

Alex Vasiliu

The Works of Richard Oschanitzky

Stylistic features



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The Works of Richard Oschanitzky analyses the German-Romanian composer and pianist's output in the context of Socialist Romania (1965 to 1979). By the means of music historiography, archive research and musicological analyses, the composer's contributions to the symphonic/chamber jazz genres, pioneering role in ethno-jazz and film music scores are analysed. The book lays particular stress on Richard Oschanitzky's attempt to find common ground between European academic music and American jazz, as exemplified in his symphonic jazz works. The Romanian edition of this book has raised awareness of the musical potential to be retrieved, resulting in additional audio-visual products, such as documentary films and new CD editions of his work. It has become part of the academic curriculum for the course *History of Jazz*, taught at the George Enescu University of Arts in Iași, Romania.

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Translated from Romanian by Emanuel Vasiliu

Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Cover illustration: © Fred Nuss

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vasiliu, Alex, 1954-

[Creatia lui Richard Oschanitzky. English]

The works of Richard Oschanitzky : stylistic features / Alex Vasiliu ; translated from Romanian by Emanuel Vasiliu.

pages cm

ISBN 978-3-631-65193-3

1. Oschanitzky, Richard, 1939-1979 – Criticism and interpretation. 2. Music – Romania – 20th century – History and criticism. 3. Composers – Romania. I. Vasiliu, Emanuel, translator. II. Title.

ML410.0679V3713 2014

780.92--dc23

2014036696

Translated from the Romanian original Edition:
Alex Vasiliu: *Creația lui Richard Oschanitzky: trăsături stilistice*
© Editura Muzicală - București, 2012

ISBN 978-3-631-65193-3 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-653-04611-3 (E-Book)

DOI 10.3726/978-3-653-04611-3

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Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

Frankfurt am Main 2014

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Peter Lang – Frankfurt am Main · Bern · Bruxelles · New York ·
Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

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This publication has been peer reviewed.

www.peterlang.com

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Argument

If a musicologist had intended to write a biography or a study of Richard Oschanitzky's works in 1979, after the latter had just passed away¹, there would have already been enough information available to sketch the portrait of a fascinating artist.

Many musicians' and music lovers' impressions were still vivid. The jazzy arrangements of works by J.S. Bach, presented in the concert hall of the Bucharest Conservatory²; a piano technique that would have supported solo performances of academic genres, orchestrations for theatre plays, fast and qualitative commentaries for small groups or ensembles; his poetic melodies, harmonic inventiveness, refined timbres and colours; orienting pop music pieces towards the genre of lied, in-depth knowledge of compositional techniques covering most fields of music, a balanced promotion of the avant-garde visible in his forty film scores (twenty-five of them, feature-length live-action), in the free-jazz opera; being certain that he would manage the marriage of opposite musical concepts (academic music and jazz), his permanent presence in radio and TV programmes; an essential contribution to records of high musical and artistic value published by *Electrecord* – all of these defined the personality of a composer and instrumentalist unique for Romania.

The orders from Italian or British record companies entailing arrangements and orchestrations for renowned pop singers, the awards he received at pop or film and teleplay music contests, invitations from the East German state radio and television to frequently participate as a pianist, arranger and orchestrator in the staging of grand entertainment shows and to compose in styles of his choice represent proof of his recognition as a musician of rare value.

Such statements can impress some European music environments as exaggerating Richard Oschanitzky's achievements. This correct impression is due to the quasi-total lack of information in the generalist and specialised Romanian press (since 1979, only a couple of studies and essays have been published in the magazines *Muzica*, *Cronica* and in a few dailies, while portrait broadcasts were aired

1 5 April 1979.

2 8 December 1964.

on the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company, on Radio Iași, Radio Trinitas, TVR Iași and TVR Cultural. The lack of knowledge on many of Oschanitzky's defining personality traits can be explained through the biographical accident of a difficult, downright tragic period in the post-war history of Romania and through the musician's reflection in the media exclusively as a pianist, arranger and jazz / film music composer.

The second cause was the regress in cultural policy initiated in July 1971; from this moment on, his original works of jazz and jazz-academic fusion were less tolerated at official level.

A third reason for the almost insurmountable difficulty of performing the chamber and symphonic jazz works in Romania was the gradual emigration³ of many technically skilled performers, who had been available for both fields of musical expression⁴.

We should not overlook the view held by most musicians in Romania, according to which the academic genres maintain their superiority over jazz, thought of as mere entertainment. The preoccupation of important composers of the 20th century for the North-American popular genres has always been seen as ephemeral, as the jazz-specific modulations, rhythms and sounds didn't mean more than mere "colouring" or short, at most respectable sequences of ampler classical works. Although respected academic music composers such as Dumitru Capoianu, Pascal Bentoiu, Liviu Dănceanu or Dan Dediu have often spoken and written with warmth and understanding about the qualities and **seriousness of jazz**, although Romania has witnessed a few attempts at reconciling jazz with the European modes of structuring musical ideas⁵, the concept of symphonic jazz did not work. In public perception, the term remained restricted to George Gershwin's ample works – *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Concerto in F* for solo piano and orchestra, *Cuban Overture* and the Suite *An American in Paris*. In the chapter dedicated to the symphonic/chamber jazz genre, I will explain the paradox that accompanied the 50-year-long discord between European academic music and jazz, understandable if we consider the 20th century development of the academic sound phenomenon, but debatable as a sign of so many composers, critics and pedagogues' conservatism.

