

Komponistinnen aus Rumänien
[Women Composers from Romania]
(review)

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The volume *Komponistinnen aus Rumänien* (BIS-Verlag 2025, 623 pages, ISBN 978-3-8142-2420-6) is the eighth in the series entitled *Archiv für osteuropäische Musik. Quellen und Forschungen*, the other volumes being dedicated to George Enescu, Ștefan Niculescu, Pascal Bentoiu, Myriam Marbe, Enescu's opera *Oedipus* and/or to topics such as the *doina* or *space in music*. This series of volumes, edited by *BIS-Verlag* at the *Carl von Ossietzky* University of Oldenburg, was initiated in 2013 by Violeta Dinescu. It complements the series of symposia titled *Zwischen Zeiten*, which focuses on topics related to Romanian music and has been organized by her at the same university since 2006. While the first four volumes include studies of different composers, the other three include "authors' works", namely the doctoral theses of Roberto Reale, Vincent Rastädter and Martin Kowalewski, all students of Violeta Dinescu. Alongside her contribution, the series of volumes involves the editorial work of some of the most active participants in the symposia, including musicologist and professor Michael Heinemann, composer Eva-Maria Houben, and composer Roberto Reale. Among them, Michael Heinemann has been a constant presence at the symposia, contributing as both an author of studies on Romanian music and co-editor of all volumes published to date. Notably, after Violeta Dinescu's retirement in 2022, he took over the organization and management of the *Zwischen Zeiten* series of symposia at the *Carl-Maria von Weber Musikakademie* in Dresden. This was a significant challenge, but Heinemann rose to the challenge, ensuring the ongoing success of this important initiative.

The volumes include papers presented at the symposium, along with several other thematically related contributions, which provide comprehensive information on the chosen topic, and, given their scale, they demonstrate professionalism and consistency, which are most probably unique in the context of Romanian music in Germany. In the context of the previous seven volumes, this last volume (2025) stands out as

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perhaps the most successful and attractive publication, both from a graphic-editorial and informational point of view. In addition to the rich ideational content, the diverse and ingenious graphic format makes it an enjoyable and engaging read. Reviewing this volume is, however, difficult, because, as it is not possible to describe and comment on all the manifold information contained, one will have to choose between selecting a few of them or limiting oneself to general considerations. In what follows, I will attempt a compromise between the two, while also allowing myself to make various comments, including critical ones.

The volume begins with a brief introduction (the same for most volumes) signed by Violeta Dinescu and Michael Heinemann, and is structured in four chapters, titled as follows (N. B. all the English translations in this review belong to us): the first chapter, *General Writings* – including 9 studies (151 pages), the second one, *Composers in Conversation with Ionuț Bogdan Ștefănescu* – including 11 dialogues (106 pages), the third one, *Women Composers from Romania. Portraits* – including 35 texts, along with photographs and musical examples (131 pages), and the fourth one, *Analysis of Selected Women Composers* – including 20 musical analyses (198 pages). As can be seen, chapters 1 and 4 are the most extensive and constitute, by their content, a kind of “scientific framework” for the entire volume. While the general articles and, especially, the musical analyses covering these chapters have already been the focus of each symposium and volume, the interviews and portraits of the women composers (chapters 2 and 3) are a welcome novelty. While not exhaustive due to practical reasons, this list of women composers is nonetheless comprehensive and likely surpasses anything previously published on the subject. Nevertheless, this topic has not been entirely overlooked in Romania in recent decades.

The total of 623 pages of the publication (including annexed texts or transition pages) therefore offer very diverse information, from original theoretical contributions or concrete analyses by Romanian and German musicologists, to personal testimonies of the women composers, more extensive in dialogue with Ionuț Bogdan Ștefănescu or more concise, in monologue, in the respective portraits.

The first chapter is the most thematically diverse and is based on the papers presented at the *Zwischen Zeiten* symposium held in Oldenburg in 2010, which focused on women composers from Romania. This chapter, therefore, serves as the foundation and purpose for the entire volume. With a few exceptions, these communications have been significantly expanded and enriched with other, more or less related contributions.

