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Jazz and Politics in the Obsessing Decade and the Following Years*

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From the outset I need to thank the organisers for including jazz music among the topics presented in this symposium (i.e. *The Musics of Power: Music and Musicians in Totalitarian Regimes in 20th Century Europe*, editor's note). During a century from the first sonic attestation (the vinyls with Original Dixieland Jazz Band published in 1917), jazz evolved according to its own musical rules, but influenced the way important European and American composers wrote. Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud, Maurice Ravel, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Dave Brubeck (I only chose a few examples) are names remembered not only in the history of academic music. Whoever is interested in the experiments of symphonic jazz (third stream, in American parlance) must study and appreciate these composers' works. If we consider the nearness between the types of academic writing accredited for centuries and the modes of composition, improvisation, sonic emission, affective environment of jazz detectable in the scores of Romanian composers Mircea Popa, Eduard Terenyi, Dumitru Capoianu, Pascal Benteoiu, Sabin Păuța, Richard Oschanitzky, the idea of the creative interface of "classical American music" – jazz – with predetermined European music is obvious. Even more so in the last

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decades of the 20th century and at present, when the symphonic or chamber works recorded especially by the concern ECM have multiplied.

Even more praiseworthy is the organisers' initiative of shedding light on the relations of jazz in Romania and political power. First of all, because the history of jazz in our country has not been written yet and exceptional achievements are little known. Secondly, much like in the former Soviet Union and in other socialist countries, after the Second World War jazz evolved in Romania from the often violent official obstruction, with dramatic consequences for the musicians preoccupied theoretically and practically with this musical genre – to the efforts of teachers, publicists, producers and musicians¹ of convincing first of all the authorities, many classically trained musicians, the audience of the qualities of this type of musical work and performance.

In fact, the public needed the least convincing of the beauty and dynamism of jazz performances. In the late 1920s, the citizens of Bucharest made live acquaintance with this music, which was, nevertheless, new to them. Only the few who owned a radio receptor and could acquire American gramophone discs were up to date with the melodies, the rhythms and the type of instrumental and vocal performance typical of jazz, which were cultivated at that time in the United States of America. One might say that jazz as a musical, stage practice was introduced in Romania by Emil Berindei. The polytechnic studies in England did not prevent him from performing in British bands, like the one led by Jack Hylton. Returning to his country in 1925, Emil Berindei, who had become an engineer with the Telephone Society, founded a year later The Hot Chaps Band, which was so successful that Mihail Jora, the first musical director of the Romanian Radio, included it frequently, beginning with 1928, in the programmes that were only live broadcasts. Emil Berindei also founded the band *Jazzul Telefoanelor* [Telephone Jazz], led a big band-type ensemble at the Radio Station, played in jazz combos in Bucharest and at the seaside.

The American jazz styles were more successful due to the foreign bands playing in Bucharest: Savoy Orpheans, Sam Wooding, Valaida Snow with a black revue band and, especially, James Cook, the conductor of the big band, which was highly appreciated at the Lafayette Galleries and at the Radio in the broadcasts of 1936. One may claim that, until the beginning of the Second World War, jazz evolved in Romania thanks to the vinyls imported from North America, due to the radio, the Romanian bands and the musicals from Hollywood, in which the classical, swing style practiced by the instrumental ensembles called big bands was cultivated. The success of this type of music in restaurants, at the

¹ We shall see during these notes why I have placed the practitioners of jazz last.

cinema and at the radio determined, of course, the apparition of an increasingly large number of Romanian players who had gigs and a source of income. If we take into consideration that in the interwar period the musical programmes at Radio Romania consisted only of live broadcasts, the proliferation of bands also ensuring the supremacy of jazz in our country is evident.

