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National Ideology, Music and Discourses about Music in Romania in the Twentieth Century*

History records and retains primarily illustrious deeds, dates and names. It is difficult to decipher in it the underlying ideologies and especially current beliefs and ideas shared by scholars and/or ordinary people. I open a parenthesis to say that, in my opinion, ideologies – corpora of relatively coherent ideas of intellectual origin – decompose and spread among ordinary people in the form of current ideas that motivate and/or explain their opinions, preferences, decisions and actions. These ideas can be reassembled in narratives that reconstruct popular versions of ideologies. I set out to develop such a discourse on national ideology starting from the musics that circulated in Romania in the 20th century.

1900-1919

In 1900, Romania is a young country, created through the union of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859, which became a kingdom in 1881, and earned independence from Ottoman suzerainty in 1877. Within its borders it houses a Romanian majority, but also Jewish, Roma, Armenian, Greek, Bulgarian, Russian, and Turkish communities. Romania inherited from the previous century major cultural institutions (conservatoires, philharmonics,

* This paper was presented in a public conference with the same title in May 2017 at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. This fact justifies the abundant use of information well-known to Romanians; it also explains the parsimonious evocation of the musical personalities from within the national boundaries, especially the living ones – a main concern for the readers of these pages.

theaters), all with the *national* attribute. Under their patronage, the intellectual and artistic world hopes to build a high national culture. However, the country also needs specific, unifying sound symbols accessible to all: boyars, bourgeois and intellectuals educated in the West, as well as ordinary citizens. Some modest composers of the 19th century collected folk melodies and dances and harmonized them for the piano, for the use of aristocratic salons and bourgeois banquets, but their popularity is limited. These melodies were often based on a post-Phanariot music.¹ But, in the second half of the 19th century, a new music emerges spontaneously: *national arias*. These songs circulate in urban areas, and are tonally harmonized, orchestrated and accompanied on the piano to suit the taste of the middle-class. Their authors are elite Roma folk musicians from the cities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Some of them already had the experience of songs accompanied by piano, which meanwhile reached restaurants, and especially the experience of the symbolic representation of Romania at the universal exhibitions in Paris, i.e. of adjusting Romanian music to the tastes of the European audience. Romanian leaders sent them abroad, between 1867 and 1900, without any reservations related to their ethnicity: that means that state nationalism was then relatively tolerant. National arias have as effect the modernization and Europeanization of the Romanian sound. They spread mainly in the cities of northern Moldavia, where many Jews still live. The teenager George Enescu, the only major composer of the time, lent their musical footprint to his Romanian Rhapsodies, written in 1901 and 1902 respectively.

In the regions where Romanians are the majority but still under the rule of the great empires in the proximity – Bukovina, Bessarabia (today's Republic of Moldova), Transylvania and Banat – the either subdued or openly declared aspiration of the people to unite with the other Romanians in a country that will be primarily theirs becomes perceptible. Intellectuals – like those in other

¹ By post-Phanariot music I understand a Balkan fusion music with a Greek-Turkish dominant feature, which existed in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia especially in the cities, during the Phanariot rule – 1716-1821 (Feldman 2016: 27). The conventional (and yet easily perceptible) musical feature of this music is the augmented second between the third and fourth degrees of the minor mode, a second that appears in all the 19th-century melodies (some accompanied by piano, others treated chorally) from the collections published by: Anton Pann, Gavriil Musicescu, Ion Andrei Wachmann, Carol Miculi, Dimitrie Vulpian, Eduard Hübsch, Eduard Caudella, Ludwig Wiest, Alexandru Berdescu, Henri Erlich, and others. This second must have been very common in the urban and rural pieces of the time. However, I have also found it in the rural musics recorded by Brăiloiu in the 1920-30s, as well as much later, in the musics collected from the Botoșani villages at the beginning of the 21st century.

Romanian provinces, in fact – are nurturing it, instilling in their compatriots the same sense of pride related to Roman ancestors and membership in the “Latin gens”. Meanwhile, traditional rural musics seem to be rich, powerful, less influenced by urban musics and relatively different from one micro-region to another – the last characteristic defining the musics of Romanian peasants of all time. At least that is what results from systematic research undertaken by Béla Bartók in Transylvania in the first two decades of the 20th century.