In approaching the central theme, the authors choose different directions, emphasizing various areas. I will briefly refer to the themes of these contributions, following the order in which they appear in the volume: the temporal dimension of the musical discourse (article signed by Petruța-Maria Măniuț-Coroiu – a substantial introduction at a general

and philosophical level, with an emphasis on the fantastic and brief references to related aspects in works by four Romanian women composers), traditional regional and Byzantine folkloric sources of Romanian music, from Bucovina and Transylvania (two articles signed by Constanța Cristescu, valuable contributions that integrate data from history, geography, ethnomusicology and Byzantinology, without any reference to a particular female composer, with the latter article being accompanied by a series of tables of modal formulas, whose logic of presentation is not always easy to follow), aspects related to multimedia and significance reflected in the works of two Romanian women composers (article signed by Corneliu Dan Georgescu – an opportunity to reveal the views of two exceptional personalities of Romanian music, seemingly very different yet active on both multimedia and moral levels; this is the only article in this chapter of the volume that, for organizational reasons, has remained in the ultra-concise form corresponding to the oral presentation at the symposium), ways of generating moments of archetypal expression (article signed by Adalbert Grote – an extensive study on the music of three Romanian women composers, delving deeply into the subject and often exploring additional aspects and providing insightful observations along with numerous quotations – with the mention that the theme of “archetypes” already has a certain tradition in Romania, which could lead to valuable discussions on the topic), the composer’s own compositional experience (article signed by Laura Manolache – including the composer’s captivating testimonies revealing how much reflection and idealism are hidden, in addition to work, behind a few notes), “the sound of Brâncuși” (article signed by Dana-Cristina Probst – an extensive and emotionally colourful presentation of the aesthetic value of this great artist, accompanied by documentary visual material and musical examples from compositional projects inspired by him), socio-cultural and historical aspects related to the activity of women composers in Romania (two articles signed by Christel Nies and Adalbert Grote – the former, a thorough report on the evolution and dimensions of the German-Romanian relations in the field of music compositions created by women, the latter, a broad and rigorous analysis of the gender issue, viewed from a historical perspective, and carried out with the depth and consistency characteristic of the author). While most of these contributions include direct references to the women composers from Romania, some do not touch on this issue, while others go beyond this thematic framework, exploring broader contexts. This “going beyond the thematic framework” was also another declared goal of the series of symposia.

The second chapter gathers conversations with several women composers, realized at a remarkable level of journalistic professionalism by the performer, conductor, poet and, not only occasionally, reporter Ionuț Bogdan Șefănescu. All interviews follow a similar format, with the women composers answering the same set of questions, but intuitively tailored to each composer's personality, such as: how they got into music, when they started composing, their unique experiences, their thoughts on Enescu, their favourite composers, their composition process, the ideals that inspire them, etc. Each interview concludes with the evocation or promise of performing a flute work of the respective composer in a concert, reminding us that the person facilitating these discussions is, in fact, a very active flutist.

Most of the titles of these interviews (such as: *The Harmony of Confessions*, *At the Confluence of Light and Colour*, *The Direction and Magic of Sounds*) are chosen by the person who formulates the questions and reflect his poetic talent through their metaphorical form. But it is not just the titles that have a specific meaning. Even though the questions are largely standardized, their adaptation to the specifics of each female personality reveals Ionuț Bogdan Șefănescu's considerable musical and psychological experience; the plasticity and depth of his comments on the answers received are often impressive. These conversations provide access to the experiences and thoughts of the women composers, expressed freely without the usual limitation of space, a constraint that is rarely felt in the pages of this volume, which is generously accommodating in this regard.

