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In Memoriam

Speranța Rădulescu (1949-2022).

Part One

In an article dedicated to the founder of Romanian ethnomusicology, Constantin Brăiloiu, Speranța Rădulescu wondered how he would find Romania today (Rădulescu 2011: 99-101). Her answers were rather bitter: the peasants had almost stopped singing, preferring instead to listen to and watch on TV “grotesque caricatures that today pass for ‘folk music’ or even ‘authentic folk music’”.¹ The audio recordings and the files once made by Brăiloiu and his team, painstakingly collected in the Folklore Archive, had become untouchable: “the funds of the Institute [of Folklore] are locked up with seven locks, lest they should fall into the hands of musicians and researchers”. Finally, Romanian composers had lost interest in what peasant musics *sounded like*, being content with their pale shadows, the staff transcriptions.

When she imagined Brăiloiu astonished by the fact that the members of the Union of Composers² appreciated “grotesque caricatures” and were indifferent to the country’s musical past, Speranța Rădulescu also expressed her own indignation and disappointment. Describing Brăiloiu as saddened and convinced that “*his work* in Romania had been in vain”, she confessed her anguish that *her work and that of her ethnomusicologist colleagues* was in vain. This anguish would accompany her throughout her life.

¹ Speranța Rădulescu refers here to state-controlled folkloric music, developed during the communist period (1945-1989) but extremely alive in contemporary Romania as well.

² The Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists is the successor of the Society of Romanian Composers, founded in 1920 by a few young composers and presided, of course, by George Enescu. Brăiloiu was among the founding members and was the driving force and the secretary of the society until his departure from the country in 1943.

But – as Speranța says and Mariana Hurjui-Său remarks in her review in this issue – “times pass, and people change, in different ways and rhythms” (Rădulescu 2022: 11-12). Institutions also change, as new people enter their ranks, with education, values and readings that are different from those of the people before them. Inevitably, the Union of Composers has also changed in recent times.

The current issue and the next one gather the articles presented in the section “In Memoriam Speranța Rădulescu” of the *International Musicological Symposium: Musical Creation and Exegesis*, held during the 31st edition of the International Week of New Music (2022), a festival organized by the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists. I thank Dan Dediu, the director of the festival, and Olgața Lupu, the founder and organizer of the symposium, for the idea of setting up this section, for the high regard they have shown to Speranța Rădulescu and for the trust they have placed in me to coordinate this section. I am also grateful to the National University of Music in Bucharest and the Alexandru Tzigara Samurcaș Foundation for their support in promoting and running the symposium.³

I thought that the “In Memoriam” section should not only be a scientific tribute, but also an opportunity for Speranța’s friends to say goodbye to her. I invited therefore Bernard Lortat-Jacob, Laurent Aubert and Margaret Hiebert Beissinger with whom she did field work for years, collaborated on scholarly volumes and anthologies of peasant music and had countless discussions about the musics from Romania and abroad; Victor A. Stoichiță and Filippo Bonini Baraldi, whom she advised during the writing of their doctoral theses and who today are mature ethnomusicologists; Zuzana Jurková and Ioan Haplea, with whom she often met at international conferences and in doctoral committees in Romania; Carmen A. Mateiescu – with whom she worked side by side at the Institute of Folklore in the 1980s and created the series of document-LPs *The Traditional Folk Music Band* – and Cécile Folschweiller, with whom she worked on her last book, *Regards sur la musique en Roumanie au XX^e siècle* (Rădulescu 2021, a revised edition of *Peisaje* published in Romanian in 2002). Their responses of acceptance came immediately and were very moving.

In these two issues of *Musicology Today*, I thought it appropriate to add to the eight articles presented in the symposium⁴ a review of the Romanian

³ The program of the festival and the full list of organizers and partners can be found on the website of the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists: <https://ucmr.org.ro/TexteV2/SIMN%202022.pdf>.

⁴ Ioan Haplea’s article is forthcoming in another magazine.

version of *Regards* (Rădulescu 2022) and the last interview with Speranța Rădulescu, previously published in Romanian. The first issue includes articles by Bernard Lortat-Jacob, Margaret Hiebert Beissinger, Zuzana Jurková, Laurent Aubert and a review by Mariana Hurjui-Său.

Bernard Lortat-Jacob and Margaret Beissinger discuss Speranța Rădulescu's relationships with the people in the field ("informants") and how these relationships, cultivated over a lifetime, are reflected in Speranța's scientific work. Bernard Lortat-Jacob evokes several encounters with musicians from Oaș and, drawing on Speranța Rădulescu's vocabulary, outlines her idea of beauty. Speranța's beauty concerns not only the musical piece, but also the person who performs it and "ne renvoie pas à une catégorie kantienne, mais à des entités multiples et solidaires où sont étroitement associés des comportements, des styles, un mode de partage, un type de connaissance et tant d'autres choses que seule l'attention ethnographique peut rendre sensibles". Margaret Beissinger investigates a series of publications by Speranța Rădulescu on *lăutari* – professional folk musicians, mostly Roma – in which the latter presents the fiddlers' accounts and opinions on the history of folk ensembles (*tarafuri*), the apprenticeship of the *lăutari*, their contracts and the definition of Gypsy music (*muzică țigănească*). Margaret Beissinger appreciates the fact that, in her articles and books, Speranța Rădulescu lets the *lăutari* speak and shows that her scholarly opinions are based on the own words of the *lăutari*.

Likewise, Laurent Aubert talks about the *lăutari* and the topic of Gypsy music – including the clichés that are spread about it. He starts, however, from his meeting in 1986 with Speranța Rădulescu and the *lăutari* from Clejani, who were later to become famous under the name Taraf de Haïdouks. Laurent Aubert follows the *lăutari* not only in the village world, but also in the new circumstances to which they have had to adapt: on the concert stage, in the Western cafés, etc., and performing, in addition to traditional musics, pan-Balkan brass band musics or *manele*.

Zuzana Jurková also looks at the connection between interpersonal relationships and the profession, and points out – following in Bruno Nettl's footsteps – that the process of becoming an ethnomusicologist depends on the presence in his or her life of a number of people who may or may not be connected with the field of ethnomusicology. Zuzana Jurková pays a touching tribute to Speranța Rădulescu and other colleagues and musicians whom she admires for their professional qualities and whose friendship she cherishes.

The issue ends with Mariana Hurjui-Său's review on the second edition of Speranța Rădulescu's *Peisaje*. Before making the usual presentation of the

volume's contents, Mariana Hurjui-Său gives a brief history of the three versions – two in Romanian and one in French – and outlines the controversies that accompanied the first edition, published 20 years ago. She points out that, despite the passage of time, Speranța Rădulescu's perspective „remains valid and necessary for the contemporary reader – both Romanian and European – who will find in the pages of the book . . . a key to understanding the interdependent relationship between musics and the various realities in the background”.

English version by Ioana Tarbu

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