ROMANIAN MUSIC 1944-2000
Ideology, Politics and Musical History

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Chapter 1
Communist power and the impact on musical composition

Post-war history for many East European countries meant a brutal rupture with previous traditions of all kinds – cultural, political, social and economic – following the installation of communist regimes with the support of the Soviet Red Army. It should be noted that there were no genuine revolutions within any of the Soviet Union's neighbouring countries such as Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Rather, a new social-political structure was imposed upon them under conditions that are now well known – international treaties and the beginning of the 'Cold War'.[1] For half a century the powerful neighbour to the east was to hold all its bordering states within its sphere of influence.

On August 23 1944 Romania, previously allied with Germany, changed sides to join its opponents. This date was subsequently promoted by the communists as having been the trigger for the 'anti-fascist and anti-imperialist revolution', celebrated annually as one of the most important national events. To be sure, what remained effectively unknown in Romania until after 1989 was the role of King Mihai[2] and other political factors in this 'turning of the army', impelled by national interests, but it offered an additional pretext for the Soviet Union to intervene in the shaping of Romania's destiny. Under Soviet domination, the Romanian communists, initially a small party in the political spectrum, became the dominant force in post-war coalition governments led by the allied Petru Groza (Ploughmen's Front), and by the end of 1947 the King was in exile and a People's Republic declared.

Political events not only had an inevitable impact on existing cultures, they also brought about certain common features uniting cultural manifestations behind the 'iron curtain' beyond the differences of language, popular tradition, rituals and religion. A Romanian, for example, reading novels of Milan Kundera re-encounters themes and situations of the epoch with a sense of having lived through them. Or again, the circumstances under which Dmitri Shostakovich or Sergei Prokofiev wrote music find their parallels in Romanian music after 1948. The fact that the communist regime in Romania, over the period as a whole, operated in a more violently repressive manner than in neighbouring countries remains one reason why Romanian artists in particular had less penetration into western circles.

Under the new cultural system imposed from Moscow, all forms of art and literature after 1945 became instruments of state policy through coordination of their characteristics.[3]

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[1] See Stelian Tănase, *Elite şi societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948-1965* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998). Tănase also points out that few of the communist leaders were of Romanian origin.

[2] The successor in the Hohenzollern family line that had been the ruling dynasty of Romania since the middle of the 19th century. Mihai was forced to abdicate on December 1, 1947 when the transitional period of the 'proletarian revolution' was replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat in the People's Republic. As Tănase writes: "The political alignment of the country with the USSR, the sovietisation of the government, and the Bolshevik structuring of the Communist Party were accelerated and secured. These three processes complemented each other and worked in concert." (Ibid., p.37.)

[3] See the exposition of Eugen Simion in his Introduction to the Unesco Colloquium 1997, *Cultura în epoca totalitarismului*, published in "Caiete critice" 1-4, 1998. Simion's observations on literature certainly apply to music as well – hence some of his ideas will be taken up later in this book.

Artistic autonomy and formalism become heretical concepts, prejudicial to anyone who might continue to pursue them. Art now had to serve the creation of 'the new human being' – for example, to convince farmers to accept collectivization enthusiastically, or to demonstrate the necessity of industrialization.[4] The message of a work of art must be clear, it must mobilize and invigorate, it must be accessible to the broad masses of working people, and it must conform to the doctrine of **socialist realism**, in accord with a famous dictum of Stalin: 'Writers are the engineers of the human soul.' The notion of socialist realism, coined by Stalin in Moscow in 1932 and supported for a while by Maxim Gorki, is a hybrid of 19th-century classic realism and the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat. It was imposed and applied in the communist countries of Eastern Europe, intensively discussed and officially lauded. It also made some converts in the West (Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Éluard, Luigi Nono, among others), until a better-informed time ensued with regard to Stalinist practices. Modernism and the avant-garde were held up as being the opposing approaches, censured as 'decadent', 'anti-human', 'diversionist' and other such terms. The resulting ideological Manichaeism sees a permanent divide between bourgeois art (subordinate to capital, manifesting 'decadent putrefaction') and proletarian art (humanist, progressive).

Not only were important works of universal value (from Proust to Schoenberg, from Joyce to Messiaen) eliminated from the public domain and banned, but the dualism 'decadent / socialist realist' was applied in the labelling of Romanian writers and artists, even in the internal examination of individual works. The absurdity of the conclusions to which this led scarcely needs to be mentioned. As a result, numerous Romanian intellectuals were 'unmasked', incriminated, censured, and at times convicted and imprisoned, most notably those who did not understand how to make 'self-criticism' or to accept various forms of compromise.

Concrete examples are also to be found in the ranks of Romanian composers, if less frequently and less resoundingly than in Romanian literature and philosophy (where dissidence was more marked) – a subtle avoidance of the officially-imposed line being more possible in the language of sound. By its own more abstract nature, music offered paths of 'evasion' with regard to socialist realism which, although 'suspect', could not be denounced outright.

Before taking up these examples, however, some observations need to be made about the general context of Romanian composition and the attitudes of musicians at the historic moment of 1944 and thereafter. The institution best able to furnish adequate data in this respect remains the Society of Romanian Composers (SCR), from 1949 renamed the Union of Composers and Musicologists of the People's Republic of Romania (after the Soviet model).[5] Here Romanian composers and theorists constantly met up with each other, in workshops and concerts, or in meetings of individual sections (e.g. those for chamber and symphonic music, choral music, wind bands or musicologists), to comment on, analyse and criticize the most recent productions in the genre. It should be mentioned that the main purpose of this institution – promoting new Romanian works – still continues to the present time, while the task of collecting authors' rights reverted to an association separate from the Union only in 1990. That its work was for some decades censored by official ideology, and its promotional

[4] Romania as a country was previously oriented to an agricultural economy.

[5] Invaluable documentation for this investigation is provided by the comprehensive historiographical study by Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti: Uniunea Compozitorilor şi Muzicologilor din România* 1920-1995 (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1995). Dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Union of Composers and Musicologists, the book is based on the institution's archives, minutes of meetings, correspondence, and periodicals of the time, and on monographs by composers and studies of their music. The historical contours emerge – in greater or lesser degrees of subjectivity – of the evolution of an association for musical composition, the musical personalities who led it, and the chronology of social and ideological conditions which influenced Romanian modern music as mediated through this forum.

role transformed into being a cradle for mass songs extolling the Communist Party and its leadership – these are indeed aspects of Romanian music of the last 50 years but, fortunately, not the only aspects.

1944-1954: The Stalinist era. Transition, consolidation and ideological pressure

We begin our observations at the moment of transition after the war, a period in music that reflects tragic changes in the structure of Romanian society at large. If two prominent personalities had constituted the leadership of the Society of Romanian Composers (SCR) until the end of the war – president George Enescu (1881-1955) and secretary Constantin Brăiloiu (1893-1958) – both were to depart the country permanently in the changed political environment. Many other important intellectuals did likewise. Brăiloiu left in 1944 for Geneva, where he was to found the International Archives of Folk Music. Enescu travelled on tour to the USA in 1946, after which he settled in France.

Even from late 1944 'purging commissions' began to be established, aimed at eliminating from public life political opponents in every sphere, including music – whether as 'representatives of the exploiting class' or as 'collaborators' with the Nazi armies, as former Legionnaires of the Romanian Iron Guard[6] or for other similar reasons. A period ensued that was undoubtedly replete with injustices and acts of personal revenge, on the basis of groundless or unverified accusations. Persecutions took various forms. In some cases it was the loss of salaries (for example the composer and conductor Ionel Perlea, already departed from Romania, who had been liberated from a Nazi camp by the allied armies; he was suspended by the SCR and as a result did not return to the country). Others had their means of existence obstructed and their living space restricted (numerous tenants were forcibly quartered in apartments and houses of others, a situation that was to persist for decades). Some were even arrested and imprisoned. From this point of view, musicians perhaps suffered somewhat less than Romanian literati and philosophers. Cases can nevertheless be cited. For his Legionnaire sympathies, Dimitrie Cuclin was sent to hard labour on the construction of the Danube to Black Sea Canal – on the pretext that he had listened to music of Bach or Wagner at the invitation of western diplomatic representatives in Bucharest. The ethnologist Harry Brauner, although a communist, was arrested along with his wife, the graphic designer Lena Constante, for participation in the circle of Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu, which became a dissident group towards the end of the 1940s.[7]

The 'transition' period of 1944-9 meant turbulent times for composers, in which some made compromises, and others enjoyed a sudden lightning ascent in the social scale. Others again held resolutely to their positions, little by little being excluded, indicted or outright persecuted. Two cases at opposite extremes can be noted: firstly that of **Matei Socor** (1908-1980), Jewish Armenian by origin, who had been a communist activist in the period of the Party's illegality, going back to the 1930s. Held in a prison camp for his anti-fascist convictions, he was freed in 1943 through the intercessions of the SCR leaders (Enescu and, especially, Mihail Jora), who made a submission to the officials of the time to release from prison 'a young composer of great talent'.[8] Socor was indeed positioned among the musical

[6] An ultra-nationalist group, founded in 1927 as the "Legion of the Archangel Michael", subsequently re-named successively the "Iron Guard" (1930), "Everything for the Fatherland" (1935) and "Legionnaires Movement" (1940). All members and sympathisers were rigorously pursued and prosecuted under the communist government as fascist terrorists, or as agents of fascism in Romania.

[7] Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu (1900-54): politician, sociologist, jurist and economist, member of the Central Committee (1945-48) and the Politburo (1946-48) of the Romanian Communist Party; Minister of Justice (1944-48). Arrested in 1948, condemned to death and executed for his opposition to the 'colonial' dependence on the Soviet Union as one of the political rivals of Gheorge Gheorghiu-Dej. Rehabilitated in 1968.

[8] See Grigore Constantinescu, *Matei Socor* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1983), p. 61.

avant-garde of the inter-war years, by virtue of his interests in twelve-tone composition and the music of Hindemith (having also studied in Germany), and had shown genuine compositional abilities. After 1944 his political rise was spectacular. He held important leadership positions in broadcasting and became president of the Union of Composers from 1949. The music that he wrote from this time onwards adhered strictly, and in exemplary fashion, to the guidelines of socialist realism. Interesting, however, is his later compositional evolution from the period of the 1970s: far from engaging himself in an ongoing political function for the regime of Nicolae Ceauşescu, he re-discovered his own aesthetic past in a certain sense, returning to a structurally elaborate, chromatic modernism. A comparison of Matei Socor's post-war evolution with that of Hanns Eisler (while recognizing their differences) can trace the same path from avant-garde dodecaphony to politically-engaged tonality. As Hermann Danuser has written: "For Hanns Eisler, working in the German Democratic Republic meant a voluntary relinquishing of the aesthetic of modernism, to which he had turned again in exile, under the renewed contact with his teacher Schoenberg."[9]

The other case is that of **Mihail Jora** (1891-1971), possibly the most prominent composer of the previous inter-war period apart from Enescu. In 1944 Jora became vice-president of the SCR, following Constantin Brăiloiu's emigration, and remained so until 1949 – while George Enescu continued as president in an honorary capacity only. In this position Jora maintained the maximum possible independence of the institution vis-à-vis the Party leadership. His unflinching stance made him a target of officialdom as 'decadent' and 'reactionary,' publicly indicted in the press for 'formalism' in composition. He was progressively removed from the leadership of the Union, and from the Royal Academy of Music, of which he was Rector[10] – marginalized, deprived of his means of existence for a time and isolated, ultimately to be rehabilitated again by gradual degrees. Jora's own creative practice shows a corresponding aesthetic stance, in an elevated kind of neo-classicism that does not exclude influences such as expressionism.

Numerous other examples of different moral-aesthetic positions could certainly be cited, whether those of established composers – showing various shades of compromise – or of younger musicians whose recognition in those years was conditional on their political affiliation and on completion of musical studies in the Soviet Union of the 1950s. The latter group includes the composers Anatol Vieru, Theodor Grigoriu, Dumitru Bughici and Tiberiu Olah, and the musicologists Octavian Lazăr Cosma and George Bălan.

The consequential position of one such as **Constantin Silvestri** (1913-1969) is also found. He was another target of attacks on the grounds of formalism, for the powerfully chromatic works of his characteristic neo-classic style (1938-1944), in which the dissonant harmony, difficult to classify, neutralizes its supporting function and adopts a kind of rugged independence from the melody. After 1944 Silvestri avoided composing in conformity with the official line of facile folklorism, and was sustained in Romanian musical life by virtue of his qualities as a conductor, being a personality impossible to overlook or marginalize. Despite this, his persecutions forced him to opt for exile in 1959, eventually settling in England.

There is further the case of moderate compromise, of a figure such as **Mihail Andricu** (1894-1974). Having written music of a classic-folkloric kind prior to 1944, he was able to retain his style without essential changes. He functioned as vice-president to Matei Socor in the Union (although in an honorary capacity, without decision-making powers), and yielded to political pressures with the composition of occasional pieces (such as *Cantata for Stalin*).

[9] Hermann Danuser, *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts,* in *Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, edited by Carl Dahlhaus, Vol.7. (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1984), p.288.

[10] A characteristic gesture of Jora, as Rector of the Academy of Music in 1948, was to call for a minute's silence to reflect on the abolition of the monarchy!

Yet his full portrait is not so simply drawn, since later on, in 1959, he was excluded from the Union on political grounds (one accusation among others being his admiration of things Western). His works were banned and he was left without means of support. Later in this book we will enlarge on Andricu's openness to Western modernism, and his generosity to younger composers in the 1960s and 1970s.

