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## CLASSICISM AND NEO-CLASSICISMS IN THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

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### *Abstract*

In one of his articles, Octavian Paler draws attention in a metaphorical-mythologizing manner upon one of the risks taken by those who chose tradition as their source of inspiration. The epigonic spirit, because this is what he refers to, cannot escape idolatrising tradition, phenomenon that happens within an alterity of the creative identity, within the pettiness of controlling the artistic means, within the infatuation of his own image which is placed under the protection of the great creative figures. The epigone masters in an embryonic form some techniques which, for various reasons, he cannot manipulate creatively. He is somehow suspended between two sensibilities, hence his failure. On the one hand, he is not aware of the risk of assuming past sensibilities, and on the other, he does not assume his contemporariness. Giving in to the temptation of looking too much into the past, the epigonic artist loses his identifying sensibility. "The mistake of neo-classicism, with its statues painted or sculpted based and antique models, is Orpheus' mistake. As we no longer have the soul of the ancient Greeks, imitating their art is useless because in art too, looking back kills if there is no conscience of the irreversibility. From this point of view, there is no turning back unless in order to desolate everything" (Paler, 2016, pp. 189-190).

This quote refers to neo-classicism perceived in its most rudimentary form, in which it would identify itself with the epigonic phenomenon. Of course, no relation of equality can be claimed between an epigone and a neo-classicist. If we are to give a brief definition in which to establish a relationship between these two terms, the epigone is a neo-classicist that lacks fantasy. Neo-classicism means to creatively take over technical means, past sensibilities in order to anchor them in the tumultuousness of contemporary times. Neo-classicism represents the happiest mixture between past and present, that form of artistic reverberation in which modernity still makes room for the seal of the past. Not servility, not obedience, not anachronism which denote the incapacity to assimilate new composing techniques or the lack of vigour of creative energies, but the power to adapt to new sensibilities through restorative interventions. Starting from here, we will trace a re-echeloning line of various types of neo-classic sensibilities specific to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and to the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** classicism; neo-classicism; nomos; canon; artistic perfection;



## 1. INTRODUCTION. CLASSICISM AND NEOCLASSICISM. SIGNIFICANCES OF THE TERM *NEOCLASSICISM*

*Classicism* is a notion that applies to the field of art, used to define any drive to seek artistic perfection, to find any ideal of beauty which gains a rational representation, deducible through organisation, norms and laws established within the internal structure of the work of art. Beyond the historical determinations and stylistic particularities that it has experienced in time, *classicism* is an ahistorical notion, which has inhabited the history of humanity periodically and en passant.

The recurrences of this spiritual matrix are known as neoclassicisms and will consist of the order, clarity and simplicity of the means of artistic expression as well as of the outlining of a restricted emotionality, judiciously kept under the permanent control of a rationality which will dictate the path of artistic inspiration. From a musical point of view, this will mean returning to the contrapuntal writing and the tonal-type harmonic clarity, approaching certain genres and forms specific to the Baroque and Classicism, but also embracing the pure music, the instrumentalism devoid of any programmatic intention. The following study will see how much truth is in all these.

In *Dictionnaire de la musique*, neoclassicism is an “expression that appeared towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to designate in music, as well as in other forms of art (poetry, painting), certain aesthetics that translate the express will to «return to»: a return to a balanced, styled, pure, «Apollonian» music inspired by the classic masters (especially Bach), as a reaction against the unstoppable expressiveness of romanticism, against its sometimes hypertrophied or rhapsodic forms and the tendency to subject music to drama; at the same time, a reactive return to atonalism and «vanguardism», etc. Romanticism was already carrying neoclassicism within itself, claiming to belong to the past, and Johan Sebastian Bach was very frequently referred to as its father, considered to be «the most classic of the classics»” (Vignal, 1997, pp. 545-546).

With the visual arts, the notion is older, neoclassicism being correlated with the art from the time of the French Revolution and Napoleon’s reign, so there had already been a precedent in terms of using it. In musical arts, as the connection between the Baroque style and the classical one is tighter than in the realm of plastic arts, neoclassicism is often defined as a “tendency to reinstate and implicitly re-evaluate within the composition certain aesthetical principles and norms and techniques specific to classical or pre-classical music” (Vancea, 1984, p. 322) or, looking at it from an ampler perspective, one can invoke “the neoclassical attitude (...) of the creators of models (of form, writing, style) of the pre-romantic musical past, more exactly the classic but especially the pre-classic one (...)” (Firca, G., 2010, pp. 368-369).

