

THE HERMENEUTICS OF TIME IN MUSIC CRITICISM¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper revolves around four questions, preceded by an introductory section attempting to shine a clarifying light on concepts such as “hermeneutics”, “music criticism” and “time”, while taking the last on a brief journey through the history of philosophy. An integral and integrating factor, time exerts its influence on music criticism and hermeneutics. The music critic approaches his field from four temporal angles – *kairós* (the supreme moment), *chrónos* (historical time), *nûn* (the present time) and *aion* (timelessness) – and therefore follows four corresponding orientations: “what does he write?”; “for whom does he write?”; “when/how is he established?” and “what is his purpose?”. Four “variations” on Romeo Ghircoiașiu's flowchart, developed in 1979 and published in the *Muzica* journal, provide us with just as many graphical representations of the critical act, one for each of the cases in question. Joining us on our ideational journey will be the philosophers Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Bruno, Bacon, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel and the critics and musicologists Martin Cooper, Winton Dean, Bojan Bujic, Adrian Marino, Luminița

¹ The first version of this paper was presented at the National Symposium on «Music and Philosophy» - «Time and Times in Music», organized by the *Gheorghe Dima* Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca, between May 29 and 30, 2015.

Vartolomei and Romeo Ghircoiașiu. The conclusion offers a retrospective look over the entire scientific endeavour, ending on Maryvonne Perrot's tone: "are we not ourselves the dishevelled bundle of a multitude of other times?"

Keywords: music criticism, hermeneutics, time, *kairós*, kairotic moment, *chrónos*, historical time, *nûn*, present time, *aion*, timelessness, Romeo Ghircoiașiu.

Music is an image of subjective time.

S. Langer

Introduction

a. Semantic landmarks

Defining hermeneutics, time, or music criticism would require as many scientific operations as the notions themselves¹.

We will give special attention to the temporal concept, while limiting ourselves to stating that if criticism is the reflection of musical life – from the act of creation to the various ways of interpretation, dissemination and reception of the work –, hermeneutics is, according to philosopher F. D. E. Schleiermacher, "the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly"². But can we perceive the discourse of duration, regarded by Feuerbach as a line shaped by the moment – sphere, drop, pearl and lightning in the ocean and on the firmament of time – "in which being and nothingness are one"³?

For if in poetry time is evoked through the fragility and ethereality of the moment⁴, in the history of philosophy it was defined through a multitude of

¹ The verb "to define" comes directly from the Latin *de-* (expressing completion) and *finire* (meaning "to bound, to limit"). *De+finire* therefore means "to set bounds to", to exhaust all the meanings of a word; the Merriam-Webster dictionary explains the term *to define* as "to determine or identify the essential qualities or meanings of" or "to fix or mark the limits of", which is impossible to achieve in a presentation of this nature. ***, Frederick C. Mish (ed.), *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, Massachusetts, 2004, p. 327.

² F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutica*, Editura Polirom, Bucharest, 2001, p. 21.

³ Ludwig Feuerbach in: Georgeta Tănase (ed.) [I], *Materia, spațiul, timpul în istoria filosofiei premarxiste*, vol. 1, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1982, p. 305-306.

⁴ 1. Virgil, in *Georgics*, 3,284, states that lost time never returns: *Fugit irreparabile tempus*, "time flees irretrievably"; 2. Horatius, in *Odae*, 1,11,8, calls us to make the most of the present moment, for the future one is uncertain: *carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*, "seize the day, putting as little trust as possible in the future"; 3. Goethe, in *Faust*, invokes time in memorable lines: "If to the moment I should say/ Oh stay, thou art so fair/ / Then may your fetters on me lay / I'll gladly perish then and there! / Then may the death-bell toll, recalling / That from your service you are free / The clock may stop, the pointer falling / And time itself be past for me!"; 4. Eminescu, in his *First Epistle*, creates an image of eternal time: "Lifeless Time distends his body and becomes endless duration, / Because nothing ever happens in the boundless desolation; / In the night of non-existence [!] all is crumbled, all are slain, / And, in keeping with its nature, peace eternal reigns again." (translation by Leon Levițchi) Cf. 1. Virgil

descriptive statements. Through the Latin word *tempus*, time might be regarded as deriving from the proto-Indo-European **temp* - “to stretch” (the divisible aspect of this sense is implied¹), or even from **tem-*, “to cut”; a cognate word, *templum*, used to designate the sacred space, “cut off” or separated from the space dedicated to the ordinary citizens of the city². Throughout its own history, time has been defined as ...