3 Beginning with 1967, when diplomatic relations between Romania and FR Germany were established.

4 Constantin Angelescu (guitar), Wolfgang Güttler (bass), Ștefan Berindei (saxophone).

5 In works composed by Dumitru Bughici, Dumitru Capoianu, Aurel Popa, Eduard Terényi, Pascal Bentoiu a.o.

In Romania, the lengthy isolation of jazz between the limits of entertainment genres was also a result of communist policies, which targeted it as a capitalist product. Between 1948 and 1963, „jazz” as a term was censored in the press, records or books could not be found in the state shops, their illicit procurement proved to be quite dangerous, Conservatory students who dared to hum or play a jazzy melodic phrase on an instrument were risking harsh punishments. One man who payed dearly for such a “mistake” was none other than Richard Oschanitzky.

This is another – important – explanation of the ignorance surrounding Oschanitzky’s works of academic music and jazz. His expulsion from the Conservatory and the subsequent lengthy absence from the Composers’ Union made it impossible for his works (of academic music of symphonic/chamber jazz) to be acquired by the Union, published as scores and included in the philharmonic programmes, issued on records. The situation stayed the same in the period of political liberalization (1964–1971). His jazz and pop music works were the only ones broadcast by the state radio and television, on *Electrecord* records.

The lack of international resonance, at least up until the 2000s, of Richard Oschanitzky’s work can also be motivated through his refusal to move to a country, where the political system and market mechanisms would have favoured an uninhibited self-assertion. By accepting only temporary collaborations with international media and art institutions, Richard Oschanitzky willingly chose the condition of a creator, who worked in an ethno-cultural area situated at considerable distance from the irradiating centres.

But these impediments don’t have endless effects. There are documents (recordings and scores for research) attesting the value of a creator whose genius was, nevertheless, recognized by some Romanian and international musicians. Beginning with 1987, some novel jazz, chamber, choral or symphonic jazz works have left behind the silence of the written text, made it onto concert stages and were captured in audio-visual memory.

The compositions that were well appreciated decades ago but were undeservingly forgotten, the unknown compositions are worth shedding light on now, when the way the musical phenomenon was configured in the 20th century attests to the validity of the creative ideas and principles cultivated by Richard Oschanitzky ever since 1959–1960.

The following study is a detailed presentation of his contributions to the Romanian synchronicity with the most interesting musical tendencies in the world, and to the evolution of the art of sound, **especially in jazz, symphonic jazz and film music**. His solutions made the constitution of the **academic-jazz fusion** creative type seem like an undisputed reality, in a context where important

American and European composers had been approaching it since the 1920, sometimes leaving the impression of having found an adequate formula (George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is a notorious example). This success was possible due to his experience as a composer in the academic genres - mass, sonata, lied, choral piece, concert, overture – which accumulated through finalized works that the Romanian musical world never became sufficiently aware of.

By shedding light on the multiple, diverse aspects of a possible genius, this research draws attention to values that have proved their resilience over time and deserve to be known.

Part 1. Academic Music and Jazz in the Period 1951–1980

1.1. Trends and tendencies in academic music

Musical creation after 1950 corresponded somewhat to the first part of the century. I'm not only referring to the succession of avant-garde and postmodern periods (1901–1920/ 1951–1970, 1921–1950/1971–2000), but to the artistic visions, the compositional technique, the type of humanity expressed in art. It is clear that the music of the 20th century reflects a different human being, another psychology, a different relationship with the self and with transcendence than the music of the 19th century.

After 1950, there was an extension of all the expressive areas that had been conquered in the first half of the 20th century: discontinuity and the chaotic character at the level of perception from the music of the Second Viennese School came to the fore in all the tendencies of the avant-garde (integral serialism, stochastic music, aleatoric music). The sound violence of Stravinsky and Bartók changed into bruitism, Debussy's suspended temporality evolved towards the ecstatic and non-evolutional, the motoric in the ostinato became hypnotic in minimalist music, the absurd associations in some of the neoclassical compositions further developed in the post-modernist collage, while the tendency towards lightness and entertainment, also promoted by the interwar neoclassicists, is today often reinterpreted in cheap fashions. There were also, however, composers who kept a relative distance from the dynamics of creative changes and experiments, writing music in a generally traditional manner, sequentially including the new techniques with dramaturgic and expressive aims.

1.1.1. Avant-garde music

The end of World War II brought about significant changes of the political and social attitudes regarding the music of the present. In the inter-war period, the neoclassical styles prevailed beyond the borders of Germany, especially in France and the United States, while the styles of the avant-garde were restricted by the international economic conditions, banned from publications and the concert stages of Germany and Italy, labeled as products of "cultural bolshevism". The atonal and dodecaphonic-serial works of the Vienna group led by Schoenberg,

officially unknown in Germany after Hitler's rise to power, became accessible between 1930 and 1940 thanks to the presentations organized in other parts of Europe by the *International Society for Contemporary Music* (ISCM).

