself, it allows me not to take the energy from me, but from what surrounds me" (Idem).

For Sergei Rahmaninov, spiritual quests meant a struggle of the soul, a diving into the depths of the ocean of human experiences. His path towards "infinity" is tumultuous, crosses the darkest areas of the soul, is disturbing, sprinkled with moments of illumination. The whole universe of Rahmaninov revolves around the *Heart*: "Music should bring relief, heal the mind and soul, it can not only be rhythm and color, it must reveal in a simple way the feelings of the heart" (Harvest of Sorrow, 1998, 1:18:45). His concern is mainly about what lies beyond death: fear of the unknown, the area "beyond good and evil."

There are two different manifestations of light and shadow in the personalities and creation of the two. Tarkovsky is dominated by *Light*, the desire to ascend, to "escape from the ego," the engine being placed in the shadow, in self-discontent, while at Rahmaninov the dominant is the *Shadow*, the manifestation of personal quests, also triggered by inner discontent, the light shining through softly, as a secondary layer. Where Rahmaninov looks with fear – if there is anything beyond death – Tarkovsky ventures boldly and securely (leaving his ego behind gives him courage), considering it a natural mission of man to strive with "faith" towards that area, death being just a gate to something else, not at all a final or something terrifying. For Tarkovsky, ignorance and lack of faith are far more terrifying and unwise compared to death or what is beyond it. The reason that animates both of them at a higher level is the desire for unity, for transcendence of duality: the eternal problem of humanity.

Apocalypse or *Dies Irae* and 1+1=1

Dies Irae is the leitmotif in Rachmaninoff's creation, his super-theme, as director Constantin Stanislavsky would say. It is found in composer's creation since the first opuses (the *Prince Rostislav* symphonic poem, written in 1891 when he was still a student at the Conservatory) until his last works (*Dies Irae* appears in five of the six works written outside Russia). It is obvious that this motif has a deep meaning, being embedded in the musical DNA of the composer.

Dies Irae is a Gregorian chant that has his origins in a Latin poem from Middle Ages. It was introduced into the Catholic liturgical services as the Mass of the Dead. After 1964, it was removed from all the church rituals, except for the liturgy for the Day of All Souls. It is associated with the Last Judgment Day, inspired by the texts of the Apocalypse (Rev. 20: 11-15, bibliaortodoxa.ro version).

Starting from composer's statements which state that music is the expression of his most hidden thoughts and the need to compose is, in fact, the need to transform these thoughts into sounds, one can explore the path in the opposite direction (*Harvest of Sorrow*, 1998, 1:30:33). What does his music convey about these thoughts and what does *Dies Irae* say in *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, for example? Revelation, the Last Judgment Day, Death, humanity has to pay for its sins... these first images induce fear, a serious attitude, in opposition to the glow of Paganini's *caprice* theme and the virtuosity generated by it. *Dies Irae* casts a dark shadow on the brightness of this theme, leads it to

the abyssal areas, sometimes directly, sometimes suggested in the subtext. Thus it is outlined one of the reasons why a spectacular, virtuoso approach to this work is perhaps not the most recommended. To the question of why was the composer so preoccupied with this subject, a response, at least in part, can be found in a conversation that Rachmaninoff had with Marietta Shaginjan, after Alexandr Scriabin's death:

It was a time when I was a little scared of any gangsters, thieves, epidemics, but at least there was always a way to deal with them. What scares me here is the feeling of uncertainty; fear of the thought that there might be something beyond death. I would rather rot and disappear than know that there is something hidden in the dark after you went to the cemetery... I have never desired immortality for myself. People are degrading, aging, eventually reconcile with themselves. But if there's anything there, that scares me a lot (This quote titled *Rachmaninoff and Shaginjan* was published on the *Voice of Russia* radio station website on June 26, 2006, retrieved on April 14, 2013).

Fear of the unknown and the preoccupation with what happens to the soul of man after death find their transposition in sound within *Dies Irae*. Rachmaninoff, the man, seeks harmony, unity, but does not dare to hope, to "lift" his head to that area that could mean peace, fulfillment, paradise, salvation. He would, instead, prefer to abolish the spirit into total disintegration, being the prisoner of duality, of inner separation. Of course, it is quite possible that over time the composer changed nuanced his ideas, however it is certain that the contradictory feelings have constantly shone forth from his music, throughout his life, to the very end, a sign that balance is difficult to reach.