- “the wisest of all things that are” [Thales]³,
- “a child playing draughts, the kingly power is a child’s” [Heraclitus]⁴,
- “the sphere of the encompassing” [Pythagoras]⁵,
- “a particular accident of a number of states which are themselves accidents” [Epicurus]⁶,
- “the moving image of eternity” [Plato]⁷,
- “an element in all change” [Aristotle]⁸,
- “a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream” [Marcus Aurelius]⁹,
- “old man, slow and swift” [Giordano Bruno]¹⁰,

Matei, *Dicționar de maxime, reflecții, expresii latine comentate*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest, 2013, p. 117; 2. *Ibidem*, p. 44; 3. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, translation by Ion Gorun, Editura Cartex, Bucharest, 2015, p. 96; 4. Marina Mureșanu Ionescu, *Eminescu și intertextul romantic*, Editura Junimea, Iași, 1990, p. 257.

¹ See Berkeley's quote below [author's note].

² Eric Partridge, *Origins. A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, Routledge, London / New York, 2006, p. 3396-3397.

³ Thales of Miletus, in: Diogenes Laertius, *Despre viețile și doctrinele filosofice*, cartea I, Editura Academiei R.P.R., Bucharest, 1963, p. 125, *apud* Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 169. In the same sense, Publilius Syrus states in *Sententiae, 154: Consultor homini tempus utilissimus*, “time shall teach you all things”. Cf. Virgil Matei, *op.cit.*, p. 54. For others, such as Paron the Pythagorean, time is “the most ignorant”: Aristotel, *Fizica*, N.I. translation by Barbu, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1966, p. 116.

⁴ Heraclitus of Ephesus, in: Ion Banu, *Heraclit din Efes*, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1963, p. 257, *apud* Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 170.

⁵ Pythagoras in: *Filosofia greacă până la Platon*, vol. 1, part 2, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1979, p. 54, *apud* Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 171.

⁶ Epicurus, in: Diogenes Laertius, *op.cit.*, p. 490, *apud* Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 177.

⁷ Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, *Problema timpului*, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 2000, p. 175. Pierre Duhem summarizes and reproduces the Platonic idea of time: “When God ordered the Heaven, he made, of eternity that abides in unity, an everlasting likeness moving according to number - that to which we have given the name *time*”. Eugen Munteanu, “Note și comentarii”, in: Sfântul Augustin, *Confesiuni*, Eugen Munteanu (translation, introduction, notes), Editura Nemira, Bucharest, 2006, p. 423.

⁸ Sir David Ross, *Aristotel*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1998, p. 84 and Aristotel, *op.cit.*, p. 117. J. H. Rush said that “the essence of life is change”. J. H. Rush, *L'origine de la vie*, in: Battista Mondin, *Manual de filozofie sistematică. Vol. 2: Epistemologie. Cosmologie*, Editura Sapientia, Iași, 2008, p. 215.

⁹ Marc Aureliu, *Către sine*, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1978, *s.l.*, *apud* Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 195.

¹⁰ Giordano Bruno identifies a few contradictions within the framework of time, which a). *opens/closes*; b). can be spoken *well/ill* of; c). is *generous/stingy*; d). *offers/takes back* gifts; e). *creates/destroys*; f).

- “the greatest innovator” and “the measure of business” [Francis Bacon]¹,
- “an indefinite continuation of existing” [Benedict Spinoza] ²,
- “fleeting extension” [John Locke]³,
- something “infinitely divisible” [George Berkeley] ⁴,
- “a pure form of sensible intuition” [Immanuel Kant]⁵, or
- “the being which, in that it is, is not, and in that it is not, is - it is intuitive becoming” [Wilhelm Hegel]⁶.

Time reflects the mundane life in all its fullness. Other philosophers have propounded various hypotheses on this concept⁷, which points to its multifaceted

generates/consumes. Giordano Bruno, *Despre cauză, principiu și unitate*, Societatea română de filosofie, Bucharest, s.a., s.l., apud Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 215.

¹ Francis Bacon, *Despre înțelepciunea anticilor*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1976, p. 96, apud Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 220.

² Benedict Spinoza, *Etica*, translation by Al. Posescu, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1957, p. 88, and B. Spinoza, in: Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 228.

³ John Locke, *Eseu asupra intelectului omenesc*, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1961, s.l apud Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 237.

⁴ George Berkeley, *Principiile cunoștinței omenești*, Societatea română de filosofie, Bucharest, 1932, s.l., apud Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 252.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critica rațiunii pure*, N. Bagdasar, translation by E. Moiscu, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, Bucharest, 2009, p. 80 and Immanuel Kant, in: Georgeta Tănase [I], *op. cit.*, p. 280.

⁶ Wilhelm Hegel, în: Georgeta Tănase [I], *op. cit.*, p. 294.

