

## Archetypal Polysemies in *Jocuri II* by Sabin Pautza

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**Abstract:** - To the Romanian composers in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the "Enescian model" became a stylistic vector of strategic reference, as the composer's openness towards universality stimulated their efforts in identifying, decanting and refining the musical archetypes. Sabin Pautza is one of those composers who cultivated intensely the ludic dimension of the compositional enterprise. His work *Jocuri II* (*Dances II*) resorts to the dialogic essence of the old *concerto grosso*, testing both the formative-combinatorial resources of the sonorous language as well as the regeneration of the musical expression by emancipating modally and harmonically certain melodies belonging to the archaic stratum of the Romanian musical culture of oral tradition.

**Key-Words:** - archetype, mode, generative-melodic tree, symmetry, repetitive minimalism, multivalent harmonisation, *ostinato*, mixtures

In the case of South-Eastern European composers, the forms and language elements established by the century-long tradition of Western music were strongly imbued with the treasure of the national musical cultures of an oral tradition which have remained a phenomenon open to stylistic decanting and refining.

Sabin Pautza exhibits a wide compositional availability, experimenting with various sorts of musical languages. But the conceptual link and the pragmatic consistency of his oeuvre stem undoubtedly from his intact connection with the ancient indigenous musical source, an eloquent proof in this respect being his *Concerto grosso for string quartet and chamber orchestra*, dubbed *Jocuri II*.

From the semantic and phenomenological branching of the **ludic**, Sabin Pautza retained either the **generative-combinatorial** instance of the language elements – successfully experimented with in *Jocuri I* for string orchestra –, or the very meaning of **folk dance**, a genre typical of the Romanian folkloric area – masterfully explored in *Jocuri II*.

Therefore, there are **quotations**, actually melodies excerpted from **Béla Bartók's** collection *Jocuri din Bihor* (*Dances from Bihor*), which undergo a process of subtle harmonic-polyphonic recontextualisation, where certain resonances of Bartók's style from the famous *Romanian folk dances for orchestra* are quite transparent.

However, the surprise arises from the area of the instrumental **accompaniment** that reproduces faithfully the unique accompaniment called "țîitura" played by the *tarafs* [1] from Maramureș county, northern Romania, where one can distinguish perfect fourths/fifths, scordaturas, syncopic catenae, percussion effects folded on the "rhythms adjusted to the dance steps" and so on.

From this standpoint, the preclassical formula of *concerto grosso* – that facilitates the dialogue between the string quartet (*Concertino*) and the orchestra of the same timbral constitution (*Ripieno*) – appears to be an excellent choice, polarising the entire compositional enterprise thanks to its truly spectacular character.

Contrary to the rhapsodic appearances, the macroform of the genre has a four-part structure articulated according to criteria of thematic, agogic, rhetorical etc. contrast.

The first movement (*Vivace*) is a pentastrophic chain (**A, B, C, D, E, F/Coda**) where each section holds a certain **melodic emblem**. If we consider that, from this perspective, section **E** has double determination and the **Coda (F)** has its own formulation, then the chronology of the 1<sup>st</sup> movt. will circumscribe a total of seven genealogically identical melodic entities (**M1-M7**).

This plurimelodicism, conserved in its original data and extrapolated to the level of the entire *Concerto* demonstrates that the composer's temporal strategy follows a principle of **advancing through**

**juxtaposition** and not through transformation. Under these circumstances, the evolutionary process defined by the binomial “repetition-difference” will set the melodic **constant** in opposition to the harmonic-polyphonic **variables** of each context.

The *Concerto* starts abruptly in the essential simplicity of the archaic pair “fiddle-zongora” (or “fiddle-bratsche”), the functions and sonorities of the two instruments being taken over by the violin-violata in (solo) tandem. The semantic connection is according to the psychological impact, as the sonorous imagination is instantly caught up in the whirl of this ancient “hora” from Maramureş (section **A/a-b**, **M1**, bars 1-23).

**Fig. 1** S. Pautza – *Jocuri II*, 1st Movt., bars 1-23



The melodic configuration is an exceptional one: the non-transformational, **circular mobility** of the profile displays the existence of an obsessive **pivot-formula** around which gravitate several other minimal-repetitive formulas that are relatively stable (**note**: circle enclosure = pivot-formula; square enclosure = adjacent formula).

In fact, the first melodic formulation (**M1**) reflects concisely, at a microtemporal level, the principle of advancing through juxtaposition previously formulated in relation to the macrotemporal dimension of the discourse.

