

# CORNEL ȚĂRANU OR PRAISE TO THE ENESCIAN MANUSCRIPT\*

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Communications and Musical Compositions.

## ABSTRACT

Until recently, beyond what we already knew (or thought we knew) about George Enescu’s music, there was a (literally) “unknown part” of his creation: his enigmatic “unfinished works”. The present study aims to present a synthetic reflection/recollection of the hermeneutic-restitutive path followed by composer Cornel Țăranu in his effort to recover, axiologically (re)position and include in the interpretive circuit some manuscript drafts found in the archives of “George Enescu” National Museum in Bucharest, a series of documents which – deciphered, completed and orchestrated by the master from Cluj – proved to be true symphonic masterpieces.

**Keywords:** draft, manuscript, hermeneutics, orchestration, restitution.

## The Composer-Restorer

Years ago, the composer Cornel Țăranu ventured, as only he could do, in the previously unwalked-in labyrinth of Enescu’s manuscripts – his enigmatic “unfinished works” – loaded with disturbing dilemmas, paradoxes and wonders.

As a “new Oedipus” faced with crucial questions, Cornel Țăranu was, had to be, “several in one”: a researcher-exegete, musicologist-lexicographer,

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\* Translated from Romanian by Sorina Postolea, proofreading by Marcella Magda

composer-orchestrator, in short, a “creator-restorer” fully engaged in the re(con)stitution of some Enescian works that proved to be true symphonic masterpieces. But this daring journey would have been in vain if the same Cornel Țăranu had not taken care of these Enescian gems’ first absolute auditions and subsequent circulation.

### A Man, a Style, an Oeuvre

At the centre of Cornel Țăranu’s investigations lay the “hidden part” of Enescu’s work, a *terra incognita* to which he set off, however, from the solid ground of a deep and long hermeneutic experience. If we were to invoke just one of his quintessential conclusions, drawn in a remarkable synthesis study, this conclusion would be enough to prove this point: “[Enescu’s] Symphonic thinking leaves a mark not only on his ample orchestral pieces – crossed by an unceasing, specific breath that we might call an infinite confession, but it also reverberates in his chamber music, his lieder, and even opera music”<sup>1</sup>.

But Cornel Țăranu’s stylistic and linguistic considerations regarding Enescu’s creation are far more numerous and among the most pertinent. Things could not have been different because he has placed himself at the core the Enescian phenomenon ever since his first period of creation, when he took over, directly and transparently, some resonances from the work of “his spiritual father”. Later, his musicological writings provided capital references regarding Enescu’s melodics/thematicism<sup>2</sup>, continuous variation<sup>3</sup>, *parlando-rubato*<sup>4</sup>, heterophony and, last but not least, his orchestral thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornel Țăranu, *Trăsături ale simfonismului lui Enescu* [Features of Enescu’s symphonism], in: „Studii de Muzicologie” [Musicology Studies], vol. IV, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1968, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> “Enescu’s melodics is the resultant of the author’s style of work. Less spontaneous, it is the result of a slow birth, of accumulations over accumulations, arranged in layers, like geological ages. There are deep layers, which seem to suggest the shadow of millennial traditions of an ancestral, proto-historic, and imperceptible archaism, just like the music in *Oedipus*.” *Idem*, p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> “Instead of the ‘incisive’ shock of untransformed thematic reprises [Enescu] prefers the subtle art of continuous variation, which apparently conceals the initial poignancy of the theme, transforms and colors its meanings, expression, and atmosphere kaleidoscopically, while maintaining an extreme unity of the whole. This art of variation is also responsible for the impression of an uninterrupted flow, of a ‘continuous murmur’ produced by the musical discourse, hence the appearance of a musical form lacking categorical punctuations or contrasting segmentations”. *Idem*, pp. 325-326.

<sup>4</sup> “/.../ This infinite confession is defining both for the author’s lyricism and for a certain character that is difficult to notice, but which can be identified in the end as the distant projection of a ‘*parlando rubato*’ principle of folkloric origin. Enescian creation is, with small exceptions, a huge *adagio*...” *Idem*, p. 326.

## From the Paradoxes of the “Shorthand Note” to the “Praise to the Enescian Manuscript”

“In examining artistic creation, the method of recomposing the whole starting from the initial impulses can be revealing if one wants to decipher the work or the man who created it; the importance of entering the secret laboratory and getting to know the procedures, drafts or manuscripts has been amply demonstrated”<sup>1</sup>, Cornel Țăranu confessed in one of the most relevant studies dealing with Enescu’s symphonism.