Once the Nazi regime collapsed in 1945, a new era began through the international resurgence of a preoccupation for dodecaphonic composition. At the beginning of the 1951–1960 decade, several composers coming from different aesthetic, stylistic and compositional backgrounds veered towards the principles initiated by Schoenberg and his peers. The motivation for veering towards the past came from a lot of composers' need to free themselves from the musical idioms associated with the previous period of personal and artistic repression. Conducted by Pierre Boulez in the Paris of 1945 as a reaction to the public presentation of some of Stravinsky's neoclassical creations, the works of young French composers became symptoms of the increasingly obvious dichotomy, which had originated at the beginning of the century, between the stylistic-aesthetical principles of neoclassicism and the principles of atonal, dodecaphonic techniques. Although the aesthetic, formal and technical principles of the two styles had occasionally found the same fruitful ground in singular works from the 1920s (like Schoenberg's *Suite for Piano, op. 25*, Berg's *Wozzeck* opera, *Chamber concerto* and *Lyric Suite*), the rebellious youngsters of the post-war generation wanted a clean break from what they considered as too traditional and reactionary.

This renewed interest for the avant-garde was given a fresh opportunity in 1946, when Wolfgang Steinecke initiated *The International Summer Courses in New Music* in Darmstadt (*Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik*). Destined for the study and performance of avant-garde music and emphasizing the work of Schoenberg's Viennese group, the centre soon crystallised the rebirth and development of dodecaphonic composition. In 1948, former Webern student René Leibowitz came to Darmstadt to teach Schoenberg's dodecaphonic method, rather than Webern's more radical version. In the first years of the Darmstadt school, Schoenberg was respected for the success of his work *A Survivor from Warsaw*, conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Sung by the German choir, the scene where the Jewish priest is being given in by the Jews greatly impressed the public. Schoenberg obviously influenced the young composers studying in Darmstadt with Wolfgang Fortner and Josef Rufer in that period, as many of them went on to Paris to continue their studies with Olivier Messiaen. One of Fortner's students from the first lectures of 1946 was Hans Werner Henze. The 1946–1950 Darmstadt performances of his first two symphonies and of cantata *Apollo and Hyacinthus* revealed his expressionistic use of the dissonant, angular dodecaphonic melodies of Schoenberg-serialist influence – which is also detectable in the works of Bernd Alois Zimmermann.

1.1.2. Integral serialism

A break between Schoenberg's more traditional dodecaphonic conception and Webern's principles was imminent at Darmstadt. Present there since 1949, Messiaen was one of the first to teach the dodecaphonic technique after the war. The French composer asserted himself in leading the trend of using the pre-determined total sound material and systematically extending the serial principle to other parameters like duration, dynamics, articulation, register, timbre and texture. Although Messiaen seems to have taken inspiration from Webern's last experience, which cleared the way towards the concept of the ultra-serial pre-determination, he nevertheless used it in an idiom quite different from the styles and aesthetics of the Viennese composers.

The first work in Europe, which was based on the new aesthetics and compositional technique, was *Modes des valeurs et d'intensités* (from *Four rhythm studies* for piano), written at Darmstadt in 1949. Messiaen's early preoccupation for serial rhythmical techniques, partially coming from his study of the Indian *talas*, resulted in a set of abstract, systematised relations, which he defined as an experiment. The construction is restricted to the basic components, with every individual detail playing an essential role in the economy of the structure. The young composers' premises were the power of the serial principle to generate a rigorous structural coherence and the dissociation of every sound event from the traditional concept of the melodic-harmonic functions, which eventually led to the isolation of the sound events in a static spacial context.

E.g. 1: Olivier Messiaen - *Modes des valeurs et d'intensités*

Voici le mode:

I
ppp ppp ff f mf ff f mf ff pp ff p
(la Division I est utilisée dans la portée supérieure du Piano)

II
sf ff mf mf p pp p p p f f f f
(la Division II est utilisée dans la portée médiane du Piano)

III
ff ff mf pp p f ff mf ff ff sff sff
(la Division III est utilisée dans la portée inférieure du Piano)

Messiaen's approach of the serial principle was completely different to Schoenberg's. The only un-serialised parameter from *Modes des valeurs* is the sound

pitch. On the other hand, Messiaen distributes three 12-note abstract “divisions” in the introduction of the work, while the notes in each of these three “divisions” of the “mode” are freely placed over the course of the composition. From a pre-compositional point of view, the divisions serve as a base for the association of their own 12 sounds, with a particular succession of the duration, intensities (dynamics) and articulation. Over the course of the work, each sound is positioned in turn as register in the three “divisions”. This meeting of the different parameters in each sonic individuality is where the autonomous character for every note of the three “divisions” is established. The durations of the elements in division 1 are arithmetically added to by the value of a thirty-second note in order to obtain a rhythmical series of 12 different values. In the 2nd division, the durations are added to by a sixteenth note, with the twelve values producing new durations, while in the 3rd division they are added to by an eighth, which results in a further six values – the total number of durations reaches twenty-four. Similarly, each sound is “allocated” one of the twelve articulations (the twelfth one has no articulation sign) and one of the seven nuances from each “division”. The result of these associations between the various parameters and pitch is a texture based on the juxtaposition of distinctive points. This is how this mosaic or “pointillist” approach contributes to isolating each individual musical event.

The technique of serialization excludes any meaning of sound directions.