To be concrete: in the generic context of a Lydian **D**, the totality of melodic devices (marked by the unmistakable augmented fourth – a dialectic syntagm from Bihor county, north-western Romania derived from the “duplicitous” play of the 4<sup>th</sup> step, **G-G#**) – correlated to the totality of **rhythmical** protocells (defined by the presence of the dactyl, the anapest and the pyrrhic) interact on the background of a **non-evolving chronology** (which has as a structural invariable the pivot-formula) resembling an “open line segment” that has its *terminus* in the final cadential quasi-stereotype.

We have insisted upon the constitutive elements of the first folkloric quotation due to their **formative-strategic** value, a principle valid for the

entire **generative-melodic tree** of the *Concerto*'s 1<sup>st</sup> movt. (whose resources apply globally, as we shall see).

After a brief transition (bars 24-25), the first segment of section **B** (a/bars 26-33) suddenly engages the entire orchestral ensemble where the largest part of the *Concertino* group (violins I-II+viola) propel in a polyphonic-imitative manner a new melodic line (**M2**), while the *Ripieni* group is completely involved in the accompaniment structure.

**Fig. 2** S. Pautza – *Jocuri II*, 1st Movt., bars 26-33



Within the circular movement there is a new repetitive reference – the descending chromatic tetrachord **B-A-G#-F** –, an intonational entity that determines itself as a temporal sequence with its own structure and periodicity. In the context, the **pivot-formula** the size of a 2/4 measure will induce the phenomenon of **dephasing** (the positioning of a melodic picture in contradiction with the accents of virtual metrics). This **de-symmetrisation** of the periodicity determines, as the standard unit is consistent with the crotchet duration – the evolving grid: **1+2+2+1** and **1+4+1**, respectively (see ex. 2).

Due to the polyphonic contribution of the *Concertino* group (triple canonical *stretto*), this phenomenon will acquire new structural values. These ones are related either to the **polymetrical play** of the accents or to the **heterophonic movement** suggested by the imitative apparatus entering in unison.

The accompaniment of the *Ripieni* group experiences a first amplified moment where we can distinguish the rhythmically constant perfect tetrapentachords (oscillation at  $\downarrow\uparrow M2$ , **A-G-A**). On the background of this harmonic *ostinato* with obvious ludic touches, the foreground previously held by the melodic line is now taken over by unexpected cries named “îăpurituri” that have a comic function and are attributed *ad hoc* to a solo voice that brings even more complexity to the vertical rhythmical level due to the **order of its own accents**.

The structural-semantic premises outlined in section **B** will be detailed in the following section, **C** (bars 45-66), identifiable by a new folkloric quotation.

**Fig. 3** S. Pautza – *Jocuri II*, 1st Movt., bars 47-54

Originally a pentachord with *subsemitonium modi* centred on **G**, the melodic-incipit syntagm will be engaged in a “modulating” (translational) evolution that will determine the **triphase** structure of the entire quotation. The three cadential marks are edifying in this respect, as they establish the multipolar grid **G-C-A**, the caesural landmarks being set by semitone (**F#-G**; **B-C**), and the final landmark by Phrygian inflection (**B flat-A**).

By analogy with the previous section, the **b** segment (bars 55-66) will resign its melodic identity developing a **harmonic ostinato** complex projected integrally and chromatically.

The vertical organisation reflects how a principle of **intervallic symmetry** has been applied, materialised into a harmonic model based upon the stratification of two augmented chords extracted from the symmetrical mode **3:1** of cardinality 6.

**Fig. 4**

Exhausting the mode's six sounds, the matrix (poly)chord will be engaged in a divergent mixed movement (at the same time as the **originally-reversed** variants) from which will arise a sonorous surface with a global density of cardinality 12.

**Fig. 5**

Unlike sections **A**, **B** and **C**, the bistrophic character of the next syntactical segment, **D** (bars 67-85), no longer keeps the typical autonomous

rendering of the composing segments on the grounds of the alternation **melodic-harmonic** (accompaniment). Consequently, the melodic formulation **M4** will have a double extension as compared to its antecedents.

**Fig. 6** S. Pautza – *Jocuri II*, 1st Movt., bars 67-85

The above-mentioned quotation is set apart due to the specific **bipolar disjunction** of the segments **a+b**, a phenomenon which results from the symmetrical translation of the modal centres at an interval of  $\downarrow P5$  (**D-G**).