1919-1945

After the Great War, the kingdom of Romania extends spectacularly, incorporating Romanian-majority provinces of former empires. The Romanian nation is now fulfilled, and needs to be consolidated by a national culture. High-quality works by composers trained in Western Europe begin to appear. But at the Romanian Athenaeum, the temple of academic music, the audience entreats the singers ready for an encore: *Națională, națională!* [National arias!] (Pârvulescu 2003: 146) The number of arias is growing, their popularity increasing, and they penetrate as far as small towns. They are disseminated via radio broadcasts and especially in restaurants, where they have survived until today, thanks to modernizations that have turned them into *café concert* or *café chantant* pieces. (My opinion is that this kind of national music in popular versions appeared around the same time in other Central European countries too. I, for example, believe that the urban music of Gypsies in Hungary, which Béla Bartók despised, was one of them.) Later, in order to enliven the universal exhibitions (1900-1939), the Romanian state sent Romanian vocalists and instrumentalists, accompanied by Roma musicians dressed now not in European-style tuxedos, but in alleged Romanian rural costumes. Thus, the state begins to intervene in the symbolic representation of the country and is determined to give visible priority to ethnic Romanians.

After the annexation to Romania (1919), Transylvania does not immediately join the popular game of building a national music. The people of this province come from a different sound world. Here, the nation must be built from scratch, because the majority Romanians need time to assert themselves and find solutions for cohabitation with the Hungarians, who have held the dominant position. In addition, the unification of popular tastes is difficult because the Transylvanians’ musics differ more from one micro-region to another than in other provinces. In fact, all traditional rural musics are in their heyday: most peasants are involved, in one way or another, at one age or another, in the musical life of their villages. City dwellers are also attached to

the peasants' music and request it from the fiddlers who play at restaurants and at various parties.

Composers, now trained at major European schools, are anxious to develop a specific academic Romanian music, but a modern one built on Western stylistic coordinates: the symbolic construction of national academic culture will continue hand in hand with modernization and Europeanization. They associate in the Society of Romanian Composers (1920). As the legacy of romantic nationalism is still alive, almost all composers agree that the best way of obtaining Romanian specificity is utilizing folklore. But how? By quoting it? By processing rural songs? By invention in folk style? The matter is debated extensively in the 1920s in *Muzica* [The Music] magazine.² Each composer proposes a solution, but especially presents in concert his works created in either way. But, in order to be put to use, peasant music must first be known. The Society of Romanian Composers establishes an archive fund to help authors consult folk tunes recorded by folklorists. In 1928 is founded the folklore archive of the Society of Romanian Composers, whose director is the general secretary of the Society himself: Constantin Brăiloiu, a quite remarkable scholar to whom I will return. The archives offer the chance of mediated knowledge of peasant music. They allow composers to disregard the conditions and meanings of music production. Later on, even sound recordings no longer seem necessary: they turn directly to collections of songs with notation (which are becoming more numerous), without realizing that these cause distortions of the realities they refer to. This additional mediation alienates them even more from the actual music, i.e. the "raw material" of the national body of composition. But it is still a long way to the quasi-total indifference to oral musics of the late 20th century.

But let us return to the archives, because they substantiate the ideological orientation of the academic musicians of the time. These include almost exclusively Romanian rural music, although the country has now numerous minority ethnic groups. The Romanian peasant and village are idealized. As popular as national arias may be, they are not considered important for national culture: the cosmopolitan city that created them is destructive for the "soul of the people". Hungarian folklore is only dealt with by Hungarian researchers from Transylvania. However, it is a Hungarian scholar, Béla Bartók, who researches extensively Romanian music from Transylvania in the first decades! His first

² The names of notable contributors: Alexandru Zirra, Constantin C. Nottara, Constantin Brăiloiu, George Breazul, George Georgescu, Sabin Drăgoi (see "Muzica (revistă)").