⁷ **1. Seneca** used to ask himself: “when will the time come when you will see that time has no more power over you ...?”; **2. Augustine**, in turn, was wondering: *Quid ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio*, “What then is time?” If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I do not know.” **3. Newton** stated the thesis of the independence of time from matter, referring to the *absolute* and *relative time*, **4. Pascal** depicted the supremacy of time in memorable words: “I see only infinities on all sides, which enclose me like an atom and like a shadow which endures but a moment and is without return”. **5. Nietzsche** reconsidered Heraclitus’s thesis on the transience of time (*Ta panta rhei* - “everything flows”: Barbu Marian, *Dicționar de citate și locuțiuni străine*, Editura Litera Internațional, Bucharest, 2004, p. 17), by placing it into a closed circle: “Human! Your whole life is, like a sand-glass, turned upside down again and again and allowed to run out again and again - a great minute of time in the meantime, until all the conditions from which you have become, in the circulation of the world, come together again.” **6.** Lucian Blaga metaphorically designated the three “possible and different temporal horizons of the subconscious” as: the fountain time (the future), the cascade time (the past) and the river time (the present); **7.** Heidegger’s *Dasein* contains a corresponding *datability*, being characterized by temporality, and perceives history “as an «intratemporal» advent”; **8.** Gaston Bachelard analysed the “poetic moment” and the “metaphysical moment” etc. **1. Seneca**, in: Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 192; **2.** Sfântul Augustin, *op.cit.*, p. 258; **3.** Isaac Newton, *Principiile matematice ale filosofiei naturale*, Editura Academiei R.P.R., Bucharest, 1956, p. 30-32, apud Georgeta Tănase [I], *op.cit.*, p. 257; **4.** Blaise Pascal, *Cugetări*, translation by Maria & Cezar Ivănescu, Editura Aion, Oradea, 2000, p. 235; **5.** Georgeta Tănase (ed.) [II], *Materia, spațiul, timpul în istoria filosofiei premarxiste*, vol. 2, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1982, p. 164; **6.** Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 2011, p. 73-74; **7.** Martin Heidegger, *Ființă și timp*, translated into Romanian by Gabriel Liiceanu, Cătălin Cioabă, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 2003, p. 534 and M.Heidegger, in: Georgeta Tănase [II], *op.cit.*, p.

nature: biological, physical, quantum, contemplative, atmospheric, hypnotic, sonorous, musical, conceptual, cosmic, psychological and philosophical.

b. A Gordian knot of three strands: hermeneutics, time and music criticism

The attempt to correlate the three concepts by looking at each from the perspective of the other (as did Susanne Langer in the *motto* quote¹) would seem more like a Gordian knot to us, for the untangling of which we would need the force of an iron logic. Criticism operates with ideas, opinions and concepts, while a work and a performance are subjected to judgements of value. Criticism unfolds its stages in a climax and anticlimax of ideas, opinions and concepts, in order to define them, i.e. to trace their pathway between *da capo* and *al fine*: here are two plaited strands: analytical and temporal. While criticism “translates intuitions into ideas”², hermeneutics is an updated interpretation of the ideas extracted by way of exegesis³: here are three plaited strands: analytical (criticism), temporal (time) and updating (hermeneutics).

c. Untying the Gordian knot: proposal for a hermeneutic approach of music criticism

If we consider time in terms of historical chronology, we accept the veracity of Ovidiu Ghidirmic's statement, whereby “hermeneutics makes the leap from historical to transhistorical. Between becoming and permanence takes place the circular motion of any genuine hermeneutic approach. The world is, and becomes, in the hermeneutic representation.”⁴ This paper will present four perspectives (while using a set of Greek time-related terms⁵) which revolve around a few questions pertaining to the field of music criticism:

- the question of the supreme moment (*kairós*): “what does a music critic write?”

224; 8. Gaston Bachelard, *Instant poétique et instant métaphysique*, in: *Messages: Métaphysique et poésie*, apud Georgeta Tănase [III], *op.cit.*, p. 244.

¹ Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, London, 1953, p. 118, apud Anthony Storr, *Symbols of Unity and Integration*, in: ***, James A. Leith (ed.), *Symbols in Life and Art*, The Royal Society of Canada, Kingston, Ontario, 1987, p. 352.

² Cf. Florin Mihăilescu, *Semnificațiile criticii contemporane: perspective ideologice*, Editura Eminescu, Bucharest, 1976, p. 333.

³ In this regard, Florin Mihăilescu contends that “Exegesis must discover, in the meanderings of a life or in the contradictions of a work, that core of secret radiation that produces the writer's unmistakable «tone». Criticism remains grounded on intuition, like the work, but its mission is to translate these intuitions into ideas.” Florin Mihăilescu, *loc.cit.*

⁴ Ovidiu Ghidirmic, *Hermeneutica literară românească*, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Bucharest, 1994, p. 9.

⁵ In the Greek language, along with these four terms, time also appears as number (*arithmos*: Aristotle, in: ***, Rosolino Buccheri, Metod Saniga, William Mark Stuckey (eds.), *The Nature of Time: Geometry, Physics and Perception*, Springer-Science & Business Media, Dordrecht, 2003, p. 368-369), as measure (*metron*: Aristotle, in: *Ibidem*), as “sign of the past and future” (*poté*: Virgil Ciomoș, *Timp și eternitate*, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 1999, p. 24), or as eternity (*aidion, aei, aionion eikona – eternal image*: Plato, in: Leonardo Tarán, *Collected Papers (1962-1999)*, Brill, Leiden / Boston / Köln, 2001, p. 207).