Keeping this in mind, it is noticeable that, in the turmoil of semantic clarifications and distillations characterising the history of music, one may often talk about neo-Baroque, neo-classicism and even neo-romanticism or neo-Gothic, depending on the time chosen as source of inspiration. The prefix *neo-* becomes a kind of *return to*. It is therefore natural to extend the significance of the term to any composers’ tendency or attitude to re-edit some techniques from any other period, closer or farther from this, to use and re-evaluate the past in general, as a reaction to any manifestation of novelty in art which shocks, disappoints or gives the impression of instating anarchy.

This way, neoclassicism becomes somehow similar to the idea of *looking back* which generates nostalgia about the past and a rejection reaction towards certain musical experiments specific to the present. It would not be surprising anymore that certain musical languages which were criticised by certain composers, who were considered neoclassic, were assimilated by their successors for precisely the same reason. The former composers, on their turn, might have considered their predecessors a kind of neoclassic themselves. One can find similarities in the neo-serialism of the ‘50s and ‘60s which promote an identical reaction towards the serial experiments specific to the ‘20s and the ‘30s. Is it not possible for the composers of the ‘50s and ‘60s to have become a kind of neoclassics for those belonging to the ‘20s and ‘30s? To the largest extent of the term neoclassicism, the answer is ‘yes’.

Neoclassicism, as we previously suggested, may also represent an attitude against the romantic, postromantic, and expressionist emotionality or against a more and more emphasised artistic individuality within the context of the ever aggressive affirmation of the musical vanguards. Thus, neoclassicism

claims the composer gains objectivity, a certain detachment which does not exclude the emotional aspect but claims to refine it and subject it to certain creation rules.

“Looking at things from within, one has to notice first of all that the modern *neo*-manifestations are mostly reactions – spontaneous or doctrinally motivated, whether the protagonists of that particular orientation, such as Stravinski or Ravel, Hindemith, are aware of it or not – generated by the *progressist fetishism* and the *permanent revolution* state promoted by the vanguard” (Firca, C.L., 2002, p. 117).

On the other hand, neoclassicism, once this new objectivity is gained, by approaching certain previous musical models in an ironic manner, seems to resort to different distortion degrees of the *cited* musical genres or languages. Famous examples that may be mentioned here are Prokofiev’s *Symphony No.1* or Stravinsky’s *Symphony of Psalms*. The allusion to Hayden’s work in the former case or Bach’s in the latter is evident. The neoclassic attitude may become

“on the other hand, essentially modern, in regards to the freedom that composers manifest in the *performance* (craft) of those certain models, to the large (aesthetic, stylistic, technical) easiness of approaching the traditional musical *objects*. The modern dimension of neoclassicism is determined both by the recourse to the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s language conquests – such as, the free use of chromatic totality, or the reforms in the realm of the modal – and, often, by the irony or parodic spirit of evoking, by the various degrees of distortion applied to the inherited data, obvious proof of the creator’s distancing from the past that he is only apparently *citing*” (Firca, G., 2010, p. 369).

Analysing all these, one may reach the following synthesis:

- at first, neoclassicism was tighter connected to classical aesthetics, capitalising on its Apollonian potential;
- at the same time, neoclassicism represents a return to the immediately previous musical languages, as a reaction to the alleged anarchy springing from Romanticism’s freedom of creation;
- then, the term was extended to other epochs, styles and musical languages;
- along with the ever abrupt emancipation of dissonance and the adjustment of the new sensibilities to a vanguard musical language, neoclassicism may become an experiment of mixture, eclectic or synthetic in nature, in which neomodality may coexist with the liturgic modality, the archaic genres may be adapted to the new sonorous organisations, the Wagnerian chromatic-type expanded tonality may be inserted into the poly-phonic language, the atonal may live along the imitative writing, etc.

