

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT MUSICAL INFLUENCES ON ROMANIAN COMPOSERS DURING THE STALINIZATION YEARS

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SUMMARY. During the first half of the 20th century, Romanian music flourished through the creation of a group of composers that were of great value. This generation of artists, although formed in schools of the West, kept in touch with the Romanian culture and worked to develop it and promote it. In this context, the consequences of World War II meant that Romania fell under Soviet control, and as a result, the Soviet ideology encroached on all aspects of Romania's society. The communist authorities realized the potential influence that culture and the arts could have, thus subjugating them to the new social-realist agenda. This paper explores the impact that the Stalinization period had on Romanian composers and the music they created, from censure to monitoring and, ultimately, control.

Keywords: Romanian music, communism, ideology, social realism, censure.

Introduction

The impact of socio-politics on music is a subject that has generated debates in the last century. A closer analysis shows that even in the times of Plato and Aristotle, this was a pertinent issue that generated many theories on the influence of music in society. In Ancient Greece, music was thought to have an impact on the political and moral behavior and as a result, was placed in high regard. Later on, the philosopher Rousseau² echoed the words of Plato and Aristotle, but added the idea of identity and emotion to music, while Adorno evaluated the link between society and sound, concluding that it belongs within a particular political economy.³ The underlining message

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² Rousseau, Jean Jacques, *Essay on the origin of languages and writings related to music*, J.T. Scott (translator and editor), Ed. University Press of New England, Hanover, London, 1998, p. 886.

³ Adorno, Theodor W., *Essays on Music*, Richard Lepert (editor), Ed. University of California Press, Berkley, 2002.

that philosophers and theoreticians conveyed is that music can be a powerful tool used in spreading ideology, but at the same time, as Micheal Steen shows in his research, *The lives and times of the great composers*,⁴ the socio-political context also influence composers and the music they created. This reality is especially significant in the 20th century, when some of the most destructive wars in history took place, setting the stage for totalitarian dictatorships. As Alex Ross states, “the period from the mid-thirties onward marked the onset of the most warped and tragic phase in twentieth-century music: the total politicizing of the art by totalitarian means.”⁵ As a result, the world witnessed the control that dictators acquired, from Hitler in Germany and Austria to Mussolini in Italy, Franco in Spain, and Stalin in the Soviet Union. In this political landscape, musicians and artists were forced to accept the new ideologies imposed by these totalitarian regimes, and for some composers, “their musical creation was not just a simple artistic and aesthetic exercise, but a specific means of involvement in the life of society.”⁶

Romania was not exempt from the totalitarian trends that divided Europe, and the Soviet model was adopted after the first communist-backed government came to power. One of the key personalities of the Romanian political arena was Gheorghiu-Dej, who possessed the characteristics of an authoritarian leader who displayed a merciless form of Stalinism. “For a brief period, while Stalin was still alive, he destroyed all overtly Romanian traditions that were nationalist. Instead of relying on the support of Romanian nationalist forces, he was content to deploy the ruthless terror that characterized all of the new people's democracies.”⁷ The terror and persecution that followed had a significant impact on the cultural, artistic and musical world, and as we shall present in this paper, composers and musicians had few choices in dealing with the new political landscape. “Once with the establishment of the communist regime, the problem of the musical style falls under the ideological domination of socialist realism.”⁸

Scope and Methodology

The scope of this paper is to present a clear and synthesized view of Romanian music during the first years of communism, known as the

⁴ Steen, Michael, *The lives and times of the great composers*, Ed. Oxford University Press, New York, 2003.

⁵ Ross, Alex, *The rest is noise*, Ed. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2007, p. 217.

⁶ Văduva, Lois, *Influența și controlul sociopoliticului în muzică (The Influence and control of sociopolitics in music)*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 2019, p. 66.

⁷ Glenny, Misha, *The rebirth of history, Eastern Europe in the age of Democracy*, Ed. Penguin, London, 1990, p. 101.

⁸ Constantiniu, Otilia, *Creating the Romanian national musical style*, Studia UBB Musica, LXI 2, 2016, (p. 59-70).

Stalinization period. Firstly, we aim to present a chronological narrative of the most important events that shaped the lives of composers, after which we will present the most illustrative musical trends that existed during the selected period.

The methodology of research in this paper is the historical method, through which we gleaned information from both primary sources, such as musical examples and secondary sources, such as published books, articles, and translations. The reason for choosing the historical method in this research is to present an accurate account of the most compelling information regarding the composers and their music in the first phase of communism. Being a broad subject, we recognize the limitations of this research and recommend further reading of the subject for a more comprehensive view. Given that the scope of this research was to present a summation based on historical events, the originality of this paper consists in synthesizing the present information, by combining information on the events that shook the musical world and illustrative examples of musical creations composed during the Stalinization period.

