

TEO, ISSN 2247-4382
70 (1), pp. 110-119, 2017

Gheorghe Mandicevschi – Oratory – “And It Was at Six o’Clock”.

A Theological and Musical Analysis

Tiberiu Ardelean

Tiberiu Ardelean

“Aurel Vlaicu” University, Arad

Email: tiberiuardelean@yahoo.com

Abstract

Church music, the foremost border area of Liturgical Theology with Musicology, aims, by its very nature, to mediate the two domains, to create links between them in terms of the sounds of art and, ultimately, to enrich each sector by lending or take-over of concepts in the complementary field.

Oratory is a vocal-symphonic work on a religious or secular text that resembles the opera, the difference being that the oratorius does not need decoration or special costumes. Can be sung in churches or concert halls. It appeared as a musical genre in the 16th-17th centuries, maintaining it until now. Among the Romanian oratories we mention those of Paul Constantinescu, Christmas Oratory and Easter. The work And it was at six o’clock is written for male choir, being one of an invaluable compositional value for the liturgical period of Good Friday from the Savior Weeks of the Savior Jesus Christ.

Keywords

Church music, Liturgical Theology, Musicology, oratorius, Christmas Oratory and Easter

I. Introduction on the role of church music in the Orthodox Church

Church music, the border area among the Liturgical Theology and Musicology, aims, by its very nature, to mediate the two domains, to create bridges between them in the art of sounds and ultimately to enrich every field in part by loans or take-over of concepts from the complementary field.

Why do we need in the Liturgical Theological domain of works with a pronounced nature from musicology?

The answer is very simple: the part from the Liturgical Theology occupied by the Church music is one of the poles of Christian worship, more than that, one of the pillars of the missionary activity of the Church. This thing is reflected in the very musical valence of music as an element with which both the neophyte, the young, and the faithful with experience, on a higher or lesser stage of the Christian perfection scale, come in contact; this music, the ecclesiastical, although it processes the sacred literally, remains tributary as a way of functioning, the anatomical or physiological rules of musicology.

Any approach to a subject involves highlighting its role and importance in a particular field. So the only areas, the only areas of our lives that remain completely ours are “art and faith”. These two syntagms can not exist one without each other, because both are the most authentic expression of our lives.

“The Church is the culture without equal in the history¹. And gave us word of communion with The One without beginning, Who, humble, is coming down to the highest of our minds, to lift it close to His mind, the One without beginning.”²

The passing of the time confirmed us and still confirms that in the Church was done and is still doing in the most highest level, art. About the importance of the art, “the experiences of centuries are attesting this thing, that in the Church are important nor the words, the preaches, ideas, words

¹ Mircea Buta, *Cântările glasurilor bisericești la Vecernie și esența lor inтонаțională, în notațiile lui Trifon Lugojan*, “Aurel Vlaicu” University Publishing house, Arad, 2006, p. 12

² Father Rafael Noica, in Archimandrite Ioanichie Bălan, *Convorbiri duhovnicești*, Mitropolia Moldovei și Bucovinei Publishing House, Iași, 1995, p.172.

and words again, but the most important thing is the art. Because the art expresses life, not ideology. A painter either knows how to paint with his bush his life experiences, or his art is good to throw away. A composer either knows how to tell something completely special from his experience with his music, or he is useful.”³

From this perspective “we should see the Orthodox culture and civilisation, compared to the civilisation of utilitarianism that succeeded to submit us.”⁴

In order to realize the role and the importance of the music in Orthodoxy in general and special in the worship, we need to look from the negative side of things. So, how would be The Seven Praises in the absence of the music? Certainly the absence of the music will create and produce monotony and tiredness. A beautiful thought of the importance of the ritual music in the Righteous Church of East is “through the Church music we come in communion with Saints and the Righteous of the Christian Church.”⁵

It’s easy to observe that in our constant spiritual ascension, at the holy Mysteries “two thirds of services are sung”⁶ and that “through the possibility of communion from the rays of that beauty (the heavenly music) and from the accords of that heavenly music, the christian receives all the help of the music from the Earth. On the wings of that sensible music, he wants and finally gets to the heaven of beauty from beyond the world.”⁷ We certainly shouldn’t discuss the importance of the music in the Orthodox Church, even if in small communities they renounced to sing ⁸ from certain local reasons.