## 2. HISTORIES OF NEOCLASSICISM

*The new Grove Dictionary* mentions the appearance of the term in 1923, closely connected to Stravinsky’s work, referring to this fact in terms of *general historic awareness* of everything that means tradition and dissolution of everything that we label as classical composers (Dyer&Sadie, 2001). The history of the term also includes certain significances related to school of creation, individual stylistic orientations, be them phased or extended to the composer’s entire creation period, and even associating him with the generality of an entire current existing in the history of music. Some *music histories* link neoclassicism to the Parisian inter-war vanguard and to the writer Jean Cocteau and the composer Erik Satie, these being the ones that initiated the movement called neoclassicism (Carozzo&Cimagalli, 2001, p. 390); others accidentally mention and briefly define the significance of neoclassicism (Salvetti, 1991, p. 97) which they see connected to Stravinsky’s creation (Swafford, 2018, pp. 227-228), almost going without saying. Some extreme versions hardly mention neoclassicism (Allorto, 2005, p. 453) while other initiatives extend it to an entire period (Pascu&Boțocan, 2003, pp. 393-400, pp. 521-545).

There are also versions that break it down to formulations that are more successful in grasping the status of the neoclassical phenomenon, with a predilection towards disseminating various categories of notions; not a current, not an era, not even a style or technique, but a *first expression* or *wave* in asserting neoclassical trajectories, outlining three moments:

“A first expression of neoclassicism is born in the middle of the Romantic current, having as its central purpose the continuation of Beethovenian directions (J. Brahms, A. Bruckner, C. Franck). The second wave will consist of the composers that are active in the last years

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> (Max Reger, F. Busoni, M. Ravel, G. Enescu) and it revives traditions of the early classicism and of the baroque. The third wave, which starts after WWI, coincides with the generalisation of the neo-baroque tendency through the works signed by I. Stravinski, P. Hindemith, A. Honegger, D. Milhaud, M. Ravel etc.” (Vasiliiu, 2002, p. 109).

### 3. NEOCLASSICISM AVANT LA LETTRE

Without an official name, the neoclassical tendencies specific to the 19<sup>th</sup> century manifest themselves rather temperamentally, the composer’s psychological structure displaying predilections towards the baroque or classical musical language, without the need to define them. Brahms, profoundly attached to Romanticism, officiates the synthesis between certain techniques specific to the Baroque and Classicism with the Romantic harmony and sensitivity. Franz Liszt behaves similarly with the less known *Missa choralis*, which he will finish in 1865, where the modal language, the polyphonic vocal writing and the romantic harmony co-exist in a salutary symbiosis. These neoclassical presentiments are also to be found in some romantic composers such as Robert Schumann, Anton Bruckner, César Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns, Piotr Ilici Tchaikovsky, Giuseppe Verdi etc. With some of them, these will constitute only brief stages, moments of confirmation and mastering certain past composing techniques, with others though they will essentially mark their entire creative evolution, multiple histories of music often placing them on a map of neoclassical nature.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) is one of those composers; his personality absorbs the entire romantic sensitivity, grafting on the trunk of tradition this twig that carries the name of romanticism, tumultuous and profoundly rebellious, trying to re-establish its order and equilibrium by regimenting it in the baroque or classical rules and canons. The result was an extremely special neoclassicism: on the one hand, the recrudescence of the baroque or classical sensitivity is animated by a new spirit, livelier, more palpable, more authentic, more modern for its contemporaries, escaping the rigidity and dryness that Brahms’ contemporaries criticised; on the other hand, the romantic sensitivity, without to succumb among the graces that were legitimising its inspiration, receives the seal of inspiring clarity of certain ordinating streams that re-instate human emotion in a restoring and regenerating framework. Often mentioned as a romantic or neoclassical composer and pianist, fact which would somehow absolve him of the monopolising labels, Brahms distinguishes himself from the romantic generation by several features which constitute the identity of his musical style and define the beginning of an orientation that reconciles the romantic sensitivity with the one of the preceding tradition. The neoclassical dimension of the Brahmsian creation is *absorbed* by the composer’s romantic personality, his preference for his predecessor’s techniques and the repudiation of programming from his creation partially distinguishing him from the romantic generation. Historians often assign to him a neoclassical dimension contained *in nuce* throughout his compositional journey. This is why Brahms’s creation is mostly the reconciliation act between Romanticism and its preceding currents; it embodies a matured artistic consciousness capable of bringing within the same framework the romantic *defiance* and the classicism’s *dogmatic rigidity*. Brahms is *taming* the romantic spirit depriving it of instrumental virtuosity, of literalistic extremes or of formal *libertinism*, conferring it depth, nobility and meditation.

