

## Moments from the Romanian history of musical education in schools

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**Abstract:** *The Romanian musical education has drawn its sap from the beginnings and has grown strong starting from the Byzantine music, the first ecclesial personalities being attested by the history of the Romanian music in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, due to the activity of Sava from Buzau and of Niceta of Remesiana. As the religious life on the Romanian territory grows more organized and consolidated, the Byzantine-type musical education flourishes tremendously in the Romanian Countries, going from the stages of learning of the religious songs by listening, towards a learning based on the neumatic Byzantine semiography, and then to the reading and assimilation of music using textbooks and curricula (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries). The laicization and generalization of education bring a new impetus in the Romanian education, consolidated later on by a series of specific laws making it possible to harmonize it with the European education. The curricular reform of the year 1997 took huge steps towards the compatibilization of the Romanian education with the European one, and the 'Bologna Process' to which Romania adhered as well has made it possible to create a European Higher Education Area (E.H.E.A.), permitting international cooperation and academic community exchanges. Without aiming to present all the details of the topic under discussion, we will present the most important moments of the Romanian musical education, highlighting the diachronic and synchronic events that have contributed to the delineation and crystallization of the Romanian education*

Key words: *teaching, text book, curriculum, reforms*

### 1. The beginnings of music teaching on Romanian territory

It is well known that in the Middle Ages there were two branches of Romanian spirituality which cohabited and influenced each other to a certain extent, namely Romanian folk melos and Byzantine songs played by the Orthodox Christian cult. Because the Christian church played an important role in the spiritual, political and social life of the Romanian society, it was normal that it hall-marked the creation and crystallization of a musical education based on Byzantine music.

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So that personalities of Romanian musicology and pedagogy brought to light documents that certify the existence of three schools of Byzantine music in the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the Romanian territory, whose cantors made the first text books and first music teaching methods, alongside picture, calligraphy and literature text books, which carried the reputation of schools and teachers abroad (Vasile 1995, 32).

The foundation of these schools was determined by the activity of great personalities recognised by the Orthodox Church such as: Sava of Buzau (martyrized in 372), considered to be the first singer certified by the history of Romanian music, and Bishop Niceta of Remesiana (336-414), author of religious songs, ideologist and educator. These two great personalities of Byzantine music lived in the first centuries of Christianity (Vasile 1995, 36) and reiterate the idea that “in Romania, musical education begins along with the organization of religious life” (Vasile 1995, 36).

Along with the building of the first metropolitan bishoprics in Wallachia and Moldavia (14<sup>th</sup> century), monastic music education enters a new stage, namely the emergence of first musical manuscript, considered to be the first Romanian school text book. Thus, from Byzantine music learning by ear, a progress was recorded to learning the singing by Byzantine neumatic semiography. An important role was played by reformer Ioan Cucuzel (13<sup>th</sup> century) and the foundation of “school of chants”, as Nicolae Iorga (Iorga 1928, 10) calls it, considered to be the “oldest” educational establishment of the Romanian cultural past, certified by documents” (Vasile 1995, 37).

Monastic and episcopal centres will lay the foundation of an “institutionalized” education and, apart from translations and annals writing, they will contribute to the appearance of the first musical manuscripts, considered to be “the first scholarly text books in Romanian pedagogy”.

In 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> centuries appear the first selections that took the place of text books and contained beside the Byzantine neumatic semiography, summary elements of teaching methods. *Evangheliarul of Iasi* – the oldest musical paper discovered on Romanian territory that contains also methodical guidelines, the *Octoechos* of Macarie (in Slavic), *Little Octoechos* printed in Slavic, *Penticostarion and Triodion* printed by Coresi in Târgoviște.

## 2. The foundation of Byzantine schools

*The School of Putna* (1493) – the first Romanian school of Byzantine type – and the one from Șcheii Brașovului (1495) are considered to be the oldest schools of church singing certified by documents, followed in time at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by monastic, episcopal, princely and manorial schools, all being types of Romanian institutionalized education.

