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## On Censorship and Other Ways to Control Music (I)

Themes such as *The Musics of Power* or *National Discourses on Music in Central and Eastern Europe* have been at the forefront of international musicology conferences organized in Bucharest in recent years by Professor Nicolae Gheorghîță from the National University of Music in Bucharest. Such investigations reflect a sustained effort to search for answers, from previously forbidden perspectives, regarding the dynamics of Romanian music during the totalitarian periods of the 20th century, and also to compare it with more or less similar phenomena in the international sphere. The most recent event of this kind took place at the National University of Music Bucharest on October 27-28, 2022, and discussed *The Control of Music. Effects and Consequences of the Institution of Censorship on Music Culture and Education in Europe (late 19th century – 1990s)*.<sup>1</sup> The topics debated on this occasion are the subject of the next three issues of *Musicology Today*, the first group of studies revealing some “faces” of censorship in Irish and Romanian music.

Harry White presents the surprising case of self-censorship imposed by the Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford on his opera *Shamus O'Brien*, which he withdrew in the height of its fame for political reasons 14 years after its London premiere in 1896. The author offers a topical revisiting of the work from the perspective of the history of its reception, the cultural politics of Irish opera, the dramaturgy – which anticipated the engagement with ques-

<sup>1</sup> The conference was supported by the project *Control over Music. Effects and Consequences of Official Censorship on Musical Education and Culture in Romania during the Three Dictatorships of the 20th Century: The Carlist, Antonescian and Communist Dictatorships* developed by the Doctoral School of the National University of Music Bucharest and Centre for Nineteenth-Century Music Studies (Fondul de Dezvoltare Instituțională: CNFIS-FDI-2022-0385).

tions of Irishness and Englishness present in later Irish theater – and, finally, reflects on the impact that Stanford’s controversial decision had on the very genre of opera in Ireland.

Another possible case of artistic self-censorship, this time manifested in composition, is analyzed by Séamas de Barra. This is *Ómós don Phiarsach / Homage to Patrick Pearse* (1979), a work commissioned to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the leader of the 1916 Easter Rising, written by the composer Aloys Fleischmann. The predominantly somber tone of the score, far from any positive valorization of national pride, is explained by the author in relation to the extremely tense political context of the early 1970s in Ireland.

Moving to the Romanian scene, three cases illustrate the censorship of music writing during the communist regime. Olguța Lupu approaches music education in relation to the process of indoctrination of children, which was very rigorously organized at the time, starting from kindergarten. The case study she proposes is a detailed analysis, from the point of view of ideological impregnation, of a third-grade music theory and solfège textbook for music schools from 1977. The author comes to interesting conclusions, also following the defective de-ideologization achieved by hastily revising this textbook in 1992, three years after the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s regime.

For her part, Cristina Șuteu chooses *Muzica* magazine, the most prestigious Romanian music periodical of the time, as her field of investigation. Referring to the political climate in which the magazine was re-established in 1950, the author identifies six levels at which communist censorship would have manifested itself on the magazine until 1989. Among the aspects Șuteu reviews are ideologized images and texts, musical scores with political messages, and the cult of communist personalities from Lenin to Ceaușescu.

The last study proposed for reading in this issue, by Lavinia Gheorghe, exemplifies how the doctrine of socialist realism, imposed in Romania in the late 1940s, has left its mark on folklore research. Based on several writings by the ethnomusicologist Mariana Kahane, the author notes the mix between field research and ideology, especially in the description of the so-called “new songs”, claimed to be the result of a new, happy life under the communist regime. Also, Gheorghe does not overlook the adjustment of Kahane’s ethnomusicological discourse by avoiding ideologizing the content or, on the contrary, by amplifying it according to the audience – Western or Soviet – to which it was intended.