And then there is the position of full integration into communist political culture, as with **Alfred Mendelssohn** (1910-1966). At the outset of his career he was influenced by his studies in Vienna, experimenting with polytonality and even with twelve-tone composition. After 1947, however, he became a prolific 'chronicler' of contemporary events, extolling the communist leaders in works such as the cantata *Glasul lui Lenin (*The Voice of Lenin), and quoting mass songs in his symphonies to symbolize the creative upsurge of the workers and similar themes. Ultimately, however, not even he could resist the temptation to revert to the modern techniques that he had long abandoned.

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The SCR as a whole began to feel the full force of political pressures in the years 1945-6, when figures from outside the institution, but with important functions in the Communist Party, arrived to monitor and dictate its activities. They forced its affiliation with the 'Union Syndicate of Artists, Writers and Journalists', then with the 'General Confederation of Labour', following the goal of 'brotherhood of workers and intellectuals'.[11] All these developments were nothing other than inevitable steps towards political subordination. The legal instance was not slow to follow for the interference of the Communist Party in the artistic domain. July 18th 1947 brought the introduction of the *Law regarding the organization of theatres, opera-houses and concert halls of the state, and for the regime of public spectacles*. By this law, a body was instituted for the control of artistic life, called the Higher Council for Dramatic Literature and Musical Composition. In October of the same year, the congress of the Union Syndicate proclaimed socialist realism as the one and only method of artistic creation: "No great culture can exist, no art of value that is not based on a progressive ideology." As a consequence, the SCR initiated discussions on music as an ideological weapon and its contribution to the education of the masses. The debates bordered on the absurd, trying to establish criteria by which a musical work is progressive or decadent (for example that an inclination to sadness leads to decadence…).[12] In any case, musical composition could not be conceived in terms outside the ideological line, while anyone who claimed to be non-political as an artist was deemed in error.

There followed, on February 10th 1948, the *Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR on problems of music*. This was extensively debated in the Romanian press and in the meetings of the SCR. The Resolution held to a theory of 'simplification' of music. The role of the Soviet Party was compared to that of the Church at the time of the flowering of Renaissance polyphony (!) – standing in opposition to 'elitism' and excess of technicalities, and in favour of a music comprehensible to all. As a consequence, composers not only needed to learn anew, but also had to 'un-learn' many techniques adopted before August 23rd 1944.

The Soviet Resolution formed the core of the ideological offensive on Romanian composers, which came to a climax in the course of 1949. The attacks on Mihail Jora intensified, an artist who was forced by these circumstances to withdraw progressively from public life, and went through times of extreme difficulty for his material earnings. Articles in the Party press (the only press at that) characterized Jora's attitude as that of the "enemy" who was impeding "progress", while the "trap of atonality and strident combinations of dissonant sounds still lies in ambush in the corners of some musicians' imagination." Mihail Jora's own

[11] See Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, pp.137-138.
[12] Ibid., p.153.

work was seen as nothing other than "deeply reactionary, ...blatant in the aggressive preference for degraded poetry with its apologia for pornography and suicide as a source of inspiration for songs."[13] Likewise condemned was the "bourgeois anti-melodic school" embodied in Silvestri, and the "fascism" of the whole Romanian diaspora as a block. All this was seen in complete contrast to the line of socialist realism, as expressed in the simplistic tonal melodies of mass songs, or in the vocal-symphonic works of such figures as Matei Socor, Alfred Mendelsohn and Hilda Jerea (1916-1980). The musical scores desired and required for the new ideology received remarkable financial support through the establishment of the *Musical Foundation*, funded by the government and offering favourable conditions for composition through a system of commissions, acquisitions, stipends, pensions, recreation accommodation and other benefits. The manipulation of composers thus became quite overt: for example, two weeks before the *General Assembly of Composers* in 1949 (in which important structural changes to the Society were to be carried through) the Musical Foundation dispensed generous commissions for compositional projects (some of which remained unfulfilled).

The end result of all the turbulent events of Romanian musical life in the years after the war was a radically changed organizational context for creative activity, with definitive ideological directives in place. The General Assembly of Composers was clearly subject to political manipulation, starting with different categories of invitations to participants (with or without voting rights), and extending to the imposition of a new leadership group on the Society and its renaming, on the Soviet model, as *The Composers' Union of the People's Republic of Romania.* If we dwell on the transformation of the Union to such an extent, it is because effectively no composition in Romania existed outside this body. Even non-member composers or students, when included in any concert program at all, had to submit the given work to the Union's compositions office in order to obtain the minimal certification 'suitable for dissemination'. Otherwise the piece would be banned. In this way ideological censorship was continuously present under the mask of ostensible professional control – and hence the interest of those in power to keep obedient leaders in control of artistic-creative unions in general (writers, visual artists, architects, makers of theatre and film, and others). We will detail at a later point the ways in which the institutional departments functioned. Here it should be underlined that, in the longer term, professional monitoring of musical scores would not permanently remain the equivalent of ideological censorship; indeed it could even acquire a beneficial function.

In the immediate term, the ideological line of Romanian music can be traced out in the public position, the reports and speeches, of the incoming Union president for the years 1949-1954, Matei Socor. Standing in opposition to Western music as an expression of decadence meant first and foremost a critical stance towards the Schoenberg school: "Atonality is formalist, and negates melody, negates Nature, negates the human heart; it promotes combinations of sounds that are arbitrary, mechanical and cacophonous."[14] Schoenberg's *Erwartung* was said to propagate pessimism, the technique of *Sprechgesang* was a hysterical declamation of lunacy. Hindemith and Messiaen, on the other hand, are propagators of mysticism. Socialist culture is, of course, the lauded opposite pole (in accordance with the Maxim Gorki phrase about writers as 'the engineers of human hearts') – as are the principles of A.A. Zhdanov as set out in *The Soviet Revolution in the Problems of Music*. Romania's own musical tradition is seen from a distorted perspective. A young romantic composer such as Ciprian Porumbescu (1853-1883) is valued for his 'connection with the popular masses', while other Romanian composers are assigned to the decadent schools of the West (French and German), including Socor himself, who submits to this form of self-criticism.

[13] Ibid., p.178 and p.184.
[14] Ibid., p.193.

Compositions of the inter-war period are seen as manifestations of cosmopolitan, academic and formalist thinking – in which composers chose mythological or exotic subjects rather than creating musical depictions of the great figures of Romanian history. As a consequence, re-orientation towards folkloric culture is encouraged, but only with a new content – socialist and accessible – and on no account in the spirit of the bourgeois slogan 'art for art's sake'.

How was this ideological line put into practice? Firstly by censorship, operated by the commissions of the Union in the selection of musical and musicological works favouring simplicity (synonymous with 'accessibility'), decorativeness, eclecticism and folklorism. Second, by inducement (particularly of a financial kind) to produce anthems dedicated to the Party, to Stalin or Lenin, or (less often) the Romanian leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej.[15] Third, through the check kept on members of the Union by the 'personnel dossier' of each person, showing social origin, political history, attitude to the communist regime and similar matters. Fourth, by removing from the list all Romanian composers (including Enescu!) who had moved to other countries.

The political rise and presidential term of Matei Socor coincided with the Stalinist period: Stalin died in 1953 and Socor was replaced as leader of the Union in 1954 – one consequence of the changes which then passed through Romanian society. During the Socor years certain coordinates defined Romanian composers' mode of existence – above all, the ideological consolidation of the cult of the proletariat, and the insistence on 'politically-engaged' music. In 1952, for example, Matei Socor drafted, after the model of the Soviet Resolution, a kind of domestic Romanian constitution for the Union of Composers, obligatory for the operations of all musical institutions – including those for teaching and for broadcasting – and faithfully applying the principles of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. The document signed by Socor – *On the Development of Music in the Romanian People's Republic* – sets out both explanation and 'implementation' of the method of socialist realism, with directives to prioritize program music. Mass songs are cited as successful examples, on such themes as the Party, the homeland, the Republic, labour and peace. Harsh criticism is dealt to the imperialistic ideology that distorts folkloric music (the requirement here is for 'accessible' harmonizations, utilizing rhapsodic forms wherever possible). Aesthetic concepts influenced by Western currents are offered as negative examples (not even impressionism being accepted, since it "denies music its capacity for development").[16] Alongside Jora and Silvestri as prime offenders, the document cites others such as Theodor Rogalski (1901-1954), Sigismund Toduţă (1908-1991), Paul Constantinescu (1909-1963) and even Mihail Andricu. The accusations of cosmopolitanism, formalism, impressionism, atonalism, nationalism and mysticism are based on terms that are not in fact defined with any clarity. Silvestri, for example, is classified as an atonal composer, a term that does not correspond at all with the nature of his harmony, which is intensely chromatic to be sure, but anchored in a functional modality.

Program music was a continual topic of discussion – being in practice the only form of music readily subject to ideological control. To this end, the official line relentlessly promoted programmatic works, with titles that reflected the 'reality of the new human being'. On the other hand, Silvestri's declaration regarding the abstract character of music – "Let us not ask…. precision of music, let us not seek in this art-form well-defined images of life, such as literature or visual arts, for example, are capable of giving us"[17] – became meaningful for generations of composers in the ensuing period, who were able to evade censorship while still

[15] Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1901-65): communist activist from 1920; of working-class origins, he held leadership positions in the Communist Party as early as 1935, when he was in prison: General Secretary (1945-54), First Secretary of the Central Committee of the RCP (1955-65), and President of the State Council (1961-65).

[16] Socor, quoted in Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.237.

[17] Quoted in ibid. p.211.

experimenting with avant-garde techniques, by giving pieces satisfactory titles (say, 'Cantata for Peace').

Another aspect of these years – a positive one, it could be said – was the high representation of Romanian compositions in the concert life of the country, in the repertoire of the 20 or so orchestras and philharmonic societies. These bodies had the obligation, maintained until 1989, to include Romanian music in their programs, especially contemporary works. A festival was also established in 1951 – the *Week of Romanian Music* – where political works were certainly predominant, yet other important and genuinely modern ones were also performed (despite being criticized in the press of the time). Invited musicians to the festival came only from from other 'Peoples' Democratic Republics' (the USSR, China, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and Poland). Interesting in connection with this event is a revision of the official attitude to George Enescu. Invited to attend as honorary president of the Week, the composer declined in a gracious letter, citing the state of his health.

What was the real attitude shown towards Enescu through this period? After his departure from the country in 1946 he remained honorary president of the Society of Composers, and was still a focus of attention. Newspapers followed his concert tours with patriotic pride and chronicled his critical successes. Enescu's wife Maria Cantacuzino donated the villa Luminis in Sinaia to the Ministry of Arts (by both consent and necessity, given that possession of only one residence in the country was permitted). Gradually in the course of 1949, however, official ideology began to minimize Enescu's significance, on grounds of the "superficiality of his contact with the masses" – indeed, only a few of his works having any folkloric spirit at all. Thus, after his promising start with *Romanian Rhapsodies*, the composer had "severed himself from the life and the wonderful source of inspiration that is the people, and allowed himself to be overwhelmed by the musical putrefaction of the West."[18] Enescu was omitted, though not expelled, from the list of members of the Union, along with other musicians who had settled outside the country. This meant that for a short period he was no longer present in Romanian musical life. In 1951 this anomaly was corrected, but not until 1954 was his name re-inscribed as a member of the Union.

Drawing a balance of this postwar decade of Romanian music, the comparison with the preceding inter-war period would show a mere quantitative increase in the works composed – by no means a qualitative advance. The composers of the inter-war generation, having contributed decisively to the shaping of modern schools of composition, were left in obscurity. With their most important scores either harshly criticized or neglected, and with the associated insecurities of the turbulent times, these musicians had no encouragement to continue with their previous creative interests. Only a very small number of them wrote compositions for the given ideological circumstances, the mass songs, oratorios, cantatas which otherwise dominated the period. The large body of such works affirms the assimilation of new generations of composers into socialist-realist doctrine, who thereby assured their own rise to prominence. Certainly it would be a matter of no small interest to undertake a re-evaluation, a new analysis of their pieces, to establish what hierarchies of value might exist, in scores that rarely show solid mastery of composition, since their technical parameters remain simple in the extreme – tonal diatonic harmony in simple forms and melodies designed to "mobilize". At the same time, their authors can be placed in various classifications – the pseudo-composers of whom nothing more was heard later on, the mediocre producers of scores, the controversial figures (such as Socor), or the composers of talent who adopted the official ideology in their youthful works (Anatol Vieru or Theodor Grigoriu).

[18] Ibid., p.184.

1954-1965: The emergence of a significant generation of composers

The end of the Stalinist period in Romanian culture meant only that a violent and aggressive phase of ideological pressure drew to a close. After 1954 the communist structure of Romanian society, at both micro- and macro-levels, was thoroughly consolidated, and the following decades show an alternation between moments of (illusionary) liberalization and 'tightening of the screw'. Indeed, communist totalitarianism in Romania was in general more intensely pervasive than in other iron curtain countries. In Poland, for example, it was possible and permissible to establish a prestigious international festival such as the Warsaw Autumn in 1957. Here Polish composers were propelled into the awareness of the European musical avant-garde, whereas Romanian composers for a time were denied permission even to take part, for all that the event was organized in the Eastern Bloc.

