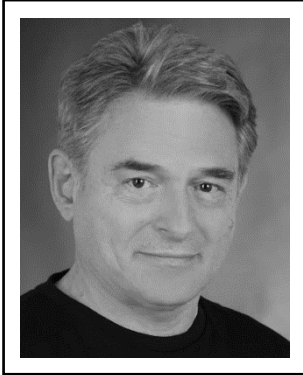


# RAMIFICATIONS: INTERWEAVED MEMORIES\*

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**Dr. Gabriel IRÁNYI** (\* 1946), composer and musicologist. About 80 compositions published by Verlag Neue Musik Berlin. Study dedicated to piano music by Ligeti, Kurtág and his own creation, published by Staccato-Verlag, Düsseldorf. Detailed analyses of the *String Quartets* by Norbert von Hannenheim and Philipp Herschkowitz (in editorial preparation). 2010-2016, vice-president of the Union of German Composers Berlin Branch, 2007-2019, vice-president of the Association of German Musicians Berlin Branch. Music director of the concert series “Studio Neue Musik”.

## ABSTRACT

In the article *Ramifications: interweaved memories*, the author combines unique aspects with a memorial character – in which the memories and things lived or shared are interweaved with the professional ones, related to the most significant evolutions of contemporary music. In the second part of the article, Irányi analyzes 3 works by Cornel Țăranu: *Dialogues II*, *Raccords* and *Bachiana*. The article analytically demonstrates the realization of a synthesis in Cornel Țăranu’s music between the transfigured elements of folklore (like the melismatic *doina*, *bucium* signals and *parlando-rubato*) with some advanced techniques of current music (sound beams, post-weberian chromatism and controlled aleatory). For a composer, the certainty of artistic fulfillment in his own creation is also a sign of a favorable constellation. On the occasion of reaching the venerable age of 85, the composer Cornel Țăranu can look back on his own creation of vast proportions and significant, at the same time. What could be noticed from the beginning of the creative path in the 50s and 60s to the young composer Cornel Țăranu, was that he found already his own style, with well-defined characteristics. The ability to have a “voice of one’s own”, with rich inflections and expressiveness, is not at all common in contemporary music. In this jubilee context, I often wondered: what were the significant moments in which I was impressed by Cornel Țăranu’s music? Memories related to lived things or shared artistic opinions are interweaved – as in *Ramifications* by Ligeti – with those related to concerts, which *de facto* finalize the actual creative act.

**Keywords:** Cornel Țăranu, memories, analysis, post-weberian chromatism, controlled aleatory

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\* Translated from Romanian by the author, proofreading by Marcella Magda

## Memories

Almost 60 years ago, in 1963, the fabulous pianist Gabriel Amirás played Prokofiev's *Concerto No. 3 for Piano and Orchestra* with the Cluj Philharmonic. What an unusual idea Amirás had to offer as encore exactly *Contraste I* by Cornel Țăranu: a work that had not yet appeared at the Music Publishing House! I watched with fascination this piece for solo piano, then unusual for me: the sounds like reminiscences of orchestral timbres, rhythmic richness, the contrasting use of registers: all in a logical and original musical form at the same time. Being a pianist at that time, I really wanted to get the score: I received it from the author in the form of a manuscript and I started to study the piece, being able to play it shortly by heart, in some concerts. Meanwhile, *Contrasts I* and *II* became repertoire works, being famous both in Romania and internationally.

Remarkable first auditions followed with *Sinfonia brevis*, the song *Horea's Oak Tree*, *Intercalații* for piano and orchestra – with Harald Enghiurliu as soloist – and *Symmetries* for orchestra. The interpretations offered by the Cluj Philharmonic under the baton of Mircea Cristescu were distinguished by plasticity and a perfect sound balance. With each new work the composer realizes a sound synthesis of the elements of his personal language, combining the transfigured elements of folklore – such as the melismatic *doina*, *bucium* signals and *parlando-rubato* – with some advanced techniques of current music – sound beams, post-weberian chromatism and controlled aleatory.

Having the opportunity to visit him, I was able to hear and discuss some significant contemporary works at the time, such as *Metastasis* and *Eonta* by Iannis Xenakis and *Sonata No. 3 for piano* by Pierre Boulez. Cornel Țăranu always had the ability to capture the essence and details of some music, which had not yet appeared in our concert programs, as well as to animate the interest of young composers interested in the most current evolutions of contemporary music.

