

# TODUȚĂ IN ROME – TESTIMONIALS

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## ABSTRACT

Between 1936 and 1938, Sigismund Toduță attended an advanced study program in the Italian capital. This was a pivotal moment in the history of Romanian music, in that the Maestro from Cluj obtained the first doctorate in music for Romania. In the early twentieth-century Rome, as in all the other important cultural centres (Paris, Berlin, Vienna, London), the fervent artistic life attracted world-famous musicians and, along with them, major musical events that everyone wished to attend. It is in this context that we find Toduță as an eminent student of the *Santa Cecilia* Music Academy (presently called Conservatory) and of the Institute of Sacred Music, where he impressed his great Italian teachers Casella, Pizzetti, Casimiri etc. with his enthusiasm for learning.

**Keywords:** national-universal, memories, complementarities, discoveries.

## Introduction

In 2010, through a happy turn of events, I spent three months in Rome “in the footsteps of Toduță”, in the archives of three major institutions, i.e. *Accademia di Santa Cecilia*, a musical institution currently hosting one of the largest and most complete Italian music libraries, *Conservatorio Santa Cecilia* and *Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra*. My intention was to bring to Romania the original copy of the first doctoral thesis authored by a Romanian musician. Due to the restrictive policies prohibiting the alienation of the patrimony of Vatican, I received only a certified copy, kindly signed and stamped by the then director of the Pontifical Institute, Msgr. Valentino Miserachs, which I handed over to the library of the Academy of Music of Cluj-Napoca, together with other documents that completed the Maestro’s file held by the *Sigismund Toduță* Foundation.

It was a time full of the excitement and gratification that any researcher experiences with every breakthrough they make. The kindness and courtesy of the teachers in Rome, the cordial feelings that exist between us and the joint projects that we are still working on have led me to believe that this research stage, conducted under Toduță’s aura, was and will remain a pivotal moment in my training and development as a musicologist.

### 1. A possible confluence between Toduță – Casella – Enescu

*For many years, i.e. since a brotherly friendship tied me to George Enescu (my colleague at the Paris Conservatory), I have developed a familiarity with Romanian music. And I am glad to say that I find Romanians to be one of the most musical peoples in Europe, and that I have great confidence in their symphonic and operatic future<sup>1</sup>*

Alfredo Casella, Cluj, 3/IV/1937 [our translation]

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<sup>1</sup> Alfredo Casella, *Music in My Time – Memories*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

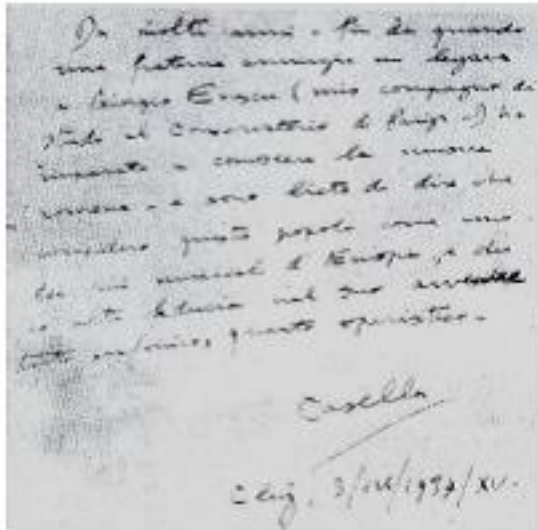


Figure 1. Alfredo Casella, *Manuscris*, Cluj 3/IV/1937

Between 1936 and 1938, Sigismund Toduță was in Rome, on a scholarship from the Greek-Catholic Church, where he attended a highly specialised study program, being the first Romanian to be granted the scientific title of “Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology”. Thus, Sigismund Toduță left his indelible mark on the music school of Cluj, placing it among the most important music research centres in Europe.

The time spent in Rome had a special significance for Toduță, as it led him to shift his professional focus from piano playing to composition, musicology and teaching.

