

Romanian Folklore: Transfer and Reinterpretations in Transylvanian Contemporary Music. The Cluj School of Composition

Abstract. The importance of the Romanian folkloric vein in the shaping of the modern school of composition was fully confirmed in the work of composer George Enescu (1881–1955), who achieved in his own music a synthesis of elements of national culture and European techniques. This is even more innovative as it implied overcoming a striking incompatibility between the monodic-modal characteristics of the local folklore and the international circuit of classical music.

The obvious contrast between the color of Romanian folkloric modalism and the norms of the Western idiom of the time proved to be, in the end, style generative. Later generations of composers, supported by increasingly specialized research in the field of ethnomusicology, were to integrate into their own works the determining characteristics of the autochthonous tradition, including modal language, the free *parlando-rubato* style, monodic character, dancing or swaying rhythms, archaic elements (such as the *ison* or the *bi-tertial* chord), timbral effects of specific instruments (alpenhorn, whistle, semantron), without excluding contemporary or even avant-garde techniques adopted in the rest of Europe.

At the confluence of tradition and modernity, the Cluj school of composition (located in the capital of Transylvania) was formed, with the composer Sigismund Toduță (1908–1991), an important promoter of local folklore, as its mentor. His last disciple, Adrian Pop (b. 1951)—also a student of Cornel Țăranu (1934–2023), a composer known for his avant-garde attitudes—like other representatives of the Cluj circle, shaped his own style in accordance with the sources of inspiration and the intended artistic message, turning to the resources of the autochthonous heritage, to the original aesthetic contributions of contemporary Romanian music (heterophony, spectralism,¹ etc.) as well as to Western techniques (such as texturalism, aleatorism). His choral, chamber, and symphonic works present the successful fusion of Romanian ethno in contempo.

Keywords: Cluj, Transylvania, Romanian folklore, folk tune, tradition, modernity, heterophony, texturalism.

Introduction

What is the role of local folklore in shaping the specificity and evolution of a school of composition? What is its significance in the vast stylistic landscape of modernity, and how can it be integrated into creative practice focusing both on meaning and originality? The development and recognition of Romanian composers, as well as representatives of local schools in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic region, offer, upon analytical examination, clues—especially of a stylistic nature—regarding the techniques and trends that have proven effective in achieving these artistic goals.

The establishment of the Romanian musical identity was achieved at the intersection of two trends: that of *compensation*, particularly related to the process of local recovery of cultural forms that appeared in the European art of the time and their placement “in tune with the local sensitivity and reality” (Herman 1977, 30), and respectively that of *affirmation*, consisting in the incorporation of popular art in forms of the West-European classical tradition, a process that resulted in bringing the specific Romanian essence among contemporary artistic values. In a unique way, the very incompatibility of the general monodic-modal nature of the inner structure of Romanian folk music with Western European musical forms of tonal-functional essence proved to be style-creating, the fusion of the two being manifested in a highly original manner in the work of the first representatives of the national school of composition.

Some of the key steps in the integration of peasant folklore (also highly appreciated by the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók) into Romanian cultured music coincided with the initiative—regarded as daring at that time—of the Romanian composer, musicologist and conductor Gavriil Musicescu (1847–1903) to process authentic tunes for choir, thus giving an impetus to the collection and harmonization of rural folklore by representatives such as Dumitru Georgescu Kiriak, Gheorghe Cucu, Ion Vidu, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Sabin Drăgoi, Constantin Brăiloiu, Gheorghe Breazul. The founding of the Society of Romanian Composers

¹ According to Romanian musicologist Valentina Sandu-Dediu (2002, 159) and composer Irinel Anghel (b. 1969), the spectralist movement has been cultivated since the 1960s by representatives such as Corneliu Cezar and Octavian Nemescu, Aurel Stroe, Costin Cazaban, Horațiu Rădulescu, Iancu Dumitrescu, Lucian Meșianu, Costin Miereanu, Mihai Mitrea-Celarianu, and Ana-Maria Avram, in clear opposition, however, “to the belated claim of primacy by the spectralists at IRCAM—Gérard Grisey, Tristan Murail and Jean-Claude Risset, members of the Ensemble l’Itinéraire, founded only in 1973”. As in the case of heterophony, Romanian composers based their research more on “the exploration of profound content such as the acoustic and, above all, the archetypal, rather than on technical-savant deductions as in the case of Western serialists or spectralists” (Anghel 2018, 16).

(SRC) in 1920, of the Phonogram Archive of the Ministry of Culture and Arts (1927) and of the Folklore Archive of the Society of Romanian Composers (1928)—merged in 1949, with the establishment of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore—facilitated the scientific knowledge, dissemination, and influence of the Romanian autochthonous dimension, intertwined with the compositional phenomenon of those years.

In addition to benefiting from an ever-expanding folkloric fund, the attitudes of exponents of the creative sector in cultivating these resources were decisive. The main impetus came from George Enescu, whose work was shaped at the intersection of Romanian authenticity and techniques specific to the Western European repertoire—with which he was also very familiar—providing a model worthy of inspiration for Romanian composition schools and establishing the valences of the native language as a reference point in shaping artistic identity.

A revealing example in this regard is the Cluj school, established, under the guidance of composer Sigismund Toduță, in the heart of Transylvania. Located between the two poles of tradition and modernity, represented by Toduță—a well-known adherent of established polyphonic practices, and Cornel Țăranu—a bold spirit in the realm of the most innovative techniques of the moment, the composers of Cluj have succeeded in maximizing not only Romanian tradition (represented by folklore in general) but also universal tradition (considered a landmark by their master composers) and local traditions (without which the search for authenticity would have been only partially resolved). The fusion of these factors, together with the specific sensitivities of each representative in relation to the intended artistic message, resulted in the emergence of some notable creative profiles. However, one of the primary resources in shaping national and personal identity was the autochthonous folklore. This study briefly presents some analytical arguments in this regard.