From the first year as a student at the "Gheorghe Dima" Conservatory, I was lucky to be part of the special harmony class of Cornel Țăranu, a class that prepared students for the composition classes of maestro Sigismund Toduță – and who went through the construction of diatonic and chromatic chords of 5, 6, 7 and 8 sounds, the harmonic language of Debussy, Scriabin as well as the Schönberg-Berg-Webern Viennese School.

Leaving Romania in 1977, my contacts with the musicians from the country were unfortunately temporarily interrupted. After only a few years – in the early 90s – we managed to resume them and further develop them.

I had the opportunity to meet Maestro Țăranu at some significant cultural events, both in Berlin and in Oldenburg, where the composer Violeta Dinescu has been organizing symposia and concerts at "Carl von Ossietzky" University for

several decades, entitled “Meetings with music of our time / *Begegnungen mit Musik unserer Zeit*”.

The concerts of the *Ars Nova* Ensemble in Berlin, in the Concert Hall of the “Titu Maiorescu” Institute and in the Kulturhaus Schwartzsche Villa were also impressive. A highlight can be considered the “Paul Celan” Event of 2013, a program consisting of 3 parts: recitations from the mythical world of fairy tales with writer, poet and reciter Oskar Ansull, a vocal-instrumental concert and concluding the presentation of 2 related films of the life and creation of Paul Celan. The soprano Lavinia Cherecheș, the cellist Marika Gejrot, the conductor Cornel Țăranu took part in the concert, the piano part being taken over by the undersigned. It was a very special cultural event, being very well visited by a large and very culturally interested audience, among which was present the director of the “George Enescu” Festival, Mr. Ioan Holender.

Being one of the first to work both with the deepening of the works of George Enescu and with the hermeneutic completion of some unfinished manuscripts, Cornel Țăranu manages to decipher and complete some unknown Enescian works, including the oratorio *Strigoii* and *Capriciul român*. The first absolute audition of the oratorio *Strigoii* – which I also attended – took place on September 26, 2019 at the Konzerthaus Berlin: Gabriel Bebeșelea conducted the Berlin Radio Orchestra, the orchestration belonging to Sabin Păutza. The concert was a great success.

In recent years, Cornel Țăranu’s chamber music has become increasingly popular in Germany, being performed not only by members of the *Ars Nova* Ensemble or famous musicians from Cluj-Napoca, such as soprano Mihaela Maxim, violinist Vlad Răceu and pianist Eva Butean, but also by Berlin musicians Marianne Boettcher (violin), Kensei Yamaguchi (piano) and Marika Gejrot (cello). Thus, the German public had the opportunity to listen to some of the author’s significant works: *Remembering Bartók* for chamber ensemble, *Four Songs on lyrics by Paul Celan*, *Three uncertain songs*, *Sonata for solo violin*, *Contrasts I* and *Dialogues II* for solo piano and *Tzara songs* for soprano and piano and to meet one of the most complex and interesting personalities of the Romanian composition school.

### **Analytical considerations**

Three works by Cornel Țăranu particularly impressed me and I will mention them further: *Dialogues II* for solo piano (1966), *Raccords* for chamber orchestra (1971) and *Bachiana* for orchestra (2016).

I listened to the piece *Dialogues II* for solo piano in Berlin in the impressive performance of pianist Kensei Yamaguchi. The composer chooses his material

according to an “ethos” specific to his music. In the 1<sup>st</sup> bar, *Quasi lento*, appears the first *alpha* motif, of melismatic origin, with simple, characteristic appoggiaturas. The second *beta* motif appears in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bar and is of aulodic origin: an appoggiatura of 7 sounds, which suddenly evolves in the acute register and widens the sound space to 2 octaves. In measure 3 appears the *gamma* motif: the melogramma Enescu =  $D^2-B^1-A^{\#1}$  – slightly transfigured, mirrored and transposed (orig. *mi-mib-do*). In the 3<sup>rd</sup> bar the sound space is widened: the B-flat pedal + the melogramma Enescu achieves a sound space up to 4 octaves. The motif *delta* with quintolas is actually a variation of the recurrence of the *beta* motif. The 4 motifs have a fragmentary character and are, in fact, related. The key to understanding the composition process in *Dialogues II* is the projection of a free, but very controlled style, which uses simultaneous variations for 4 motifs. Hence results a form with polymorphic qualities, which also alludes to orchestral polychromy.