Many of the testimonies are unique and have the charm of intimate confessions. It is extremely difficult to select and comment on something specific because every thought and every page holds particular value. Therefore, to ensure fairness and avoid injustice to anyone, I will only share a few general thoughts, with the regret that I cannot speak at length about so many important compositional figures, many of whom I have known and been close to for many years. It is also important to note that while most of the women composers discussed have already been the subjects of published articles conceived in general musical contexts, which did not make gender distinctions, – so their ideas are not entirely unknown –, the dialogue format of this chapter provides an added personal perspective, allowing, through questions, for a deeper exploration of the artistic world being researched.

Thus, it is relevant that many women composers approached music from an early age, some even before the age of 10, while others only began composing after they turned 30. Some of them suffered under the communist regime, while others benefited from being born in Bucharest (out of the 35 women composers featured in the volume, 20 are from Bucharest, 8 were born in Transylvania or Banat and 7 are from Moldova or Muntenia), which provided them not only with economic and administrative advantages but also with access to cultural information and important social connections, which are valuable in a context where personal relationships are highly valued. Among the personalities who

have influenced their artistic journey are theatre people, sculptors, teachers and composers. The musical preferences of the women composers say a lot about their cultural perspective: while some say: “Bach, of course”, remembering the emotion felt upon contact with Beethoven’s music, or admire Gesualdo, others name Debussy, Stravinsky, Messiaen, John Cage, Charles Ives, George Crumb, Karlheinz Stockhausen, György Ligeti, Arvo Pärt or even Tiberiu Olah or Aurel Stroe or non-European cultures as their aesthetic ideal. However, not all of them admire George Enescu (sometimes they prove that they cannot understand him), and even the motivation for their admiration for him can be very diverse – which would be an interesting sub-topic in itself, worthy of a dedicated study.

A chapter that deserves special attention is the third, which focuses on the portraits of the women composers. I consider it a central chapter because, although general articles, interviews, or analyses are available in other publications, some of the information presented here offers crucial documentary data, while others are unique testimonies that reflect the way of thinking of remarkable personalities. In addition to the list of compositions and biographical data – which allow, for example, a clear picture of the international scope of their work –, this chapter includes photographs and short musical examples. It is worth noting that most women composers have benefited in their professional rise and have emerged from the advantages offered by the numerous institutions supporting women composers in recent decades. Regardless of their life path and public success, it is fascinating to read the concise statements of these women composers, in contrast to those in the previous chapter, precisely because this conciseness compels us to uncover the essence: the expression of a personal *credo* in just a few sentences. This chapter can also be viewed as a *compendium of women composers from Romania*, as it provides essential documentary information that facilitates easy comparison and consultation.

While some artists feel completely blocked when trying to define themselves, others seem unable to stop sharing their most intimate thoughts (a phenomenon also noticeable in the previous chapter). Between these extremes lies a fascinating spectrum of attitudes: from self-satisfaction to the tendency to refuse sufficiency, from extreme modesty to a subtle form of autism – perhaps more common in the artistic community than is commonly believed –, from the desire to express the meaning of music in particularly poetic terms and what it wishes to communicate, to considerations on the relationship between sensitivity and structure (rarely focused solely on musical structure), and to the ambition to transcend the ordinary, capturing attention through broad perspectives that move beyond music and encompass philosophical reflections on the world, life and existential questions. I wonder if they are all equally convincing.

Some interesting quasi-statistical findings emerge, such as the fact that if, as we have shown, the majority of the selected women composers were born in Bucharest

(20 out of 35), most of them also worked in this city and were active in several fields, sometimes in different urban centres. Especially the youngest ones have achieved remarkable international careers (ranging from Australia to Canada, with many also spending time in Paris or Germany), which was unthinkable during the years of socialism. Most of them express a desire not to align themselves with any modernist trends, preferring instead to maintain their freedom. It is a radical change in attitude, with the classic avant-garde implying the declared integration into a particular group. If the label “avant-garde” can be applied to a few of them, it is not always a matter of a post-modern or traditionalist attitude either. *A declared detachment from conventionality of any kind* appears to be a consistent trait.