The School founded under the guidance of Cozia Monastery, led by the Romanian cantor Filotei, the one under the guidance of Neamt Monastery, Moldavian schools founded under the guidance of monasteries and churches and the ones from Wallachia will determine the introduction of the Romanian language in the song. The Romanian erudite Metropolitan Antim Ivireanu translates in Romanian the *Octoechos* (1712), that gave parishioners the possibility of understanding the Holy Writ (Ivireanu 1972, 329), therefore two hieromonks were singing in Greek, and other two laymen were singing in Romanian (...) in the little aisle (Bianu 1944, 486).

The musical education knows a period of development especially during Constantin Brancoveanu, when the Romanian language tends to come into focus in religious singing. In this sense, the musical school from Bucharest is represented by Hieromonk Filotei Sin Agai Jipei (1730 A.C.) by means of the manuscript *Romanian Chants*.

Along with the re-establishment of Turkish-Phanariote administration, one can feel the Oriental influence in chant songs derived from lay music, well appreciated in the Wallachia and Moldavia of those times (Ciobanu 1974, 304).

At the same time, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, choral music and instrumental music (piano, organ, guitar) appeared, along with private teachers who taught the boyar sons French language and piano (Ghenea 1965, 133), and the first artistic associations were founded (in Transylvanian cities). The Austrian influence, and later on the Magyar influence, exercised on Transylvania, had beneficial effects on music, stimulating the artistic activities in Romanian language and the circuit of foreign melodies (German and Austrian) in musical activities.

Byzantine musical tradition and musical education accomplished in confessional schools with strong European influences will help in delineation of real musical “schools” no sooner than the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the foundation of music and recitation schools of the *Philharmonic Society in Bucharest* (1834) and of the *Philharmonic Conservatory in Iași* (1836).

### 3. Legislative references

Along with the generalization of primary education, the supremacy of the church starts to fade and European influences can be sensed more and more, due to the activity of great personalities, namely Gheorghe Asachi, who disseminates in Romania the advanced ideas of Frobel. The great merit of Asachi consists of the fact that he founded a laic music school at a moment when the chants played yet an important role (Ghenea 1965, 135).

At the same time, a modern law of Romanian education is materialized (in 1864, under the administration of Alexandru Ioan Cuza), which established an in-depth musical education. This opens the road for new European education systems

(Congress of Prague) by generalization of education which was structured for the first time based on three courses: primary, secondary and superior course, music being taught at each level (both vocal and instrumental music).

The next is “*Law for primary education and normal primary education of Petre Poni*” (1896), followed by “*Law for secondary and superior education*” (1898) of Spiru Haret that included music as a mandatory education. Moreover, in the school syllabus drafted a year later (in 1899), vocal music has 2 hours weekly for all the classes of primary education and one hour for 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> classes, and one hour of choir. This will determine the organisation of school choral competitions beginning with the year 1904.

Minister Spiru Haret (1908) gives also a decree that will replace theoretical musical elements with applied activities (songs and choirs for 2-3 voices), stating that musical lessons will be attractive for pupils and that choir lessons should be meant to crown teacher’s activity in class. The decree also recommends a repertory consisting of national folk music and patriotic songs. These are pedagogical principles valid also in modern pedagogy of our days.

In 1924 *Law for State primary education* adopted under the administration of minister C. Anghelescu, introduces in the education system the segment intended for younger children (corresponding to kindergarten), this moment crystallizing the curricular cycles for the Romanian educational system. Inspired by the French model, the Law structures the study subjects, and concerning musical education one can notice a great leap in the sense of reconsidering its status, from crafts to artistic subject, the masters of music acquiring the title of teachers, the classes of musical education being equipped with musical instruments, providing them in this way with the material support for a quality learning that will contribute to round up the musical standards for the Romanian musical education system.

Another important moment is the elaboration of the musical curricula of Marcel Botez and George Breazul (1929). They stipulated musical education from kindergarten to the last form of high school. The goals proposed by the curricula open the high school pupil’s horizon to a European musical culture with elements of Romanian melos.

Therefore, attending the music classes, students were supposed to develop their aesthetic sense, sensibility, fantasy and creativity, and to complete their national, social, moral and aesthetic education (Vasile 1995, 97). All these goals will be contained later in the frame goals/competences required by the *National Curriculum*, along with the Romanian education reform we will present hereafter.