The subject of Revelation is also present in Tarkovsky's creation in a different light. The director describes thus the Apocalypse: "As I have already said, in my opinion, it is an image of the human soul, with its responsibilities and obligations... But it would be wrong to believe that Revelation exclusively carries a punitive message. Maybe its main message is hope... There is hope in human ignorance" (Dulgheru, 2014, pp. 287-288). It can be observed how the same concern reflects two opposing attitudes: the unknown at Rachmaninoff generates fear, while at Tarkovsky means hope. Tarkovsky, subjected to the same earthly rules of duality, struggles and strives for the attainment of unity and urges others to do the same. He understands that the phenomenon of separation is the source of unhappiness, be it the internal separation of an individual or the separation between people. In *Nostalghia*, the fear of Revelation is overcome by sacrifice through fire – self-imolation. *Domenico's* last words, before imolation, urge people towards unity: "If you want life not to be extinguished, we must hold our hands together... People must return to unity, not to remain separated" (*Nostalghia*, 1983, 1:44:16). $1 + 1 = 1$ means Unity, the transcendence of the dual nature, the harmonizing of contradictions.

Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini and Nostalghia

The choice of *Nostalghia* for the purpose of discovering new ways to discern meaning in *Rhapsody's* music is based on the following elements:

- Both works are composed in exile;
- Both were realized towards the end of their lives, being the penultimate opuses in the creation of both artists;

- Created half a century after, Tarkovsky's film can contribute substantially to the understanding of the semantic meanings hidden in *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*.

The present article is based on the detailed analysis of *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* from the author's doctoral thesis entitled *The Russian Piano School in the first half of the 20th century – profiles of great pianist composers*, based on the *Nostalghia* film critic Dmitri Salĩnski and presented in the book named *Tarkovsky's Canon*.

***Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* - summary analytical incursion**

Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini is based on the theme of the famous *Caprice no. 24* for violin, composed by Nicolo Paganini. Thanks to the dramatic, spectacular melody and the fact that it is written in the form of a theme with variations which leaves space for development with unlimited potential, it is one of the most "quoted" themes in the history of the music that followed. Composers such as Liszt, Brahms, Schumann, and Lutosławski have enriched the piano literature with true masterpieces, originating with this theme.

In comparison to his predecessors, Rachmaninoff brings as a novelty element the superposition of two musical genres – the *rhapsody* and the *theme with variations*. It retains the form of the theme and variations as the main structure, using the "freedom" of the *rhapsody* in certain situations. Rhapsody elements give shape flexibility, create space for reflection and, most importantly, open the door for *Dies Irae*.

The introduction of *Dies Irae* is Rachmaninoff's most important element of originality in the work. Paganini's caprice has a secular character, profane; it is a work of virtuosity, shining, spectacular. Introducing a sacred theme, such as *Dies Irae*, changes radically the perspective. What was spectacular before is now transformed into drama, the shine of virtuosity receives macabre shades, what was an elegant dance before becomes now a dance of Life and Death, and the examples continue. From the midst of this tumult there arises, in the 18th variation, a ray of light: Hope – the sublime moment of the work, the one who brought the fame of the work around the world. The theme of the caprice appears in reversed form. Reversing the motif, using the major tonality, transforming the character from an energetic, masculine, dynamic one into a dreamlike, feminine, particularly warm and expressive are elements that materialize the principle of duality in sound form. However, this moment does not last long, there are only two and a half minutes of hope, after which the composer returns to the previous turmoil with even more intensity. The theme of the caprice dominates the work until the end, *Dies Irae* appearing explicitly only in the last variation, superimposed on Paganini's theme.

The *Nostalghia* film

Nostalghia presents the story of the Russian poet *Andrei Gorceakov*, arriving in Italy to investigate the traces of an unknown Russian composer who lived in the 18th century. Being a serf, he was at one point in Italy for musical studies, sent by his master. Once he felt the feeling of freedom and recognition of value, he chose not to return to Russia. This story, which in the film remains in the shadow, reflects the story of the director's life: undermined in his own country, permanently censored, recognized outside the country,

then left for Italy, culminating in the decision not to return to Russia, after the release of *Nostalghia*.