Although the leadership of the Union of Composers and its internal organization did change – the presidency from 1954 to 1977 passing to Ion Dumitrescu – its political basis and ideological substratum inevitably remained the same, in line with the soviet model of socialist realism. A variety of critical nuances began to appear with regard to political documents previously accepted without reservation – especially those from the pen of Matei Socor – while Socor himself as a composer came to be held up as a negative example, on the grounds of being "simplistic and harmfully academic".[19] Socor was further under attack in the press for the 'Zhdanovist resolution' as framed by him, and for his approach to the leadership of the Union. On the other side of the ledger, some previous injustices were corrected: Mihail Jora had already been re-admitted to the Union in 1953, but now he gradually became more active in its musical events. Likewise, composers who had settled outside the country were accepted back as Union members (Enescu, Marcel Mihalovici, Stan Golestan). These were the effects of an ostensible democratisation, seen more broadly in the whole of Romanian society after the death of Stalin, when he and his personality cult started to become objects of criticism.

The cycles of communist power are a well-known phenomenon, whereby each newly-installed leader criticizes his predecessor. The consequences manifest themselves for a whole group of people in the seat of power, or those enjoying their favour, who fall into disgrace along with their protector. In Romania such a process occurred especially in 1965 when the regime of Ceauşescu appeared to be a liberation in comparison with that of the excoriated Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. The illusion proved to be of short duration.

But let us not run ahead of events. For the time being in 1954, winds of change were felt in the lives of composers. On the grounds of defective administration, but more particularly for his political power-plays, Socor was replaced in the leadership of the Union by **Ion Dumitrescu** (1925-1999). Leaving aside Dumitrescu's significance as a composer, his record stands as a good organizer of the institution, well suited to another style of communist politics, by which non-Party members were promoted to positions of responsibility. The administrative plan of the Dumitrescu era showed some positive measures – encouraged, certainly, by the favourable political climate in which things were changing continually and in surprising ways. First, there was the move of the Union in 1956 to a new central office in the Cantacuzino Palace (later, in 1967, to be donated to the Ministry of Culture by Enescu's wife Maria Cantacuzino) – together with the establishment of the George Enescu Museum. Then there was the legal regulation and implementation of the *Decree on the Rights of Authors* (No.321/ 1956), based on international norms combined with a communist model, which had a beneficial effect on the financial situation of composers.[20] Thirdly, there was the

[19] Zeno Vancea, quoted in Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.269.

[20] In the period of the 1950s-1960s a number of important composers were able to live entirely from their author's rights, i.e. from the income dispensed by the Union – including not only writers of 'patriotic music' in the form of choruses and cantatas, but also some who made no ideological concessions.

establishment of the Union's publishing house in 1957 (*Editura Muzicală*), to ensure the printing of all kinds of new work in music and musicology – naturally, only such contributions as were recommended by the offices of the respective sections.

The speeches of Ion Dumitrescu as the composers' freshly appointed leader were more nuanced than those of Matei Socor, but in fact preserved the same ideological basis. This was further backed up by Dumitrescu's personal aesthetic convictions, as a traditionalist composer writing in classic-romantic forms and in a tonal language coloured by Romanian folkloric elements:

> Our musicians understand ever more profoundly the essence of a national art that is truly progressive, remote from chauvinism, shunning both outward ethnographic display and impersonal cosmopolitanism, free from disdain for other cultures, from formal experimentation, and from the pursuit of the extravagant, which conceals the source of inspiration, and demonstrates a lack of true mastery.[21]

Bearing these convictions in mind, it is hardly surprising that at the end of the 1950s Dumitrescu came into conflict with a section of the younger generation of composers interested primarily in the *new music* of the 20th century – modernism and the avant-garde, with all the far-reaching innovations that they had brought in musical language and thought. Between 1952 and the end of the decade the ranks of the Composers' Union were joined by Cornel Ţăranu (b.1934), Myriam Marbe (1931-1997), Pascal Bentoiu (1927-2016), Doru Popovici (b.1932), Tiberiu Olah (1928-2002), Aurel Stroe (1932-2008), Wilhelm Georg Berger (1929-1992), Dan Constantinescu (1931-1993), Ştefan Niculescu (1927-2008) and Adrian Raţiu (1928-2005). Theodor Grigoriu (1926-2014) had already been a member from 1945, and Anatol Vieru (1926-1998) from 1947. It would be misguided to make any overriding generalization about the work of these composers, which shows a great diversity of aesthetic positions. Some of them retained a more evident thread of continuity with the classic-romantic tradition; others were more preoccupied with innovation (meaning at that time the twelve-tone method of the Second Viennese School) – both of these orientations producing musical compositions of value. At a later point we shall examine in more detail the currents of thought adhered to by each composer and the technical basis of their compositions. For the time being, the general context needs to be noted whereby, for example, chromatic music, which could suggest a tendency leading to the twelve-tone Second Viennese School, was officially banned by the leadership of the Union. Thus Ştefan Niculescu relates his experience of the commission for symphonic and chamber music, which decided on distribution and remuneration of works submitted by Union members in these genres:

> Vehemently rejected were works in which 'traces' of classic dodecaphony could be found – the only kind with which the commission was, to some degree, familiar. In order to establish the presence of such a mortal sin, the commission simply counted up chromatic notes in a melodic line, and if the result was 12, the work in question was stigmatized with the grave accusation of formalism. The difference between dodecaphony and serialism was not yet known to them – many of them taking the two terms to mean the same thing.[22]

To understand the importance of the views of the Union commissions, we need to give a brief account of their manner of operation through these decades. In 1954 Ion Dumitrescu re-structured the sections, grouping them into 'symphonic and chamber music', 'light music

[21] See Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.292.
[22] Iosif Sava: *Ştefan Niculescu şi galaxiile muzicale ale secolului XX* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1991), p.41.

and mass music'[23], and 'musicology'. Each section had its controlling commission, made up mainly of musicians of achievement and prestige in their respective domains, but predominantly representing the older generation. Taking the case of the section for symphonic and chamber music (the most important one for changes in musical language, with operatic works at times also subject to its evaluation) the procedures went as follows:

> After being submitted, a score was entrusted to one or more members of the commission for a written appraisal. It was then listened to, from piano or a tape recording, and discussed in the full session of the commission until an assessment of the work was arrived at and entered in the minutes, with a recommendation, in the happiest instances, for release, publication and acquisition – without any obligation for all three of these to be the case.[24]

This manner of censorship, even if it were purely aesthetic and not political, could take effect on a financial level – the works of the younger composers not being rejected outright by the commission but assigned minimal payments under the third heading 'acquisition'. Things were different in the case of the choral section, later to be separated from 'light music' as 'mass music' – a generic term for all choral music. Here the obligation to write patriotic choruses for a range of official occasions unified the efforts of all composers. And yet the genre of Romanian choral music was by no means restricted to patriotic songs for public occasions. There were still composers with innovative talents in choral writing. Just two might be cited, who achieved important new syntheses in the art of folksong arranging – Alexandru Paşcanu (1920-1989) and Radu Paladi (1927-2013), both of whom specialized in large part in composing for choir.

The role of the commissions was generally one of a sorting-house for Romanian scores, which they ordered into a hierarchy on a more or less subjective basis. They were also a forum for debating the aesthetic currents of the day. Particularly for the period up to the 1960s, a clear resistance of the Union leadership can be observed to the younger members' enthusiasm for dodecaphony.

This conflict should not be understood merely as a clash of generations, since there were also musicians who supported their younger colleagues' openings to the avant-garde. One was Mihail Andricu, in whose house they listened to 'decadent' and 'formalist' music of Western Europe, non-existent in the official courses of the Conservatorium. This was one of the reasons for Andricu's exclusion from the Union for the years 1959–1962, following a 'briefing' session which 'unmasked' him as a "lamentable derelict of the past".[25] It was not the composers, however, who had organized this sitting – intended more as an example to intimidate them – but workers, journalists and other intellectuals (of course orchestrated by the Party), who without knowing Andricu accused him of "very grave deviations from civic and professional morality".[26]

On the other hand, a composer and teacher such as Mihail Jora, while not always in agreement with the experiments of the young, appreciated innovative (i.e. serial) elements in new scores where he could see a solidity of technique in the writing, especially those of his pupil Dan Constantinescu. Another composition teacher of the 1950s, Leon Klepper, showed an even-handed position in his public comments:

[23]The ideological influence in the area of so-called 'light music' should also be noted. Such music was subordinated to socialist realism as well, and even jazz was obstructed from developing freely.
[24] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.325.
[25] Ibid., p.330.
[26] Ibid., p.329.

> Some say that it would not be good if all composers cultivated the same style, the same kinds of harmonization, on the grounds that we would no longer detect the personality of the composer. The opposite extreme is to think that, if diversity becomes so widely individualized, there would no longer be such a thing as a Romanian school. The truth lies in the middle, and the setting of limits is a question of common sense.[27]

The same Leon Klepper, on his return from the *Warsaw Autumn* in 1957, in which he had participated only as an observer, raised the question (probably rhetorically) as to why Romanian music had not been represented there, either by the works of its classic modernists such as Enescu, Silvestri and Paul Constantinescu, or by scores of younger composers.

The discussions around the concept of a 'national school' became more open and nuanced in the musical press after 1954, without having any decisive effect in changes to official ideological attitudes. Some of those who had previously promoted the principles of socialist realism in emphatic, even aggressive fashion, now adopted a wider perspective. There is the case of George Bălan, philosopher of aesthetics, who developed a theory of a necessary transition from *rhapsodism* – seen as the infant stage of a great culture, and necessarily embracing the clichés of popular melodic arrangements – to the higher stage of *symphonism*:

> Unfortunately, it is not the problems of socialist realism that stand at the centre of present-day discussions about musical composition but rather issues about a national form, understood in narrow terms – of folkloric purity, craftsmanship and formal perfection.[28]

Not long after this statement, in 1957, Bălan engaged in a published polemic with an academic composer, Nicolae Buicliu (1906-1974), whose *Symphony of the Republic* (an illustration of socialist realism) he had criticized:

> Titles alone cannot bestow meaning on musical images. This truth is obvious and elementary to most people. I recall how we formerly used to evaluate the orientations of works of Romanian music in this regard. You took, for example, the schedule of compositions of the Composer's Union and rapidly scanned it. So-and-so is writing a symphony – abstract music! So-and-so wants to write a quartet – what a flight from reality! Ah look here: a symphonic poem about electrification of villages – at last we've got music with a theme based in reality! – As if the actual character of a composition were contained in the composer's external verbal declaration.[29]

Bălan continues this argument as a plea in support of 'new' and 'contemporary' composers, with examples drawn from Berg, Shostakovich and Stravinsky, and from the scores of younger Romanians.

The year 1957 marks the beginning of a new aesthetic direction advanced by young composers, with two signal works from graduates of the Moscow Conservatorium: Anatol Vieru with his *Concerto for Orchestra* and Tiberiu Olah with *Cantata for female chorus, 2 flutes, strings and percussion after popular Csango verses.* It is interesting to observe that studies in the Soviet Union for these two composers did not end up with ideological thinking or communist indoctrination, but with the acquisition of a solid technique in composition for which the Moscow school was renowned – for example, in the classes of Aram Kachaturian or Evgeni Messner. For some years, the names of Vieru and Olah, along with those of Ştefan

[27] Ibid., p.274.
[28] Ibid., p.284.
[29] Ibid., pp.304-305. After he had been left alone for a period to expound his theories, Bălan was accused of modernism and was sent to Moscow in 1957, for doctoral studies in Marxist-Leninist aesthetics.

Niculescu, Myriam Marbe, Dan Constantinescu, Aurel Stroe, Doru Popovici, Adrian Raţiu, Mircea Istrate, and Cornel Ţăranu from Cluj, made up a compact and united group, joined by a common interest in new music. For the majority of them, the modernity of Enescu in his last work provided vindication. In 1956, one year after Enescu's death, Constantin Silvestri conducted the first performance of the *Chamber Symphony*, regarded by some of the more conservative composers as a departure from the path of a national music (because of its chromatic expansiveness), and not to be taken as a model by the younger generation. Other musical sources were passionately studied in the new ranks: Bartók, the Second Viennese School, Hindemith, Messiaen and Stravinsky – in as far as they could gain access to the scores, which were difficult to procure.

Within this group of young composers solidarity prevailed that will not be found in any other generation of Romanian music. They all attended every performance of their colleagues' works, which were then discussed for hours on end. They participated in the Union's workshop sessions with a united point of view (where mainly Romanian music was presented, but from 1958 also some important works of musical modernism started to be heard, by Berg, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev). And they experimented with novel forms of serialism, by which the bureau of symphonic music would no longer be able just to count up the first 12 chromatic notes of the score. It is interesting to place in an international context the type of serialism that they practised, which might be more comparable with that undertaken by Milton Babbitt in the USA than with the integral serialism of Boulez and Stockhausen in European music. This was, of course, a manifestation of a *Zeitgeist* rather than an express desire to synchronize with prevailing currents in the world, which in practical terms were scarcely known in Romania. While it is true that the works of these younger composers were programmed only sporadically in their country's concert life, they were encouraged to strengthen their relationship with the doctrine of socialist realism, which had now become more 'liberal', allowing for a greater variety of forms to express the humanist-socialist content.