The neoclassical dimension of Piotr Ilici Tchaikovsky’s creation (1840-1893) is less known. One could catch a glimpse of it in the four orchestral suites he composes in 1879, 1883, 1884, and 1887. Tchaikovsky composes constantly from 1862 to 1893, the year of his death, one not being able to delineate a neoclassical stage in his creation. Neoclassic escapades are to be found throughout his creation such as in *Symphony No. 3*, that he composes in 1875, in the fifth part of which he inserts an ample fugue; and this is not the only example of this sort.

The four orchestral suites scattered across a decade, during which Tchaikovsky composes a series of other major works such as the *Piano Concert No. 2* (1880), the *1812* and *Romeo and Juliette* overtures (1880), the *Mazepa* opera (1883) and the *Manfred Symphony* (1885), represent accreditations of a Baroque compositional technique that Brahms completely mastered. The inserted fugues, either as distinct sections or developing segments, and some dances of baroque nature denote a transient neoclassicism, a passing phase which may return anytime, rather than a deliberate preoccupation of the composer’s part. Tchaikovsky is profoundly devoted to romantic aesthetics and his neoclassicism is

linked to a certain emotional circumstance. He sometimes wants to give birth to his romantic experiences and dreams in a more sombre manner, by assigning it the neoclassical mark, promoting thus a circumstantial neoclassicism.

Max Reger (1873-1916) configures a neoclassicism of a post-romantic nature noticed from his very first creations in 1890 till his last ones, towards the end of his life. The initiator of the slogan *Back to Bach*, he will promote a musical language whose specificity is the synthesis between the Bachian polyphonic writing and the intensely chromatinized tonal harmony of post-romantic nature, the way Liszt and Wagner forged it. However, unlike Bach whose *avant la lettre* "postromantism" could be felt here and there in some of his creations and which was closely related to strengthening certain areas of religious significance (Bulancea, 2019, pp. 185-194), Reger goes further and, still staying within the postromantic aesthetic framework, overloads the polyphonic writing at the same time with overpopulating the harmonic discourse with chromatic elements and modulations that are more and more often and distant, gaining the superlative effect of a grandiloquent expression with the risk of losing the warm humanism of an internalized lyrism. Reger is not less postromantic than neoclassical; he is not less subjectively involved than objectively. He manages to push their extreme levels to unimaginable dimensions, obtaining a spectacular polarizing effect. He ventures himself to outline an ever precarious equilibrium which survives an overflowing imagination, profoundly attached to the musical tradition detached from any literalistic intent.

#### **4. NEOCLASSICISMS IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY. TYPES OF NEOCLASSICISMS**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Neoclassicism gains a historic and aesthetic identity through the already mentioned contribution from the French musical sphere. Its area of manifestation is located somewhere between 1920s and 1950s. Nevertheless, there are numerous composers who, without having any connection with Cocteau's, Satie's and Stravinsky's initiatives, manifested a neoclassical tendency in their creation so neoclassicism comes to define that natural, human and universal inclination of the creative man to return to or recover the tradition in order to regain an Apollonian attitude in art. Some, such as Messiaen, Stravinsky or Hindemith, will approach it in a more daring manner; others, such as Orff or Elgar, will be more docile towards it. Some will treat it transiently, such as Enescu, Bartók, Prokofiev or Schostakovich; others will operate with longer intervals, such as Poulenc, Bussoni or Respighi. This explains the great variety of neoclassical tendencies specific to this century; the various approaches that characterise the creative impetus of composers.

This is not less evident in France where, unlike Claude Debussy (1862-1918) who is sometimes said to have had a short neoclassical stage in terms of the evolution of his chansons, Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) detaches himself from his impressionist homologue precisely through his preference for musical forms and structures springing from the synthesis between tonal and modal, his predilection for intellectual rigor affecting the structure of his works. The undeclared neoclassicism of his works offers the musicological medium the opportunity of attaching him to impressionism. However, when it comes to Ravel's style and his comparison with Debussy's style, the former is rightfully attributed a strong sense of objectivity, an inclination of working on the musical theme and the forms derived from classical and Baroque models rather than preference for the colours, textures and languorous sensuality of Debussy's music (Schonberg, 2000, p. 454). Synthesising, we could state that Ravel, profoundly devoted to impressionism, often resorts to the ordering force of neoclassicism, grafting it on the former's trunk, in a similar manner to that in which Brahms did with romanticism.