Although the list of Romanian players in the examined era is impressive, I should mention Theodor “Teddy” Cosma’s contribution as a pianist to the success of jazz in Romania (majorly influenced by the American Teddy Wilson, hence his nickname), as a conductor of the band *Jazzul Radio* [Radio Jazz] from 1934 to 1940, then of the Electrecord label band from 1951 to 1960. Theodor Cosma was an authentic jazzman both through his piano playing, marked by a powerful swing (his duets with pianists Bibi Alexandrescu and Jancy Körössy have become historic), and through his entertainer-type stage presence, through which he dynamized the improvised solos or the accompaniment of the band members. As an argument in favour of the musical value and success of the combo conducted by Theodor Cosma, I have to mention that the Electrecord band was awarded a prize at the Youth Festival in Moscow in 1956.

Since after the Second World War the broadcasts of the Romanian Radio Station continued to be live and the music was attributed many minutes daily, the increase of the number of jazz players is understandable. They did not only have a contract with the Radio, but also with restaurants in Bucharest, and the styles cultivated in that time were the classical ones, to which were added the rhythms and the sounds of Latin America. In the course of conversations I had in 2006 and 2007, the great pianist Jancy Körössy told me the following:

I learned the American tunes by listening to Radio BBC, Radio München, Radio Tanger or from the printed collections brought by foreigners. In the years 1945-1946 there were many American soldiers here. If you looked at Bucharest from an airplane you could see only khaki uniforms, it was full of Americans here. . . . I found in Bucharest² very good piano players: Gicu Kofler had graduated the Conservatoire, he was also performing classical music, . . . Steve Bernard was playing American standard ballads and Spanish hits. He was also performing vocally. At that time there were many elegant bars in Bucharest. Sile Dinicu was playing a lot of dance music, which was very near in style to jazz (his band

² In 1946, the year when Jancy Körössy settled in Bucharest.

featured a violin, a guitar, a piano, drums, a bass). There was also Gaston Ursu, a pianist who performed lyrical melodies above all. Romania had talented pianists, violinists, bassists, but less drummers. (Vasiliu 2014: 25-26)

The installation of the communist regime, the cold relations between the former Soviet Union and the United States of America had the cultural effect of censoring the artistic production originating across the ocean. In radio programmes, the jumpy swing of the jazz tunes was equalled and often surpassed by the patriotic marches composed in Moscow or Bucharest, the word “jazz” disappeared from the written and electronic media, the discs, books published in the Western countries, in North America did not enter the country along official lines anymore. Still, what was being played in the great restaurants of Bucharest? What was being broadcast on the radio beside the patriotic songs and the “new type” of folklore with adapted texts and arrangements or orchestrations which did not serve the traditional original melodies, but burdened them and made them uselessly symphonic? Jazz, of course. The players, the bands were the same, the internationally fashionable music proved to be continually influenced by classical jazz or by the first forms of modern jazz, the broadcast times also needed to be filled by programmes drawing the public.

The solution came from Moscow in this case, as well. At the Radio and in the whole press, the repertory of the instrumental ensembles put together on the model of American big bands was called “stage music”, while that of the small bands – “easy-listening music” or “instrumental music”. In restaurants, in the radio programmes, later in television ones, it was preferable to avoid songs with lyrics because they did not fit the new political-moral canons, while the lyrics about the eternal joy and the permanent enthusiasm of the “new person” did not resonate with the melodic and rhythmic lines characteristic of jazz. When, however, some authors tried this “marriage”, the effect was used for a while with a propagandistic aim, but time did not validate it. Examples can be quoted from the repertory of the greatly successful vocal band of the period 1951-1961, Trio Grigoriu: *Cântecul satelitului* [The satellite song], *Din mâine noi facem azi* [From tomorrow we make today]. Another tune, which was heavily broadcast in the years 1961-1965, *Macarale* [Cranes] (authored by Costel Zaharia), despite having an instrumental arrangement close to the one used by the jazz big bands of the swing era, did not conquer time because of the lyrics.

Some musical events taking place in the Proletkult era assemble a contradictory image regarding the presence of jazz on Romanian stages.