It should be noted that the composers grouped in this way did not represent an entire generation. Other composers of similar age preferred a different aesthetic line, a post-Enescu approach of moderating between old and new, and seeking an equilibrium between the international symphonic tradition (especially that of France) and the principles of Romanian traditional music. This latter group was valued more highly by the leadership of the Union of the time (i.e. Ion Dumitrescu) and included Pascal Bentoiu, Wilhelm Georg Berger, Nicolae Beloiu, Theodor Grigoriu and Dumitru Capoianu. They cannot be unified under any general stylistic label such as neo-classicism (although this seems closest to their preoccupations), but consistently advanced a position of 'moderate modernism'. We can thus observe in Romanian music the aesthetic attitudes that were characteristic of music across the wider world in those years. As Danuser has written:

> The 'modern' manifested itself in musical history after the mid-century primarily in the 'radical' sense, of a tradition of new music that is critical of tradition (especially through developments in serial composition). But it continued as well in the (terminologically vague) form of 'moderate modernism'. Being comprehensible to a broader public, the latter approach took a larger share in the contemporary programming of operatic and concert institutions.[30]

In concrete terms in Romania, the former group of 'radical modernists' generated more followers than the latter group of 'moderates' – be it because newly rising generations of the young are consistently attracted to experimentation or because they passed through the

[30] Hermann Danuser, *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts*, pp.291-292.

composition classes of Ştefan Niculescu, Aurel Stroe, Tiberiu Olah, Anatol Vieru, Dan Constantinescu and Myriam Marbe, professors for many years at the Bucharest Conservatorium, or the class of Cornel Ţăranu in Cluj.

Techniques of composition could not be controlled by the Communist Party, but this did not mean that the ideological offensive did not impose emphases from time to time. In 1958 the concept of the 'cultural revolution' started to take shape, through intensified contacts between intellectuals and 'working people'. Composers were sent forth on information-gathering visitations of various kinds, investigations in factories and other collectives, campaigns of 'culturalisation' in the countryside, directing of amateur musical groups – many of these tasks being unncecessary and absurd. A 'patriotic' musical repertoire, exclusively choral, was prescribed for the planning of the Composers' Union and its 'creative work-places', divided into certain categories of performers, such as children, youth pioneers, workers or rural dwellers. Also in 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted a new resolution on the problems of music, nullifying the Zhdanovist resolution. As a consequence, the Composers' Union of Romania criticized Socor's resolution of 1953. Yet beyond this the debates continued within the Union until the beginning of the 1960s, with inevitable clashes of opinions between generations about the modern manner of composition. Guidelines were introduced, on the one hand opposing experimentalism as an end in itself, on the other hand in opposition to folklorism.

A major concern for Romanian musicians was the obstruction they suffered from building any relationships outside the country, both at institutional and personal levels. Neither individually nor as a group could composers be members of any international organization. The impossibility of paying subscriptions in foreign currency was a further hindrance, given the extremely restrictive regime for holding currencies. In the inter-war period a Romanian branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music had existed, but was disbanded in 1948.[31] An offer to re-establish a national section was received in 1956 from the central office of the Society, located at that time in Paris. The offer was rejected by the leadership of the Composers' Union, on the grounds that the statutes of the ISCM would contradict those of the Union. Moreover, Romania had not signed the copyright conventions. The law on authors' rights, which continued in force from 1950 to1990, was conceived on the Soviet model and applied only within the national borders. This made bilateral relations with other countries at best difficult, if not impossible. There was also virtually no promotion of Romanian music beyond the country's borders. Foreign tours of Romanian performing groups did not include significant Romanian works in their repertoire. Things fared no better in the reverse direction. No purchase of scores, musicological books or gramophone records was permitted, thus limiting access to information to the maximum extent. When a representative of the Schott publishing house visited Bucharest in 1960 to obtain publishing rights for Romanian music in the West, the offer was not accepted.[32] Any composers who at long last were able to travel to the international festivals (generally only after 1965) were likely to be advanced in years, and had acted on their own to organize publication of their scores or memberships of authors' rights (SACEM or GEMA), or to get hold of important scores and books by their own financial means.

Given this background, it is all the more remarkable that Romanian works were nevertheless recognized with awards from prestigious international competitions. Among others, Anatol Vieru gained the Geneva *Reine Marie-José Prize* in 1963, with his *Concerto*

[31]The comprehensive volume by Anton Haefeli, *Die Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM). Ihre Geschichte von 1922 bis zur Gegenwart* (Zürich: Atlantis Musikbuch-Verlag, 1982) shows that the ISCM in 1926 numbered 18 sections, Romania among them – mentioned as functioning between 1925 and 1935, and de-activated between 1948 and 1950. Only after 1989 did the re-establishment of the Romanian section become possible.

[32] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.357.

for Cello and Orchestra; Wilhelm Georg Berger was awarded First Prize in the chamber music section of the *Prince Rainer III Competition* in Monaco in 1964, then in 1965 First Prize in the *Reine Elisabeth Competition* in Liège, for his *String Quartet No.6*; Alexandru Hrisanide (b. 1936) was honoured in 1965 with the Boston *Prize of the Lily Boulanger Foundation*, for two chamber works.

Scores for the international competitions could be sent individually through the post, with or without the agreement of the Union. When it was a question, however, of active participation at international festivals by young composers (involving an elaborate procedure for the issue of a passport), every initiative was blocked by Ion Dumitrescu, who would never assent to the 'experimental music' of the young becoming known outside the country. The year 1964 can be taken as an example[33]: the organizers of the Warsaw Autumn made a request to the Union for recent scores for inclusion in the festival, expressing a specific wish for *Coloana infinită* (Infinite Column) by Tiberiu Olah. This piece had been recommended by the Polish composer Wlodzimierz Kotonski, who had recently visited Bucharest and made contacts with a range of musicians. The Union not only delayed in replying – which made it practically impossible to have any representation of Romanian works in Warsaw – but also put forward just one work, the *Chamber Symphony* by Enescu (which was not programmed anyway). Another example would be the case of the young composer Irina Odăgescu (b.1937), who was granted a scholarship in Paris in 1964, but not given permission to leave the country. Other composers again would have wished to participate in the Darmstadt Summer Courses for Modern Music, but had no chance at all of obtaining passports.

It might be supposed that a possible international launching pad for Romanian music would be created by the *George Enescu International Festival and Competition*, established after Enescu's death by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Romania. The first festival was held in 1958, the second in 1961, the third in 1964, continuing thereafter at the same three-year interval. Such positive results for Romanian music, however, did not eventuate – the sensational emphasis being placed on competitions in interpretation (for violinists, pianist and vocalists). Accordingly the invitations to prestigious international guests went primarily to performers, rather than composers or Western musicologists who would have been capable of evaluating the Romanian works performed in the festival, and possibly promoting them outside the country.

In this whole context of ideological saturation – with the frustrations endured at every turn by composers of all generations, with the impossibility of exchanging views or concepts with colleagues on the other side of the Iron Curtain – a succession of scores still continued to be produced which established a Romanian school of composition that was up with the times. New and original systems were devised and theorized in significant studies. A diversity of aesthetic views crystallized as options for musical practice, which in the succeeding decades proved to be as 'modern' as those in other parts of the world. It is true that the years marked by the official ideology of socialist realism produced a pseudo-culture, music of regression, in the sense of a return to stylistic formalisms of previous musical periods. But on the other hand there was also the music of moderate modernism, of various shades – for example, that of a neo-classicism with authentic folkloric materials. And then the music of a 'radical' avant-garde also emerged, taking the 12-tone methods of Schoenberg and Webern as a point of departure to develop a discipline of abstract thinking. As I have written elsewhere, in a study of the music of Dan Constantinescu:

> It remains an interesting fact that two opposing totalitarianisms manifested themselves simultaneously within the one Europe, itself rent apart by the corresponding ideological differences. On a compositional plane the elements at issue are Eastern socialist realism on

[33] Ibid., p.368.

> the one hand and Western integral serialism on the other. The adoption by the Romanian younger generation of serial techniques grafted onto traditions of polyphonic, folkloric and Byzantine music that were alive and vibrant in the extreme signifies a desire, in psycho-sociological terms, to evade the stylistic 'line' drawn by the 'centre'. It is, in other words, a proof of the celebrated, oft-mentioned and much-disputed 'resistance through culture' that emerged in this geographic and cultural space following the installation of communism.[34]

But the young were not the only exponents of chromatic innovation – it affected older composers, too, who were provoked into changing their aesthetic approaches. In the early 1960s, for example, Paul Constantinescu's final work, the *Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano*, finds him exploring chromatic modes derived from ecclesiastical chant, which are worked into a complex linear style of writing. As another example, Mihail Jora's ballet score *Întoarcerea din adâncuri* (Return from the Depths) has a complicated chromatic structure (in essence a modal one, along the lines of a Bartók or Enescu). Or there is the spectacular stylistic transformation in the work of Ludovic Feldman (1893-1987), the head of the bureau for symphonic and chamber music of the Composers' Union from 1953 to 1963 – who was 'converted' from a folkloric neo-classicism to twelve-tone writing and 'neo-expressionism'.[35]

The conservative perspective of one section of composers also needs to be recorded, which materialized from discussions that were held on the notions of diatonic as against chromatic. The diatonic they regarded as generating music of tonal or natural-folkloric inflections, the chromatic producing dodecaphonic ones – conveying, respectively, 'positive' and 'negative' programmatic meanings. Such a stylistic opposition between diatonicism and chromaticism, reduced to this simplistic level of discussion in the first instance, was to lead to profound transformations in Romanian composition over a number of decades. And indeed beyond Romania as well: a diatonic but non-tonal system re-emerges in the 1980s in the compositional thinking of an important figure such as György Ligeti.

Surveying the statistics drawn up by the Composers' Union on the occasion of the national conference of composers in 1963,[36] the figures on compositions since 1949 show 300 symphonic works, 400 chamber pieces, 200 songs, 18 operas and ballets, and of course an impressive quantity of mass songs and light music. It remains to be seen how many of these works prove to have lasting viability, have genuine traits of originality, or bear the stamp of creative personalities.

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[34] Valentina Sandu-Dediu and Dan Dediu, *Dan Constantinescu, Esenţe componistice* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 2013), pp.53-54.

[35] See Dan Dediu, *Episoade şi viziuni: Ludovic Feldman*, (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală,1991).

[36] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.364. The author reports that for fourteen years, the Union was not given permission by the Party and State leadership to hold this assembly.

Chapter 2
The Ceaușescu dictatorship: survival modes of Romanian composers

The internal changes wrought on the Romanian Communist Party in 1965, following the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and the rise of Nicolae Ceaușescu, naturally brought with them transformations in Romanian life. For the generation that lived through this era, possibly the strongest memory is the sense of hope – that things would change for the better in Romania, and that the youthful Ceaușescu was a positive reformist. Indeed, a certain liberalisation did make itself felt around 1965. Some political prisoners from the Dej era were released and rehabilitated. The economic situation of the country seemed to ease in terms of people's standard of living. It was possible to move more freely to the West. And Ceaușescu's stance on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 – alone among Eastern Bloc countries in opposing Soviet aggression and not participating with Romanian forces – won him strong sympathy in the international arena. (Here is not the place to go more deeply into the reasons and circumstances that allowed Ceaușescu to take this position.) One result was the celebrated invitation to London from Queen Elizabeth, with the resulting image of the two heads of state, the British queen and the Romanian communist president, riding together in the royal carriage.

The illusion lasted no more than a few years. Following a visit to North Korea and China in 1971, Ceaușescu was inspired to emulate the model of Asian communist regimes, which he adapted to a dictatorship of his own. As a result, a new ideological offensive took effect on the whole of Romanian society, with a view to 'improvements in the political and ideological work of Marxist-Leninist education.'[37] Thus began a period of continuous decline in social, material and cultural life, which was to lead to tragic stress-points in the decade of the 1980s.

The 'cultural revolution' that was initiated in 1971, among other changes, brought with it for composers the introduction of a competition for new choral works – 'Cântarea României' ('Singing of Romania'). Radio and television participated in the organisation of the competition, giving it intense media exposure. Cântarea României soon turned into a much-followed mass event, an annual display of competing regional artistic groups, with special emphasis on the promotion of workers' choirs, amateur in status but sometimes with professional conductors. The choral compositions thus had to be tapered to the interpretive requirements of such a situation. It must be noted in this context, however, that there was a remarkable advance in the level of choral performance in general, across an impressive number of choirs – from the professional ensembles associated with philharmonic societies and radio to a range of independent and amateur groups. In the 1980s the intensity around the choral competitions increased to the point of becoming opulent show-pieces, held in stadiums. As lavish television spectacles they rivalled the scale of the big celebratory days in the Communist calendar, such as August 23rd, or the birthdays of the 'beloved leaders' Elena and Nicolae Ceaușescu.

New qualities in occasional works were now demanded of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of the Socialist Republic of Romania. Just as the early 1950s had brought forth a plethora of pieces in devotion to Stalin, two new protagonists now became an obligatory focus of attention alongside the Party: Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife Elena. Also still acceptable, of course, were 'general humanistic' subjects and hymns of praise to the father-land or to peace. Other areas of creative composition were vigilantly controlled by the censorship office of the Ministry of Culture and the Communist Party. The strictness of the regime gradually increased, particularly in the 1980s, with regard to any attempts at moving

[37]Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.415.

beyond the imposed limits – although these were in fact more readily detectable in literature (including the literature of musicology) than in musical composition itself.

The period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s may have appeared to show signs of liberalisation, with the travels of artists to other countries bringing them contacts and cultural information. In the following years, however, these things became progressively more difficult, with artists more closely monitored and controlled – whether openly or in the shadows – by the state *Securitate*. Many composers chose the path to exile, making up a Romanian diaspora whose works would be 'recovered', performed and known in Romania only after 1990. Others found modes of survival as artists in their own country, in accordance with their respective dispositions, moral and aesthetic.

