

Liviu Dănceanu – *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12.* Analytical Perspectives

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ABSTRACT – This study is dedicated to musician Liviu Dănceanu, a complex and multi-faceted personality, a master of the art of sounds and words, who would have turned 70 this year had he not left this world seven years ago. His name is associated with various musical and musicological works, all reflecting his enduring passion for knowledge across multiple fields, including music history, hermeneutics, and epistemology. One of his significant achievements is the “Archaeus” Contemporary Music Workshop, established in 1985, which is one of the longest-lasting ensembles in Romania. This study focuses on one of Liviu Dănceanu’s early works from the *Quasi* cycle, which holds a significant place in the composer’s overall body of work. We are discussing the *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12 for Clarinet or Saxophone and Orchestra*, which is representative of both this *Quasi* cycle of works and the composer’s early style. Our focus on a work composed 41 years ago by Liviu Dănceanu aims to highlight the stylistic elements that define the composer’s personality and also manifest in various forms throughout his later works. The *Quasi-Concerto* is also a significant work in the history of the “Archaeus” Ensemble, as it was one of Liviu Dănceanu’s first works performed by it. Through this work, a close and long-lasting collaboration was established between this contemporary music ensemble and the renowned French saxophonist Daniel Kientzy, one of the leading enthusiasts of new Romanian music and the first soloist invited by Liviu Dănceanu to perform with the newly founded ensemble, the “Archaeus” Contemporary Music Workshop.

Keywords: Dănceanu, *Quasi-Concerto*, concerto, instrumental theatre, clarinet, saxophone, Archaeus.

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1. Introduction

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the birth of musician Liviu Dănceanu, born in Roman, on July 19, 1954. Seven years ago, on October 26, 2017, he passed away, leaving a significant void in Romanian music creation and musicology, as well as in concert life. His absence is still deeply felt by the musicians who knew him, for he was a captivating personality of high moral and intellectual stature.

Composer, musicologist, conductor and organiser of musical events, Liviu Dănceanu was the promoter of the renowned “Archaeus” Contemporary Music Workshop (founded in 1985), which has proven over time to be one of the great values of Romanian culture, and which next year will celebrate four decades of activity.

From the very beginning of his musical career, Liviu Dănceanu was attracted by the knowledge and testing of new stylistic directions, especially in contemporary Western music, which he got to know more closely by participating in international specialization courses. In the years preceding his studies, he brought this ensemble to life, establishing it as a flagship of Romanian music. As an organiser and conductor, he gave hundreds of concerts with this ensemble over decades of activity, performing hundreds of musical works, many of them dedicated to this ensemble and presented in absolute première. Through the Contemporary Music Workshop “Archaeus”, Liviu Dănceanu demonstrated his interest in reintegrating valuable musical works from the past into the current performing circuit – works that were not yet sufficiently recognized.

This respect for the musical culture of previous eras is also evident in Liviu Dănceanu’s early compositions, in extracting and recontextualizing aesthetic, stylistic or philosophical landmarks whose value was sifted by time, and which are in line with his creative temperament.

From his earliest compositions, one can already notice this talented composer’s personal compositional attitude and stylistic signature.

Our focus on his early compositions, particularly on an example from the representative and original *Quasi* cycle of works, was determined by the composer’s consistent adherence to stylistic values that were already glimpsed, or clearly manifested, from that early stage of his creative career – the *Quasi-Concerto for Clarinet or Saxophone and Ensemble*. Our primary objective is to showcase the balance between avant-garde musical elements reflecting Liviu Dănceanu’s spontaneous, curious, and knowledge-driven spirit, and traditional elements that are filtered through his extensive artistic, musical, aesthetic, and philosophical background.

2. Liviu Dănceanu – biographical aspects

Liviu Dănceanu's career path is fabulous, characterized by energy and passion. He studied composition with maestro Ștefan Niculescu (1975-1981), a distinguished figure who greatly influenced the young musician's development, particularly by instilling in him a passion for heterophony. This technique has often been employed by generations of composers who followed in the footsteps of our country's genius, George Enescu.