Main character's pursuit of the exploration quest opens up much broader and deeper horizons. The issue of duality and of separation is dealt with by reference to cultural differences – European culture versus Russian culture, social differences – women's position in the Western (independent) versus Russian culture (man-dependent, lives in the shadow), degradation of faith and spirituality in the West (*Domenico* is considered insane because he wants to save the world) versus the spirituality of the Russian people who are in the "search for God" and have, still, a faith.

Nostalghia is a movie with few characters, the action is static but with a very strong presence. Characters become a reason for meditation, for pondering; frames create the psychological context; each element has a complex significance and refers to the fundamental existential problems of mankind. For example, *Gorceakov* symbolizes the problem of separation, inadaptability and self-immolation. Once in Italy, in the environment of the Italian culture which he studied at home and which he admires, he realizes that he is in fact an alien to that culture, that he can not assimilate it and can not pass on, to his own world, the accumulated impressions. The character thus becomes aware of the fact that the direct personal experience, the connection with the environment in which a man is born, grows, forms his roots, is the only one that remains over time, and the assimilation of another culture is an illusion. The attachment to family, natal places is suggested in the film through a frame of the archetype of the house – one of the most important elements in Tarkovsky's art; it appears in key moments and has associated specific music – the popular song *Kumiski*, which deals with the story of a woman who lost her husband in the war.

Eugenia, the woman who accompanies *Gorceakov* on his journey through Italy, symbolizes the feminine nature from a Western perspective. She, in fact, through her qualities – independent, alone, without children – highlights the qualities of the woman in Russia, embodied in the film by the main hero's wife – gentle, silent, pregnant (fertility – life – fulfillment of purpose).

Domenico, the math professor whom the world regards as insane, plays an essential role in the film. He is the one that triggers the transformation of the hero by the power of example. Self-sacrifice by self-immolation gives courage to *Gorceakov* to realize the ritual through which he can find his salvation, his peace. Not by accident, Tarkovsky uses a musical theme from Beethoven's 9th Symphony – *Ode to Joy* – for that moment. *Domenico* symbolizes Hope – that kernel of faith, of "insanity" that can turn things around, in the last moment, when everything seems to be lost.

Comparative analysis of works' architecture

In *Tarkovsky's Canon*, Dmitri Salĩnski takes a step towards transdisciplinarity, in that he approaches the analysis of the film from the point of view of poetry and mathematics. He seeks new meanings, hidden in the film's metric, in his poetic structure. At the same time, the author points out that the syntactic and semantic analysis of the film does not take into account the mathematical model and that this analytical territory deserves more attention. The author wrote about these things in 2009 (Salĩnski, 2012, p. 23). Following the analysis of *Nostalghia*, Salĩnski reached the following conclusions:

- The film's construction is symmetrical. The author "folds" the film, dividing it into equal segments (first in two, then in four equal parts of time) and discovers important connections and correspondences that escape a linear assessment. The film lasts for two hours, which are mathematically divided into quarters. The scene of the child who sees the world for the first time after seven years of isolation and asks his father if what's going on in front of him is the beginning or the end of the world is the axis that divides the film in half (minute 60-61). At the second folding, at the quarters of the film, an extremely interesting element appears: at minute 30 unfolds the image of a pregnant wife laying on the bed. Its round, luminous contour is like a cupola. On the other side of the axis, at minute 90, appears the image of the cathedral of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome – the heart of the Western (Catholic) spiritual life. In the first part of the film, shortly after its start, the earthly world is presented through elements related to the female principle such as birth and children, punctuated by the priest through the question addressed to *Eugenia* – "And you want a child?" The scene is takes place in a church, where women went to pray at the Madonna del Parto to get pregnant. The scene takes six minutes. In the mirror, before the end of the film, there is the scene where *Gorceakov* fulfills the ritual of crossing the empty basin with the lit candle. Salinski sees some interesting correspondences here: the dry basin space corresponds to the cathedral in the first sequence while *Gorceakov's* death corresponds to the need to give life (the scene lasts eight minutes). The two constants are symmetrically positioned on the horizontal axis of the film.
- Calculation of the Golden Ratio reveals unprecedented aspects of how Tarkovsky sees this area within a work of art. In *Nostalghia*, at the main point of the Golden Ratio, exactly at minute 72, there is a scene in which *Eugenia* reads *Gorceakov* from a Russian composer's letter, in which he speaks of nostalgia and the choice to not return to Russia. It is the moment in which the director "actually" presents the theme of the film – the reason why *Gorceakov* is in Italy and nostalgia. The surprise element, however, occurs when *Gorceakov* begins to bleed from his nose. This reaction appears as a physical materialization of the soul "illness," nostalgia. The fact that Tarkovsky places the human vulnerability, the pain, in the area of the Golden Section is shocking, contrary to the typical constructions. The explanation can be found in his statement, quoted at the beginning of the article – because of his displeasure, he finds his resources to lift himself out of self-complacency. This attitude is found in Asian philosophy, where *yang* is born in the middle of *yin* and vice versa. Out of darkness, light is born and vice versa. The director, not only lived, felt and was conscious of it, but turned it into a fundamental creation principle. In the Reversed Golden Ratio at minute 46, there is another key moment of the film – *Gorceakov's* entry into *Domenico's* home, the moment when his destiny is radically changing. The author concludes:

Binary fragments lay down the fundamental principles of existence, expressing the static aspect of the subject, while the golden ratio expresses the dynamic and material aspects, even with a negative focus - almost hidden in *Nostalghia*, more evident in other films ... (Salinski, 2012, p. 34).

Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini can be divided into three sections, on a fast-slow-fast pattern, organization that refers to the structure of the instrumental concert. The first section is comprised of variations I-X, second section of variations XI-XVIII, and the last section of variations XIX-XXIV. Viewed as a whole, the architecture of the work is balanced, the construction of the climactic moments are well contoured, with periods of accumulations and resolution; each section ends clearly. The work encompasses six climactic points and seven minimum points. These have been taken into consideration on the account of their emotional load, the context in which they emerge and the elements through which they are expressed (dynamic, agogic, harmony etc.).

The semantic climaxes are distributed as follows: M1 – variation XVIII, M2 – variation XXII, M3 – variation XXIV, M4 – variation X, M5 – variation XIV and M6 – variation V. The second half of the work features a more agglomerate positioning. The semantic minimums are the following: m1 – variation XVII, m2 – between variations XVIII and XIX (in orchestra), m3 – variation XXII, m4 – variation XI, m5 – variation I.

From the analysis model used by Salinski we used the division of the work into eight equal segments as well as the calculation of the Golden Section and its reverse point. This scheme overlaps with the structure outlined above – the three large sections in which the maximum and the minimum semantic variations and segments are divided. From this overlapping results the following:

- Rachmaninov does not subject the form to mathematical precision, as Tarkovsky does in his films, however still respects proportions to a significant extent. The theme with variations is a rather strict form at its basis, which traditionally develops geometrically, symmetrically, progressively. Its inclusion in the rhapsody genre framework gives it the degree of freedom necessary to express the intentions of the composer. It may be said that Rahmaninov's need to express certain things shaped the musical form, leading it to a new evolutionary stage.
- Dividing the work into eight equal sections by number of measures it can be seen how important points, whether they are of minimum or maximum, are located before or after the "symmetrical zone."
- The Golden Ratio is located within the 18th variation, at the end of the slow section. The deviation from mathematical calculations is fifty-five measures, which means two variations away. The main argument in considering the Golden Ratio in the 18th variation is based on semantic considerations supported by the writing elements. The reversed theme presented in *Db major* brings, for the first and only time, *Light* in the work, *Hope*, embodies the feminine energy, gentle, emotional, warm, even fiery. This sublime poetic moment "breaks" the rhythm of the struggle and the tumult from before. The variation is a culmination in all of the parameters: the melodic-harmonic novelty is supported by the dynamic elements – the theme subtly turns into *pianissimo* as the light that rises from the abyssal areas of the previous variation and grows to an explosion of light energy, reaching *fortissimo*, and then it gradually dies off, like a flame that exhausts its burning. This moment can be "compared" to *Domenico* in Tarkovski's film. Both themes suggest *Hope*, the escape from the troubled areas of the soul, curing the "illness" of the spirit. The difference in approach between the two artists depends on how their works evolve after exhausting the role of the two "characters" (the

ending of the variation, respectively *Domenico's* death by sacrifice). In the case of the *Rhapsody*, the turmoil comes back, with much greater power, like a snowball that grows towards the end of the work, while in Tarkovsky's movie, *Domenico's* death changes the direction of the film towards reconciliation, although by death in *Gorceakov's* case.