The social and political context

Between the Two World Wars, Romania experienced a free market economy, its educational system was considered to be competitive, and Romanian culture was flourishing. There was a significant development in the Romanian musical educational system, which was striving towards a modern national musical repertoire, forming a synthesis between the Romanian folklore, the Byzantine music, and the European language.

The year 1920 represents the founding of the *Society of Romanian Composers*, its purpose being the reunion of the country's most prominent musical personalities.⁹ Also, the publication *Muzica (Music)* was founded in this year. These two initiatives opened the way for the integration of Romanian music into the new European school of thought. On the one hand, the *Society* ensured a strategic artistic trajectory and, on the other hand, *Muzica* created an environment favorable to debates and exchange of views between composers, regarding the formation of a national music school. The result of these two events was the formation of a trend that combined Romanian national specificity, the national folkloric source, and European modernism.

This thriving framework was interrupted by the Second World War, the pro-Nazi Government, followed by the Soviet take over. These events brought a significant turn in the progress of Romania towards a democratic society and an ideologically free culture. Inspired by the Soviet model, the

⁹ Firca, Gheorghe, *Uniunea Compozitorilor – asociație profesională și club elitist (The Composers Union – professional association and elitist club)*, *Muzica*, no. 4, 2010, p. 30.

Romanian communist authorities soon realized the significant potential that arts and culture could have on manipulating the population in accepting the new political trend. Consequently, those who “were ready to ascribe their loyalty to the Communist Party could expect great rewards, while those who did not give in could expect heavy repercussions.”¹⁰

Some writers, such as George Călinescu, university professor, critic and writer, and the great writer Mihail Sadoveanu aligned with the new ideology and tried to continue their career in this new political landscape.¹¹ Other writers hesitated in the beginning, some even preferring to give up their career as authors than to become propagandists of an ideology they despised. However, as time passed, numerous authors accepted to work in compliance with the communist ideology due to the destiny of writers such as Radu Demetrescu-Gyr, Romulus Dianu, Șerban Cioculescu, and others, that were arrested and sent to prison or in concentration camps. The perspective of unemployment and its consequences were enough to convince some composers to accept the communist regime, even if at a superficial level.

Not only writers were forced to submit themselves to the communist and Soviet ideology, actors also had to obtain a thorough preparation in regards to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and to get inspiration from Soviet actors. The result of this interference of communist authorities in theater was that the public was increasingly reserved towards these events, which were, in reality, a camouflaged propaganda.¹²

In the beginning, painters, sculptors, and musicians thought they were going to be overlooked regarding their artistic activity. Unfortunately, arts were also subjugated to the socialist realism agenda. An example in this regard is the bas-relief of Constantin Baraschi that immortalizes Romania's release by the Soviet army and reproduces a Soviet tank surrounded by a pleased crowd. The bas-relief had a phenomenal success and received the national award in 1953. The artistic works that did not have political content, such as landscapes or still life, were criticized and considered to lack life, and artists were accused of being strangers to reality. Real art, in communist critics' words, had to display portraits and themes that would breathe life into the people. “Arts were meant to have exact functions, wholly subordinated to the political ideology. Freedom and sincerity of the expression, so necessary to artistic creation, are replaced by conformity.”¹³

¹⁰ Gallagher, Tom, *Furtul unei națiuni, România de la comunism încoace (The Theft on a Nation – Romania from Communism to the Present Days)*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 2004, p. 67.

¹¹ Boila, Romulus, *A Decade of Soviet Rule*, Ed. Praeger, New York, 1956, p. 129.

¹² *Idem*, p. 151.

¹³ *Idem*, p. 157.

The culture of the Communist era was subject to continuous control and monitoring through specialized censure services that worked to verify the content of the operas following ideological and not esthetic criteria. There was a phenomenon of subordinating culture to the Communist Party's program, characterized by imposing a direction established by the Party, promoting people loyal to the regime, and sanctioning the ones that did not align with the party ideology. The soviet control determined the dynamic of the political regime that underwent three stages¹⁴: *The Stalinist phase* (1944-1955), characterized by the Sovietization imposed by Stalin and the spread of the party ideology. During this time, the purpose of culture and art was that of supporting and promoting the communist ideal. The norms of *socialist realism* were imposed, by which the communist party understood that it meant presenting reality according to ideology, using an accessible language. This period is also called *the proletarian period*, according to Lenin's thesis that supported the proletarian culture instead of the bourgeois one. Therefore, numerous valuable Romanian writers and scientists were eliminated from teaching under the pretext that they did not accept Marxism.

The relative liberalization stage (1956-1974) brought a slight freedom in the ideological control over culture, and themes such as the great party of the leader as a hero were no longer compulsory. During this period, Romanians were allowed to resume contact with the Western world, and the ideological censure became more permissive so that certain cultural activities were resumed. These years, culture experienced a development again; both in terms of performance and stylistic diversification.

