

## INTERPRETATIVE-ANALYTICAL HYPOSTASES IN “SEPT FRAGMENTS DE TRISTAN TZARA”<sup>1</sup> FOR VOICE AND PIANO BY ADRIAN POP

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**SUMMARY.** The present paper provides a descriptive analysis of the *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*, a unitary song cycle, organized on the basis of an internal dramaturgy, in which the poet's verses (used in French in original) outline the thematic framework pervaded by the central idea of love. The unity of the interpretation of the cycle of the *Seven fragments from Tristan Tzara* can be achieved only after a deep knowledge of the expressive and symbolic springs of the musical-poetic discourse. The study of the musical segments closely leads to the comprehension of the musical language in the process of decoding the encrypted meanings in the score, an image of the whole being configured only when the cycle is complete. The elements of assimilation, memorization and interpretation will be tracked and chiselled into the vocal-instrumental duo throughout each song. The vocal techniques used vary according to both the particularities of the language elements and the way of their psycho-affective representation in interpretation. The vocality, adapted to the rhythmic and metrical writing of the pieces, requires a perfect mastery of the interpretive technique. The vocal part, as a constitutive part of a musical discourse with a modal language of synthesis, is emphasized by the writing in the piano accompaniment, in which the chordic structures are either gravitational or geometric. Analysing the form of the works, we concluded that, in each case, they are entirely subordinate to the needs of a dramatic sense and closely related to the poetic and musical images. Nevertheless, our paper is embedded within a personal interpretative vision on the “fragments” of the cycle, bearing the imprint of the subjectivity that resides in the personal reception of the meanings of music.

**Keywords:** song cycle; voice training; artistic image; vocal emission; intonation

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<sup>1</sup> The *Seven fragments from Tristan Tzara* (original French title: *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*) by the composer Adrian Pop were written in the spring of 1995 on the occasion of the centenary of the poet's birth (1886) at the request of the "Tristan Tzara" Cultural Association in Moinești. Their first performance took place in October 1996, during the "Toamna Muzicală Clujeană" Festival, in the interpretation of the mezzo-soprano Ana Rusu and the pianist Cristina Mureșan.

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The *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara* represent a unitary song cycle, organized on the basis of an internal dramaturgy, in which the poet's verses (used in French in original) outline the thematic framework pervaded by the central idea of love. The phrase *sept fragments* reflects a certain delimitation from a stylistic or genre lineage outlined with precision, while at the same time the title is justified also by the brevity of the musical-poetic images, built on fragments of poems, which allows the composer a greater freedom in the selection of images and their combination in a cyclical structure of their own, with a vision relatively independent of Tzara's poetic cycle (in fact a larger volume).

Such a denomination does not, however, cancel the insertion of the work in a well-defined genre concept from the point of view of tradition, this insertion being well perceivable in two directions: on the one hand, the French *chanson*, closely related to the song (a term adopted by most Romanian composers, of old, but also modern ones: Gheorghe Dima, Mihail Jora, George Enescu and many others, a genre observed also from the prism of the text retrieved from the posthumous cycle of poems *Chansons et déchantons* by Tristan Tzara); on the other hand, the German tradition of the *lied*, and more specifically the song cycle, to which leads the line of leitmotivic suggestion, of internal thematic connections or the allusive use of the principle of reprise which offers, following the model of the famous *Dichterliebe* or *Frauenliebe und Leben* cycles by Robert Schumann, the perspective of the cyclical unity of the vocal-instrumental miniatures. Considering both connections valid, we will opt, in the designation of the pieces, for the original term of "fragments," proposed otherwise by the author himself. In their analysis we will detail every time the dominant stylistic aspect, due to the fact that each 'fragment' has a distinct genre and form personality, giving the cycle heterogeneity, as such consistent with the stylistic synthesis that the composer performs. Thus we will see that "in fragment no. I dominate the features of the lied, in the second the theatrical aspects are detached, forming a miniature vocal-instrumental scene, fragment III is a song referring to the folk lied, IV and V are fragments proper, having the equivalent extension each of a musical period, being otherwise coupled together in a type of small binary form with subtle correspondences between the two texts taken from different poems, - fragment VII is a combination of *chanson* and lied, with a ternary form with reprise, VII is a *chanson* with theatrical elements and with a complex function of recollection / reprise at the song cycle level (the reprise of the introduction of the initial lied)."<sup>3</sup>

The multiple facets of the meanings of the poetic metaphor, in close connection with the language of surrealist orientation in the second stage of Tristan Tzara's creation are reflected in the musical metaphorical correlations, being semantically diffused in various subtle stylistic "colours." We may discuss about a meta-stylistic view in which the composer outlines from the musical

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with the composer, June 2010.

standpoint two semantic planes: the plane of an objective reality, realized at the level of the contemporary chromatic modal language, and the symbolic plane, realized by analogy, with sonorities located stylistically in areas of the musical tradition: Renaissance, Baroque, Romanticism. In all the 'fragments' chosen, the composer felt, sensed the subtlety of the poetic suggestion, the musicality and its inner rhythm enhancing the symbolic expressive valences of the musical discourse. Thus appear colours of melancholy, nostalgia (in fragments III-IV-V), subtle irony and parody (II... *j'ai un cheval dans ma tête*) or accents of fine humour, wearing the perfume of times past (VI... *que c'est drôle...*). Throughout the cycle, the composer expresses himself deftly, with an economy of the compositional means whose expressive efficiency is the mastery of the great masters of the genre.