In conclusion, it is a whole world, alive and warm, trying to express itself simply or “interestingly”. I cannot completely avoid subjectivity and choice: I am deeply impressed – and not for the first time – by Maia Ciobanu’s sincerity and courage, by her clear and bold expression, and the depth and freedom of her thinking. Through her “elitist manifestos”, she manages to express truths that are all too often overlooked by a widespread hypocrisy (regarding concepts like elite or democracy), which seems more pronounced today than ever. Maria Ciobanu would certainly have much to say about her music, which is both extremely rich and highly expressive (and she does so in the previous chapter), but her focus in this chapter reflects her thoughtful intention to go beyond self-reference. It is also a sign of responsibility: her thoughts are not merely theoretical considerations, but a direct challenge to an unacceptable situation for someone with a moral compass. Irinel Anghel’s *credo*, no less consistent, reflects a completely different position: I am not sure if anyone else has analysed themselves, their artistic choices, the purpose and style of their work with such care and meticulousness, focusing exclusively on the self, and who has so much to say and is capable of articulating and organizing everything in a coherent text, displaying the qualities of a different kind of manifesto, which may extend beyond just personal reflections.

The fourth chapter focuses on the musical analyses of “selected women composers” (*Analysen ausgewählter Komponistinnen*). It is gratifying that this selection includes both contemporary names, such as Myriam Marbe, Doina Rotaru, Maia Ciobanu, Irinel Anghel, Diana Rotaru (but not Carmen-Maria Cârnci or Mihaela Vosganian, who, it is true, are addressed in the first article of the volume and in others), and names of less current women composers, such as Felicia Donceanu or Carmen Petra Basacopol or others who only came to prominence later or less so, or like the late Marina Vlad, Liana Alexandra and Ana-Maria Avram. This chapter, again, cannot be approached in a simple and expository manner, given its scope and diversity of contributions. Some studies forgo musical examples in favour of generalizations and extensions of perspective, which start from the premise that a thorough analysis, while desirable, is not only hard to follow but also says too little about the author of the music, if not properly

commented on. Other studies make extensive use of detailed, sometimes overly meticulous descriptions of the musical discourse, accompanied by multiple musical examples, tables, lists, etc., all focused on the data of the analysed piece. However, the musical examples are of multiple interest because they reflect not so much the changes made in the field of musical notation, but also the choices made by the woman composer. Especially in the middle decades of the last century, they represented a kind of “symbolic passport to integration” into the avant-garde of the time. Given that, at that time, it was often no longer a matter of visually conveying through the score any specific musical intention from the composer to the performer, notation had evolved into a relatively independent and imaginative domain, with the expressive qualities of quasi-improvisation and distinctive visual impact. However, I think that the period of fascination exercised by some bizarre graphics has passed, even though they still say something about the way the woman composer oriented herself in the swarm of new ideas and solutions of the last century. But the problem of musical notation is complex, and there can be no definitive solutions or verdicts here.

It is obvious that even in the writing of the articles of this chapter, there was no space restriction, just as the unequally covered topics of the analyses can only be explained by the subjective preferences of the editors. And if we start from the assumption that an analysis of the musical structure is just the first essential step toward developing broader and deeper insights about the music, its composer, the work itself and its context, we must accept that some of the articles have only reached this initial stage, presenting an overly broad perspective. While some articles manage to say a lot in 2-3 pages, others make excessive use of space. However, the extent of this chapter reflects, above all, the interest in musical structure and the professional discussion surrounding it, an approach that Violeta Dinescu established from the first symposium, often setting herself apart from the trend prevailing not only in Germany, of placing socio-political issues, including tendentious political debates, at the forefront.