Between 1928 and 1935 the curricula are changing often, while in 1936 (and only 3 months in 1933) the supremacy of the curriculum of G. Breazul was unanimously appreciated. It stipulated the extension of folk Romanian music in educational activities and remains definitive owing to the success scored by his education system at the *International Congress of Musical Education from Prague*.

For the first time, the Romanian school had a unitary curriculum that will be included in the monumental *Patrium Carmen* (Vasile 1995, 97).

George Breazul took into account also the music teachers' training concerning pedagogical and psychological aspects, proposing, accordingly, the foundation of a musical pedagogy department as part of the Conservatory from Bucharest, which was supposed to initiate students into elements and concepts of pedagogy and psychology, ethics, folk and methods of teaching music and history of Romanian music (Georgescu-Breazul 1925, 70).

It is necessary to highlight two moments in the Romanian pedagogy evolution – first, it is the *Spiru Haret Law* issued in 1898 which will develop the education system of Podoleanu-Corduneanu-Kiriatic and the second is the *Angelescu Law* issued in 1928, which will generate the direction for George Breazul and his generation: Sabin Drăgoi, Constantin Brăiloiu, Gheorghe Cucu, Marcel Botez, Ion Vicol, Nicolae Oancea and others.

It should be mentioned that, during this period, there appeared an array of text books, which were translations or “grosso-modo” were taking over texts belonging to the European professional literature. For that matter, they were challenged at that moment.

At the same time, there appeared two books of musical theory for school use, made after a special didactics, by: G. Mugur, Iosif Vorobchievici, Grigore Teodosiu, Ludovic Wiest, Fr. Reimesch, and, last but not least, the musical text book of Constantin Corduneanu.

An important moment in the delineation of a real Romanian musical pedagogy was the emergence of Gavriil Musicescu's course named “*Practical course of vocal music*” (...) in 4 vol. (I in 1877), that won a prize in Paris (1880), which stressed the practical aspect to the detriment of the theoretical aspect. George Brătianu, George Stephănescu, G. Mugur, Ștefan Vasilescu, Ion Costescu and later on Manya Botez followed up Gavriil Musicescu, their text books presenting influences from Emile Jacques-Dalcroze and combining musical elements (songs) with drawings made by children themselves. In author's opinion, music has a substantial contribution to the development of children's sensitivity (Vasile 1995, 126), these principles being applied in the education of children who attended classes in the private school founded by her (1930-1955).

The setting stage of a Romanian pedagogy in musical education area experienced two great directions: the first one of integral taking-up of various European conceptions and a second that took up new trends and adapted them to the specificity of Romanian education, and it should be mentioned that the last one obtained international appreciation due to the report of George Breazul presented at the First International Congress of Musical Education, being considered “the most efficient and original” (Vasile 1995, 126).

#### **4. Curricular reform**

After more than 70 years from the affirmation and success acquired at international and national levels by the musical education system of George Breazul, we will move on in time and we will focus on the changes brought by Andrei Marga's reform of pre-university education (I did not focus on Communist period that traced out Romanian education by excessive theory of the content, texts, songs and so on).

A very important moment for the implementation of the newest pedagogical trends of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the school system in Europe, and implicitly in Romania, a first step towards the desideratum of "Romanian education becoming compatible with the European one" was made in 1924 due to the education reform (Angelescu Law) and also by a Romanian participation to the First International Congress for Musical Education held in Prague in 1936, represented by two personalities of Romanian musical culture, namely George Breazul and Constantin Brăiloiu.

Other important names in Romanian pedagogy who contributed to stimulation and modernization of Romanian musical education are: Prof. G. Antonescu (Bucharest University), supporter of herbartian school, Prof. Ștefan Bârsănescu (Iași University), supporter of the theory of education for children by means of culture and aesthetic development, Prof. Constantin Narly (Chișinău University), interested in developing students' individuality, Prof. Ghidionescu and Tudoran, managers of an experimental school, followed by other academics. Based on their ideas and concepts they determined the issue of alternative music text books (1902-1939), that brought as a novelty the following: Romanian folk song (Breazul, Brăiloiu), special contents for young children (Voivodica, Breazul, Manya Botez, Brăiloiu), introduction to metric accents (Brăiloiu, Botez), phonomimic elements (Breazul), conception of a melody (Manya Botez), elements of European music history (elements of shapes, harmony and so on).

