

Nicolae Gheorghită

“WE ARE CHANTING TO STALIN TOO!” Musical Creation in the People’s Republic of Romania on the 70th Anniversary of the Genialissimo Generalissimo (1949)

Stalin turned 70 on December 21, 1949, an occasion on which all “democratic” peoples of the world were celebrating the embodiment of perfection, the “greatest Genius of all times and of all peoples”. A genuine “collective psychosis” turned the Generalissimo into the central subject of “Soviet arts”, music playing a major role in this strategy to promote his image as a “liberator” and “saviour” of nations.

Just like in other Communist States, in the Romania of the times, the scope of events dedicated to Stalin’s 70th anniversary was unprecedented: books, albums, films, conferences, exhibitions, festivals, proletarian competitions, festive gatherings, etc. marked in detail and overemphasised the life and activity of the “Great Man”.

This study investigates the musical events organised on this festive occasion in the People’s Republic of Romania, as well as the more than 100 Romanian choral, instrumental or vocal-instrumental creations dedicated to Stalin. In parallel, discussions will approach the dramatic transformations undergone by the Society of Romanian Composers in its 1949 metamorphosis under a new name, in the context of campaigns fighting against “formalist deviations” evinced by certain composers, and of the institution of Socialist Realism as a unique creation method that was to be adopted by all arts.

Gabriel Banciu

Musical Creation between Freedom and Ideological Control. Sigismund Toduță, Criticism of the Communist Regime, and His Secret Works

Under the Communist rule creative freedom was strongly restricted by the hypocrisy of the doctrines which only accepted music as a tool of propaganda. Composers had to hide that part of their work breaking the politically-accepted model and later referred to, ironically, as “desk drawer music”. Even the pieces which seemed to conform to the party line but hinted at the styles promoted by the West were considered “decadent” and were harshly criticized by the censorship apparatus. One of its organisms, endowed with political power, was the Union of Composers, the decision-maker with regard to art music publication and performance. An exploration of the political documents

Abstracts

of the time and the ideas noted by composer Sigismund Toduță, enriched by memoirs and testimonials of his contemporaries, will allow us to understand certain specific aspects of that era.

Costin Moisil

Byzantine Musicology and Romanian Communist Regime: A Revisitation

Somehow surprisingly, Byzantine musicology flourished during the communism in Romania. How was it possible to publish articles and books on a religious topic in an atheist totalitarian state with a vigilant censorship? Franz Metz (1995) and Nicolae Gheorghiuță (2015) have shown that religious music research was in fact encouraged by the regime in order to support its nationalist ideology. My paper is a revisitation of the subject, bringing new data into view.

Alex Vasiliu

Jazz and Politics in the Obsessing Decade and the Following Years

In the period 1945-1965, jazz was cultivated in Europe both in the classical and the modern forms. The rhythmic, expressive, melodic fundamentals of this musical genre also marked the so-called “easy-listening” genre through instrumental arrangements, a specific type of singing, improvisation. If in the Western part of the continent jazz evolved naturally by reproducing the stylistic stages invented in North America, the native country of jazz, this type of artistic creation was banned, obstructed, subjected to ideological conditions in an Eastern Europe ruled by communist regimes.

Jazz had a particular history in every country of the former communist bloc, one related to the cultural and political specificity of each area. Romania was an interesting case. There were resistance fighters, who entered in an open conflict with the authorities, musicians who heightened and modernized the art of jazz not only in Romania, but also on an international level. Recordings are the most important historical documents in this sense.

The present study sheds light on an era that has been scantily studied by revealing information and sonic evidence regarding the life and creation of Richard Oschanitzky and Eugen Ciceu.