collection of pieces was published by the Romanian Academy in 1913, but the next collection that he offered to the same Academy for publication after the war was turned down (Bartók 1913, 1923, 1935, 1967-1973). In the interwar period, nationalism gradually becomes exclusive by omission: it is oriented only toward the majority population and determined to give credit only to indigenous researchers. A Romanian competitor of Brăiloiu, the musicologist George Breazu, founder of another archive of rural music,³ illustrates this exclusivity. He advises his employees and students to bypass the Gypsy musicians, because they distort folklore (Breazu 1939: 343-344). The scholar of the time that never advanced, through his writings or actions, any nationalist opinion was Constantin Brăiloiu.

Urban musical life becomes diversified: there appear operetta, brass-band, revue, and light music, etc., almost all embodying the Western aspirations of a class of ordinary people. On the outskirts of the cities appear slum musics, embraced by another category of ordinary people, who are not bothered that they contain reminiscences of Oriental sound and that their propagators are Gypsies. The state does not try to control any music other than indirectly, through resource allocation.

The interwar period is the most fertile in Romanian academic culture. Intellectuals and artists that will become important in European scholarly culture begin or continue their activity then: Constantin Brâncuși, George Enescu, Dinu Lipatti, Constantin Brăiloiu, Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran. One of the most prestigious is George Enescu, a top European composer and violinist, educated in Germany and France. Unlike his fellow Romanians, he is attracted by the urban music of Roma fiddlers, which he uses in some of his works.⁴ Enescu is especially fascinated by the Oriental influences assimilated by this music over the centuries, which he borrows and pours in modern compositional expressions. Interestingly, Enescu records as the subtitle of his works inspired by the music of Gypsy fiddlers the following phrase: “in Romanian folk character” (*dans le caractère populaire roumain*)! He thus suggests that the national character is produced with the contribution of “others” as well, be they socially marginalized; and that academic creation can ignore the axiom of *the necessary recourse to purely Romanian rural music*.

³ The Phonographic Archive of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Arts, now integrated in the archive of the Constantin Brăiloiu Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest.

⁴ Two of the most significant: Sonata No. 3 “in Romanian folk character” for Piano and Violin, Op. 25 and *Impression d'enfance*, Op. 28, suite for violin et piano.

The state is not directly involved in academic compositions in 1938-1945, even in the short period of royal dictatorship, or later when the party of the extreme right comes to power. Then nationalism becomes virulent, but artists continue to be free to express themselves as they see fit. I have no evidence that Jewish and Roma musicians were victims of the Holocaust, but the tension in their lives must have been immense.

Traditional musics are still strong, although sometimes they give signs that they absorb some urban elements. In the 1920-1930s numerous research and folk tunes collection campaigns are undertaken. The Romanian Social Institute, with which Brăiloiu collaborates, initiates sociological monographs of rural areas. After a while, Brăiloiu continues on his own, together with his team of assistants. From the recordings made then it results that rural musics are not affected by national ideology; but this is uncertain, since folklorists do a preliminary sorting of the songs they record. In 1943 Brăiloiu settles in Geneva, then in Paris. There he dedicates his time to the foundation of the International Archives of Folk Music⁵ and to music systematics studies, and thus becomes a classic of European ethnomusicology.⁶ Romanian folklorists, and later ethnomusicologists, are to continue on their own.

1945-1965: EARLY COMMUNISM, PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM AND SOCIALIST REALISM

After the end of World War II, Romania sinks into one of the darkest periods of its existence. The Red Army and Soviet commissars occupy the country, introduce communism, and impose an overhaul on all the institutions to make them able to implement the new goals: destruction of the elites, turning peasants into proletarians, subjecting the workers, leveling society down to the lowest level, and creating “new man”, one so politically indoctrinated as to become a halfwit. Beliefs, principles, ethical guidelines, hierarchies, social relations, ways of life all crumble. The Bolsheviks require their subordinates in Romania two commandments, apparently resulting from the communist ideology. The first is proletarian internationalism, which aims at raising to the forefront of political life working people from minority groups. Many Hungarian executives are appointed in Transylvania – another wound

⁵ *Archives internationales de musique populaire, Musée d'ethnographie de Genève*. The archives exist and are active even today. Moreover, the records from the Brăiloiu archive are available on the internet to anyone, including Romanians: http://www.ville-ge.ch/meg/musinfo_ph.php.