The work of restoring a musical manuscript, especially one that was left in a “draft” stage, brings to the fore the condition of having in-depth, as comprehensive as possible and potentially integrating knowledge of the author’s style of composition. Cornel Țăranu set off with this great asset, which made it easier for him to cover in an optimal manner the entire causal chain.

The first impression one has when skimming through an Enescian draft is that of contact with “shorthand notes”: enigmatic, laconic and often illegible. Most of the time, in Enescu’s case, these shorthand notes show how he recorded his first creative impulse; it is around this primordial gesture, of music in a nascent state, that an entire sound universe will be defined or, rather, redefined.

What are the “steps of approach” leading to the essence of things which is meant to guarantee the symphonic-orchestral completion and (re)dimensioning of the music promised by the unfinished Enescian manuscripts?

In a conversation with the Cluj-based musicologist Oleg Garaz, the composer Cornel Țăranu recalls some of the most interesting experiences he went through while deciphering Enescu’s manuscripts. Of special worth in this context is his plea for the need to know, understand and faithfully transpose the Enescian orchestration model, as a fundamental-intrinsic part of a possible re(con)stitution methodology: “After deciphering the manuscript, we proceeded to transcribe it again. When I was certain that I had read the Enescian shorthand document well and that I had managed to understand everything that was written there, I moved on to the next phase, i.e. orchestration. /.../ So I had the orchestration model of each work, which I was then able to continue in the same way. /.../ The methodology I used was based on the certainty that I knew on which orchestral color path Enescu wanted to go.”<sup>2</sup>

Opening the secret door to the manuscript room, Cornel Țăranu entered it excited, burdened and with a glimmer of hope, only to come out of it later – serene,

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<sup>1</sup> *Idem*, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Oleg Garaz, *Descifrarea manuscriselor enesciene neterminate: potecile lăaturalnice ale meșteșugului hermeneutic – Interviu cu Cornel Țăranu* [Deciphering the unfinished Enescian manuscripts: the unbeaten paths of hermeneutic craft – An interview with Cornel Țăranu], in: *Poetică muzicală în convorbiri* [Musical Poetics in Conversations], Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 285.

confident and free in an undisguised cult of “the Enescian manuscript, a miracle of care, patience and respect for music. Looking at such a manuscript – the master adds – you enter the composer’s creation laboratory, you decipher his titanic effort, his thirst for perfection”<sup>1</sup>.

## The Rebirth of Masterpieces

Many of us have often wondered – as the reflex of a burning unfulfilled desire – what a “meeting in a masterpiece” between two of the most significant personalities of Romanian and European culture, Enescu and Eminescu, would look like. A possible answer comes from maestro Cornel Țăranu’s first success in deciphering and reconstructing Enescu’s manuscripts: the poem-oratorio *Strigoii* [Ghosts], for large orchestra, choir and soloists, on a text by Mihai Eminescu.

The drafts of this monumental compositional project covered Eminescu’s text in its entirety and this became a true “guide” in the (“step by step”!) reconstruction of its sound chronology. However, the road to rendering Enescu’s discourse in all its clarity and coherence (it is approx. 30-minute long) proved to be quite difficult. In 1981, in the special ambiance of the events occasioned by Enescu’s Centenary, maestro Țăranu entrusted to the printing press the first actual pieces of information about the posthumous trajectory of some unique Enescian works.

Revealing the conclusions of his laborious work of epistemological research, the author (of the now famous Enescian restitutions!) shared with us the strong impressions produced in him by the contact with the drafts for *Strigoii* [Ghosts]. Initially written in a “summary and quasi-stenographic” manner (“in the form of a two-staff excerpt in which are crowded together the text, fragments of vocal and choral parts, and rare orchestration or dynamics notations”), they proved to be written “under the impulse of continuous inspiration”, “in one breath”<sup>2</sup>.