It is obvious that in order for the interpretation to bend along the composer's artistic intentions, the interpreter must be informed about them. The preface to the volume published by Arcadia Media publishing house in 2007 offers clues and essential details: "Intended as an uninterrupted succession, the lieder, some more developed, others conceived in miniature touches, embody the sinuous experiences of love: lyricism and effusion, sensuality, melancholy, but also ironic disguises, sometimes even sarcastic. The musical discourse follows these meanders, making use of various stylistic reflections that respond to the great mobility of poetic images."<sup>4</sup>

The study of the musical segments closely leads to the comprehension of the musical language in the process of decoding the encrypted meanings in the score, an image of the whole being configured only when the cycle is complete. The elements of assimilation, memorization and interpretation will be tracked and chiselled into the vocal-instrumental duo throughout each song.

### I. (...*légère, fine...*)

... is a riddle that opens the cycle in a lyrical atmosphere punctuated by the insertion of a micro-chorus that links the verses: "qu'est-que que c'est?" The characteristic elements of the lied are, in this fragment, dominant. The perfect osmosis between the accents, the meaning of the words and the motivic contour of the vocal melody, complemented and completed by the piano accompaniment, the voice-piano dialogue, the contrast of character and tempo between the expository and the middle stanzas, the idea of the micro-reprise of the form, the enlarged extension, the impetuosity and the dramatized frame of the expression, represent general and particular considerations through which this fragment approaches the technique and structure of the lied.

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<sup>4</sup> Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara pour voix et piano*, Arcadia Media Publishing House, 2007, pg. 3.

The vocal part takes on the intensity and character of the piano's sonority, according to the composer's indications: *come da lontano*, using a soft, velvety timbre, a low intensity of sound and the *parlando* character suggested by the melodic-rhythmic shape. The unison with the piano implies a precise rhythmic-melodic synchronization, but also an important intonational support in the first stanza. The *esitando* expression as well as the insertion of the micro-refrain motif of the interrogation followed by the fermata emphasizes the intimate, fragile atmosphere, the amazement suggested by music and text:<sup>5</sup>

E.g. 1

I. (... légère, fine ...)

Andante

Piú mosso, parlando

*come da lontano*

*pp*

*mp*

*p*

*esitando . . . .*

*p*

*pp*

*Ped.*

*Ped.*

*Ped.*

lé - gè - re fi — ne

chair de dat - te, mon beau sou - ri — re — — — — —

qu'est-ce que c'est?

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara, I. (...légère, fine...), m. 1-9.***

<sup>5</sup> The musical examples are taken from the handwritten copy of the author, and not from the edition printed at Arcadia Media Publishing House. I chose this graphic version because it is the one I used when I performed the songs, and besides, I attach to the handwriting, which is also very calligraphic and neat, an extra personal note emanating from the author.

The chromatic play existing both at the level of harmony (consisting of successions of chords with intervallic structures of sevenths and ninths) and of the melodic motifs (the play of the minor seconds) will be fully manifested in the second segment of the first stanza of the lied, which is a free, upward sequential development of the first musical idea. With this "unrest," a chromatic and rhythmic restlessness on the same words, the expressive speech gains in intensity, the range being ever more wider (the soprano line rises to G<sub>5</sub>), which requires a good vocal support to achieve the dynamic climax in *forte*, doubled by a pronounced agogic climax: *crescendo ed animando*. The vocal melodic outline will be interspersed with the doubling appearing in the upper melodic line of the accompaniment, enriched with mixtures, this again giving the voice a useful intonation reference point.

E.g. 2

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "re, mon beau sou - ri - re, lé - gè - re, fi - ne chair de". The piano accompaniment features a chromatic, upward-moving line in the right hand and a more static line in the left hand. The second system shows the vocal line moving to a forte (*f*) dynamic and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "dat - te, mon beau sou - ri - re". The piano accompaniment continues with the chromatic, upward-moving line in the right hand and the static line in the left hand. The score is marked with *cresc. ed animando* and *col Ped.*

Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
I. (...légère, fine...), m. 14-19.

The second stanza of the lied is a playful musical replica given to the enumeration in the poetic text, which includes the words *souple*, *rapide*, *pesante*, *riante*. The composer constructs, in a quasi-Baroque manner, an isorhythmic, sequential passage, for the realization of which the voice may resort to the technique of performing coloraturas, through a light, non legato emission. On the word *riante* the composer uses a melismatic ornamental formula, accurately noted with thirty-second notes, suggesting subtly the musical expression of the laugh - which the voice can underline through a more obvious *non legato*, but realized in the general lightness atmosphere requested by this passage. A good diction will ensure the *volubile* character required by the composer. (The sporadic intonation markers in the *arpeggiato* figured plane of the piano writing may be helpful, but the passage must be studied with great attention to intonation and aiming to gain an automated manner, the piano markings only serving as control points.)