Here are some general observations on the volume as a whole. As is natural, certain women composers are better represented in the volume than others, not necessarily depending on their degree of “public visibility”, or popularity, or the extent of their work. Although I do not intend to provide a rigorous statistic, several names stand out among the 35 selected women composers, such as Irina Odăgescu and Laura Manolache (each with five mentions in the titles), Doina Rotaru, Maia Ciobanu, Irinel Anghel, and Ana Szilágyi (each with four mentions) and Mihaela Vosganian and Violeta Dinescu (each with three mentions), either as the subjects of some article or analysis or as authors who often discuss their own music. Regarding the 20 authors/women authors of the texts included in the volume, Michael Heinemann stands out with 5 articles (all of which are exemplary musical analyses), Adalbert Grote with 3 articles, while Constanța Cristescu, Ruxandra Mirea and Ana Szilágyi each have 2 articles. The other fifteen authors each

contributed one article. If the first chapter, which provides a general overview, includes only 3 articles written by German authors and 6 articles by Romanian authors, the last chapter, which focuses on an analytical approach, includes 11 articles written by German authors and 6 articles by Romanian authors. Overall, the ratio between Romanian and German authors is 13 to 14, showing a balanced representation (I apologize if my counts were incorrect...).

The following is a commentary written in a casual tone, including a critical look at the volume, from the perspective of an *advocatus diaboli*. It is therefore not so much a criticism *per se*, but rather a desire to discuss the issues of *limits* and *meaning*, which are delicate yet inevitable aspects of any endeavour, including editorial work, however successful it may be.

A first natural question would be to what extent the selection made in this volume is representative, considering that, for practical reasons, not everything could be included. It is about, on the one hand, the women composers included in the volume, and on the other, the extent to which these women composers were the focus of one or more contributions. What “catches the eye” from the first reading is the quasi-absence of any mention of Myriam Marbé – probably the most famous and important woman composer in Romania – except for the analysis of one of her works authored by Michael Heinemann. The reason for this absence is simple: the sixth volume in the same series (*Myriam Marbé*, published in 2022 by BIS-Verlag, 406 pages) is wholly dedicated to this woman composer and includes both the author’s own musicological contributions and a wide range of studies focused on her work and personality. This explanation is not mentioned anywhere in the volume under review. Another absence, that of Adriana Hölszky, is explained by the fact that, although she was born and studied in Romania, which she left at the age of 23, her (exclusive?) integration into German music cannot be questioned – even if the title of the volume is not “Romanian Women Composers” but, (translated), “Women Composers *from* Romania”, which diplomatically avoids any possible discussions about her nationality. However, names such as Olguța Lupu, Silvia Macovei, Mansi Barberis (if Hilde Jerea had not been overlooked, she could have been included too), and others, less known (including Diana Gheorghiu, Diana Danciu, Cornelia-Neli Dodan) are also missing from the list. However, I do not claim that my information in this area is up to date. But if a compendium of Romanian women composers (such as Chapter 3) does not include certain names, this fact should have been explained.

However, if we refer to the studies included in the volume, not all absences of certain contributions can be easily justified. Inevitably, we are talking about a questionable selection anyway, because no set of possible criteria can truly capture the rich tapestry that characterizes the landscape of contemporary Romanian women composers.