⁶ Brăiloiu's major works are included in Brăiloiu 1973 and Brăiloiu 1984.

added to the Romanians' centuries-old unhealed wounds. The Roma become party secretaries, mayors, second-level chiefs. Poor, uncultured and inexperienced, the hapless Roma become leaders loathed by everyone: affirmative action often produces the opposite effect to the one intended. However, the temporary rise of Roma through social ranks is not accompanied by a special interest for their music.⁷

The second commandment requires that the entire culture should be accessible to the working class. Consequently, 20th-century European academic music is labeled as decadent and prohibited for more than a decade. The radio supports these directives by broadcasting "peoples' (i.e. Soviet peoples') music" and academic Soviet pieces. (I open a parenthesis to say that the communist ideology went through several decades of conflicting stages that would make one think that, at least on the pragmatic plane, it was not really an ideology, but a set of opportunistic ideas issued by circumstantial leaders of the Soviet state, ideas that could be easily shattered by their successors.) The second commandment is a strong recommendation to authors: their works must fall within "socialist realism".

Anthropological literature claims that communism is a modernization project. Maybe in some ways that I was unable to identify in Romanian communism. What happened here in music cannot be called modernization. All the works of the last six-seven decades are removed from concert programs and school curricula. Romanian composers with an "unhealthy (i.e. bourgeois) background", or those who do not write about the working class and to its understanding are removed from playbills, put on public trial, punished. Unimaginable personal tragedies follow: incarceration, destroyed careers, dispossession of property, persecution of their children . . . The terror wanes over time, in pace with the diminishing Soviet influence, but also with individual concessions. In the early 1960s, the Union of Composers has become an obedient institution, serving the party with a group of opportunistic volunteers, ready to meet the ideological demands in force (or those ever to be invented). They assume the production of a music to the taste of government, allowing their fellow composers to write their works in peace, but with caution.

Interest in rural music increases. In 1949 the Folklore Institute is established. In the same year, the first folkloric ensembles and orchestras also appear,⁸ whose aim is to "improve" and politically correct the peasants'

⁷ However, Electrecord, then the only recording label in Romania, released some Gypsy music records, including in Romani.

⁸ A concise description of folkloric music due to Laurent Aubert: "a manipulated

musics. They act after the model of the Soviet Moiseyev ensemble: grand size and euphoric-optimistic expression. An army of cultural activists – composers, conductors of folk orchestras, lyricists of “new life” songs, directors of cultural centers and teachers from popular art schools – is set in action. They are grouped by institutions: guidance centers for folk art, county culture inspectorates, etc. Running in alternation with political speeches, folklorized musics become instruments of indoctrination of the people.

Traditional rural music is shrinking gradually as people, constrained by land dispossession and forced collectivization, change residence and lifestyle. However, folklorists also notice that some peasants feed their repertoire with songs heard on the radio and television and apply “improvement solutions” suggested by cultural activists.

1965-1989: THE NATIONAL-COMMUNIST PERIOD

In 1958, the Russians withdraw their troops from Romania. The reins of the Romanian state are taken up by the local communists, trained under Stalin. Towards the mid-60s, the state frees the surviving political prisoners and gradually gives up the notion of “leading working class”, targeting more educated people, provided that they are faithful to the party. Proletarian internationalism is abandoned too in favor of constantly growing nationalism. Apparently this rekindles the interwar nationalism; but in reality this one is different, because it is financed and controlled by the state.