Although considered to be an element of the American capitalist reactionary art fought against, as we shall see immediately, in the press of all types, jazz was the main style in a recital held in the year 1956 (!) at the Dalles Hall in Bucharest by pianist Jancy Körössy's band. Assembled at that moment of four immensely talented instrumentalists (Jancy Körössy – piano, Alexandru Imre – alto saxophone, Béla Kalauz – bass, Puiu Osadci – drums), this combo curiously received the approval of holding the recital, although the musical genre it cultivated, jazz, was not liked at that moment by the authorities. The only logical reason out of which that recital took place is the total appreciation that Körössy had been enjoying for a number of years, as he was listened to very often in live radio broadcasts. Having an harmonic-melodic imagination expressed through melodies of captivating beauty, possessing an outstanding rhythmic sense, mastering a brilliant piano technique, Jancy Körössy was liked by everyone, having the rare talent of improvising on any musical idea. This last-mentioned quality gave him the possibility of playing spontaneously and writing instrumental arrangements around some Romanian folkloric tunes, especially from the urban repertory. He was the first jazz musician in Romania who took inspiration from the tradition of the place.

Returning to the recital from the Dalles Hall, Körössy's strategy of programming only Romanian tunes, out of which four of his own compositions and only one American tune, agreed with the authorities, who rendered the jazz evening the unwanted character of uniqueness. The audience did not have the chance of participating in such musical manifestations too often. The four compositions by Körössy included in the recital (*Meditație* [Meditation], *Degrabă* [Soon], *În zori* [At Dawn] and *Hora* [The Round Dance]) stood the test of time, being part of the concert playlists, radio and disc recordings that the author made across the decades. Fortunately, the audio recording realised in 1956 by Mihai Berindei (jazz trumpeter, commentator, sound engineer, author of an important disc series published at Electrecord) has survived. Nowadays it can be listened to on the CD accompanying the first volume in the series *Jazz in Romania – Romanian jazz, I – Jancy Körössy* that I was fortunate to publish in 2014 at the Artes Publishing House.

At the same time, the official propaganda looked obstinately for any occasion of criticising jazz musicians and the audience willing to listen to them in more or less harsh terms. As was natural in the period 1948-1963, the Soviet model was the first one to be adopted. Here is an example: in Issue no. 9/968 from February 26, 1960, *Contemporanul* – an important political, social and cultural publication of the time – reproduced a long article signed by Dmitry Kabalevsky from the Soviet magazine *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, pub-

lished on February 14 of that year. The author was dedicating a whole chapter to the critique brought to jazz as a musical genre. In that same year of 1960, *Contemporanul* published in the Issue 37/726 of September 9 the article signed by Ionel Hristea, entitled *Jaz sau Beethoven?* [Jaz or Beethoven?]. Leaving aside the not unimportant detail that in the era studied here the term “jazz” was permanently written with a single “z” in the Romanian press, what stays significant is the downgrading of jazz on principle, as apparent in the title formulation, and the association of this type of music with antisocial acts. Ionel Hristea was writing: “. . . undoubtedly, jazz (which deserved being discussed in detail and we shall maybe do that) has brought, beside certain artistic conquests, the danger of *musical hooliganism* (italics added), which we must fight energetically.” If I add the fact that in the column dedicated to musical news from abroad, the editor of *Contemporanul* did not miss, in the same years, the opportunity of mentioning that at the American Jazz Festival in New Port (Rhode Island), 150 youths were arrested for violence, without detailing in which context those acts had been performed, we have only three examples (out of many that can be extracted from other press issues) regarding the disliking of jazz by the communist regime. In the Issue 17 from the first day of May 1959, *Contemporanul*, the weekly magazine which, together with the newspapers *Scântea* [Spark], *România liberă* [Free Romania], or *Scântea tineretului* [Youth Spark] announced the public tone of the Romanian political course, published on an entire page the unsigned article “O epavă deplorabilă a trecutului este supusă judecării opiniei publice” [A Pitiful Wreck of the Past under the Judgement of Public Opinion]. This is not the right place and the necessary time to reproduce, even selectively, the depositions of well-known men of culture, musicians included, of course, who spoke against Mihail Andricu. Their accusations and tone were so unfair, so violent, that it would be difficult to unearth them. This episode seems a copy of the Meeting of February 10, 1948 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union themed “Against Formalist Tendencies in Soviet Music”, a meeting which, as we know, condemned composers Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, Aram Khachaturian, and others. The Romanian version of the Soviet resolution appeared four years later, but its lines of force were effective even in 1959. Entitled “The Resolution of the Extended Plenary Session of the Committee of the Union of Composers from February 4-5, 1952, about the Development of Music in the P.R.R.”, the text established as priorities programmatism, accessibility, the fight against cosmopolitanism, against the formalism represented by atonality, against impressionism considered “one of the most dangerous cur-

