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HAUNTING SOUNDSCAPES OF TRANSYLVANIA: LIGETI'S RESEARCH STAY AT THE FOLKLORE INSTITUTE IN BUCHAREST

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SUMMARY: Ligeti's visit to the Folklore Institute in Bucharest in 1949/50 was a brief but defining episode of his youth, and one which proved to have a strong impact on his work. As one of the least explored stages of his early development, this Romanian research stay provided the composer with an entirely new set of ideas which were later manifested in his works, first as direct citations (*Baladă și joc, Romanian Concerto*, *Musica ricercata, Bagatelles for Wind Quintet*), and then as distant, barely discernible echoes (*Piano Concerto*, *Violin Concerto*, *Hamburgisches Konzert*). According to Ligeti's own comments and manuscript sketches (held at the Paul Sacher archives), he derived and developed some of his most original compositional techniques from folk genres such as *colinda, hora lungă, bucium signals* and *bocet* originating in Transylvania, Banat and Muntenia, music he heard in various villages of the Carpathian region*, a*nd on wax cylinders in Bucharest. In order to show the long-term impact of Romanian folklore on his music the approach will capture two images of Ligeti on either side of the Iron Curtain: first it will explore how he managed, without political compromise, to avoid falling foul of the rules of the communist regime on the use of ethnic elements in the new ideology aesthetics and then how he turned this source of inspiration into a uniquely modern idiom after relocating to the west. Employing Romanian folk elements while in eastern and, later, in western Europe, Ligeti allows the listener to perceive the diverse multi-ethnic roots of his music, which pervaded his inspiration and generated a unique sound world.

Keywords: Ligeti, Enescu, Romanian folk music, Iron Curtain, Bucharest, Transylvania

Born in a multi-cultural region such as Transylvania, Ligeti's contact with Romanian folk music was a constant during his formative years. In this environment he became acquainted with the soundscape of Transylvanian

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villages, listening to *colinde* (carols), folk dances, *hore*, *doine* (yearning songs), bocete (funeral songs), etc., all types which Bartók had already collected and studied in depth at the beginning of the 20th century.

This sound world was already part of Ligeti's musical heritage when, in 1945, he began to study at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, after hesitating over whether to head south to Bucharest, or west to the Hungarian capital. Although the cultural life of the two cities was very different (Bucharest was strongly connected to Paris, and Budapest to Vienna) in terms of political context, the two cities shared the same destiny behind the Iron Curtain.

In 1993 Ligeti delivered a speech in which he expressed his sense of being stylistically imprisoned, trapped between the walls of the avant-garde and those of the past: "I want to escape"[2], he bluntly said. If, in the nineties, he was referring to metaphorical walls, the ones he had to climb during the late forties and early fifties were made with bricks of solid ideology. And indeed, he did wish to escape, partly because he had been commissioned in Budapest to write a piece in honor of Stalin or Rákósi, a task he wanted to avoid[3]. The commission was in fact nothing but a punishment for his overly contrapuntal compositional style, a technique associated by the communist regime with religious music, and therefore banned. His escape route was provided by a short-term scholarship at the Folklore Institute in Bucharest, and he arrived on Romanian soil by the end of 1949.

The time spent in Bucharest contributed substantially to Ligeti's Romanian musical identity. This is clearly shown by certain of the manuscripts held at the Sacher archives in Basle, in particular the 27 transcriptions of Sketchbook no. 34 in which Ligeti carefully notates the source for each of his transcriptions, allowing us to observe today his familiarity with such important Romanian folk music collections as those assembled by Sabin Drăgoi, George Breazul, and Alexandru Berdescu[4].

The transcriptions, made together with Mircea Chiriac during a short trip to the village of Covăsinț, mark the source of the theoretical conclusions formulated by the composer in two Romanian folk music studies that were

[2] György Ligeti's talk in 1993 at the New England Conservatory, cited in Alex Ross: *The Rest is Noise*, Picador, New York, 2007, p. 506. "When you are accepted in a club, without willing or without noticing you take over certain habits of what is in and what is out. Tonality was definitely out. To write melodies, even non-tonal melodies, was absolutely taboo. Music has to be *a priori*…. It worked when it was new, but it became stale. Now there is no taboo; everything is allowed. But one cannot simply go back to tonality, it´s not the way. We must find a way of neither going back nor continuing the avant-garde. I am in a prison: one wall is the avant-garde, the other wall is the past, and I want to escape."

[3] Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti's Romanian Concerto. From Wax Cylinders to Symphony Orchestra", in *Studia UBB Musica*, no.1/2013, Cluj University Press, p. 52.