1. The role of George Enescu in the formation of the Romanian school of composition

The introductory chapter has drawn the context in which the personality of the composer George Enescu (1881–1955)² emerged. By combining the cultured heritage of the 19th century (let us not forget that Enescu was trained in Western Europe, in Vienna and Paris) with the impulses received from the popular musical substance (of an ethnic rather than academic-savant essence), he was to substantially influence the attitude of later generations of Romanian composers towards the autochthonous folklore. A few stylistic considerations that can be found in Enescu's compositions and which are worth mentioning are: the prevalence of the *parlando-rubato* improvisatory system, whose specificity lies in the free, asymmetrical rhythmic execution and a melismatic melody, originating in the ornamental cantabile style of songs and *doinas*;³ the fondness for the instrumental recitative style, especially among the fiddlers; the “supremacy of melody over all other elements of language” (Niculescu 1980, 87) as a fundamental characteristic; the chromatic concept based on the general modal language; the cultivation of the rhapsodic form; etc. At the level of writing, some methods organically deduced from popular melodies can be noted, such as the pedal and *ostinato* technique, the major-minor oscillations specific to Romanian song, or “the intense use (often in the moments of climax in Enescu's works) of unison” (Firca 1974, 26).

In addition to enescian works featuring an autochthonous substratum, constituted by projecting an “imaginary folklore”⁴ situated at the confluence of specific melodic-rhythmic elements with those coming from universal music, another technique intensively used by Romanian composers was that of processing the popular tune or “quotation,” of enhancing its expressive valences by adapting it to various genres or stylistic settings.

Moreover, the Romanian folk essences also generated innovative techniques in the Romanian artistic landscape of the 20th century. Thus, starting from the need to create a polyphony that would correspond to the *parlando-rubato* structure of his folk-inspired melodies (and not to the divisional rhythmic system specific to the contrapuntal setting), Enescu developed the heterophonic syntax, manifested, in the general sense

² Some of the most illustrative enescian titles derived from the artistic-musical exploitation of the national folklore in his cult works are *Poème roumain* Op. 1 (1897), *Romanian Rhapsodies* (1901), the *Orchestral Suites*, Sonata No. 3 “dans le caractère populaire roumain” Op. 25 (1926), Suite for violin and piano “Impressions d'Enfance” Op. 28 (1940).

³ A melancholy song, whose intonations and melodic shape imprints the typical “dor” (longing) feeling—an untranslatable notion which most often implies the feeling of sadness or nostalgia.

⁴ The invention of “imaginary folklore” melodies with an authentic character and a more complex melodic, rhythmic and modal structure, to which the status of “themes” could be attributed, allowing the natural derivation of transitional moments, development and coda was a frequent phenomenon in the creative work of the 1950s, in such composers as Sigismund Toduță, George Dumitrescu, Iancu Dumitrescu, Alfred Mendelssohn, Paul Constantinescu, Nicolae Bucliu, Marțian Negrea, Mihail Andricu, Tudor Jarda, and others.

of the term, by the pendulum between the mono-vocal and pluri-vocal states, respectively the alternation between unison and pluri-melody, generated by the overlapping of a basic melodic line with its variations. The theorization and definition of heterophony as a basic syntactic category (equal in importance to monody, polyphony, or homophony), with its origin in folklore, is attributed to another Romanian composer, Ștefan Niculescu (1927–2008), who also consistently applied it in his own work, “in forms of synchrony, but also in other ways, associated with the *ison* technique (see *Ison I, II*) or in complex combinations with the other ‘syntactic typologies’” (Sandu-Dediu 2002, 108). In other words, the form is generated by the temporal organization of the music, by the successiveness (monody) or simultaneity (homophony, polyphony, heterophony) of the unfolding sound, in multiple possible combinations: polyphony in between a heterophony and a homophony, polyphony of heterophonies, heterophony of heterophonies, etc.” (Sandu-Dediu 2002, 108–109). Thus, unlike Pierre Boulez,⁵ who deduces heterophony from the equation of serial music, the Romanian school of composition approached the phenomenon in a broader and deeper way, from a modernist-avant-garde position, also evident in other conceptions, among which we mention spectralism—with “an emphasis on rediscovering the natural roots of music, primarily by the representatives of the Romanian compositional school, whose theoretical and practical primacy over the orientation is very little (almost none) known internationally” (Anghel 2018, 152), aleatorism—in variants closer to the radical model, or the controlled one, derived from an improvisatory approach with its origins in folklore, morphogenetic music,⁶ etc.

At the same time, during the first decades of the second half of the 20th century, the modal intonational universe drawn from folklore evolves through the gradual acquisition of increasingly distant functional spaces, tending towards chromatic thinking, a fact that can be found in the middle and last stage of Enescu’s oeuvre, where “a broad chromatic modalism imposes itself with certainty” (Popovici 1980, 33). Thus, in Romanian music, the chromatic total will be reached not by hyperchromatizing the major-minor, but through the diatonic modes and, especially, the chromatic ones. What is novel is that the intense chromatization of the modes does not contradict but, rather, intensifies the national coloring in a very subtle manner. The new scientific methods of investigation, and especially the mathematical ones, also confirm their role—both as a means of control and as a possibility of achieving new sound structures.

Although the Romanian compositional space undergoes a significant stylistic diversification, the broadening of the technical and expressive spectrum and the approach to the coordinates of a universal style does not invalidate the affiliation of the artistic products to the composers’ mother language, the tradition permanently manifesting its dominance as a “style supra-coordinate” (Herman 1977, 144).