Comparing the situation of musicians with that of writers, across both Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods (the latter could be said to ensue later in Romania than in other Eastern Bloc countries, with the death of Gheorghiu-Dej), a number of striking similarities can be observed. Their essential difference, however, would be that literature, paradoxically, produced works of acknowledged significance in the years 1953-57, under the full domination of socialist realism,[38] while the same could not be said of the musical field, where important works started to appear only after 1957. In any case, the point is illuminated that art and culture did not become the total servants of politics and official ideology, but found their own paths of 'evasion'.

The literary critic Eugen Simion drew up a kind of taxonomy of those engaged in cultural work from the 1950s onwards, which largely applies to the specific situation of musicians as well. To cite his classifications, the options were as follows:[39]

– not to collaborate, to be silent, to renounce one's artistic vocation, possibly to wait out the situation, to be resigned, fatalistic. Or to be thrown into prison for eight, ten, fifteen years, even to be condemned to death and miraculously to escape this fate (Ion Caraion). At the time of the political 'thaw' (1964-65), the survivors were released and some could resume publishing their writings (Vasile Voiculescu, Constantin Noica, Nicolae Steinhardt, Ion D. Sârbu and others). A radical attitude of this kind was more evident among writers and philosophers, less so among composers, with the notable exceptions of those cited in the previous chapter – Harry Brauner, Dimitrie Cuclin and Mihail Jora.

– to collaborate, to become an 'official' writer (or composer), to be published, awarded prizes, to frequent the facilities for artists fitted out in former royal palaces, to enjoy any number of other privileges – all of this being immediately reversible if the artist 'strayed' from the Party's ideological norms.

– to abandon the country, to take refuge in the West, departing into many different qualities of exile from the post-war era to the 1980s. For a writer (as in the case of Emil Cioran or Mircea Eliade, among others), the change of language meant a change of identity. A composer's personal expression, by contrast, can remain the same, in the universal language of sounds – and has the capacity to retain, in greater or lesser degrees of subtlety, the connections to birthplace, to make perceptible a specific kind of spirituality. But then, no musicians of the format of Cioran or Eliade can be named in the Romanian diaspora (without, of course, taking Enescu into account, who had already died in 1955).

– not to oppose the regime, making small compromises without betraying the essence of one's art. This attitude was adopted by a significant category of artists and intellectuals, while their compromises took on different nuances and complexities from one case to another. How high the price of such compromises was to be, what was finally gained from such strategies, and how much East European culture was redeemed in this way – these are questions that we will seek to answer in subsequent pages.

[38] Eugen Simion, op.cit.
[39] Ibid., p.15.

– the phenomenon of dissidence: some of the 'comrades on the path' of the Communist Party of Romania detached themselves, for one reason or another, from the official ideology, and started to place it under question. Some younger members in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s began to contest the official culture in various ways, some abandoned the country. As Simion writes: "Romania came to know this phenomenon late; in other countries of Eastern Europe, dissidence was more powerful, and echoed more powerfully in cultural life itself."[40]

With his synthesis Simion gives a precise definition to the varied nuances that are necessary in understanding the phenomenon of two cultures, not totally dissociated from each other, which functioned in the "impure, tragic and strained" history of the post-1945 period: (a) an official progagandistic culture; (b) a culture not necessarily clandestine, but neither abandoning its own criteria and strategies, based mainly on an insistence on the aesthetic realm. The second culture became dominant and even brought about a change of mentality within the system. One of the most illustrious examples is found in the philosopher Constantin Noica. Having remained in Romania when associates such as Mircea Eliade and Emil Cioran had gone into exile, he spent most of the years from 1949 to 1964 in prison. After his release as part of a general amnesty, Noica created a cultural philosophy of performance, writing works on Being and the Romanian language. He attracted and educated an array of important disciples, withdrawing to a life in the most primitive conditions in a small mountain town, Păltiniş. A diverse collection of personalities was thus able to rescue Romanian culture in a place which was, to quote the literary critic Simion, no "Siberia of the spirit", but no spiritual paradise either – rather a place of contradiction, of abnegation and compromises in order to defend the truth and authentic values.

1965-1977: Openings and closings

The ways in which this complex of pathways evolved for Romanian composers can also be observed in the documents of the Composers' Union. Although a promise was given as early as 1965, by the Ministry of Culture and the Communist Party, for the Union's integration into the international organizations for authors' rights (SACEM and GEMA), this never eventuated. Also short-lived was any facilitation of travel for Union members to participate in international events. The longstanding restrictions imposed on obtaining passports, and on acquiring the necessary foreign currency for travel or study, made such journeys ever more difficult.

These factors, together with the pervasive and obligatory ideologizing, became integral to the daily lives of composers. Every political anniversary required of them new patriotic songs and politically-charged articles, as a kind of payment to justify their guild's existence. Paradoxically, under these conditions works of serious musical significance did still emerge, which not only brought Romanian composition into line with the European and American avant-garde but also launched some novel ideas and concepts of their own, acting to open up important new possibilities in the universe of sound. The appearance in the 1970s of specialized ensembles for contemporary music (among other specialties), along with the rise of some extraordinary solo performers, created a certain upsurge of enthusiasm for experimentation. Ensembles of this kind were *Musica Nova* (directed by Hilda Jerea), *Ars Nova* (directed by Cornel Ţăranu), the *Madrigal Choir* (under Marin Constantin), while the solo players included the clarinettist Aurelian-Octav Popa and the pianist Alexandru Hrisanide. The experimental spirit bore fruit in both chamber and choral music domains – through acoustic investigations of instrumental sound and heterophonic composition on the

[40]Ibid., p.15.

one hand, and innovations in vocal writing on the other, the voices extended timbrally or supplemented with invented instruments manipulated by choristers themselves; choral chromaticism, too, pursued in intensified forms of harmony and melody.[41]

New ranks of younger composers, born between 1933 and 1945, now joined the generation cited in the previous chapter, which had first come to the scene in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Many of the newcomers developed their own compositional orientations through the 1970s and 1980s, indeed continuing to the present day in a span of musical preoccupations: spectral music with its insistence on the primal qualities of sound itself; meditational and incantational music; compositions deriving their principles from morphologies of Romanian folk materials and defining certain archetypes (a number of composers being research scholars in this area); aleatorism in various modes of integration (with greater and lesser degrees of control); minimalism, instrumental theatre, and electro-acoustic music. A non-exhaustive list of these composers includes Nicolae Brânduş (b.1935), Mihai Mitrea-Celarianu (b.1935), Ede Terenyi (b.1935), Nicolae Coman (1936-2016), Corneliu Cezar (1937-1997), Irina Odăgescu (b.1937), Lucian Meţianu (b.1937), Mihai Moldovan (1937-1981), Corneliu Dan Georgescu (b.1938), Liviu Glodeanu (1938-1978), Vasile Spătărelu (1938-2005), Dieter Acker (1940-2006), Octavian Nemescu (b.1940), Dan Voiculescu (1940-2009), Dinu Ghezzo (1941-2011), Horaţiu Rădulescu (1942-2008), Dan Buciu (b.1943), Costin Miereanu (b.1943), Sabin Păutza (b.1943), Viorel Munteanu (b.1944), Iancu Dumitrescu (b.1944) and Ulpiu Vlad (b.1945).

Many of these composers' works were characterized by a kind of heterophony with aleatoric elements, a style of textural writing taken over in part from Polish music of the period (Lutoslawski and Penderecki), but frequently also charged with a defined individual ethos. The same technique – along with other stylistic aspects enumerated above – is found again in the succeeding generation of composers born between 1945 and 1955 – Maya Badian (b.1945), Costin Cazaban (1946-2009), Liana Alexandra (1947-2011), Valentin Petculescu (b.1947), Fred Popovici (b.1948), Irina Hasnaş (b.1949), Călin Ioachimescu (b.1949), Christian Alexandru Petrescu (b.1950), Adrian Iorgulescu (b.1951), Adrian Pop (b.1951), Doina Rotaru (b.1951), Maia Ciobanu (b.1952), Violeta Dinescu (b.1953), Sorin Lerescu (b.1953), Liviu Dănceanu (1954-2017) and Şerban Nichifor (b.1954). Some of these opted, at various times, for individual forms of neo-tonalism (neo-Romanticism), in conformity with traditionalist trends.

A stylistic overview of all the composers mentioned above cannot do more than describe the general field of orientations within which they sat. How the respective parameters of style align with the individual composers who explored them will be shown in more detail at a later point in this book. For the time being, these names map out the successive new beginnings of Romanian composition and its prominent contributing figures – including those who had already settled in other countries.

Gradually, despite all the limitations imposed by the composition bureau of the Composers' Union, the territory of New Music established itself, prevailing and defined in large measure by a sprit of experiment. Even if the avant-garde works did not always get official approval for dissemination, or received scant payment on the fee schedules, they affirmed their existence in the artists' meeting circles of the Union and in concert life. The wider costs imposed on composers' lives are another question. As Cosma writes:

[41] Ibid. The examples cited by Cosma – *Scene nocturne (Might Scenes*) by Anatol Vieru and *Ritual pentru setea pământului (Ritual for the Thirst of the Earth*) by Myriam Marbe – must be seen as the polar opposite of the official occasional works in the choral category. And yet the latter class of pieces can be in turn be divided into the cliché-based and those showing solidity and talent in writing.

> It seems clear that the struggle of the new wave of composers was not a trivial one, and not lacking in a sense of drama, suffering and frustration. The young generation maintained that they were ostracized and harassed, marginalized in the matter of fees and rights, banned and re moved from programs of certain organizations, regarded with suspicion, pursued by the *Securitate*, their advancement impeded, their liberty imperilled. And yet no-one was arrested for writing in a particular musical style or employing an avant-garde technique… The repressive ideological apparatus did indeed use chicanery against them, intimidated and denigrated them. In published articles and in meetings they had fingers pointed at them. The fact that a succession of young composers chose the path of exile after 1971 indicates there were good causes for resorting to such a painful step.[42]

For those who remained in the country, their daily existence and their life as composers meant a permanent struggle to maintain an inner equilibrium – to put to one side the difficulties of each day and concentrate on the work of composing, and if possible to secure a future for a school of composition through a group of students.

The conflict between conservatives and avant-gardists remained a source of debate until the end of the 1960s. This can be observed from an event in 1968, namely the General Assembly of Composers, in which the country's elite also took part, including Nicolae Ceauşescu himself (at the moment of his full glory, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by troops of the Warsaw Pact minus Romania). Here Ion Dumitrescu consolidated his position as leader of the Union. Apart from the inevitable ideological speeches, the contributions of composers illustrated the same conflict between traditionalists and representatives of 'New Music' – projected into an issue of relations between generations. Ştefan Niculescu, for example, declared:

> I have not seen up till now, and hope not to see, any cases of intolerance in the ranks of younger members towards the style of their older confreres. It surprises me all the more to note, among some of the hallowed names of the older generations, and even among the venerated *maestri,* cases of intolerance towards the attainments of the younger members.[43]

Fortunately, the election of the Union's leadership committee resulted in younger additions to its ranks, although the electoral process, in the usual way of the communist era, was subject to Party procedures – delegates being presented with a list of pre-determined candidates.

By the end of the 1960s, the Union of Composers and Musicologists appears to have attained a flourishing state, both organizationally and financially, under the leadership of Ion Dumitrescu. In addition to the central office in Bucharest there w ere composition branches in Cluj, Iaşi and Timişoara, and artists' workshop circles had been set up in Braşov, Târgu Mureş and Craiova. Inspectorates for authors' rights were distributed throughout the country. There were also annexes of the Union which undertook their own administration – the publishing house *Editura Muzicală* and the music shop *Magazinul Muzica* (situated in the centre of the capital). For the first time the creative prizes awarded by the Union in its various component sections were nominated by juries for the respective areas, thus having some degree of aesthetic autonomy. The activities of the sectional bureaus, channeled mainly into the assessment of works and their sifting, selection and payment, followed the same general lines as the preceding period – of course, with some inherent changes of concepts for assessors of musical scores and musicological studies, resulting from innovations in the respective areas. Programs of Romanian music were prescribed for the country's

[42] Ibid., p.391.
[43] Cited in ibid., p.396.

philharmonic societies. School pupils and music students were required to learn works by Romanian composers for exams, auditions and competitions at regional and national levels.

As previously mentioned, there was a period of opening to the wider world from 1965, which became manifest in a number of events. For the first time, Romanian composers took part in the Warsaw Autumn Days, represented in the 1965 festival by Niculescu's *Symphony for 15 instrumente*, Stroe's *Arcade*, and Olah's *Coloana infinită* (The Endless Column). A string of international prizes also ensued. These included among others: The Queen Elisabeth Prize in Brussels, to W.G.Berger in 1966 for the *Concerto for violin and orchestra*, and in 1967 to Nicolae Beloiu for *Symphony No.1*; the Italian RAI Prize to Pascal Bentoiu in 1968, for his radiophonic work *Jertfirea Ifigeniei* (The Sacrifice of Iphigenia); Bentoiu was also awarded the Guido Valcarenghi Prize, Rome 1970, for his opera *Hamlet*, printed in Italy and first staged in Marseilles. In a further development, musicians were able to take up scholarships in other countries Dumitru Capoianu and Theodor Grigoriu benefited through the Union from one-month scholarships in 1967, offered by the US Department of State. Niculescu, Vieru, Olah and Stroe each lived in Berlin for periods of a year in the early 1970s, on scholarships of the German academic exchange service DAAD. From 1966 it became possible to attend the Darmstadt Vacation Courses for Modern Music – a positive change, but a little late in coming. The lustre of Darmstadt was starting to fade, and the period in which younger East European composers had been propelled into international attention (such as the Polish school from the 1950s onwards) had also passed.

