

## Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense - decisive presence in the Romanian cultural and musical evolution

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**Abstract:** *Symphony orchestra of blowers, Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense is today the performance standard in terms of wind bands in our country. Through its activity carried out during seven decades, the band crowned the creative, interpretative, educational and cultural values of the military music bands from the Romanian garrisons and military units. Having a repertoire that exceeds two thousand works from almost all musical genres (hymns, marches, patriotic and military songs, fantasies, potpourri, overtures, processing of songs and folk games, symphonic poems, symphonies, jazz, Romanian light music, etc.) from the creations of Romanian and universal composers, the wind symphony orchestra supported a rich concert, ceremonial and protocol activity, representing Romania in numerous national and international festivals.*

Key-words: *marching band, wind instruments, percussion, performance, interpretation, creativity, standard, military music.*

### 1. Introduction

This year, the military music celebrated 190 years of existence, almost two centuries of evolution of some wind bands from the military units and garrisons, to which is added the Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense, as a unique symphonic band. From the signaling instruments of the Dacians-Romans or Romans who accompanied the armies in battles, passing through the oriental formations (Turkish methanes and tabulhana) in the Phanariot period and adapting to Western musical forms (German or Russian), military music formations have accompanied the army in times of peace or war. That is why their artistic activity

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was based on social, cultural and military needs, fulfilling an educational role both on the military staff, the general society, but also on the young people through specific forms of schooling.

Currently, military music has specialized structures regulated by the "Regulation of military music in the Romanian Army", approved by the Order of the Minister of National Defense no. M 202 of 20.11.2018. These are:

- The General Inspectorate of Military Music (Military Music Service), which leads, organizes, and controls the field of military music in the Romanian Army. It operates under the Joint Logistics Command and has in its organizational chart also Military Music deployed in various garrisons in Romania, which are groups of professional instrumentalists who participate in specific training, ceremonial or protocol activities, but who also promote military traditions and national culture by concerts addressed to the general public.
- The Military Music Training Center (Military Music School) is a military structure intended for the professional and continuous training of personnel in the *Military Music* weapon. For proper functioning, it works on modules (planning, coordination, evaluation, evidence, education and instruction office; instrumental training department, theoretical music studies department and ensembles, courses, administrative department, library)

## **2. Statement of the hypothesis**

The pretensions of military museums during the communist and post-revolutionary periods are remarkable both in terms of sound structures, the repertoire addressed, but also in social terms (Gheorghita 2020, 240). Research of this musical type into the Romanian representative bands has been fragmented and often considered niche. However, their own adaptations which kept the attention of the general public present, together with the repertory and instrumental approaches, have strengthened the cultural value of these bands in the Romanian collective mindset. At national and international level, M.N.D's representative music has devoted the musical discourse of the military fanfare, and has existed as a European-level symphonic orchestra.

## **3. Dissertation**

### **3.1. Short history**

The history of military music is intertwined with the evolution of the armies on the Romanian territory. They performed the functions of signaling, encouraging, culturalizing of the masses and armies and, in days of peace, a recreational function.

With the founding of the *Earth Guard* in 1830, musician soldiers have a well-defined status. In the years that followed, military music was a constant presence at ceremonies, national holidays, socio-political and cultural events, but especially in the midst of battles fought by the Romanian army.

In 1880, by Ministerial Decision no. 114 of July 25, the name of Marching Band was established for all army corpses with the weapon Music. In the next three decades, these bands carry out a rich concert activity, which asserts itself in the Romanian cultural landscape and thus has a pioneering role in shaping the taste of the Romanian public towards Western values and the creations of valuable composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludvig van Beethoven, Giuseppe Verdi, Gioachino Rossini, Giacomo Puccini, Franz Schubert, Richard Wagner, etc.

In the First World War, military instrumentalists took an active part, supplying the front line, encouraging combatants, supporting morale in quiet hours and effectively participating in first line attacks. The interwar period is marked by the outstanding personality of Egizio Massini, former conductor of the Romanian Opera, an overwhelming personality of those times. He enriched the repertoire, the instruments, the staff in the units, but especially he founded *The School of Military Musicians* in 1936. He promoted both in the country and on the biggest stages of the world a band of 700 musicians in numerous tours.