Against this effervescent artistic background, the Cluj school of composition developed, being established within the National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima,” respectively around the paternal figure of the composer Sigismund Toduță. Finding their inspiration in the autochthonous musical heritage, as well as in the poetics and theorizations regarding the cultural determinants or the “stylistic matrix” (Blaga 2011, 141) of the Romanian “mioritic” space⁷ outlined by the philosopher Lucian Blaga (1895–1961)—with whom Toduță was in a close artistic and spiritual connection—the generations of composers from the heart of Transylvania have, over time, brought to light valuable creations configured at the intersection of tradition and contemporaneity.

⁵ As noted by Kóter Péter László, in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Heterofonia și problema categoriilor sintactice. Aspecte teoretice, terminologice și analitice* [Heterophony and the Problem of Syntactic Categories. Theoretical, Terminological and Analytical Aspects], completed in 2023 at the National Academy of Music “Gheorghe Dima” Cluj-Napoca, Boulez particularly captures the monodic substrate or principle of the phenomenon, seeing heterophony as “a distribution, on different dimensions, of identical sounds” (2023, 13).

⁶ Based on mathematician René Thom’s thesis concerning the continuous accumulations of an organism in interference with its environment, which at a certain point cause erosion of its existence, leading to catastrophe, rupture and a change in its direction of evolution, morphogenesis refers, in music, to the processes by which forms are created or destroyed. Morphogenetic aesthetics aims to trace the genesis, evolution and death, respectively the laws and stages of existence of a sound organism, and the rupture at the level of musical composition becomes a reflection of a “broken” thinking with an effect on the semantic level. One of the main representatives of this orientation was the composer Aurel Stroe (1932–2008) (Anghel 2018, 168).

⁷ Starting from the word “miorița,” which essentially indicates a young sheep aged 1 to 2 years, and from a Romanian narrative song bearing the same title and featured in autochthonous folklore all over the country, the great philosopher, poet and playwright Lucian Blaga (1895–1961) links, in two parts of his *Trilogy of Culture*, namely *Horizon and Style* and *The Mioritic Space* (1936), the Romanian cultural creativity and ultimately style to the spiritual “mioritic” horizon. The text of the ballad *Miorița* describes an episode of transhumance in an idyllic Romanian setting, the plains, in which two shepherds plan to kill the third to take possession of his flock, as well as the surprising, peaceful attitude of the victim towards death, at the moment he learns about the conspiracy from one of his young sheep. This “mioritic fatalism” is one of the features that are highly imprinted in the “ancestral Romanian soul,” manifesting itself universally in the autochthonous culture.

2. Folkloric source and the Cluj school of composition

Characterized by variety, rather than by imitative manifestations that would generate—through processes of teaching, learning, and reproducing a certain “way of doing things”—an artificial stylistic cohesion, the Cluj school consists of composers who trained at the Academy of Music in the capital of Transylvania, as well as those who, despite not having studied there, have maintained significant collaborations with the institution over time. It is very likely that they influenced each other—more at the level of emulation than at that of imitation—thus “becoming the authors of some ‘made in Cluj’ compositions” (Adrian Pop, in Temeș 2021). Representatives such as Sigismund Toduță, Cornel Țăranu, and Adrian Pop had a considerable impact on the way in which Western European and local traditions, as well as avant-garde developments, were reflected in Cluj-Napoca’s compositional practice.

2.1. Sigismund Toduță

A leading figure of Romanian music, the first Romanian musician to earn the “Doctor of Musicology” title following his studies at the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra in Rome (1936–1938) and also the founder of music doctoral studies in Romania, in Cluj, the composer, professor and musicologist Sigismund Toduță (1908–1991), brought a synthesis between West-European classical traditions and Romanian popular music, advancing a structuralist orientation,⁸ achieved by exploiting the value of folk music (peasant music, or the Greek-Catholic vein) in a neo-Baroque spirit.

He consistently promotes polyphonic genres and forms such as madrigal, fugue, *ricercar*, *passacaglia*, etc. Relevant examples in this sense are the opera-oratorio *Meșterul Manole* (Master Manole, 1985, after Blaga’s play with the same title)—a work with a massive architecture, which integrates “polyphonic variations on folk melodies” (Sandu-Dediu 2002, 125), *Passacaglia* for piano (1943), built on the theme of a carol, etc. We also identify in Toduță’s music samples of “imaginary folklore,” “invented,” of “an authentic character and a more complex melodic and modal structure” (Herman 1977, 75) used as themes that allow “the natural derivation of moments of transition, development, coda” (Herman 1977, 75) etc. This is the case with his symphonies, as well as with the *Sonatina* for piano (1950), in which “forms such as sonata, *passacaglia*, *rondo* reach a real maturity, bearing the structure of ‘sound crystals’” (Herman 1977, 75). Another Toduțian manner of processing melodic idioms from folklore is through cyclical development and melodic variation, a process that “demonstrates the vitality and malleability of autochthonous thematic material, while at the same time providing a link to the great values of universal creation” (Herman 1977, 76).

We could not miss from the list of Toduță’s masterpieces the *Miorița* oratorio-ballad (1958), for three soloists (tenor, soprano, alto), girls’ choir, male and mixed, and orchestra, a late work that, by the way it explores the Romanian folkloric background—including Byzantine intonations or vocal inflections suggesting microtones—“inaugurates a new creative phase that deepens the chromatic writing, without intending to enter the sphere of serialism” (Sandu-Dediu 2002, 127). The ways of revealing the folkloric dimension throughout the 13 movements of the work, based on the mioritic idea, vary from the heterophonic procedures and the extensive “melismatic roulades, on pedal-*ison* notes” (Țăranu 1969, 53), which are performed on the *Doinind*, *molto rubato* background that enhances the pastoral character of the text (in the first movement, “Heterofonia”), the ancestral resonances of the soloistic discourse dedicated to the flute (in the fourth movement, “Aulodia”)—whose chromatic elements refer to specific sonorities of the pastoral instruments, the setting of popular intonations to the patterns of Renaissance or Baroque polyphonic forms (in the fifth movement, “Oița birsană”) and even to the intonations of *doina*, *bocet* (lament), lullaby, carol, or dance. The overlay of contemporary techniques to the Romanian folk language, the structuralist trend so evident in Toduță’s oeuvre, as well as his inclination towards regional, Transylvanian traditions constitute stylistic coordinates that can be found, in fact, in most of the representatives of the Cluj school of composition, each of them integrating them, however, in an original manner, according to their own artistic vision.