[4] See for more details: Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti's Romanian Concerto. From Wax Cylinders to Symphony Orchestra", in *Studia UBB Musica*, no.1/2013, Cluj University Press, p. 55.

later to be published in Budapest[5]. The original Romanian text of one of these articles is kept by the Paul Sacher Foundation, bearing a slightly different title: "Armonizarea poporană exemplificată prin muzica lăutarilor din comuna Covăsinţ, jud. Arad".

György Kurtág himself highlighted the importance of the theoretical conclusions Ligeti reached in these writings after studying the folk band from Covăsinţ:

> *Much has been written about how he profited from folklore research (that of Brăiloiu, Kubik, Simha Arom, and of course, again and again, Bartók), but it seems that even he forgot that it was the young Ligeti (1950–53) who revealed in a seminal essay the functioning and harmonizing patterns of Romanian folk orchestras.*[6]

But in terms of creative activity as a composer, one of the musical fruits of this sudden escape was his first orchestral piece – the *Romanian Concerto*, acknowledged as the most notable achievement of Ligeti's ethno-musicological journey both to Bucharest and to Covăsinţ village.

Listeners may surrender easily to Ligeti's joyful piece without noticing that its ethnic sounds distil a difficult historical moment in which both Hungary and Romania were moving inside the frontiers of the Eastern bloc. This colourful work captures the historical context of the years 1949-1951, a period which marks its gestation and completion.

A historical scrutiny of the year 1949, when Ligeti came to Bucharest, reveals a series of dramatic events which impacted at every level on the destiny of both countries. The wheels of terror had been set in motion behind the Iron Curtain and were meant to put the entire Eastern bloc in political and ideological synchrony. In Hungary, 1949 was saw the execution of László Rajk after a process framed by Rákosi and molded according to the purest Stalinist pattern.

Ligeti arrived in the neighboring capital city of Bucharest only to find a strikingly yet somehow unsurprisingly similar situation. In 1949, Romania under the rule of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was witnessing the first communist executions and it was also the year when the horrific "Piteşti experiment" had begun, an experiment which actually enforced ideological "re-education" through torture.

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[5] "Egy aradmegyei román együttes" *(„*A Romanian ensemble from Arad County*")*, in *Kodály Elmékkönyv. Zenetudományi Tanulmanyok I*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1953; „Népzenekutatás Romániában" („Research on Romanian Folk Music"), in *Új Zenei Szemle*, I/3, August 1950, Budapest.

[6] Bálint András Varga: *György Kurtág; Three Interviews and Ligeti Homages* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009), p. 104.

Culture harnessed itself to the objectives of the new ideology, and it is important to understand the brutal impact this had on both culture and artists; Ligeti's arrival in Bucharest coincided with a moment in which the Society of Romanian Composers was completely reshaping its purposes, according to the Prague Congress, held in 1948.

"In 1949, Matei Socor, a faithful follower of communist propaganda, had been appointed the new head of the Society of Romanian Composers, directly after such musicians as Enescu and Jora had been removed from their positions of president and vice president respectively. Socor was rigorously imposing the strictures determined by the new ideology then engulfing Eastern Europe[7], and started to re-organize the Society according to their new political criteria for artists. An official list arranged the categories of musicians by their political 'usefulness'. In order to understand something of how these definitions were arrived at, it may be mentioned that within the 'suspicious' category fell such names as Mihail Jora (who had acquired the reputation of being 'nest of old bourgeoisie´s aesthetics'), and among those 'to be removed'[8] were many notable names, some of them already based abroad, including Constantin Brăiloiu, Marcel Mihalovici, and Dinu Lipatti"[9].

New ideologies stormed culture and forced artists to follow new currents towards absurd goals. The wooden rhetoric and the threats went hand in hand, openly showing the consequences for those artists who would cling to Western or bourgeois values. One fragment from a newspaper article sounds a note of horror: "all those who are against the bright path of our Romanian Popular Democracy have already been and will be eliminated"[10]. A campaign to intimidate composers into following the new norms of socialist realism had been adopted, in order to force artists to rid themselves of their "ideological confusion".

Heated debates took place during this Conference organized by the Society of the Romanian Composers in 21-22 October 1949, a few months before Ligeti's arrival in Bucharest, and acknowledged artists were criticized for anachronistic or Universalist tendencies. Alfred Mendelssohn was a participant in the Composers´ Congress held in Prague, and delivered after his return

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[7] Octavian Lazăr Cosma: *Universul Muzicii Româneşti. Uniunea Compozitorilor şi Muzicologilor din România - 1920-1995*/*The Universe of Romanian Music. The Society of the Composers and Musicologists of Romania - 1920-1995*, Editura Muzicală a U.C.M.R., Bucureşti, 1995, p. 176.

[8] Octavian Lazăr Cosma, op. cit., pp. 186-188. Information extracted by Octavian Lazăr Cosma from the Dossier 434/1949 Arhivele Statului – Bucureşti, Fondul Uniunii Compozitorilor.