On the occasion of a concert given by the Cluj Philharmonic Orchestra in Rome, Toduță spoke with deep emotion about the privilege he had been given to know the overwhelming personality of the Italian musicians, their exquisite artistic skills and their outstanding pedagogical qualities:

*Between 1936 and 1938, I got to know Maestro Alfredo Casella from the Accademia di Santa Cecilia (...) to discover that he is one of the most prominent personalities of the first half of the twentieth century. The magnetism of his performing art is unforgettable. The works of Scarlatti, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann were played with great composure and depth, oftentimes reaching a level of expression that verged on poetry. The repertoire he used during his piano classes was extensive and diverse, while his vast experience and rich culture, fertilized by a constant and tireless activity, enriched his lectures with valuable analytical insights. Despite my*

*attempts to actively participate, my modest capabilities for analysis and assimilation were lost in the richness of his works and compositional skills.*<sup>1</sup>

Alfredo Casella's personality (1883-1947) became known in Italy between the two world wars, as a result of his tireless efforts to support contemporary art. With both his mother and father descending from families of musicians, Casella's artistic qualities were embedded deep in his genetic code; he was born with an exceptional musical gift. At the age of 13, after a few years of piano classes with Federico Bufaletti, he achieved his first great success in a public concert at *Circolo degli Artisti* in Turin, after which he was immediately accepted to the Paris Conservatory, in Louis Diémer's piano class. He perfected his performance studies with Alfred Cortot, while also attending the composition classes of Gabriel Fauré, where among his colleagues were Roger Ducasse, Charles Koechin, Maurice Ravel and George Enescu. In 1915 he returned to Rome, where besides carrying out an intensive activity as a teacher, critic and musicologist, he took over the leadership of the "neoclassical movement", an attitude that emerged in inter-war Italy – and also shared by Malipiero, Pizzetti and Respighi –, meant to impose a major stylistic shift from an already obsolete Romanticism and Impressionism, to a more sober, austere and captivating style of art.

Casella's works included concertos for piano, violin, cello, organ, brass and timpani, symphonic poems, chamber music, instrumental music mainly for piano (2-4 hands), stage works such as ballets and operas etc.

It is fascinating to understand how often Toduță experienced the revelation of rediscovering Enescu's genius when he was around Casella. Whenever he was asked about the personality of his Italian maestro, Toduță would invariably compare him to Enescu:

*I would like to emphasize that Alfredo Casella had an absolutely exceptional personality. In many respects he resembled George Enescu, who had actually been his colleague at the National Conservatory in Paris. A complete musician, just like Enescu, Alfredo Casella possessed all the qualities of a brilliant conductor, composer and performer of worldwide fame.*<sup>2</sup>

The role of Sigismund Toduță's personality in Romanian music, just like that of George Enescu with his mature works (*Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 3 "in Romanian Folklore Style"*, the lyric tragedy *Oedipus* or the *String Quartet in G Major No. 2*), can be used to illustrate the parallelism between national and universal. Toduță and Enescu have ennobled world culture by integrating the

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<sup>1</sup> Sigismund Toduță, undated *Manuscris* [Manuscript], from the *Sigismund Toduță* Foundation Archive.

<sup>2</sup> Despina Petecel, *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie*, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor și Muzicologilor din România, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 73-74.

Romanian authentic musical idiom in the spirit of the melodies of Latin essence, a practice that was used throughout history by the likes of Johann Sebastian Bach, where the great tradition of the German art, passed down by Pachelbel, Scheidt and Buxtehude, incorporated elements from the Italian works promoted by Vivaldi, Scarlatti and Legrenzi. For both of them, folk art bore the stamp of national spirituality and originality, a treasure that deserved worldwide recognition.

The time spent in Italy, as well as the following years, mark the beginning of a possible confluence between Enescu and Toduță, cemented by the experiences they had in Rome, which created the basis for a relationship of mutual appreciation, as we can infer from their own statements, captured by several commentators:

*My first success as a composer is linked to George Enescu's name and to his constant and generous comprehension of the art and progress of Romanian music. It came with the «George Enescu Award», which I obtained in 1940 for the "Symphonic Variations for Large Orchestra on a Folk Theme: "Trecui valea"". This recognition<sup>1</sup>, linked to the personality of the great musician, surrounded by the aura of a genius, carries great significance for a composer's early career. The «Robert Cramer» prize for a cycle of lieder on poems by Mihai Eminescu, along with a second prize awarded by the same George Enescu for the «Piano Concerto», are as many incentives in the search for ever new artistic beauties. The significance of these moments reinforces the importance of the early spiritual efforts in forging an artistic path that keeps in line with the Romanian cultural tradition.<sup>2</sup>*

| 1940, 22 decembrie |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Premiul I :        | Alexandru I. Zirra ( <i>Pe șesul Moldovei</i> , poem simfonic)                                 |
| Premiul II :       | Constantin I. Lazăr ( <i>Sinfonietta</i> )<br>Sigismund Toduță ( <i>Variațiuni simfonice</i> ) |
| Premiul III :      | Romeo Alexandrescu ( <i>Allegretto rustico</i> )   |
| Mențiunea I :      | Mircea Popa ( <i>Sinfonia I</i> )<br>Aurel C. Popovici-Racoviță ( <i>Cuartet de coarde</i> )   |

