

## Managing Cross-Cultural Artistic Projects

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**Abstract:** *Classical music has, from the beginning, been an evolutionary art form, by being an interplay of various cultural influences and technical development. Considering these aspects, managing cross-cultural artistic projects and collaborations in Romania's classical music events represents an intricate tapestry of opportunities and challenges, requiring a very fine and detailed understanding of cultural dynamics, artistic vision, and strategic management. The current research explores the multifaceted aspects of such cultural collaborations, offering different considerations regarding the processes, benefits, challenges and potential pitfalls of engaging in cross-cultural artistic endeavours within the Romanian classical music landscape. The rich historical and cultural intersections on the Romanian territory offer numerous examples for the research.*

Key-words: *artistic management, cross-cultural projects, cultural dynamics, artistic vision*

### 1. Introduction

The geographical area of today's Romania has been, throughout its entire history, a place of confluence between several peoples and civilizations. Each of these left deeper or more superficial traces on the culture of the territory occupied by the ancestors of the Romanians, the Dacians, the Thracian-Getians.

The traces were important in the culture, in the language, traditions, way of life, in the daily life that the inhabitants of this territory led and in the families they founded. The challenges they went through led to an increase in the capacity to defend, negotiate, and defend their own values, but also to strengthening the capacity of the occupants of this territory to integrate external influences and to keep the path to progress open through the discernment that has characterized them since ancient times.

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## 2. Historical context

The population whose cultural foundation is represented by the territory of present-day Romania is that of the Dacians. Their culture is particularly vast, as shown by the numerous gold objects found on the national territory, objects made with superlative craftsmanship, but also the numerous traces left by them regarding spirituality and religious ceremonial (Iorga 1913, 337).

From the culture of the Romans, the next cultural influence on the Romanian territory, the Dacians added a profound and irreversible linguistic change to their own culture. They were also exposed to an openness towards superior organization, the culture of succession and the importance of the unitary leadership of the great Roman Empire, but also to the preferences of its inhabitants to use music during festive ceremonies, or during parades or events in their famous arenas.

The next significant cultural influence on the country was exerted by migratory peoples throughout the 3rd-13th centuries AD. Goths, Huns, Gepids, Avars, Slavs, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Pechenegs, Cumans, Tatars, each contributed to enriching the cultural vision of the local population with new customs, traditions and beliefs, both musical, in churches and secular, from the music-dance syncretism point of view, as well as from a rhythmic, ornamental or ritual point of view (Pop 2014, 201).

At the same time, in the 4th-15th centuries AD, the Byzantine Empire influenced the native population culturally and dogmatically, adopting the Orthodox religion, which the majority of the population still maintains with faith to this day, as well as architecture, singing (psalm music, sung in churches) and writing (Cyrillic, used until the 19th century) that became part of the life of the majority of the population.

Transylvania, part of today's Romania, also received significant influence from the Hungarian and German populations (Saxons). The ethnic, cultural and organizational influence favored the artistic exchange between the three ethnic groups. They coexisted and developed commercial, social and craft relations that contributed to the opening of this area to a more Western vision compared to the rest of the Romanian territory.

In the rest of the territory, a strong cultural influence came from the East, through the many attempts of the Ottoman Empire to conquer and incorporate the territory of the Romanian Principalities between the 15th and 19th centuries. The Ottomans stood for a moderate influence from a cultural point of view, the native population defending not only their territory, but also their own values. They nevertheless borrowed linguistic, musical (oriental sounds or musical instruments) or decorative art features that were incorporated into their own culture. The gastronomic influence that the Ottomans generated from their interaction with the locals can also be mentioned, an important irreversible influence.

The Habsburg Empire represented for a part of Romania, including the area of Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, another significant cultural influence. The contact of this culture on the musical level (orchestra, fanfare), on the educational level but also on the administrative, urbanistic modernization specific to their culture, stood for a new impetus for change. It took part in the consolidation of an intelligentsia that contributed significantly to the increase of the educational level and free thinking of the population.

The eastern regions of Romania, Moldavia and Bessarabia, were on the other hand culturally influenced by the Russians. Having the same religion, they led to a choral style with specifically harmonized harmonies of large dimensions, but also to a particular administrative and military perspective.

The 19th century brought an influence that continued to bring new cultural perspectives to the national territory: the French influence. This, through the momentum generated by the freedom gained through bloodshed during the French Revolution, brought freedom of expression in literature, theater, dance, music, clothing, but also in spoken language, administration or law.

Nr. crt.	Civilization	Period	Cultural influence
1	Dacians	Before 106 AD	Strong indigenous population, with a deep spiritual and craft culture, strong and innovative
2	Romans	106-271 AD	Social and urban organization, Latin language, ceremonies and parades for entertainment purposes
3	Migratory populations	3rd-13th centuries AD	Great cultural diversity: traditions, dances, language, music, rituals
4	Byzantine Empire	4th-15th centuries AD	Adoption of the Christian Orthodox religion, music, architecture, writing
5	Hungarian and Saxons	12th-18th centuries AD	Multicultural coexistence, urbanization, development of craftsman organization, Western vision – in Transylvania
6	The Ottoman Empire	15th-19th centuries AD	Oriental music, ornamentation, improvisation, decorative art, gastronomic influence, Oriental vision
7	The Habsburg Empire	18th-19th centuries AD	Administrative organization, administrative modernization, urban planning, music and dancing
8	Russians	18th-19th centuries AD	Important religious part, military perspective, Slavic influence – in Moldavia and Bessarabia
9	French	19th century-present	Freedom of expression in literature, theater, dance, music, clothing, in spoken language, administration or law

Table 1. *Significant cultural influences in current day Romania*

All these significant cultural influences have been summarized in a succinct, tabular manner, in the previous table. Eastern and Western influence contributed to the formation of a particularly culturally complex civilization, which, through synthesis and permanent refinement, contributed to the creation of an authentic, unique expression of contemporary Romanian culture. Archaic values, visionary openness and the embrace of inherent change have contributed to the vibrant spirit of Romania today.

