

ANALYTICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE PRESENTATION OF *CHANT DE LINOS* BY ANDRÉ JOLIVET*

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Abstract. *The composition Chant de Linos by André Jolivet was an important response to the shift in ideals and aesthetics from the time of the Second World War and continues to occupy the great attention of flutists to this day. Today's abundance of literature has enabled this approach to Jolivet's music in several different ways, but since the author of this text is a flautist himself, a significant part of the work will be devoted to the interpretive aspect through the explication of the practical application of the already elaborated facts. The presentation of the multi-layered aspects of the piece will be made with the help of various critical aspects that will shed light on the cultural and social aspects of Jolivet's background, while also illustrating important poetical characteristics of his. Methods of artistic research such as historical, analytical, comparative and practical-performance method will be used in this work. Although the composer himself did not provide more extensive program content, we can consider that Chant de Linos belongs to program music, since it clearly evokes certain ideas and concepts. Mapping and defining specific non-musical content contains the first part of the text, while the second part will deal with its practical application. Therefore, the goal of the overall exegesis is to bring the performers to a deeper understanding of the composer's intentions in order to perform the most expressive and meaningful interpretation.*

Key words: *André Jolivet, Chant de Linos, flute, analysis, interpretation*

1. JOLIVET'S POETICS

In his interview with Martine Cadieu, André Jolivet (1905-1974) reveals the composers whose works deeply influenced his early musical language: Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Paul Dukas (Cadieu 1961, 1). The influence of their music will certainly follow Jolivet's aesthetics throughout his career, and this is primarily noticeable in the common

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attachment to French exoticism, which was affected by the music of Eastern cultures. Jolivet opted for mystical-ritual poetics through studying with Edgar Varèse. He helped Jolivet in discovering the most important aspect of music – "the magical and ritual expression of human society" (Ibid. 3). This is similarly elaborated in Fulcher's book on French music and ideology, where Jolivet's specific *Orientalism* and his musical reintegration of European and non-European cultures are discussed in more detail (Fulcher 2005, 302). From that perspective, Jolivet's goal was to create a universal musical language, which he tried to achieve through the musical synthesis of other cultures, in search of new means of communication. Also, a great influence on Jolivet's creativity was exerted by the collaboration with the composers of the group *La jeune France*, who, besides him, included Yves Baudrier, Daniel Lesur and Olivier Messiaen. Regarding the innovative approach to the notions of silence and emotional power – in Jolivet's terms, called *sound space* (Badcock 2007, 5) – Messiaen himself describes it as follows: "Jolivet plays with silence, he allows it to spread freely round one line, then thickens it with heavy resonance, then cuts it up wildly with grating rhythms, and after whirling up through space its last remnants with angry drums on mysterious bells, kills it suddenly with a gigantic gong stroke" (Cadieu 1961, 4). We shouldn't ignore the influence of Schoenberg's expressionism and his idea of atonal language, which significantly influenced Jolivet's works until the Second World War. According to some interpretations, Jolivet's work could be roughly divided into three periods: before, during and after the Second World War (Badcock 2007, 4). One could also talk about the split of his style into terms such as *humanistic, mystical and ritual*.

2. ABOUT THE *CHANT DE LINOS*

The musical piece *Chant de Linos* (Song of Linos) for flute and piano was written in 1944 as an obligatory piece for the competition of the Paris Conservatoire and is dedicated to its flute professor Gaston Crunelle. With the help of flautist Jean Pierre Rampal, who won first prize at the given competition, the work was immediately well received. In terms of its technical requirements, this piece is among the most demanding pieces of flute literature. In addition to this version, there is another one from 1945 written for flute, violin, cello and harp, which had its premiere in the same year in the Pierre Jamet's quintet. Jolivet particularly favored the flute because of its associations with the mythical beliefs. He believed that the flute has the ability to unite the "corporeal and cosmic within us" (Ibid. 13). It is not difficult to realize that the poetics of the *Chant de Linos* came from the French tradition of flute works inspired by Greek mythology, such as Debussy's *Syrinx*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Roussel's *Joueurs de Flute*. Jolivet was also inspired by the playing style of North Africa's local musicians, whom he encountered during 1933. Their free and improvisational style of playing undoubtedly influenced Jolivet's way of composing, which is reflected in his other pieces written for the flute, such as *Cinq incantations*, *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, *Concerto for Flute* and other chamber works involving the flute.