However, a type of movement is produced in two fundamental ways. The first one denotes a process by which the descending lineal outline of every “division” of 12 pre-compositionally determined notes is gradually disappearing through the permanently changing order of the note line. The second one is based on changing the spatial relations between the elements of the three “divisions” through counterpoint interactions, where the melody lines are freely and constantly re-interpreted in reference to each other. This multidimensional principle can be illustrated by analogy with space arts. We can imagine a mobile tridimensional object, made up of a variety of huge, fixed components, rotating in space. The identity of the elements remains unchanged but each one of them appears in a different perspective in reference to the others. This dimensional effect, based on a change in perspective, is mainly obtained by contrastingly fixating the different notes, while the equally different parameters of every sound event contribute to outlining its identity.

Invited to teach at Darmstadt in 1950, the French music critic Antoine Goléa brought from Paris a record of *Modes des valeurs...*, which created sensation among the young composers. The same year, conductor Hermann Scherchen brought Italian dodecaphonists Luigi Nono and Bruno Maderna,

while in 1951, the people at Darmstadt met Karel Goeyvaerts and Karlheinz Stockhausen in order to set the new trend imposed by Messiaen's creation. The next year, Pierre Boulez, who had studied with Messiaen in the early 40s and had been influenced by Schoenberg's pre-serial compositions, presented the famous "Schoenberg est mort" manifesto at Darmstadt. The text reflected the young generation's consensus in opposing Schoenberg's manner of treating the forms, textures, melody and accompaniment as a framework for the dodecaphonic technique. If *Modes des valeurs...* hadn't been strictly serialized at the level of intonation, it nevertheless resulted at Darmstadt in the break with Schoenberg and the definition of a "post-Webern" concept, based on the complete serialization of the structure and contents. What attracted the composers gathered at Darmstadt was the possibility of a systematic, total contact with serialism, the intellectualized, concise treatment of form and texture details, the possibility of eliminating the traditional differences between melody and harmony.

The first important public manifestation of the post-Webern development was a concert of revolutionary works in the Darmstadt of 1952. Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel*, which made quite a stir at the beginning of his public career, was one of the first "pointillist" works influenced by Messiaen's *Modes des valeurs...* and by Goeyvaerts's *Sonata for two pianos*. Written for oboe, bass clarinet, piano and percussion, *Kreuzspiel* is based on the "idea of intersecting the temporal and the space phenomena ...in three stages", where the placement of various parameters (pitch groups, register, duration, dynamic level and timbre) is subjected to a systematic process of interactions and reinterpretations.⁶ The programme also featured Bruno Maderna's work *Musica su due Dimensioni*, where for the first time random live sounds were combined with tape-recorded electronic sounds – a very strictly organized but colourful and vocal-expressive take on Lorca's first epitaph, *Espana en el Corazon* (Spain in my heart); this occasion also saw the performance of Pierre Boulez's completely serial work, *Structures pour deux pianos* (1951–1952).

Boulez's most discussed work is by far *Le Marteau sans Maître* – a suite of vocal and instrumental pieces inspired by René Char's surrealist texts. It made a powerful impression due to the vitality and the continuity of the rhythm (conceived in contrast to the pointillistic principles experimented with in *Structures...*), the timbral refinement and the hallucinatory lyrics. The mentioned

6 Cf. Antokoletz, Elliot – *Twentieth-Century Music*, Prentice Hall Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1992, p. 373.

means contribute to a vision of „a world left pray to blind forces, that no Supreme Leader can master”.⁷

Starting with 1955, Romanian composers also began to pay attention to the serial-dodecaphonic technique. Doru Popovici's *Prometheu* opera and Anatol Vieru's *Concerto for flute and orchestra* (1958) are considered to be the first local serial works.⁸ Tiberiu Olah, Aurel Stroe, Cornel Țăranu, Roman Vlad, Dan Constantinescu, Ludovic Feldman, Adrian Rațiu, Ștefan Niculescu wrote in the first creative period either according to Schoenberg's technique or its modern follow-up, complete serialism. For all of them it was an exercise in rigour, a means of synchronizing with the West and a way of rebelling against the aesthetics of socialist realism, which was dominant up until 1965. “In those baffling times, serialism presented itself as a certainty; it was offering a perfectly rational and well rounded technique, proposing an almost scientific approach. [...] The type of composers produced by the school of integral serialism is readily conditioned to embrace any abstract technical schemes that may come up in the future.”⁹

1.1.3. Concrete music. Electronic music

As a parallel to the discovery of Webern's serialism and the complete serialization of sound parameters, the post-war European musical phenomenon tended to explore novel sound spheres that originated outside the musical-artistic space. In 1949 Paris, talk started about the so-called “concrete music” made by engineer Pierre Schaeffer together with a group of musicians from Messiaen's circle (Pierre Henry, Pierre Boulez). Trying to push the boundaries of the sound material, the partisans of concrete music magnetically recorded various sounds chosen from everyday life, from nature, from street noise (calling them “sound objects”), and invented willfully musical manipulating techniques: slowing down and accelerating speed, reverse play of the recording, fragmentation, collage, mixes. The fruit of couple Schaeffer – Henry's experience is first of all the work *Symphony for One Man Alone* (1951), “a symphony of human noises”. Actually, the experiments at the French Radio broadcasting company stimulated an aesthetic movement

7 Vlad, Roman – *Istoria dodecafoniei* (The history of dodecaphony) (revised and enlarged edition; study, notes and commentary by Viorel Munteanu), Editura Național (National Publishing House), 1998, p. 297.