The last stage of the communist era was that of the *nationalist communism* (1974-1989), where the Party justified and legitimated the politics of the communist regime and promoted Nicolae Ceaușescu's image. During this period, there was an opposition reaction towards re-Stalinization politics, as the country had a challenging time coping with the intensifying restrictions.

In this paper, we follow especially the life and musical creation in the first period, marked by the Second World War, when the communist ideological pressure was starting to emerge, and until the removal of Matei Socor from the presidency of the Composers Union in 1954 and the start of the liberalization period.

In the early Stalinization stages, the politicization of Romanian culture became a reality, and Katherine Verdery argues that, despite individual efforts, the intellectuals ended up reproducing the national ideology.¹⁵ Even though

¹⁴ Georgescu, Vlad, *The Romanians: A History*, Ed. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1991, pp. 218-220, 242-243.

¹⁵ Verdery, Katherine, *National Ideology under Socialism, Identity and cultural politics in Ceausescu's Romania*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1995, p. 302.

there was an effort to avoid precise party indications, often, the national idea was used as a shield against repercussions. Unlike the American author, Mircea Martin argues that, for the most part, Romanian intellectuals distanced themselves from the promoters of the ideology and distinguished between official nationalism and the non-politicized one, that supported modernism and Europeanism.

Eugen Simion presents the possibilities that people involved in the cultural life had during this repressive landscape: to refuse to collaborate and give up their artistic activity, or to be threatened with prison or death sentence; to collaborate, thus becoming official writers (or composers); to flee the country; to not directly oppose the regime, in other words to accept few compromises without betraying their art or to choose to resist. Ioana Macrea-Toma presents some of the reasons for which Romanian writers were put in a difficult situation if they decided to display their dissatisfaction with the regime publicly. Among the reasons highlighted were the issues of professional endorsement, the meagerness of external relational support, and the complex nature in both the indifference and hostility of the Censorship.¹⁶

Because of these options, two cultures dominated the Romanian cultural landscape after 1945: an official culture, propagandistic, and an underground culture that focused on the esthetic.¹⁷

The impact of Stalinization on Romanian Composers – The Way Towards Musical Censure

In her book, *Muzica românească între 1944-2000* (Romanian Music between 1944-2000),¹⁸ Valentina Sandu-Dediu presents how Romania's socio-political context following WWII influenced the artistic life. Once the Communist regime came to power, a schism happened concerning the previous cultural, political, social, and economic traditions, and arts became instruments used for the benefit of state politics. Art had to fulfill its purpose of creating “the new man,” and of influencing society to accept the doctrine of socialist realism. For instance, during these years, “the message of an artistic work must be clear, mobilizing, tonic, accessible to large masses of working people, in compliance with the socialist realism doctrine.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Macrea-Toma, Ioana, *Priviligiența. Instituții literare în comunismul românesc*, (*The Privileged. Literary Institutions in the Romanian Communism*, Ed. Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009, p. 337.

¹⁷ Simion, Eugen, *Cultura în epoca totalitarismului* (*Culture in the Era of Totalitarianism*), in *Caiete critice I* (Critical Books I), No. 4, 1998.

¹⁸ Sandu-Dediu, Valentina, *Muzica românească între 1944-2000* (*Romanian Music between 1944-2000*), Ed. Muzicală, București, 2002, pp. 11-29.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 12.

Stalin invented socialist realism in 1932 and imposed it in the Eastern European Communist countries. This ideology opposed modernism and avant-garde, which were considered decadent and anti-human. All modernist elements became prohibited, and therefore values, such as Proust, Schoenberg, Messiaen, were eliminated from the public space. Also, the works of writers and composers who were charged and imprisoned for not accepting certain compromises were banned. Speranța Rădulescu demonstrates that the terror spread through the Communist regime influenced all composers during this period. "They modified more or less, in one way or another, their perspective on the world, their existential path, creative ideas, and compositional style."²⁰ A writer during the dictatorship times, Mircea Zăciu highlights that there was a sort of cultural resistance, even if it was not at all times visible. Frequently, a masked resistance sought to reaffirm the Romanian spirituality.²¹

The change towards this political climate was sensed as early as 1944, as a series of reforms and changes were implemented to replace the former legionnaires and supporters of Lieutenant Antonescu. As a consequence, the Secretary of Culture and Arts passed on a Decision to form within a twenty-four-hour timeframe a so-called "purge committee" that would verify and sanction the people that had collaborated with the Nazi army. Alfred Alessandrescu, Ioan Dumitru Chirescu, and Mihail Andricu formed this initial purge committee, who were correct and exemplary people that were not liked by authorities because they were not aggressive enough. The results of the committee caused the elimination of the composer Ioan Mânzatu and the two poets Vasile Militaru and Radu Demetrescu-Gyr from the Society. All three were primarily displaced because of their former ties to the legionnaire movement, which was now heavily condemned. Former officials from the war period were attacked; for example, Mihai Constantinescu was forced to testify and admit to treason and collaboration with the enemy. Also, a wrongful accusation of Constantin Silvestri was released, and "other composers underwent a difficult time; the time of purge was not without risks, not even for the most uninvolved people. In regards to the others, there were punitive measures that involved the termination of contracts, and other hardships, including the restriction of freedom."²²