E.g. 3

Mosso, volubile e leggiero

*p*

sou-ple, ra-pi - de, pe-san - te, ri - an te, sou-ple, ra-pi - de, pe-san - te, ri-an te,

*sub. p* *leggiero*

*accel.* **Veloce** *f*

sou - ple, ra - pi - de, pe - san - te, ri - an te, pe - san

*Ped.*

*poco dim.*

te, ri - an - te, ri - an - te

(sempre col Ped.)

*mf*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
I. (...légère, fine...), m. 20-29.**

The coda is based on the micro-chorus – question and the answer “c’est à moi de le deviner” – “I am the one who has to guess,” returning to the initial note, F#, a pedal over which the musical melodic motif reiterates, more interrogatively than conclusively, the idea of the chromatic-diatonic alternation:

**E.g. 4**

*Andante*

*p*

c'est à moi de le de - vi - ner

*p*

*attaca*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
I. (...légère, fine...), m. 36-39.**

## II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...)

The second fragment begins with *attaca*, in an unexpected *Molto Allegro*, with a piano solo that introduces a discourse dominated by arpeggiated and rhythmically obstinato structures, creating the image of an imaginary gallop ("dans ma tête").

The clashes of seconds between the voices in the ostinato discourse, the fluctuating dynamics, the compound meter, the trill that gains by ascension an increasing sweep of range, complete the suggestion of sound hallucination and implicitly of the surrealist images generated by the meaning of the verses.

### E.g. 5

Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 11-19.

The voice is assigned a melodic line in another tonal plane, a third sound layer, supported by a dramatized tone of the timbre on the *marcato* indications, as well as on the fermata notes or on the large interval leaps (of octaves, and as such the voice should be placed properly for a correct singing technique). Asymmetrical rhythmic pulsations are also difficult to synchronize, as are the interventions after the rests in the song. The intonation markers need to be well-memorized, as they are somewhat "hidden" in the harmonic texture (it is possible, and perhaps even preferable in terms of tempo and rhythmic asymmetries, to choose an alternative option - that of automation by study of the melodic contour without seeking the intonation support in the piano harmonies).



The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the lyrics "j'ai un che -". The piano accompaniment features a complex, rhythmic pattern. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics "- val dans ma tête, j'ai" and the piano part with a *più f* dynamic marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *f*, *più f*, and *Ped.* (pedal).

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... *j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...*), m. 24-33.**

In the second verse, constituting the second segment *b* of the first stanza *A*, the imaginary horse “jumps and overturns me” (“il bondit et me bouscule”). The musical image is also built on an ostinato in the piano, but this time in chord structure, the voice following the extremely “capricious” dynamics with *crescendos* and *subito p*, which finally reach a sonorous culmination on  $A_5$  supported in *fff*. A short conclusion with a culminating role restores the *arpeggio* figuration in the piano, and will be played in a *poco allargando* on the high note of the soprano, which “decomposes” into an exclamation on indefinite pitches, *quasi gridando*. The piano part will accentuate this climax of panic, realizing a quasi-random moment on indefinite notes, having only the rhythmic support and the ascending-descending direction up to the final cluster and the mutual *glissando*. The vocal effects can be spectacular provided a good mimicry of the expression and of the state that the composer configured with an almost visual descriptive efficiency. The ascending *glissando* at the end of the high note, the colour of the declamation as well as the rhythmic synchronization with the piano in the final *glissando* are the key elements of the artistic image.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment in G major, 3/4 time. The right hand has a complex, rhythmic texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The left hand has a similar texture. The tempo is marked 'quasi gridando'. The second system shows the vocal line in G major, 3/4 time. The lyrics are 'et me bous - cou - le'. The tempo is marked 'strepitoso'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same complex texture. The score ends with a fermata over the final notes. Performance markings include '(sempre col Ped.)' for the piano.

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 62-65.**

The second segment *B* of the lied configures sonorously the presence of the bee in the blood (“une abeille dans mon sang”), which whispers words of love. The discourse is also built on three planes: the obstinate plane provided by a major triad suggesting the buzz of the insect, the melodic plane of the piano consisting of the melodic-*arpeggiato* elements of a seventh chord, functionally located in an area of diatonic sliding towards the chromatic and back, and finally the plane of the voice, which ensures in a *Sprechgesang* manner the declamation of the verses. The rhythmic element, extremely complex, has an increased importance in achieving the required expression, an expression that fluctuates between the capricious, hesitant and afterwards insinuating attitude and colour of the voice.