From an intonational point of view, we find again the Lydian-mixolydian constants of the modal tree that lies at the foundation of the entire *Concerto*, in association with the modal colour induced by the chromatic mode 3 (augmented second, on steps I-II: **D-E#**; **G-A#**), and from a rhythmical viewpoint an *ostinato* combination on subdivisions of the dactyl and anapest.

In its turn, the accompaniment brings forth a breath of fresh air by means of the double bass, reminding of a certain firm, rather rough, bow strike that seems to stem directly from the sonorities of the double bass (“gordună mare”, “broancă”) from Maramureş county.

In the next section (**E**, bars 85-111) the facts of the advancement are quite similar.

Starting with a rhetorical “signal”-like formula, **M5** – corresponding to segment **a** (bars 85-99) – evolves in a Lydian D with plagal allusions, where the fourth step is mobile (**G-G#**), accompanied by certain mixolydian inflections (oscillation **G-C**).

**Fig. 7** S. Pautza – *Jocuri II*, 1st Movt., bars 85-96

The extension of the pentachordic (melodic) availabilities to **heptachords** and, furthermore, the latter's **polychordal dilation** by the multiple infiltration of the mobile steps provide the accompaniment with the substance of an authentic

### multivalent harmonisation.

In a genuine rhetorical *descensio*, section **F**, the **Coda** (bars 112-145) launches the viola's **concluding soliloquy** – a final melodic formulation (**M7**) introduced discretely (*con sora*) in a very soft dynamics (*ppp*).

Instituted as a sort of modal-convergent prolongation on **A**, the debut **M7** insinuates the perpetuation of the Lydian, but relinquishes immediately this intent in favour of the chromatic mode 1. The profile of the line is familiar, but the minimal-repetitive expressions gain here some extra rhetoric generated by the frequent interpolation of the rests.

The **second movement** (*Andantino pocco rubato*) is a great bistrophic lied (*А-Ав*) whose moderate, somewhat fluctuating motion contrasts obviously with the alert kineticism of the 1<sup>st</sup> movt.

Section **A** (bars 146-159) opens with a suave, lyrical melody, played by the first violin of the *Concertino* group.

Fig. 8 S. Pautza, *Jocuri II*, 2nd Movt., bars 146-159

A typical instance of what we call (by neoclassical connection) an “accompanied monody”, the first section proves to be extremely significant for the manner in which the line is **harmonically enhanced**.

It is the case of this octaval anhemitonic **pentatonicism** with the reference sound on **A** which, due to the complementary contribution of the accompaniment, is integrated (included) into a mixolydian **heptachordic extension** with mobile steps (a polymodal convergent area): step 6: **F** (Aeolian) – **F#** (Dorian); step 3: **C** (Dorian/Aeolian) – **C#** (Ionian/mixolydian); step 7: **G** (mixolydian) – **G#** (Ionian/Lydian).

In a vertical-harmonic context, the mobility of the steps generates the chords' **bi-/multivalence**, a phenomenon that is consubstantial with the modal-harmonic concept.

Fig. 9

The homophonic writing becomes even more relevant due to a specific path dominated by **plagal** relationships where we can identify certain resonances belonging to well-established styles of harmonisation (Bartók, Drăgoi etc.):  $\downarrow 2$ : VII-VI-V-IV (bars 148-150);  $\uparrow 3$ : VI-I; VII-II (bars 154-155);  $\uparrow 5$ : IV-I (bars 153; 157).

Beside the already-mentioned phenomena (**multivalence**; **plagal importance**), the harmonic contextualisation of pentatonicism includes the phenomenon of oscillation at  $\uparrow \downarrow 2$ , active in cadential areas: caesural, segment a (bars 150-152) and final, segment **av** (bars 157-159). We note the “open” character of both cadences on step 5, **E**, and their possibility to induce the idea of a Dorian/Aeolian inflection with the temporary (transitive) shift of the modal centre on the upper fifth.

By contrast, section **B** (*Piu mosso*, bars 160-167) brings a change in the structural-rhetoric register by means of a more dynamic melody that has a chromatic substance mainly subject to the same harmonic treatment.

Fig. 10 S. Pautza, *Jocuri II*, 2nd Movt., bars 160-167

Fig. 11

A first evaluation of the new folkloric quotation indicates the structure of an octaval bichromatic heptachord on **A**, in plagal form, with a mobile 4<sup>th</sup> step (**D-D#**), whose active dualism in different octaves engages the occurrence of the augmented octave.

However, the two-phrase symmetry – established by the two cadences (caesural, 1<sup>st</sup> step, bar 163 and final, 5<sup>th</sup> step, bar 167) – allows a second interpretation (as plausible as the first) by means of the phenomenon of **bipolar translation** on  $\downarrow 5P$  (a phenomenon of a genuine modal-archaic origin).