8 Cf. Munteanu, Viorel – *Întâlnirea compozitorilor români cu dodecafonia* (Romanian composers meet dodecaphony), in the vol. *Istoria dodecafoniei* by Roman Vlad, op. cit., p. 457.

9 Bentoiu, Pascal – *Imagine și sens* (Images and meaning), Editura muzicală, București, 1973, p. 156.

which envisioned the conversion of raw sounds into artistic-musical elements. This tendency was continued with superior technology in electronic music, but also in compositions for acoustic instruments, whose timbral limits were continually expanded.

Stimulated by Pierre Schaeffer's experience, in 1953 Herbert Eimert created electronic music for the first time in the radio studio of Köln. The first pieces, which were presented to the public on 19 October 1954, were signed Stockhausen, Eimert, Goeyvaerts, Pousseur and Boulez – composers who had not long before experimented with integral serialism. Electronic music did not assert itself as an independent tendency, but as a technique involved in almost all aesthetic visions of the avant-garde. Electronic music can be “serial, textural, improvisational, continuityist, transformational, repetitive, spectral, etc.”¹⁰ Still, it is the 1950s that we owe the beginning of this technique to, which in time has become a veritable industry: electronic music. After Köln, other studios were dedicated to such productions in Paris (RTF), New York (Columbia University) and Milano (RAI).

Romanian electronic music appeared in 1964–1965 with Corneliu Cezar and Octavian Nemescu's experiments. “Aum” for magnetic tape (C. Cezar) and “Concentric” for instruments and tape (O. Nemescu) were followed by Lucian Mețianu's works (who studied electronic music in Köln with Eimert), Anatol Vieru's (electronic poem *Țara de piatră* / The stone country) and Liviu Dandara's creations (*Timpul suspendat* / Suspended time and *Affectus memoria*, recorded in Pielsen and Bratislava).¹¹ Since then, the electronic technique in Romanian composition was combined with various other aesthetics – some of them specific to our cultural space: spectralism, archetypality.

1.1.4. Mathematical organization: stochastic music. Texture

The total determination of music experimented with in integral serialism provoked two almost simultaneous reactions. The first one adopted the contrasting position of the total or partial creative freedom – indeterminacy, which I will refer to in the following paragraph. The second highlighted an organizational alternative of the creative process, which also took chance into consideration by subordinating music to several complex mathematical theories, like

10 Anghel, Irinel – *Orientări, direcții, curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX* (Orientation, directions, trends of Romanian music in the second half of the 20th century), Editura muzicală, București 1997, p. 53.

11 Cf. Anghel, Irinel – Op. cit. pp. 53–54.

the probability calculus, Markov chains, etc. In his article *The Crisis of serial music* (1955), Yannis Xenakis demonstrated the paradox of the serial technique through the relation between total calculation and the indeterminacy effect, similarly, between controlling details on a compositional level and the impression of chaos upon listening. In compensation, the Greek-born, French-naturalised composer proposed mathematical control techniques of the sound masses (“the sound cloud”), naming his concept “stochastic music” (structured on the basis of statistics and the probability theory). *Metastasis* for 61 instruments (1955), where he capitalized on string glissando in order to configure mobile sound volumes, represents the beginning of a relatively long period of time, where ample orchestral canvasses conceived for their global effect enriched the general musical language. Among Xenakis’s compositions, we should mention *Pithoprakta* (1956), *Syrmos* (1959), *Herma* (1961), *Persepolis* (1971) (a sound-and-light show).

At the confluence of Xenakis’s constructivism and American indeterminacy, the Polish school represented by Lutoslawski, Penderecki and Gorecki capitalized on and extended the mass techniques, instrumental effectology and new methods of temporal determination, at the same time laying the foundation for a novel semiography of music.

There were also Romanian composers who used and deepened mathematical models. Closest to Yannis Xenakis’s conception came Aurel Stroe in his works from the ’60-’70 decade¹²: *Laude I*, *Laude II*, *Canto I* (where he experimented with full computer programming). In the same period, important composers of the Romanian avant-garde, like Anatol Vieru, Ștefan Niculescu, Liviu Glodeanu and Mihai Moldovan, experimented with mathematical concepts and methods in creating sound textures.

1.1.5. Indeterminacy. Improvised music

The first decisive steps towards the aleatoric technique were made by American composer John Cage (b. 1912). Right after 1950 he began to write works that were considered to be stages of his technical and philosophical development. *Music of Changes* for piano (1951) was among his early works labeled as aleatoric, a tendency that had been foreshadowed in his first compositions, structured along Charles Ives and Henry Cowell’s principles. The two experimented with percussive sonorities and untempered pitches but Ives had been the first one to think in terms of introducing the element of chance or randomness, a fact

12 Cf. Sandu-Dediu, Valentina – *Muzica românească între 1944–2000* (Romanian music between 1944–2000), publisher: Editura muzicală, 2002, p. 173.

he stressed upon in the score comments and the actual notation. The occasional use of notation that cannot be put into practice determines performers to improvise. Ives's *Hallowe'en* (1906) for string quartet, piano and optional drum allows for three or four repetitions of the piece in an undetermined tempo, in order for it to be performed "as quickly as possible, without weakening the performance of any players or instruments". In *Scherzo: Over the Pavements* for woodwinds, percussion and piano, the author mentioned that the section of the cadence "can be played or not". In his turn, Cowell made choice and randomness possible. His string quartet no. 3, *Mosaic* (1934), contains fragments that the players can perform in the order of their choice, and notations that allow for aleatoric playing and complete improvisation.