rents". Naturally, in the spirit of these conceptions, jazz did not escape the ideological "curse", because the authors of the resolution stated: "In cantatas and songs there are still great misfortunes; one can come across patterned, vulgar melodies and remains of American jazz, an expression of the 'way of life' of the decadent bourgeoisie."

But if, in 1959, a personality such as Mihail Andricu was treated so violently, of course, by order of the political authorities, students considered to be disrespectful to the ideological line of the communist party were all the more harshly punished. Their professional value did not count, nor did official prizes, nor the promising outlook that they had. There were several cases of Conservatoire students who were expelled in those years, but the second most notorious example of political repression, which also took place in May 1959, was student Richard Oschanitzky's. Accepted in 1955 first at the admission examination of the composition class of the Bucharest Conservatoire with the *Mass in D minor*, Oschanitzky would enjoy the appreciation of his teacher Mihail Jora, the 18 works composed as an undergraduate especially in the field of chamber music (variations for piano, sonatas for various instruments, lieder, vocal-symphonic opera) being commended by the professor. Mihail Jora definitely had a significant word to say when Richard Oschanitzky was awarded two important distinctions: the First Prize of the vocal-symphonic works competition organised in 1957 on the anniversary of a decade from the proclamation of the republic – to the Cantata for Choir and Orchestra *Pentru tine, Republică* [For You, Republic] – and the only Enescu Scholarship from 1959 in recognition of the value of the cycle *Cântarea iubirii* [The Song of Love] for Baritone/Mezzo and Chamber Orchestra. At the competition performance of the seven songs cycle, the soloist was baritone Octav Enigărescu. The professional recording can be found in the archive of the Oschanitzky family. In a piece of news appearing in Issue no. 19/605 of August 16, 1958 of the same magazine *Contemporanul*, the publication, among others, of the Mihail Jora's ballet music score *La piață* [At the Market] at *Editura Muzicală* [Music Publishing House] was announced. The *Burlesque for Bassoon and Piano* by Richard Oschanitzky was the only work pertaining to a student of the composition class proposed for the same editorial series.

Richard Oschanitzky had become a star among the students of the Bucharest Conservatoire, a star in the best sense of the word. He was admired by his colleagues as an amazing score reader, for the profound knowledge of several Bach works (which he would reproduce at the piano), of works by Bruckner, Bartók and Shostakovich, for the talent of improvising in the style of any important composer, for the ease and expressiveness of his piano

playing. Personalities of Romanian composition and musicology like Nicolae Coman, Vasile Spătăreanu or Gheorghe Firca have related to me in detail about Richard Oschanitzky's outstanding musical capacities, testimonies which were included partly in the television documentary, and in full in the volume *Creația lui Richard Oschanitzky – Trăsături stilistice* [The works of Richard Oschanitzky – Stylistic features], which I have authored, the volume being published in 2012 at *Editura Muzicală*.