Since the earliest times the beneficial or harmful effect of the music was known. Indeed, the harmony is a reflection of the inner peace of the man. This is a way of reconciliation, union and concordance. Harmony is

³ Christos Yannaras, *Ortodoxie și occident*, Bizantină Publishing House, București, 1995, pp. 69-70.

⁴ Christos Yannaras, *Ortodoxie și occident*, p. 70.

⁵ Gheorghe Șoima, *Funcțiunile muzicii liturgice*, Revista Teologica Publishing House, Sibiu, 1945, p.3.

⁶ Archdeacon Teacher Ioan Brie, *Cântări la serviciile religioase*, Edited by the Orthodox Romanian Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului Archdeocese, Cluj, 1987, p.3.

⁷ Gheorghe Șoima, *Funcțiunile muzicii liturgice*, p. 29

⁸ In Greece, in the Holy Athos Mountain, there are monasteries where everyday services are read, not sung.

Gheorghe Mandicevschi – Oratory – “And It Was at Six o’Clock”

that stage of peace with yourself that occurs when you’re thankful of all what you received from God.

This shows that the principal role of the church music is not the aesthetic role, of decorating the church services, but to be a means for the renewal and restoration of the man in Christ. But this mediating role in our relation with Christ has the music only when is lived by us as a prayer.

The musical universe of our day is a highly offerable one. What we need to know is that we should not only choose our own “tastes” in terms of music, but rather with discernment. When it comes to our power, let choose those musical genres that do not spiritual harm us but create us. It is also wrong to listen to church music just to enjoy ourselves. First of all, she calls us to see our own sins, to repentance, to raise our mind and heart to God. It is only these that we begin our good healing in Christ.

II. Parallelism between the ecclesial and the cult, symphonic music

The Church, by its nature shows us a different kind of music, that causes a state of awakening, a state that cannot be found in the concert halls. The Church music has no regard for its own, individual feelings, but the feeling of communion. In a concert hall, there are people that don’t know each other and after the concert they can go home with a personal, individual thanks, without knowing each other better. Instead, in Church, the role of the music is one of showing the communion between people, of gathering all around the Eucharistic chalice, who is Christ.”⁹

“The liturgical music is, as a great liturgist said, Father Petre Vintilescu, a state of prayer, outlining the states of the religious feeling that do not find enough breath and adequate enough in the word spoken or recited.”¹⁰

Father Teacher PhD Ene Braniste said that: “in the worship, after his text, is all a prayer, especially a prayer of worship, of praise, but express in the soared form of the poetical inspiration, having the most form of poetry or religious hymn.”¹¹

⁹ Mircea Buta, *Cântările glasurilor bisericești...*, p. 27

¹⁰ Fr. Petre Vintilescu, *Imnografia bisericească*, Bucharest, 1936, pp. 183-184.

¹¹ Fr. Teacher PhD Ene Branîște, *Liturgica Generală*, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al BOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993, p. 706

III. A short biography of the composer Gheorghe Mandicevschi

Gheorghe Mandicevschi was born on November 8, 1870 in the village of Molodia,¹² the northern Bucovina, today Ukraine, being the last of the eight children of the priest Basil Mandicevschi and his wife Veronica Popovici. He is the brother of the well-known composers and pedagogues from Bucovina Constantin, Eusebiu and Catherine¹³. He was a composer, conductor and teacher of liturgical music. The first artistic environment offered by his parental home, where, despite the material hardship of the numerous family, there was also the possibility of listening to a chosen music, because the daughters and sons of the Mandicevschi family were all endowed with a particular musical talent.

After completing the primary courses, he attended the seminars in Cernăuți between 1890-1895, where his teacher was Isidor Vorobchievici, who encourages him and guided him in particular.

Between 1895-1899, Gheorghe Mandicevschi, under the supervision of his brother, Eusebie, studied at the University of Music and Classical Arts in Vienna, where he studied counterpoint, harmony and composition. In 1900 he returned to Bucovina and became a teacher of music at the Clerical Seminary, at the School of Church Musicians and at the Orthodox High School of Girls, where between 1900-1907 he was the conductor of the Choir Society "Armonia"¹⁴- Society for the Cultivation and Spreading of National Music in Bucovina, created on July 18, 1881 in Cernăuți, at the suggestion of Metropolitan Silvestru.

