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Salon Music in the First Decades of the 19th-Century Moldavia. Case Study: Musical MS No. 2663 (dated 1824) from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest*

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In the ballroom, the prince [vodă], wearing a white gown, a dagger with diamonds hanging at his waist, was sitting in the middle of the couch between the windows, leaning on the cushions, with his royal sable fur cap, with the white ribbon rather falling on his forehead, and with his hands clasped on his lap. On the side of the bed, on the right and on the left, were sitting, in a row, the prince's six sons, [surrounded by his relatives, various other guests, as well as by] several ladies from the high aristocracy. (Ghica 2002: 217)

This scene takes place on the first day of 1827 during the royal ball given at the luxurious Romanit Palace (today's Museum of Art Collections in Bucharest) by Grigore Dimitrie Ghika (1755-1834, ruled between 1822-1828), the first native ruler in the Principality of Wallachia after the Phanariot rule. The event gathered, in the halls boasting Venetian glass chandeliers, silk from Damascus and Aleppo, and tables brimming with candy and confectioneries, the town's local and foreign elites, permanently or temporarily living in Bucharest, as well as, besides the many servants and various helpers, three music bands playing from "a gallery improvised over the front door" of the Palace (Ghica 2002: 216-17).

* This paper has been previously published in Romanian and English in a slightly different form, as introductory study of the edited musical manuscript no. 2663 (see Gheorghîță 2019).

When the dance began, the young boyars would take off their gowns and footwear and, wearing thin leather slippers only, would rush to invite the younger and the older ladies to dance the polonaise, . . . the waltz and the ecossaise. Not everyone dared approach the prince's closer relatives; each had her favourite dancer! (Ghica 2002: 219)

Two of the bands provided Western music, while the third, a *taraf* (a folk music band) led by Dumitrache Lăutar, came in “towards the end of the ball, when the boyars were beginning to warm up and felt like some *horă* (a circle dance), some *brâu* (a waist handhold dance), or some *cântec de lume* (wordly songs)”, diversifying the musical program with such local pieces as *Ai, Ileano, la poiană* [Meet Me in the Clearing, Sweetheart] or *Ah! Nurițo, cale bună* [Fare Thee Well, Honey] and catering for every taste and demand (Ghica 2002: 217-20).

The two orchestras belong, it goes without saying, to well-to-do individuals who also took an interest in educating the nation. Dinicu Golescu (1777-1830), for example, a “boyar [and a] lover of progress”, as described by Ion Ghica (1816-1897), the memorialist reporting the story of this ball, had founded on his domain not only schools teaching in Romanian, both for girls and for boys, but also one of those orchestras, composed of 12 “little gipsies” (*țigănași*). For their musical education, the aristocrat had a Transylvanian teacher brought in from Sibiu, to instruct two violinists, two flutists, two clarinetists, an oboist, a piper (*fluieraș*), two brass (*trâmbițași*, probably flugelhorn) players, a percussionist and a *țimbalist* (probably playing the cimbalom?) (Ghica 2002: 217-18). He taught them some European works (*europenești*) – the waltz *O, du lieber Augustin*, the folk song *Was macht der Herr Papa*, the Austrian anthem (Haydn's *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*, our note), a *căzăcească* (a Cossack folk dance tune) and several *csárdás* (Ghica 2002: 217-18). The second orchestra was patronized by *clucer*¹ Alecu Nicolescu from Râmnic, and was composed of six gypsies, slaves on his domains, able to play, on 15 instruments,² the aria *Stella confidente* from act I of Gioachino Rossini's *Tancredi*, the antique aria *Son*

¹ Person in charge with providing the necessary supplies for Prince Court.

² “Three guitarists, who, while operating with their fingers the strings of the instruments hanging around the neck, by moving their head to the right and to the left, were blowing in a pan flute stuck in their cravat at the level of their lips. A mandolinist, who, him too, apart from his sweet instrument, was blowing, by means of a similar disposition, in a pan flute. A wind player, on a three-legged support, who like the others was also playing the pan flute” (Ghica 2002: 218).

*tre giorni che Nina*³ and *Marșul lui Napoleon* [Napoleon's March] (Ghica 2002: 218-19). Like Dinicu's orchestra, Nicolescu's had an instructor, Cocoratu by his name, a highly appreciated *Maître de grâce*⁴ who had lost some of his popularity with the arrival in Bucharest of professor Duport, son of the celebrated dancer, ballet master and composer Louis-Antoine Duport (1781/83-1853) from the "Great Opera in Paris" (Ghica 2002: 218).