- the question of historical time (*chrónos*): “for whom does a music critic write?”
- the question of the present time (*nûn*): “when and how is a music critic established?” and
- the question of timelessness (*aion*): “what is the purpose of a music critic?”

We will clarify, *cum grano salis*¹, the terminology used within each perspective. Each pathway is illustrated by the same flowchart published by Romeo Ghircioașiu in the *Muzica* journal in 1979, in which he describes “the creative process of an original work”². We will start from the premise that real music criticism is, alongside the compositional work, an endeavour characterized by originality, and will adapt each step of our theme, with minor changes, to Ghircioașiu’s flowchart.

1. The question of the supreme moment (*kairós*): WHAT does a music critic write?

Besides carrying the meaning of annual divisions or historical periods³, the term *kairós* also represents the idea of opportune time⁴, supreme moment, creative moment, fertile moment, which differs from the “punctuality of the point”⁵.

The motif of the “kairotic moment”, or of “the privileged moment”, as Maryvonne Perrot⁶ calls it, which for Plato represented the “moment of creation” and for Aristotle the “moment of change”, appeared later in Arabic philosophy as “the moment of instantaneous Creation and Decreation of the world”⁷. In the context of music criticism, it marks the moment when the “unique augural moment” becomes the “inaugural moment”, defined as “an entirely strange (atopical) «reality»” of the “uniqueness of the *kairós*”⁸. It is the moment of inner enlightenment, when a bud of light grows into a judgement of value, which later, translated into the terms of a critical review, will define someone like Eduard

¹ “With a grain of salt” (with moderation). ***, Laurie Haight (ed.), *World Dictionary of Foreign Expressions. A Resource for Readers and Writers*, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc., Wauconda, Illinois, 1999, p. 88.

² Romeo Ghircioașiu, “Epistemologia muzicii ca artă și știință”, in: *Muzica*, Year XXIX, March, No. 3/1979, p. 8.

³ T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Peters, Louvain, Belgium, 2009, p. 355.

⁴ C.D. Yonge, *An English-Greek Lexicon*, Longman-Brown-Green, London, 1849, p. 502.

⁵ Virgil Ciomoș, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

⁶ “The experience of Kairos, in which time suspends its flight, its flow, is characteristic of the philosophies of the moment, sensitive to the privileged moment, charged with ontological value [...] Here, living in a different time, breaking free from the horizontal time and from the limitation of hic et nunc plays a decisive role in the affirmation of the dreamer's cogito.” M. Perrot, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁷ Virgil Ciomoș, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 353-354.

Hanslick (1825-1904) as “the first great professional critic”¹ among his contemporaries, or Henry Edward Krehbiel (1854-1923)² as “the pontiff of musical wisdom”³. Only then will a music critic write true music criticism.

Defined by the *Oxford Companion to Music* as “the intellectual activity of formulating judgements of value”⁴, the term music criticism derives its origin from from the verb *krinein*, meaning “to judge, to separate, to distinguish”⁵. The noun *krites* also derives from this verb, meaning “judge, one able to discern”⁶. Music criticism is an artistic tool in the service of “quality control”⁷, based on the substantiation of opinions and implying a judgement of value that concerns aesthetic, technical and interpretative aspects.

Music criticism transcends *nunc transiens* and eventually focuses on *nunc stans*⁸, “the supreme moment”, becoming the result of the creative self. It is only now that we can ask the question from which we started: “what does a music critic write?” The answer is: “a few measures of the score of the future”⁹.

Apparently, Romeo Ghircoiașiu based his flowchart on the neurofunctional model of the cerebral hemispheres¹⁰.

¹ Marguerite & Terry Broadbent, *Great Pianists of the Golden Age*, North West Player Piano Association, Wilmslow, Cheshire, 1996, p. 61.

² This characterization of Krehbiel was made by the music historian Mark N. Grant. ***, Stephen L. Vaughn (ed.), *Encyclopedia of American Journalism*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York / London, 2008, p. 104.

³ Music critic acknowledged as such by the *New York Tribune* newspaper, for forty years. *Ibidem*.

⁴ Bojan Bujic, “Criticism of Music”, in: ***, Alison Latham (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2002, p. 324.

⁵ The term “critic”, in *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper, 2001-2015, available from: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=critic&allowed_in_frame=0, viewed 23 March 2015.

⁶ ***, Philip Babcock Gove (ed.), *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, vol. 1, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, 1986, p. 538.

⁷ Luminița Vartolomei, “Responsabilitatea actului critic”, in: *Muzica*, Year XXV, No. 11/1975, p. 10.