⁸ This structuralist orientation, as well as the inspiration from Transylvanian oral traditions, can be found in most of the representatives of the Cluj school of composition, from Vasile Herman to Dan Voiculescu, from Hans Peter-Türk to Valentin Țîmaru and Adrian Pop.

2.2. Cornel Țăranu

Cornel Țăranu (1934–2023), a composer, musicologist and teacher, was another outstanding personality of the Cluj creative space.⁹ His work embodies “a multidimensional space of world history and culture,” a temporal concept in which “past and present are perceived simultaneously” (Ciobanu 2019, 25), as well as stylistic poles apparently in contrast. This is confirmed by titles such as *Saramandji*, *Lăutarul* [The fiddler], *Nomad Songs*, *Doina*, *Transylvanian Ballad*, *Modra Rijeka*, *Yang & Yin* on the one hand, and *Rime di Michelangelo* (Michelangelo rhymes), *Madrigale*, *Shakespeare Sonnets*, *Barroccoco*, etc., on the other.

Although he is known for the avant-garde attitudes that he displayed both in the creative sphere and in relation to his students—Țăranu being part of the “golden generation” that established itself after the 1960s as the “Romanian avant-garde,” while his oeuvre integrates serial-dodecaphonic (*Sonata ostinato*, 1961) and post-serial stages, manifestations of aleatorism, electronic music, stochastic trends, or freedom of form (*Dialoguri II* (Dialogues II) for piano, *Intercalări* (Intercalations) for piano and orchestra, *Racorduri* (Connections)), etc.—specific elements of Romanian folklore—namely the two complementary styles, the lyrical (*parlando-rubato*) and the dance, kinetic one—are to be found as far back as his creative beginnings and are reflected later in some of his “most virulent opuses” (Mogoșan 2024, 79). Thus, in the String Trio (1952), written at the time when Cornel Țăranu was studying in the class of Professor Sigismund Toduță and dedicated to the master, the predominantly neoclassical style is complemented by the technique of processing popular quotations, the second movement (*Allegretto*) being inspired by the melody No. 158 from Béla Bartók’s folklore collection from Bihor, while the fifth movement (*Allegro molto vigoroso*) is based on melody No. 1 from the same volume.

The second half of the 1950s will reveal a “lyric-contemplative” inclination, specific both to Enescu’s music and to Romanian culture in general. Revealing in this sense is the Sonata for flute and piano (1960), the first part of which betrays “inspiration from ornamental genres of the *parlando-rubato* type (dotted rhythm preceded by appoggiaturas, ornaments which ‘flourish’ the long notes)” (Mogoșan 2024, 82), while the second part, featuring a pronounced chromatic language, “seems to allude to the second part of George Enescu’s Chamber Symphony” (Mogoșan 2024, 83). The references to Enescu’s work are not surprising, in the context in which Cornel Țăranu has established himself as a fervent researcher of the great composer’s oeuvre, the volume *Enescu în conștiința prezentului: eseuri* (Enescu in the consciousness of the present: essays, 1969) being a landmark in Romanian musicology. Moreover, his theoretical endeavors were doubled by the completion of some of Enescu’s compositions: *Strigoi* (Ghosts, lyrics by Mihai Eminescu), Symphony No. 5 (movements I and IV), the Piano Concerto *Caprice Roumaine* for violin and orchestra (1996, in collaboration with Sherban Lupu). Țăranu’s exhaustive study of Enescu’s legacy and his in-depth understanding of his compositional style have had an impact on his own creative horizon, reflected in the form of “artistic affinities” or “parallelisms of sensitivity.”

The maestro’s artistic affinities can become pretexts for his own creative statements. Pretexts and not premises, because most often, in Cornel Țăranu’s case, the shaping of a composition in relation to the musical cultural heritage is more a matter of personal style than of influence or borrowing (even temporarily) the creative idioms of his predecessors. On the one hand, this frequent reference to the past is also an imprint of the school of composition guided by Sigismund Toduță, who imbued his disciples with a creative orientation rooted in the European tradition. No wonder that Țăranu’s older colleague, the composer and musicologist Vasile Herman, used to say that the new always grows from the old. Unlike the other members of his generation from Cluj, Cornel Țăranu had the advantage of a freedom of spirit that propelled him into the avant-garde zone of music, without, however, feeling the need to completely break away from the Transylvanian spirit. (Boancă 2024, 59)

A multifaceted personality, Cornel Țăranu also frequently referred to the artistic universe of other creators, musicians, poets, and writers. Besides the obvious “affective communion” with the philosopher and poet Lucian Blaga—emblematic for the creative school of Cluj and manifested in works such as: *Cetini negre* (Black Branches, 1958), the madrigals *Dorul*, *Dor* (Longing, Longing, 1964) and *Spune-o ncet, n-o spune tare* (Say it slowly, don’t say it out loud, 1964), the pieces for voice and piano *Epitaph* (1958) and *Întoarcere* (Return, 1967), or *Ușor nu e cântecul* for baritone and ensemble (Easy is not the song, 2010), which incorporates verses

⁹ Cornel Țăranu studied with Sigismund Toduță in Cluj (1951–1957), with Olivier Messiaen and Nadia Boulanger at the Paris Conservatory (1966–1967, 1972), and attended the Darmstadt summer courses in 1968, 1969, and 1972.

from the poems *Catren* (Quatrain), *Glas de seară* (Evening voice), *Cântăreți bolnavi* (Sick singers), and *Cânele din Pompei* (The Dog from Pompei)—the last of them an unrealized project of Toduță, a “testamentary dream of the master” (Angi 2011, 16), fulfilled by Țăranu through his own artistic means—the works of the composer from Cluj pay tribute to different personalities, from Johann Sebastian Bach to Béla Bartók, from Michelangelo Buonarroti, William Shakespeare, or Stéphane Mallarmé to Romanian poets such as Mihai Eminescu, Ana Blandiana, Nichita Stănescu, Paul Celan, etc.