Although the work benefited from a more accurate transcript as well (“much more detailed, with the voice part written separately and a rich bottom part containing three or four staves, with elaborate indications regarding orchestration and nuances”), it was nevertheless interrupted in the middle of the first part. It is precisely at this key point that the extensive contribution of maestro Țăranu came into play. He confessed that “after a careful analysis of the manuscript, it was possible to proceed with a drafting of voices and piano extracts

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<sup>1</sup> Cornel Țăranu, *Enescu încă onștiința prezentului* [Enescu in Today’s Conscience], Editura pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1969, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Cornel Țăranu, *Enescu în lumina unor lucrări inedite* [Enescu in the light of some unusual works], in: *Simpozion George Enescu – 1981* [Proceedings of George Enescu Symposium – 1981], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1984, p. 232.

for the entire text, some omissions being easily inferable from the context". This led to the reconstruction of the entire work "without personal additions"<sup>1</sup>.

The process of reconstructing the poem-oratorio *Strigoi* [Ghosts] helped Cornel Țăranu get fully acquainted with "the contorted and nervous writing, that first-hand, first-idea Enescian writing<sup>2</sup> which was so much different from the readable writing of the 'good-to-print' version of the text"<sup>3</sup>. The experience thus gained materialized in an even more daring attempt, that of reconstructing *Symphony no. 5* by George Enescu.

Example no. 1: George Enescu, *Symphony no. 5*, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt., *Moderato sciolto*, fragment/manuscript<sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> "Written in sepia ink, which was also faded, with numerous erasures, additions, numerous references on the edge of the column, the manuscript was close to what is usually called *illegible*." *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 233.

<sup>4</sup> Reproduction after autograph manuscript in facsimile, cf. Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2004.

The drafts for the last Enescian symphony contained important points of support, i.e. about two-thirds of the original orchestration. Based on this “primer”, as the composer calls it, it was possible to reconstruct the 1<sup>st</sup> Movement in its entirety by completing the piano excerpt which lacked “a series of heterophonies, figurations, inner voices, subtle, specifically Enescian, instrumental timbres, the supple writing and the meticulous notation of string digitization, links, accents, etc.”<sup>1</sup>.

Orchestrating the remaining 17 pages was a rather difficult undertaking, but a success. Nevertheless, at the time, Cornel Țăranu recognized from the height of honesty that has always characterized him: “Even if I have not managed (yet, even though after the first orchestra rehearsals I operated numerous retouches) to approach Enescu’s supple, modern, transparent and poetic orchestration (which could overshadow Ravel for instance), I have the satisfaction of having given back to our musical heritage a page of great value in Enescu’s creation”<sup>2</sup>.

There followed the orchestration of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement, but the stylistic examination of the work brought new revelations: as in an arc over time, the ambiance of *Symphonies 1-3* resonated with the modalism and timbre refinement found around the *Chamber Symphony*, and the heterophonies and heterochromies of his last period of creation, which determined the subtle Enescologist to see in the music of this masterpiece a true synthesis of Enescian symphonism.

The completion of the orchestration in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> movement of Enescu’s *Symphony no. 5* and the presentation of this version in 1991, in the interpretation of the Cluj Philharmonic Symphonic Orchestra, as well as the completion of the orchestral score by Pascal Bentoiu and its public performance in 1995, close the reconstitution odyssey of this masterpiece, which saw the light of day at the Editura Muzicală [Musical Publishing House] in Bucharest, in 2004.

But the labyrinth of Enescu’s “novelties” was to be crossed once again by Cornel Țăranu when he decided to bring to light the work which, under Enescu’s final signature, would have likely become the only “Romanian concert for violin and orchestra” left to posterity by the incomparable composer-violinist. In fact, W. G. Berger points out, “imagined in the ‘rhapsodic genre’ and performed ‘in the Romanian folk music manner’, the unpublished ‘Capriccio’ would have likely represented a third term, a sign of the beautiful assembly between *Sonata no. 3 for piano and violin ‘in the Romanian folk music manner’, op. 25 (1926)* and *Concerto overture on themes in the Romanian folk music manner, op. 32 (1948)*”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornel Țăranu, *Enescu în lumina unor lucrări inedite*, ed. cit., pp. 232-233.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Berger, *Gânduri despre un proiect enescian: „Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestre”* [Thoughts on an Enescian project: “Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestre”], in: *Simpozionul Internațional de Muzicologie „George Enescu” – 1991: „George Enescu și muzica secolului XX”* [Proceedings of “George



get inside it and, somehow, it seems to guide you, you find the solutions, it gives you some ideas. Little by little, you realize what the right path is to finally complete the work.”<sup>1</sup>

Enescu’s drafts point to the composer’s intention to make a work in four movements. Based on an original but incomplete orchestral version (counting 20 pages written impeccably in ink), Cornel Țăranu manages to complete the orchestration of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement started by Enescu and to orchestrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> movements, the last one being incomplete. The major obstacle to the complete reconstruction of the work was related to the problem of the interventions made to “complete” the drafts for the 4<sup>th</sup> movement, which remained in suspension. However, after the public presentation of the first three movements with the violinist Sherban Lupu and the Cluj Philharmonic Orchestra, the composer finds the solution to continue, completing the double process of finishing and orchestrating the manuscript.