Cage's most radical departure from the traditions of Western music began in 1949, with a new focus on Indian music and philosophy and on Zen Buddhism, studies which were partially stimulated by his own thoughts on the significance and aim of music. The Indian sources, with their improvisation on intonational and rhythmical formulas (*ragas* and *talas*) contributed among other things to Cage's encounter with the concept of indeterminacy. His departure from the rationality of music became more evident due to the fundamental concepts of Zen Buddhism, which, based on the mystical and the irrational, did not look for universal finality. I mention here some of Cage's works: *Concert for piano and orchestra* (1958) contains three independent structures, which can be played by an orchestral ensemble, a chamber group or by the soloist alone: 4'33" – the controversial piece where only the sounds of the concert hall can be heard; *Atlas*, giving the players the freedom to choose the tempo, the dynamics, the attack and succession of the 19 structures. European composers Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez and Mauricio Kagel were sensitive to Cage's aesthetic of open forms; combined with other visions, the aesthetics of indeterminacy massively infiltrated European composition in the late 1950s. "Improvisation, open works, conceptual and intuitive music are born on the territory of disorder as an aesthetic doctrine."¹³ In Romanian works, we should remember the "influences of indeterminacy, which were integrated with synthetic visions of modern techniques"¹⁴, present in the compositions of Cornel Țăranu, Irina Odăgescu, Miriam Marbe, Nicolae Brânduș.

Indeterminacy has the great merit of having stimulated the musical imagination of composers and performers, thereby bringing about the invention of a

13 Irinel Anghel – op. cit., p.27.

14 Irinel Anghel – op. cit., p. 27.

new notation. The novel sonorities discovered through experiments in creative and performing freedom permeated the contemporary language of composition, surviving after the zenith of the aleatoric phenomenon had passed.

1.1.6. Tapping on tradition. Minimalism

Minimalist or “repetitive” music, cultivated in the USA from the middle of the 60s, was an important factor in blurring the borders between the artistic and popular musical genres. With its surprisingly large and diverse public, this movement partly influenced similar developments in Europe starting with the 1970s. In North America, La Monte Young was among the first to be seduced by minimalist music. As a result of his 1959-to-1961 collaboration with the *Fluxus* group, he evolved from serialism (late 1950s) to the technique based on repetition. His transition between the serial and the minimalist contexts was obvious in his *Octet for brass* (1957), where extremely long notes were included in a serial context. In Wim Mertens’s view, there were aspects in Webern’s music, which contributed to Young’s development, “especially the duality between Webern’s structural variation and the resulting static sound. Webern had a tendency of producing continuous variations over the course of a piece in the same octave, irrespective of their place in the series. In any case, listeners tend to perceive this process more like a state, as if the same information were repeated endlessly.”¹⁵

The origins of minimalist techniques can be traced back to various music pieces of the 19th and 20th centuries, from Satie’s first works – for instance, the three piano pieces of *Gymnopédies* (1886–1888), with their simple, free textures, minimally and mechanically transformed – to the first composition applying the principle of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, Arnold Schoenberg’s *Five pieces for orchestra* Op. 16 no. 3 (1909), which was based on a gradual process of changing sonority through timbre, starting from a single five-note chord.¹⁶

The aesthetics of minimalism are founded on the doctrine of using a minimum number of sounds, which are to be repeated and subjected to a subtle process of transformation. Present in all the arts (Japanese haikus, the practice of ikebana, Asian incantational music, dance, etc.), minimalism takes multiple extra-European archaic sources as inspiration. Beside La Monte Young,

15 Wim Mertens - *American Minimal Music: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1983), p. 20. Apud Antokoletz, Elliot – op. cit., p. 498.

16 Cf. Antokoletz Elliot – Op. cit., p. 498.

American composers Terry Riley, Steve Reich or Phillip Glass experimented with both the philosophy and the technique of repetitive music. Considered the first minimalist-repetitive work, Steve Riley's *In C* (1964), conceived for any number of melodic instruments, stands as a prototype for the technique based on a limited number of pitches in a continuous but not easily perceivable process of change. However, the simplicity of this music stimulated many imitators, who produced repetitive canvasses containing a limited number of ideas.

In the Romanian space, the minimalist technique found special significance and application. Discovering its archaic origin, also connected to the local ethnic and cultural area, its presence in rituals and children's folklore, composers like Corneliu Dan Georgescu, Miriam Marbé, Tiberiu Olah, Octavian Nemescu or Doina Rotaru integrated repetitive sections in works of complex structures. Specifically Romanian minimalism does not exist as such, but insertions of this type have been used in works dominated by other aesthetics.