In this case we will have two complementary heptachords, each with its reference pole: **1.** the octaval bichromatic heptachord, in plagal form, on **A**; **2.** the chromatic heptachord type 1, non-octaval, on **D**, with a final cadence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> step, **E**.

Although the new modal structure is more complex by comparison with the pentatonic section **A**, there are enough resources for a multivalent harmonisation, and the mobility of the steps generates, here as well, direct or latent oppositions of diminished octave.

Apart from the relevant chord polymorphism, it is the **relational perspective**, this time, that offers us further significant instances. Among these let us mention the concatenation by  $\uparrow m2$  of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> steps (chords **A** major-**B** flat major) – an intentional rhetorical allusion to the “**interrupted cadence**” from the tonal-functional harmony (bars 163-164) – and the final cadence by **subtone** that, related to the **A** *finalis*, takes not only the aspect of an “open cadence” (IV-V), but especially that of an archetypal **cadence from Bihor** (bars 166-167).

The latter macrosegment of the bistrophic architecture, **Av** (bars 168-214), consists of a section having a variational-harmonic character – with a four-phase structure: **Av+Av1+Av2+Av3** (bars 168-206) –, a section **B** – reduced to the single exhibition of the corresponding melody (bars 207-214) – and a **Coda** (bars 215-224) – a concluding paragraph circumscribed to a dilated time typical of a long-awaited repose of remembrance.

The focus of the four variational instances lies within the area of the harmonic closely followed by the timbral.

The climax of the harmonic comment is reached in variations **Av2+Av3** (bars 184-190; 191-206).

Apart from the specific effect of certain **shifting harmonies** (comparable to that obtained through the scordaturas from the accompaniment practice of some folk instrumental *tarafs*), we note the impact of the phenomenon of **pentatonic diatony chromatic neutralisation**, in a climactic context where all its components are dilated.

Even though the last chord prolonged by fermata subscribes to the closing rhetoric, the actual ending of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Movt. is greatly “delayed”: either by interpolating the segment **Bv** (bars 207-214) – a process of juxtaposing different tempos that highlight the ending’s free-narrative character, or by the occurrence of the real **Coda** (bars 215-224) – a structural-semantic reiteration and redefining of the beginning (**Av4**).

After the last sounds have died out, we will re-enter the typical **dance** atmosphere that has been prepared according to the old customs by means of an accompaniment formula that will be perpetuated invariably during the first section (**A**, bars 225-267) of the **3rd Movement** (*Giocosu*).

Initially occurring within segment **a** (bars 225-233), this beginning of **macro-ostinato** is structured

according to a double stratification of **polyrhythmic/ hemiolic** ratio: **3/2**.

On this background will evolve the **first folkloric quotation** of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Movt. which, given its structure and ethos, is perfectly integrated to the melodic (modal) generative tree of the entire *Concerto*.

**Fig. 12** S. Pautza, *Jocuri II*, 3rd Movt., bars 234-245



We observe, therefore, the same type of circular construction based on the juxtaposition of minimal-repetitive syntagms within a two-phrase structure (**b-b1**, bars 234-239; 240-245).

In the case of the melodies from Bihor county with a frequent cadence on the 2<sup>nd</sup> step (hence the phrase “cadence from Bihor”) the phenomenon of horizontal **bipolarity** is natural. That is why, in this case, after the caesural cadence on **C** (1<sup>st</sup> step), the final cadence will lie on **G** (2<sup>nd</sup> step). Besides, the cadential oscillation at  $\uparrow m2$  – generated by translational symmetry – goes beyond the dialectal significance we mentioned, as it is particularly active in the world of the Romanian archaic modalism.

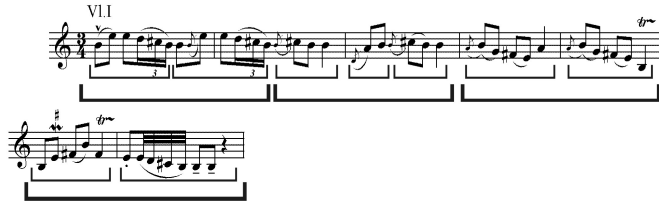
The second section **Av** (bars 246-260) will evolve according to the same premises, as the variations point out, on the one hand, the responsive engagement of the entire orchestral apparatus and, on the other hand, the “interference” of the “consonant” chords due to the major-minor dualism (reference point **C** and **F**, respectively) – another one of the composer’s “humourous key” who is especially receptive to the **scordaturas** in the accompaniment played by the *tarafs* in Northern Romania (the regions of Maramureş and Oaş).