This aesthetic orientation is one of the pillars of the post-war contemporary music, its first appearances dating from the atonal period of Schönberg, Berg and Webern. In his book dedicated to Paul Klee, *Le pays fertile*, Boulez refers precisely to this musical aesthetic orientation, emphasizing the relationship between rigor and chaos: “Il faut discipline et rigueur dans les fondations, et l’anarchie doit constamment combattre la discipline. C’est de ce combat que résulte la poésie, une poésie fondée sur le dynamisme et la transformation; une poésie qui apporte l’irrationalité dans un monde requérant une structure solide: une poésie qui transcende le conflit entre ordre et chaos.”

à Harald Wagner

**Dialogues II \***  
pour piano seul

**Example no. 1:** Cornel Țăranu, *Dialogues II*, measures 1-7

“Discipline and rigor are fundamentally necessary, and anarchy must constantly struggle with discipline. From this struggle results poetry, a poetry

based on dynamism and transformation; a poem that brings irrationality into a world that claims a solid structure: a poem that transcends the conflict between order and chaos.”<sup>1</sup>

The work *Raccords* for chamber orchestra dates from 1971. The ensemble includes 1 flute, 1 oboe, 1 clarinet, 1 trumpet, 1 horn, harp, piano, 1 percussion, 6 violins I, 4 violins II, 4 violas, 3 cellos and 2 double basses.

Already in the first bars sound beams are projected in the higher register: the *glissandi* of the harp and of the string instruments disturb the general tonal spectrum, and the percussion and the wind-instruments contribute to achieve a first culmination.

Example 2: Cornel Țăranu, *Raccords*, measures 1-4

The following evolutions, with vibrated surfaces, are counterpointed with punctual “intercalations”, with well differentiated articulations.

After a series of accumulations and thinning, the second culmination takes place.

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Boulez, *Le pays fertile*, Gallimard, 1989, pp. 127 and 130. Translation: Gabriel Irányi, 2020.

Example no. 3: Cornel Țăranu, *Raccords*, measures 41-48

The culmination of the last stage of part I combines new joints: *col legno sulle 4 strings* for cellos and double basses, *glissandi* for violas, *pizzicati-glissandi* for violin I and II, *arco-glissando-sul ponticello* for violin I and II, *pizzicato entre chevalet-cordier* for violas and cellos and *col legno battuto* for double basses.

Example no. 4: Cornel Țăranu, *Raccords*, pp. 22-23 (controlled aleatory)

In *Raccords* appear the favorite style elements of the composer: his preference for sound beams, the combination of total chromatic with random articulations and gestures which produce microtonal “disorders” and combining all this with archetypal elements of folk origin.

*Bachiana* (2016) belongs to the late creation of the composer Cornel Țăranu and can be interpreted as a tribute to Bach, characterized as the only musician who “sensed the future” (Claude Debussy) and being also “for half a century the everyday bread” for George Enescu.

The image shows a page of a musical score for a full orchestra. The score is for a piece titled "Bachiana" by Cornel Țăranu, page 36. The tempo is marked "Più lento". The score is divided into four measures, each with a measure number above it: 4, 3, 4, and 3. A box around the number 24 indicates the starting point of a section. The instruments listed on the left are: Flute (Fl.), Piccolo (Picc.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), Trumpet (Tr.), Horn (Cor.), Trombone (T-bn), Arpa (Arpa), Cello (Cel.), Viola (Vib.), Mtrca (Mtrca), P-tto (P-tto), Vlni I (Vlni I), Vlni II (Vlni II), V-le (V-le), Celli (Celli), and Cb (Cb). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings like "mp" and "p". There are also performance instructions like "senza suono" and "muta in Campanacci".

Example no. 5: Cornel Țăranu, *Bachiana*, p. 36

The thematic material is represented by the 3 subjects of the *Fugue in C# minor* / WK I by J. S. Bach, a monumental work, “whose subjects were interpreted

by different commentators either as T + Cs1 + Cs2 (Ludwig Czaczkes), or as T1 + T2 + T3 (Hugo Riemann, Johann Nepomuk David, Hermann Grabner). Czaczkes considered it as a 5-voice fugue with 2 rigorously preserved countersubjects, in the correlation of a triple counterpoint to the octave, so as a fugue built according to the criteria of a triple fugue (*Tripelfuge*)."<sup>1</sup>

The 3 themes will be treated in *Bachiana* in different moments and will be counterpointed either with stylistic elements of Cornel Țăranu – see Ex. 5 – or with melodic-rhythmic motifs called *jazz riffs*. *Bachiana* is part – especially due to the synthesis of new music with jazz – in a famous tradition, which includes Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, Shostakovich, Milhaud, Bentoiu and many other composers.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Voiculescu, *The Fugue in the Works of J. S. Bach*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, p. 140.