After the Second World War which decimated the military instrumentalists, during the communist period, due to some general inspectors (Dumitru Eremia or Emilian Ursu) who found financial and political ways to restore the troops, they have adapted the repertoire of new Soviet tendencies and have responded to propagandistic requirements, addressing the masses with impressive instrumental numbers (over 1000).

The complex process of restructuring the army after 1989 led to the dissolution of most of the bands in the garrisons; currently only 17 bands are still active, performing ceremonial services, parade or anniversary and promenade concerts in front of the general public. The Representative Music Symphony Orchestra of the Ministry of National Defense, based in Bucharest, remains the top standard.

### **3.2. Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense**

Institutionally created on August 1, 1951, the Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense was the desideratum of many general inspectors of military music, who wanted a symphony orchestra that would be representative both for the bands in the country and for the Romanian cultural life, through the high artistic quality and through the vision and courage of its conductors and leaders (*Journal of Modern Military Music* at 190, 2021, 22). The prestigious activity of seven decades puts this orchestra (a fanfare at its origin) together with the great

orchestras in Romania and in the world. The proof are the numerous prints on CD or DVD, numerous concerts in halls or festivals, posts on You Tube, participation in numerous national or international parades, but also the performance of official military service at ceremonies, anniversaries, welcomes of heads of state or commemorations. Over time, there has been a continuing concern in carrying out numerous artistic activities, with the major goal of cultivating the masses, attracting them to good taste and quality music. The entire activity of the Army Representative Music is oriented in two main directions: protocol activities and garrison services (military and state ceremonies, official receptions, honorary companies, gala performances, front magazines) and cultural and artistic activities such as: symphonic concerts, promenade concerts, radio-tv and magnetic recordings, concerts at national and international festivals, concerts in operations theaters, etc. (Ignat 2012, 27).

**The structure of the band** respects the sound and ambitus correspondences of the classical symphony orchestra, having the following composition: clarinet (1,2,3), flute, piccolo, oboe, bassoon, saxophone (alto, tenor and baritone), horn (1,2,3,4), fligorn (1, 2, 3), trumpets (1, 2, 3), euphonium, bassoon, trombones (1, 2, 3), F and B flat tuba, percussion, bass guitar, solo guitar, electric piano. From this structure emerges the vast repertoire possibility proved by the success of numerous concerts. The purpose of integrating these instruments was to be able to introduce in the repertoire as many works of all possible genres or expected by the public, from miniatures to complex works such as symphonic poems or symphonies. From its establishment until now, the **repertoire** of the Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense has included over 4000 musical works: hymns, marches, patriotic and military songs, processing of folk songs and games, potpourri, fantasies, rhapsodies, suites, overtures, symphonic poems and symphonies, jazz, from which the concert repertoire was composed. The composers approached were both Romanian and foreign. The pieces were written directly for the fanfare or are adaptations / orchestrations / arrangements / transcriptions of the most popular Romanian or universal creations, from all periods of musical history. We also mention the concert works for trumpet, trombone, tuba, clarinet, horn, etc.), which require good technical and interpretive training. Last but not least, we mention the existence in the repertoire of all the anthems of the European countries, countries from Asia, America, Africa and Australia.

The concerts in Bucharest take place at the Radio Hall, the Romanian Athenaeum, "General Dumitru Eremia" Concert Studio, Marble Hall of the National Military Circle, Palace Hall, Children's Palace, etc. Among the conductors who performed we mention: Colonel Aurel Gheorghiuță, Colonel Marius Firca, Colonel Liviu Voicu, Colonel Marius Șerbănescu, Aurel Manciu, Fiorangelo Orsini (Italy). Toni Scholl (Germany), Tiberiu Oprea, Florin Totan.

The orchestra has participated in numerous **international festivals** in the country or abroad: Bern, Tehran, Zurich, Sarajevo, Paris, Mons-Belgium, Limoges - France, tour in Poland; Albens, Albertville, Gap, Albertville, Villefranche-de-Rouerque, Saumur, Tarbes - France; Zurich, Morges, Avenche - Switzerland; Krakow, Katowice - Poland; Debrecen, Budapest - Hungary; Modena, Sanremo - Italy; Saalfelden, Bruckan der Mur- Austria; Karlsruhe, Kaiserlautern, Stuttgart, Roth, Berlin-tour in Germany; Maunz and Hannover Braunschweig, Neubdg, Berlin, Hamburg - Germany; Mons, Koksijde, Etalle- Belgium; Beijing- China; Kromeritz - Czech Republic; Zvolen - Slovenia; Breda - Netherlands; Heerlen - Netherlands; Denmark Tatum - Denmark; Veliko-Tirnov - Bulgaria and Ankara - Turkey, Oslo, etc.

