

# The Rondo-Thinking in the Symphonic Poem "Festival of Rome"

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## ABSTRACT

As one of the outstanding composers of the 20th century, Respighi is famous for his three symphonic poems "Fountain of Rome" ("Fontane di Roma"), "Pine of Rome" ("Pini di Roma") and "Festival of Rome" ("Feste Romane"). Through the study and analysis of the "Festival of Rome", this paper finds that Respighi has unique characteristics in the application of the rondo principle in the classical structural principles. He extended the classical structure principle of rondo to the level of rondo-thinking and applied it to the musical details of his works, such as sections, motivations, tonality, dynamics and tempo. This kind of creative thinking of extending and developing the principle of musical form is of enlightening significance to contemporary music creation.

**Keywords:** Respighi, "Festival of Rome", the rondo principle, rondo-thinking

## I. INTRODUCTION

Rondo-thinking is a compound word. Literally, it is a combinative phrase made up of two separate words, rondo and thinking. To make its meaning clear, it is necessary to first introduce the words rondo and thinking.

Rondo, a musical term, is generally expressed in two terms: genre and form (structure). And it's broader as a genre than as a form. The "rondo" in rondo-thinking mainly refers to the category of musical form, that is, the structure of music, namely rondo form. It refers to a basic theme, usually referred to as the principal part or the refrain part, which has segments and a larger scale than the segments appearing more than three times in the work. The insertion of different sections in the basic theme is called a refrain part, regardless of the structure of the sections. In this way, the musical form featuring recurring principal part and multiple contrast between the inserted part and the main part (inserted part) many times is called rondo. And the pattern principle of contrast and alternation between refrain part and inserted part is rondo principle. In general, A represents the principal part and B, C, D, etc. represent the inserted part. Typical rondo form is shown as A, B, A, C, A. Occasionally, the rondo form with the inserted part in front can be seen, which form the structure of B, A, C, A, D, A.

Thinking, as a process, is the indirect and general reflection of human brain to objective things. It is a

higher form of cognition, and it reflects the relationship between the nature of things and the regular connection between things. If the concept of thinking is combined with some principles in music, such as the principle of variation and the principle of sonata, new concepts such as variation thinking and sonata thinking can be generated. These concepts are the expansion of the understanding of the principle of musical form structure, which are not confined to the category of musical form and have broader audience. Structural thinking and structural principles form the relationship of including and being included. For example, a work written in sonata form must have sonata thinking, but a work written in sonata thinking does not necessarily have to be written in sonata form.

Through the relevant elaboration of rondo and thinking, an understanding of rondo-thinking is developed: rondo-thinking is an expanded cognition of rondo principle formed by combining the principle of rondo form with the concept of thinking, and it has a relationship of including and being included with the rondo form. In rondo-thinking, due to the expansion of the concept, the principal part (or refrain part) is no longer necessarily a theme with a segment or the above structure scale, but may be a motivation, a phrase, a kind of intensity, an orchestrated arrangement of timbre, a principle of tonal arrangement, and so on. In the four movements of the "Festival of Rome", although none were written in an independent, typically rondo form, the rondo-thinking is scattered in the details of the music by means of motivation, section, intensity and tonality, forming a unique structural phenomenon. Here are some examples.

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**II. THE APPLICATION OF RONDO-THINKING IN WORKS**

*A. Inter-paragraph rondo-thinking*

The essence of the rondo-thinking between paragraphs is close to the rondo form, because the structural length of the principal part has the meaning of the paragraph and also forms a contrast with the inserted part. In the first part of the four-movement "Epiphany", the main part A, appearing three times in the peddling-tone as the image, meets the basic requirements for the number of repetitions in the rondo form, and the comparative refrain parts between the principal parts also conform to the general practice of rondo form. However, the arrangement of the whole

music form is different from that of the conventional rondo form in three aspects.

First, the third appearance of the main part has a double function, playing the role in introducing the inserted part D. Second, after the first appearance of the refrain part, the first inserted part was reproduced in the form of changes (but it cannot be understood as the repeated changes of the refrain part and inserted part of the whole, because the refrain part structure was drastically reduced), and then a new second inserted part with a market scene appeared. Third, the music does not end at the principal part, but at the inserted part. The whole sequence of appearance is shown in "Table I". It can be seen from the chart that the paragraphs reflect the rondo-thinking.