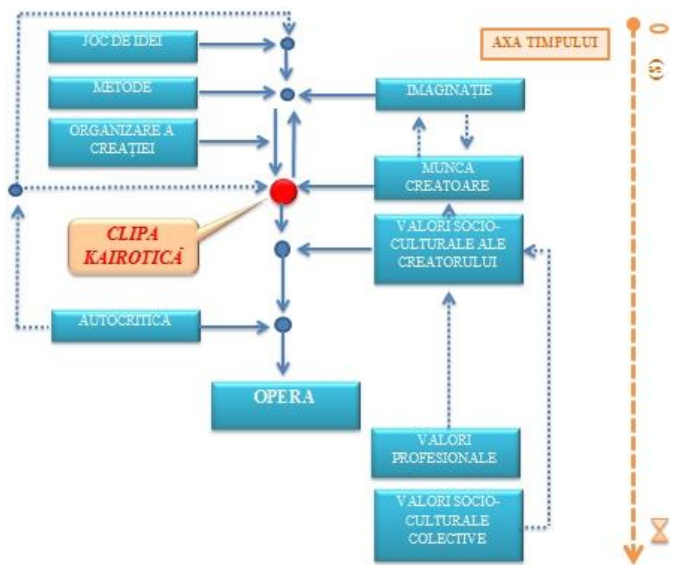
⁸ In Latin: “the passing moment” and “the eternal moment”, as Augustine called them. Battista Mondin, *op. cit.*, p. 159-160.

⁹ In this regard, M. Perrot quotes Bachelard, who claimed that “the future is only a prelude, a musical phrase that moves forward and verifies itself. A single phrase. The world extends only by a very short preparation. In the symphony that is created, the future is guaranteed only by a few measures.” M. Perrot, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁰ Thus, on the left we see the logical, synthetic, abstract characteristics of the left cerebral hemisphere: the play of ideas (which right here has logical valences), the methods and organization of the work and self-criticism; on the right, we notice the resolutive, intuitive, emotional characteristics of the right cerebral hemisphere: imagination, creative work, socio-cultural, professional or collective-cultural values acquired by the author. The result of this analytical enterprise, the work, lies halfway between the two sectors; so does the “kairotic moment” (the explanatory box does not place it in the right “hemisphere”, author’s note). The information related to the neurofunctional anthropological model was taken from: Mielu Zlate, *Fundamentele psihologiei*, Editura Universitară, Bucharest, 2006, p. 125.

In **Figure 1**, the particularity of the term *kairós* is framed within a broad context. A first element is the play of ideas, correlated with the specific methods (left) and with imagination (right); next comes the organization or the work (left), followed by the creative effort, which is influenced by the social-cultural and professional values acquired (right), to eventually result, through the process of self-criticism (left), in the work – in our case, a music review. Thus, after going through several stages - from the moment of the “play” of ideas, with its characteristic spontaneity, to the application of the methods and the arousal of the artistic imagination – the music critic subjects everything to the organizational aspect of the work. What follows is the stage of the creative work, determined by the values acquired over time including elements of general knowledge, specialized studies and findings from the public feedback, to finally result in a genuine review. An *Eureka!* moment occurs at some point in the course of this analytical process, akin to the one experienced by the composer at the moment of creation. Just as Schenker claims to have been struck by the “lightning flash of a thought”¹, or Schoenberg to have “subconsciously received a gift from the Supreme Commander”², the music critic must capture the “kairotic moment” (marked by a red dot in the flowchart) that transcends the temporal and reaches the supreme moment of juxtaposition between *nunc transiens* (the passing moment) and *nunc stans* (the eternal moment). Here, he becomes creator at the very moment of “*ictus condendi* [...] «the event of creation»”³

Fig. 1. PROCESUL GENEZEI UNEI OPERE ORIGINALE (Ghircoiașiu, 1979)



¹ Jonathan L. Friedmann, *Music in Our Lives: Why We Listen, How It Works*, McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, Jefferson, North Carolina, 2015, p. 112.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Eugen Munteanu, in: Sfântul Augustin, *op.cit.*, p. 450.

2. The question of historical time (*chrónos*): FOR WHOM does the music critic write?

Described as a first principle in Orphic mythology¹, the Greek titan Kronos², father of Zeus³ and son of Uranus and Gaea⁴, the one who devoured his children, was often mistaken for *chrónos*, “time”⁵, becoming the symbol of an entity which on the one hand creates, and on the other destroys⁶. We thus have a mythical Kronos and a historical *chrónos*. We will refer to the latter. Terms like a(na)chrony, diachrony, protochrony or synchrony demonstrate the historical dimension of time, defined by Aristotle as a “moving point” between the past, present and future⁷.

Usually, the critical act has a double destination: the artist – composer or performer – as “producer”, and the public as art “consumer”. These two anthropological categories are concerned with different matters:

- the *problem of conclusiveness*: the artist wants to know how well he/she managed to play his/her role and what impact it had on the audience;
- the *problem of co-participation*: the public wants to decode the artist's message⁸.