I will allow myself here an observation based on my experience regarding how one can verify the correctness of a selection or the accuracy of certain documentary information. Whenever I want to verify if, for example, a German encyclopaedia provides accurate information, I first check the articles on topics I am well acquainted with: Enescu, Bucovina, Transylvania, the Romanian language, Romanian folklore, etc. If the respective articles are incomplete, provide false data, or are ideologically biased – something I am capable of assessing with a thorough understanding of the facts – I will conclude that it is highly probable that other information in the same encyclopaedia is equally incorrect. So you cannot fully trust them. In short, what may appear to be a *pro domo* endeavour is in fact meant to test the overall credibility of the source. Upon returning to this volume, I can confidently state that two of my articles, dedicated to important women composers from Romania, were unfortunately overlooked, for reasons that are hard to explain. One of the articles includes an analysis of a work by Doina Rotaru and some generalizations regarding her unique compositional style and aesthetics (*Doina, Bocet, Wehmut, Schatten, Rauch... Einige Gedanken mit Bezug auf Doina Rotarus Ästhetik / Doina, Lament, Longing, Shadows, Smoke... A Few Thoughts about Doina Rotaru's Aesthetics*), based on a communication given in 2021 at SIMN in Bucharest, and another article, dedicated to Violeta Dinescu, titled *Violeta Dinescu im Kontext der zeitgenössischen rumänischen Musik / Violeta Dinescu in the Context of Contemporary Romanian Music*, presented at an anniversary symposium organized in Oldenburg in 2013 and including an original contribution that reflected the environment from which it emerged. This approach, although rarely attempted, also provided a comprehensive overview of Romanian music as a whole (which is absent from this volume). There are indeed two references to Doina Rotaru in this volume – a general one, in an article by Adalbert Grote, and an exclusive analysis by Carolina Schulz – as well as other occasional mentions. However, I believe it would have been appropriate to include an additional article, dedicated, apart from a new analysis, explicitly to the aesthetic views of this personality. Other women composers have also been the focus of several studies. As for Violeta Dinescu, she is represented in this volume only through an analysis of one of her works, conducted by the notably productive and original analyst, Michael Heinemann. I know that, not so much out of modesty, but rather out of a desire to avoid any accusation of self-promotion, she prefers not to be too visibly present in the volumes and symposia she organizes, which is, of course, understandable and appreciated. However, I believe that the article mentioned above would not have justified such interpretations, would have completed the picture of her complex contribution to contemporary Romanian music and would have also presented an overview of this music,

which is essential when focusing on just one aspect, as is the case with this volume. In conclusion, based on the “personal verification method” mentioned above, if the articles dedicated to such notable figures have been excluded, it is likely that other significant contributions have also been overlooked. Therefore, it is unlikely that the volume will provide a complete picture of the Romanian female compositional landscape as reflected in musicological studies. As a confirmation of these observations, I will quote a few overlooked articles, even though they relate to the topic of the volume (mentioning that I did not systematically analyse this aspect and that I certainly imagine that there are valid reasons for these omissions) – Ruxandra Mîrea: *Femei compozitoare reprezentative din Romania* [Representative Women Composers from Romania], 2011; Andreea Năstase: *O profesoară de muzică a creat harta femeilor compozitoare ignorate de istorie, inclusiv din România* [A Music Teacher Created the Map of the Women Composers Ignored by History, Including from Romania], 2022; Elena Șorban: *Women Composers in Romania: A Survey of Their Work in Troubled Times*, 2022. While this conclusion was initially based on the premise of the practical impossibility of exhaustively presenting such a topic, it now reflects an objective reality. This cannot be a matter of saving space, once very extensive articles or others that do not relate to the topic of the volume have been generously included.

Another natural question à la *advocatus diaboli* concerns the organization of the materials included in the volume. One of the delicate aspects of any collective volume is precisely the selection of the principles of a particular order, and, among other things, the coverage of important points: what the volume begins and ends with.

Since this is a typical gender theme – the music of women composers – perhaps it would have been desirable for the volume to open with an article that explicitly presents and justifies this theme. Such a text could have been, for example, one of Adalbert Grote’s studies from the first chapter, which explores the issue in depth (it should be noted that the second study was selected for the end of the chapter), or the article signed by Christel Nies, which also carries a militant tone. Instead, the article signed by Petruța-Maria Măniuț-Coroiu, which was preferred, although of an undeniable quality, is perhaps too abstract to serve as the opening of the volume. Furthermore, the chosen theme, which highlights the work of four Romanian women composers and their representation of the fantastic in music, cannot be adequately addressed within a narrow context that focuses primarily on gender affiliation, as it is too broad in scope. The order of the articles in the first chapter follows, except for the last one, the alphabetical criterion (and if there was an exception, there could have been a second one, regarding the first article) – a rule also applied in the second and third chapters, but completely abandoned in the fourth one, which is not homogeneous anyway. In this last case, however, the choice of texts serving as *incipit* and *finis* seems perfectly justified (consistent articles dedicated by Michael Heinemann and Carmen Popa to Myriam Marbé and Maia Ciobanu). However,

the inconsistency in applying the alphabetical order criterion may raise the question of what criterion was preferred instead.