E.g. 8

*parlando, cpriccioso*  
*mf* (<sup>></sup>)  
 elle me dit

*quasi sotto voce*  
*mp* 3  
 elle me dit

*mp sotto voce, insinuante*  
 elle me dit des mots d'a - mour

*pp*

*f*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
 II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 79-84.**

The voice will change from *parlando* to *cantando* (initially *bocca chiusa*, followed by text) with the scordatura tuning in the melodic plane of the piano, on a seventh chord; the effect of “exhilaration,” enhanced by a short voice-piano imitation, is achieved through a sweet warm expression, *dolce*, for the colour of the voice in *piano*.

E.g. 9

*p dolce*  
 elle me dit

— des mots d'a - mour —

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics 'des mots d'a - mour' are written below the staff. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: a right-hand staff with a treble clef and a left-hand staff with a bass clef. The music features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the piano part, with many sixteenth notes and rests.

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 91-96.**

The ending also brings the surprising outcome: the horse is wickedly stung by the bee - but it does not realize what went wrong to receive this “punishment”; the blame for what happened, however, is “maybe, the spring” (“peut-être, le printemps...”). The poetic metaphor receives a sonorous garment developed in analogy with the events of the poetic description: clusters, *Sprechgesang*, the transition from the spoken to the sung utterance. The role of speaking in rendering these shades of candid humour and naivety is crucial.

**E.g. 10**

*parlando*  
*f*  
mais l'a-beil-le pi-que le che-val

*f secco*

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics 'mais l'a-beil-le pi-que le che-val' are written below the staff. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: a right-hand staff with a treble clef and a left-hand staff with a bass clef. The music features a complex, rhythmic pattern in the piano part, with many sixteenth notes and rests. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *f secco*, and performance instructions like *parlando*.

The image shows two systems of a musical score. The first system has a vocal line with lyrics "qui me dit merde à moi je n'y suis pour-tant pour rien" and a piano accompaniment. The second system has a vocal line with lyrics "c'est peut-ê-tre le prin-temps" and a piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, *pp*, and *sotto voce*. Performance instructions include *Ped.* and *ataaca*.

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 97-105.**

“From the point of view of genre and form, the second fragment is neither a lied nor a *chanson*, being rather a theatrical composition, where the descriptive elements of the accompaniment constitute the background for an evolution of the voice that seems to interpret ‘roles’ presented in succession but also in interaction / dialogue, which requires a transposition, an immediate experience of these roles and of the mobility of expressions and attitudes. The alternation between the emotionally charged song and speech, the extreme contrast between the two great sections of the piece, the mixture between modal melody and speech, between chords and clusters, between metre and its suspension, contribute to the theatricality of this ‘musical’ sketch.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Conversation with the composer, June 2010.

### III. (... il a pris la clé des champs...)

The third fragment is conceived with a great economy of sound means to render the atmosphere of contemplative naivety with which the composer decrypts the meaning of the verses: “he took the key of the fields to open the horizon / he entered it alive, but never returned again.” Over the pedal of fifth in the piano, static as the suggestion of a still landscape, the calm of a field with an open horizon, the vocal melody receives outlines embedded in a pentatonic substrate. The simplicity and the hieratism of the musical image imply an unvibrated timbre, a clear, open, white voice, with the clarity of a folk vocal song. The high notes should be covered, pushed behind the glottis, to achieve a *filato* that ensures low sound intensity and the colour appropriate to the atmosphere. The gentle *glissandos* between the notes of the melisma end each melodic line, while the nuance of *piano* helps to highlight the composer’s intention to render the atmosphere of meditative silence, merging with a horizon of nature understood as contemplation.

“We are dealing here with a fragmentary formal structure proper: the lack of configuration of a cadence with a conclusive role, the small dimensions, the static character of the accompaniment which gives at the beginning the impression of an introduction, only to remain unchanged, unmoved by the unfolding of the vaguely folkloric vocal phrases, with a medieval connotation, separated almost arbitrarily, just as fragments of thought subsumed to the general contemplative state - all these are a particularity of this fragment which, detached from the cycle, could hardly constitute an autonomous piece.”<sup>7</sup>

#### E.g. 11

III. (... il a pris la clé des champs ...)

Andante quieto, contemplativo *mp semplice, senza vibrato*

il a pris la clé des

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

champs ————— pour ou - vrir

l'ho - ri - zon

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
III. (... il a pris la clé des champs...), m. 1-12.**

**IV. (...sur le douves...) V. (...le poisson de ta main...)**

The two fragments of the poem form a miniature diptych containing a common sound material, organized with the same simplicity of the musical expression as the preceding one, having the conciseness and the aphoristic qualities of the Japanese haiku (each of these two fragments are comprised of only five measures).

The musical-poetic metaphor is clothed in a faded vocalization, *lontano e dolce*, on arpeggiated, descending contours, supported by chords of geometrical or gravitational structures deduced from modal sections, seventh and ninth chords, *sixte ajoutée*. It is worth noting the process by which a subtle contrast is made and at the same time a meaningful connection with the preceding fragment, namely that after the prolonged harmonic pedal of fifth along the entire previous fragment, the harmony starts in a progressive series of chords, accompanying a melodic evolution of the voice, while also retaining the pentatonic substrate.