[9] Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti's Romanian Concerto. From Wax Cylinders to Symphony Orchestra", in *Studia UBB Musica*, no.1/2013, Cluj University Press, p. 52.

[10] Cornelia Pascal: "A început curăţenia la Conservator" ("Cleaning at the Conservatory has started"), in *Studentul Român*, IV, 6, 27/ ian. 1948, p. 6, cited in Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit*., p. 159.

a lecture at the National Conference in Bucharest. He emphasized the unconditional nature of the impositions from the Soviet Union, stating: "What works for the Soviet composers also works for ours"[11].

Ana Pauker, a key figure of the new regime in Romania, foreign Minister during the time Ligeti was in Bucharest, was showing "the way" in which Romanian artists were expected to reshape their approach to the arts, underlining a clear disassociation from Western culture: "Composers should learn and UN-learn a lot"[12]. This meant that the regime had started to fence new music off from the West and from the "poisonous" Bourgeoisie. In fact, new ideology and the values of Western culture had officially become polar opposites, not only in Romania or Hungary, but across the entire communist bloc. Ligeti's temporary escape to Bucharest therefore turned out merely to be a change of scenery: the ideological turmoil was the same. A long list of the new emergent repertoire in tune with the new ideology had been drawn up in Romania, as well as in the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, showing a grotesque uniformity of topics and a strong working class flavour[13] (see the titles of the footnote).

The use of folklore in exchange was strongly encouraged in the Report of the Conference adopted in the Eastern European countries but, as expected, also the use of folk music in composition should follow strict rules. Music was meant to be an ideological weapon and folklore, employed in a certain "politically correct" way, was part of the arsenal of communist propaganda. The slightest deviation became subject to the harshest of critiques and censorship. Apparently, the writing of a folk-based piece was like walking through a minefield, and Ligeti's refuge among the wax cylinders in Bucharest was not safe ground either.

In Romania, Constantin Silvestri was criticized for the improper manner in which he employed folk elements[14] ("formalist, decadent"). Enescu himself was blacklisted and it was said that after composing the two Rhapsodies "he breaks up with real life and from the source of inspiration which is the people, and allows himself to be overwhelmed by the musical 'rotten stuff' of the West"[15].

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[11] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 171. Alfred Mendelssohn's speech was later published under the title *Quo vadis musica* in Flacăra, I, 41/10 October 1948, pp.1; 3.

[12] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[13] I. Morozov – *Plugarii* (The Ploughmen); C. Palade – *Strungarii* (The Lathe Men); A. Alessandrescu – *1st of May* Cantata; Z. Vancea – *Stalin´s name*; H. Jerea – *Ode to the Stalinian law*; M. Andricu – *Cantata for Stalin*; Erasmus Minkievici – *Wishes from the Carpathians to comrade Stalin* ; A. Mendelssohn – Oratorio *Lenin´s Voice*; E. Rubinstein – *On Lenin´s Way*.

[14] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[15] Petre Iosif – "Pentru combatarea unui hipnotic periculos", in *Flacăra,* II, 40 (92)/8 octombrie 1949, p. 3, p. 11, cited in Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

The pieces “in Romanian style” (which meant by that time the use of the folk music in a more sophisticated, subtle way) had being sanctioned as well: in his Report, presented at the National Conference in 1949, Matei Socor clearly set out how the rules of folk music should be approached, also emphasizing how it shouldn’t: “Some of the productions in Romanian style suggest the cosmopolite image of the boyar, who, from the verandah of his feudal lordly house, takes delight of the Romanian picturesque landscapes. Usually, such compositions ´in Romanian style´ are full of nostalgic, mystical or entertainment elements, and sometimes with a tone of mockery for revolutionary figures of the past, or towards the simple people of our country.”[16]

In the same Report of the Conference held in 1949, the employment of folk heritage was highly encouraged, ONLY if they were to be provided with a new, socialist content.

Various participants delivered speeches, showing their adherence to the new order. Regarding folk music, here is what should have not been done while employing folk material: A. Stoia, in his intervention accused a certain category of composers who “take folk themes, mutilate and expand them over a few chords and a few metrical changes and present them as Romanian music compositions”[17].

Also the most authentic folk music had to be censored; Harry Brauner[18], director of the Folklore Institute in Bucharest, decreed that some folk music genres were outdated, such as “doina” (a slow, yearning song, so emblematic for Romanian folk heritage). This genre, according to Brauner, was related to the past and had no longer any meaning in the present. Besides, he drew attention and called for prudence in approaching the fast folk dance melodies[19].

Even the most acknowledged musicians of the past were monitored and could not get away from the critiques, among them Bartók himself; it was Ovidiu Varga who showed that also “in Bartók´s music there can be found a series of negative, formalist elements, especially in the way he treated the folk music from the harmonic point of view, influences which had ‘unhealthy’ consequences even for Romanian composition….”[20] What a contrast with Constantin Brăiloiu’s words expressed right after the death of Bartók, in 1945, saying that Romanians had just lost a great friend!