But then, immediately upon the initiation of the Cultural Revolution in 1971, the foreign contacts of musicians were censored in increasingly repressive fashion. New political measures in 1972 blocked any individual publication of scores outside the country. And now any personal initiative to participate in international events was abruptly penalized, as occurred with two scores of Aurel Stroe – his opera *Der Nobelpreis wird nicht verliehen* (The Nobel Prize will not be Awarded), premiered by the Kassel Opera in 1971, and his symphonic work *Canto II*, presented at the Festival of Royan in 1972. These scores were assessed at the symphonic bureau of the Union, in accordance with the usual system of acquitting works – but the composer had not requested special approval for sending them out of the country, a fact that irritated the Union leadership:

> I cannot be reproached for anything in this matter. If the works need to be presented to another higher committee beyond the symphonic commission, and the super-committee needs to give approval to symphonic works and scores, even though they contain nothing but musical notation, we must be informed of this.[44]

The political thumb-screws can be observed in action here, symptoms of the resurrected communist ideology that affected every corner of Romanian society. From 1971 the Theses of Nicolae Ceauşescu formed the principal topic of compulsory discussions at meetings of the Union of Composers. Artistic life gravitated around the 'Praise of Romania' festival, while an array of disturbing signs indicated a path towards cultural degradation. One example was the elimination of music as a subject in secondary shools, with long-term consequences for audiences, which progressively dwindled in numbers, a situation still not remedied up to the present day.[45] Then in 1974 the newly established Central Editorial Office subordinated numerous individual publishing organs within its control, including those for music, in order to facilitate censorship of printed material of all kinds. It must also be said that the financial situation of the *Editura Muzicală* – fully subsidized by the state – enabled the

[44] Aurel Stroe, quoted in ibid., p.419.
[45] After 1990 music was resumed in the syllabus of secondary high-schools, but only as an optional subject, and no improvement in general musical education became evident over the following decade.

publication of some musical scores of great importance (less so works of musicological literature), which contributed to the consolidation of new musical directions in the younger generation.

"Building a socialist society, multi-laterally developed" was the slogan of the time which musicians also had to adopt. From now on, increasing numbers of politically-engaged titles were demanded of them, and works giving expression to the developing personality cult of the national leader that would swell to tragic dimensions in the 1980s. In the context of the Union, as in all Romanian institutions, compulsory 'political education' sessions were held that engaged in ceaseless discussions of documents from the Congresses of the Communist Party. Meetings of the Union leadership could not be conceived without an ideological coloration. On the cover of the journal *Muzica*, edited by the Union of Composers, the portrait of Nicolae Ceauşescu appeared more and more frequently, and militant themes made their imprint on a whole series of musical works – choral, vocal, symphonic and operatic – written not only by the usual composers of this genre but also by representatives of the avant-garde, inevitably involving degrees of compromise. This development tended to blur the clear-cut distinctions within Romanian music, between 'politically-engaged' works (with text) and 'disengaged' ones (without text), or between traditional and experimental directions.

Such characterizations need to be further refined in relation to the particular figures involved. There were composers of the 'mass production' variety, whose music retained no interest into the future, not even shortly after its creation. But other composers produced remarkable works which – while bedecked with political or occasional titles – remained unaffected by their political subjects and acquired a place in Romanian musical history through the innovations of their their techniques and /or contents.

In the years 1976-77 increasing accentuation of ideology made its presence felt at every level. The artistic movement with the greatest promotion behind it was the festival 'Cântarea României' ('Singing of Romania'), which marshalled professional musicians to act in directing roles for amateur performers in choral and instrumental groups from across the country – artistic brigades from factories and industrial plants, choirs and bands from agricultural societies, schools and miltary units. The professionals were not even given the possibility of electing where and with which group to work. It should be noted that the supreme forum of the Party for the issuing of advice, censorship, and approvals in the whole domain of Romanian education and culture was the cabinet of Elena Ceauşescu. This body also decided on removals and appointments of leadership functionaries, following criteria with no apparent logic but ever more persistently promoting those who were the most obedient to the regime. Such was the case with the Composers' Union, where Ion Dumitrescu was dismissed and Petru Brâncuşi (1928-1995) was installed as president by the Party leadership. He was a university professor and doctor of musicology, an author of nationalist books and articles about music, but now at the full height of his political ascent as a possessed communist ideologue. Brâncuşi already held the post of Rector at the Bucharest Conservatory (later to become the National University of Music), where he rigorously applied the official policies, disbanding nearly all the important orchestral and chamber music ensembles of the institution, and zealously cutting the numbers of students admitted – a move that was soon to prove disastrous.[46]

[46] Ibid., p.444. In the case of the Conservatorium, as with most institutes of higher learning, the student numbers fell dramatically in the 1980s. University admission became a traumatic event for most young people seeking to gain a place, as it involved difficult and sometimes corruptly administered exams. By the end of the 1980s, the Conservatorium had a total of around 100 students across the four years of study. Following their graduation, a further stage of obligatory service awaited them (as music teachers or 'cultural inspectors') for a minimum of 3 years, in smaller towns or villages far removed from the university areas where they studied or lived.

1977-1989: Ideological stresses

At the beginning of Petru Brâncuşi's presidency, composers – especially those who had been marginalized under Ion Dumitrescu – held some hopes of changes for the better in the Union's activities. They looked to a reinvigoration of the workshops for new composition, the establishment of a 'Romanian Music Days' festival in Bucharest,[47] and a broader recognition and appreciation of the whole spectrum of musical composition, across generations, styles and approaches. Before long, however, alarming signs became apparent in musical life, which reflected the steady worsening of the social and ideological environment in Romania.

As an example of this, a large earthquake of March 1977 became a pretext for communist officials to evacuate the Composers' Union, and subsequently the Enescu Museum, from the Cantacuzino Palace – for 'repairs' that were never actually carried out. As Cosma writes:

> For fifteen years the Cantacuzino Palace was left in a deserted state, the building deteriorating with each passing day. For fifteen years the Union of Composers was exiled from its seat, as a consequence of contemptuous attitudes towards musicians, composers and musicologists.[48]

Among further signs of the times, the Union's established routine now included telegrams of congratulation sent to the 'beloved leader' Ceauşescu for a whole raft of public occasions (this being the practice of all institutions in the country, as the obligatory expression of the personality cult). The portrait of Ceauşescu now progressed from the internal title-page of the journal *Muzica* to adorn its outside cover. Artistic production plans were imposed on composers, for new works dedicated to Communist Party congresses or other historical and political anniversaries. Official meetings again took up the debates about socialist realism and humanism, indicative of the neo-Stalinist tendencies at the end of the 1970s.

Under such conditions, the attitudes of composers cannot be judged as a block – each case being a special one, and each work having its own individual history (regardless of its integrity or otherwise). One can speak of differing degrees of political servitude and artistic compromise. Some composers were specialists in occasional works, but even among these there are distinctions to be drawn: between types of choral writing (banal or with innovative elements); between harmonization approaches (tonal, modal, or a fusion of the two); and between different kinds of formal unfolding (in simplistic templates or more developed continuities). Other composers kept faith with the aesthetic line of New Music, experimenting with Western ideas, and devising their own systems. Yet a number of these also wrote, in passing, patriotic choruses or cantatas, whether through financial need or because their guild required some steps of compromise from its members in order to survive. This is the actual generalisation we can make about the mentality of musicians under dictatorship – the invention of solutions for survival. If, by contrast, there were well-known cases among writers of dissidence that reverberated in the West (one example being the poet Mircea Dinescu), not one musician displayed any inclination to remonstrate openly with the communist regime.

[47] This idea was strongly promoted by Ştefan Niculescu, along with his colleagues Aurel Stroe and Anatol Vieru among others, but was not realized until 1991, with the establishment of the International Week of New Music.

[48] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.449. It must be added that various rumours circulated about future plans for this sumptuous building - most persistently, that it was to be used by the heir of the Ceauşescu 'dynasty', Nicolae and Elena's son Nicu Ceauşescu. However, it was not possible to override the will of Maria Cantacuzino, whose gifting of the property to the state was exclusively for musical purposes and for the memory of Enescu.

And yet a considerable number of composers encoded aspects of regime criticism into certain musical scores, especially in operatic works and other forms of word setting or *Textkomposition*.[49]

The 1980s brought further restrictions. Musical education was affected by a dramatic reduction of student places in secondary colleges and higher institutes with musical specialization (among other disciplines). More generally, the pressures from the Interior Ministry became ever more open. A controlling order was issued for all links of Romanian citizens with citizens of other states. Romanians were obliged to write an informative description of each meeting with anyone from the West, detailling what was discussed and who else was present. Along the same lines, the issue of passports became more and more difficult. Ideology intensified its hold with the 'obligation owed' by every citizen to become an inscribed member, if not of the Communist Party, of one of the other 'democratic' forums such as the Front of Unity and Social Democracy, a structure that was itself a subordinate creation of the CPR.[50]

Within the domain of the Composers' Union, the gradual deterioration of a public role can also be seen, in the diminishing number of composition workshops – to the point of their complete disappearance[51] – but also in the prevalance of ideology in the meetings of the leadership committee. Nor did the change of presidency in 1982, to Nicolae Călinoiu (1926-92), bring with it any spectacular changes. Călinoiu was a graduate in music pedagogy from the Conservatory and, like his predecessor Nicolae Brâncuşi, a musicologist. Although a better administrator, more flexible and open,[52] Călinoiu was compelled (as in his other post as Rector of the Bucharest Conservatorium) to maintain the official line of permanent indoctrination of the Union membership.

The type of ideological censorship now being applied with ever more virulence is tellingly illustrated by the attempt at gathering together the tradition of early Romanian music. In 1983-4 the Union's bureau of musicology launched a project to search out and identify manuscripts of religious music to be found in Romanian territory, towards the preparation of a general edition. There existed, however, a list of officially prohibited terms – words not to be enunciated in radio or television, nor to be printed in editiorials, magazines and books – among which such terms as 'religious' and 'ecclesiastical' figured prominently. Thus for this kind of sacred music remained only the descriptions 'byzantine', or respectively 'gregorian', brought together under the vague general category of 'early sources'.[53] Facsimiles and

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[49] See Valentina Sandu-Dediu, 'Romanian Operas in the 70s and 80s: Protest or Concealment of Anti-communist messages?', în *Music as Protest*, The 29.th Slovenian Music Days Symposium, 2014, coordinated by Primoz Kuret (Ljubljana, 2015), pp.158-164.

[50] Octavian Lazăr Cosma, op. cit., p.478. As Party secretary of the Union of Composers and Musicologists from 1979, Cosma describes this situation in the particular case of musicians, citing Aurel Stroe as one example of refusal to submit to ideological regimentation. Stroe was neither a member of the Party nor prepared to sign his inscription into the FUSD in 1981.

[51] The workshops had remained a unique space of purely professional discussion without ideological implications (except for those with a specifically announced political theme) – hence the need to impede them. Notable all the same is the fact that they produced programs of works (generally listened to from recordings) representing a wide range of generations and viewpoints. Although female composers appeared regularly in the program, special workshops were also dedicated to them, particularly around the date March 8th – International Women's Day.

[52] The later Union president of the 1990s, Adrian Iorgulescu, in a retrospective survey of the institution, characterized Nicolae Călinoiu in this way: "an able activist, endowed with a practical sense, who consistently followed a similar but more nuanced strategy by comparison with his predecessor – basically the only course that was countenanced by the all-powerful Party." Adrian Iorgulescu, "Celebratory Speech: 75th Anniversary of the Composers' Union," *Muzica* 4/1995, p.10.

[53] The inventiveness should be noted, which was characteristic of Romanian intellectuals and artists in general, to camouflage the forbidden behind a semblance of the officially acceptable. All kinds of titles appeared (sometimes verging on the absurd) which navigated past the censors. Through a code that was recognized by the

transcriptions of early chants were accordingly published in this nomenclature – sometimes with their texts removed if these contained excessive references to 'God', 'Jesus', 'Mother of God' and other such vocabulary. Along similar lines, the collections, transcriptions and stylistic analyses of folkloric material – normally welcome in the context of an ideology which placed emphasis on the spirit of nation and peasantry – ran into difficulty when it came to funeral rituals. Even the words 'death' and 'funeral' were on the prohibited list. One celebrated example is a comprehensive typological study of such rituals, authored by Mariana Kahane and Lucilia Georgescu in 1987. This appeared with the title *Cântecul zorilor şi bradului* (The Song of Dawn and the Fir-Tree), a reference to the prevalent themes of funeral rituals. The 'Song of Dawn', sung very early in the morning, served as an initiation of the deceased to the afterlife and as a summoning forth of the spirits; the 'Song of the Fir-Tree' enacted a symbolic marriage with a fir-tree of those who had died unmarried.