I insisted on giving this detailed account for two reasons. First of all, I wanted to highlight the irreversible transition and the complex process of becoming European and modern which characterised Romanian society from Wallachia and Moldavia in the first decades of the 19th century, a phenomenon noticeable towards the end of the previous century and which would intensify after the termination of the Phanariot rule in the Romanian Principalities (1821). Second, because I wanted to exemplify, even if fragmentarily, the mixture of musical practices, the coexistence of traditional dances and Levantine songs with repertoires imported from Central and Western Europe, a mixture manifest in the musical anthology which this paper investigates.

Narrative sources of the time aside, not too numerous, quite imprecise and sometimes even confusing at that, the musical document preserving piano repertoires in Romanian salons in the first half of the 19th century is very uncommon. Such a find is the codex no. 2663 in the Music Cabinet of the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest. The note in French on the inside front cover of the manuscript says that it was donated by *mademoiselle* Euphrosina Ghyka to Mrs. Elisabetta Franchini, as a gesture of friendship, on August 1st, 1824, when two ladies were in Odessa, a cosmopolite area and an important cultural and commercial centre which had become, upon its annexation in 1792, part of the Russian Empire, with its annexation following the Treaty of Iași in 1792.⁵ At the end of the note there are two indecipherable initials (see Fig. 1).

Believed to be Moldavian,⁶ the codex most likely came to Odessa when a significant segment of the Danubian Principalities elite, from Moldavia espe-

³ The original title is *Tre giorni son che Nina in letto senesta*. Often called *Nina* or the *Siciliana*, the aria was originally attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736); it was later attributed to Vincenzo Legrenzo Ciampi (1719-1762) (Osborne 1974: 205).

⁴ Person who teaches young ladies and men etiquette.

⁵ On the musical life of 19th-century Odessa, see Kaplun 2018: 127-132.

⁶ Octavian Lazăr Cosma calls the manuscript cahier *Codex Moldavus* (Cosma 1972: 12-15). See also the extensive analysis and socio-cultural and historical contextualization that Haiganuş Preda-Schimek presents in study "The Changing Taste of the Romanian Elites as Mirrored in Handwritten Piano Cahiers from the First Half of the Nineteenth-Century" (Preda-Schimek 2019: 277-307). For the Romanian version of the study see Preda-Schimek 2020: 17-56.

cially, had emigrated there, following the breakdown of the *Philiki Hetairia* [Φιλική Εταιρεία] and the Ottoman's subsequent reaction to the Revolution of 1821. The context in which *mademoiselle* Euphrosina Ghyka, most probably member of the Ghiculescu aristocratic dynasty, the Moldavian branch,⁷ acquired this anthology is unknown. The identity of the person who compiled, copied or did the piano arrangements is just as obscure. Neither do we know if Euphrosina could play this instrument (we might suppose she did), nor how the young Moldavian *mademoiselle* came to make such a present to the lady with an Italian name. According to the research of Dan Dumitru Iacob,⁸ Elisabeta Maria Franchini (1790-1870), née Kiriko or Chirico in Istanbul/Constantinople in 1790, is the wife of Antoine Ferdinand Franchini (1771-1833), dragoman of the embassies of Venice, France and Russia in the former capital of the Byzantine Empire (Filitti et al. 2004: 327, footnote 83).

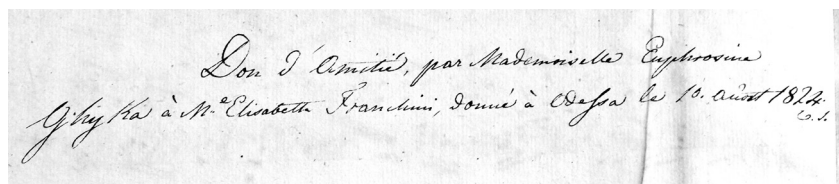


Fig. 1. “Don d’amitié par Mademoiselle Euphrosine Ghyka à Me Elisabetta Franchini, donné à Odessa le 1-e août (sic) 1824.” The note on the inside front cover of Rom. MS no. 2663 (dated 1824), Music Cabinet of the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest.

Until 1824, when Miss Ghyka offers Mrs. Franchini this musical codex, instrumental arrangements, for piano in particular, of Romanian or Romanian-inspired works are very rare, appearing only accidentally or simply as an exotic element, exclusively in foreign publications and recorded by foreigners. The only works discovered to date are the *Capriccio on Moldavian and Wallachian themes* for cello and piano by Bernhard Romberg (1767-1841), published in 1827⁹ (the German musician travelled and performed in Iași and Bucharest, in 1806-1807 and 1812, respectively; see Breazul 1956: 125 and 1959: 26-33), and the several piano arrangements of local melodies published in the German musical magazine *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1814,

⁷ See details here: http://www.ghika.net/_ro/index_ro.htm, accessed on July 21st, 2019.