[16] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[17] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
[18] Soon to be arrested and judged in the same trial as Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu.
[19] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
[20] Apud. Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

How then in such a hostile context for artists would Ligeti dare to have recourse to Romanian or Hungarian folklore of his native land and make use of it in his compositions?

The whole situation briefly described above sheds new light on Ligeti's starting point as a composer and allow us to retrace the long distance he still had to travel towards becoming the iconic avant-garde composer we researchers speak about so enthusiastically today.

First of all, his interest in folk music was completely genuine, as an interview in Romanian given to the composer Nicolae Brînduş, in '79, confirms[21].

In his dialogue with Nicolae Brînduș, Ligeti described his experiences in folk music collection, moving from Bucharest to the village of Covăsinț, and emphasizing the long term impact of all this on his creativity.

He completed the Romanian Concerto, his folk-inspired piece, when he returned to Budapest, passing through an intermediary stage (the piece *Baladă şi joc*), but the restrictions in employing folk heritage were in force also in Hungary.

Surely, all the critiques expressed at the Conference in Bucharest could very well apply to Ligeti´s *Romanian Concerto*, even though at a superficial glance, Ligeti's approach to folk music seemed in keeping with the regime's specifications. But to compare the clear cut instructions stated in the Report with the score of the *Romanian Concerto* is to detect a number of discrepancies which might show that Ligeti was in fact ignoring the new order, while simply searching for his own artistic identity.

Indeed, the *Romanian Concerto* showcases all the "errors" pointed out in the Report of the National Conference held in Bucharest in 1949: improper harmonic treatment according to the new aesthetic standards, fragmentation of folk melodies, but worst of all, resorting to the forbidden fruit of dissonance, something which also may have raised the eyebrows of the Eastern Bloc censors. By extracting an introductory motif from a Romanian folk dance called "Sârba" which he transcribed in Bucharest, he emphasized or "stained" the coda segment with an extended minor second of the wind instruments (4th movement, bars 610-620). Could one speculate that the young composer has encoded his own voice here with the same exclamation: "I want to escape"? Probably the extended minor second was one of the reasons why the premiere was soon to be banned in communist Hungary.

[21] Brînduş, Nicolae: "Interviu cu György Ligeti" ("Interview with György Ligeti"), in *Muzica*, No. 1/January, 1980, Bucharest, p. 40. The fragment from this interview is cited in English translation in: Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti's Romanian Concerto. From Wax Cylinders to Symphony Orchestra", in *Studia UBB Musica*, no.1/2013, Cluj University Press, p. 59.

Firstly, Ligeti never intended to please the regime. In terms of the research and composition of folk music, he simply followed in the footsteps of Bartók, whom he greatly admired. The 28-year old composer relied on the most authentic melodic sources, all extracted and transcribed from the wax cylinders of the Folklore Institute in Bucharest, as is shown by Ligeti's manuscripts held by the Sacher archives[22].

In his *Romanian Concerto*, besides the choice of most authentic sources, Ligeti used what would have seemed to the new ears, strange harmonies in the slow movement, which mimic the *bucium* signals in the Carpathian Mountains, exploring the acoustic universe of un-tempered intonation[23].