According to the dynamic indications, the first fragment of this couple is reduced to *pianissimo*, while in the second it is indicated a small crescendo that can be achieved by an intensity that does not exceed a *mezzo-piano*, and the indication *incalzando* can be capitalized by a fuller, warmer timbre, maybe even vibrated. “At this moment the dynamic factor is noticed as a minimal yet efficient process, in the configuration of a contrast, an expressive evolutionary course between successive fragments, which thus define each other in meaning. In the last fragment we notice, together with the ‘inflaming’ emotions obtained through dynamics, also a transformation of harmony in a tonal sense, benefiting from the warmth and stability of the C major chord (“le poisson de ta main” - the momentary illusion of the presence of the beloved being) alternating, in a problematic suggestion, with a complex chromatic formation of chord change, dissonant and indecisive (‘dans l’eau de ma mémoire’).”<sup>8</sup>

## E.g. 12

IV. (... sur les douves ...)

Lento malinconico  
*pp lontano e dolce*



sur les dou-ves dans les prés on — ne trou-ve

*mp*

V. (... le poisson de ta main ...)

Lo stesso tempo  
*p incalzando*



que re-grets pa-raît-il le pois-son de ta main

*m.d.* *m.s.*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
IV. (...sur le douves...), m. 1-5.  
V. (...le poisson de ta main...), m. 1-2.**

<sup>8</sup> Conversation with the composer, June 2010.



**VI. (...que c'est drôle...)**

In the sixth fragment, the poet meets, in imagination, three young ladies who "changed the night into day" ("ont changé la nuit en jour"). The melody intoned by the voice is inspired by the style of the medieval chivalric songs - thus establishing a correspondence of substrate with fragment no. III. The alternate metre as well as the harmony and the Mixolydian mode on F#, all compete in achieving a specific archaic atmosphere. The freshness and fragrance of earlier eras that emerge from the stylistic "reconstruction" at the level of the language is enhanced by the open vocal colour, and by the *tenutos* that mark the asymmetrical pulses of the discourse flow. The piano part contributes to the remaking of these temporally stylistic connections through various attack modes such as *staccato*, *tenuto*, or frequent *mordent* ornamentation.

**E.g. 13**

**VI. (... que c'est drôle ...)**

*Allegretto giocoso*

*f aperto*

que c'est drô - le voy - ez - vous, que c'est drô - le  
trois jeunes fil - les dans la tour, trois jeunes fil - les

voy - ez-vous, que c'est drô - le voy - ez - vous  
dans la tour, trois jeunes fil - les dans la tour

*leggiero, volante*

*Ped.*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 1-10.**

The first two stanzas present an extremely simple structure, *A-b, A-b*, in which *b* is a refrain based on ostinato chord structures, suggesting a kind of game, a “counting” of the girls: “this, this and this” (*ça ça et ça*). “At the same time we note in the piano accompaniment the allusion to the sonority and the *rasgueado* technique of the guitar, which accentuates the *troubadour* connotation of the piece, as well as the affiliation with the genre parameters of the French vocal-instrumental *chanson*.”<sup>9</sup>

## E.g. 14

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 11-18.**

The middle part of the piece is devoted to the gradual building of the culmination, from sequential melodic ideas, moving the tonal-harmonic structures gradually ascending: E#, Fx, E#, F#, G, Ab ... The melodic arches of the voice are realized by *crescendo- decrescendo*, naturally, along with the same evolution of the range, up to the *staccato* attacks on repeated

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with the composer, June 2010.

notes, starting from *pianissimo* to *forte*. The emission as well as the intonation in this passage must be controlled very carefully, due both to the short attack with rib-abdominal support and to the chromatic melodic twists, as well as to the agogic involving an *accelerando*.

E.g. 15

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4.

- System 1:** The vocal line begins with a *pp* dynamic marking. The lyrics are "sont ve - nues me met-tre-en". The piano accompaniment also starts with *pp*.
- System 2:** The vocal line continues with lyrics "tê - te, sont ve - nues, ve-nues me mettre-en tête, sont ve-nues me met-tre-en tê - te". It includes markings for *p*, *cresc. poco a poco*, and *col Ped.* The piano accompaniment features a *p* dynamic and a *cresc. poco* marking.
- System 3:** The vocal line repeats the lyrics "sont ve-nues me met-tre-en tê - te, sont ve - nues me met-tre-en tê - te" with an *accel* marking. The piano accompaniment includes *a poco* and *accel.* markings.

*Mosso ancora accel.*

sont ve - nues me mettre-en tê - te sont ve - nues me

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 57-65.**

The passage at *Mosso* must be sustained with strong *marcatos*, continuing the previous *accelerando* and translating the feelings of annoyance and exasperation. By contrast, the soft emission, as a light wind (*comme un soffio*) on C#, bestows colour on the conclusion of this fragment: “puis se sont allées ailleurs,” in the imitative voice-piano dialogue.

This section is structured according to the characteristic procedures of the lied – that is the careful pursuit of the inflections and suggestions of the text, the motivational and derivative way by which the course of the song is constructed, the dialogical, mutually reinforcing character of the voice – piano accompaniment relationship, where the instrument not only supports but also comments on the evolution of the melodic line.