2.3. Adrian Pop

Composer Adrian Pop (b. 1951) studied under Sigismund Toduță, who instilled in him an admiration for the canonical repertoire and major historical styles. At the Cluj Academy of Music, Toduță’s thorough examination of the stages preceding musical modernism became a fundamental method in the study of composition. Pop also studied under Cornel Țăranu, who produced in him “the revelation of the modern horizons, of the playful, innovative or simply provocative boldness” (Temeș 2021, 17). He has established himself in the artistic space of Transylvania not only by his refined creative endeavors, but also through his pedagogical and managerial activity, as rector of the “Gheorghe Dima” Music Academy Cluj-Napoca (between 2008–2012) or artistic director of the International Festival “Cluj-Modern” (starting with the 2013 edition until today).

Another revelation of his formative years, namely the “identitarian and cultural” (Temeș 2021, 17) one relating to the Romanian folklore—initiated by his mentor and teacher Traian Mîrza—was to materialize in a permanent passion for the autochthonous substratum. It manifested in the form of popular tune processing (in choral works, which actually brought him his first international recognitions, then, shortly after, in the symphonic-concerto genre), or as “composition in popular style”/“imaginary folklore” (the chamber genre being extremely revealing in this sense).

Defining the melodic parameter as “the minimum necessary and sufficient condition of music” (Sîrbu 2017, 34) and building his artistic language from the position of a “moderate modern,” Adrian Pop achieves unique fusions of tradition and contemporaneity. He treats the folk quotation both “starting from mathematical models, employing a series of new sonorities, born from the osmosis of the archaic Romanian modal language with electronic technique” (Sandu-Dediu 2002, 130) in *Colinda soarelui* (Sun Carol) for flute, percussion and magnetic tape written in 1974 in the studios of Bayreuth, or in a heterophonic setting, in the choral piece *Vine hulpe de la munte* (Here comes the fox down from the mountains), also known under the title “Colindă¹⁰ de pricină” (Reason carol), dated 1974.¹¹ We can also find the technique of processing popular quotations in the concert and symphonic sector. The Concerto for cello and orchestra (1975)¹² is based on an archaic Romanian melody (Figure 1) taken from *Colinda no. 180* (*Poruncit-a poruncit*, cannot be translated) included in the collection of *303 carols with text and melodies collected and notated by Sabin Drăgoi*, yet which is heard only in the second movement of the work, as a result of an extensive process of “accumulation” of the rhythmic-melodic material with the help of cell-motivic variations.



Figure 1. Adrian Pop—Concerto for cello and orchestra.
The original carol theme, *Colinda no. 180* (*Poruncit-a poruncit*), laying the foundation of the symphonic development

¹⁰ The “colinda” (carol) genre—one of the most important in the Romanian folkloric repertoire, consisting of ancient songs of congratulations and greetings practiced especially during the winter holidays and which “presents the most important rhythmic of Romanian folk music” (Alexandru 2023, 12)—is one of the favorite genres of composer Adrian Pop, a connoisseur of old ritual customs and layers. “Colinda de pricină” (Reason carol) is, in fact, a sub-genre of the “colinda,” namely its parody.

¹¹ The piece was awarded the grand prize in the “mixed choirs” section of the Concorso Polifonico Internazionale “Guido d’Arezzo” (1978).

¹² The results of the analytical approach undertaken on Adrian Pop’s Concerto for cello and orchestra have been published under the title “Interferences between tradition and modernity in the symphonic and concerto works by Adrian Pop—(1) The Cello Concerto” (2023).

The soloist's virtuosic, highly improvisatory discourse will be assimilated, throughout the three movements unfolding *in attacca*, to the many different types of writing, from monody or accompanied monody to free, imitative polyphony, simple or layered *ostinato*, discrete heterophonic, pointillistic, or polymetric textures that highlight the "resonances" of the cellular or motivic components of the original carol. Timbre, as well as the various ways of sound articulation, represent one of the main resources in rendering the improvisatory character and agility specific to fiddlers—in the solo sector—while the orchestral apparatus amplifies or acts as a binder during the lyrical or more dramatic evolution of the protagonist cello.

Etos I (1976),¹³ based on a "Miorița"¹⁴ tune originating from *Sălaj*, is another work constructed by the technique of folkloric quotation. Throughout the three large sections arranged in a monolithic architecture we recognize the elements of an archaic world, such as the sounds of the shepherd's whistles, the natural resonances of the *tulnic*¹⁵ (in the first movement), the virtuoso dialogue (second movement) of two *semantrons*¹⁶—instruments specific to Romanian folk organology—and the route of the flocks of sheep "ascending and descending mountain slopes" (third movement). In fact, the entire symphonic evolution is in line with the coordinates of the mioritic space, of the "undulating plain" described by Lucian Blaga, outlined here "by a series of sound waves resulting from accumulations/rarefactions within the musical parameters" (Adrian Pop, in Sandu-Dediu 2002, 130), realized with the help of contemporary language techniques such as heterophony, spectralism, and texturalism.