The parallels in the destiny of the two musicians of different ages – Mihail Andricu and Richard Oschanitzky – are amazing. Both enjoyed professional recognition, both were passionate about jazz, both had relations with foreign embassies, both were expelled from the official musical circuit in the same month of May 1959. Certainly Oschanitzky's entry, unauthorised by the Romanian authorities, in the building of the Egyptian Embassy in Bucharest and the presentation of a musical programme on this occasion was one of the reasons causing the violent official reaction. It is well known that the communist regime always forbade Romanian citizens to enter relations with foreign citizens and, especially, with embassies. However, during the public session at the Institute for Oil and Gas, probably in order to avoid an unpleasant diplomatic situation, the accusers were silent about that moment, reproaching Oschanitzky for not having declared in his autobiography submitted to the Conservatoire his father's (conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra in Timișoara during the Second World War) purported collaboration with the pro-Nazi authorities. The accusation was proved as unfounded by the conductor Peter Oschanitzky, the brother of the musician studied here, while his arguments were included in the aforementioned 2012 volume (VasilIU 2012: 45). Richard Oschanitzky was publicly accused of his preoccupations in the field of jazz music and was attributed the statement that he cannot succeed better than in the genres of American music.³ Without a doubt, unrealistic statements⁴ intended to bring exemplary punishment to the "guilty party". Which also happened, since Oschanitzky was expelled from the Conservatoire. There appears here the first difference between Mihail Andricu and Richard

³ Information from the memo addressed by Richard Oschanitzky to the general secretary of the R.P.P., Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. The copy of the document is kept in the Oschanitzky family archive, but the original sent to the upper party and state leadership has not been found.

⁴ Greatly proven wrong through all the arrangements, own compositions, large-scale works composed by Richard Oschanitzky, presented at the Television, recorded at the Radio in Romania and Germany, on Electrecord vinyls during the author's life, re-edited on CDs in the two volumes *Romanian Jazz Masters – Richard Oschanitzky* (7 dreams records – 2005, 2014).

Oschanitzky: Andricu accepted to admit to facts by having a self-critical article published in the press, while Richard Oschanitzky never did a *mea culpa*, later refusing Ion Dumitrescu's (president of the Union of Composers) suggestion of repeating the fourth and fifth years as a student of the Conservatoire composition class. Although a great number of works in the various genres composed by Richard Oschanitzky from the moment of expulsion until before his death in 1979 is found in the Oschanitzky family archive, in order to earn a living he wrote hundreds of arrangements and orchestrations destined for Electrecord, the Radio, the Television, cinema studios, theatres in Bucharest and the country, he collaborated with televisions from the two Germanies, but spent a large part of his time playing jazz in the most select restaurants of Bucharest, recording a long series of own works at the Radio, Television and on vinyls, which reflected Romanian musical preoccupations or represented original contributions in the styles ethno-jazz, bossa nova, jazz-style reworkings of academic music scores (Bach, Gluck, Vivaldi, etc.), free jazz and chamber/symphonic jazz. Since Oschanitzky did not have a Conservatoire graduate diploma, the works in the academic genres were not recorded, published, performed publicly during his lifetime, only after 1989 a part of them being included in the concerts of the philharmonics in Iași and Timișoara, in the concerts of the Radio Symphony Orchestra and in the International Festival bearing his name, organised by TVR Iași, the German and French Cultural Centres for a decade (1999-2009).

A last case in point within this research was Eugen Ciceu. Attending the courses of the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatoire at professor Ana Pitiș' class, Ciceu developed his academic piano musical culture, by mastering a vast territory: sonatas and concertos by Domenico Scarlatti, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff. Like Richard Oschanitzky, classically-trained Ciceu proved an early passion for jazz by learning quickly, under the dire information conditions for this musical genre in the *obsessing decade*, everything of importance in the whole history of jazz in matters of piano playing.

Still like Oschanitzky, Eugen Ciceu was expelled from the Conservatoire in the year 1959. Musicologist Octavian Lazăr Cosma lists, among the expelled students, Eugen Ciceu under the category "serious disciplinary faults", which could also mean a reason of political nature (Cosma 2010: 261). I opine that Ciceu was reproached for having a priest for a father and preoccupations for jazz.