Chant de Linos is a perfect example of the way Jolivet evoked the ritual. In this context, we can bring up Arthur Hoérée's thought about Jolivet's poetics, which directly relates to this work: "Jolivet's art is dedicated to restoring the original ancient musical sense, such as the magic and incantation expression of the religiosity of the human community" (Cook 1991, 108). The title of the piece can be translated as The Song of Linus, where Linus (or Linos) represents the Greek mythological character that was believed to have invented

melody and rhythm. The same name is associated with several characters in Greek mythology – two were the sons of the god Apollo (protector of music). One of the versions of Greek mythology says that Linus, among other things, taught music to the Greek gods Orpheus and Heracles, and the latter killed him after an unsuccessful lyre lesson. In ancient Greece Linus was the personification of mourning and lamentation, so it is believed that because of his name the classical Greek genre of lament song got the name *linos*. In this respect, it can be said that throughout this piece Jolivet idiosyncratically presented the Greek concept of *linos* in the form of a ritual lament. This is confirmed by Jolivet's epigraph at the head of the score, which is the only author's program text: "The singing of Linos was, in ancient Greece, a kind of threnody: a funeral wailing, a lament intersected with shouting and with dances" (Jolivet 1946, 1).

In order to complete the story of the piece, we should also keep in mind the time when the work was created. As the piece was written at the end of the Second World War (around 1944), one cannot avoid the question of whether the laments and cathartic dance passages are actually a musical response to the horrors of that time. From Leslie Sprout's article, we can understand the state of French music during the Nazi propaganda dictatorship. Sprout states that the public performance of the new French music was forbidden in Nazi Germany and the same was beginning to happen in occupied France. It was also suggested that along with Germany's persecution of modern composers, performances of Messiaen's recent compositions that were characterized as "politically inappropriate" should be banned (Sprout 2005, 263). Compared to Messiaen, who in the traumatic experience of the camp still avoided holding a rifle, Jolivet had a more direct experience of war, since he defended his country as a soldier.

The non-musical background that is hidden behind this piece can primarily serve the performers in creating a more imaginative interpretation. In the emotional context, the piece contains, on the one hand, mournful mourning, a sense of loss expressed through lyrical cries, while on the other hand, the primitive expression of pain (which is transformed into a Phoenix rising in the Coda) is represented through wild dances. These two juxtaposed ideas are very clearly represented by the choice and role of instrumentation as well as through the musical form – which perhaps most effectively portrays the given story.

3. INTERPRETATION

In one of the musical interviews about his compositional premises, Jolivet emphasizes that all of the technical acquisitions should never be separated from the human element and any complexity that negates the connection between music and the human voice should be ignored. He also argued that compositional technique should be placed at the service of melody and its continuity (Schiffer 1975, 16). We notice this way of thinking exactly on the micro and macro level of the work *Chant de Linos*. From his prism, Jolivet masterly joints the sections through the use of a common tonal "pivot" that connects two adjacent parts, so that one gets the impression of one continuous tonal thread. In relation to the conceptual organization of the piece, the musical content acts in a succession of sections of passionate crying, calm lyrical passages and energetic dances. In formal terms piece consists of ten main parts and we can illustrate it as follows: **Introduction** (bars 1– 16), **A** (17–33), **B** (34–46), **A1** (47–58), **B1** (59–81), **C** (81–175), **A2** (176–187), **B2** (188–197), **C1** (197–207) **Coda** (208–229).

Although the motive material of the Introduction is not repeated in the further development of the piece, Jolivet uses it to establish the main intention of the repetitive and ever-reshaping cry in the flute section. The given melodic contours are supported in the piano part by dissonant chords that mostly act around tritone intervals. The opening flute tone can be somewhat understood as a sudden cry, which with its initial dynamics and expression should shock and immediately excite the listener. However, the opening tone should not be played too loudly, since the given part has yet to have its climax in bar 8. I think that special attention should be paid to the notes that act as the tonal axis. Similar to Debussy's procedure in his *Syrinx*, Jolivet constructs a melodic line by setting a single pitch towards which the other tones of the phrase gravitate (Example 1). It is a typical example of evoking the playing of Pan's flute, whose tones are tuned to its fundamental tone. From this perspective, it could be said that the flute part resembles an improvisational way of playing, since the passages play more the role of ornamenting the fundamental tone than they would resemble a melodic line. Therefore, "ornamental" tones should be performed with less expression than their tonal pivots. In this sense, the phrase could be guided on a broader plan – from one tonal axis to another.

Example 1: *Chant de Linos*, Bars 1–4

The image shows a musical score for the first four bars of 'Chant de Linos'. The top staff is for the flute, starting with a trill on G4 (circled in red) and a melodic line with several notes also circled in red. The bottom staff is for the piano, featuring chords and rhythmic patterns. A tritone interval is highlighted in the first measure of the piano part. Dynamics include *ff* and *sf*. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80.