The Soviet control started to infringe more and more control over the musical life. For example, at the General Assembly of the Society of

²⁰ Rădulescu, Speranța, *Peisaje muzicale în România secolului XX (Musical Landscapes in XXth Century Romani)*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 2002, p. 68.

²¹ Zăciu, Mircea, *Interviuri (Interviews)*, ed. Grațian Cormoș, Ed. Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 303, Interview conducted by Rodica Palade, in "Revista 22", no. 21, 23-29 May, 2000, pp. 10-11.

²² Lazăr-Cosma, Octavian, *Universul muzicii românești (The Romanian Musical Universe)*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 1995, p. 129.

Composers, held on April 22, 1945, the State Secretary Mihai Ralea conveyed that the purpose of the assembly was to complete the purge within the Society. The purge committee members had submitted their analysis, but the authorities did not agree with the results. Therefore, they decided to have them revised and changed. In the context of rising tensions between the Society and Ministry, some musicians saw their chance to obtain positions of control and influence. An illustrative example of this reality was Matei Socor's rise to power. At the 1945 General Assembly, after Society's vice-president Mihail Jora finished his report, Matei Socor expressed his consternation that there were no references made regarding their gratitude towards Stalin and the Red Army, which brought freedom. Socor proposed to send Stalin a formal letter, declaring their gratitude. Mihail Jora, unintimidated, indicated that Socor should send the telegram himself. Given the political tensions of the time, Jora's response was an act of courage that would later cost him deeply.

Another event that showed the tendency towards political subordination was the adherence of the *Society of Romanian Composers* towards the *Artists, Writers, and Journalists' Syndicates Union*. The purpose of this movement was to exert more control over the Society, led by a group of intellectuals who were proving not to be obedient enough to the new political appointees. "Whereas it was the wish that this fortress that seemed inexpugnable be politicized and regimented, as it was the procedure with the other intellectual Societies, in exchange for enrolling the entire country on the system instilled with the support of the Red Army"²³ Two disputing groups of composers were established. On the one hand, there was the leadership of the Society, comprised of Mihail Jora, Alfred Alessandrescu and Theodor Rogalski, who was supported by George Enacovici, George Enescu and others, and were against the politicization of the musical world. On the other hand, there was the group led by Mihail Andricu and Matei Socor, who tried to boycott the Committee's works and were promoters of the political agenda.

Given the constraining situation, some composers decided to flee the country, to escape the looming political oppression. One notable example is George Enescu,²⁴ who left Romania in 1946, as he was increasingly disturbed by the harsh landscape. Despite his exile, he was still followed by the Communist authorities, which hoped to use him for their benefit, although Enescu has insisted on several occasions that he was not political. In the National Council for Studying the Securitate Archives (CNSAS), over fifty documents highlight Enescu's surveillance, and the Communist authorities

²³ *Idem*, p. 136.

²⁴ Ioana Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu presents the information on the political situation of Enescu, *George Enescu, Musicians in archives – Biographies hidden in the Securitate Archives*, <https://www.muzicieni-in-arhive.ro/george-enescu-en.php>, accessed September 25, 2019.

hoped that he would return home, thus elevating the Party's prestige. An interesting fact to note is that based on the documents revealed, except for Enescu's wife, everyone in the composer's circle was an informant of the Securitate, either bribed or an actual deponent for them.²⁵ The Communist officials tried to infiltrate his circle of acquaintances to discover his vulnerability and use it to lure him back to Romania. These sorts of intrigues were rampant during Enescu's whole life, and they included financial and prestige incentives. At the same time, it is essential to note the inconsistency of the Communist authorities, as, despite their continued efforts to lure Enescu back home to use his image for the credibility of the regime, they also criticized him in national magazines for his lack of ideological commitment.²⁶

Enescu is a notable example of the tensions that the Communist regime exercised on people, although the composers that remained in Romania had an even harder time. The Soviet ideological pressures started to intensify on February 26, 1946, when, during an Extraordinary General Assembly, the Society's adherence to the General Work Confederation was announced, and the ideologist Marcel Breslașu presented the advantages of getting closer to the working masses. The intellectuals and workers had to "respect each other and love each other, so that, in the end, people would be stronger, more connected in the face of the adversities that they are called to overcome."²⁷ At this point, it is interesting to remark on the reactions of the Society's vice-president. Mihail Jora did not engage in the discussion, but let M. Constantinescu salute Marcel Breslașu. The leadership of the Society was not favorable to the ideological conception. The only agreement point between them and Marcel Breslașu was the promotion and encouragement of the national musical creation. In an executive meeting of the Society, held on May 1948, Jora began an open conflict with Alfred Mendelsohn and Mauriciu Vescan regarding the offensive towards creating democratic music, the composer stating that he was against forcing composers to create something they did not feel.²⁸ As a result of Jora's stance, the media vehemently attacked him, calling him out for his resistance against the state ideology.²⁹