### **3. The dynamics of current cross-cultural collaborations**

The management of intercultural artistic projects in the field of classical music is a complex process, requiring a refined combination of managerial skills, aesthetic sensitivity and a deep understanding of cultural diversity.

Globalization is a very dynamic part of our century, its prospects being particularly vast. From an economic point of view, globalization is the free circulation of capital on the international market, considering investments, trade and the financial market. Considering globalization from a technological perspective, it has favored a very rapid development of both information and communication technologies, allowing for instant interconnection at a global level. Considering the social aspect, globalization has allowed for increased and instantaneous contact between various individuals who, due to increased mobility, have created solid social communities (social networks rapidly amplifying this phenomenon) (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization 2004, 8). From a political point of view, globalization has allowed for an increase in the role of international organizations at a global level, and an intensification of relations between states in managing global challenges such as peace or migration (Appadurai 2013, 61). Another perspective of globalization is the ecological one. This involves the awareness and involvement of all citizens of the planet in protecting the only planet on which humans can survive (from the data available to date).

The cultural perspective is, however, the one on which this paper is oriented. The era of cultural globalization of which we are a part has, more than ever, an accelerated dynamic dimension (Payne 2016, 33). In an era of cultural globalization, in the context briefly described above, the circulation, borrowing, exchange of ideas and values of different cultures is a moment of reflection, perhaps even of balance, about the national cultural identity of each people (Hitt et al 2016, 46). The dilution of cultural values and cultural hybridization through the mix of values of different cultures and diverse lifestyles that led to the refinement of the cultural identity of each person over hundreds of years can lead to a risk that is difficult to manage, perhaps even an irreversible one.

Cultural globalization viewed from so many perspectives at an international level, the collaboration between musicians and composers, instrumental or vocal performers, actors, dancers, composers, conductors, visual artists, directors, set

designers, choreographers, costume designers, screenwriters, painters, sculptors, multimedia artists and institutions coming from distinct geographical spaces and traditions requires not only the logistical coordination of meetings between them, but also a genuine openness to intercultural dialogue. The cultural exposure that everyone has had throughout childhood and later in the maturation process leads to different ways of expression, specific to that environment and represents a decisive foundation for the creation of authentic expression in a cultural, creative context.

From the implementation point of view, such projects require careful management of limited financial resources, precise synchronization of institutional calendars that are most often drawn up for a period longer than a year, and adaptation to various administrative systems, adapted to the manager's personality and leadership style (Mammadova 2021, 183). Among the indispensable elements for the success of a collaboration, we can list effective communication aimed at setting up common goals for the parties involved, knowledge of working languages, primordial from the point of view of musical connections being English and Italian, but preferably also knowledge of German. This also contributes to understanding the cultural specificity of each partner and to creating superior professional and human connections (Mirrlees 2013, 122).

From an artistic point of view, the major challenge lies in maintaining a delicate balance between the respect for the cultural identity of each tradition involved in the artistic act presented to the public and the need for an aesthetic coherence that offers the public a unified experience and the most authentic transmission of the artistic message that the creator (composer, writer, painter etc.) intended to convey. Music is an international language of communication that allows for more precise guidance of the performer on the score, but artistic vision, deep understanding of the message communicated is decisive when performers from different cultural backgrounds, who have been exposed to different educations, will figure out complex visions of the work being performed.

At the same time, the ethical dimension of these cross-cultural projects cannot be overlooked. It is essential to avoid the stereotypical simplification of differences through the vision of one of the participants. An authentic intercultural project involved showing a path that involves as little subjectivism as possible, which is not limited to the simple juxtaposition of ethnic elements, but aims to create a space for creative dialogue. Thus, diversity becomes a source of innovation and permanent artistic reflection. Finally, managing this type of project involves transforming diversity into an aesthetic binder, capable of uniting traditions, provoking perspectives and offering the public an artistic experience that transcends the geographical, cultural and temporal boundaries of art, of music performed in the contemporary period, regardless of the moment of its composition.

One of the most representative examples from the contemporary period in Romania, which can very well reflect the dynamics of cross-cultural collaborations, is the George Enescu International Festival. This prestigious festival held in Bucharest,

which celebrated its 27th edition in 2025 (the first year it was held was 1958), brings together musicians from all over the world for a calendar month, musicians who present an extraordinarily expressive diversity. The cross-cultural dialogue between them is received with great openness by the public, the generous program of approximately 100 cultural events being of diversity, including collaborations between international and local artists, all contributing to mutual enrichment and facilitating a cultural exchange enriched by the musical encounter.

#### 4. Conclusions

Managing cross-cultural projects and collaborations is a challenge for artistic managers around the world, involving the development of strategic, communication and cultural skills approached in a manner that allows openness to the cultural richness and diversity of other peoples. Mutual respect, keeping an open attitude towards the new in the context of an intention to preserve the identity of national values in the general context of globalization, implies an effort to contribute to each artist on the path to cultural enrichment and to create a dynamic proper to the period in which we operate. Romania continues to stand for an international pillar that supports the prestige and international appreciation of classical music.

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