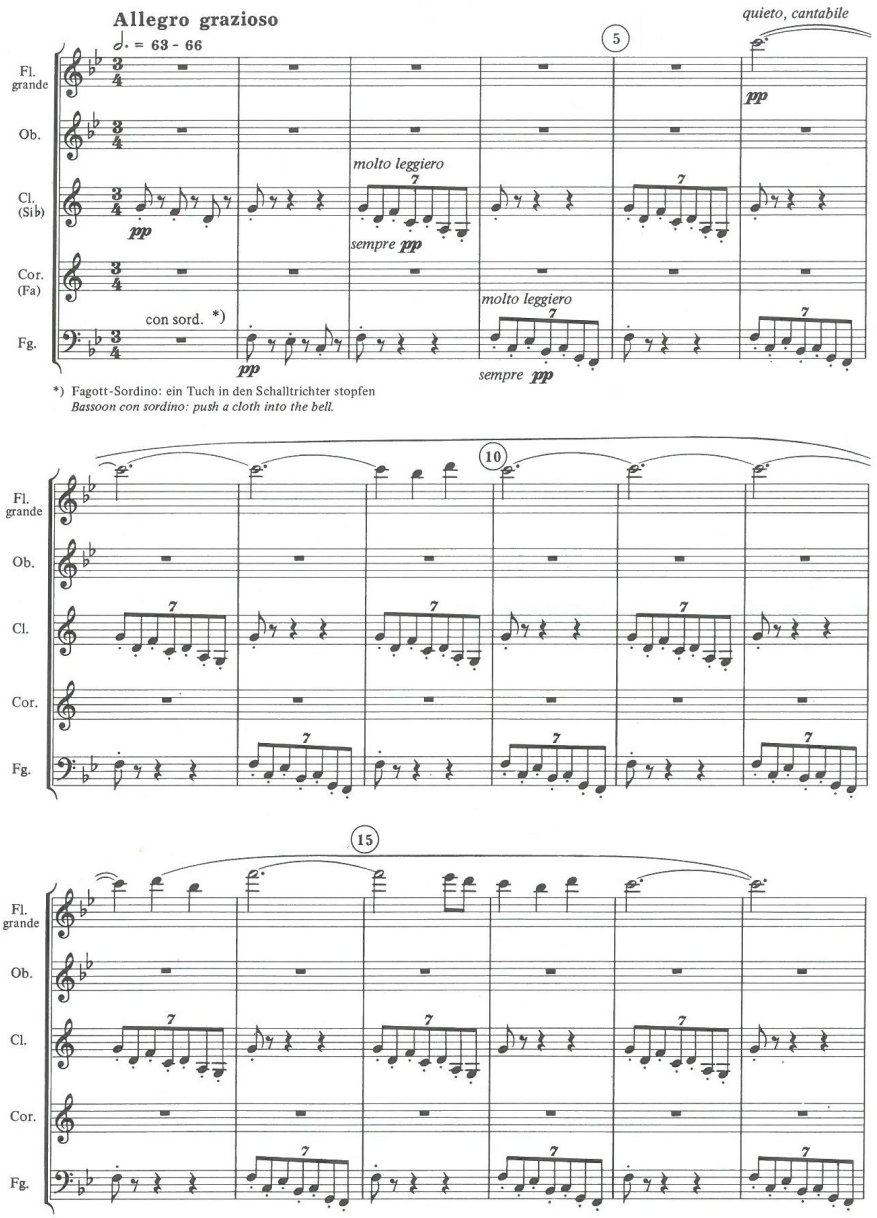
There is no doubt that until 1956, the folk melodies had not been absorbed in Ligeti's music as a positive response to the regime's demand. The composer was constantly "haunted" by this sound world of Transylvania and one of the proofs is precisely the evocation of this instrument, with its pastoral and sometimes funeral signals, in his *Hamburg Concerto*, a piece composed on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

That Ligeti did not use folk music by taking orders or as a circumstantial fact, is shown by other works written both before and after moving to the West, thus drawing a full circle. His rich memory stock of Romanian folklore flourished in his music since the late 70s in an unexpected way, nurturing his language from the underground.

One of these cases was discussed with musicologist Richard Steinitz[24] and sparked my interest in tracing the origin of a melody with strong folk flavour. It is an almost identical quotation of a melodic line in one of Enescu´s Symphonies and in Ligeti's *Musica ricercata* (1952), also in *6 Bagatelles for Wind Quintet* (1953), accompanied by a pointillist figuration, and later, outside the Iron Curtain, in his *Violin Concerto* composed between 1989-1993, when folk music was no longer a political requirement. This striking melodic coincidence requires some explanations: first of all, Ligeti couldn't have known Enescu's 5th Symphony, because the composer left it un-orchestrated.

