ROMANIAN MUSIC UP TO 1944: NATIONAL EMPHASES AMONG THE ROMANTICISM AND MODERNISM

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Summary

1. MUSICAL BEGINNINGS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, Romanian musical culture in the Principalities (Wallachia and Moldavia) mainly consisted of Byzantine and folk layers, with Oriental/Turkish accents and the beginnings of secular music in the late-eighteenth century (worldly songs, courtly songs composed by boyars). Greek and Turkish influence (via the courts of the Greek Phanariot rulers) was therefore predominant up to 1820, and native music was mainly represented by the *lăutari* (folk musicians) and church choirs. The transition from the Greco-Oriental to the Western typology made itself felt through the success of foreign travelling opera companies, but Western music spread due also to other factors: increased commercial ties with the West, the fact that from 1829 numerous young people (the sons of boyars and bookmen) went to university in the major European capitals and brought back with them a new mindset and new models. Such models were likewise encouraged by the foreign artists who settled in the Principalities. The first manifestations of native "cultivation" were initially bound up with the theatre: works for the stage, political couplets, and potpourris on national themes, displaying the patriotic, historical spirit characteristic of early Romanticism in general.

The second half of the nineteenth century proved to be more important than the first thanks to increased professionalism and the emergence of new genres. Composers now begin to enter national history for the merit of having written the first Romanian symphony, the first Romanian string quartet, the first Romanian opera. These works were to lead to the establishment of a national idiom, adapted to the genres borrowed from the European music of the time. If the results fall short of their authors' praiseworthy intentions (due to the national music's immaturity), if Western-type forms still seem incompatible with native melodies and harmonies, the attempts to solve such problems were to have success in the widespread choral genre in particular.

2. GEORGE ENESCU

Around 1910, after a non-homogenous stage, but one of significant gains, thitherto separate attitudes—the national and the universal—began to manifest themselves in the music of the same composer. The most remarkable such case remains that of George Enescu, who achieved a modern synthesis of styles, and from whom a large part of contemporary Romanian music claims to descend. In his music are observable various trends: late Romanticism alongside neo-classical inflections, the insertion of Romanian traditional music into a cultivated, modern European language.

3. ROMANIAN MUSIC IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Via Dimitrie Georgescu-Kiriac there took shape one of the two divergent directions that had emerged by the beginning of the twentieth century, namely the assertion of national cultural autonomy as opposed to the idea of basing Romanian music on universal music in

general and French music in particular. The second direction originated in a composer of Italian origin who had settled in Romania: Alfonso Castaldi, the first professor of composition at the Bucharest Conservatory.

We are now talking about the music of the Greater Romania, since in 1918 Wallachia and Moldavia had been unified with Transylvania, a region far more permeable to Western influences, given that it had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the music of the inter-bellum may be observed, in differing degrees, the mark of German romanticism and French impressionism and neo-classicism, as well as the effort to construct a "national" musical language drawing on native oral musical traditions.

4. *THE INFLUENCE OF INTER-BELLUM COMPOSERS ON GENERATIONS AFTER 1950*

The rupture brought about by the installation of a communist regime in Romania after the Second World War meant music was composed to political orders and was severed from the new directions of the inter-bellum. Nevertheless, the younger generation was still obviously influenced by composers and teachers such as the towering figure of George Enescu. Ultimately, to remark upon such influence means seeking an answer to the question of whether there was a Romanian school of composition.