Textural blocks built on repetitive polyrhythmic layers but also on the basis of clusters—dynamized by continuous *glissandos* that follow the oscillating, ascending-descending, respectively *ppp/poco f* sense of the sound magma—are identifiable. The texture welding is enhanced, in the same time, by the insertion of suspended cellos, whose timbre and "approximate" pitches (with noise effects) contribute significantly to the syntonic¹⁷ fusion (in the first part). (Figure 2)

¹³ The results of the analytical approach undertaken on Adrian Pop's *Etos I* de Adrian Pop have been published under the title "Interferences between tradition and modernity in the symphonic and concerto works by Adrian Pop—(2) *Etos I*" (2023).

¹⁴ Regarded as a collective work of the Romanian people, "Miorița" was collected by Alecu Russo in 1846 (from the Vrancea area), published—under the title "Mieoara"—in 1850 by the writer Vasile Alecsandri in the Romanian folk songs section of the gazette "Bucovina" (Chernivtsi) and included in 1852 in the volume *Poesii populare* (Folk poems). While the "Alecsandri version" is associated with the ballad version, the carol version—as in the case of the "miorița" used by the composer Adrian Pop in *Etos I*—is specific to the northern area of Maramureș. Thus, it was not by chance that the Romanian philosopher and poet Lucian Blaga (1895–1961) was to develop his philosophical perspective on Romanian culture in relation to the "mioritic" space—"a high and indefinite undulating matrix-space, and endowed with the specific accents of a certain sense of destiny" (Blaga 2011, 141), considerations also captured by the ideational substrate of the work *Etos I*.

¹⁵ A long wooden trumpet formerly used to convey warnings (as of invasion) between Romanian communities (Merriam-Webster n.d.).

¹⁶ A wooden plank or an iron bar that gives a sound like a gong when struck with a mallet and that takes the place of a bell in Eastern Orthodox churches (Merriam-Webster n.d.).

¹⁷ In his volume entitled *Texturalismul sau sintonia muzicii din cea de-a doua jumătate a secolului XX* (Texturalism or syntony of music in the second half of the 20th century, 2019), Andrei Cozma describes syntony as an inherent quality of textures, a result "of the association of several sounds, which are therefore perceived together" (Cozma 2019, 13).

Figure 2. Adrian Pop—*Etos I*. Textural moments in Movement 1, mm. 69–79

A particularly expressive impact is then created by the compression of the symphonic apparatus, in the central section, to the configuration of a *semantron* couple, which engage in a rhythmic progression energized by a captivating play of accents—periodically or irregularly placed in relation to the metrical accent—against the background of a significant sound amplification. Clearly, this reduction of the symphonic apparatus to a duo of percussive instruments (Figure 3) specific to traditional Romanian organology and Orthodox liturgy facilitates, at the same time, the transposition, in the macro-structural level, of the “oscillation” movement associated with the “mioritic plain” and the tragic, funeral connotations of the folk theme.¹⁸

Figure 3. Adrian Pop—*Etos I*. Dialogue of *semantrons* in Movement 2, mm. 120–139

¹⁸ The ballad *Miorița* also integrates a tragic dimension, which is, however, softened by the parallel “death-wedding”, described with resignation and serenity by the protagonist—the Moldavian shepherd—who learns from one of his sheep that the other two shepherds—the Hungarian and the one from Vrancea—who accompanied him on the transhumance, were planning to kill him, in order to take over his flocks.

It is only in the final segment that the folkloric quotation is made explicit, signaled by the first appearance of the jingle bells. Its configuration—a heptatonic doric, with a generally descending line—will serve, both in the standard version and through processing, to render the almost “plastic” representation of the mountain plains, as well as the rising descent of the flocks of sheep. The successive exposures, in heterophonic settings, of the Miorița tune, as well as its inversion will evolve, as the orchestral density increases, towards a writing with textural features (Figure 4).

The image shows a musical score for the first exposition of the "Miorița" theme. It is arranged for Violins I and II, with parts divided into sections 1-4 and 5-8. The Violin I part (top) starts with a *ppp* dynamic and a *morendo* marking. The Violin II part (bottom) also starts with *ppp* and includes *arco* and *con sord* markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic changes to *pp* and *ppp*. A box with the number 155 is located in the upper right corner of the score.

Figure 4. Adrian Pop—*Etos I*. First exposition of the “Miorița” theme at the beginning of Movement 3, heterophonically played by the violins in divisions, mm. 151–155

The overlapping or juxtaposition of descending-ascending lines, along with other figural motifs, prepare the idyllic, brilliant, consonant climax of the work, as well as its dramatic, dissonant replication—an evocation of the tragic dimension of the mioritic theme. Then, they are gradually resolved through the process of “sonorous deconstruction” of the symphonic apparatus, which leads to the final chord.

Not to be excluded from the list of Adrian Pop’s works based on folkloric quotations is the *Solstițiu pentru orchestră* (Solstice for orchestra, 1979) piece (Figure 5). Also starting from the melody of a carol—a carol “of the Sun,” whose ancestral roots are linked to the celebration of the star of the day and the moment of its symbolic birth, preceding the Christmas celebration and crossing from pagan times into Christian times—the monolithic symphonic discourse renders, in a programmatic manner, the cosmic and telluric manifestations of the two solstice moments: the winter solstice, respectively, the moment of rebirth at the “New Year,” and the climax of the energetic development of the symphonic magma—the summer solstice. The two key moments of the ideational substratum, situated in the beginning and in the end of the work, are marked by the exposure of the folkloric, diatonic tune by the wind section. The application of the principle of polyphony of attacks on it results in new effects of the brass and bassoon instruments. It also creates the sensation of a melody perceived as from a great distance, with almost dissolved contours and the rhythm subject to a slight distortion, “somewhat aleatoric due to the fact that there are no attacks” (Plăian 2022, 233).