- The reverse of the Golden Ratio is found in the Xth variation, at a distance of nineteen measures from where it would have been mathematically placed. This variation is part of the group built around the *Dies Irae* theme (variations VII-X). This group of variations deserves particular attention, due to the influence of the medieval motif appearing both frontal, explicit as well as occult, hidden in the subtext.

In the 7th variation, the composer introduces the original motif from *Dies Irae*, in half values, *meno mosso* tempo, thus reaching the length of a musical sentence. The theme is assigned to the solo instrument. On a secondary level, the orchestra echoes the theme of Paganini's caprice, in augmented values – eights, in equal rhythm (eliminates the dotted rhythmic formula). The overlapping of the two musical themes creates unity, the sound appears as a block infused with the apocalyptic nuances of *Dies Irae*, the theme of the caprice loses its shine, rather similar to a funeral march or a *dance macabre*.

In variations VIII-IX, the *Dies Irae* theme no longer appears explicitly, however its influence is obvious. The theme of the caprice is brought back in tempo I, in chords, still preserving the equal values, elements from which results a cumbersome, oppressive sound. The apocalyptic atmosphere constantly increases in the next variation, where other elements are exploited: rhythm and harmony. Overlapping the binary to ternary rhythm (one distributed to the solo instrument, the other to the orchestra), in a contradicting form, creates a tumultuous, agitated, conflicting, gloomy atmosphere. The impetuous rhythm "destroys" the melody, leaving from the theme only the main harmonic pillars, these too modified by the introduction of chromatisation.

The augmented fourth appears in two hypostases:

- tonal *A-D#*, (m. 329) where *D#* is an ornament note for *E*, justified later, in the full chord of measure 341.
- modal *E-A#* (measure 331), in the Lydian mode on *E*. The writing evolves from one in unison octaves to one in chords (piano), being permanently supported by the orchestra. The dynamic construction is in waves, with massive energy releases in intensively chromatic cascades of the piano.

In Variation X, the *Dies Irae* motif reappears in a more serious register than the first time, with more gruesome, macabre sounds that explode in the orchestral tutti (mm. 376-382). From a semantic point of view, it can be said that, in this section, the image of the Apocalypse is widely developed in its dark terms – an image with a strong transformational role. In his Ph.D. dissertation *The Russian Musical School in the first half of the 20th century – profiles of great pianist composers*, the author makes a reference to Carlos Castañeda, who talks about the relationship between Man and Death in the following terms:

"Death is our eternal companion," said Don Juan with a very serious air. It's always on our left, at an arm's length... Death is the only intelligent counselor we have. Each time you feel, as you always do, that everything goes wrong and that you are about to be annihilated, turn your head to your Death and ask if it is so. Death will tell you that you are wrong; that nothing matters aside for its touch. Your death will tell you, "I have not touched you yet" (Castaneda, 2004, pp. 52-53).

If this section is used as an image-symbol of Death and the 18th variation as a symbol of Hope, an interesting interpretation formula is reached. Compared to the Tarkovskyan model, it appears in the mirror: in the Inverted Golden Ratio section appears the "negative" element and in the Golden Ratio the opposite element. This duality can be further extrapolated to masculine-feminine, dark-light, death-life, yin-yang etc. This vision of the architecture of the work comes as an argument in favor of approaching the *Rhapsody* from the perspective of the significance of the secondary theme, *Dies Irae*, before Paganini's brilliant caprice.

