

Musicology Today

Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest

Issue 4 (52) October-December 2022

Title: Romanian-German Dialogues on Romanian Piano Music (I)

Author: Florinela Popa

E-mail: popa.florinela@unmb.ro

Source: Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest / Volume 13 / Issue 4 (52) / October-December 2022, pp 287-288

Link to this article: musicologytoday.ro/52/MT52editorialPopa.pdf

How to cite this article: Florinela Popa, "Romanian-German Dialogues on Romanian Piano Music (I)", *Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest*, 13/4 (52) (2022), 287-288.

Published by: Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică București

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

Florinela POPA

Romanian-German Dialogues on Romanian Piano Music (I)

The idea of discussing Romanian piano music by analysing a series of works from a double musicological perspective – that of a German author and that of a Romanian one – was at the basis of the symposium held on September 23-25, 2022 at the Carl Maria von Weber Conservatory in Dresden, at the initiative of Professor Michael Heinemann. The event was a continuation of the series of symposia on Romanian music entitled *Zwischen Zeiten*, initiated in 2006 in Oldenburg by Professor Violeta Dinescu and coordinated by her annually for 15 editions.

The approach proposed in Dresden allowed a much needed mirroring of an “outside” view with an “inside” one, launching a dialogue on methodological aspects and on the reception of (Romanian piano) music in the context of the European and world orientations and directions of the time, but also targeting a series of clichés deeply rooted in Romanian musicology during the nationalist-communist period, perpetuated by inertia even after 1990, such as “national and universal”, “Romanian ethos” etc. A better understanding of the mechanisms and factors that imposed these concepts in the period becomes all the more necessary as they were also found in the theoretical “instrumentation” of certain composers analysed.

The discussions in Dresden have resulted in a series of materials that *Musicology Today* presents in two successive issues. The four studies included in this issue deal with two thematic pairs: an overview of Romanian piano music in the view of Adalbert Grote and Corneliu Dan Georgescu, and two analytical juxtapositions of Theodor Grigoriu’s piano cycle *Columna modală* [Modal Column] (1983-1985) by Ana Szilágyi and Valentina Sandu-Dediu.

Adalbert Grote aims to trace the main stylistic orientations in 20th and 21st century Romanian piano music, starting with Enescu’s versatility and con-

tinuing with the various compositional abstractions of folkloric sources, then marking the convergences – especially from the first half of the 20th century – with French neoclassicism, but also with the Bartókian model, reaching then the “radical” conceptions specific to the avant-garde of the 1960s-1980s, and, finally, the conceptual, stylistic and expressive plurality that characterizes the piano works after 1990.

Corneliu Dan Georgescu, in turn, conceives a broad systematization of Romanian piano music, imagining two axes. The first, the temporal one, marks the beginning of six periods through historically significant years (1820, 1920, 1945, 1965, 1970, 1990), periods that “usually merge with the next and continue to coexist with it, so that their end cannot be specified”. The second axis, typological, comprises four aesthetic orientations Georgescu calls *lyric-contemplative*, *structuralist-constructivist*, *archetypal-reflexive* and *ludic-parodic*. The works he has selected for exemplification offer some clues to the viability of this two-dimensional system.

The second thematic nucleus, Theodor Grigoriu’s *Modal Column*, also gave rise to approaches from different angles. As the probing of the Romanian ethos was for Grigoriu a manifesto of his oeuvre, explicitly assumed in the subtitle of this work, “investigations into the ethos of Romanian music”, and perpetuated in numerous subsequent compositions, Ana Szilágyi focuses on the musical and extra-musical aspects (from the visual arts, poetry, nature) of Grigoriu’s thinking from the perspective of understanding the ethos, while also treating this opus from the pianist’s point of view. In turn, Valentina Sandu-Dediu sets some analytical landmarks on the pieces that make up the piano cycle, conceived in pairs, following the prelude/fugue or free/rigorous constructed model of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*. As for the Romanian imaginary created by Grigoriu, which is basically deeply subjective, the author acknowledges the difficulty she has in distinguishing “the Romanian feelings, the Romanian thought, the ethos linked to the genetics of the Romanian people, to which Grigoriu often refers”, while questioning the role such a theoretical construction played in the extremely difficult political context of the time.

Finally, Iulia Mogoșan takes the pulse of the Dresden symposium, presenting the topics and the working atmosphere in a concise, interesting and essential way and providing an excellent link to the next issue of the journal.