As expected, the communist authorities did not look kindly towards anyone that refused to embrace the new ideology, so the most significant power shift in the musical world happened in 1949, when Matei Socor, who had proven himself to be loyal, became president of the Composers Union. The press

²⁵ Csendes, Ladislau, *George Enescu, un exil supravegheat? (George Enescu, an exile under surveillance?)* Ed. Casa Radio, București, 2011.

²⁶ Lazăr-Cosma, Octavian, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

²⁷ Lazăr-Cosma, Octavian, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

²⁸ *Idem*, p. 166.

²⁹ *Idem*, p. 162.

published articles that praised the new president and presented him in a favorable light. The reality was a completely different one, as due to his absence from numerous meetings and his tendency to hold unraveled speeches, he was severely disliked. Nevertheless, Socor was also the voice of *reason* in regards to composers' activity and the general direction of Romanian musical creation. „One could not miss the opportunity to pour, with a large ladle, the venom of party propaganda. Therefore, a document was issued where the composers and musicologists were reminded of their burdening tasks, in an imperative tone, sounding like a command, obligation, subpoena.”³⁰

After this shift from Society to Union, Jora's situation became even more oppressive, as he was removed from all previously occupied positions and criticized in the press for his decadent compositions.³¹ Despite the apparent victory of the regime against Jora, the Securitate increased their surveillance on the composer in the following period, intercepting his correspondence and phone calls. The attacks did not end there, as Jora's wife was arrested and sentenced to four years in prison, just for the fact that she was Grigore Gafencu's sister. Gafencu had been a former minister of Romania and a former minister in Moscow, tried in absentia after leaving the country.³² The attacks on Jora continued in various publications because his music did not align with the party politics, this having a profound effect on him. „After being subjected to such pressure, Jora finally gave in and accepted an order for a ballet in the spirit of socialist realism, *Când strugurii se coc* [When the grapes ripen].”³³ After this composition, Jora was somewhat rehabilitated and was allowed to regain his position as a professor at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory and was even awarded The State Prize in 1954. Despite this, after the ballet *Când strugurii se coc*, Jora managed to compose without using explicit party ideology. For one of the darkest periods in the history of Romanian music, Mihail Jora remains an example of morality and strength of character.

Since the media played such an essential part in the subjugation of composers, it is not surprising that the journal *Muzica* also became a tool for political ideologization, which, interestingly, in the year 1950, had a single publication. As Cristina Șuteu argues in her article³⁴, the musical opinions that were expounded in the *Muzica* journal could be incorporated in the

³⁰ *Idem*, p. 223.

³¹ *Idem*, p. 205.

³² Voicu-Arnăuțoiu, Ioana Raluca, *Mihail Jora in Musicians in archives – Biographies hidden in the Securitate Archives*, <https://www.muzicieni-in-arhive.ro/mihail-jora-en.php>, accessed 27 September 2019.

³³ Popa, Florinela, *Mihail Jora and the Trap of Ideologies*, in *Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest*, 7/4 (28) (2016), 311-322, p. 319.

³⁴ Șuteu, Cristina, „*Muzica*” *Journal (1916-1989): The C-O-S-T of the compromise...*, *Studia UBB Musica*, LXI, 2, 2016 (p.71-88)

message that creates the acronym COST, which has a significant meaning. C stands for conformation to the political regime, O for opposition against the old order, S for supporting the working-class musicians and T for the transformation into the „new” man.

The reality of Romanian music during the Stalinization period³⁵

“In the context of strict political ideology, composers had to deal with many frustrations, from the lack of communication and debate with other musicians outside the iron curtain to the censure of modern music and other tendencies characterized by communists as being decadent.”³⁶ Given this challenging situation, the composers were encouraged to compose music with a political agenda, and the favorite themes were Stalin and Gheorghiu-Dej’s portrayals, the country, work, and the party. The realist socialist creation was also a favorite subject, articulated by Jdanov.

The three significant artistic directions that the Communist Party supported during these years were: the patriotic marches and the hymns that would praise the party, music accessible to the masses, and the Soviet music. Consequently, a series of works, which respected the requirements of the realist socialist doctrine, emerged, such as the song *Broken Handcuffs*³⁷, which between 1948 and 1953 was Romania's national anthem. Aurel Baranga wrote the text, and Matei Socor composed the music. This work is an illustrative example of the music composed in that period, the text of the anthem highlighting the importance of the patriotic and working theme.