The National Military Music Creation Contest "IOSIF IVANOVICI", from Bucharest, (15th edition, May 20. 2021) and the International Festival of Military Music from Brăila (Edition XIV, 2018) are the festivals organized in the country and at which representative music was present.

### **3.3. Innovative approaches in the concert activity of the Representative Music of the Ministry of National Defense**

The first remarkable concert took place at the Romanian Athenaeum on December 23, 1956. The Representative Music of the Army performed on stage with the Artistic Ensemble of the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Band of the Military School of Music. The concert enjoyed a great appreciation, the technical-instrumental being noted and the artistic level reached by this band in the short period since its formation. The musicologist Viorel Cosma wrote *"It deserves an emphasis on the special attention the contemporary Romanian music enjoyed and, especially, the care with which the works of Ciprian Porumbescu, Ion Dumitrescu, Alfred Mendelsohn and Dumitru Eremia were orchestrated and performed."*

The consensus of the specialized critics who enthusiastically supported the existence of a national military music, decreased the skepticism of some composers regarding the use of this musical formula. As a result, in 1958 **the creative subsection for marching music was created within the Union of Composers**. It was subordinated to the "Symphony Section" and was called *the Marching Band Bureau* and it annually brought together the country's music leaders who presented their most successful creations, composed in the previous year (Gheorghită 2020, 265). At their audition, not only they were present with the staff of the Military Music Inspectorate, but also representatives of the Union of Composers. Only one year after the establishment of the fanfare subsection within the Union of Composers, **the Army Representative and Protocol Music Studio** was put into use (Gheorghită, 2016, 34). The new hall was built in a very short time and was arranged according to the standards corresponding to the acoustic requirements, benefiting from the

support of the sound engineers and builders from the Romanian Broadcasting. The new hall, which could accommodate up to 400 instrumentalists, becomes a perfect space for rehearsals and recordings both for the Representative Music of the Army and for the reunited music of the capital.

One of the first concerts under the direction of Emilian Ursu took place at the Romanian Broadcasting Studio in July 1978. The band, which brought together over 100 instrumentalists, also added lyricists, trumpeters and percussionists. And this concert brought in front of the public works of great difficulty and artistic value of famous composers such as Iacob Mureșianu, George Enescu, Johann Sebastian Bach. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the first military music, in 1980 an anniversary concert was organized at the Romanian Radio and Television Studio. Being an exceptional event, the Representative Music of the Army had in front the first soloists of the Romanian Opera (Eugenia Moldoveanu and Nicolae Herlea), together with the soloists and the choir of the Artistic Ensemble "Doina" of the Army (Fig. 1) Particularly appreciated were the repertoire approaches in contemporary music such as the music of the Romanian film *MihaiViteazu* by Tiberiu Olah, masterfully transcribed by Emilian Ursu or the oratorio *Tudor Vladimirescu* by Gheorghe Dumitrescu, which emphasizes the opening of the band for contemporary Romanian repertoire (Ignat 2012, 99).

Fig. 1. G. Verdi, "Traviata", orchestral arrangement by Dan Godfrey, m.16-18

In the period following the 1990s, representative videos from the big concerts were printed and posted online. From the repertoire filmed and then posted on YouTube we mention as representative works for the artistic activity of the band: *Andantino Inocente*, by Pavel Stanek, *Piano Concerto in Laminorop 16* (part two, Adagio), *Attitude* by Eugen Nicolae, *EL Camino Real* by Alfred Reed, *Ross Roy* by Jacob de Hann, *Cavaleria Rusticana* by Pedro Mascagni, *Tannhäuser Overture* of Wagner, The slave choir (Fig 2) from the opera *Nabucco* by Giuseppe Verdi, My secret love song by Kees Vlask, fligorn soloist Floarea Florin; Tico-tico in the Fuba of Zeguinha de Abreu, Transylvanian Suite, music and orchestration by General (r) Ionel Croitoru,

march Carol 1 by Iosif Ivanovici, orchestral arrangement by Colonel (r) Ionel Croitoru or the work "Ardealul" by Iacob Mureșianu in orchestral arrangement by Emilian Ursu; Cantata Mihai Viteazul-Intrarea în Alba Iulia, composed by Tiberiu Olah. From movie music remember Das Boot (the submarine) to the music of Klaus Doldinger, and The Pirates of the Caribbean by Klaus Badelt; "A tribute to Elvis", Elvis Presley's music, orchestral arrangement James Christensen.