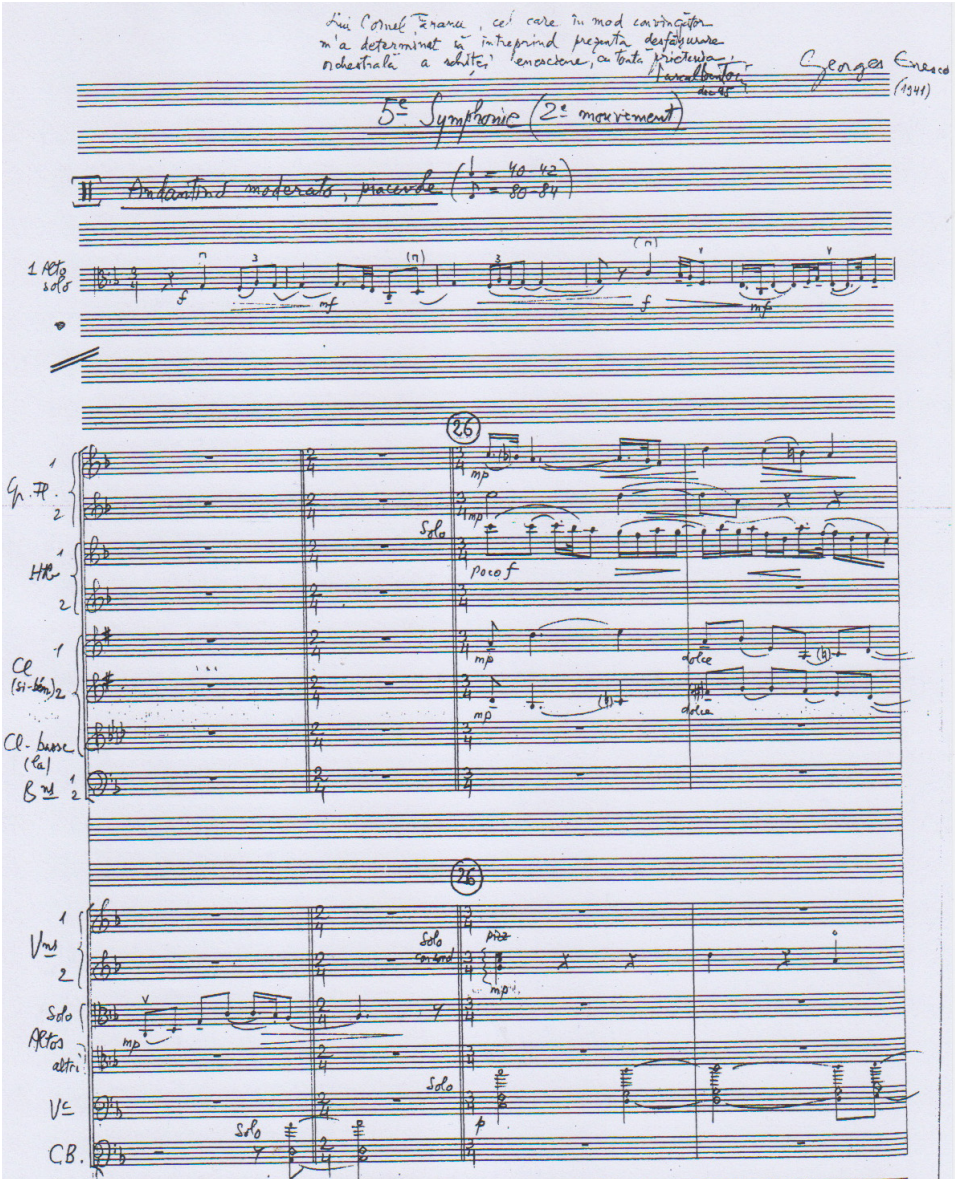
[22] Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti's Romanian Concerto. From Wax Cylinders to Symphony Orchestra", in *Studia UBB Musica*, no.1/2013, Cluj University Press, pp. 61-70.
[23] *Ibidem*, pp. 65-66.
[24] See Richard Steinitz, "The Innate Melodist" in *György Ligeti's Cultural Identities* (Amy Bauer and Márton Kerékfy eds.), Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon - New York, 2018, pp. 68-69.

E.g. 1



Ligeti - *Sechs Bagatellen für Bläserquintett* (no. 3), bars 1-18
© Schott, Mainz