TABLE I. THE WHOLE SEQUENCE OF APPEARANCE

Paragraph	A	B	A1	B1	C	A2 (D)	E
<i>Musical image</i>	Peddling scene	Raucous beat	Peddling scene	Raucous beat	Market scene	Peddling and peasant tunes	Lively ballad

*B. The rondo-thinking between music sections*

The principal part and the inserted part of the rondo-thinking between music sections are in the form of musical section. In the first part of the second movement of the "Amnesty Festival", there are several phrases. At the end of every phrase there is almost always a closing factor of a stanza form that begins with a dominant sound and flows down to the tonic. Thus, it shows the rondo-thinking with the principal

part of the closing section and the inverted meaning (the inserted part appears in the front). For example in the score case 1 ("Fig. 1"), the framed part represents the "refrain part" of the closing. Although due to the limitation of space, all the melodic materials are not listed completely, it can be seen from the relationship between melodic materials in these 17 sections that the rondo-thinking is manifested in the form of a musical section.

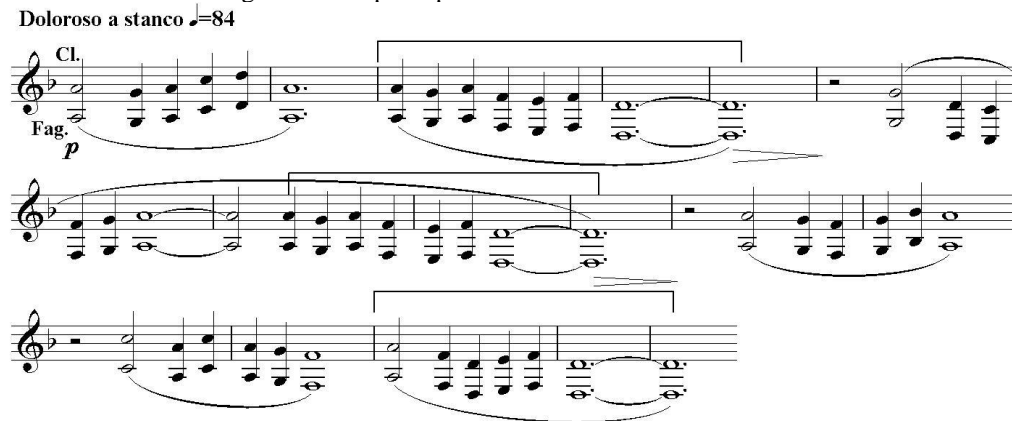


Fig. 1. Score case 1.

*C. The rondo-thinking in motivations*

The principal part of the rondo-thinking in motivations is in the form of motive. In the middle of the first movement of the "Arena", at the end of each phrase is the threat motive  $\text{bA-F-G-bA}$   $\text{ba-f-g-ba}$  that originated in the middle introduction of the movement, and the music before each threat motive (which can be

understood as a phrase) is different. In this way, the thinking of motive rondo in inverted form is developed. For example in score case 2, due to the limited space, on the first half of the musical score of the complex section is used here. By combing the material relationship in this score and presenting it in the form of a table, rondo-thinking in motivations can be seen ("Table II").



Fig. 2. Score case 2.

TABLE II. THE RONDO-THINKING IN MOTIVATIONS

Theme mark	B	A	C	A	D	A
Form	Phrase	Threat motive	Phrase	Threat motive	Phrase	Threat motive

D. The rondo-thinking in the orchestration

The principal part of the rondo-thinking in the orchestration is mainly in the form of timbre collocation, and the task of rondo-thinking is accomplished through the reproduction of timbre. In the prelude of the first part of the first movement "Arena", the orchestra's full-playing orchestration technique, which is characterized by rolling and roaring, and the high-pitched buchanan horn that is characterized by solo, form the rondo-thinking in timbre. It is worth noting that the contrast between the rondo inserted part

and the refrain part can be understood in combination with the melody played. The main melody played by tenor buchanan of the main instrument is different every time, while the main melody played by the band is always played with a weak rise, a fourth fall and an upward octave to obtain the meaning of multiple repetitions of the refrain part. The shading sound made by the tutti and solo also has very contrastive effect. It can be seen from score case 3 in "Fig. 3" that rondo-thinking is embodied in the form of timbre arrangement.