1.1.7. Postmodernism

Considered more of a historical interval than an aesthetic tendency in itself, postmodernism is a term that can define today's art (starting with the 1970s as a form of manifestation and later conceptualized as such). Currently, the directions of postmodernist musical art are manifold: polystylism, metastylism, neotonicity – new consonance, ambiental music, multimedia art, instrumental theatre, archetypal music, etc.¹⁷ What is common to the multiple facets of postmodernism?

1. An open or understated form of reclaiming tradition, referencing historical eras or the recent past;
2. giving up experiments in favour of creation as a work of art; a return to a certain accessibility – as a consequence, the wish to win back the audience;
3. the compositions of the present reflect the creator's memory and musical knowledge, as they are made up of multiple images and sound idioms transferred onto the score in intertextual fashion.

Wolfgang Rihm, Magnus Lindberg, Jonathan Harvey or Brian Ferneyhough are well-known names in current European composition, whose scores evince a mix of styles and the issue of re-evaluating tradition.

17 Cf. Anghel, Irinel – Op. cit.

1.1.8. Romanian music

Although I have already referred to the Romanian correspondence of the stylistic tendencies in international contemporary music, I will dedicate a separate section to local composition in order to underline our composers' specific development, their aesthetic and language options. I will only stress those elements which particularize Romanian music, as illustrated in the two fundamental research works that I have previously quoted from¹⁸, or based on my own observations.

A brief history is needed in order to understand the current Romanian musical landscape. Lacking in tradition, Romanian composition was suffering from a century-old jet-lag, when compared to Western or even Central-European music. Crystallized as part of the extended phenomenon of turn-of-the-century national schools, Romanian composition registered a truly miraculous rise.

If George Enescu achieved an ample synthesis of Western musical traditions (the classic, romantic, post romantic, neoclassical, modern) and our folkloric tradition in works of great complexity and artistic value well-worth knowing all over the world, the other interwar composers – Sabin Dragon, Mihail Jora, Theodor Rogalski, Paul Constantinescu a.o. – stressed the national specifics, taking folklore and Byzantine liturgy as starting points. From this period, we need to remember Paul Constantinescu's Byzantine Christmas Oratorio („Oratoriul bizantin de Crăciun”) and Mihail Jora's lieder – musical emblems of Romanian spirituality.

After 1950, our culture entered the influence of a totalitarian ideology (similar to the other countries from the ex-Soviet block) – an ideology imposing aesthetic orientations which did not favour creative evolution. I'm thinking about the accessibility (culture for the masses), the pregnant national colour and themes, materialism and secularism – ideas reflected in a significant chunk of musical production between 1950 and 1965. As opposed to a Western Europe in full avant-garde, the Romanian musical works of the 50s gravitated around folklorising neoclassicism doubled by the aesthetics of socialist realism.

However, the young generation of composers was receptive to the flow of avant-garde ideas, took part in the Darmstadt courses and was later present at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. The Romanian composers experimented with new

18 Anghel, Irinel - *Orientări, direcții, curente ale muzicii românești din a doua jumătate a secolului XX* (Orientation, directions, trends of Romanian music in the second half of the 20th century), Editura muzicală, București 1997; Sandu-Dediu, Valentina – *Muzica nouă între modern și postmodern* (New Music between the Modern and the Postmodern), Editura Muzicală, București, 2004.

styles and techniques. Opposed to the official cultural orientation, they became the highlights of the Romanian composition school. I'm referring to Niculescu, Anatol Vieru, Tiberiu Olah, Aurel Stroe, Cornel Țăranu, Myriam Marbé. The main procedures and aesthetics of the Western avant-garde were reclaimed and experimented with: integral serialism, the technique of textures and of global sonority, indeterminacy (with its entire panoply of sound, graphical, conceptual and spectacular phenomena).

At the same time, another type of creation evolved along the lines of moderate modernism, one that capitalised on the modal structure of Romanian folklore and/or on Byzantine modalism, to create a post-Bartók variant, thereby configuring synthetic sound systems – tonal-modal, serial-modal. Our composers' modal thinking also opened itself to the "archetypal minimalist modalism" present in all cultures (Tiberiu Olah, 2, 3, 4-sound systems or modal-type monodies); it created modes through calculation, numerical and geometric systems (artificial modalism with G. W. Berger, A. Vieru, T. Olah, M. Moldovan, L. Glodeanu, V. Spătărelu, etc.) or achieved modal-serial syntheses (Constantinescu, Olah, Țăranu, Glodeanu).¹⁹ Structuring compositions modally became associated with referencing the classical tradition in the choice of genres, treatment forms and techniques. Initiated by the interwar composers, Romanian neoclassicism was continued in the new languages, proving the seriousness of the composition school and the quality of the specialist training that developed in the 50s and 60s under the guidance of Mihail Jora and Sigismund Toduță, in the two great learning centres for composition, Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca.

After 1970, Romanian composers were receptive both to Steve Reich's repetitive and to La Monte-Young's or Giacinto Scelsi's non-evolutive minimalism. In the 1980s, a new postmodernist era of reclaiming tradition began with polystylism, style collage, metastylism, the new tonality, and the new consonance proclaimed by Wolfgang Rihm in work and theory; these were also recreated by Romanian composers. Closely connected to reclaiming the primordial functions attributed to music in archaic cultures, further developments were ambiental music and instrumental theatre using acoustic and/or electronic means. This atmosphere of reclaiming tradition and ancient practices favoured the crystallization of a particular aesthetic in Romanian music – *archetypal art*. The aesthetics of archetypality influenced a large part of Romanian composition, managing to reunite some of the most diverse techniques: spectral music, heterophonic music, morphogenetic music, the new non-serial complexity, etc.