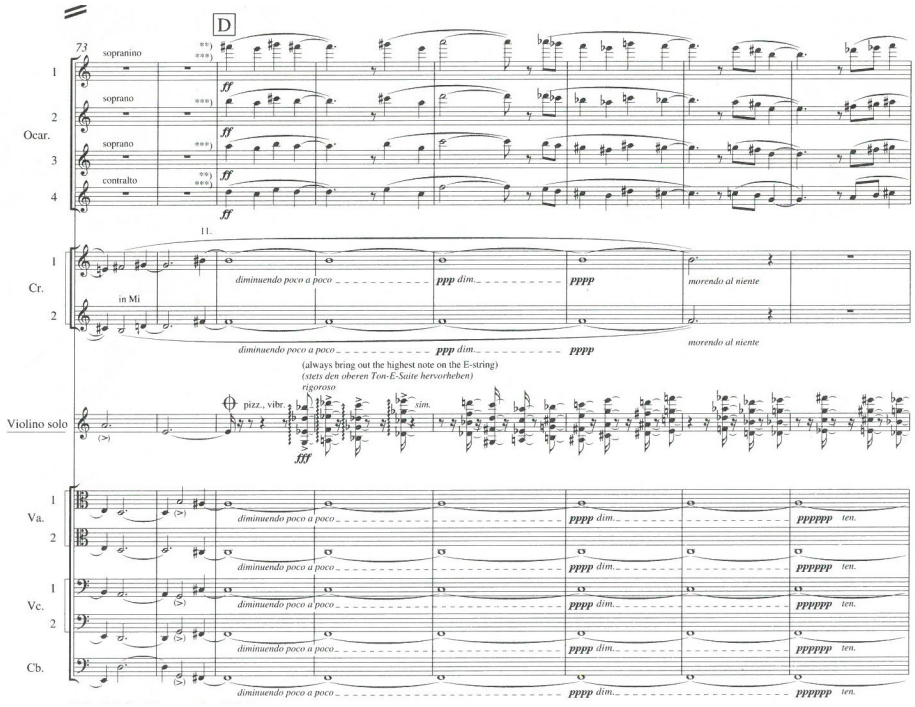
E.g. 2

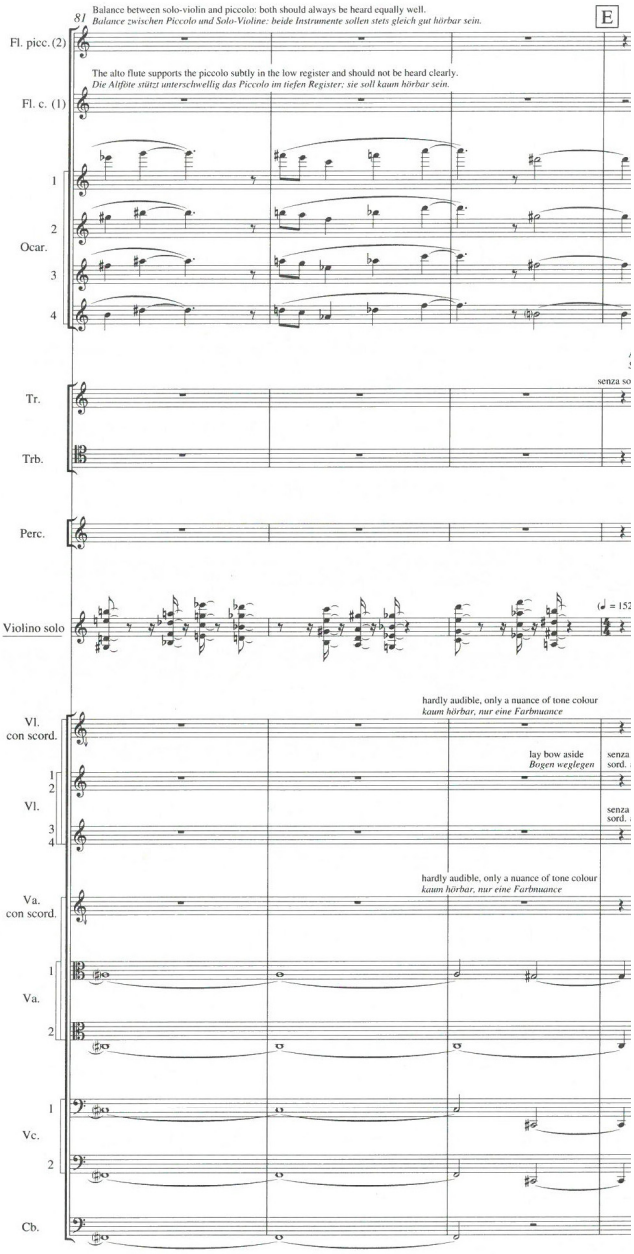


Enescu – *Symphony no. 5*, 2nd movement
(orchestration completed by Pascal Bentoiu)

On Enescu´s manuscript, held by the Enescu Museum in Bucharest, at the end of the second movement which employs the pastoral-nostalgic folk melody, one can find the composer's French note "Sinaia, Luminisch, ce 8 juillet 1941" (his summer villa in the Carpathians). Taking into account this chronological aspect, it is evident that at the time Ligeti wrote *Musica ricercata* or the *Six Bagatelles* he couldn´t have possibly known Enescu´s piece. Nor had Ligeti heard this melody when composing his *Violin Concerto*, where the folk theme generated an unusually beautiful ocarinas chorale, because Enescu's 5th Symphony was only publicly performed in Romania in the 90s (orchestrated by Pascal Bentoiu in 1995).

E.g. 3





Ligeti – *Violin Concerto*, 2nd movement, ”Aria, Hoquetus, Chorale”, bars 75-84
© Schott, Mainz

Seeking to explain this striking coincidence, an answer may be found, once again, at the Folklore Institute in Bucharest. In 1932, Enescu was an elected member of the Romanian Academy. Among his duties was to express an opinion and write reports on musical or scientific works to be published or publicly presented. A number of important folk music collections were viewed by him[25], which later entered the library stock of the Institute in Bucharest. Enescu also had the opportunity to listen in 1938 to some 30 discs recorded by Constantin Brăiloiu, containing Romanian folk music from all over the country, recordings which had also been broadcast in 1937 and 1938 by the Radio station in the Romanian capital. The discs could have very well ended up at the Folklore Institute where Ligeti was conducting research in 1949/1950. Could this be an explanation for the folk song used by both Enescu and Ligeti independently of one another? The research is underway and will hopefully prove conclusive.