In an interview for the *Muzica* magazine, the composer confessed about the relationship he had with his maestro: "Ștefan Niculescu was my Archæus, the one who poured water at the root of my transition from the state of cultural subsistence to that of true existence, from virtuality to actuality."¹

After graduating from the Bucharest Conservatory, Liviu Dănceanu participated in composition courses and festivals in London, Paris, Tallinn, Prague and Warsaw.

He was strongly marked by the vibrant musical scene abroad since 1984, when he attended summer seminar courses in Kazimierz-Dolny, Poland, which were dedicated to young composers. During this time, he studied with several remarkable musicians, including Iannis Xenakis and Zygmunt Krauze.² This experience inspired him to establish an ensemble shortly after returning to the country. The purpose of the ensemble was to promote contemporary music, as well as some of the most significant musical works ever created (in Byzantine, Renaissance Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern styles), some of which were relatively unknown to the public at that time. His musical output during that period was also influenced by the connections he had made with renowned avant-garde musicians from abroad. He was an advocate of the spectral movement, of music as a syncretic manifestation and of controlled aleatoricism, all in the service of expressiveness and the artistic message.

In 1987, Liviu Dănceanu became a member of the "Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de musique" (SACEM) in Paris. Since 1997, he taught music history and composition at the university from which he had graduated. He published a series of volumes on musicology, along with numerous essays, articles, studies, chronicles, and reviews in various magazines both nationally and internationally. These works demonstrate his ease of writing, clairvoyance, structural logic in exposition, extensive musical and artistic knowledge, and exceptional ability for synthesis.

He produced radio broadcasts, held conferences, conducted concert lessons, and presented scientific communications both domestically and internationally (Italy, France,

¹ Dănceanu, "De vorbă cu Liviu Dănceanu", 4 (our translation).

² Zygmunt Krauze (b. September 19, 1938), a prominent representative of contemporary Polish music, prolific composer, pedagogue, concert pianist, and organizer of musical events. He wrote "unistic" or unitary music, influenced by the paintings of Wladislaw Strzeminski, "spatial" music, and, later, music based on musical quotations (<https://zygmuntkrauze.com/en/front/>).

Germany, Spain, the U. S. A., Russia, etc.). He was an exceptional theorist, and his original ideas about music are evident in both his compositions and his remarkable work as a conductor.

In 1986, he founded and coordinated the “Contemporary Music Days” Festival in Bacău (alongside the members of the Syrinx Trio³ and conductor Ovidiu Bălan), which is the longest-running contemporary music festival in the country (38 editions held annually). He also founded the “Archaeus” Festival in Bucharest, in 1998.

An analytical personality, deeply engaged with the challenges of contemporary music, Liviu Dănceanu acted, initiated, and created with the naturalness characteristic of a talented individual, establishing a unique stylistic perspective in modern Romanian music. He was a composer for whom tradition could not be denied. Liviu Dănceanu returned to the traditional musical values, selecting specific aspects that he adapted to the current musical context. He composed numerous works across various genres, including symphonic, chamber, choral, stage, electronic music, instrumental theatre, and film music. Certain stylistic aspects were implemented on multiple levels, resulting in the emergence of several cycles of works, including *Quasi*, *History*, and *Palimpseste*.

3. Elements of style and language in Liviu Dănceanu’s early works – the *Quasi* cycle

Liviu Dănceanu’s career as a composer began in 1978, when his piece, *Les héros Op. 1*, was performed while he was a student at the National University of Music in Bucharest.

Like other Romanian composers such as Corneliu Cezar (the founder of the spectral movement in Romania with his work *AUM*, composed between 1965 and 1967), Octavian Nemescu, Lucian Mețianu, Călin Ioachimescu, and Nicolae Brânduș, Liviu Dănceanu also draws upon the spectral technique in his early works. He also explores the complexity and diversity of expression that the genre of instrumental theatre offers, as well as the various sound production techniques available. These first three attributes of the composer’s style, clearly highlighted in the *Quasi* cycle of works, are also evident in the maestro’s later works.

In Liviu Dănceanu’s works, we encounter a unique form of spectralism, which serves his postmodern outlook of transposing the principle of the Eminescian archetype into music.