The image shows a musical score for four saxophone parts: Alto Saxophone (A. Sx.), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sx.), Baritone Saxophone (B. Sx.), and Bass Saxophone 1 (Bsn. 1). The score is in 2/4 time and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents. The dynamic marking is *ff* (fortissimo). The key signature has two flats. The score spans three measures, with the first measure starting on a double bar line and the last measure ending on a double bar line. The bass saxophone part has a '2' below the staff in the first and third measures, indicating a second ending or a specific fingering.

Fig. 2. G. Verdi, "Nabuco, The slave choir", orchestration by Anton Cenușă, saxofoni, m. 6-8

Particularly suggestive is the repertoire in which the band had vocal soloists: *You raise me up*, by Rolf Løvland, bass soloist Filip Panait; *The Great Union never forgets*, composed by Viorica Macovei soloist Viorica Macovei, arrangement by Firca Marius; *If you were a willow on the shore* by Horia Moculescu, arrangement by Alexandru Butnariu, soprano soloist Elena Dincă-Velica, soloist of the Choir of the Ministry of National Defense; aria Rusalka by Antonin Dvorak, performed by soprano Monica Valentin. We also mention the collaborations with choirs such as: the Divine Harmony Choir (Choir Master Colonel Cristian-Marius Firca) and the Representative Music of M.Ap.N with the Easter hymn "*Christ is Risen!*", conductor Colonel Aurel Gheorghîță, orchestral arrangement -colonel Cristian-Marius Firca; the homage work "*Eminescu*", music by Ion Aldea Teodorovici in the orchestration of Marius Firca, conductor Marius Firca, soprano soloist Alexandra Tărniceru; or the vocal group consisting of 4 soloists (Tenor Șerban Cristache, Baritone Ioan Alexandru Alexandri, Baritone Florin Cojocaru, Bass Robert Ionescu) from the Choir of the Ministry of National Defense, performing "Hora Unirii" by Alexandru Flechtenmacher, on lyrics by Vasile Alecsandri, orchestral arrangement by Alexandru Butnariu, the musical management of Colonel Aurel Gheorghîță, conductor Colonel Marius Șerbănescu, conductor of the choir lieutenant Daniel Metea.

A big concert took place on March 1, 2017 at the Palace Hall, where the Representative Orchestra of the M.Ap.N. was with the great virtuoso Nicolae Zamfir, accompanied by the Cantoris Choir, soprano Maria Jinga, conductor Aurel

Gheorghită, choir master Daniel Jinga, guest Christian Micșunescu, a concert that enjoyed great success.

Unpublished is the video printed in the pandemic period with the vocal group composed of 5 soloists of **the Choir of the Ministry of National Defense**, who offered for audition the work "*Spring*" by Antonio Vivaldi, in a surprising vocal adaptation. The musical direction was provided by Colonel Aurel Gheorghită, choral arrangement by Alexandru Butnariu, conductor lieutenant Daniel Metea, soloists: soprano Elena Dincă Velica, tenor Cristache Șerban, baritone Alexandri Ioan Alexandru, baritone Cojocaru Florin and bass Ionescu Robert; "Iosif Naniescu" priestly choir, from Curtea de Argeș, Patriarchal Psaltic Group "Tronos". During the pandemic period, the activity took place only in the garrison, the band serving sound only at ceremonies held outdoors.

#### 4. Conclusions

The participation in the Romanian cultural life of the symphonic orchestra of the souls representative music of M.AP.N., represented a constant value with a well-defined role and status, having its unique value as well. The composers made it possible, through an overflowing creativity, to approach any kind of repertoire by the brass and percussion orchestra, radically changing the "ritual of interpretation" and intentionally establishing a break with tradition (Sandu-Dediu, 2013, 189). Its presence is the guarantee that the tools of the souls can form a pleasant sound of the general public and can approach the most diverse repertoire.

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