

Polyfunctional analysis of the music for launeddas

Phase 1 – *The application*

The approach to the analysis of music for launeddas can appear to be a procedure relatively simple and can trigger exegetic mechanisms which appear easily practicable to an outsider, or to a simple estimator; for sure it cannot result arduous if you take into account the unavoidable social and folkloristic implications in which the environment of launeddas is so indissolubly inserted.

You can be overpresumptuous and by approaching to the sound event with levity for analysing it or, more simply, for enjoying its indisputable beauty and fascination, it can lead the traveller to an experience which is satisfying, but often surrounded by an inexplicable mystery which is nourished by the players themselves.

The schematization of forms can be an easy work as well and the researchers from the past, who for the first time ventured on this field, surely offered suggestive interpretations of the musical phenomenon, and not only, by addressing their study toward those players who represented the aurora and at the same time the twilight of launeddas musical culture in Sardinia.

The academic criterion of the analytic action connoted the hermeneutics of what concerns the musical instrument, the scales and its more representative expression forms (among which, perhaps, *su ballu* is the one which, thanks to its contents and realising technique, represents the perfect union), this appears to be an objective fact.

The aesthetic prospective, the one of the listener, also guaranteed a starting point which is favourable and adaptable for the first attempts of cataloguing and analysis of the musical forms that are mostly used in the basic structure of the Sardinian musical society, which join the cultured experience to popular forms (the influence of the cultured music, nowadays, is conditioning very much the traditional player who, in many cases, begins to own some rudiments of musical grammar and general formal principles, clearly borrowed from the cultured music).

The reality of this phenomenon is extremely more complicated and structured than you can perceive with a more or less exhaustive examination of a score for launeddas. The essence of the music for launeddas is filled with such a technical, formal, instrumental complexity that, sometimes, it cannot be caught even by the more careful and prepared analyst, and the fund of academic knowledge, acquired in long years of study, can often be an *obstacle stone* in the way of those who are interested in ethnic music of Sardinia, and not only them. Therefore it is necessary to turn your attention to the specific dominant dynamics of the sound phenomenon, to which the culture of launeddas give vent.

If you want to fully seize this essence, an analytic approach is unavoidable, which analyses the subject of interest, so that it is made really understandable, and so interpretable.

Relying to an analytic praxis, which is maybe obsolete or at least unwilling a natural updating phase which also considers the implication of new technological and methodological resources, appears an action lacking in farsightedness.

As result the help of information systems is necessary, in order to address the analysis subjects toward a decryption process which makes manifest what happens inside them with clearness which was never previously assumed.

The music for launeddas, and most of all what concerns the *ballu* form, is the result of a process of extreme compression of multiple musical concepts in which, what could have been expressed in an understandable way in a lapse of time adequately prolonged, is condensed in very reduced spaces.

It is like willing to estimate all works of *Van Goo*, as limit example, but condensed in only one picture with a summarized overall area. How much can you appreciate the Dutch painter this way? Alright, you can grasp some glimpse, a general idea of a colour and some more, but you will never reach the full awareness of what you are watching. Therefore it is a problem related to the perceptive sphere: Even if

you have the entire work of the author in front of you, you are not actually able, in this condition, to evaluate it. The limitation of sight prevents an aware fruition of the image.

The same phenomenon exactly happens in the music for launeddas. You have to report the complexity of an event, a sound one in this case, on some parameters which can be clearly perceived: Indispensable condition for setting an interpretation process.

For these reasons it was necessary to prepare an analytic procedure which could assist the analyst in its decryption work of the codes implied in the instrumental praxis of launeddas, with an operating methodology which sets aside poetic and aesthetic circumstances.

The system is called “*Analisi polifunzionale della Musica per Launeddas*” (Polyfunctional analysis of the Music for Launeddas)¹. As principle, polyfunctional analysis means that analytic acting in which multiple levels of fruition of a sound object are plausible, which you think own their structural autonomy.

The analytic system is substantially subdivided in two defined subsystems *analytic engine* and *analytic sub-engine*, the latter indissolubly connected to the first one.

The *analytic engine*, more times quoted in this volume, consists in an exegetic apparatus conceived on more levels of fruition, exactly eight (four positive ones and four negative ones), which are independent and finalized to the search for a parameter to be determined in the designing phase.

The *a.e.* (note *analytic engine*) cuts the sound object, in the case of this work the introspection concerns the music by E.fisio Melis and his *Ballu*, by reducing it to its lowest terms, in the search for characteristic metastructures, such as composition syntagms, stylistic methods and combination architectures subjected to the given structure, in this case the *Ballu* and the *nodas*.

The *analytic sub-engine* represents a further widening of the 4th negative and can be combined only to that. The procedure consists in the cataloguing of complex fragments in four evolutionary levels, defined: 1. *generator* (the conceptual source), 1^a. *integral reiteration of the generator* (repetition of the subject), 2. *rhythmic variations to the generator* (in presence of the mancosedda itself but with modified durations); 3. *variations to the generator* (maximum combination freedom in the line of the mancosedda and the mancosa), 4. *portions* (quotes of complex fragments in point 1, 2, 3).

The results are undoubtedly interesting and, at the same time, encouraging. The author of the *Ballu*, analysed through this new methods, demonstrates to own a music syntax which is various and rich in contents; his own are real compositions which don't make use of paper's help for existing.

The wish is to be able to widen the research area, by involving the current launeddists, in order to give to Sardinian music an indispensable page of its history, before time erases the signs of this culture.

Taken from the book: "Chiavi di Lettura del Repertorio Tradizionale - Vol. 1 - Seconda parte - a".

¹ For a widening, see: www.launedda-s.com / Page – Studies and Researches.