One can also consider a more general question, which may be the most delicate and important one in this context: what is the relevance today of publishing a volume dedicated exclusively to women composers, in a political and cultural landscape where, for several decades, they have received preference, promotion and substantial financial support through scholarships, awards, concerts, radio and television shows, publications, CDs, and other forms of publicity and are, in any case, very present in the musical world? The question is all the more legitimate considering that, in Romania, even during the socialist period, when there was a quota for women's representation across all fields (including art, science, politics, sports, etc.), women composers played an important role in the musical landscape, often without receiving special promotion, but without facing discrimination either. The compensation for a regrettable discrimination that has been prevalent throughout history and in various fields (which still exists today, and I fear will always exist, not only related to gender but also tied to the level of culture and tolerance of a society) is no longer a sufficient argument in every case. The most important aspect is not the political or cultural one, but rather the scientific and artistic one: one cannot truly understand and address the fundamental issues in music from a limited perspective, including those limited to gender (such as time, archetypes, or traditional music). Music knows no such boundaries. I may not be the most appropriate reviewer for this topic, if I question the very legitimacy of such a thematic selection. Because, precisely in a context where belonging to specific groups is officially encouraged, as reflected in this volume, I would like to clarify that I am not a partisan of "gender research" in the realm of music, nor of research by region, race, religion, age, or any other category, but *from a holistic perspective*, viewing it as only a preparatory phase. This seems to be the only correct stance against all discrimination, whether negative or positive. Or, perhaps, on the contrary, this very positioning may qualify me as an optimal observer precisely because I allow myself to formulate such an uncomfortable doubt.

Lastly, one more question that may also be considered risky (similar to other risky ideas presented in this review), compromised by standard presentations: do these women composers have some unique qualities, does their music differ from that of their male counterparts, and therefore is there such a thing as "feminine specificity" in music? The topic is discussed less and less frequently, and when it is, it is often done in a naive and biased manner. In this volume, it was avoided. I believe that the music composed by women possesses equal strength and depth, demonstrating just as much interest in abstraction, structure, and organization, and their goals are just as significant as those of their male counterparts. Do women composers perhaps experience greater intuitive freedom in their use of shapes, colours, and musical effects? I will not venture further into these considerations, contenting myself with categorically rejecting the classical

associations “masculine-strength” and “feminine-sensitivity”. However, although I do believe that there is often “something” special in the music of certain women composers (just as there is in the music of any composer), it is challenging and ultimately unimportant to pinpoint exactly what that is, aside from the perspective of any other criterion than *aesthetic quality*.

From this critical perspective, which may seem to relativize the value of the volume, I believe that the answer to all the questions posed above (some of which I hope are understood as purely rhetorical, yet still significant) regarding the *purpose* of the appearance of this volume can be found in the scope and quality of the material included, even if it is specific to a particular gender. Few publications offer such comprehensive and well-documented information. And on this occasion, factual situations are revealed, including a burst of ideas that might not have been expected given Germany’s still limited understanding of Romania. Violeta Dinescu and the co-editors of the volume deserve credit for assembling such a complex array of thoughts, expressions, confessions, informative data, and musicological contributions.

When we examine this volume alongside the others and consider the project as a whole, it becomes clear that it has successfully established a highly professional cultural enterprise, which makes minimal or no concessions to questionable tastes, the urge for cheap popularization, anti-professionalism, and political biases, which is quite rare in today’s climate. It also managed to attract personalities from German musicology alongside collaborators from Romania, in a joint effort to promote Romanian culture. Because, as unpleasant as it may be, we must admit that Romanian music remains largely unknown in Germany. And here lies the undeniable merit of Violeta Dinescu, who demonstrated perseverance, inexhaustible energy, patience, tenacity, personal charm, talent as an impresario, and exceptional diplomatic and organizational skills. The fact that she successfully secured the funding for the publication of this book, which she initially supported herself and distributed to various musical institutions in Germany (not solely those focused on female contributions), is a reflection of these qualities, as well as of the overall appreciation for the book, and the recognition of the author herself and her work. While it is undeniable that Violeta Dinescu acted in her own personal interest and in support of feminism, it is equally important to recognise that she also represented the interests of many others, and, above all, those of Romanian culture.