Years later, his eminent piano teacher Ana Pitiș expressed words of admiration for her former student, praising his exceptional achievements in the field of jazz.

Everything we worked on came to bloom and what surfaced then was a classical music pianist but he advised that somewhere, high up, classical music and the jazz of the quality he reached meet. One cannot speak of a pianist and a musical genius who cannot also play jazz at the level reached by Eugen. As a classical pianist he graduated the Music School with Grieg's Concerto. He also played *St. Francis Walking on the Waves* by Liszt (named then *The Second Legend* to avoid a mystic ring). One could see it in him then that he would be a good jazz musician. But his evolution, the immeasurable gifts he had brought him to that height where all arts meet. The artistic jazz that Eugen cultivates is due, of course, to guidance and the school, but one cannot say that in the beginning he showed predilection for classical music or jazz. Under guidance, he could have had exceptional results in painting, as well. That explains the level he reached. . . . By improvising in the manner of jazz on themes by Mozart or Liszt, Eugen did not betray them. I am so convinced that, if jazz had existed at that time, Mozart and Liszt would have been jazz players at the level of the music they composed!⁵

After a few years in which he played at restaurants in Bucharest, made a few recordings at the Romanian Radio Station and at the label Balkanton in Bulgaria,⁶ Eugen Ciceu settled in 1962 in the Federal Republic of Germany, asserting himself among the best jazz pianists, appreciated by all the great American jazzmen touring Europe. At the end of the last concert held in Romania in the summer of 1994, he told me about the years spent in Romania as a jazz pianist, the reasons which motivated him to leave, he defined the musical style which asserted him in Europe and Japan.

I left out of, let's say, political reasons. Not because I was doing politics, but because my father was a priest and in that regime

⁵ Excerpt from a conversation between the author and the teacher Ana Pitiș – Bucharest, August 23, 1994, broadcast in the *Video Jazz Show*, TVR Iași, September 1994.

⁶ Like Jancy Körössy, unfortunately for Romania, Eugen Ciceu (Cicero) first made vinyl recordings abroad. Of the 50 official albums published during his lifetime until 2006, the only edition published in Romania was the audio tape *Cicero Jazz – Electrecord*, 1993. Unfortunately, the neutral title and the absence of an informational leaflet deprive first-time listeners of information representative of the genre and the quality of his music.

children of priests did not have that many chances. I only realised this much later, during my studies I was only interested in music. And jazz music wasn't allowed much because all sorts of "dialectical" combinations were being made, it was purported to be decadent, American. Idiots who did not understand anything meddled in artistic issues! And we, children, were curious: why Stravinsky, a sensational composer, was forbidden as a Russian émigré? I remember that this shocked me. And I tried to learn, to listen to all the music that was forbidden on the radio, together with Vladimir Cosma. I was listening to the radio at night, transcribing on scores and that's how it started. In Germany, after playing for a while with very big American musicians, I began to play reworkings on my own. In the beginning, classical purists did not accept me, nor do I think they accept me today in any one of the camps of classical and jazz. But in the West the public is the umpire, it decides the artist's place: if the public buys records and attends concerts, the artists' problems are over. . . . Everything I worked on with Mrs. Pitiş I recorded on the first disc,⁷ and if the musicians you play with like you, they carry you onward. . . . I did not invent anything new, I probably made a link between music that I could not live without and music I was passionate about. In my youth there was a very sensitive pianist, Bill Evans, who re-harmonised all the classical American songs by Gershwin or Cole Porter. Today his arrangements are played, the harmonies that he introduced in these songs. Sergei Rachmaninoff discovered American pianist Art Tatum in a bar in New York. He had phenomenal technique, superb harmonies, but he was not known. He was playing in that bar. Because of Rachmaninoff there are records today and Art Tatum is considered to be the most brilliant jazz pianist of all times, because of a classical pianist and composer of genius!⁸

Eugen Ciceu was much appreciated and asked for at the television, at labels in Europe and Japan because he charmingly harmonised the elements of the pre-classical or romantic type of writing with the dynamic, jumpy melodies, with the surprising harmonies and the hot or discreet rhythm – all character-

⁷ *Rokoko-Jazz*, Saba, 1965.