Figure 2. “George Enescu” Awards. Excerpt from *George Enescu. Monografie*, Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice, Bucharest, 1971

<sup>1</sup> Among the recipients of the “George Enescu Award” are: Jean Huré (*Quintet for Piano, Two Violins, Viola and Cello*), Paul Ladmirault (*Sonata in G Major for Violin and Piano*), Alfred Mendelsohn (*Symphony No. 6*), Constantin Nottara (*Siciliana for Violin and Piano*), Guy Ropartz (*Sonata No. 3 in A Major for Violin and Piano*), Sigismund Toduță (*Symphony No. 2*), Pancio Vladigerov (*Two Romanian Symphonic Sketches*), Eugène Ysaÿe (*Sonata No. 3 in D Minor for Solo Violin*).

<sup>2</sup> Sigismund Toduță, *Manuscris* [Manuscript] from the *Sigismund Toduță* Foundation Archive, dated May 30, 1968.

Enescu entered the history of *Santa Cecilia* Academy in Rome in 1932 when, as it had happened in the many countries he had visited, he received the title of "honorary member of the Academy", in appreciation of his achievements.<sup>1</sup>

The international success enjoyed by Enescu and Toduță between the '30s and '40s came as a confirmation of the maturity and prestige of the Romanian school of music, as emphasized by Emanoil Ciomac: "[...] The success that our co-nationals have accomplished abroad shows the vigour of the musical qualities of a wonderful race in full swing."<sup>2</sup>

Enescu's position in relation to the Romanian school of composition has remained questionable.<sup>3</sup> He never fitted in the category of "school founders", as he was too preoccupied with his own path. Although he did not teach composition, he was always well understood and followed by the musicians of his time. In this context, any suggestion that came from him, like the one confessed by Toduță, would become a highly significant event:

*I was a student of the Music Conservatory and, venturing beyond the borders of the syllabus, I started working on a large-scale vocal-symphonic work, "Psalm 133". My simple and clumsy drafts, showing obvious signs of immaturity, were looked over by Enescu. With the pen in his hand, the Maestro would intervene every time there was a stumble in the melodic scheme, giving it more prominence, enriching the musical text with a counter-subject meant to add more dynamics and rhythmic feel to the temporal flow, and thus enhancing the orchestral colour and creating a vivid concerto of instrumental timbres. And so, with the Maestro's touch, this page was turned from an inarticulate attempt into an expression endowed with the expressive potentialities of art.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> George Enescu proclamat membru de onoare al Academiei de muzică din Roma, in: *Adevărul*, Bucharest, 45, Issue 14723, December 31, 1932, and a copy of the Maestro's letter of gratitude addressed from Bucharest, on May 13, 1932, to the Count of San Martino, President of the Academy, preserved in the archive of the Department of Music History of the Art History Institute, in: *George Enescu-monografie*, Academia de Științe Sociale și Politice, Bucharest, 1971, p. 694.

<sup>2</sup> Emanoil Ciomac, *Producțiile românești în țară și străinătate*, in: *Curentul*, Bucharest, 10, Issue 3378, June 28, 1937.

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Voicana, Clemansa Firca, Alfred Hoffman, *George Enescu. Monografie*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Române, Bucharest, 1971, p. 909.

<sup>4</sup> Sigismund Toduță: *Enescu – pedagogul*, scientific paper, n.y., in: *Sigismund Toduță – destăinuri, documente, mărturii*, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, 2008, p. 18.

## The teachers in Rome and the Institute of Sacred Music

During his early life, Ildebrando Pizzetti was known as one of Italy's most prolific opera music composers. After graduating from the Conservatory of Parma (1895), he began his collaboration with the poet-librettist Gabriele D'Annunzio, together with whom he created the masterpiece *Fedra* (1915), and due to whom he shifted his compositional focus to music theatre. Following his adherence to the Italian "neoclassical" movement mentioned above, Pizzetti's maturity works took a stylistic shift towards a "repetitive-dogmatic" area<sup>1</sup>, which was quite a critical period for his creation, during which he decided to return to research, conducting and teaching.

Sigismund Toduță attended Ildebrando Pizzetti's composition classes at the National Academy in Rome. In an interview with Despina Petecel, he spoke with emotion about the hundreds of students who were crowding around Pizzetti's remarkable personality: (*he fascinated with*) the erudition of his thought and the nobility of his works ... he fully deserved the nickname «Palestrina of the new Italian music».<sup>2</sup>

9-VI-1938

S. Toduța.

Musikologia paleografica.