Below is a brief presentation of those who contributed to the care and preparation of this volume. If Violeta Dinescu is (or should be) well known to the Romanian public, little is known about Michael Heinemann and Roberto Reale, although they are not entirely unknown. I believe that presenting them briefly benefits both them and the Romanian public.

Michael Heinemann, a German musicologist and professor, was born in 1959 in Bergisch-Gladbach, a medium-sized city (approx. 110,000 inhabitants) located in Nordrhein-Westfalen near the Rhine River and Cologne. Founded and inhabited since Roman times, it is one of the few German cities that remained unaffected by the war. He studied Catholic music, pedagogy, organ, musicology, philosophy, and music history, earning degrees from the University of Cologne. He worked at the *Technische Universität* and *Hanns Eisler-Academy* in Berlin, or as a freelance musicologist, then at higher education institutes in Essen and at *Carl-Maria von Weber Musikakademie* in Dresden, where he currently teaches historical musicology. The subjects of his works include, among others, the history of Bach's reception, music theory in the 17th century, the correspondence between Clara and Robert Schumann, various aspects of the music of composers such as Palestrina, Monteverdi, Schütz, Händel, Beethoven, and Richard Strauss, as well as the history of music in general. He has collaborated on the publication of numerous volumes covering a wide range of topics. He is one of the most present and active participants in the symposia organized by Violeta Dinescu, with, I would say, a decisive contribution to the editing of all eight volumes of the *Archiv für osteuropäische Musik. Quellen und Forschungen* series published to date. His contributions are distinguished by precision and conciseness, revealing the deeper expressions and significances of the analysed music, while maintaining an original tone often emphasized metaphorically. During these symposia, he maintains a discreet and cooperative presence, demonstrating competence and discipline as a colleague. By assuming leadership of the symposia series *Zwischen Zeiten* in Dresden, he made a significant contribution to the understanding of Romanian music in Germany.

Roberto Reale, a German composer and musicologist, was born in 1974 in Hanover, the capital of the state of Niedersachsen, a city with over half a million inhabitants. He initially studied horticultural sciences at the local university, then musicology (with an emphasis on 20th and 21st-century music and Eastern Europe), as well as the English language at the University of Oldenburg. His primary work, which is also his doctoral thesis under Violeta Dinescu, explores the *Elements of Mourning in George Enescu's Opera Oedipus*. For many years, he was Violeta Dinescu's assistant and collaborator on most of the series of volumes edited by her, along with Michael Heinemann and, to a certain extent, Eva-Maria Houben. He composes mainly chamber music and works for *musical theatre*. After the "Oldenburg period", he worked at the *Bundesakademie für Kulturelle Bildung* in Wolfenbüttel, where he focused on the artistic trends in a changing society, seen as a starting point for developing cultural education models and creating contemporary offers in the field of music programs. He was distinguished by his diverse skills and friendly demeanour, always ready to help, comment, and respond with humour.

To conclude, one last reference to Violeta Dinescu: in addition to the qualities already highlighted, the driving forces behind her accomplishments that may not be immediately

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evident are her extensive education and knowledge across various fields, including history. She is a cultured person who is eager to build and contribute, making her exceptionally well-suited to represent Romanian culture effectively. Her actions ensure professional quality free from concessions to poor taste in fashion or politics. Returning to her idea to establish an archive dedicated to Eastern European music at the University of Oldenburg (which is still stored and accessible there), with a particular emphasis on Romanian music, to organize a series of symposia and edit and publish volumes focused on Romanian musical culture, it can be said that this idea has long surpassed the initial critical phase and has now yielded wonderful results. The greater the distance from its first steps and the broader the perspective, the more visible its value becomes.

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Translated from Romanian by Marcella Magda