Then, there will be the composers known as Les Six (*The Group of Six*), especially Honegger, Milhaud and Poulenc, who, disapproving with Debussy's or Ravel's music, which they considered outdated and artificial, will build an eclectic-like neoclassical attitude encompassing different variants. Milhaud, for instance, builds an eclectic-like neoclassical attitude through his predilection for short pieces, jazz music and South-American dance music, with often incursions into polytonality. Honegger remains attached to the Western symphonic tradition or to the Handelian oratorical conception, while Poulenc, the only one surviving time's censorship, performs incursions into farther eras which he approaches in an unmatched manner, with a fine sense of humour which confers him a certain objectivity, allowing him a chance of ensuring a recipe for success.

Later on, the French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), who will patron the group *Young France* at some point, will assume for himself a certain type of neoclassical attitude. Messiaen reinvents the entire musical language and, if one may speak of a neoclassicism in his works, this will always be located in a vanguard area. He destructures the work of musical art through rethinking all musical parameters, especially the melody, the rhythm and the harmony, obtaining musical effects of a particular originality. There is a hermeticism of his art which does not make it accessible to the large public. Despite this, the mix of intuition and engineering found in his art, the combination between decorative and structural, the mixture between naturalism and abstractionism, sensuality and aridity, luxury and simplicity, action and contemplation, will ensure an undisputed success. Messiaen is probing with his music areas of feeling that avoid any intrusion of banality. Using his themes, he often ventures in expressing certain profound and ardent religious experiences, so that the violence of his musical language draws its essence from the defiance of common categories. (Vignal, 1987, p. 508) His sensitivity navigates areas that are linked to mysticism so his music will consequently alternate as expression between the quietness of a gentle breeze and the shuddering greatness of a thunder.

Paradoxically, one will also find a neoclassical vision in the Viennese school dominated by the figures of the three expressionist composers. "If neoclassicism means, among other things, a return to an order given by Baroque and classical structures, then the idea of chaotic atonalism (which became a cliché to describe some of Schönberg's works) is immediately contradicted." (Sandu-Dediu, 2010, p. 168) The idea of Apollonian which had dominated any artistic desideratum for centuries would be profoundly altered by the unprecedented status that dissonance would gain among musical opposites. The claim of an affinity with Bach's music is only a partial one and profoundly distinct from it but, perhaps, justified. Grafting compositional techniques specific to the Baroque and classicism on an atonal framework, in a desperate attempt to confer the illusion of order, may constitute a failed experiment. From a metaphoric perspective, their endeavours resemble the efforts of some children who are trying to recompose the vase they have just broken. Of course, there is the delight of reconstruction, as in a puzzle, which will confer the illusion of aesthetic satisfaction and, in addition, the idea that the mechanics of re-assembling the pieces, the mathematics governing this process, offers access to the hidden essence of the world, finally discovered by means of a refined *game of beads*. Order, complexity, rigor to the detriment of functionality, consonance, and organicity, resulting in dissolution of human sensitivity. Schönberg, Berg and Webern claim that they reconfigures the order postulate in a world dominated by anarchy turning, paradoxically, into Messianic apostles of what art should signify. Disfiguring it of any type of functionality, they would do the same as their contemporary regimes, gaining a formal, non-human and non-empathic order. The quintessence of their actions is unmeasurably more justified than that of the political vector of their time. It may impress certain professionals or melomaniacs seeking the hermetic sensationalism, fact which happened nonetheless, but it will not enjoy at all the public popularity.

Unlike atonal composers, Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) claimed a position closer to tradition and Bach's music. He loved to approach Baroque-like genres and forms such as fugue, suite or sonata, which he would dress up in a profoundly original harmonic language. He did not contemplate atonalism at all although the audacity of his musical language has often been mistaken for atonalism. It is enough to simply listen to the prelude of *Ludus tonalis* (1942) to notice the profound resemblance to Bach's *Chromatic fantasy*. Hindemith borrows, along with their techniques, various musical genres and forms, especially Baroque, which he adapts to his neotonal language, promoting an essentially vanguardist neoclassicism, always supple, permanently innovative through reconfiguring them "in the new mosaic-like sound context of the 20th century, achieved through the combination of the baroque traditional constructive techniques with the innovative principles of personal thought." (Vlahopol, 2010, p. 173)

Unlike him, Carl Orff (1895-1982) sets himself within the limits of a synthesis neoclassicism which succeeds in amalgamating the musical languages specific to his age with those of the Middle Ages. His preference for the poetics and musical themes practised by the Goliards presents him as composer capable of updating the past, not necessarily by taking over certain techniques specific to it, but by adapting and reconfiguring certain artistic meanings that seemed to have been forgotten. Having perhaps a more acute awareness of the past than other composers, Orff rejects in his creation the ideas of evolution, novelty or originality at all costs, betting instead on the idea or reiteration, of *aggiornaménto*, of adaptation to the progress by promoting a neoclassical attitude which manages to transmit the discreet perfume of some ages that seemed unrecoverable.