Responsoria 2<sup>a</sup> di Felice Anerio

The image shows a handwritten musical manuscript page. At the top left, the date '9-VI-1938' is written and underlined. To the right, the name 'S. Toduța.' is written. Below this, the title 'Musikologia paleografica.' is written in a decorative, cursive script and underlined. Underneath, the specific title 'Responsoria 2<sup>a</sup> di Felice Anerio' is written. The main part of the page contains a musical score for four voices: Cantus, Altus, Tenor, and Bassus, plus a basso continuo line. The score is written on five-line staves with a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: 'Tei - stis, Tei - stis est a - mi - mi - mus'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Figure 3. Sigismund Toduță, *Responsoria 2-a di Felice Anerio*. Manuscris, p.1, Archives of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome

<sup>1</sup><http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/Name/Ildebrando-Pizzetti/Composer/9540-1>, accessed on November 17, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Despina Petecel, *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie*, vol. II, Editura Muzicală a UCMR, Bucharest, 1995, p. 72.

Another world-class scientific authority in the field of Renaissance polyphony, who had a strong influence on Sigismund Toduță's professional development, was Raffaele Casimiri, alongside whom he studied palaeography, a very important tool in the preparation of his future doctoral thesis, which dealt with the analysis and transcription of several manuscripts by Giovanni Francesco Anerio, unknown until then.

Casimiri was known in Italy for his tireless preoccupation with Gregorian research. He began his career at the early age of 18, when he was appointed principal of the Theological Seminary, conductor and teacher of composition. When only 21, together with Carlo Respighi and Angelo Santi, he co-authored one of the most important collections of Gregorian chant, *Rassegna gregoriana*:

*Casimiri (...) a pedagogue who knew how to ignite and guide the curiosity of young researchers towards the sources of polyphony (...), the brightest chapter in the musical art of all time. My subsequent attempts to build a bridge between the Romanian folk song and the ethos of the Italian Renaissance polyphony, manifested particularly in the field of choral interpretation, of our folklore, were and have remained a constant point of interest.*<sup>1</sup>

DE VRBANA MUSICAE SACRAE ALTIORIS SCHOLA PONTIFICIA  
CONSTABILIENTIA.

## PIVS PP. XI

### MOTU PROPRIO

Ad musicae sacrae restitutionem, secundum Pii X fel.  
rec. decessoris Nostri praescripta, itemque statuta in Co-  
dice Iuris Canonici ad can. 1264 § I, certo efficaciterque dif-  
fundendam nulla est dubitatio quin hoc maxime valeat, pe-

Figure 4. Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. Foundation document, excerpt

### ***... ad musicae sacrae restitutionem - Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome***

For a period of two years, the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music was Toduță's home. Founded by Pope Pius X in 1910 under the name of School of Sacred Music and decreed in 1914 as the only music related pontifical academic institution, the Institute functioned over time as a liturgical restoration forum for the Catholic culture around the world. Around the mid-twentieth century, the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem.*

Institute was already known as a valuable centre for multicultural dialogue, open to peoples around the world<sup>1</sup>, offering specialized training in Gregorian chant, composition, choral conducting, organ, musicology, piano and singing, on three levels of education: *baccalaureato* (3 years), *licenza* (2 years), and *dottorato* (3 years). The research topics that were most intensively cultivated by the Institute were musical analysis and palaeography, counterpoint and harmony, history of sacred composition, improvisation, Gregorian chant and cheironomy, which were substantially complemented by the performance practice on period instruments. In 1936, the Pontifical Institute was headed by Father Paolo Maria Ferretti, one of the leading theoreticians of Gregorian chant at the time<sup>2</sup>, with whom Sigismund Toduță studied “Gregorian transcription and accompaniment”, obtaining his first diploma with the paper *Cantate Domino*.



Figure 5. Sigismund Toduță, *Cantate Domino*, *Manuscris*, p. 2, from the Archives of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome

<sup>1</sup> The Institute currently hosts students from Albania, Angola, Brazil, China, Korea, Croatia, the Philippines, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Portugal, Congo, Romania, Russia, Spain, the USA, Vietnam and Venezuela.