E.g. 16

**Moderato**

puis

*col Ped.*

*mp* *p* *calando poco a poco*

se sont al - léés se sont al - léés ail-leurs ail-leurs

*mp* *p*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 71-78.**

The reprise restores the initial theme followed by a short coda, rushing towards the final exclamation, on an indefinite high note, in *fortissimo*. Within this "fragment" we find a considerable extension (similar to the one reached by no. II), as well as the complete expressive character, which allows its autonomous interpretation. Moreover, the combination of the *chanson's* procedures with those of the lied in a formal composite structure, a ternary articulation with reprise, represents a special feature and provides the whole cycle with one of the important aspects of the stylistic synthesis on which the author relies.

E.g. 17

ça et ça et ça et ça et ça et ça

*Ped.* *cresc. sempre*

The musical score is for a vocal and piano piece. The vocal line begins with a fermata, then enters with a recitative-like passage marked *poco tratt.* and *precipitando*. The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines. Dynamics include *ff* (fortissimo) and *atacca*. Performance instructions include *Ped.* (pedal) and *atacca*.

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 97-106.**

**VII. (...ainsi va et vient...)**

The last fragment of the song cycle is attacked without pause, functioning as an epilogue but also as a synthesis of the whole dramatic development of the cycle. “The theatrical aspects with which the fragment begins, the elements of French *chanson* – this time rather Romantic – together with the procedures from the expressive register of the lied, the retrospective designed through the return to the atmosphere at the beginning of the cycle – all these compete in concentrating in this piece the significance of the whole, in a form of condensed excellence.”<sup>10</sup>

The song begins with a recitative that must be sung aggressively, *quasi gridando*: “go away! I hate you,” is written. The scenic movement as well as the expression of the face can suggest this violent, hissing refusal which must be allowed to take effect by respecting the *fermata* in the score. The contrast of character is achieved through the nuances of *piano*, tempo (*Molto lento*), and the meditative, static character of the phrase “return forever,” which must be achieved through an intimate, faded, white sound without vibrato – almost whispered.

The transition from this moment to the next (measures 8-15) is made directly by a slow *glissando* in measures 6-8, an effect that links the two states. This *glissando*, ravelling through an ascending octave range – without increasing the dynamics – gives the moment an affectionate expression, of

<sup>10</sup> Conversation with the composer, June 2010.

certain sensuality. The swinging-ostinato accompaniment sets the concrete tempo of the piece, built on a come-and-go movement, seemingly monotonous, but in fact containing a meaning that suggests feminine flair. The vocal part must be supported by an almost imperceptible passage from one note to another, without articulation and without altering the intensity on the high sounds: "Ainsi va et vient l'eau à la bouche."

E.g. 18

VII. (... ainsi va et vient ...)

Libero *f quasi gridando mf intenso* Molto lento

va - t-en je te dé - tes - te re-viens

*lasciar vibrare a lungo*

*teneramente* *gliss. lento* *Moderato*

c'est pour tou - jours ——— ain - si va et vient, va et

*p* *mf* *sempre legato*

*col Ped.* *(sempre col Ped.)*

vient, va et vient ————— l'eau à la bou-che

*poco*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VII. (...ainsi va et vient...), m. 1-15.**

The second articulation, A' (measures 16-30), starting from the same verses and approximately the same musical idea, amplifies the state through a gradation of tension that reaches a high dynamic, in which the voice must sustain this climax only up to *poco forte* on A<sub>5</sub> (on the lyrics “and from the cup to the lips”), the word ‘lips’ representing the key of the poetic image, intoned on the climax-sound of the song. The dosage of the sound intensity also depends on a timbre that can be made dimmer, darker in sonority, pushing the vocal e transformed into a deep in the vocal apparatus and by a very good support in the diaphragm.

The dynamic descent folds downward on the melodic slope, and the agogics indicates the entrance into another nostalgic-dreamlike expression area – “what remains of dreams.”

In the *Lento* transitional segment, this dreamlike, unreal universe, the floating state in reverie is rendered through the timbre of the piano, with extremely unobtrusive sounds in *ppp*, but also through the dissonant state of the chords, placing the discourse in an area of abstractness, strangeness. It is a reprise without words, a recollection of the whole cycle and, of course, and an explanation of all its intricacies. Its marking is achieved by recapitulating the beginning.



**Lento**

*ppp*   *lontano*   *poco*   *pp*   *mp*

*Ped.*   *Ped.*   *Ped.*

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VII. (...ainsi va et vient...), m. 31-36.**

The last appearance of the idea A, measures 39-53, reinforces the mentioned techniques and concludes an atmosphere that the composer clearly indicates, *Lento estatico*. The sonorities of the voice and the timbre must become unreal, spoken for themselves, coming from the fragile world of the most intimate feelings, enhancing the expressiveness and meaning of the lyrics: "dreams ... enough for our love ..."