In its application, the Romanian nationalist communism was a regressive project, a return to radical nationalism, which in Europe had long lost its vigor. Relying this time on Romanian intellectuals, the state put into circulation a new Romanian mythology, which mixed distorted historical data and aberrations. Romanians were told that they were the first people who lived on their territory; the others were foreigners trying to impose their domination, who spread a false history all over the world, claiming precedence. The Party decided that the Dacians were a Thracian branch prior to Romans and other peoples in the region, hence the true ancestors of the nation. The Roman ancestry was dethroned. The new mythology was seasoned with resentment: *enemy-strangers* were invented to blame for the endless shortcomings people faced in everyday life: Russians, Hungarians and Roma.

consumer product, homogenized and formatted to the tastes of certain political powers and to presumed tourist quests for a false, artificially built authenticity” (Aubert 2008: 149).

However, there follows a good period for academic composers. Their works, well paid, are heavily promoted. Each symphonic concert begins with a Romanian, preferably new piece. Composers no longer necessarily turn to folklore for “national character”, but any initiative aiming in this direction is welcome. Some write pieces that claim to tap ancient archetypes. Others develop works dedicated to the honorable Dacian ancestors. A musicologist goes even further, dealing with musical instruments that would have belonged to the ancient Greeks, who preceded Dacians on some Romanian territories. There is also a group of young and brave artists who develop an abstract, avant-garde music influenced by the Darmstadt School – an omnipotent, aggressive emblem of European modernity at the time.⁹ Power tolerates them with suspicion, but students worship and imitate them as much as they can. Their modernist-radical music must be understood as a gesture of masked protest, because it is opposed, in European terms, to the official socialist-realist culture and nationalism.

Interestingly, most intellectuals fell under the spell of nationalist-communist ideology, because they saw it as a reinstatement of the link with the interwar period, which had become ideal by idealization. Besides, enemy-strangers constantly gave them reasons to accept it. The Russians had brought communism, plundered the country, destroyed society and washed people’s brains with their Soviet music. It was true. The Hungarians, as chauvinistic as ever, committed hostile acts; for example, their folklorists moved around Transylvania and recorded the Romanian music of the *ceterași* (fiddlers), which they took to Budapest, where musicians adopted and played it while claiming it was Hungarian music from *their* Transylvania. There was something true in it too, but not entirely, because the Transylvanian *ceterași* – be they Romanian, Hungarian or Roma – had been for a long time performing for all ethnic groups. I remember, however, that my field folklorist colleagues indignantly recounted, in 1970-80, that Hungarians were “stealing our music”. As for Gypsies, they were even worse, they said, because they distorted it.

The sound emblem of the national-communist period was the perpetual festival entitled Song to Romania (*Cântarea României*), initiated in 1975 and discontinued in 1989. It consisted of a series of show-contests that spanned two years and took place in almost all the localities, progressing from the periphery to the center. They ended in awards, then recommenced. All amateur and professional artists in the country were required to participate in the festival. Amateurs were considered possible substitutes for unregimented

⁹ Ștefan Niculescu, Anatol Vieru, Aurel Stroe, Myriam Marbe, Dan Constantinescu.

professionals. Any production presented was basically a tribute to the country, the national-communist regime and the Leader. The country seemed to be engaged in an eternal feast, which was rather grim, as the Song to Romania was under way just as the economy was collapsing.

The consequences of the national-communist ideology on ethnomusicological research were severe. All folklorists were exclusively concerned with the Romanians' rural music, which was ebbing but still relatively alive, ignoring other musics at hand. Their chief concerns were the structure of music, genre classification, typology, monographs – all important, but deliberately moving them away from the social aspects of music production. Folklorists totally disregarded Gypsy *lăutărească* music, which, although scarcely advertised, was at its zenith and enjoyed huge popularity in major cities in the south. Interestingly, internalization of the national-communist ideology was now so great that researchers did not realize that disinterest for certain musics was tantamount to obedience to the party which, in fact, they hated. As an excuse for everyone, including me, I must add that, for lack of information, specialists ignored the ideas circulated by their Western colleagues in the last decades and did not realize that harking back to the work of Brăiloiu no longer sufficed. But ordinary people did not bother about party directives or ethnomusicologists' opinions. They loved Gypsy music wholeheartedly, even though many were also attached to the new nationalist mythology! (I open a new parenthesis to say that current ideas formed together an often incoherent corpus, because they tacked fragments of different ideologies without worrying about the contradictions.) People also loved another new music, which in the 1970-1980s was gaining in popularity in all the regions of the country: Serbian music from Banat, which deserves special attention.