Composers could avoid censorship with greater ease than musical scholars, and especially so in textless, abstract compositions, which constituted an authentic artistic refuge. In the domain of compositional technique, modern and experimental procedures continued to be pursued at their previous high levels, and kept up an implied 'virtual' dialogue with musical trends in the West. As Cosma writes:

> However much the epoch was one of increasing humiliations, harshness and unhappiness, all the more did it mobilize the will to survive, the desire to engender true values… At a time when disaster was evident on an economic plane, the situation on the plane of musical composition maintained itself, by and large, in a favourable zone. We observe this in the courage, in the eagerness for scrutiny and for being up to date. The thirst for information and the desire for assimilation and for true creativity are clear and powerful factors in music. This can be explained by the individuality of the figures active on the compositional front – a wide span of intellectual personalities who maintained standards of emulation, professionalism and artistic integrity.[54]

Naturally, many of the new techniques involved experimentation with assistance from performers, since even in this period new contemporary ensembles continued to be formed and to impose their presence – from the Timişoara-based trio *Contraste* (1983) to various Bucharest groups formed by composers, such as *Hyperion* (1976), directed by Iancu Dumitrescu, *Traiect* (1982), coordinated by Sorin Lerescu or the *Archaeus* Workshop of New Music (1985), conducted by Liviu Dănceanu.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the same kind of 'double-life' becomes observable among musicians as for the majority of Romanians. No-one any longer believed the communist demagogy, and everyday life was becoming progressively more difficult. Many, however, found personal refuge in other planes of existence. In order to understand the modes by which the artists survived in this environment, we only have to be reminded of some parameters of the Ceausescu system. Not only were traditional residential precincts torn down on a vast scale in Bucharest, in order to reconstruct the capital after the North Korean model,[55] but also churches and monasteries were demolished across the country, while the

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complicit community, the readers in principle could discern what was concealed in the content, though not infrequently mangled by the censorship of the Council of Culture. (This body was subordinate to Elena Ceauşescu, responsible for education, research and the arts in her capacity as the 'intellectual' of the Ceauşescu family.) The translations of international musicology, which were very few, aside from those from the Soviet sphere of influence, frequently suffered the same distortions. In the late 1980s, the book of Antoine Goléa, *La musique, de la nuit des temps aux aurores nouvelles* was brought out with difficulty, and in an incomplete version, from which all critical references to various Russian and Soviet-sphere musicians had been cut.

[54] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.495.

[55] Remaining as a significant landmark is the former House of the People, which crowned the Victory of Socialism Boulevard. The massive building has become not only a tourist attraction but functions as the Palace

populace was subjected to dis-locations and forced movements, leading in many cases to personal tragedies. The megalomaniacal plan to make Bucharest – situated 250 kilometres from the Black Sea – into a port city, by means of a connecting canal to the Danube River, remained incompleted by 1989, as did the 'systematization' plan of demolishing and reconstructing villages. It should be remarked that the surge of demolitions and constructions did have some positive aspects, with the creation of jobs for the first stage of the underground Metrou network in Bucharest. Its necessary extension stagnated almost completely after 1989. On the other hand, the aesthetic monstrosity of most apartment blocks (popularly known as 'match-boxes') disfigured the aspect of most quarters of the city. These replaced the old burghers' houses, regarded as 'non-functional' by a leadership which had moved massive numbers of the rural population into the cities, to enable forced industrialization, and had to house them somewhere.

Daily deprivations included the shut-downs of electricity for several hours – most likely in the afternoon and evening[56] – and a lack of gas or other resources for running the communal heating plants, with the consequence of freezing conditions and lack of hot water in residences and public buildings in winter. In some situations there was even an interruption in cold water, and each day also brought interminable early-morning queues for food. The cultural climate was defined by endless hours of radio and television broadcasts devoted to 'Singing of Romania', and to the personality cult of the two Ceauşescus. It also included censorship in absurd forms when one least expected it, which in turn gave rise to some memorable evasion strategies. Access to information and possibilites of travel outside the country became ever more restrictive. There were numerous well-known cases of chicanery around attempts to obtain a passport: for example, a new music ensemble, invited to a foreign festival or concert performance, finds itself at the last minute compelled to travel without one or more members – naturally a classic case of an absurd situation. One story with a bitter taste circulated among musicans –telling of a communist official who, receiving the request for a string quartet to travel outside the country, replied that it would be completely fine for just three members to travel, and they should simply play louder to make up for the missing fourth one.

For some musicians, however, opportunism became the best route for successful survival, whether by the penning of celebratory political articles in the journal *Muzica*, or by paying homage to Ceauşescu in the innumerable choral works written for this purpose.[57] Alongside the cases of 'moderate opportunism' there were those of a more crass kind, which became highlighted following the events of December 1989. From 1990, for example, it became a relatively frequent practice to replace 'patriotic' texts in the same piece of music with religious words, since the fashion was now to repudiate communist atheism in favour of a fulsome spiritual religiosity. More blatant still is the example of the composer Şerban Nichifor. He had written Lieder on poems by Mircea Dinescu, a young poet who in 1989 became a well-known dissident under the Ceauşescu regime. Nichifor announced the withdrawal of his songs from public distribution at the time, when any link with Dinescu could be dangerous for his career.[58] A short time later, immediately after the revolution of

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of Parliament, with concert halls and other facilities. It was the centre for a large part of the 1995 International Enescu Festival.

[56] People then could only work by candle-light or spirit lamps.

[57] Just as there was an impressive list of works in the 1950s dedicated to Stalin, we now find an imposing line-up of choruses for Ceauşescu.

[58] This stands as a celebrated example in the history of the Composers' Union and is cited by Cosma, (*Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.507), who reproduces passages from Nichifor's submission to the Union leadership in October 1989: "… considering the disastrous incongruity between my artistic credo and the works *Patru schiţe pentru un lied neterminat* (Four Sketches for an Unfinished Song) and *Pisicile din Vatican* (The Vatican Cats) –

December 1989 and the fall of Ceauşescu, the same Şerban Nichifor requested the president of the Composers' Union to cease distribution of all his mass songs, which he had written 'against my will, due to unbearable pressure.'[59] Here is one of the clearer examples of opportunistic conduct from those years (without, however, making any connection with the actual musical value of this composer's scores).

Only the decade after 1990 was to bring a certain reassessment of works from the immediate past, free of ideological implications. Political patronage of musical works disappeared, giving way, however, to other constraints – mostly of an economic kind.

works that were written against my own will, at a difficult time for me – I hereby inform you that I wish them to be withdrawn, immediately and with no exceptions, from public circulation and distribution."

[59] Cosma, *Universul muzicii româneşti*, p.508.

Chapter 3
After the revolution: musical composition and changes in Romanian society

1990-2000: The 'decade of transition'

The ten years that passed between the political events of December 1989 and the end of the century did not justify most of the hopes of Romanian society – and things were little different for musicians. From the beginning of the 1990s an appreciable reduction could be observed in the number of Romanian works performed at regular concerts throughout the country. The absolute freedom enjoyed by orchestras in choice of repertoire manifested itself in the exclusion of contemporary Romanian music, as a reaction against the immediate past, when philharmonic societies and opera organisations had an obligatory percentage of Romanian pieces imposed on them, without any qualitative criteria. As a result of all the occasional works that abounded in pre-1989 programs, with their pervasive communist ideological content, the musical public had acquired an allergy against Romanian music, almost without discrimination.[60] No distinctions were made between such occasional compositions and new Romanian works of significant value, whose premieres had made the names of better Romanian composers known and respected. It was true that a section of the audience pre-1989 was 'resigned' to the idea that the symphony programs would invariably start with a Romanian piece. Sometimes the audience members applauded it politely, sometimes they avoided it by arriving late, but it quite often occurred that a traditional mainstream audience was pleasantly surprised by some new Romanian music. After 1990 such opportunities did not often arise.

The tiny number of new Romanian works programmed and premiered in general concerts was not sufficient to have a positive influence on the creative climate. A relative improvement did, however, come about in the course of the decade, thanks to the establishment of festivals specializing in contemporary music – in Bucharest, in Bacău, Cluj and elsewhere. Ştefan Niculescu, the founding director of the International Weeks for New Music (established in Bucharest in 1991), declared at the end of the 1990s:

> In the current Romanian world, the arts come last, while music is at the end of the arts queue. Especially our new music (whether for orchestra, chamber ensembles or opera) is in a situation of crisis regarding its reception. It is not just a matter of Romanian composition (more likely to be programmed in other countries than at home), but of the entire musical culture of the twentieth century. Neither music lovers nor most of our professional musicians are able to familarize themselves with this field, now vast in scope – since the music of our now concluding century is practically non-existent in this country. It is not to be found in libraries in the form of musical scores, books or recordings; it is not to be heard in concerts, except on some rare and accidental occasions; it is not taught within music education, not even at university, in other than a brief introductory way, with too few exceptions. Thus we enter the 21st century with a black hole in Romanian culture – the whole preceding century being unassimilated and therefore absent. And yet, despite the proportions of this crisis of reception and audiences, we do not have any crisis in creativity. On the contrary, creative personalities of all generations continue to compose with great vigour, even in the absence of any hope that the situation will normalize.[61]

[60] See Michaela Roşu, "Creaţia românească în repertoriul instituţiilor muzicale," *Muzica* 2/1992, pp.1-4.
[61] Valentina Sandu-Dediu: "Dialog cu compozitorul Ştefan Niculescu", *Muzica* 4/1999, pp.55-56.

Numerous composers did, indeed, continue and diversify their musical preoccupations, and gradually some of them had their music programmed more frequently in other countries. Tours outside the country by composer-led contemporary ensembles also intensified – although still impeded by the visa system for foreign travel – and these offered multiple possibilities of information-exchange in both directions. It was perhaps the younger composers, some them having made their debut in the 1980s, who benefited most from such openings to the West, through the dispensation of scholarships and composition prizes. The generation born around 1960 emerged, with such names as Livia Teodorescu (b.1959), Ana-Maria Avram (1961-2017), George Balint (b.1961), Mihaela Stănculescu-Vosganian (b.1961), Dana-Cristina Probst (b.1962), Nicolae Teodoreanu (1962-2018), Dora Cojocaru (b.1963), Christian-Wilhelm Berger (b.1964), Adrian Borza (b.1967), Iulia Cibişescu (b.1967), Dan Dediu (b.1967), and Irinel Anghel (b.1969). As alumni of the composition classes in Bucharest and Cluj, these younger figures gradually detached themselves from the influence of their professors and sought continuations on their own stylistic pathways. A whole array of approaches are found in their scores: explorations of folk traditions, Romanian, Balkan, extra-European; heterophonic writing; techniques of electronic and spectral composition; creative dialogues with the classical tradition in original kinds of post-modernism.

Certainly, the generational groupings of Romanian music that are proposed here may seem artificial in many cases. What striking distinctions might be drawn between, say, Mihnea Brumariu (born in 1958) and Livia Teodorescu (born in 1959) – such as to place them in two quite different contexts. The generational boundary is, however, adopted in the interests of a certain order – the particular sequence of names being indicative of the spectrum of aesthetic orientations in which the composers can be placed. Nearly all of these had completed their tertiary studies before 1990, and fortunately, even in that grim period from a social-political point of view, it cannot be said that they had no opportunities to learn. Culture was able to generate an intellectual oasis, to the benefit of younger Romanians – at least by comparison with the recent historical situation of Russian music. Regarding their Soviet counterparts, Grijori Pantijelev writes:

> And finally the younger generation born in the 1960s, who were educated before 1983 in the age of 'stagnation'. This generation was almost completely separated from the cultural tradition. From whom could they have learned in any case – since the older composers of the first generation, among them Shostakovich, had already died, and the middle generation had not yet achieved any recognition. None of these younger figures managed to produce an outstanding work to date. The defining characteristics of this generation are a lack of a clear point of view, a lack of independence, and an insecurity of stylistic enterprise.[62]

The institutional framework of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania in the 10 years following the revolution became more and more absorbed in economic aspects and the survival of the guild. The presidents who succeeded in office in this period – Pascal Bentoiu for two years, followed by Adrian Iorgulescu – were both renowned composers. They managed to update the necessary legislation to organize the finances and artistic activities of the Union efficiently – for example, the application of laws for authors' rights. The central office returned to the Cantacuzino Palace, which was restored with the Union's own funds and also housed the Enescu Museum. The UCMR became involved in supporting concerts and festivals of (pre-eminently Romanian) new music. A Studio for Electronic Music and Recording was established under the directorship of Călin Ioachimescu,

[62] Grigori Pantijelew, "Wege zu sich selbst. Zur Stilfindung junger sowjetischer Komponisten", *Neue Musik im politischen Wande*l, edited by Hermann Danuser (Mainz: Schott, 1991), pp.23-31.

and substantially equipped with a view to creating sound documentations at a professional level. The Union was also the patron of two specialist journals (*Muzica* and *Actualitatea Muzicală*). It gave support to the re-establishment of a Romanian section of the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) with Nicolae Brînduş as president, and assisted with the organization of the World Music Days festival, hosted by Romania in 1999.

Romania's transition, in a less than coherent fashion, to a market economy formed a difficult political and economic environment for the efforts of the composers' guild. Artistic identity and financial survival were all the harder to secure with a government culture budget that had fallen to negligible levels. All these issues were underlined and brought together with a rekindling of historic memories of Romanian music at a moment of celebration – namely, the 75th aniversary of the Union (1920-1995). From the perspective of this event, it is interesting to observe how Romanian society of the communist period was perceived in retrospect, although musicologists had so far been in no hurry to develop an analysis of ideology and musical aesthetics in the second half of the twentieth century. However necessary – and also inviting – such a project might have been, their desire was outweighed, it seems, by the fear of how their composer colleagues might react.

