

Musicology Today

Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest

Issue 4 (40) October-December 2019

Title: The 19th-Century South-Eastern Europe Salons: Laboratories of the Musical “Europeanisation” (2)

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Source: Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest / Volume 10 / Issue 4 (40) / October-December 2019, pp 227-228

Link to this article: musicologytoday.ro/40/MT40editorialPopa.pdf

How to cite this article: Florinela Popa, “The 19th-Century South-Eastern Europe Salons: Laboratories of the Musical ‘Europeanisation’ (2)”, *Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest*, 10/4 (40) (2019), 227-228.

Published by: Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică București

Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest is indexed by EBSCO, RILM, and ERIH PLUS

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The 19th-Century South-Eastern Europe Salons: Laboratories of the Musical “Europeanisation” (2)

Taking back the topic of the previous issue of the journal *Musicology Today*, the present issue brings about new aspects that were discussed during the international conference held between 21st and 23rd of November 2019 at the New Europe College and the National University of Music in Bucharest as part of the scientific project *Elites and Their Musics: Music and Music-Making in the 19th Century South-Eastern Europe Salons*, coordinated by Nicolae Gheorghiuță.¹ The studies included in the present issue not only assign on the South-Eastern European map those certain landmarks concerning the salon music, their resources and stylistic influences but also reconstitute various hypostases regarding both the public and the private musical life of the 19th century, since the salon represented a space of intimacy whatsoever. At the same time, the present studies shed light upon the very beginnings of the musical art setting up in certain cultural centres.

Derek B. Scott outlines a parallel between the salon music in London and that in Bucharest. Observing the impact that the historical and social conditions had upon the act of music-making, the author surprisingly discovers numerous similitudes between the two areas considered so different geographically as well as culturally. In his study, mainly based on the analysis of some eloquent musical examples, Scott points out the importance of knowing the salon music, without which the understanding of the musical life – in this case, in London and in Bucharest – remains truncated.

In her turn, Avra Xepapadakou offers a perspective on the musical salons in Greece, regarded as part of the process of Westernising and Europeanising

¹ The conference was supported by the Doctoral School of the National University of Music Bucharest (*Fondul de Dezvoltare Instituțională*: CNFIS-FDI-2019-0171).

to which the Greek culture joined in 1830 concurrently with the foundation of the modern Greek state. The author highlights the part of the salon music played within the collective effort employed to mark the identity separation from the Ottoman past. Needless to mention that the process of familiarising the Greek public with the West-European harmony was highly due to the music of salons. More than that, Xepapadakou's study gives details concerning the protagonists and the participants to this kind of events as well as the repertoires performed in these salons and the importance of the journals for spreading the salon music across the country.

The same tendency for social and national separation from the Ottoman past was noticed by Marijana Kokanović Marković in the salons of the 19th century in the Serbian Principality. Her work studies the salons that the Princess Anka Obrenović organised in the West-European spirit in Belgrade during the 1860s and which represented an important landmark for the social and cultural life of the capital: women's salons, women's art salons and the so-called "mixed" art salons. Besides the socialising and entertaining aspects, Kokanović Marković also describes the musical profile – including the favourite musical instruments and repertoires – specific for Anka Obrenović's salons.

The study proposed by Haiganuş Preda-Schimek places the towns Bucharest and Iaşi on the map of musical salons. The author focuses her attention on two manuscripts, a Wallachian cahier and a Moldavian one, dated back between the years 1820s and 1840s. These manuscripts consist of short piano pieces for amateurs composed by professional musicians. Preda-Schimek's analysis of the manuscripts reveals the flexible taste of the Phanariot and Moldo-Wallachian elites in the first decades of the 19th century, closely related to the urban society specific features: ethnic pluralism, immigration and westernisation.

The itinerary through the South-Eastern European salons approached in this issue of *Musicology Today* closes with the town Iaşi. Dalia Rusu-Persic gives an insight into the incipient stages of the Romanian music development in the West-European style by historically cataloguing and describing unknown salon musical pieces found as manuscripts in the libraries of Iaşi and written by the Moldavian composers Gheorghe Burada and Eduard Caudella.

All these studies are leading towards the same conclusion meaning that the inquiry upon the salon music – which, in fact, has few chances to reveal musical works of certain aesthetic value – remains a key element in the attempt to rebuild and go thoroughly into the social history of the 19th century music.

English version by Carmen Dominte