The development is ensured by means of the variational technique, manifested at the motivic level, but we also find in the beginning of the middle, evolutionary section variations on a *chaconne* theme (consisting, in its turn, of cells of the initial generative motives). The timbral dimension, emphasized by writing techniques such as the polyphony of attacks, pointillist, textural, aleatoric, or heterophonic, is decisive in revealing the music program, particularly the relationships between night-day/dark-light or warmth-glaciality (e.g., wind sound, *frullato* in flutes, the glassy sound of the vibraphone). The same applies to the sound language, the modal-chromatic or chromatic propensities, often explicit at the level of the clusters, being counterbalanced by the pronounced diatonic character of the carol melody flanking the symphonic development. As for the folkloric roots of the composition, they are evident not only in the insertions of the folk tune, but also in the numerous idyllic interventions, derived from folkloric quotations or *oiseau*-like garlands (particularly in the woodwinds), clarinet *cantilena* (in the third evolutionary section of the Development) featuring the expression of an alpenhorn signal, heterophonic settings, in *rubato* or an aleatoric manner, etc.

If the symphonic genre offered the composer, from the very beginning of his creative path, a favorable environment for integrating the quite pronounced folklorism he cultivated, especially through the use of sound textures—which, according to Adrian Pop’s confessions, matched his way of feeling and thinking music (Apostu 2017, 19)—the chamber works with a folk substance are dated later, after the 2000s. Just as in the case of the application of the technique of processing the popular quotation—in pieces such as *Cadenza*

for cello (2000), *Gordun* for solo cello (2005), or *Cântece de stea* (Transylvanian Christmas carols, 2006)—the composition in “popular character,” that is, in the absence of a pre-existing folkloric quotation, “seems to be something natural and at hand for Adrian Pop” (Silaghi 2009, 149).

The work *Țiituri*¹⁹ (cannot be translated) (2006) for violin and cello falls into the category of “imaginary folklore,” its discursive evolution capturing, throughout the four contrasting movements, the atmosphere and spirit of Romanian dance in Transylvania, respectively the archaic universe, of the Romanian village, in the lyrical parts: I. *Allegro brillante e con fuoco* and III. *Vivace, quasi presto*, about which the author states that “they have a common air with some Bartókian pages” (Adrian Pop, in Németh, 2019, 70) / II. *Molto andante* and IV. *Molto andante, pocchiss. Rubato*, “closer to the enescian model, but in a less complex way than in Enescu” (Adrian Pop, in Németh 2019, 70). The sonorous translation of the title, which refers to the improvisatory capacity of traditional Romanian *tarafuri* (fiddler ensembles), is achieved through the efficient exploitation of sound registers and ostinato formulas. According to Silaghi (2009), “the need to use a great diversity of elements and technical procedures gives the instrumental performance a considerable degree of difficulty” (149).

The development of the organic discourse is supported by the variational process, while the return of the melodic theme from the opening of the work at the end of the third movement signals the use of the cyclical principle, with a unifying role on the whole architectural structure. As far as the sound universe is concerned, the modal language shows pronounced chromatic inclinations, resulting from the application of accidentals in the more ornamented or improvisatory sections, but also from the presence of some Romanian folkloric musical gestures, such as the *chromatic backward formula* (adapted to the modal system, the intervallics dominated by the presence of the minor second not following the path imposed by the leading note in tonal music) or the *bi-tertial chord* (the manifestation of the mobile third being considered an expression of the oscillation between the minor and major modes) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Adrian Pop—*Țiituri*. Third Movement—chromatic backward formulas, m. 112, 116, 117

The accompaniment is predominantly *ostinato* (specific to the *Țiituri* formulas), often in the form of rhythmic pedals of perfect fifth or perfect fourth (intervals that enhance the archaic essence of the harmonic parameter). Moreover, the inflections and modal leaps amplify the impression of “waving,” of mobility of the evolving material, a perception also supported by the meter-rhythmic configuration of the melodic-harmonic patterns, which vary from *giusto* (in the first movement) to asymmetrical (in the second movement) and the motoric sections (of the third movement). The final movement is under the sign of the *parlando-rubato* style, generated by “the stuttered execution..., by prolongation or acceleration of values,” but also by “the lack of periodic accents and their replacement by expressive accents” (Niculescu 1980, 251). Last but not least, the thematic substance is emphasized by the timbral resources of the instrumental couple, the usual executions being constantly accompanied by unusual effects such as natural *flageolette*, *glissando*, or *harmonic glissandi* (used in the rendering of a “flight of doves” in movement III, stanza I), *col legno batutto*, *arco*, and *tremolo getatto* so intensely exploited in the achievement of the percussive character of movement III (stanza II), and so on.

¹⁹ A more detailed analysis of the work *Țiituri* by Adrian Pop was published in the volume *Aspecte stilistice în creația camerală a compozitorului Adrian Pop* (Stylistic aspects in the chamber music of composer Adrian Pop), signed by the author in 2022 (106–123).

The multitude of facets of the Romanian folkloric universe, evoked in the choral, symphonic, or chamber music of the composer Adrian Pop from Cluj, attests his affinities with this remarkable background, affinities reaffirmed throughout his work in numerous settings, from quotations (under the dominance of the carol genre, for which the author has developed a marked predilection) to composing “in style,” with obvious references to the specific techniques of the fiddlers’ art or to aspects of popular organology.

Conclusion

Located at the confluence of the efforts to compensate for the gaps between the Romanian musical culture and the European tradition, respectively those of affirming the artistic originality of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space, the autochthonous musical folklore is a constant element in the oeuvre of the main exponents of the national school, starting from the enescian example.