The young composer’s connections with Western music were established through various approaches to post-serialism, global sound effects, and particularly through the incorporation of the quasi-improvisational heterophonized textures (influenced by the

³ Performers from the “Mihail Jora” Orchestra from Bacău: flutist Dorel Baicu, oboist Dorin Gliga and bassoonist Pavel Ionescu.

Polish composers Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki). For Liviu Dănceanu, the archetypes, the connections to the musical past, serve as pigments that, when masterfully applied, lend strength to any score, as seen in the three works composed in 1981: *Archaeus for Violin and Tape Op. 5* (homage to Mihai Eminescu, dedicated to Constantin Noica), *In Memoriam Lucian Blaga, for a Cappella Choir Op. 6* and the poem for orchestra *Angulus Ridet Op. 7*, each representing different views on the creative act.

In these early works, we also notice the diversity of syntaxes, intertwined with a unique naturalness, a preoccupation likely inherited from his mentor, Ștefan Niculescu.

The titles that Liviu Dănceanu gives to some of his works are also particularly unique, approximating or hybridizing the genres or styles that each respective work explores. This is especially true of the *Quasi* cycle, which includes works such as: *Quasi-Fugue for Guitar Op. 11* (composed in 1983), *Quasi-Concerto for Clarinet or Saxophone and Ensemble Op. 12* (1983), *Quasi-Ricercare Op. 14 for 1-5 Instrumental Voices and Percussion or for Violin, String Orchestra and Percussion* (1984), *Quasi-Prelude Op. 16* (1984), *Quasi-Toccata Op. 21 for Violin (Violins) and/or Viola (Violas) and/or Cello (Cellos) and/or Double Bass (Double Basses)* – 1985, *Quasi-Postludium Op. 19 for Guitar* (1985), *Quasi-Opera for 8 Performers Op. 38* – theatre music in 2 acts, with prologue, intermezzo and epilogue (1986), *Quasi-Symphony (Symphony I) Op. 13* (1987) and *Quasi-Sonata Op. 41 for 2 Violins or Violin and Cello and 2 Reciters*, on a montage of verses by Edgar Allan Poe (1987), or the more recent *Beverdillini* (in Verdi's and Bellini's style) and *SymConcertPhony*.

A key characteristic of Liviu Dănceanu's works is their diversity, featuring a blend of musical languages from different eras within a wide expressive palette. This quality is evident from the early stages of his career, beginning with his early works belonging to the *Quasi* cycle. These *Quasi* works stand out for the variety of techniques used, the return to archetypes of language and expression, reformulated and interwoven in new contexts strongly marked by the composer's personal style, an astonishing clarity of construction, and an extraordinary power of suggestion of the conceptual ideas. In the composer's mature works, some of the sources used are presented through humour, irony, or the grotesque, in a polystylistic style, influenced by the ethos of Byzantine music, echoes of folk music, and elements of oneiric surrealism.

Due to their complexity and diversity, the *Quasi* works appear as compendiums of world music history, presented through an insightful and innovative perspective that reflects musician Liviu Dănceanu's temperament.

Prominent in the *Quasi* cycle of works is the ritualistic aspect of music, characterized by the states of incantation and meditation created particularly in the *Quasi-Concerto* and *Quasi-Opera*, through gesture and movement as elements of instrumental theatre. In the *Quasi-Concerto*, the instrumental theatre also serves as a means to reflect the precarious conditions faced by the artist and society, confined by and dependent on the strict norms set by the communist authorities.

4. *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12* – highlights

The selection of this landmark work from Liviu Dănceanu's early career, *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12 for Clarinet (Saxophone) and Ensemble*, composed in 1983, was influenced by the composer's innovative approach to this hybrid genre – concerto/instrumental theatre.

The concerto is a musical genre with a rich tradition, which brings the relationship between the soloist and the ensemble to the fore. In his *Quasi-Concerto for Clarinet (Saxophone) and Ensemble*, Liviu Dănceanu extends this solo-tutti relationship by employing theatrical means while preserving certain traditional elements of the concerto genre.