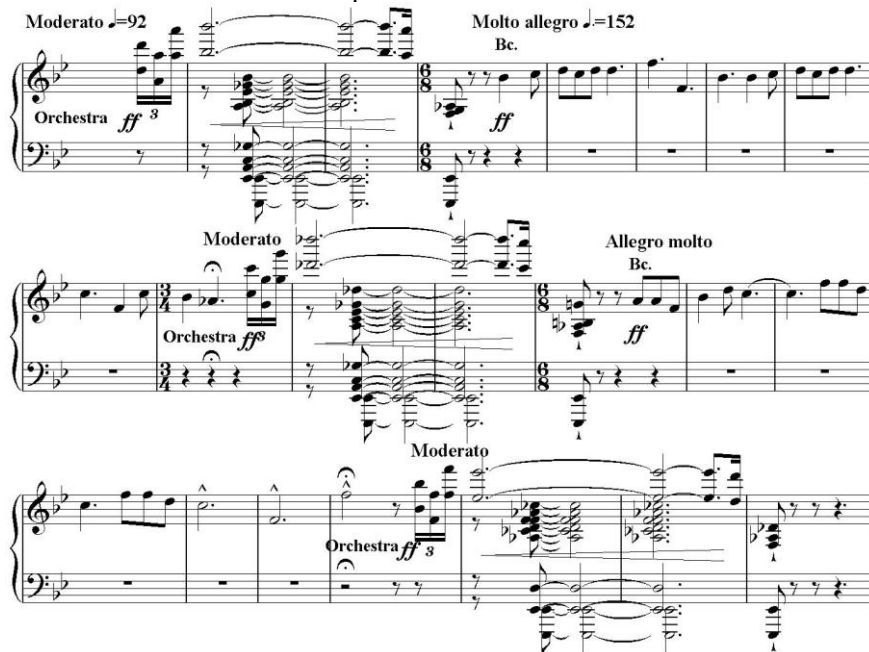


Fig. 3. Score case 3.

*E. The rondo-thinking in tonality and harmony*

The principal part of the rondo-thinking in tonality and harmony is a stable or relatively stable central tonality, form a contrast with the other tonality as the inserted part. The last part of "Epiphany" in the fourth movement is divided into five paragraphs due to different writing methods. These five paragraphs take

the main continuity of D major as the central tonality, but there are some relatively unstable and fuzzy harmonies between the main continuity to form the effect of the inserted part, and the two harmonies also form the contrast between the inserted parts, as shown in "Table III". As can be seen from the table, rondo-thinking is also reflected in tonality and harmony.

TABLE III. THE REFLECTION OF RONDO-THINKING IN TONALITY AND HARMONY

Theme mark	A	B	A	C	A
<i>Harmony form</i>	Static state	Dynamic state	Static state	Dynamic state	Static state
<i>Main methods</i>	Main continuity	Fuzzy, with the bass melody A sound around and the characteristics of the direction harmony	Main continuity	Fussy, featuring the use of bVI, bVII, which have the harmonic characteristics of the subordinate direction	Main continuity

*F. The rondo-thinking in tempo and intensity*

In the work "Festival of Rome", Respighi used the rondo-thinking not only in the paragraph, the section, the motivation, the orchestration and the tone (harmony), but also in the tempo and intensity. Of course, the composition of music must be the combination of multiple musical elements at the same time, therefore, intensity, tempo in the rondo-thinking of course will be combined with other elements.

In the introduction of the first part of the first movement of "Arena", the arrangement of tempo is obviously rondo, reflecting rondo-thinking (see score case 3 in "Fig. 3"). In terms of tempo, Moderato is the principal part of the rondo (it has appeared three times), and the inserted part is Molto allegro and allegro Molto,

which form a contrast with the principal part, reflecting the rondo-thinking in the tempo layout.

In the middle of the first movement, in order to highlight the fierceness of the trapped animal, brass instruments are used to play the threat motive. The corresponding intensity is also specially designed to highlight the ferociousness of the fierce animal with the high intensity of ff. The high intensity of ff appears 4 times, inserted by other intensity such as p, mp and f, etc. As a result, the rondo-thinking with inverted significance is shown, in which the ff intensity is the principal part and p, mp and f intensity are the inserted parts. The intensity layout between the threat motives and the complex phrase is shown in "Table IV", from which we can see the reflection of rondo-thinking in the intensity.

TABLE IV. THE DYNAMIC ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE THREAT MOTIVE AND THE COMPLEX PHRASE

Theme mark	B	A	C	A	D	A	E	A	F	A
<i>Intensity form</i>	p	ff	p	ff	mp	ff	f	ff	f	ff

From the above analysis, it can be seen that there are many forms of rondo-thinking in the symphonic poem "Festival of Rome". The use of the rondo-thinking in the work shows Respighi's familiarity with the principles of traditional musical structure was profound and heartfelt.

**III. CONCLUSION**

Influenced by the Impressionist and Post-romantic styles, Respighi's music creation has an inclusive and complex character. However, through the surface coat of impressionism and romanticism, his love for

traditional and classical methods of composition can still be found, especially his preference for the principle of classical rondo structure. In his practice of music creation, he conceptualized and introduced the principle of rondo, and applied it to the aspects of paragraph, section, motivation, timbre orchestration, harmony tonality, intensity and tempo, etc., so as to form the thoughts of rondo in the writing of music details. This practice has played a positive role in the shaping of musical image and the unification of musical structure. His creative thoughts on the extension and development of the principle of musical form are of enlightening

significance to contemporary music creation and are worthy of study.

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