The Cluj musical school, shaped under the impulse of mentors such as Sigismund Toduță or Cornel Țăranu, is no exception. Without overshadowing their admiration for the stylistic heritage of the cultured musical past (still cultivated today in the formative process of young composers), or undermining the avant-garde trends—for which some representatives have shown a pronounced aptitude—the continuators of the musical tradition in the heart of Transylvania have preserved the musical folklore as an inexhaustible source of artistic value, ingeniously linking it to their own creative views. The fusion with the specifically Toduțian structuralist orientation, the serial tendencies of Țăranu or the textural ones of the symphonic-concert compositions by Adrian Pop, the use of quotation processing or “imaginary folklore” are just some of the countless compositional arguments that support the potential of the ethnic substratum, against the background of the “mioritic” space described by the great philosopher Lucian Blaga and in a novel, effervescent relationship with the various manifestations of musical contemporaneity.

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Rumunų folkloras: perkėlimai ir reinterpretacijos ūiuolaikinėje Transilvanijos muzikoje. Klužo kompozicijos mokykla

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikiama pagrindinių rumunų folkloro integravimo į profesionaliąją muzikinę kūrybą strategijų apžvalga, pabrėžiant folkloro rinkimo, sisteminimo ir meninio įprasminimo veiklos reikšmę nacionalinės muzikos raidai bei jos įsitvirtinimui tarptautiniame kultūros kontekste.

Atsispirdami nuo George'o Enescu (1881–1955) kūrybinio impulso, kuris tapo svarbiu orientyru jungiant smuikininkų liaudies muzikos tradicijose slypinčias folkloro esmes su Vakarų Europos muzikos paveldu, rumunų nacionalinės kompozicijos atstovai ėmė ieškoti vis originalesnių būdų atskleisti rumuniškos stilistinės matricos savitumą. Enescu kūryboje ūis sintezės principas reiškėsi naujomis kompozicinės raiškės priemonėmis, tarp jų – heterofonija, laikoma esmine sintaksine kategorija, būdinga *parlando-rubato* ir improvizaciniam liaudies melodijų stiliui. ūią koncepciją vėliau nuodugniau išplėtojo kompozitorius ir teoretikas ūtefanas Niculescu (1927–2008), interpretuodamas ją nepriklausomai nuo serijinės muzikos fenomeno, kurį tuo metu plėtojo ir Pierre'as Boulezas. Tuo pagrindu nacionalinės mokyklos kompozitoriai, priklausomai nuo pasirinktos konservatyvesnės ar labiau avangardinės krypties, formavo skirtingas, tačiau savitas stilistines strategijas.

Kompozitorių požiūrį į Vakarų Europos muzikinį paveldą, liaudišką pagrindą ir Transilvanijos etninę erdvę ypač reprezentuoja Klužo kompozicijos mokykla, susiformavusi apie kompozitoriaus Sigismundo Toduță (1908–1991) asmenybę. Būdamas nuoseklus polifoninių formų puoselėtojas, jis savo mokiniams perteikė struktūralistinę muzikinio mąstymo kryptį, kuri atsispindi ir jo paties folkloro inspiruotuose kūriniuose. Be to, didelę įtaką Toduță mokiniams darė jo intelektualinis ir emocinis ryšys su poetu ir filosofu Lucianu Blaga (1895–1961). Pastarojo kultūrinė vizija, siejama su pašamonės, begalinės, banguojančios, *mioritzinės* (nuo senovinės rumunų pastoralinės baladės „Miorița“) erdvės samprata, įvairiomis formomis atsispindi ir Klužo kompozicijos mokyklos atstovų kūryboje.

Kitas svarbus ūios mokyklos mentorius buvo kompozitorius Cornelis Țăranu, kurio avangardinės tendencijos nesutrukdė kūryboje nuosekliai pasitelkti etninės muzikos elementus. Net ir pereidamas per skirtingus stilistinius etapus – serijinę ir dekafoninę, postserijinę, aleatorinę ar stochastinę kūrybos fazes – kompozitorius rėmėsi dviem pagrindiniais liaudies muzikos stiliais: lyrinio (*parlando-rubato*) ir kinetinio (šokio).

Abiejų ūių meistrų – Toduță ir Țăranu – mokinys kompozitorius Adrianas Popas (g. 1951), pasirinkęs vadinamojo nuosaikaus modernizmo kūrybinę kryptį, savo muzikoje taip pat nuosekliai rėmėsi folkloriniais ūaltiniais. Ypatinę vietą jo kūryboje užima archajinis žanras *colinda* (kalėdinė giesmė), interpretuojamas įvairiuose muzikiniuose kontekstuose: nuo chorinių ir simfoninių-koncertinių formų iki kamerinės muzikos. Tokiuose kūriniuose kaip Koncertas violončelei ir orkestrui, *Etos I ar Solstițiu* („Saulėgrįža“) folklorinės melodikos transformacijai pasitelkiamos įvairios ūiuolaikinės kompozicinės technikos – tekstūralizmas, spektralizmas, aleatorika ir kt. Kamerinėje muzikoje (pavyzdžiui, kūrinyje *Țituri*) kompozitorius taip pat plėtoja stilizuotą folklorinės raiškės kalbą.

Straipsnyje aptartos kompozicinės strategijos, susijusios tiek su minėtais kūriniiais, tiek su kitais Klužo kompozicijos mokyklos atstovų darbais, leidžia teigti, kad etninis substratas išlieka svarbiu kūrybinio originalumo ūaltiniu. Blaga'o apibrėžtės *mioritzinės* kultūrinės erdvės kontekste jis tampa vaisinga terpe naujas nacionalinės muzikos raiškės galimybes atveriančiam dialogui tarp muzikinės tradicijos ir ūiuolaikinių kompozicinių tendencijų.