The current analysis seeks to provide a diachronic illustration of the musical evolution, focusing on the structural techniques employed at micro- and macro-architectural levels while highlighting the expressive significance of certain compositional choices made across different aspects of sound. Emphasis is also placed on how elements of instrumental/aleatory theatre impact the sonic development and interpretation.

According to the composer's confession, the "*Quasi-Concerto Op. 12* embodies the application of theoretical approaches related to the present and the presence of music as a human and cosmic reality. In the *Quasi-Concerto*, the initiatory, functional aspect of sound is reconsidered – after a musical evolution where its significance diminished to the point of disappearance (hence the gestural behaviour of the performers)."⁴ The functionality of sound can be found in the elements of instrumental theatre, in the dominance and subordination relationship between the soloist and the ensemble, in the soloist's unpredictability, in the macro- and microstructural aleatoric structures and in the rediscovery of noise and the harmonic spectrum of a sound, all of which determine the ritualistic function of this music.

It is the reconstruction of the archaic, primordial dimension of music, which Liviu Dănceanu proposes in the *Quasi-Concerto*, that musicologist Viorel Crețu also referred to in a compositional portrait dedicated to the composer: "The incantation-morality connection proposed and intended by the composer is quite natural as long as the incantation, as a complex method of inducing an aesthetic state in the listener, doubled by an adjacent world of representations, naturally opens up into a complex system of ethical values of equally complex cultural spaces."⁵

Composed in 1983, the *Quasi-Concerto* illustrates the composer's rebellion against the rising communist dictatorship. The elements of instrumental theatre appear precisely to reflect the precarious condition of the artist and society, confined by and dependent on the rigid norms imposed by the authorities.

⁴ Liviu Dănceanu, quoted in Crețu, "Portret componistic – Liviu Dănceanu", 21 (our translation).

⁵ Crețu, "Portret componistic – Liviu Dănceanu", 21 (our translation).

The soloist (clarinet or saxophone) is domineering, he is the dictator who imposes on each partner the framework of development, the sound material and even the phrasing techniques. The soloist seems to have a rather aggressive attitude towards the other instruments, especially in the first movement. By trying to expand his limits, he minimizes the condition of the other instruments, disrupting their action.

The score is structured into 3 movements and 26 sections; the first movement contains 12 sections, and the other movements contain 6 sections each. The first six sections of **the 1st movement** may be played in any order, at the conductor's discretion. Each section consists of two musical lines: one of the soloist, which always introduces a new musical theme and develops it throughout the entire section, and another one of the six instruments of the ensemble (trombone, percussion, cello, piano, bassoon, double bass), which mimics the soloist's fragment by repeating it during all six sections. Each time another performer in the ensemble accompanies the soloist, overlapping with him in the latter part of his musical evolution. At the beginning of the section, the soloist approaches the player who wants to join in the game initiated by him, bringing the clarinet or saxophone bell as close as possible to the sound box of the other instrument (or placing the bell right inside it). Up until the seventh section, where all the instruments blend with their distinct sound qualities, there is a gradual increase in timbral density as more instruments are introduced. This progression also leads to an implicit build-up of tension, regardless of the order in which the sections unfold.

The length of each fragment is measured in seconds, and the duration of the soloist's evolution gradually decreases from section I to section VII (B-flat clarinet/B-flat saxophone: section 1 – 85 seconds, section 2 – 80 seconds, section 3 – 75 seconds, section 4 – 55 seconds, section 5 – 45 seconds, section 6 – 35 seconds and section 7 – 30 seconds).

In the first six sections, the intensities range between piano and forte, passing through the intermediate nuances of mezzo-piano and mezzo-forte (sometimes preceded by the *sempre* indication), or through the variable ones of crescendo and decrescendo. Thus, in terms of dynamics, we notice the duality between unity and variety.

Variety arises from the contrasting oscillations of intensity (attenuated by the crescendo-decrescendo indications). In terms of timbre, unity is achieved through the permanence and independence of the soloist, complemented by a diverse range of effects, including various types of vibrato (*lento*, *rapido*, *negro*), frullato, glissando, and trill, as well as the harmonic spectrum of a sound. On a melodic level, unity is found in the repetition of microstructures and their imitation, whereas in terms of continuity of the sound vibrations in time, it is related to the measurement of the fragments in seconds.