In section **A** (17–33) "the plaint" is more intimately reflected through the lyrical and long melody of the flute. The piano part carries a constant rhythm the pattern of which appears in every measure of this section, while the harmonies alternate sequentially (the tritone interval also prevails). Although it can be said that the given section is lyrical, it nevertheless hides a germ of ritual (or magic) within the obsessive repetition of a rhythmic pattern in the piano that can sound like a mantra. Even though many performers perform this section with a lot of *rubato* and agogic freedom, this can lead to inadequate transmission of Jolivet's intention – evoking the ritual. Therefore, I think it is important to determine the limits of agogic freedom without violating the incantational character at the same time. It is interesting that Jolivet uses tone G here as a reference pitch (at the beginning as well as at the end) presenting it as a tonal axis by using a similar method to the one in the Introduction.

The **B** section (34–46) represents a contrast to the previous one and characteristically evokes the ferocity of the lamentation. Here articulation is punctually written, and I believe its role is to express a lamentable character, but more in a rhetorical way. With this articulation Jolivet underlines the essentiality of the inseparable nature of music and the human voice in yet another way. In technical terms, I think the difference between *staccato* and accented tones should be as obvious as possible (related to measures 35–36 and similar). Grace notes such as *acciaccatura* could – in addition to their ornamental purpose – serve as a

dynamic and articulating aid for the accented tones to which they are attached – the attack of the accented tones will be of better quality if the initial air energy is directed from the grace note. The ritual "delirium" evoked in this section lies in the well-balanced and mutual sound of both instruments. Critical places for finding a good balance are where the flute approaches the limit of its lower register and in flutter-tonguing passages in the first octave.

The next two sections (**A1**, 47–58 and **B1**, 59–80) are actually variants of the previous two. The difference certainly exists in the rhythmic and melodic structures, however the thematic structure remains the same. In section **A1**, the mystical character is more expressive than in part **A**, since the flute motives extend mainly in higher registers. To maintain the mysterious character, the flutist should use as little vibrato as possible to avoid potential romantic phrasing, which was not the most accurate way of Jolivet's expression. On the other hand, the flutist should maintain singing melody – which could rather be achieved by the help of agogic, timbral and dynamic oscillations.

Section **B1** differs from the previous *Piu mosso* by an added cadence that acts as a transition for the next section. In the given bars (73–80), Jolivet uses the same principle of the „gravitating“ pivotal tone, which in this case is note D. In a way, Jolivet uses the given note as intonation preparation for the next section. The flutist should therefore pay special attention to the tone D, so that the quarter note value (on which note D is located) comes slightly extended and tonally underlined.

Section **C** (bars 81–175) actually brings the central character of the piece. Here Jolivet depicts the ritual dance most impressively. The content of section **C**, with its playful rhythm and wild character, ties the extra-musical association evocating the pictures of an ancient idol sacrifice. Also, it isn't possible to avoid the musical association with the passages of *The Rite of Spring*, although the French composers of the time often denied the influence of Igor Stravinsky. In this section, the flute part takes over the role of a percussion instrument, filling in with sixteenth-note figures the irregular 7/8 time signature. Jolivet poses a considerable challenge to the flutist by requiring fortissimo dynamics on the repeated tone D and its neighboring tones from the first octave. An eased embouchure that is relaxed to the point of not letting the air through the corners of the lips can help for a well-articulated tone – otherwise, a low-quality (slipped) tone can occur. The focus should actually be on the very center of the lips. As for evoking the playful-ritual character, I think it is important to underline the downbeats of each bar where the flute evokes a percussive instrument (Example 2).

Example2: *Chant de Linos*, Bars84-86

This can help achieving the effect of obsessive repetition of rhythmical patterns, which is a typical feature of ritual music. It is also important to provide a clear articulation of meter and rhythm, so the choice of an appropriate tempo (not too fast) should be mutually

correlated. Jolivet's tempo marking (quarter note = 120bpm) could cause this section at certain acoustic halls to sound faster than it was written, and therefore it is good to organize it in a slightly slower tempo. That allows the wild character to sound close to pagan dance. Here an awareness of one's own weight can help and contact with the surface on which one stands, so that through the psychosomatic experience of connection with the ground, the tone could become wider and proper in character.

Actually, Section **C** consists of two parts. The first, which has been discussed so far, is linked with a somewhat slower part (bars 135–175) but contains similarly playful and ritual connotations. Unlike the previous part, the character of the *meno mosso* is softened by a somewhat humorous streak, and this is particularly reflected in the *scherzando* of piano passages. The flute part is now labeled *ben cantando* and takes the role of the human voice again. The very texture, character, and musical language of the second part of section **C** can somewhat be associated with the erotic nature of the ritual. This is reflected in the intriguing dialogue between the instruments, as well as in the intriguing melody that "seduces" with its oriental atmosphere. It is therefore necessary to play these passages as sensitively and articulately as possible, while constantly maintaining the dance pulsation.