The interpretation must have a balance in the dosage of the energetic and expressive flow of the song. The decryption of the state the composer asks for can be found in both the dynamics, tempo and character and agogic indications, the melodic contour, the recitative-like figures, the atmosphere created by the harmonic and tonal sphere - all following especially the suggestions offered by the poetic text. The motivation, as well as the generating force of the artistic image created, is in the first phase the understanding of the poetic text, which in close connection with the movement of the musical affect fertilizes the imagination but especially the sensitivity of the performer. The poetic image suggested by the intertwined verse and music are of a rare beauty, aiming at an intimacy of the gesture and a fragility of the feeling, an almost visualized image of the moment and state of mind.

### Conclusive considerations

The unity of the interpretation of the cycle of the *Seven fragments from Tristan Tzara* can be achieved only after a deep knowledge of the expressive and symbolic springs of the musical-poetic discourse. The vocal techniques used vary according to both the particularities of the language elements and the way of their psycho-affective representation in interpretation.

The vocal writing of the version for high voice is characterized by a melodicity located in a general range comfortable for the soprano voice, reaching in the upper register  $A_{b5}$  (lied no. II) and in the lower one  $D_4$  (lieder no. VI-VII). The intensely chromatinized passages or the large leaps require a great deal of attention in the precision of the intonation. As we have seen, this is often eased by the harmony or the figurations in the piano accompaniment, which provide effective intonational reference points, sometimes the doubling in the piano discourse being of great help. However, there are also cases where the piano part does not duplicate the sounds of the voice, but in most cases the entries are anticipated by at least one sound in the piano score.

The intense study of the interval relations of the song, their automation in connection with the piano part, as well as the association with the poetic-musical images, facilitates the work of deepening the meanings of interpretation.

The vocality, adapted to the rhythmic and metrical writing of the pieces, requires a perfect mastery of the interpretive technique. For example, in fragment no. I, the indication *più mosso, parlando* implies a vocal technique in which the rhythm is integrated to a free expression, subordinated to the chanting of the verses, creating the sensation of sung speech. Also, where the rhythmic decreases of the melody of the second segment reach thirty-two values (I...legère, fine... *Mosso volubile e leggiero*), they will be approached with a specific coloratura technique, as we have shown above. The phrase and implicitly the sound of the voice receive a particular colour that blend with the colorful image created by the composer when the voice adapts to the specific of the musical language in some of the songs of the cycle, such as in lied no. VI, in which the alternative metre generates asymmetrical rhythmic-expressive accents. The synchronization of the two parts depends on the mutual perception of the rhythmic pulsation of the pieces, such as in the second lied, in which the adaptation to the measure written in 7/8 pattern leads to the need to be integrated in an unequal pulsation of 3 + 2 + 2.

The vocal part, as a constitutive part of a musical discourse with a modal language of synthesis, is emphasized by the writing in the piano accompaniment, in which the chordic structures are either gravitational (with sevenths, ninths, elevenths, as well as chords with *sixte ajoutée*) or geometric. Sometimes, the chords appear as self-contained sound objects, having a symbolic expressive function: in lied no. I, the chord that anticipates the question "what is this?" returns as a leitmotif in the last lied with a musical conclusion: "what remains of dreams / enough for our love?" The piano accompaniment completes what remains inexpressible in words, ensuring, in addition to the framework and atmosphere, a continuous intonational and expressive landmark. Thus the obstinate mobile chord pedals (lied no. III) or the obstinate arpeggiated figuration (lied no. II), static pedals (no. IV, V) are some construction and expression manners that offer the tonal and harmonic

background for the unfolding of the vocal part. Clusters on certain or indefinite pitch sounds appear in moments of tension, marking, together with the voice, a key situation in the dramaturgy of the lied:

E.g. 20

*quasi gridando*

et me bous - cou - le

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 65.**

The modal frame of some integral musical ideas concerns a certain stylistic area, as we find in the fragment VI, where the song is written in F# Mixolydian, or in no. VII, where the intonational framework is embedded in a G Aeolian scale.

Suggestions of bimodalism are found in fragment II, integrated to a general vision of play between diatonic and chromatic elements presented simultaneously, to which the vocal part contributes with a third dimension, that of the sung declamation:

E.g. 21

*parlando*  
*mp*

*simile* *sempre legato*

*mp*

j'ai une a -

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
II. (... j'ai un cheval dans ma tête...), m. 70-72.**

The specific modalities of the “sliding” to a tonal space generally located either at an interval of ascending or descending second or some other interval, or by sequencing through a “tonal scordatura” or by tonal leap of the respective structure, require special musical qualities on the part of the singer, among which a good adaptability to sudden tonal changes. The mixtures of different intervals are meant to create images with a specific, unique colour, giving the piano-voice dialogue additional flexibility.

## E.g. 22

The musical score shows a voice line and piano accompaniment. The voice line is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "se sont al - léés se sont al - léés ail-leurs ail-leurs". The dynamics are marked as *mp*, *p*, and *calando poco a poco*. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and arpeggios, with dynamics marked as *mp* and *p*.