This expressive formula with a “second beat” will become the focus of the final subsection, the **Coda** (bars 261-267), which is a conclusive moment ending suddenly in a suggestive fermata on the rest; the rhetorical significance of this abrupt ending being a radically discontinuous one. Thus, contradicting any expectations, section **B** (*Moderato*, bars 268-296) will open with a “mood” introduction (flageolets, appoggiaturas and trills combined with attacks in *glissando* and *pizzicato*) on whose background will evolve the second melodic formulation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Movt. (**b**, bars 274-280) – an octaval Dorian heptachord on E with a cadence on the 5<sup>th</sup> step of the mode (plagal area).

The division of the whole according to the

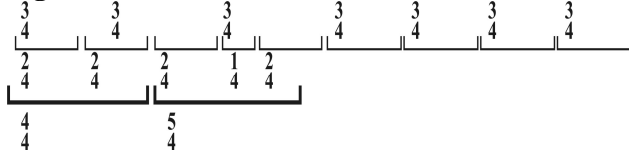
dialogic structure of the *concerto grosso* will allow the *Soli* group to lay out a melody from the lyrical register of the dance repertoire from Bihor, definable by the same **repetitive minimalism**.

**Fig. 13** S. Pautza, *Jocuri II*, 3rd Movt., bars 274-280



In the context of the virtually-ternary metric organisation, the cellular-motivic symmetry established on morphologically homogeneous surfaces will generate certain **dephasings**, the quotation chronology being overall subject to an expressive **latent polymetry**.

**Fig. 14**



The ending of section *B* is **paradoxical**, and the composer himself suggests two closures. The former refers to the reprise of the entire section, like *D'a Capo al Segno*. The latter sets the finale on the last fermata-chord of the same section. However, both variants will be connected by a totally unexpected continuation, a **retro-insertion** that is meant to be a **Coda** of the entire *B* (bars 303-314).

By evoking the entire melodic quotation from the **2<sup>nd</sup> Movt.** of the *Concerto*, centred on **B** and stylised in the sense of an *Andantino poco rubato-Moderato*, Sabin Pautza constructs a “finale” whose “autonomy” rather relates to the manner of interpolating a slow, highly-concentrated, quasi-formal movement in between the dynamic movements of some *concerti grossi* by Bach, Händel, Corelli or Vivaldi. Nevertheless, the segment proposed by the composer does not have a transitive, but a **conclusive** functionality, substituting *in extenso* the true final cadence of the **3<sup>rd</sup> Movt.**

However, the last movement of the *Concerto* reflects the intention of an apotheotic ending in the register of a progressive harmonic enhancement, and that is why the composer's choice will be the **theme with variations (A, A1, A2)**.

The chosen melodic formulation seems to stem from the ancient *Codex Caioni*, but it displays certain substantial similarities with all the other folkloric quotations included in the score of this *Concerto*.

**Ex. 15** S. Pautza – *Jocuri* II, P. IV, bars 315-326



Therefore, we come across the same architectural typology generated by the translation symmetry at  $5p\downarrow$  – a latent polar parallelism confirmed cadentially in the consistency of a bivalent (Aeolian-Dorian) modal availability.

The active principle of the vertical syntax will consist in the **cyclicity of harmonisation**, meaning the sequential covering of the entire tonal circle by means of descending perfect fifths.

This device generates **polytonal tension**, and the perpetuation of the sequential stereotype renders the harmonic level autonomous in comparison with the melodic one. And if it is engaged in a mixed-chromatic motion – as it happens in segment **a1v2** (bars 356-359) – the phenomenon will become radical.

*Jocuri II. Concerto grosso for string quartet and chamber orchestra* represents an **exceptional** achievement in the Romanian musical output; its architectonic structuralism, its modal-harmonic syntax, the timbral-orchestral management and, last but not least, the overall balance between **traditional** and **modern** represent arguments in favour of an original approach to Romanian music of an oral tradition, and **Sabin Pautza's** view is well grounded here in the traits of a symphonic character *avant la lettre*.

*References:*

- [1] *Taraf*: a type of Romanian music ensemble made up of *lautari* (instrumentalists) that play a sort of traditional music called *muzica lautareasca*.  
[2] *Zongoră*: a traditional instrument specific to Maramureş county, northern Romania, resembling a guitar

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