

BOOK REVIEW

REMEMBERING THE FUTURE – ȘTEFAN ANGI'S CONFESSIONS ABOUT HIS COLLEAGUE, THE COMPOSER CORNEL ȚĂRANU (ȘTEFAN ANGI: CORNEL ȚĂRANU. MĂRTURISIRI MOZAIcate, STUDII ȘI ESEURI, ED. EIKON, CLUJ-NAPOCA, 2014)

Movingly genuine, pithy and comprehensive – these are maybe the best words that characterize the latest book of the music aesthete from Cluj, Ștefan Angi written about his colleague and contemporary, the Romanian composer of an international reputation, Cornel Țăranu. The volume is not so a traditional biography or monography as a series of confessions exposed in the most various ways: a cavalcade of memories, interviews, essays and studies, critiques and chronicles and introductions to works. This variety of the reflections is probably the most suggestive way of revealing the composer's several faces: the contrast between his jovial habit and the deepness, the seriousness of his music, the ancestral roots of his creation of a remarkable openness towards the new, his performing, pedagogical and other public activities outgrew from the imperative of composing and promoting contemporary music.

It's not so difficult to perceive between the lines of Angi's book his reverence for the composer's oeuvre, which is, however, much more, than a cordial gesture for the 80th birthday of the Maestro. It is, so to say, an *homage*. An *homage* to the composer, and least to the values promoted by him. It is hard to understand Țăranu's works, musical thinking, artistic attitude without the knowledge of its particular historical-cultural context, also experienced by the author: the urge for creative freedom forced by the political oppression on this side of the Iron Curtain, a cultural identity deeply rooted in the popular tradition and the search for the latest forms of artistic expression, the close spiritual coherence of the spiritual elite, the dialogue of different cultures.

One of the main ideas of this book, as one of the Maestro's oeuvre rests on the unquestionable significance and necessity of new music. While this art was always modern and new until the 19th century, the creative crossroads of the last century led more frequently to the alternative of novelty, in the spirit of the Latin proverb: "non nova, sed nove" (not new, but in a new way). Angi restates his firm position for the new – „nova, non nove" (new, not in a new way) – along with the composer, as a common belief. This doesn't mean neither the change for its own sake, nor the denial of the old. It refers much more to a fertile creative process that is able to transubstantiate and transform old and perpetual ideas, thoughts into new (if you like: contemporary) artworks by the means of new composing devices and forms of expression, whether they are myths, ancient music cultures or other values of our cultural heritage.

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On the grounds of this principle, that of promoting new music were founded by Țăranu in 1968 the internationally known Ars Nova Ensemble as the Cluj Modern Festival a decade ago. His efforts were frequently recorded by Angi in several chronicles and critiques (also included in the present book), being aware that the new music requires, even more than a 100 years ago committed aesthetes, opinion-shapers.

Though the composer's avant-garde verve seems to be unremitting, also confirmed by Angi as a hope in the introduction of this volume, the reader may experience from time to time the curious sentiment of nostalgia for the new; and further, wakening from nostalgia, the idea of remembering and most of all reminding the future. The interview-montage compiled by the author reveals the paradox of this situation: as long as the avant-garde aspirations of the Eastern Bloc – nurtured formerly by the isolation, dictatorship and defiance against the oppression – were confronted with the lack of understanding, in the globalized world opened after the fall of walls the new had to struggle with another enemy: indifference.

Angi's volume summarizes the experiences, edifications and rich results of these lifetime efforts: the composer's dilemma about past, present and future (Confessions), and above all his creative path, the traverse section of its representative genres and compositions, including the analytical summary of the compositional style elements and their underlying aesthetic dichotomies (Studies and essays).

Let's quote in conclusion the author's hopeful thoughts towards the Maestro about the future and trust in continuance: "... the risks [of thinking in perspectives at this age] coincide with the ideals that you never gave up, and together with them new works, new accomplishments, new successes will come true."

ATTILA FODOR