To support these intentions, the language used by the critic must be specific: he must facilitate the artist's access to information on performance or compositional aspects, form the public's musical taste and arouse their interest in art. At this point, the critic becomes a mediator attempting to establish a line of

¹ Alongside Chaos, Night, Air and Eros. See Radcliffe G. Edmonds, *Orphic Mythology*, in: ***, Ken Dowden, Niall Livingstone, *A Companion to Greek Mythology*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, UK, 2011, p. 78.

² Sometimes called Cronos or Kronos, identified with the Roman god Saturn, often confused with the Canaanite Baal Kronus and with the temporal principle *chrónos*, mythology presents him as the youngest of the Titans and the one who led the revolt against the gods. Because he had been warned that one of his children would eventually overthrow him – which actually happened, through the hand of Zeus – he swallowed each of his sons as soon as they were born. However, Zeus, who had been saved by his mother Rhea, forced him to regurgitate his brothers – Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, Poseidon (called Cronidae) – and, according to some accounts, killed him. The festival held in honour of Cronos in midsummer was called Cronia. See J.A. Coleman, *The Dictionary of Mythology. An A-Z of Themes, Legends and Heroes*, Arcturus Publishing House, London, 2007, p. 255.

³ Anca Balaci, *Mic dicționar mitologic greco-roman*, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1966, p. 109-110.

⁴ Uranus – Heaven and Gaea – Earth. Jenny March, *Cassell's Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Cassell & Co., London, 2001, p. 227.

⁵ The first letter is different in Greek: *χρόνος* [*Chronos*], “time” and *Κρόνος* [*Kronos*], the mythological god. Pierre Grimal (auth.), Stephen Kershaw (ed.), *A Concise Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Basil Blackwell Ltd., Oxford, 1990, p. 110.

⁶ Hans Biedermann, *Dicționar de simboluri, vol. 1*, Editura Saeculum I.O., Bucharest, 2002, p. 96.

⁷ Eugen Munteanu, *Note și comentarii*, in: Sfântul Augustin, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

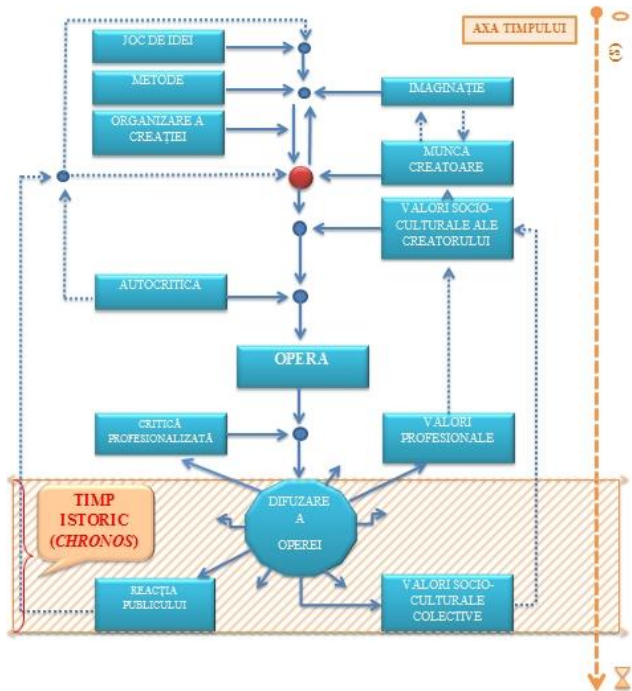
⁸ Here we must also mention the public that missed an artistic event and tries to partly make up for it by reading the review [author's note].

communication between performer and audience, his importance becoming symptomatic in that he processes the information before transmitting it to the readers. All these aspects must be incorporated in a highly concentrated and effective form, imposed by the constraints of the genre.

Figure 2 highlights *chrónos*, historical time, in a hatched section emphasizing its three-dimensionality: past, present and future. The *past* is the time elapsed since the publication of the review until its reception by the professional or amateur public.

The *present* represents the moment when the reception actually takes place and includes a feedback, called “the public's reaction”. The dissemination of the work will influence the collective cultural values which, together with the public's reaction, after another “kairotic moment”, will have a *future* impact on the music critic's creative work. Here, we recognize the temporal horizon defined by Blaga as river time (the past), cascade time (the present), and fountain time (the future)¹. Good criticism must be anchored in the three-dimensionality of its own time. A work dwelling solely in the past is doomed to oblivion; one grounded in the present will become past itself and will too drift into oblivion; one looking to the future will be a utopia; but the one embedded in the three-dimensional historical time will always remain a masterpiece.