At 15 July 1904, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the death of the Saint Stephanos the Great, Teacher George Mandicevschi, together with the "Harmony" Choir, performed to the divine Liturgy at Putna monastery, in Re-major, for mixed choir of 4-8 voices.

He also composed religious works: Choral chants for the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom - mixed choirs, liturgical answers for male choirs, Sunday axions and some feasts. Two choral pieces are of undeniable compositional and artistic value: "I went down from the top of the sky" for 6

¹² Fr. Teacher PhD Nicu Moldoveanu, *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, Basilica Publishing house, 2010, p. 256

¹³ Nicu Moldoveanu, *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, p. 256

¹⁴ Nicu Moldoveanu, *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, p. 256

Gheorghe Mandicevschi – Oratory – “And It Was at Six o’Clock”

mixed voices and Oratorio for Good Friday: “And it was at six o’clock”, which was played by any band male, although it is also harmonized for the mixed choir, both in Matins on the Great Friday and at funerals.¹⁵

Other works written by the author are music for Vasile Alecsandri’s play “Stone from the House”, as well as the “String Quartet”. Despite his short life (he died on March 23, 1907, at only 37 years old), Gh. Mandicevschi made a huge contribution to the development, promotion and preservation of Romanian musical art.¹⁶

In Romania, the choral church music penetrated relatively late, namely, in the middle of the nineteenth century. In this century, as Father Nicu Moldoveanu said, everything that could be accumulated in the church was accumulated, so that in the twentieth century there would be a synthesis of everything that is more beautiful, more balanced, more clear, more accessible. In Bucovina, with beginning with the second half of the 19th century, along with the homophone church music, choral church music was also played. Its penetration was facilitated by the Austrian dominion and the relations established over a century and a half, between the Bukovinian Romanians and the administrative and cultural environment in Vienna, at the conservatory from here, the “Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst”, perhaps the most popular conservative of that period, studying almost all musicians from Bucovina, Eusebie Mandicevschi, the son of Bucovinian priest Vasile Mandicevschi, even succeeding to become a renowned professor within this educational institution. In this context, the church choral music in Bukovina at that time has seen an unprecedented ascension. Carol Miculi, Isidor Vorobchievici, Ciprian Porumbescu, Victor Vasilescu, Eusebie Mandicevschi, Gheorghe Mandicevschi, Constantin Sandru, Iancu Ursuleac, Alexandru Zavulovici, Dionisie Para, Radu Paladi are the most famous names of those who contributed through their compositional, didactic, and conducting activity, to this ascension. They showed their musical talent within cultural and student societies such as Arborea, Junimea, Armonia or Orthodox Academy, succeeding in their compositional, conducting, didactic and pedagogical activity, to raise the church choral music in Bucovina on the highest levels. Their church choral compositions demonstrated the professionalism and the dedication with which they have worked to enrich the Bucovina musical heritage. However, the

¹⁵ Nicu Moldoveanu, *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, p. 256

¹⁶ Nicu Moldoveanu, *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, p. 256

majority of the church choir creations of the Bukovinian composers of that period are marked by a strong Western influence, different to the traditional style manifested by the singing of the pew in the Orthodox churches, which is otherwise explicable given the cultural environment. Thus, in 19th-century Bucovina and the first half of the 20th century, church music had a sinuous journey, but through the care of God and the contribution of some lovers of music, church and nation, she managed to preserve in the bed of Orthodox chant the Byzantine tradition inherited for centuries by the forefathers. The Byzantine Melos could be heard both in its original form, sung, probably more withdrawn, in the monastic environments, in manuscripts with neume, but in adapted form, with linear notation, after the psalms of Silvestru Morariu Andrievici, Isidor Vorobchievici or Mihai Ursuleac, remaining in the spirit of prayer with the Romanian brothers beyond the boundaries of the historic Bucovina.

Gheorghe Mandicevshi remains a valuable composer, even if he has only few choral works.¹⁷

IV. Oratory “And it was at six o’clock”. Musical- theological analysis

Oratory is a vocal-symphonic work on a religious or secular text that resembles the opera, the difference being that the oratorius does not need decoration or special costumes. It can be sung in churches or concert halls. It appeared as a musical genre in the 16th-17th centuries, maintaining it until now. Among the Romanian orators we mention the works of Paul Constantinescu, Christmas Oratory and Easter.

The work “And it was at six o’clock” is written for male choir, being one of a priceless compositional value for the liturgical period of Good Friday from the Holy Week of the Savior Jesus Christ.