⁸ Many thanks to Dr. Dan Dumitru Iacob who helped me identify the names and genealogy of some of the key characters studied in this paper.

⁹ Bernhard Romberg, *Caprice pour le violoncelle sur des Airs Moldaves et Valaques avec accompagnement de deux violons, alto et basse*. Oeuv. 45, Peters, Leipzig, 1827.

1821 and 1822 (Ciobanu 1978: 42-43, 56-61). To these is added the miscellaneous manuscript likely compiled in Bucharest in 1819, which opens with a fragment of a Greek grammar by Stephanos Kommitas, continues with a piano method in German by Wenzel Ruziczka probably (*Aufvergsgründe der praktischen Tonkunst besonders auch zum Clavier oder Fortepiano*) and closes with 17 dances and European salon melodies and three piano arrangements of Romanian folk melodies.¹⁰

In this context, the documentary value of manuscript no. 2663 in the Romanian Academy Library is more than significant. The anthology's scale (152 pages) and the large number of pieces it contains (183!) are another argument in favour of its exceptionality.

With regard to the repertoire, the codex displays a certain diversity, being copied by more than one hand and disposed without any apparent logic. The Western, extremely heterogeneous pieces, predominate, which indicates a massive import of "musical" Europeanness, in a way surprising for the Romanian Principalities of the time, although some narrative sources of the time record this type of repertoire:¹¹ 37 ecossaises,¹² 27 waltzes, 16 marches, 13 mazurkas (the last one, incomplete), nine quadrilles, four lancers, four Russian pieces, four polonaises, two *danses anglaises*, one with the title *Appellé la Synagogue (sic)*, one minuet, one krakowiak, as well as other piano miniatures of an indefinite genre.

Another category is represented by vocal works with piano accompaniment: seven in French, four in German and one in Italian. In total, 161 compositions of Western inspiration and origin. To these are added 22 piano arrangements – of exclusively Moldavian folk pieces, judging by their titles.

One of the major problems in examining this manuscript concerns the works' paternity, as in most of the cases neither the authors nor the copyists could be identified. The brief notes will hardly offer an insight into the collection's contents and role. For instance, the last three ecossaises are composed by *Mr Tserkaffe* (?), one waltz is called *Augustin (Waltz Augustin)*, two works are by Mozart (a rondo and a *Schlitassch*), an anonymous work proves to be the song *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*, whose melody is apparently of

¹⁰ Manuscript no. 492. The document is kept today in the "George Breazul" Fund of the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists. For details see Ciobanu 1978: 43-44, 61-62. For a description of the manuscript, see Breazul 1970: 156-176.

¹¹ See, for example, Raicevich 1822: 122, footnote 1 (*Note de Traducteur*); Wilkinson 1820: 135-6.

¹² The songs seem to be copied by different hands.

French origin.¹³ The data on the 16 marches is even more scarce: one is the “triumphal” march from Gaspare Spontini’s opera *La Vestale*, and the other is inspired by the aria *Le Déserteur, Mourir n’est rien* by Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny (1729-1817).

The presence of the well-known Viennese folk song *O, du lieber Augustin*,¹⁴ accompanied by four variations, indicates it was widely circulated in Wallachia and Moldavia – something mentioned, as seen, by memorialist Ion Ghica on the occasion of the 1827 Bucharest princely ball (Ghica 2002: 218). Another unfamiliar name is Jean Zapf (?), composer of seven variations (the last one, a rondo) in a pre-Mozartian style, by far the most technically demanding of the entire codex. The three-movement sonata (*Allegro non troppo, Andante, Rondo à la turca*) whose author remains unidentified is in the same style.