#### **5. The situation of music text books between 1948 and 1996**

Between 1939 and 1948 there were no newly issued text books, except a few belonging to the authors: Ion M. Potolea, Nicolae Buicliu and Victor Gheorghiu. The education reform in 1948 stipulated the equal right to education for all the citizens and was structured on the following education cycles: preschool, elementary (7 years), medium and superior. New curricula will be found in exclusive text books, all being printed by State Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House (E.S.D.P), as follows (Munteanu 2008, 92):

- C. Meitert and Dumitru D. Stancu – *Music text book for 7<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Științifică, Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1957;
- Ion Vicol – *Songs and learning*, Musical education, București, 1967;
- Ion Potolea and C. Lungu – *Common text book for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1962 (revised in 1973, 1975-1976, 1993);
- Ana Motora-Ionescu – *Music text book for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1963 (reissued in 1972-1973);
- Nicolae Filipoiu – *Music text book for 7<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1964;
- Nicolae Brâncuși and Nicolae Popescu – *Music text book for 7<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1965;
- Dumitru Sachelarie, Petre Codreanu, Vasile Tomescu, Emilia Comișel, Nicolae Parocescu – *Music, elements of history of music – experimental text book for 10<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1966, 1969;
- Ion Vicol – *Singing on notes*, Musical Education, București, 1967
- Petre Țipordei and Ștefan Andronic – *Music text book for 9<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1968;
- Dumitru Sachelarie et al. – *Music text book for 11<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1968;
- Ion Șerfezi and Eremia Albuțiu – *Music text book for 10<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1969;
- Mușat Popovici and Doru Popovici – *Music text book for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București;
- Nicolae Popescu – *Music text book for 5<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1973;
- Nicolae Popescu – *Music text book for 7<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1979;
- S. Ciurumelescu – *Music text book for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1980, 1985, 1993;
- Musat, Popovici, H, Popescu-Marian – *Music text book for 7<sup>th</sup> form*, Editura Științifică, Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1982.

## 6. Alternative text books emergence (1997-2013)

An important moment in the development and alignment of the Romanian education system to the European one was the curricular reform, known as “A. Marga’s Reform” (minister of National Education Ministry in the studied period). The implementation of this reform owed to the innovator effect of two acts issued in

1995 and 1997, respectively the Education Law and the Statute of teaching staff. The law contains the whole area of concerns of the system: evaluation of knowledge and institutions, initial and continual training of teaching staff, academic and school management, school network structure, list of teachers and school competences, financing system and so on (Curriculum National 1997, 7). The reform proposes the transition from a centralized education to an education system “adequate to a society based on personal liberties, market economy, values compatibility, Rule of Law and focuses on Euro-Atlantic integration” (Marga 1999, 8).

For the first time a National Curriculum was issued (which was implemented beginning with the academic year 1998-1999) that contains education syllabuses and curricula, mandatory subjects, but also a curriculum based on school’s decision (C.D.S.), which gives the possibility of personalization of each school unit.

Minister’s Order no 4150/13.07.1997 decides that the Framework Plan of Education should contain:

- core curriculum (subjects and mandatory study hours for all pupils) representing 75-80% of the whole and a curriculum based on school’s decision (C.D.S.) representing 25-30% of the whole;
- curricular areas – group together the subjects that have in common certain training goals; musical education is integrated in arts together with fine arts;
- curricular cycles – time distribution of schooling containing more years of study and having in common certain purposes;
- maximum number and minimum number of hours per week (time margin) assigned on class and study year;
- common body core curriculum contains a minimum number of hours assigned to each mandatory subject of study, providing all pupils with equal chances;
- school programs contain the contents and learning activities as well as goals, general competences with a high degree of generality and operational goals related to the sequence/sequences discussed; they result from the framework object.