In the 1970-1980s, at wedding parties, the musicians from the province of Banat performed a music with three alternative names: Serbian (*sârbească*), Banatian (*bănăţeană*), or Serbian-Banatian (*bănăţeană sârbească*), which was attractive, among others, because it was “brought” by Gypsy musicians from the neighbors in Yugoslavia, then a prosperous country, from which one could travel around Europe. It combined elements of rural music from the Romanian Banat and a Yugoslav popular music known as *novokomponovana muzika* [Serbian: newly composed music]. Serbian-Banatian music reactivated the Romanians' attraction to Balkan music, which had once been familiar.¹⁰

¹⁰ Serbian Banat music emerged in the 1970s, quickly consolidated, and gained immense popularity in the 1980s, when it began to infiltrate all the regions. In some places it can still be heard today at wedding parties in Romania.

Alarmed by this new, ethnically impure music gone out of control, undermining the sacrosanct “national character”, the Party forbade it. It orchestrated a press “campaign to depollute folklore” and took administrative measures to punish those who propagated it. The punishment consisted in fines and in canceling by the police of the license to work as a freelance musician. The episode of the fight to “depollute folklore”, one of the most absurd interventions of the state in popular music culture, occurred in 1987-1988. That is, shortly before the December 1989 revolution.

1989 AND ON

I will not evoke here the revolution of December 1989, because it is confusing. One of its most disturbing aspects is that the ideological orientation and the direction the country is about to engage in are unclear for a long time; and the most depressing is that the country’s new leaders are the activists of the old regime, ready to obstruct any renewal. But there is also an immediate benefit: freedom. Every citizen earns, inter alia, the right to make, play and ask for any music he fancies.

Since then musics from Romania underwent major transformations. The most significant are those of folkloric music. In January 1990, folklore shows on television and radio were halted for several months following the request of many listeners identifying folklore with an emblem of national-communist regime and refusing to accept it. (People with no knowledge of anthropology made a judicious anthropological observation.) After several months, however, the old cultural activists left without occupation gradually re-included folkloric music at stations and in shows, and restored the power of the institutions on which it was based: folkloric ensembles, popular schools of art, radio and TV shows. Listeners did not object any more, because now they had alternatives. However, since then “folklore” has never been so abundant again.

In the 1990s a new music, seemingly Oriental, arose spontaneously. Its geographical origin was uncertain, and it was alternatively called Oriental, Turkish and Gypsy. During a decade, this music was decanted into a Balkan vocal-instrumental ethno-pop called *manea* (or, in the plural form, *manele*). The *manea* was disseminated in various doses throughout Romania. Intellectuals vilified it. Some even proposed banning it! The reasons were varied: this music openly assumed the past dependence of the country on the Ottoman Empire, which many refused to accept; it ignored the national character – although after 1990 no one knew exactly what this character should be like; it was made and performed mostly by Roma, who had the reputation of being full of sins

and altering the honorable “national character”; its lyrics were vulgar; finally, the *manea* was often linked to the underworld, which fed it through huge tips offered to musicians. The reaction of the intellectuals partly (not entirely) explains the internalization of the national-communist ideology. Ordinary people, especially the young, do not care about the views of intellectuals and display a relatively durable passion for the *manea*. (Popular fusion musics similar to the *manea*, at least insofar their process of generation is concerned, appeared in all the countries of southern Europe: *chalga* (Bulgaria), *arabesk* (Turkey, Macedonia), *turbo-folk* (Serbia), *tallava* (Albania), *laiko* (Greece), *rabiz* (Armenia).)