In regards to the music (E.g.1), we recognize the preference towards a simple and accessible strophic form. The work is in G minor (harmonic), the time signature is of 4/4, and the form is a small bi-strophic. Both stanzas have eight measures formed from two phrases of four measures. The character of the song is that of a fervent anthem, given by the punctuated rhythm and the ascending melodic profile, which like many anthems (including national), begins with an ascending perfect fourth.

³⁵ This subject was presented in detail in Văduva, Lois Paula, *Romania’s Stalinization and its Effects on the Romanian Musical Universe*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 2019.

³⁶ Văduva, Lois Paula, *op.cit.*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 2019, p. 40.

³⁷ *Broken handcuffs are left behind/The worker is always in the front/Through struggle and sacrifice a step we climb/The people are masters of their destiny. Chorus: Long live, long live our Republic!/In a march of a tempestuous torrent/We, workers and peasants and soldiers/Are building the Romania of the new Republic/Eliminating the old putrid dam/It’s the hour of holy suspense/Union and peace and work are carrying the flag/Of the new Popular Republic/By the great victory we are going/It is time for future triumphs./We swear that we will work together and fight/By the new Republic.* Cited from, <http://www.nationalanthems.info/ro-53.htm>, translation by author.

This anthem is an illustrative example of the type of music accepted and promoted during the Communist era, especially in the Stalinization period. Thus, in these years, the formation of a pseudo-culture³⁸ can be observed in the sense of a decline in academic music. Despite this, as composer Viorel Munteanu said, “not a few Romanian composers were against the standardization of art in a culture for masses.”³⁹

E.g. 1

Zer - bro - chen die Ket - ten, aus Ker - kern her - vor, im
 Zdro - bi - te că - tu - șe în ur - mă ră - mân. În

Marsch - tritt der Ar - bei - ter - klas - se, so stei - gen als Herrn uns - rer
 frun - te - i me - reu mun - ci - to - rul. Prin lup - te și jert - fe o

Welt wir em - por die Stu - fen der stei - ni - gen Gas - se. Es
 treap - tă ur - căm. Stă - pân pe des - tin e po - po - rul. Tră -

le - be der Volks - sktaat, den Man - ner und Frau - en mit un - ge - stum fuh - ren zum
 ia - scă, tră - ia - scă, Re - pu - bli - ca noas - tră. În marș de na - val - nic şu -

Sieg und zum Glück, tausend Hände, tausend Köpfe sich aus eigener Kraft er - bauen die
 voi re văr - sat. Munci - tori și lă - rani, căr - tu - rari și oș - tași, Zi -

1. neu - e ru - ma - ni - sche Volks - re - pu - blik.
 dăm Ro - mă - ni - a Re - pu - bli - cii noi.

2. Volks - re - pu - blik.
 - pu - bli - cii noi.

In the same spirit, the party promoted and encouraged the creation of patriotic marches and hymns that would praise the party through music accessible to the masses and a Soviet creed.

³⁸ Term used by Valentina Sandu-Dediu.

³⁹ Munteanu, Viorel, *Întâlnirea compozitorilor români cu dodecafonia (The Meeting of Romanian Composers with Dodecaphony)*, în loc de postfață: Roman Vlad, *Istoria dodecafoniiei (Instead of a Preface: Roman Vlad, The History of Dodecaphony)*, Ed. Națională, Bucharest, 1998, p. 447.

Firstly, we have noted the musical creation most visibly influenced by the ideology of those times, namely the choral creation and patriotic song. These were the most accessible genres and broadcasted in the socio-political context of the times. A vital consequence of the promotion of these genres was the development of choral formations and the organizing of various creation contests. The music composed illustrated the energy and joy of the working people and portrayed the love for the homeland. Almost all the songs had as themes the party, homeland, peace, friendship, socialist contests, and electrification.

Along with the patriotic song, there were melodies composed in other genres as well, such as the choral poem or symphonic suite. The communist years affected the choral creation as well because the value of a work was given by its melodic simplicity and its popular themes that glorified ordinary life or the past.

Even though there were numerous works of music lacking value during this time, there were also many instances in which creative composers fought to preserve their artistic conscience. Given the numerous restrictions on artists and composers, it is surprising that during the communist period, there were a significant number of valuable works produced. Through talent, some musicians created a movement of cultural resistance by approaching some compositional directions, which did not obey the political ideology of those times. Given the communist ideological landscape, it is only natural that folklore and national identity were encouraged, but in forms as accessible as possible. The folkloric endeavors that would align with occidental modernism were discouraged during those years.