At the microstructural level, the score features graphic diagrams that provide the performer with various degrees of freedom in his evolution. However, sometimes the composer takes the lead in shaping the essential details of his music. Instead of

writing a fragment note by note, he uses certain symbols (some of which are explained in the score's legend) that sometimes take on different geometric shapes.

There are also instructions related to execution, expressed in Romanian and French. When introducing the French version of the explanations, the author likely had the French saxophonist Daniel Kientzy in mind. It is known that most Romanian musical works for saxophone were performed by Daniel Kientzy, often composed specifically for him. The performer, renowned for his affinity with Romanian music, is a remarkable global saxophonist skilled in playing all seven types of saxophones.⁶ In the legend for the *Quasi-Concerto* score, Liviu Dănceanu notes: "during the performance, the performer may use various types of clarinets – B-flat clarinet, bass clarinet – or saxophones – soprano, tenor, bass."⁷ So, the soloist is asked to possess a highly developed instrumental technique, but also a deep understanding of and proficiency in the language of contemporary music, to decode the unconventional notation into appropriate sonorities, into the expressions and messages intended by the composer.

The (first six) sections that lead to the stabilization of the overall sonorities are based on the principle of contrasting musical ideas.

In the first four sections, the sound events take the form of geometric figures, each of them being framed within a border. The number of sides of these figures gradually decreases from section I to section IV: section I – hexagon, section II – pentagon, section III – quadrilateral, section IV – triangle. The principle of execution of the drawing is maintained throughout the sections. Therefore, the points that connect the sides of the geometric figure are represented by different sounds, or by the effects of a single sound. Each point will serve as the starting point for a direct route connecting all points in the drawing. Passing through any two points within an evolution is done by necessarily passing through the starting point. So, all possible combinations of sounds of the geometric figure appear through an order of the sound routes and hence of the incipient sounds that is left to the performer's discretion.

For example, in section I, the soloist approaches the trombonist. Inserting the bell of his instrument into the bell of the trombone, he produces a random sound that continues with a series of effects (*non vibrato*, *vibrato rapido*, *frullato*, *slap*, *vibrato lento*), combined based on the principles mentioned above. As if stimulated by the clarinetist, the trombone player picks up (after 35 seconds) the same sound and the same effects, imitating the interpretative gesture of his partner as faithfully as possible.

⁶ Saxophonist Daniel Kientzy is also the author of an extensive treatise on saxophones, *Saxologie – du potentiel acoustico-expressif des 7 saxophones*.

⁷ See the manuscript of the score for the *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12* by Liviu Dănceanu, p. 1 (our translation).

An optimal choice, given the equal number of performers and sections, would be to approach a different partner with each new section.

The 2nd movement could be characterized as a series of dialogues between the soloist and the ensemble. The soloist proposes one of the elements, which he expands (opting in section 1 for the very modal structure that he exposed at the end of the 1st movement – *G – A flat – A natural – B flat – C – D flat – E flat – F*), and the ensemble imitates him in a quasi-constant timbral density (in the same modal scale). The modal language of the entire middle movement is based on this mode (with four semitones and three tones), transposed to different scale degrees.

The overall intensity of the first four sections is forte. In this respect, the last two sections are closely linked through a build-up of tension, doubled by a rising crescendo (in two phases) from piano to forte. The first section takes over the improvisation of sounds in a given mode. The second section includes several long notes moving in relatively large intervallic leaps, especially in the soloist's part, while the ensemble intervenes through a simultaneous evolution in unison, or in octaves. Section 3 abounds in appoggiaturas, while section 4 reinstates the homophonic structure through the harmonics of the wind instruments (including the soloist's) and the chords sustained by the other partners. This is the only moment in the score that the composer wants to mark through periodic metrical accents, resulting from the alternation of ternary and binary measures, of three and two beats. In the last sections, the successive attacks of the different sounds separate the instruments into independent sonic lines, despite the common modal language.