The structural unit at the level of the work is observed, first of all, in the relationship between the solo instrument and the orchestra. The way the composer distributes the main elements between the two "entities" is quite impressive. If symmetry is systematically avoided at the level of section partitioning, it compensates reachly as far as the role of the the pianist and the orchestra are concerned. At any point in the work, if a frame stop is made, one can see unity, complementarities. Although the piano and the orchestra have well-defined roles, they act together as an indestructible whole. Some examples in this sense are: the overlapping of the two themes, in the VIIth variation (*Dies Irae*-piano, caprice-orchestra) and in the XXIVth variation, in reverse form (*Dies Irae*-orchestra, caprice-piano), the overlapping of the polyphonic with the homophonic writing in the same example of overlapping themes, the inclusion of the piano in the orchestral tutties, in variations X and XIV which, although optional, all the pianists choose to play, as without piano the sound would not be complete.

Another element that contributes to the general feeling of unity is the use of moments of symmetry at the level of the work. Such a moment is realized between the beginning and the end – the final motif of the introduction is identical to the one at the end of the work, the first being distributed to the orchestra and the second to the piano. This symmetry, this arch of the form of the whole is also found in Tarkovsky's film – the image of the Russian house appears both at the beginning and the end, while the musical motifs used support the images; the pop song associated with the house opens and closes the movie, as is the sequence of Verdi's *Requiem* which is associated with the space in exile.

The use of the caprice theme in reverse form within the XVIIIth variation is also a kind of symmetry at the thematic level by mirroring the main theme. It could be interpreted as the alter ego of the caprice theme, the one who has the mission to "oppose" the dark *Dies Irae*. The caprice theme and its inversion can be considered as a sound representation of the personality of the composer while *Dies Irae* is the voice of inner quests, of fear, of pain, of nostalgia, in a word, of all that won't give him peace. In essence, all these coexist, they live in the same interior space, the drama of man coming from the fact that he perceives them sequentially, one at a time, not simultaneously.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS. INTERPRETATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

The results of the analysis presented in this article revealed semantic connections that were not visible through other types of analysis. These connections directly impact the view both overall as well as regarding the way sections are related to each other. Awareness regarding the "weight" points of the work and the way they relate to each other is made even at great distances as is the case with the two points of the Golden Ratio. Variations X and XVIII give a much clearer picture of the whole and helps to construct a "lucid" interpretation. This conscious construction represents the resistance pillars of the work. In this way, the performer/interpreter's mission of "rebuilding" the composer's sonic edifice becomes truly authentic.

Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini is still a misunderstood work. Interpreters are easily caught in the "net" of the spectacular, being enchanted by the vitality of Paganini's caprice theme and the high level of virtuosity of the work. These elements alone would have been perfectly valid in another context – if there had not been the *Dies Irae* theme. However, as it has been observed during the analysis, *Dies Irae* completely transforms the entire message of the work and leads it into a much deeper and meaningful area. Understanding the subtext has direct implications in choosing the tempo, the way harmonic elements are understood and rendered, the dynamic construction and, most importantly, in the artist's attitude towards the work. Such a work obliges introspection, searching for personal answers to be able to convey the message further.

Using mathematical models of analysis and/or elements specific to other arts (cinematography, poetry, theater, arts, architecture, etc.), research can lead to certain novel points of congruence or divergence, but more than that, it may be the way to the "area" that is beyond forms. Inside the elements of language that make up the form, there are keys to understanding the subtext, as pianist Gabriel Amiraş accounted. Going into the intrinsic area is, however, a complex work, long-lasting, which requires total involvement from the performer/interpreter and, most importantly, requires a permanent concern for his or her own development and evolution. Starting from the idea that music is a language, arises the question "what does it express?" Given the fact that it is a non-verbal language operating with sound frequencies, the possibilities are extremely wide. It can convey rational concepts, images, emotions, feelings, spiritual experiences. The fact that the sound frequencies go beyond words and the ability to decode messages rationally, makes it possible to communicate via other channels such as emotions ("from heart to heart" in colloquial terms) or at a spiritual level.

The performer/interpreter's responsibility in front of a score is to get closer to it with the greatest awareness he or she is capable of at the time. This means: total openness, without issuing judgments in the first phase, pre-informative preparation (ongoing self-education), assuming the choices made for that work (involvement with utmost seriousness in the study of the score), self-exigency – the instrument that won't allow the performer to "hurt" the music through negligence, ignorance or superficiality.

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