Fig. 2. PROCESUL GENEZEI UNEI OPERE ORIGINALE (Ghircoiașu, 1979)



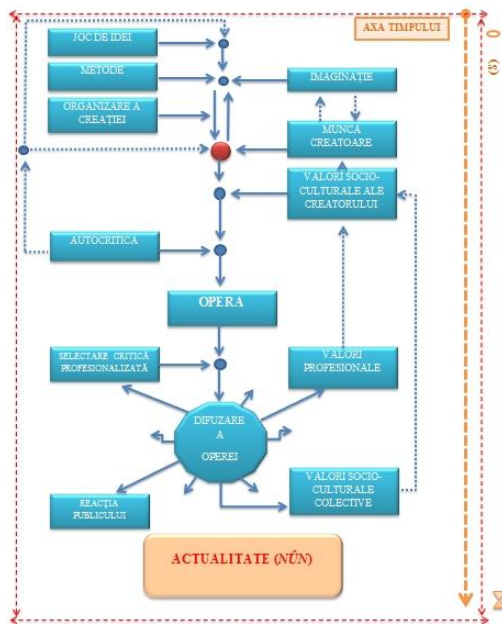
¹ See footnote no. 22, position 6 [author's note].

3. The question of the present time (*nûn*): WHEN and HOW is a music critic established?

The Greek word *nûn*, denoting the present “now”¹, or even the “eternal present” (for Parmenides²), evolved into the Latin *nunc* – “moment” and into the English *now*, “at the present time or moment”³. As a guide in the musical field, the critic must highlight and substantiate the current value of a work. His professional activity must be characterized by an “all-encompassing knowledge and attention to detail”⁴, skill and experience, passion and vision, vocation and professionalism, intuition and creativity. In other words, as stated by Martin Cooper, a critic should know “everything about something and something about everything”⁵.

In **Figure 3**, *nûn*, the present time (marked by the term “*actualitate*” [meaning “present” - translator's note], arranged in the bottom box of the flowchart) sets the music critic in his rightful domain. All the elements

Fig. 3. PROCESUL GENEZEI UNEI OPERE ORIGINALE (Ghircoiașiu, 1979)



¹ Hesiod used the phrase *kai gar nun* in *Theogony*, meaning “even now”, while Plato, in the 3rd book of the *Laws*, described the events that happened in the Athens of his time by the word *nûn*. Apparently, Parmenides proposed the concept of “timeless eternity”, using the phrase *nûn  st n*. Irene J.F. de Jong, Ren  N nlist, *Time in Ancient Greek Literature*, Brill, Leiden / Boston, 2007, p. 46 and Gerard Naddaf, *The Greek Concept of Nature*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York, 2005, p. 34.

² Marcel Conche, *Philosophizing ad Infinitum. Infinite Nature, Infinite Philosophy*, State University of New York, Albany, New York, 2014, p. 7.

³ The term “now”, in *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Douglas Harper, 2001-2015, available from: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=now&allowed_in_frame=0, viewed 21 November 2015.

⁴ Olimpia Radu, *Pagini de critic *, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1988, p. 141.

⁵ Martin Cooper, “Music Critics and Criticism Today”, in: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 101, No. 1406 / 1960, Musical Times Publications Ltd., p. 220.

requires a rigorous and continuous training. For, although the purpose of criticism is to facilitate the understanding of the work and to explain it, it will never be able to exhaust the reality of the text, which will always have “something” more to say. In this context, *nûn*, the *now* of criticism, aims not at concepts, or books, but at foundations¹.

4. The question of timelessness (*aion*): WHAT is the purpose of a music critic?

In addition to other terms dedicated to immortality², *aion* was introduced in philosophy by Parmenides, connoting “unlimited duration, eternity”³, a “transcendent mode of being”⁴. Aristotle was talking about infinite time⁵, while for Plato, the term referred to posterity⁶.

The purpose of the music critic is to give posterity valuable works and thus influence the opinion of future generations. He can reach timelessness through the work. His analysis of the work becomes a new work, which survives him. According to Winton Dean, a critic must assess and elucidate the following questions, with the greatest accuracy:

- what did the artist try to do?;
- to what extent did he succeed? and
- how does the work relate to other works?⁷.

¹ Vlăduțescu's paraphrase of Kant. See: Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, *O enciclopedie a filosofiei grecești: filosofi, filosofii, concepte fundamentale*, vol. 1, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 1994, p. 293.

² Like *a-thanatos* “without death” (for Homer), *ænaos*, “eternal” (for Xenophon, Pindar, Plato), *aidios*, “everlasting perduration in time”. C.D. Yonge, *op.cit.*, p. 178.

³ ***, Wesley J. Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, Massachusetts, 1990, p. 10.

⁴ Francis E. Peters, *Termenii filozofiei grecești*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1997, p. 23. “Man is aware”, says Eliade, “of several temporal rhythms, and not only of historical time – his own time, his historical contemporaneity. He has only to listen to good music, to fall in love, or to pray, and he is out of the historical present, he re-enters the eternal present of love and of religion. Even to open a novel, or attend a dramatic performance, may be enough to transport a man into another rhythm of time – what one might call condensed time – which is anyhow not historical time.” Mircea Eliade, *Imagini și simboluri*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1994, p. 40.

⁵ We can distinguish the “eternity, which is the property of divinity – from timelessness, the state of being unaffected by time, or insensitive to duration (as are mathematical truths ...)”. Élisabeth Clément *et alii*, *Filozofia de la A la Z*, Editura ALL Educational, Bucharest, 1999, p. 166.