⁸ A talk with Eugen Ciceu, in the summer of 1994, broadcast in the *Video Jazz Show*, TVR Iaşi, September 1994.

istic of jazz. His music was and has stayed alluring, sparkling, sweet, which is why over 50 albums have amounted in the discography bearing his name. The audience and the musicians he collaborated with liked him, which explains the negative side of his musical career, marked by many bootlegs. Ciceu was the only Romanian musician in the history of jazz who enjoyed such fame. His posthumous presence on the internet is explainable, as information and especially audio and video recordings demonstrate his exceptional imagination, spontaneity and piano virtuosity. The reworkings of academic creations in the language and spirit of jazz often surpass in value projects of the same type cultivated before him and until the present day by ensembles and pianists like Jacques Loussier and The Swingle Singers, among others.

Eugen Ciceu left Romania in 1962, when the dawn of political and cultural liberalisation slowly appeared. If the Issue no. 25/663 of *Contemporanul*, published on June 26, 1959, only included a photo of the Polish band Wichary that was touring in Bucharest, and in three years' time, in 1962, Jean-Victor Pandelescu managed to introduce a review entitled *The Fips Fleischer Jazz* (an East-German band) in no. 35/829 of August 31, on December 13, 1963 jazz was again approached in the pages of the magazine, true, still on the socialist connection, through a review of a record accomplished in Poland by a well-known American musician – saxophonist Stan Getz. The author of the review, whose initials were Ș. M., wrote a substantial, appreciative text, closing as follows: “. . . the sale of this record is a good initiative on the line of educating the musical taste of the audience not only by making easy-listening and dance music records, but also valuable jaz (*sic!*) music records available” (M., Ș. 1963).

The writing of the word “jazz” with a single “z” was still wrong, but the signal gave hope. I overlook the news of March 6, 1964 about George Sbârcea's book *Jazzul, o poveste cu negri* [Jazz, a story with black people], news that, although providing details on the contents of the volume, anticipated as the first on jazz in the history of Romania, would only see the volume published . . . ten years later (Sbârcea 1974)! The increasing importance of jazz is also documented through the information published in Issue no. 23/921 of June 5, 1964, which announced the conference themed *Jazz – easy-listening music?* held by George Bălan at the Bucharest University of Music. The name of the aesthetician and musicologist George Bălan is important because he wrote in the magazine *Contemporanul*, Issue no. 27/925 of July 3, 1964, *the first piece of advocacy in Romania about the value of jazz as a form of art*. The ample, well-documented text is a condensed history of jazz and the review of a concert in this genre that had taken place recently at the Students' House of Culture. I do not remember having heard or read a reference to the ample article, which drew

the attention of the public through the simple title, significant for the reticence surrounding this musical genre in Romania: “Jazz.....” (with exactly ten ellipsis dots). The final assault in the fight for asserting jazz happened in March 1965, when the band All Stars led by trumpeter Louis Armstrong held two concerts at Sala Palatului [the Grand Palace Hall] in Bucharest. Costin Mioreanu published in *Contemporanul* – Issue no. 14/964 of April 2, 1965 – a large-scale review, in which he knowingly and enthusiastically analysed the programme of the most well-known and loved jazzman in the world. The path of jazz towards the Romanian public was now opened, the radio had already begun to broadcast specialty shows, in that unforgettable year 1965 the *Jazz* series opened at Electrecord and in Issue no. 3 of the *Secolul XX* [20th Century] journal, exclusively dedicated to music, Mihail Andricu wrote a micro-synthesis of jazz, that preceded Cornel Chiriac’s contribution, the historic study *Jazzul, izvoare și semnificații* [Jazz, Origins and Significance].

English version by Emanuel Vasiliu

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