If we were to summarize in just one word the reaction of Cornel Țăranu, not overshadowed by the immense effort made to reconstitute Enescu’s masterpiece, this word would be none other than ‘fascination’: “The instrumental writing and the orchestration show an imagination and subtlety typical for Enescu. The mixtures of timbres and colors have beauties that are hard to describe, and the work’s agogics is of a suppleness perfectly moulded on the tempo fluctuations so characteristic of this music. The emergence of solo moments or solo groups, the many *divisi* are just some of the features of the writing for strings.”<sup>2</sup>

The opinions of the violinist Sherban Lupu – a close collaborator of maestro Țăranu and interpreter of the first absolute audition of the work – follow the same lines: “*Caprice Roumain* is essentially an apotheosis of the Romanian fiddler’s portrait, a celebration of his art and soul; it is an invaluable living document of great violinistic complexity and technical virtuosity which also celebrates the richness of means of expression so characteristic of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian fiddlers.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oleg Garaz, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> Cornel Țăranu, *Enescu în lumina unei lucrări inedite: „Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestre”* [Enescu in the light of an unusual work: „Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestre”], in: *Simpozionul Internațional de Muzicologie „George Enescu”, 1995 – „George Enescu în muzica secolului XX la 40 de ani de la moartea sa”* [Proceedings of “George Enescu” International Musicology Symposium, 1995 – “George Enescu in 20<sup>th</sup>-century music 40 years after his death”], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2000, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Sherban Lupu, *Cuvânt înainte* [Foreword], in: *George Enescu – Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestre*, part edited by Sherban Lupu, Editura Grafoart, Bucharest, 2018.

CAPRICE ROUMAIN  
pour violon et orchestre  
I

George Enescu  
Revision: Sherban Lupu

Ben moderato

a tempo

Cor. angl. harm.

f precipit. sf ten. V meno f f espress. c. 4

mf sost. poco rit. 1 2

stringendo a tempo f espress. ten. c. 3 c. 4 ben

ben f poco precip. sf sost. c. 3 c. 4

pp poco ff largamente

pes. rubato precip. 2 3 3 8<sup>va</sup> 2

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Example no. 3: George Enescu, *Caprice roumain pour violon et orchestra*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, *Ben moderato*, part fragment<sup>1</sup>

Only a faithful and devoted promoter of Enescu's violinism could have penetrated the essence of a unique, enigmatic, paradoxical writing, "which (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, *Lento*, our note) fully exploits the deep and dark sounds of the instrument with an abundant *vibrato* and the frequent use of expressive *glissandi*,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Editura Grafoart, Bucharest, 2018.

such as the long *vibrato portamenti* that create obsessive effects of sighs and cries, while the bow is asked to interpret more *parlando* or *louré*, which is so typical of Enescu's violin works"<sup>1</sup>.

Passing through the 'tunnel of time', Enescu's unfinished works came to light. Their guide? An explorer, a successor, a lover with an implacable verdict – "the only way to know someone is to love them" – **Cornel Țăranu**: the composer-restorer of truth and beauty animated by the revival of mute sounds from mute manuscripts, enlightened and ennobled by the rebirth of the masterpiece, but also slightly bent under the metaphysical burden of a destiny that chained him in an Oedipian manner with the destiny of the one who did not bow before the Sphinx: "The legitimate question is: was I able to substitute myself for his intentions? It is clear that there is a margin here in which an answer cannot be given one hundred percent, but it can be very close and it would have been very sad if these manuscripts had remained just some objects in a museum..."<sup>2</sup>.

But did not remain just some 'objects in a museum', and Enescu has a 'now' just as he has an 'always' – a non-margin of the universe that Cornel Țăranu certainly looked at when he decided to fulfil a part of Enescian infinity.

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<sup>1</sup> Sherban Lupu, *Cuvânt înainte* [Foreword], *op. cit.*, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Oleg Garaz, *op. cit.*, p. 67.