## 7. University education

As mentioned above, the key moment concerning higher education studies of musical education is represented by the foundation of the two superior institutions of arts, namely *Philharmonic Society* of Bucharest (1834) and *Philharmonic Conservatory* from Iasi (1836) which taught many generations of musicians and irradiated in entire Romanian territory arts, in general, and especially music. In time, other musical university institutions were founded in Cluj, Braşov, Craiova, Oradea, Târgovişte, Piteşti, Constanta, and so on.



An event which brought great changes in the university structure was the *Bologna Process* (June 1999), an act signed by education ministers of 29 European countries. The stated goal of it is to “create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic communities’ exchange” (ANOSR 2009, 1).

In 2009, the Bologna Process gathered together 46 countries, members of the European Cultural Convention and also involved in its activity important institutions such as: European Commission, European Council, UNESCO-CEPES, representatives of higher education institutions (EUA), students (ESU), agencies for quality assurance (ENQA).

### **7.1. Directions of action**

The ruling principles of Bologna Process follow certain directions that are mandatory for all the educational institutions of member countries.

#### *7.1.1. Competences framework based on three cycles*

According to this directive, competences acquired by the students are part of the National Framework of Competences (C.N.C.), which defines what a student should know and what compatibility he should have after completing the specialization and how he can change his competence by means of professional retraining. C.N.C adopted in 2005 states 3 curricular cycles: bachelor degree, master degree, doctoral degree, facilitating accreditation (acknowledgement) of competences in the European area.

#### *7.1.2. Mobility*

In May 2007 ministers of higher education from member countries of Bologna Process issued a statement that said: “Mobility of academic staff, of students and graduates is one of the central elements of Bologna Process, that creates opportunities of personal development, develops international cooperation between individuals and institutions, enhances the quality of higher education and of research, giving substance to the European dimension”. (ANOSR 2009, 1)

#### *7.1.3. Quality assurance*

“Quality assurance” means in the vision of the Bologna Process “all the policies, processes and actions meant to assure that institution, programs and competences observe and maintain specific standards referring to education, financial support and

infrastructure.” Hence, superior institutions guaranteed that educational qualitative level is reached and the permanent improvement of the system is certain.

Another goal of the Bologna Statement is stimulation of European cooperation concerning quality assurance by means of a common vision referring to the elaboration of compatible criteria and methods, defined in the document “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”(2005).

#### *7.1.4. Capability of employment*

Higher education has the role to train students in order to acquire skills, competences and knowledge, abilities and attitudes needed for their employment and for keeping the employee status. Employment or conservation of job position depends on their training and development degree.

#### *7.1.5. Competences acknowledgement*

Even though the international act which defines competences acknowledgement in European area is issued by the European Council Convention UNESCO, the responsibility rests with higher education institutions for training the students and with the employers for competences acknowledgement required by labour market. Supporting the competences acknowledgement are documents such as European Credit Transfer System and diploma supplement.

#### *7.1.6. Social dimension*

This directive of Bologna Process refers to student’s equality of opportunity: free access, participation, study completion, life conditions, guidance, financial support, representation in making-decision structures (Department, Teacher’s Council and Senate), and mobility opportunities and so on. Social dimension is a guarantee for success in the European common area.

#### *7.1.7. Lifelong learning*

Lifelong learning was defined at Prague ministers meeting (2001) as a key element of EHEA, especially for a European society based on knowledge, which needs well defined strategies referring to permanent learning in order to assure competitiveness and innovation, to improve social cohesion and quality of life.

Bologna Process directives were applied also to Romanian musical education system.

## 8. Conclusions

The Curricular Reform of 1997, apart from novelties brought to the system, created the opportunity of vocational educational systems division into two great stages: traditional education and modern education known as active school for musical education. Both modern pre-university and higher education system state individual freedom, answer to labour market's needs and highlight human values that make possible the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Romanian educational system.

Even though the Romanian traditional education system was contested because of its excessive theoretical nature, it gave great international personalities, if we refer to only a few names belonging to various areas.

After 1950s music schools and music high schools were founded; they trained a lot of pupils and contributed to future musicians' education, to the growth and maintenance of a high musical-cultural level of the local communities.

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