Nevertheless, several valuable composers managed to form a synthesis between the national and the universal, a synthesis, which would help form and develop the Romanian compositional school.⁴⁰ Working the folkloric material gave composers numerous possibilities to create valuable compositions. Composers such as Zeno Vancea, Marțian Negrea, Theodor Rogalski, Paul Constantinescu, and others accomplished to create works that integrated Romanian folkloric modes in classic-romantic forms and genres.

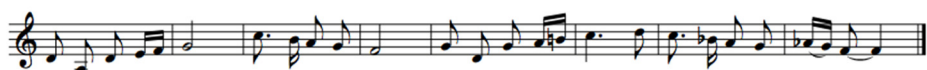
In this category of folk influences, one of the most appreciated works was Paul Constantinescu's *Miorița* (The Little Ewe Lamb). The melodic sources of *Miorița* are three musical folkloric versions: one from Sibiu-Rășinari, one collected by the composer Sabin Drăgoi in Balinț, and one belonging to M. Vulpescu. The composer also added excerpts taken from Tiberiu Bredniceanu, and he composed original melodies to complete the score.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Sandu-Dediu, Valentina, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴¹ Rîpă, Constantin, "Reflecții la Miorița de Paul Constantinescu" (Reflecting of Miorita, by Paul Constantinescu), *Lucrări de Muzicologie*, Vol. 10-11, G. Dima Music Conservatory, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, p. 206.

The melodies composed by Paul Constantinescu align with the quoted folkloric ones and one of the most illustrative song (E.g. 2, theme S) composed in this work, a central point of the poem, is a four voices unison called a lament, which reunites the pentatonic pillars from preceding melodies.⁴²

E.g. 2



Another brave musical direction was the inclusion of the sacred in musical works. This theme was used through the avoidance of religious titles, despite the sacred content of the music. Composers used titles with texts and ideas accepted by the authorities, such as peace or harmony. The composers could, therefore, create in compliance with their artistic conscience, especially taking into consideration the fact that the official censors did not have the required musical background to discover the religious sources of the music sheets. The only risk was a colleague's denouncement, which could have signaled the real content of the composition. Another way of including the sacred in the musical creation was by filtering it through the national heritage, which was the Romanian Byzantine tradition. Composers such as Paul Constantinescu, Doru Popovici, Sabin Drăgoi and Marțian Negrea intertwined the Byzantine music with modern composition. An illustrative example is *Symphony no. 3 Byzantine for Choir and Orchestra*, by Doru Popovici. This work is based on Byzantine quotes, which taking into consideration the circumstances of those times, is considered to be an act of courage. The work has a religious text (E.g. 3) and was performed in entirety only in 1968, due to the complicated political situation.⁴³

E.g 3

p

Sla - vă - ntru cei de sus lui Dum - ne - zeu în Vi - fle - em aud as - tăzi

De la cei fă - ră de tru - puri Pa -

ce Ce - lui ce pre pă - mânt a fi a bi - ne - vo - it.

⁴² Constantin Rîpă, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁴³ Sandu-Dediu, Valentina, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Other representative works in this respect are the two vocal-symphonic works *Byzantine Easter Oratorio* and *Byzantine Christmas Oratorio* by Paul Constantinescu, through which the composer initiated the Byzantine oratorio genre made of elements appropriated from the Orthodox Christianity and that lead him to be considered the father of Byzantinism in Romania.⁴⁴ Religious themes and texts saturate these works, which is the reason for their prohibition in concerts. For example, the music in *The Passion and Resurrection of the Lord*, composed in 1946, is based on authentic sources but built in a way, which demonstrates its originality. The words are based on the Gospels, and the first choir intervention is a brave praise song *Hallelujah molto tranquillo* (E.g. 4), for four voices, taken from Macarie's *Irmologhionul*.

Besides the compositions by Popovci and Constantinescu, other works such as *The Requiem* by Sabin Drăgoi, *Passacaglia* by Sigismund Toduță, *Symphony no. 2* by Toduță Marțian, *The Requiem* by Marțian Negrea were also based on the Christian Byzantine tradition.

A work that is beyond the scope of this research, as it was created in 1980, is *Festum Hibernum*, by Alexandru Pașcanu, but we mention it because it is an illustrative example of how composers hid religious meaning in the harmonic framework a composition.

E.g. 4

The image shows a musical score for a four-voice choir and piano. The score is in 4/4 time and G major. The vocal parts are labeled S (Soprano), A (Alto), T (Tenor), and B (Bass). The piano part is labeled 'Piano'. The lyrics for all parts are 'A - li - lu - i - a'. The score includes dynamic markings of *ppp* and *dim.*, and a *morendo* marking for the Soprano part. The piano accompaniment features a steady harmonic accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand.

⁴⁴ Anghel, Irinel *Orientări, direcții, curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX (Orientations, Directions, Trends of Romanian Music in the Second Half of the XXth Century)*, Ed. Muzicală, 1997, No. 1, 2008, p. 11.

