

COMPOZITORI CLUJENI. GENERAȚIA '76-'80 [CLUJ COMPOSERS. '76-'80 GENERATION]¹

We welcome with great enthusiasm the appearance in 2022 of the CD “Compozitori Clujeni. Generația '76-'80” [Cluj Composers. '76-'80 Generation] which is part of the “Anthology of Romanian Music” series. The project was financed by the Ministry of Culture together with the Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania, under the coordination of associate professor Cristian Bence-Muk who is the Dean of the Theoretical Faculty of the “Gheorghe Dima” National Academy of Music. With a total of 61 minutes



and 33 seconds of contemporary music, this CD offers the public the privilege of hearing six works, each with its own stamp of originality, by six students trained in the Cluj School of Composition of the “Gheorghe Dima” National Music Academy under the careful guidance of master Cornel Țăranu and master Hans Peter Türk.

The present album debuts with *Cinci bagatele pentru clarinet și cvartet de coarde* [Five bagatelles for clarinet and strings quartet] (2012: Track 1-5), a work in which associate professor Șerban Marcu (b. 1977) approaches the minimalist aesthetics in a personal manner.

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Explaining the compositional conception of each individual miniature, Șerban Marcu affirms the fact that in *Bagatela no. 1* (2'30") the minimalism manifests itself in the form of economy at the level of the tonal structure, being grounded on 10 different pitches.

In *Bagatela no. 2* (1'02"), the rhythmic variety is expressed by "the clarinet discourse which is based almost exclusively on sequences of eighth notes", and for the harmonic parameter in the *Bagatela no. 3* (3'37") the clarinet's lyrical cantilena is accompanied only by diminished minor seventh chords.

The repetitive-evolutionary musical discourse from *Bagatela no. 4* (2'10") is followed by a minimalist approach to musical gestures in *Bagatela no. 5* (3'09"). The composer himself mentions: "the clarinet is in the main role of the musical discourse of all the five miniatures, and the string quartet is having rather the role of accompanying the clarinet, of offering harmonic or timbral "decoration". (Șerban Marcu, 2012)

The work was presented to the public on 5th of November, 2012, during the "21st Century Clarinet Quintets" concert, and was recorded live in the Studio Hall due to the implication of the Acoustic Studio team of the National Academy of Music "Gheorghe Dima", Cluj-Napoca. The interpretative conception bears the mark of the renowned clarinetist Răzvan Poptean and the prestigious string quartet "Arcadia": Ana Török (violin I), Răsvan Dumitru (violin II), Traian Boală (viola), Zsolt Török (cello).

In the sequence presented on the CD, follows *Starlight* for flute, violin, cello, harp and percussion (2021, Track 6, with a duration of 8'03") signed by associate professor Tudor Feraru (b. 1976), a work that the composer himself classifies "in the 'soundscape' category, also based on partially controlled aleatoric processes at the level of heights, intensities and textural density. The piece aims to involve the performers as consistently as possible in creating a unique soundscape, meant to suggest a journey among the galaxies. The score uses graphic illustrations, like constellations, and uses a temporal axis based on which the instrumentalists can follow the relative thread of the sound development. Although much freedom is allowed in the individual contribution of each performer, the composition of the ensemble cannot undergo changes (percussion includes only vibraphone, glockenspiel, triangle, and metal bells). The intended sonic effect of the work might best be defined by timelessness and weightlessness." (Tudor Feraru, 2021)

The recording was made during the "Meridian" Festival (2021), the work being performed by "Ensemble Couleurs", conducted by Alexandru Ștefan Murariu, with Ramona Murariu (flute), Francesco Ionașcu (violin), Diana Stir (cello), Alexandra Răileanu (harp) and Toni Vîntur (percussion).

Associate professor Răzvan Metea (1978-2021) composed the work *Schizo Folk* for clarinet and electronic music (2011: Track 7-9, p. I – 3'40", p. II – 3'35" p. III – 2'48") as "a combination of songs in Romanian folk style, bringing together sound effects made with the help of the human body and the computer. At the base of this work is a musical motif subject to continuous elaboration, which results in the melodic line with the fourth and second intervals as the basic constructive units.

In the first part we find two vectors that alternate permanently – a melodic one (performed by the clarinet) and a rhythmic one (performed by foot kicks). As well here we encounter moments of *Rubato*, of aleatoric music and improvisation. In Part II, two elements are also noticeable, but this time one static and monotonous (at the beginning) and one moving, dancing, on a waltz rhythm (at the end). In Part III, most of the ideas presented in the first two parts combine and develop, with the music evolving and culminating in that schizophrenic folklore also mentioned in the title. In parts II and III, the electronic music is conceived as a playback over which the soloist's performance is overlapped." (Răzvan Metea, 2011).

The work was presented to the public by the clarinetist Răzvan Poptean, during the "Clarinetomania" performance on 12 of October 2011, in the Studio Hall of the National Academy of Music "Gheorghe Dima", the recording being made by the institution's Acoustic Studio team.

In the opinion of the musicologist associate professor Lucian Ghișa, the work *Ludus cvintetix* for clarinet and string quartet (2012, Track 10, 11'48"), signed by associate professor Ciprian Gabriel Pop (b. 1977), "express a motric play in which the polyphony of accents, together with the ostinato rhythm, represent the main compositional elements of the work. [...] The quintet qualifies within the aesthetic category of the comic, an aspect that characterizes a large part of the works of the composer Ciprian Gabriel Pop, who has already succeeded to form a well distinguished and well-structure personal style, a language that underlines his personality within the group by young composers from the Cluj school. Polyphonist by excellence, playful by his construction of personality and *giusto* by technique, Ciprian Gabriel Pop manages, once again, to create a work perfectly anchored in the newest creative algorithms of the 21st century, but which is addresses, due to its accessibility, to a wide audience." (Lucian Ghișa, 2012)

Through the contribution of the clarinetist Răzvan Poptean and the “Arcadia” quartet, the work was performed within the “21st Century Clarinet Quintets” concert which took place on 5th November 2012 in the Studio Hall of the National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima” and recorded by the institution’s Acoustic Studio.