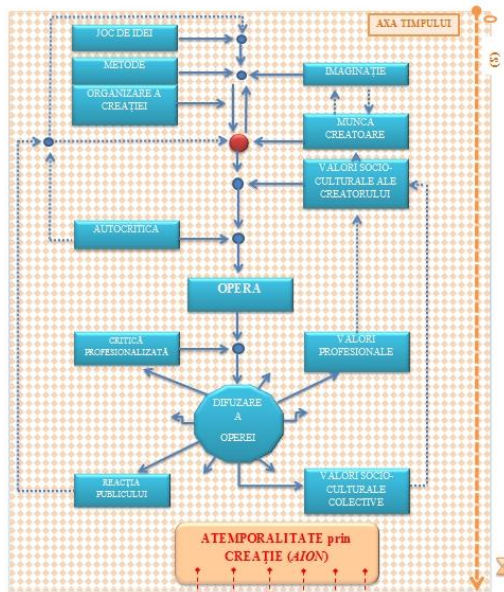
⁶ “The wheel of generations from the myth of Er [...] reintegrates human existence into a cyclical movement in which the past repeats itself.” Élisabeth Clément *et alii*, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

⁷ Winton Dean, “Criticism”, p. 36-50, in: ***, Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 5: *Courand to Edlund*, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., London / New York / Hong Kong, 1995, p. 37.

If a value is the product of a person of value, then only a critic with a highly developed sense of fact can hope to recognize and appreciate the artistic greatness of a work¹. The fundamental duty of the critic from the very beginning of his analysis is therefore to inform the public on the content and form of a work, i.e. to operate objectively, accurately and consistently, and thereafter to resume his personal critical appreciation (self-criticism)². Essentially, criticism undertakes to convince future readers about what and how to listen to and what attitude to adopt when going to a concert. Criticism evaluates, selects, ranks and presents analogies with the art of litotes: it tends to say much in few words, suggests opinions and contributes to the development of the aesthetic taste.

Figure 4 presents that part of the critic's work in which he looks for the people behind the works, or for histories within history. Is it possible for a critic to reach timelessness? *Aion* designates an epochal time, a time when the springs, streams and rivers of the music creators were flowing toward the same place – the cultural memory of a people or of a continent. The music critic offers his significant contribution in this area. He enters the cathedral of immortality through his critical work (the extension of the hatched area is suggested by the arrows in the timelessness box at the bottom of the flowchart). He thus paves the way for better-trained generations of composers and performers and for a better informed art-loving public.

Fig. 4. PROCESUL GENEZEI UNEI OPERE ORIGINALE (Ghircioaşu, 1979)



¹ ***, Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, vol. 1, The Macmillan Press, London, 1994, p. 36.

² Romul Munteanu, *Metamorfozele criticii europene moderne*, Editura Univers, Bucharest, 1988, p. 462.

Conclusions

Hermeneutics ... Time... Criticism ... These concepts converge on the valorization of values and non-valorization of non-values. This is the ultimate goal of criticism and, in our case, of music criticism. For Adrian Marino, "the critic embarks on a series of intellectual operations involving what is called analysis, exegesis, hermeneutics, whose ultimate aim is the development of value awareness, the valorization of value."¹

At the end of this process, if we cast a retrospective glance at the four questions, the answers might have different connotations:

"What is the kairotic moment?" (*kairós*)... "An idea, as a present Absence."

"What is historical time?" (*chrónos*)... "Climax and anticlimax of the moments."

"What is the present time?" (*nûn*)... "A feather in the ocean of eternity."

"What is timelessness?" (*aion*)... "The moment of a human being merging with the Moment of a World."

In this context, as Heidegger stated in 1953, "philosophizing always remains a kind of knowing that not only does not allow itself to be made timely (*zeitgemäß*) but, on the contrary, imposes its measure (*Maß*) on the times (*Zeit*)."²

If "music is an image of subjective time", then we can paraphrase Grillparzer by saying that "time makes poetry sing and music speak."³ Pavel Pitea used to say that "there are beings that die before being born"⁴ while "there are people who live without ever dying"⁵. Then he asked himself: "What is a moment?" And then answered: "It is nothing compared to eternity, but an eternity compared to nothing."⁶ And yet, to the question: "What is eternity?" he answered that "it would be nothing if it weren't for the moment."⁷

One last rhetorical question remains: "are we not ourselves the dishevelled bundle of a multitude of other times?"⁸

¹ Adrian Marino, *Introducere în critica literară*, Editura Tineretului, Bucharest, 1968, p. 144.

² Martin Heidegger, *Introducere în metafizică*, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 1999, p. 19.

³ See: D. Spătaru, "125 de ani de la moartea lui Schubert", in: *Muzica*, Year III, No. 4/1953, p. 58.

⁴ Pavel Pitea, in: Florea Marin, *Omul în devenirea sa*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 279.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ M. Perrot, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

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