**Adrian Pop, *Sept fragments de Tristan Tzara*,  
VI. (...que c'est drôle...), m. 75-78.**

A vision of the structure and form of the pieces, in close connection with the tempo and character, gives the performer increased safety in execution, facilitating memorization and providing benchmarks in terms of phrasation and tension gradations of the cycle. Thus, analyzing the form of the works, we concluded that, in each case, it is entirely subordinate to the needs of a dramatic sense and closely related to the poetic and musical images. We do not encounter very clearly articulated forms following the traditional model, but forms whose articulations and segments have an intimate meaning related to the dramatic gradation pursued by the composer. At the same time, the unity of the cycle is built on “tableaux” and scenes that have an obvious or hidden continuity, but being related to the idea, the suggestion, or the metaphor contained in the selected poem fragment.

Number I has an approximate form of Bar. *A - A' - B* and a small coda-reprise *a*. It is linked with *attacca* to number II, in binary form, *A* - the tableau of the “horse in the head,” *B* - the image of the bee whispering words of love - epilogue.

The numbers II-IV-V are united by the atmosphere and the simplicity of the communication of the images, which have an almost visual plasticity.

No. III is a small form *a-a'-a*, and 4-5, are "welded, two monostrophic, *b* and *b'*, having the appearance of some miniatures (evoking, as mentioned before, the miniature-metaphorical poetic forms of the Japanese haiku).

Number VI is a "medieval story" in which the form has a chorus and the archaic fragrance of its song contrasts with the median chorus. The form also seems to have origins in the medieval *balatta* genre (*Bar* with varied reprise). On the other hand, as we have pointed out, here appears - against the background of the simple formal pattern in principle - a synthesis in the more subtle plane of genre, where the elaborate technique of the lied intersects with the traditional strophic layout of the chanson.

II: A chorus– B – conclusion and again A'

The form of song VII is conceived as having three variational hypostases of the same musical idea, starting from an intonation bearing a cell-like aspect: A- A'<sub>dev</sub>- A".

The unity of the cycle is given by the *attacca* execution of the fragments, but also by the symmetrical gradation of the complexity of the sound architecture, of its extension and of the function of the poetic images within the unit of the sound dramaturgy.

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Medium exposition	Amplified development	Short- haikus episodes	Short- haikus episodes	Short- haikus episodes	Extended development	Medium epilogue

At the same time, the tempo indicated by the composer within the cycle has meaning and expressiveness through the chain of movements that offer the performers the surprise of the contrast, but also the complementarity of artistic images related through the musical material (lieder no. IV-V).

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Andante	Molto Allegro	Andante	Lento	Lento	Allegretto	Lento- Moderato- Lento
<i>Slow</i>	<i>Fast</i>	<i>Slow</i>	<i>Slow</i>	<i>Slow</i>	<i>Fast</i>	<i>Slow</i>

The agogical and dynamic indications in the score appear to the performer as an effective guide in understanding the expressive meanings of the music, to which is added a rich palette of indications in terms of

expression and character. The composer notes in detail the evolution of the phrasation according to all these indicators, suggesting in some cases even the appropriate vocal colour, state or attitude. Thus, the voice must have the appropriate colour in fragment no. I to suggest the *parlando* requested by the author, the hesitation (*esitando*), and in the second segment to illustrate with ease and volubility the poem. In the second fragment the voice reaches the point of shouting: *Quasi gridando, parlando*, alternating with the *sotto voce* interventions, on indefinite pitches, *parlando capriccioso*, or *sotto voce insinuante*. The acting qualities of the performer should not be lacking in this small theatrical-musical scene, in which the epic element is played with an expressiveness that exceeds the limits of the sung voice.

In the three central slow lieder, the unvibrated, simple voice is asked by the composer to render the states generated by the metaphors of the poetic fragments: *Andante quieto, contemplativo, semplice, non vibrato*, in no. III, *Lento malinconico- lontano, e dolce*, in no. IV-V, an open, *aperto* vocal colour, with the possibility of vibrato, and in lied no. VI, to render the *giocoso* atmosphere required by the author. In lied VII the soprano will pass from the shout to a tender colour, *teneramente*, and finally in a *filato pp* will render the ecstatic (*lento estatico*) and contemplative thrill.

The richness of the agogics and the dynamics is reminiscent of the style of the Impressionists, the complexity of the phrases being complemented by the subtle directing of the moments of silence. The agogical rests or those at the end of the lieder are meant to ensure the highest expressiveness of the musical metaphors of Tristan Tzara's poems.

The descriptive method by which we tried to outline a certain interpretative vision regarding the "fragments" of the cycle carries, to a certain extent, the imprint of the subjectivity that resides in a personal vision of the meanings of music, but, in the process of interpretation, these states achieved the desired result.<sup>11</sup>

*Translated by Roxana Huza*

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<sup>11</sup> With the performance of the last song of the cycle, *Ainsi va et vient*, presented at the first edition of the National Competition for the interpretation of the Romanian lied in Brasov, in 2003, I had the satisfaction of winning the Prize of the Union of Composers and Musicologists in Romania.

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