This melodic coincidence only goes to show that for Ligeti, being "haunted" by these melodies in his early pieces inspired by the Romanian folk music was something which came from a sound musical instinct, and was not an enthusiastic response to a pre-determined ideology. *The Romanian Concerto, Musica Ricercata, Baladă și joc* did not meet the requirements or fit the template of the new aesthetics, even though at a first glance one could sense a pure folkloristic style.

Using an enriched lexicography during the last two decades of his creative life, references to Romanian and Carpathian region music persist and recur like remote autobiographical echoes.

Once established in Vienna he distanced himself from the folk music, trying to update his vocabulary to the Western newest trends, away from any strictures imposed by the absurd communist regime. Yet, he makes a stunning affirmation when stating that his *Kyrie* section of the *Requiem* is in fact a heterophony of *bocete* (funeral songs heard in his native Transylvania)[26] and also stating that he wanted to create here a bell of human voices[27].

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[25] Enescu wrote reports on numerous folk collections and research publications: Sabin Drăgoi: *303 Colinde* (1933); George Breazul: *Carte de cântece* (1935); Ion Caranica: *130 de melodii populare româneşti (*beginning of the 40s); I. Stroescu: *Hore şi sîrbe din Oltenia;* Nicolae Ursu: *Contribuţii muzicale la monografia comunei Sîrbova; Contribuţii muzicale la monografia comunei Măguri;* Constantin Brăiloiu: Recordings of folk melodies from all over Romania - 30 discs (1938); Recordings of folk melodies collected from Transylvania (1943). See Mircea Voicana: *George Enescu. Monografie*, Ed. Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, Bucureşti, 1971, pp. 707; 991; 993.

[26] Ligeti's discussion with Constantin Rîpă, conductor of the *Antifonia* Choir (Gh. Dima Academy, Cluj-Napoca), during the Festival *Musique d'Aujourd'hui*, Strasbourg, 1994. The choir presented Ligeti's *Requiem.*

[27] Paul Sacher Stiftung, Ligeti Collection.

Having stepped through the looking glass of Modernism, all these references were still vivid, yet during his last two decades of his creative life, Ligeti's Transylvanian heritage is "reflected in his work as through a fractured mirror: with distorted and irregular fragments, broken pieces facing in different directions, sometimes reflecting the same object variously in different proportions. The effect is like viewing film footage through an impenetrable spider's web and receiving only a low definition version of the source image"[28].

Trying to track down the pieces and recreating the original source of inspiration is a challenge for any contemporary researcher, and this manner of evoking the music of his native land, as a blurred remote object, could be called *nostalgia in disguise*. And here are some examples: the recurring sounds of the Transylvanian funeral melodic tradition emerge as through a veil in the Piano Study *Autumn in Varsovie* and in the *Piano Concerto* (the chromatic descendant line), the alphorn signals of the Carpathians are evoked again in several of his pieces the 1980s and the 1990s (*Hamburgisches Konzert*, among others), the folk dances permeate both his *Violin Concerto* as well as the *Viola Sonata* and the manuscripts of the Sacher archive fully confirm it.

But nostalgia took also an overtly stated form: the purest way of yearning for his native land might be considered the *Hora lungă*[29] of his *Viola Sonata*. Its haunting beauty is reproduced in an naturalistic way, without any artifice, allowing us to conclude that not even the avant-garde of the Western Europe could mute down the sonic echoes of his folk heritage.

Leaving Romania and Hungary for Austria and Germany, Ligeti broadened his musical knowledge and assimilated a great variety of folk cultures in his oeuvre, yet his music always encrypted sonic memories of his homeland, maybe as a means of dealing with the homesick, as this source of inspiration fully worked its magic in his music both as undercurrents and overtones.

In order to reinforce this hypothesis, I had recourse to Ligeti's words, speaking in the early nineties about his cultural roots which blossomed in his music:

I am a Hungarian Jew born in Transylvania. I had Romanian nationality when I was born, and later became Hungarian citizen when I went to Budapest (this was very difficult to acquire!). I then fled to Vienna after the Revolution in 1956.

[28] See Bianca Țiplea Temeș, "Ligeti and Romanian Folk Music. An Insight from the Paul Sacher Foundation" in *György Ligeti's Cultural Identities* (Amy Bauer and Márton Kerékfy eds.), Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon - New York, 2018, p. 134.

[29] Folk genre from the region of Maramureș, North part of Transylvania.

I didn't become someone from the West, but rather someone who has roots in both parts of the world.

In my heart I feel at home everywhere, in Vienna, in Hamburg, in Paris, in New York, or in Budapest.

Everyone should be like that, a citizen of the world.

But of course, I am tied to Transylvania, where I haven't been in 36 years…[30]

No doubt, Ligeti's words make any other concluding remark redundant.

R E F E R E N C E S

***, The manuscripts of the Ligeti Collection of the Paul Sacher Foundation, Basle.

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