19 Irinel Anghel – Op. cit., p.20.

Developed in various parts of Europe, especially Paris, the spectral music based on natural resonance was initiated in 1965 by Romanian composer Corneliu Cezar in the work *AUM*, which was immediately continued by Octavian Nemescu with *Concentric*. We should remember that in that same period K. Stockhausen was writing the work *Stimmung* in a similar technique and would present it in 1972 at Darmstadt and 1979 in New York. After that date, the music on harmonics or meditative music (in a state of *Stimmung*) would become one of the revolutions of Romanian composers.

Another original element of Romanian technique and conception is heterophonic music. Subordinated to the archetypal approach as a phenomenon to be found in archaic cultures, heterophony was discovered by Enescu, then applied in theory and composition by Ștefan Niculescu. Even if Pierre Boulez was the theoretical model proposing this structural distribution of identical pitches for serialist concepts, Ștefan Niculescu developed a global approach to the new syntax. The oscillation of a timbre ensemble between the state of unison and that of multivocality is essentially the definition formulated by the author. Reflecting ancient philosophical ideas – the relationship between One and the Multiple – and a primordial acoustic phenomenon – the sinusoidal shape of air vibration in a tube or of a string when producing sound –, heterophony as conceived by Ștefan Niculescu proves to be a technical solution adapted to modern music, where monodies and the multivocal syntax alternate, whereas rhythm has long lost its regular pulsation.

1.1.9. Richard Oschanitzky's relationship with the stylistic tendencies of the era

In 1955, Richard Oschanitzky entered the Bucharest conservatoire with a worthy experience in genre composition in the classical and romantic styles („Două romanțe pentru voce și pian” / Two novelettes for voice and piano, on Heine's lyrics – 1954, „Două lieduri pentru mezzo și pian” / Two lieder for mezzo and piano – 1955, „Șapte variațiuni pentru pian” / Seven variations for piano – 1955, „Missa în fa minor pentru cor, soliști și orchestră” / Mass in F minor for choir, soloists and orchestra, „Missa Brevis” – 1956). During his undergraduate years in the class of Mihail Jora, he learned modal harmony, folklore-processing techniques, how to insert folkloric motifs in traditional genres/forms. („Trei colinde pentru cor mixt” / Three carols for mixed choir, „Cinci piese pentru pian” / Five pieces for piano, „Andante pentru vioară și pian” / Andante for violin and piano, „Trei preludii pentru pian” / Three preludes for piano – 1957, „Sonata pentru pian” / Sonata for piano, „Scherzo pentru pian”

op. 3 / Scherzo for piano, „Trio pentru vioară, violoncel și pian” / Trio for violin, cello and piano – 1958, „Sonata pentru flaut și pian” / Sonata for flute and piano, „Sonata în la major pentru pian” / Sonata in A major for piano – 1959). After the unfortunate event of 1959 – his exclusion from the Conservatoire -, he continued to compose, gradually assimilating the avant-garde techniques of the moment. If in *Das Lied von der Wolke* op. 11 (1960–1966) he combined in his own way Bartok’s modalism with Alban Berg’s atonality, the *Sonata for clarinet and piano* (1963) is entirely dodecaphonic, whereas his *Chamber concerto for piano, woodwinds and percussion* (1963–1964) bears proof of his experiments with the pointillist serial technique and the repetitive structures originating with Stravinsky, so modern in the American music of the time (jazz and academic minimalism!).

While Richard Oschanitzky’s free jazz works (*Cearta / The Battle, Blue Brazil, Procesiune / Procession, Entorsă / Sprain, Don’t be sad, Always Down, Enchainé, Neurasia, T8*) composed between 1967–1970 represent an original instantiation of the techniques of indeterminacy, the film music *Comedia gamelor / The comedy of scales* (1969) and the chamber jazz piece *Ochi – In memoriam Țuculescu* (Eyes – In memoriam Țuculescu) (1972) are studio works reflecting the techniques of concrete and electronic music, which were then developing in Romania.

Due to his spiritual openness, his compositional destiny of having joined / combined apparently incompatible worlds like jazz and academic music, at the same time, by virtue of the musical cosmopolitanism in his masterpiece - „Dublul concert pentru pian, saxofon tenor, orchestră simfonică și bigband” / Double concerto for piano, tenor saxophone, symphonic orchestra and bigband” (1969), Richard Oschanitzky emerges as a post-modern composer *avant la letter*.

1.2. Jazz, a defining component of modern music

All through the decade 1951–1960, **classic jazz and modern jazz** were practiced side by side. Louis Armstrong’s combo, the historic big-bands run by Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton and Count Basie, pianists Earl Hines and Erroll Garner, clarinetists Benny Goodman and Woody Herman, singers Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan (to name just a few) were enjoying success in North America and Europe, especially through radio and the circulation of vinyls. Naturally, the swing style was adopted on the Old Continent. France championed the post-war popularity of early and classical jazz, maintained ever since 1934 by the *Quintette du Hot Club de France*, the rebirth of the New Orleans style or by American stars on tour – some of whom found in France a temporary or