Other works in the anthology are tied to the Russo-Turkish War and the military tsarist occupation of the Romanian Principalities between 1806-1812, which had brought to Iași and Bucharest Russian officers and noblemen, most of them of Scandinavian and German extraction. With an excellent command of French, they had a dominant contribution to the socio-political and cultural life of the capitals north of the Danube, and in particular to the dissemination of the fashion of Western balls and ballroom dances in the Romanian Principalities.¹⁵ This category contains several marches. The first, *Marsch Alexandre*, bears the name of Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1777-1825), and the second one, *Marsche du Prinz Deligne*, that of Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne (1735-1814), “officer in the service of the Tsarina (Catherine II of Russia, most commonly known as Catherine the Great, 1729-1796, our note) and famous salon dandy”, as historian Nicolae Iorga called him (Iorga 1928: 255). To these are added four textless works: *Kosaque, Chanson Russe, Arie Russe* and *La Russe*. The copyist of the latter, although he signed his initials, could not be identified – unlike the piece itself, about which we know that it is the folk song *Plecând cazacul peste Dunăre* [*Іхав козак за Дунай* / The Cossack Rode beyond the Danube], written down in Russian collections around 1790 (Breazul 1960: 32), in fact one of the most famous folk creations of Ukrainian origin (Tyrrell 2001; see also Brown 1987).

Of the 12 pieces with lyrics in French, German and Italian – probably arias and salon songs originally –, I managed to identify some of the French language

¹³ *Malbrouck s’en va-t-en guerre* [Malbrouck goes off to the war] (Kennedy 1996/2003: 1709).

¹⁴ The song appears written *Mein liebend Augustin*.

¹⁵ For a recent and integrative research on this phenomenon, see Ionescu 2020. See also “classic” research in the field signed by Dan Dumitru Iacob 2006: 263-324; 2012: 89-135; 2015: 163-268 (especially chapter 3).

compositions: *Portrait charmant, portrait de mon amie*, piece attributed to the Queen Marie-Antoinette of France (1755-1793), and likely dedicated to her friend, Princess of Lamballe; *Bouton de Rose*, probably composed by Étienne Méhul (1763-1817), on lyrics by Constance de Salm (1767-1845), a countess with literary preoccupations; *Dans un délire extrême on vole fuir ce qu'on aime...*, a novel from the three-act comic opera *Les coureurs d'aventure*, composed by Nicolas Issouard (also under the pseudonym Nicolo, 1775-1818) on the libretto by Charles-Guillaume Étienne, whose Parisian premiere took place in 1814.¹⁶

In a category of their own, dispersed throughout the manuscript without any particular logic, are the 22 presumably Moldavian songs and dances. Heavily misspelled, in French, German and Greek (but in Latin letters),¹⁷ they seem to compose two groups: one obviously built on chromatic structures (borrowed from the Phanariot/Ottoman modal universe perhaps), and another in thoroughly diatonic tones. With a few exceptions, the diatonic works and their melodies seem to be naive sound constructions based on Western writing technique and reworking local folklore, and not original pieces written by ear as heard played by the fiddlers, which is probably the case with the first category. They are rather basic folklore reworkings than works proper. Five of the so-called Moldavian pieces mark the fingering,¹⁸ which indirectly points to the local elites' wish that their offspring, educated in boarding houses for the "noble demoiselles", master and reproduce local repertoires at various balls and musical evenings (soirées).

The accompaniment of the Romanian or presumably Romanian pieces is one of the subjects necessitating nuanced discussions. It is very simple, rudimentary, in the Alberti bass manner, throughout the piece on the tonic or on the *finalis* chord, then, rarely, on the 4th and 5th degrees and, even more rarely, using secondary triads. We may wonder if it's not simply a question of lack of knowledge, yet it's hard to believe that the person, or persons, who compiled the anthology didn't have a decent grasp of harmony, seeing that some of the works posed serious technical and harmonic problems as compared to the Romanian pieces. The few piano arrangements of Romanian folk pieces written down before and after 1824, even towards the middle of

¹⁶ Many thanks to Dr. Marie-Laure Massei-Chamayou (Université de Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Dr. Bruno Plantard (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris) for their suggestions and help in identifying the authors of the music and lyrics of the French compositions from this manuscript.

¹⁷ *Bogdanika*.

¹⁸ Of the entire collection, only seven pieces noted piano fingering; five of them are presumably Romanian.

the 19th century, reveal the same modest and static accompaniment,¹⁹ which seems to indicate a model of accompaniment relatively standardized and generalised in the popular local practice, and which the arrangers took pains to write down according to their musical literacy, intuition, and imagination and, of course, according to what the fiddler bands played. A similar situation is the collection of nine books with 41 “Romanian melodies” put together by Alecsandru Berdescu between 1860-1862, where he notes – in Romanian, French and German – that the works are written “for the first time in their whole originality and National character as the Romanian fiddlers perform them.” Moreover, book 1 indicates three accompaniment versions, from simple to complex, “after the pleasure one takes, or the ease one has, in performing” (see Fig. 2 and Ex. 1).