The work includes Christmas carols and songs, but because the choir does not use words, they were not signaled to the authorities of the times. For example, the end of this masterpiece is a choral rendition of a beloved Christmas carol, *O ce veste minunată*, (E.g. 5 - *O, what a wonderful news*).

E.g. 5

Maestoso (cca ♩ = 84)

The musical score is for a choral piece in 4/4 time, marked *Maestoso* (approximately ♩ = 84). It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.), along with a piano accompaniment. The Soprano and Alto parts have lyrics 'A.' and 'a.' under the notes. The Tenor part has a 'g' below the first note. The Bass part has 'Unis.' above the final note. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, and *Unis.* The score shows the first two staves of each part.

These are just a few examples that proved the creativity of some musicians to compose, despite the socio-political limitations, valuable and relevant music.

The end of the Stalinization period

The year 1953 was a turning point, because of an event that had profound consequences on the political and social landscape: on March 3rd, news of the death of Stalin shook the world. On the Romanian front, the Composers' Union leadership was shaken by the results of the investigation regarding its administrative irregularities. Socor was confronted on many charges, and he was even bravely asked publicly by composer Mihail Andricu why he could not promote contemporary Western music. This moment was a turning point in the path of the Union and the Romanian musical universe. Even though the ideological pressures continued, the Union's new president, Ion Dumitrescu managed to keep a balance between politicization and the artistic act, so that Romanian music was relatively freed from the suffocating Soviet chains it encountered up until that moment.

The second period of the Communist regime brought a slight ideological relaxation that gave young composers respite to compose in contemporary western styles. As a result, they published works containing atonality, electronic music, serialism, and integral serialism and others, thus leaving a significant print on the music of other cultural centers in the world. Even if this ideological relaxation period lasted only a few years, giving way to the most challenging time of the communist regime, it was still a valuable time in which Romanian composers could align themselves with their international counterparts.

Conclusions

This article succinctly presented the impact that the Stalinization period in Romania had on composers and the music they created. In a time of cultural development, the instauration of the communist regime had a devastating impact, as the social ideology imprisoned the whole society. Music was not exempt from this reality, and musicians were faced with tough choices, either to comply with the new ideology, which disapproved of modernity and many other trends, or to face the dire consequences. Illustrative in this respect is the Decision announced by the Department of Cults and Arts to form a so-called “purging” commission, which would be responsible for removing all the promoters of the former regime. In this context, there were two different groups of musicians that emerged, with different attitudes toward this new reality. There was a group of composers such as Mihail Jora, Alfred Alessandrescu, and Theodor Rogalski, supported among others by George Enacovici and George Enescu, who promoted the freedom of music. On the other hand, there was a group led by Mihail Andricu and Matei Socor, who fought for the politicization of music. The tensions between these two groups shaped the Romanian musical life during the Stalinization years. We also presented the situation of George Enescu, who, despite going into exile, was still followed and pressured by the Securitate. Also, Mihail Jora was a crucial figure in these years, as he publicly opposed the political pressures and suffered the consequences.

The music composed during these years shows two opposing directions, which are illustrative of the fight between composers and musicians concerning the level in which the political factor permeated into music. There were numerous works, especially choral creations, patriotic marches, and hymns that aligned to the socialist realist doctrine. An illustrative example is the work *Broken Shackles*, which between 1948 and 1953, was Romania's national anthem. On the other end of the spectrum, some compositions maintained a rigorous level of professionalism, and that proved the talent and value of Romanian composers. One way in which composers managed to compose following their artistic conscience was through the use of folk material, which is a favored theme during communism, and which gave them

a slight freedom in the techniques used. In this group of composers, we mention Ludovic Feldman, Marțian Negrea, Theodor Rogalski, Anatol Vieru, Sigismund Toduță, and Paul Constantinescu.

Another valuable compositional direction during these years was the sacred musical creation. The prohibition of religious activity determined composers to find ingenious ways of incorporating the sacred, for example, by filtering it through the Romanian Byzantine tradition, which was an accepted practice. Notable work in this direction was *The Christmas* and *Easter* oratorios by Paul Constantinescu, *Symphony no. 3 Byzantine for choir and orchestra* by Doru Popovici, *The Requiem*, by Marțian Negrea and others. The sacred was also included in some compositions by creatively veiling the religious themes in the musical works, a notable example being Alexandru Pașcanu's *Festum Hibernum*. Even though this work is beyond the scope of this research, as it was composed in 1980, we mentioned it, as it is an illustrative example of ingenuity and creativity in a time of heavy persecution.

The years of Stalinization were an uncertain and challenging time in the history of Romania, with a direct impact on the musical works. While the political ideology tried, often successfully, to stifle the creative spirit, we can still see the significant efforts of composers to continue the progress towards a valuable national musical heritage.

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