The occasion of the anniversary gave rise to public statements of clear positions by the two Union presidents of the 1990s, composers of two different generations. Recalling their words thus give us an insight into the mentality of musicians in that decade:

> Pascal Bentoiu:
> It seems to me that, after 75 years of existence, our professional organization can take pride in drawing a balance that is broadly positive. Not even that ill-fated and harsh period managed to dim it following the application of Zhdanovism to our culture. And in no way has it been over-shadowed by the very evident material difficulties which the last six years since December 1989 have brought us. The Union can certainly not be counted among the profiteers of 'transition' or of corruption in general. It has tried – and and still tries – to assert by every means the existential rights of Romanian musical art, the inalienable rights of the author, the right to social protection, and the dignity of the artist.[63]

> Adrian Iorgulescu:
> Objectivity compels us to point out that even in that Orwellian context two positive events occurred. One was the appearance in 1950 of the journal *Muzica*, after an involuntary interruption of 25 years, in a new series edited by the Union (to be sure, also massively infiltrated with ideology). The other was the establishment of the music store Muzica… Regarding the triangular relationship between author, Union and political-ideological power, things are complex, for the following reasons. Undoubtedly the Party tried to subjugate the Union, in order to impose its socialist-realist model on composers. But in actual fact neither material pressure nor propaganda campaigns achieved the result they had counted on, in as far as the Union had built up its own sources of income since the 1960s, and all the siren-blaring proved to be completely counter-productive. For the sake of argument: autonomy of finances allowed our institution to confer on its members the ability to enjoy a decent level of existence exclusively by practising their craft – through a correct administration of copyright laws and of the system of score acquisitions. As a result, composers were not compelled to write works on commission in order to assure their survival. Compromises were made – and I underline this fact – only by those who were well-disposed to compromise (for motives on which I will not comment here). At this point we enter a debate in the area of professional ethics.[64]

[63] Pascal Bentoiu, "Ce a însemnat pentru mine Uniunea Compozitorilor", *Muzica* 4/1995, pp.26-28.
[64] Adrian Iorgulescu, "Celebratory Speech: 75th Anniversary of the Composers' Union," *Muzica* 4/1995, pp.8-11.

On the same celebratory occasion, another subject rarely touched on – that of composers belonging to national minorities (Germans, Jews, and Hungarians) – was broached by a well-known Jewish-Romanian critic, Iosif Sava:

> Chaos, confusion and the excessive lust for power bring to the surface the complex-ridden, the inert, the incapable, the bad and the paranoiac. From those ranks are always recruited the chauvinists, the primitives, the xenophobes. For these reasons I would like to underline height of character, generosity, nobility, as the leitmotiv of the 75-year history of the Union of Composers and Musicologists… Paul Richter, Wilhelm Georg Berger, Theodor Fuchs, Ludovic Bacs, Max Eisicovits, Richard Bartzer, Cziky Boldiszar, Andras Benkö, Alfred Mendelsohn, Victor Bickerich, Hilda Jerea, Harry Brauner, Ludovic Feldman, Leon Klepper, Richard Oschanitzky, Elly Roman, Erwin Junger, Ede Terenyi, Zoltan Aladar, Adalbert Winkler – dozens of such names can be found in the catalogues of the Union, and no one among the composers of real talent ever attempted to 'minoritize' or humiliate them.[65]

These extracts from the anniversary symposium of the UCMR are amplified by the extensive volume of documentation covering the history of the institution, already much quoted from in this book. Written and published in 1995 by Octavian Lazar Cosma, Vice-president of the Union, the volume is an important source, although it can not be the only one for a broader general study of Romanian composition.

At the century's end, the fact was that the UCMR, while being actively involved in the annual International Festival of New Music in Bucharest, did not appear to have the means for a wider range of activities, necessary for the task of raising modern Romanian music out of its anonymity. It was also the case that the Union received no received significant support in this role from other institutions. One telling example is the International George Enescu Festival, which by reason of its renown and funding attracted celebrated international soloists and conductors to Bucharest every three years – consequently drawing large audiences to the city's concert halls. But despite having Romania's greatest composer as its symbolic host, this festival had undertaken practically nothing for Romanian composition – neither for composers of the interwar period, who would of course comprise Enescu's contemporaries, nor for those of the present generation. Such material was sparsely represented in programs that layed stress on outstanding performances of traditional European repertoire – albeit that in other ways these were a welcome development in the Romanian musical scene, since they filled a gap in this regard.

With such obstacles at home, the oft-repeated question of the decade after the revolution, as to why Romanian music could not emerge from its geographic isolation, has little point. The German music journalist Gisela Gronemeyer reported on her attendance at the first International Week of New Music in Bucharest in 1991. It might not have been imagined that her comments would still retain their relevance ten years on, concerning the reception of Romanian music in the West, but also the reception in the reverse direction:

> All this actually strengthened the impression that Romanians at present are barely interested in music from the West, even while their composers are putting out their feelers to the West. The deficit of interest is mutual: no one here [in Germany] takes an interest in Romanian music. Among the festivals of national encounter, which have taken place in recent years with increasing involvement of the Soviet Union, an encounter with Romania was never much in demand. True, there is a fleeting awareness of the names of the older generation of composers – the Darmstadt Vacation Courses have done a little to cover them. Anatol Vieru retains contacts in Berlin from his time as a DAAD German

[65] Iosif Sava, "Uniunea Compozitorilor – tribună a antişovinismului", *Muzica* 4/1995, p.64.

> government scholarship holder, Myriam Marbe has become quite well known through the women's music scene, and Aurel Stroe now lives in Mannheim. But these encounters are all of a rather sporadic nature, and Anatol Vieru, for example, laments that Romanian composers had much more of a presence in Germany in the 1970s, even at the Donaueschingen festival. Travel restrictions, which increased again after that, made the isolation worse. And then, the Romanians composers – like those from the former German Democratic Republic – above all have to suffer the reputation of not being 'up to date' in their music, because the clocks in the East supposedly run differently. The music of the Soviet Union, on the other hand, is currently received here as exotic.[66]

Writings about Romanian music in the same German cultural terrain were also sporadic, and mostly written by Romanians. Some published symposia contain articles by Anatol Vieru or Corneliu Dan Georgescu. In the journal *MusikTexte* a general overview of present-day Romanian composers by Fred Popovici and Mihaela Marinescu appeared, as did a portrait of Ştefan Niculescu. Beyond that, Ulrich Dibelius's well-known book on music since the war (*Moderne Musik seit 1945*) makes a sketchy reference to some Romanian composers, while smaller publishing houses have produced books on Enescu (by Dieter Nowka) and Myriam Marbe (by Thomas Beimel).[67]

All these studies – naturally, only a selection from the complete bilbiography of German writings about Romanian modern and contemporary music - remained insufficient to publicize across the Romanian borders the names of composers who were highly valued by their well-known colleagues in other countries. Just as examples, we might mention here the affinities between Schnittke and Vieru, or Ligeti and Niculescu. There were also French and English performers who constantly and passionately promoted Romanian music. Daniel Kientzy motivated an impressive literature of new works (in particular concertos) for saxophone, going back to the 1980s. Numerous works for flute were dedicated Pierre-Yves Artaud, and trombone works to Barrie Webb.

Taking up the title used by the Vienna Modern festival in 1998, Romania is located, from a Western viewpoint, 'at the margins of Europe'. The concept of 'margin' was extensively debated and its ambiguities were underscored in the substantial program booklet of this Vienna festival. Geographically we are not situated at any continental border, but our culture is often perceived as 'marginal' or 'provincial' – not able to benefit from the political support offered to powerful Russia, nor from the traditional ties of Poland, the Czech lands or Hungary with Western countries. Our cultural position has instead consolidated itself in a Balkan context, as is seen in the numerous associations and forums that have formed in recent times, with the aim of creating an information network in this part of the world.[68]

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[66] Gisela Gronemeyer, "Meilensteine. Die 1. Internationale Woche Neuer Musik in Bukarest", *MusikTexte* 40/41 (1991), p.116.

[67] The cited writings, in alphabetical order, are as follows: Thomas Beimel, *Vom Ritual zur Abstraktion. Über die rumänische Komponistin Myriam Marbe* (Unna: Tokkata Verlag für Frauenforschung, 1994); Volker Blumenthaler and Jeremias Schwarzer (ed.), *Myriam Marbe. Komponistin zwischen Ritual und Intellekt.* Symposium report (Saarbrücken, PFAU, 2001); Ulrich Dibelius*, Moderne Musik nach 1945* (München: Piper Verlag, 1998); Corneliu Dan Georgescu, "Neue Tendenzen in der zeitgenössischen rumänischen Musik", in *Gegenwelten. 10 Jahre Kulturinstitut Komponistinnen*, Heidelberg. A documentation edited by Roswitha Sperber (Hofheim: Wolkeverlag, 1997), pp.147-63; *MusikTexte***,** Zeitschrift für Neue Musik, 92 (Cologne, February 2002); Dieter Nowka, *George Enescu und die Entwicklung der rumänischen Musik* (Sinzheim: Pro Universitate Verlag, 1998); Fred Popovici and M. Marinescu, "Tradition und Erneuerung. Zeitgenössische Musik der mittleren und jüngeren Generation in Rumänien", *MusikTexte*, 57/58 (Cologne, March 1995), pp.16-20; Anatol Vieru, "Zur Entwicklung der Neuen Musik in Rumänien", Paper for the Congress *Komponistinnen – gestern - heute*, Heidelberg 1987, published in: *Studien zur Musik des 20 Jahrhunderts in Ost- und Ostmittel Europa*, edited by Detlef Gojowy (Berlin: Verlag A. Spitz, 1990, Osteuropa Forschung, Vol. 29), pp.67-78.

[68] From a musical perspective, a recent English-language book offers a number of articles about the characteristics of Balkan musical culture: Sokol Shupo (ed.), *Art Music in the Balkans*, (Tirana: ASMUS, 2001).

To return to the welcome commentary on this subject in the Vienna Modern festival booklet, the essay devoted to Romania synthesizes some aspects of Romanian music (– Romania being one of a number of national portraits thematicized in the festival, which also included the Baltic states, Ukraine, Scandinavia, Russia, Spain Portugal and Ireland). The author, Lothar Knessel, poses the same questions – rhetorically to greater or lesser degrees – which had intensely preoccupied Romanian musicians in the preceding ten years. This discussion, however, had remained superficial and on a sterile level in Romania itself, without leading to a systematic treatment of the issues in any published form, or to possible explanations for the problem of 'marginalization':

> Have we arrived, despite everything, at the margin? Does the Romanian composer, as Ştefan Niculescu maintains, have the sense of being a second-rate European? One who is located at a neglected margin? (And hence the inferiority complex, not uncommonly encountered in south-east Europe, becomes an obstacle?) Is the image of the country from an external perspective dependent on concepts with traditionally negative connotation, such as Wallachia and the Balkans? Have rigid Stalinism and the 45 years of socialist communism – of which 25 years were the Ceauşescu dictatorship, replete with *Securitate* – suffocated free thought, and locked up this area that was previously so open? Have they walled in to people's conscience this tormenting sense of marginalisation?[69]

The list of questions can be continued. Why is there such a delay in recovering the music of the inter-war period, considering that other composers alongside Enescu created works of comparable significance? To project the current school of composition outside the country's borders, it is necessary first of all to know and appreciate the traditions within those borders, and to show their continuities or discontinuities with the present. Symposia are organized on the anniversaries of important inter-war composers, but their proceedings – and the scores of these composers – remain unpublished. We take pride in the inter-war avant-garde, in Romania's active position in musical Europe at the time. That contribution was not restricted to the naturalized French citizens Marcel Mihalovici or Stan Golestan, nor to the celebrity performer Enescu, but came also from composers active in Bucharest, following studies, for example, in German universities. Where is all this data to be found – and much other documentation? In what publications and with how much circulation? How many CD anthologies wih examples of that inter-war avant-garde have appeared since 1990? Not a single one. The composers' guild, of course, directs its efforts to producing anthologies of present-day music, but even these have insufficient distribution.

Mention must also be made of the proliferation of other popular genres of music, much more accessible to young people and more to their taste – such as pop-rock and hip-hop – although they do not form part of this study. The Americanization of Romanian society in the 1990s is evident in the enthusiasm with which all such modes and models were taken up. Parallel with this, Balkan and Roma melodies enjoyed growing popularity – even being the subject of theoretical discussion in ethno-musicology as 'pan-balkan cross-bred music'.[70] It is notable that both the American mode and the 'Balcanization' were products of globalization in the South-east European perimeter.

The present writer contributed the survey "Modern Music in Romania. A Historical Sketch", pp.106-36 (English version by Stella Tinney).

[69] Lothar Knessl, "Rumänien, ein anderes Europa? Lebendige Tradition fördert musikalisch Neues", in: *An den Rändern Europas* (WIEN MODERN`98, 063).

[70] See Speranţa Rădulescu, "Musique de métissage pan-balkanique en Roumanie", *Muzica* 4/1998: pp.143-46, Lecture at the International Colloquium "La diffusion des musique de monde", organized by "Zone Franche", L´Institut du Monde Arabe et l´Université de Bourgogne, Paris, 15th-17th May 1998.

The effect of globalization on the art music of the decade after 1990 has not yet been researched, but in fact has not appeared such a necessity. Romanian composers in general continued their work on the same conceptual pathways that they had already marked out before the 1990s. These will be charted in more detail in the suceeding second part of this book.

English Version by John McCaughey