Fig. 2. “Melodii române scrise pentru prima oară în toată originalitatea și caracterul lor Național astfel cum le eczeceută Lăutarii Români, pentru pianoforte de Alecsandru Berdescu, dedicate Națiunei Române” [Romanian melodies written for the first time in their whole originality and National character as the Romanian Fiddlers perform them, for pianoforte by Alecsandru Berdescu, dedicated to the Romanian Nation], Bukurest, Adolf Ulrich.

¹⁹ See, for example, the collection *Muzici ale saloanelor din Principatele Române în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (I) [Salon Musics from the Romanian Principalities in the First Half of the 19th Century (1)], with bilingual introductory studies by Speranța Rădulescu (2019: VII-XXII) and Dan Buciu (2019: XXIII-XXVI).

Andantino.

The musical score is for a piece in 3/8 time, marked 'Andantino'. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked '1.' and 'Facile'. The second system is marked 'Difficile'. The third system is marked '1.' and '2.'. The melody features trills (tr) and triplets (3). The score is written for piano (p) and includes a 'DC' marking at the end.

Ex. 1. The three accompaniment versions to the song “Îți aduci aminte, dragă copilă, d’anoastră fericire, d’allă nostru amor?” [Do You Remember, Dear Child, Our Happiness, Our Love?], in Berdescu 1860-1862.

The foreigners – as they were doing the reworkings until around 1850, including the present collection – seem to be fascinated by the exoticism, the charm and the originality of the sound they work with – we call it local, but it’s dif-

difficult to say how much of it was Romanian. The results will not always satisfy the critics, especially those following Western aesthetic criteria. Such a case is the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* Leipzig critic who reviewing in 1848 Johann Andreas Wachmann's *Bouquet de melodies valaques originals* (second book), doubted the melodies were correctly written down. He is no more flattering when referring to their harmonization: "If the accompaniment is the author's property, we do not know; in this case, it's nothing to be proud of" (Breazu 1966: 131).²⁰

Another aspect that the arranger/arrangers of the Romanian pieces had to solve was the free rhythm which characterised the melodies of the time (Rădulescu 2019: IX/XVII and which he had to subject to the Procrustean rules of Western meter. Rare, the dedicated contemporary narrative sources could nevertheless throw a light on this issue. Prince Anatole Démidoff (1813-1870), accompanied by a group of researchers and by painter Denis Auguste Marie Raffet (1804-1860) on his way back from Europe to the Meridional Russia and Crimea, reported the harmonic freedom and uneven rhythms characteristic of the folk melodies played by the two gipsy bands at the dinner given in Bucharest by Prince Alexandru Ghika in the summer of 1837. The two orchestra take turns

in performing the national arias of the Wallachians and the unique, in their own way, melodies of the fiddlers. The gipsy orchestra composed of the discordant elements yet produces effects which one would in vain look for in the masses of orderly and correct harmony Western ears are used to; as for the time signature, it is asymmetric, bouncing, with a limping gait, progressing by unexpected beats... (Demidoff [1848]: 141)

Offered on the 1st of August 1824 by *Mademoiselle* Euphrosina Ghyka to Mrs. Elisabetta Franchini in a gesture of friendship, while the two ladies were in Odessa, manuscript no. 2663 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest took, most probably, several years to be copied, as evidenced by the large number of pages of the codex (152), as well as by the diversity and heterogeneity of the musics recorded by various persons, whose handwriting can be easily differentiated. As we mentioned in the introductory part of this study, we ignore whether the document was started in the

²⁰ "Ob die harmonische Begleitung Eigenthum des Verfassers ist, wissen wir nicht; in diesem Fall darf derselbe nicht stolz darauf sein."

Principalities or in Odessa, and where it was completed. Equally uncertain are the following aspects: what were the written or oral sources based on which the anthology was copied, to what extent these musics were already circulating in salons and in private homes in the Principalities (one can assume that they were, at least in part), or if they had been taken from similar milieux in Odessa?

Beyond the many questions which, for the moment, cannot find a satisfactory answer, codex no. 2663 is, indeed, an exceptional collection, for at least two reasons: a) it represents the oldest musical anthology in manuscript discovered, so far, in Romania, which preserves the largest collection of salon music sheets for piano (183 pieces), and b) it constitutes one of the most relevant and significant sonorous sources of the time, documenting the musical preferences of the new, budding elites in the Romanian Principalities, from the first decades of the 19th century.

English version by Maria Monica Bojin

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