In the academic world, composers went various ways. Some have remained anchored in the protesting radical modernism of the 1960-1970s, although it is now out of fashion in Europe. Others lined up behind the ideology of globalization: in their works they combine musical elements from any source.¹¹ Others adopted a clarity of musical expression in striking contrast to the virulent modernisms they had previously practiced. For others, archetypes – very differently understood – remain a temptation. Still others are fascinated by electro-acoustic technology. Finally, there are composers for whom the sound illustration of mathematical or philosophical ideas and penetration into the psychological world of great literary masterpieces are of cultural interest. Each one seeks solutions to express oneself in a personal way, making his way through the multitude of directions outlined by fellow Westerners. Much fewer are those for which folklore is a direction to follow.

¹¹ “Any source” means any music, academic or popular, taken from any cultural area of the world. Jean During distinguishes between “globalization” and “mondialization” (During 2011): in broad terms, the first consists in the fusion of musics from the same cultural micro-area following models provided by one of them, and the second in the fusion of music from any region, even geographically or culturally distant. From a different perspective, the Norwegian ethnomusicologist Thomas Solomon notes “the contrast between what can be called ‘organic transculturality’ in music – the more or less spontaneous emergence of hybrid musical forms in situations of cultural contact – and ‘intentional transculturality’ – the conscious, deliberate bringing together of musical expressions from different cultures or social groups. While organic transculturality can be said to characterize the historical evolution of all cultures (since no culture is entirely isolated), intentional transculturality can be defined as artistic practice that explicitly aestheticizes cultural mixing, drawing attention to its juxtaposition of musical materials from different cultural sources and social groups. Such deliberate practices of cultural mixing are inherently political, since there is always a power differential between social groups that are bearers of the different cultural traditions that are brought together.” (Solomon 2017)

The question that those who are used to problematize ask is: How to express your patriotism, to which nationalism has long been linked? (The same question can actually be put by any European citizen.) How can I point to the fact that I am Romanian? But do I have to indicate that I am Romanian? After all, why not? Western intellectuals advocate the protection of the cultural identity of minority groups, why not also of the majority? The solution guaranteed by interwar and communist nationalism was using Romanian rural musics. But now these are disappearing along with the peasantry, or changing in ways that make them nationally irrelevant and aesthetically unattractive.

At certain times, the popular version of nationalism played a positive role in Romania, because it is beyond doubt that a country, especially a young one, needs an emblematic music that coalesces and gives coherence to the nation. At other times, nationalism was the professional option of most academic musicians; however, it was faced with the implicit opposition of several musicians who showed that the national sound flagship can do without the pure Romanian rural component (George Enescu, Dinu Lipatti, Mihail Jora, etc.). In other periods, the nationalistic excesses of power were symbolically challenged by the followers of the radical modernism of the 1960-1970s, who clamored their commitment to contemporary European musics and their disinterest with the sacrosanct “Romanian character”. Finally, there were periods when official nationalism took absurd and oppressive forms. By prohibiting popular musics open to the world, the state aimed for the isolation of the country and its people and the exclusion of minority groups from the nation; but the ban ran into popular opposition expressed through music. During the 20th and 21st centuries, national ideology is always *different* and generates different works and behaviors. Importantly, except during the brutal intervention of the state in the final years of communism, it is associated with *modernization and Europeanization*.

Romanian ordinary people often understood their condition as citizens and related it to the construction of national culture more appropriately than intellectuals, albeit not always through artistically elevated music. They found solutions which adequately reflect their major aspirations in every historical period. At the intersection of the 19th and 20th centuries, i.e. when the national feelings of all were rising, they created and circulated national arias (*ariile naționale*). Later, towards the end of the communist era, they forged “ethnically impure” music (*muzica bănățeană sârbească*), which implicitly opposed the excessive and exclusive nationalism expressed through folklorized music. After 1990 they invented another music: *manele*, an ethno-pop music.

On the one hand, this music symbolically restores connections with the Balkan sound that Romanian academic culture despises; on the other hand, it opens to the wide world of which the ordinary people dream.

In the popular construction of the nation, the role of professional musicians, Roma or Romanian, was major. Due to the obligation to appropriately meet the requirements expressed by customers, they became the promoters of transformations in music which anticipated and encouraged larger pro-national movements, or conversely, corrected their excesses.

English version by Adrian Solomon

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