The tension builds, and the sonic impulses (in *slap* or staccato), broken down in time and space, remain somehow suspended once this intensely agitated movement suddenly stops.

In the **3rd movement**, the instruments of the ensemble lose their autonomy and timbral naturalness entirely after the soloist's desperate efforts to separate them from that "initiatic, functional dimension of the sound" referred to by Liviu Dănceanu.⁸

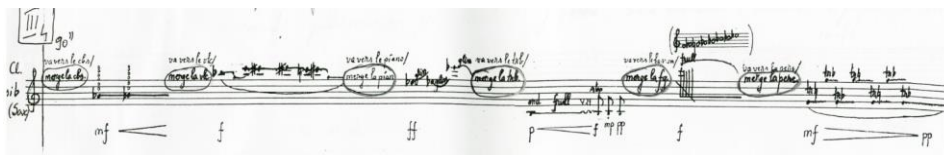
Through this kind of approach, the composer intends to reflect the harsh reality society lived in during the communist period, and the stern dictatorial methods of forcibly implementing ideas, which gradually transformed individuals into pawns and led to the dissipation of their valuable qualities. Therefore, noises take the place of sounds, while percussion and its specific effects monopolize the development of the ensemble.

The first two sections focus on the tutti sonorities, delimited by two consecutive movements involving all instrumentalists, from the bassoonist to the double bassist and vice versa, to facilitate the use of other instruments. In the first section, they move towards the percussion. Choosing one of the instruments (bongos, bass drum, snare drum or tom-tom), they begin to improvise on a symmetrical rhythmic formula, in a continuous

⁸ Liviu Dănceanu, in Crețu, "Portret componistic – Liviu Dănceanu", 21

increase in density of the musical material and intensity. In the second section, the double bass, cello, and piano return to their instruments, one after the other, and the rest of the ensemble moves forward (also one after the other) to the place where they find a double bass, a cello, or a jaw harp, and successively strike a string along its entire length, with a thimble, in glissando. The attacks of the instruments (in sforzando) are consecutive and ensure the continuous repetitiveness of the information until the end of section 5, from where they are lost in the sonic memories evoked triumphantly by the soloist, towards the end of the score.

The soloist regains his rights only in section 3, launching into several melodic-rhythmic bursts and combining the elements previously exposed by and imposed on the ensemble. The palette of nuances is extremely rich, taking the form of repeated crescendos from mezzo-forte or forte to fortissimo. In section 4, he associates each microstructure presented with an instrument of the ensemble, approaching that instrument and playing it close to it: the harmonic spectrum of certain sounds is attributed to the double bass; the sustained chromatic notes – to the cello; the glissandos from a definite-pitched note to an undetermined one – to the piano; the repeated note, altered by various effects – to the trombone; the improvisational formula performed based on a given modal scale – to the bassoon; and the oscillating trills (half or whole step apart) – to the percussion. Thus, the soloist concludes his demonstrative part close to the percussion, the instrument that has been given the greatest attention in this last movement:



Ex. 2. Liviu Dănceanu, *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12*, 3rd movement, section 4.

Once he arrives behind the ensemble, the soloist ventures alone in several 15-second-long fragments. The writing becomes increasingly transparent, and the intensities gradually decrease to pianissimo. Seated on his knees, the soloist performs a series of glissandos according to given melodic contours. He gradually removes the head of the instrument while emitting a sound oscillation (approximated in the score by a graph) and ends (in *pianissimo possible*) imitating the *wah-wah* effect, as in Section 6 of the 1st movement:

The image shows three staves of handwritten musical notation for Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. sax.).

- Staff 1:** Starts with a 15" time signature. The instruction "dans le genre / in gemunchu" is circled. Below the staff are several slurs labeled "gliss".
- Staff 2:** Starts with a 15" time signature and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The instruction "tirer rapidement la tête de l'instrument / scoate treptat capul instrumentului." is circled.
- Staff 3:** Starts with a 15" time signature and a dynamic marking of *pp*. The instruction "impr. avec l'aide de la paume : l'effet suivendra celui de waii-wah / impr. cu ajutorul palmei : efectul va arveni pe cel de wah-wah." is circled. Below the staff is a drawing of a palm and several wavy lines.