Associate professor Matei Pop (b. 1980) dedicated *Nostalgia – Hommage a Zoltán Kodály* for flute, clarinet, piano, violin, viola, and cello (2019, Track 11, 8’42”) to the French contemporary music ensemble *2e2m*, which played the premiere of the piece in the same year, within the “Cluj Modern” International Festival.

The composer himself states that “the title evokes an archaic period, when the elemental forces of music were closer to people’s hearts. The musical material consists mostly of quotations from authentic Hungarian folklore sources, taken from the extensive collections made by the great composer and ethnomusicologist Zoltán Kodály, the work being at the same time a tribute to his personality.

The compositional procedures are based on the exploitation of polymetric and polytemporal phenomena obtained through various overlaps or alternations of the source-melodies, as well as through the resulting modal congruences. There is also an original melody, which functions as a *ritornello*, its role being to separate different musical sections within the formal structure.” (Matei Pop, 2019).

The work was presented by the prestigious *AdHOC* ensemble: Raluca Ilovan (flute), Aurelian Băcan (clarinet), Francesco Ionașcu (violin), Ovidiu Costea (viola), Vlad Rațiu (cello), Eva Butean (piano), under the musical direction of maestro Adrian Pop, during the “Toamna muzicală Clujeană” [Cluj musical autumn] Festival, on 18th of October, 2022 in the Studio Hall of the National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima” and recorded by the Institution’s Acoustic Studio.

The vice-president of the Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania and associate professor Cristian Bence-Muk (b. 1978) composed the work *21.12.2012* for clarinet and string quartet (2012, Track 12, 10’17”).

According to Cristian Bence-Muk, the work “does not symbolize the end of the world, but only the end of a large cycle of the Sun, a cycle of 26.000 terrestrial years, an aspect calculated with precision by the greatest astronomers of Antiquity - the Mayans. Initially, the numbers in the song’s

title are interpreted as a telephone number, and the sounds of the keys, transferred into musical sounds, give rise to a musical motif that will run through the entire score.

Later, the numbers will find a melodic equivalent (taking into account the ambitus of a standard piano – “A” from Sub-contra octave to “C 5” – will be sought the sounds 21, 12, 20, 1 and 2, starting both from the grave register to the ascending direction, as well as from the upper limit of the ambitus in the descending direction, which will generate two motifs of five notes each, which together with their inversions and a series of 12 notes will constitute the main musical material of the piece), rhythmic (number 2 – will be represented by two sixteenth notes or a repeated chord, 1 – by an eight note or an isolated chord), partial and metric (alternative measures: 8/8, 10/8, 12/8).

The moment of the Sun’s passage from one hemisphere of the galaxy to another will be emphasized by an aleatoric music moment involving all five performers, thus suggesting disruption and chaos of cosmic proportions. The transition to another galactic hemisphere will produce multiple inversions of the basic musical elements, as a “reversal” of the order of things, culminating in an extra-musical direction, through the typing of the recurring telephone number 21022112.

The spiritual change and evolution, which appears as a consequence of cosmic transformations, is suggested by the replacement of the minor second (semitone) – which represented the main constructive element of the “old sound world” – with the major second (tone) – which will become, after the general aleatoric moment, the new element of sound construction –, trying to rebuild the whole world on new bases, in the context of an upward, spiraling evolution.” (Cristian Bence-Muk, 2012)

This work is offered to the listeners in a live recording from the performance within “21st Century Clarinet Quintets” on the concert from 5th of November, which took place in the Studio Hall of the “Gheorghe Dima” National Academy of Music, performed by the clarinetist Răzvan Popotean and the “Arcadia” quartet.

The musical compositions signed by Șerban Marcu, Răzvan Metea, Ciprian Gabriel Pop and Cristian Bence-Muk are composed and printed within the C.N.C.S. project, type TE, “The artistic-social impact of contemporary musical creation in the 21st century, through the prism of the creative relationship interpreter – consumer – public” (2010-2013), project director: Cristian Bence-Muk.

This remarkable CD, produced under the auspices of the Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania and mastered by Andrei Barbu, offers to the public valuable musical material with representative works of contemporary Cluj composers: Şerban Marcu, Tudor Feraru, Răzvan Metea, Ciprian Gabriel Pop, Matei Pop and Cristian Bence-Muk.

The musical expressiveness in dynamics, phrasing, articulation, the rhythmic precision, the synchronization, and the involvement of the performers in performing the musical discourse are but a few examples of the valences which listeners will be able to notice during the audition of the CD.

Seen from another perspective, the entire artistic message created and performed within this album could be translated into an invitation toward the compositional universe of each of the six Cluj composers, to discover new epistemological dimensions from each one's creation.

These masterpieces successfully combine styles of Romanian and universal musical culture, and the impact they have already had and will continue to have on the audience, justifies the expression of our desire that in the near future to have the privilege of listening to other albums of these Masters in the art of composition.

CRISTINA ŞUTEU²

² *Lecturer Professor, PhD, National Academy of Music „Gh. Dima”, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
E-mail: suteu.cristina@amgd.ro*