Section **A2** (bars 176–187) acts as a reprise of section **A**, only in a shorter and additionally modified version. The piano part no longer has an ostinato rhythm, as was the case in the previous sections (**A** and **A1**), but only supports the flute line harmonically. A lament is characterized by perhaps the deepest sorrow so far, and evidently, the great contribution to that effect lies in the contrasted previous section **C**. On the interpretation side, the "lament prayer" can be evoked more deeply if the flutist pays additional attention to the manner of performing the sustained tones, which in this variant of section **A** come to a special expression (the initial periods of bars 178, 179, 181, 182...). A flutist could encounter these moments similar to the way of interpreting the Baroque Topic *sospiri* – in which the holding tone (in a manner of *appoggiatura*) is interpreted with greater dynamic and articulation intensity than its resolving tone. The next section (**B2**, bars 188–197) forms a pair with the previous section. With certain variation, **B2** is shortened and can therefore act as a transition which connects sections **A2** and **C1**.

The final *Allegro*, in the form of section **C1** (bars 197–208), brings the same thematic material from the central part of the piece, with its second part omitted. The ritual dance dominates again, however, Jolivet does not elaborate the motive content as he did previously, but with the formed dance material he introduces the **Coda** (bars 208–229), whose tonal content is transformed in a surprising way. Jolivet makes the transition from a complex modal system (sometimes also atonal) to a simple pentatonic one (combined with Doric and Aeolian modes). Although the rhythmic pattern has been preserved, with the change in tonal language the character of the ritual dance acquires a completely new dimension. In a way, the listener perceives the experience of a transformation from dark and tragic to bright and triumphant. The rising intervals in the piano section (bars 210–213) contribute to the depiction of fighting confidence with the hope of a triumphant ending to the story. In the introductory words of this paper, there was talk about the myth of regenerated Phoenix, and this allegory can be to some extent conveyed and experienced in the musical content of the **Coda**. On the interpretative side, I think it is very important to keep the playing rhythm, considering that the rhythm in these last bars is the most expressive tool. Also, the slide ornaments (similar to those in the figure in bar 216) should not be spread out, as this will disrupt the rhythm, as well as the obsessive 7/8 meter. Although Jolivet did not indicate this, the first downbeat of the given figures may be slightly underlined in each repetition to further emphasize the repetitive rhythmic pattern (Example 3).

Example 3: *Chant de Linos*, flute part, Bars 219–220

From section **C1** to the end of the piece, the tone of D unequivocally occupies a “gravitating” tone, while with Jolivet's use of the pentatonic scale and diminishment of harmonic complexity, one gets the impression of a clear cadence tonal center.

4. CONCLUSION

The results that can be achieved with the help of this paper imply that with different information about Jolivet's piece *Chant de Linos* and the use of various analytical methods, a wider experience and inventive interpretations can evolve. As already noted, a deeper understanding of Jolivet's music requires an interdisciplinary approach, which in this case, among other things, includes details about the composer's life and his interest in various non-European cultures. By applying a holistic approach to Jolivet's musical expression, we can get closer to the composer's intentions and then find a way to use that knowledge in favor of the individual performer's conception. Delving into the extra-musical content of Jolivet's music can significantly expand the interpreter's experience, and that is the starting point for any objective perception of the musical content.

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ANALITIČKO-INTERPRETATIVNI PRIKAZ KOMADA PESMA LINOSA ANDREA ŽOLIVEA

Kompozicija Pisma Linosa Andrea Žolivea zauzimala je važan odgovor u smeni ideala i estetike iz vremena Drugog svetskog rata i sve do danas zaokuplja veliku pažnju flautista. Današnje izobilje literature omogućilo je da se Žoliveovoj muzici pristupi na više različitih načina, no budući da je autor ovog teksta i sam flautista, značajan deo rada biće posvećen interpretativnom aspektu kroz tumačenje praktične primene već elaboriranih pretpostavki. Takođe, prikazivanje višeslojnih aspekata komada biće omogućeno uz pomoć različite literature koja će rasvetliti kulturološko-socijalni teren sa kog je Žolive stvarao, uz osvrtnje na bitne poetičke karakteristike kompozitora. U radu će biti korišćeni metodi umetničkog

istraživanja kao što su istorijski, analitički, komparativni i praktično-izvođački metod. Iako sam kompozitor nije obezbedio opširniji programski sadržaj, možemo smatrati da komad Pisma Linosa spada u programsku muziku, budući da jasno evocira određene predstave i pojmove. Mapiranje i definisanje konkretnog vanmuzičkog sadržaja sačinjavaće prvi deo rada, dok će u drugom delu biti prikazano tumačenje njegove praktične primene. Stoga, cilj ukupne egzegeze jeste da se izvođači dovedu do dubljeg razumevanja kompozitorovih intencija radi što izražajnije i sadržajnije interpretacije.

Ključne reči: Andre Žolive, Pisma Linosa, flauta, analiza, interpretacija