Ex. 3. Liviu Dănceanu, *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12*, 3rd movement, section 6.

Composer Viorel Crețu summarizes the essence of this interesting hybrid work, a concerto-instrumental theatre piece composed by Liviu Dănceanu at the age of 29: “The essential condition for the alignment of the system of representations induced by the composer and performers in the audience’s perception is the music’s ability to access timelessness; the interchangeable sonic and syntactic structures, the repetitive elements, the manifest aleatoricism – all these serve as the foundation of the piece, which draws inspiration from incantatory practices and creates *sui generis* musical architectures.”⁹

The *Quasi-Concerto* was performed for the first time by the “Hyperion” Ensemble led by Iancu Dumitrescu, on November 12, 1983, and by the “Archaeus” Contemporary Music Workshop conducted by Liviu Dănceanu, in his first concerts at the Romanian Athenaeum (February 17, 1986) and at the Bacău Athenaeum (February 20, 1986, during the first edition of the Contemporary Music Festival, founded by Liviu Dănceanu).

⁹ Crețu, “Portret componistic – Liviu Dănceanu”, 21 (our translation).

The *Quasi-Concerto* offered the ensemble its first opportunity to meet the renowned saxophonist Daniel Kientzy, the first soloist invited by Liviu Dănceanu and his ensemble. Daniel Kientzy became well-acquainted with the “Archaeus” Ensemble, and their collaborations consistently produced exceptional musical results. The Contemporary Dance Group, coordinated by choreographer Raluca Ianegic, also contributed to the performance of this work at the Romanian Athenaeum and the Bacău Athenaeum, in February 1986.

The performances of the “Archaeus” Contemporary Music Workshop met the prestigious standards established by this ensemble since its first concert. A columnist from the Bacău magazine *Ateneu* highlighted the impressive qualities of the guests and their significant contributions to the success of the events. He praised Daniel Kientzy’s “unparalleled mastery” and also commended the Contemporary Dance Quartet’s “absolutely cerebral, distinguished, and sensitive choreographic language.”¹⁰

This analysis emphasizes the musical and theatrical elements, the balance between tradition and innovation, and the conceptual positioning of the piece at the intersection of genres. These attributes are also evident in the composer’s mature works, reflecting key aspects of his creative personality.

Conclusions

Liviu Dănceanu is a distinguished musician with an exceptional musical culture and imagination, who thoughtfully preserves and weaves together elements from various traditions in the history of world music.

The rediscovery of tradition is reflected in the *Quasi-Concerto Op. 12* through the return to the ritualistic function of music, expressed by decomposing and simplifying the sonic evolution until it reaches the spectral essence of sound. Reaching the limit of what can be expressed through music alone, the soloists, enchanted by this captivating game, discover their freedom of expression in movement and instrumental theatre. Duality exists in the soloist’s choices and uncertainties of manifestation, as well as in the contrasts of dynamics and timbral density.

The diversity of sources from which the composer draws essences of compositional style and language by using a modified approach to the concert genre tailored to the current expressive needs, by rejuvenating certain incantatory and ritualistic expressions through spectralism – a technique associated with the musical avant-garde of those years, by emphasizing expressiveness and the utterly subjective experience which encompasses not only the composer but also all participants in the act of creation and interpretation, allowing for varying degrees of freedom in the performers’ expression, all these converge

¹⁰ Pruteanu, „Prima ediție a «Zilelor Muzicii Contemporane»”, 22.

to create a cohesive music that bears the stylistic imprint of composer and musician Liviu Dănceanu's personality.

The *Quasi-Concerto* is a popular work among the public and soloists who are eager to transcend the boundaries of performance, embracing improvisation and a complex artistic expression. It is a representative work of both the *Quasi* cycle and the composer's early creative period, a conceptually unique score in the context of contemporary Romanian and global music, in which the musician's future stylistic options can already be envisioned.

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Translation from Romanian by Marcella Magda