The text of this fragment of the oratory was taken from the Gospel of St. Luke the Evangelist, 23, 44-46, the words of Christ on the Cross, in the moment of the Crucifixion: “And it was now as at the sixth hour, and the darkness was made all over the earth until the ninth hour, when the sun darkened, and the tabernacle of the temple was torn in the midst. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Father in Your hands I trust My spirit. And

¹⁷ Zeno Vancea, *Muzica bisericească corală la români*, Timișoara, 1938, pp. 62-63.

Gheorghe Mandicevski – Oratory – “And It Was at Six o’Clock”

these say, He gave His spirit.” We are, therefore, in the day when the sun is above, like a Pantocrator, and it goes to its sunset.

The sixth hour marks the lunch hour (12:00, noon)

The ninth clock marks mid-afternoon (3:00 PM)

The work begins in La Minor, with a 5P series, baritone and bass, in an Adagio of dads, with crescendo and decrescendo, with a bell reverberation and effect, then adding to the piano tenor the voices 1 and 2, who repeats the same message, confirms and strengthens the biblical truth of the event to come; T2 having a chromaticity from Si to Si b, and then to Do, which gives a state of insecurity, because we must not forget, we are at midday, when naturally and absolutely normal is day and not dark.

Here, at the words “and was darkness”, the composer overthrew the natural law of this state (of darkness), and presents us with a darkness in a cvartsextacord of the Do major, and by a chain of agreements in the Sol, he leads us to a Mi Major, with that delay at T1, on time 4, which prepares somewhat of a state of tranquility in the incipient tone.

Until this moment, the composer, through the words of St. Luke Evangelist, the composer presents a framework in which we can observe Christ on the Cross, the one who goes to death, through that melodic-harmonic discourse, through some tranquil tones and giving a state of an existing one and not a future one.

Moving forward with the analysis, we come to the words “and the sun has darkened”. This is not just a cover for the heavenly astral, as happens in an eclipse, but it is about the sun’s sleep as we call Christ in the Troparion of the Nativity.

This divine truth is suggested by the composer, through the Do #, which introduces the La Major; again a paradox, the state of darkness gives the brightness and expansion to the La Major. I mean, is not dying any star, any sun, but Christ the Sun. That Do #, exceeds the state of Christ of the Cross.

The breaking and tearing of the temple’s iconostasis, from the next steps, again expresses a state of panic, of fear, of despair, but that iconostasis is not only the door of the temple, but more, it signifies the Christ’s shirt for which the lot has been thrown. This is how we read at Mt. 27,35: “And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments, throwing

lots, that the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, I have divided my clothes, and have throwing lots for my skirt.”

This state of iniquity, the composer expresses it also through a major accord, dominant Si major, which introduces Mi major, and which highlights through the words “And crying out Jesus, out loud said,” the pain expressed by Christ through that pianissimo of La minor, who betrays, actually shows the humanity of Christ, His human nature.

That quartsextacord on Re minor, at the words “And these say,” prepares the first cadence of the present work. We can say it’s a two-cadre piece.

I spoke at the beginning of the analysis of the Christ of the Cross; if this work had brought to light only that truth of the Christ Cross, then the composer would have stopped at the first cadence, the usual cadence, in which T 2 moves on to a minor melodic, after which the choir is quiet on a double the T, the Baritone, and the Bhakta octave. But the composer, through his own inner state, through a genius inspiration, brings to light the hope of the Resurrection through that Picardian third. From Christ of the Cross in the first cadence, we come to the Christ of the Resurrection from the second cadence, through that glorious La major, into a pianissimo without breath. I mean, from death to life, from the Cross to the Resurrection, in music, space can be represented by a #.

V. Concluding ideas

- The main role of the church music is not an aesthetic one, of decorating the services, but to be a means of renewal and restoration of the man in Christ. And that mediator role in our relationship with Christ is acquired by the music when it is lived by us as a prayer.
- The Church, by its very nature, shows us another kind of music that causes a state of awakening, a state that cannot be found in the concert halls.
- George Mandicevschi remains a valuable composer.
- From the Christ on the Cross at first cadence, we get to Christ of the Resurrection in the second cadence, through that glorious La minor, in a pianissimo without breathing. I mean, from death to life, from the Cross to the Resurrection, in music, space can be represented by a #.