<sup>2</sup> Paolo Maria Ferretti (b. Rome, December 3. 1866 – d. Bologna, May 23, 1938) was a professor of Gregorian chant. His professional religious career began in 1884, when he took his monk's vow. Six years later he was bestowed the title of priest and was appointed abbot of the Monastery of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma between 1900 and 1919 and director of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. He wrote papers of great scientific importance: *Principii teorici e pratici di canto gregoriano* (Rome, 1905), *Il cursus metrico e il ritmo delle melodie gregoriane* (Rome, 1913), *Estetica gregoriana ossia Trattato delle forme musicali del canto gregoriano* (Rome, 1934), *Estetica gregoriana dei recitativi liturgici* (Venice, 1964), *Harmony and Rhythm in Ancient Music* (Venice, 1969).

After completing the first cycle of studies, he applied for the entrance exam for *Magistero in composizione*, for which he composed the *Adagio per organo* and *Fuga vocale*.

The entrance exam was held over two days, during which the candidates had to compose several completely new works, during a time interval set according to the contest regulations. The annotations found in the materials kept in the archives of the Pontifical Institute show that Toduță finished the *Fuga* at 13:30, and the *Adagio for Organ* at 11:30, the next day. The brief time in which he composed the materials, his optimum level of knowledge of harmony and counterpoint and his efficient voice leading showed that Toduță had already reached the compositional maturity that would be later confirmed by his graduation paper, *Psalm for Mixed Choir and Organ*, a large-scale three-part work combining solemn and grandiose homorhythmic passages with more intimate and lyrical ones, such as the canon for tenor and contralto in the middle part.

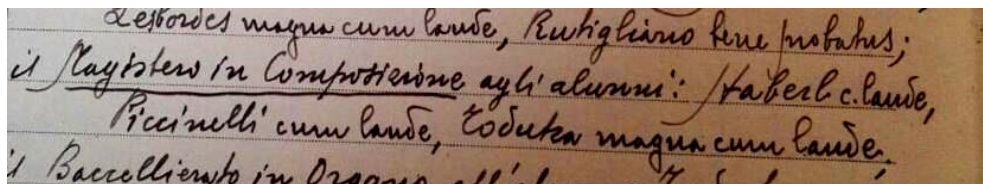


Figure 6. Minutes regarding the award of academic titles, from the Archive of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome

In 1938, Toduță obtained his doctoral title for the transcription and analysis of two works composed by Giovanni Francesco Anerio in 1596<sup>1</sup>, unknown until then, i.e. *Responsoria feriae quintae sextae et Sabbathi in hebdo mada sancta quatuorvovibus una cum duebus passionibus* for four voices and *Missa Lateranensis* for seven voices.

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Francesco Anerio (1567-1630) was an Italian composer of the Roman school, of the late Renaissance era, who made a particularly important contribution to the early development of the oratorio. He wrote an impressive number of motets, litanies, antiphons, psalms, madrigals and sacred music concertos.



Figure 7. Giovanni Francesco Anerio, *Responsoria feriae quintae sextae et Sabbathi in hebdomada sancta quatuorvocalibus una cum duobus passionibus*, National Central Library of Rome, 1596

The researchers of the Institute believe that this thesis was not only the first one in Romania, but also among the first ones in Europe: „*Questo dottorato di Toduță fu probabilmente uno dei primi dottorati in Musicologia d'Europa solo pochi anni dopo il primo dottorato della storia avvenutone gli USA nel 1932*”<sup>1</sup> (Silvano Presciunttini – communication presented at the 2016 edition of the Sigismund Toduță International Festival). Thanks to these efforts, in 1968, the state authorities approved the establishment of the first doctoral school of musicology, the *Sigismund Toduță Doctoral School*, which still operates at the Academy of Music in Cluj-Napoca.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the context of the progress made by contemporary musicology, the studies devoted to Sigismund Toduță's work carry an extra significance as, apart from their scientific value, they are meant to keep the Maestro's emblematic personality forever alive in our minds and hearts.

Sigismund Toduță is greatly indebted to Italian music and to the Renaissance resources in particular, which strongly influenced his chromatic and

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<sup>1</sup> “Toduță's doctorate was probably one of the first doctorates in Musicology in Europe, several years after the first doctorate was earned in the U.S., in 1932.”

modal contrapuntal thinking. In Italy, Toduță perfected his compositional techniques, which he later incorporated in an utterly personal style in an impressive number of masterpieces. Moreover, Toduță's closeness to Alfredo Casella led to a connection with Enescu's universe, as ascertained by Toduță himself, who admitted to a certain complementarity stemming from the aura of modernism that surrounded Enescu's works, which was reflected throughout Europe in the early twentieth century.

## **Mentions**

We express our thanks to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome and to Professor Silvano Presciuttini, for their contribution to this article.

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