The English musical landscape manifests itself through a grounded classical-romantic continental tradition and a profound attachment for national music. The musical language of a composer such as Edvard Elgar (1857-1934) will alternate between the ardent rigour of Brahms and the postromanticism of Strauss or Mahler. Others, such as Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) or Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), will recover, through neoclassical evocations, composers like Thomas Tallis or Henri Purcell. A certain modal flavour will permeate the folkloric themes of Vaughn, a symphonism that rejects a provincial perspective, sometimes cross-bred with a boldness of language that forces the English music to evolve on all levels. On the other hand, Gustave Holst (1874-1934) will alternate between the modernity of the musical language that may shock by boldness and the appeal to folklore or to sonorous sources of medieval inspiration, much like his colleague Vaughn Williams whom he had a profound friendship with.

On its turn, Italy will manifest, through its composers, strong neoclassical tendencies whose essence can also be found in their quasi-restorative nature. Take for instance, the initiator of *young classicism*, Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924), whose compositional endeavours aimed at combining the Italian cantability with the German musical structures. His neoclassicism will be indebted to the postromantic aesthetics along the line initiated by Liszt, Wagner, or Brahms, manifesting itself mainly as a reaction to Schönberg's expressionistic atonalism, Stravinsky's primitivist modalism or Debussy's sensual tonal modalism. His neoclassical language will leave a mark on his entire compositional career, so he will become one of the main promoters of compositional rigor.

Another Italian composer that will develop a neoclassicism of quasi-restorative nature is Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) who will be preoccupied with the recovering of several musical traditions starting from the Gregorian music, feeding on the sources provided by the Renaissance or Baroque music and going as far as processing Rossini's music. Reluctant towards the idea of originality and novelty at all costs, Respighi reveals himself to be a composer profoundly attached to musical tradition and to creation in its spirit. He is not preoccupied with renewing the musical language but rather with updating tradition through orchestral transcripts and adaptations. The same path will be taken by composers like Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973), Alfredo Casella (1883-1947) and Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968) who will constitute the triad of the Italian neoclassicism. They will develop a classicising direction, a mannerism which does not avoid creative intervention, more daring harmonies or certain compositional incursions that have an increased degree of originality. Within the European, and not only, musical context of experiments of any type upon the musical phenomenon, they claim as their own an aesthetics of tradition by re-establishing the initial beauty of music, that beauty which, risking to seem old-fashioned to some people, still has a lot to say. It is a beauty that offers the soul the feeling of reconciliation with itself, reinstates its damaged dignity, which takes you to the origin of grace, a place where the entire human equilibrium is restored. A beauty of finding fulfilment in simplicity, a beauty of pure joy, which sees the world as a celebration, as an epiphany of light and profound order. It is a beauty of recovering a deep feeling of good in relation with the self, the world and God.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In the history of music, neoclassicism is not a current like the great creative eras. It is manifesting more like a tendency which reverberates at the level of the musical language through reinstating order and equilibrium where these seem to exist no more. Unfavoured in history by the temporal factor, by circumstance or by the glamour of a school of creation that has imposed itself on the landscape of musical evolution dynamics, neoclassicism does not receive the status of current or era like the one in the visual arts. On the other hand, neoclassicism is not a style because the diversity of forms of manifestation makes it impossible to achieve unity at the level of musical language. The multitude of neoclassical approaches, attitudes, and tendencies turns to crumbles any unitary perspective of it. In the case of the other arts, neoclassicism is favoured by some European monarchic regimes, their centripetal political attitude manifesting in art as well. It should be enough to notice the more than one-hundred-year gap between the classicism of visual arts and the musical classicism to better understand this matter of fact. Musical classicism becomes visible in the vicinity of certain political sensitivities which already envisaged the dissolution of the monarchic regimes. It is contemporary with the affirmation of neoclassicism in the other arts, reason for which, the coming-backs to a neoclassical attitude in music will

be nothing but particular manifestations sometimes with dispersion at the national level, well individualised as tendencies, reflecting thus the multicultural context of the European space specific to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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