

VASILE IJAC AND MUSICAL LIFE IN INTERWAR CLUJ

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municipality of Lugoj in the field of Culture” and the “Pro Cultura Timisiensis” award “for special merits in promoting culture in the Timiş County”. Published books: *Rapsodia din Belinţ* [Rhapsody from Belinţ], Marineasa, Timişoara, 2003; *Zeno Vancea. Etape biografice şi împliniri muzicale* [Zeno Vancea. Biographical Stages and Musical Accomplishments], Tim, Reşiţa, 2007; *György Kurtág. Reîntoarcerea la matricea spirituală* [György Kurtág. Return to the Spiritual Matrix], with a preface by Francisc László, MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; *Aurel C. Popovici-Racoviţă. Preotul-compozitor şi profesorul* [Aurel C. Popovici-Racoviţă. The Priest-Composer and Teacher], Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2010; *Muzicienii din Banat* [Musicians from Banat], Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2011; Sabin V. Drăgoi, *Monografia muzicală a comunei Belinţ. 90 melodii cu texte culese, notate şi explicate / XXX Coruri aranjate şi armonizate după melodiile populare culese, notate şi alese din comuna Belinţ* [Musical Monograph of the Belinţ Commune. 90 Songs with Collected, Notated and Explained Texts / XXX Choruses Arranged and Harmonized According to the Folk Songs Collected, Notated and Selected from the Belinţ Commune], anastatic edition edited by Constantin-Tufan Stan, with a musicological study by Constantin Catrina and a linguistic study by Simion Dănilă, Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2012; *Vasile Ijac – părintele simfonismului bănăţean* [Vasile Ijac – the Father of Symphonism in Banat], Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2013; *Liviu Tempea. Pianistul-compozitor* [Liviu Tempea. The Composer-Pianist], Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2015; *Ioan Vidu. Doinitorul Marii Uniri* [Ioan Vidu. The Songsmith of the Great Union], with a preface by Elena Chircev, Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2017; *George Enescu. Consonanţe bănăţene – cronici, evocări, interviuri, omagii, mărturii* [George Enescu. Consonances from Banat – Chronicles, Evocations, Interviews, Tributes, Testimonies], Second Edition, Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2018; *Banat. Miscellanea musicologica* [Banat. Miscellanea Musicologica], Eurostampa, Timişoara, 2018; *Ioan Vidu, Creaţia literară* [Literary Creation]. Collection of studies, articles, memoirs, speeches, pamphlets, essays, compiled by Viorel

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Vasile Ijac and Musical Life in Interwar Cluj

Cosma, edition expanded and edited by Constantin-Tufan Stan, Eurostampa, 2019; *Eternul feminin. Particularități stilistice în creația vocală a lui Nicolae Coman* [The Eternal Feminine. Stylistic Features in Nicolae Coman's Vocal Works], Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2019; *Corul din Chizătău. 1840-2020* [The Choir from Chizătău. 1840-2020], Second Edition revised and expanded by Constantin-Tufan Stan, with a foreword by Valentina Sandu-Dediu, Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2020;

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to capture some relevant episodes from the effervescent musical life of Cluj during the interwar period (ennobled by Enescu's recitals), based on certain biographical stages and events from the (instrumental, chamber and symphonic) compositional and musicological activity of Vasile Ijac from Banat (1899-1975), who completed his professional training at the composition school of the Cluj Conservatory – where he studied with Maestro Marțian Negrea –, and forged an outstanding teaching career at the Timisoara Conservatory. The paper also includes references to the pre-university institutions of Cluj where he worked as a teacher, as well as significant passages extracted from the chronicles published in the pages of local periodicals, which complete the atmosphere of high spirituality of a cosmopolitan burg with an opulent cultural tradition. The appreciations of Nicolae Ursu, a coryphaeus of the national folklore and a prominent representative of Romanian choral composition and conducting, present in those years in Cluj, outline the personality of Vasile Ijac, the father of symphonism in Banat, a former student of the Schola Cantorum in the City of Lights, winner of the "George Enescu" National Composition Prize.

Keywords: *Vasile Ijac, Cluj Conservatory, Cluj Philharmonic, Marțian Negrea, Timișoara, Nicolae Ursu*

With the beginning of the 1936-1937 academic year, the spiritual life of Timișoara was enriched by the arrival of a new musician, son of Banat, a 1928 graduate of the department of theory-composition of the Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art of Cluj (with an episodic activity, between 1922 and 1924, in the choir of the Romanian Opera¹, after a first teaching stint in elementary education as a

¹ According to his own confession, his concurrent activity at the two institutions was imposed by imperative financial necessities. Vasile Ijac missed the opportunity to collaborate with Traian Grozăvescu, the soloist of the Cluj Opera, who had been fired after the incident of January 23, 1922, when he refused to be cast in two roles, in two shows that were to take place on the same evening. During the two seasons on the Opera stage as a chorister (with Hermann Klee as choir master), Vasile Ijac was in the company of Sava Golumba and Liviu Roman, and was also privileged to listen to the solo performances of soprano Ana Rozsa-Vasilii (originally from Buziaș) and baritone Laurian Nicorescu, born in the commune of Jabăr (near Lugoj), to whom he would later become related through his future wife Zina Maria Miloia-Magdu (Cf. Constantin-Tufan Stan, *Laurian Nicorescu – compozitorul și artistul liric* [Laurian Nicorescu – Composer and Lyric Artist], Anthropos, Timișoara, 2008; Constantin-Tufan Stan, *Mihail Bejan – autorul primei traduceri în limba română a "Cronicii notarului anonim al regelui Béla"* [Mihail Bejan – Author of the First Romanian Translation of "The Chronicle of King Béla's Anonymous Notary"], Eurostampa, *Musicology Papers*, XXXV/2, 2020

permanent teacher at the primary school of the commune of Teregova, Caraș-Severin county, between 1919 and 1922.)² After several teaching experiences in high school education in Caransebeș (as a substitute music teacher in the 1924-1925 school year, at the “Traian Doda” High School, when he had temporarily interrupted the conservatory courses) and in Cluj (the “Tarbut” High School between 1925 and 1926, the Normal School for Boys between 1926 and 1927 and the Settlement for the Protection of the Blind between 1927 and 1936, where he taught vocal and instrumental music), Vasile Ijac was offered the opportunity to occupy, on a contest basis, a teaching position at the Department of theory-solfege of the Municipal Conservatory of Timișoara, an institution under the administrative tutelage of the City Hall. His ascension to the elite body of music education of Timișoara was immediately accepted and embraced by colleagues and music lovers alike. His name, a hope for the future of the Romanian school of composition, had already been circulated on Radio Bucharest (through the broadcast of the *Romanian Rhapsody* in 1932, performed by the Orchestra of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting, under the baton of George Simonis), in the Timișoara press, as well as in some Cluj publications (*Patria* [The Homeland], *Societatea de mâine* [Tomorrow's Society]), in which the works of the young musician had been met with extremely favourable reactions.

Nicolae Ursu, who was in Cluj in those days, had sketched an enthusiastic composer's portrait occasioned by the review of the first piano miniature notebook (*Hedonisme* [Hedonisms], Op. 13, for solo piano) from the cycle *Clipe vesele* [Happy Moments] (Schildkraut, Cluj, 1933),³ remarking on the complexity and originality of his musical language, formed and consolidated in Paris, in the climate of classicizing austerity of the Schola Cantorum (and enhanced by his study trips to Austria, Germany and Hungary), but also in the context of the overflowing manifestations of the modernist trend representatives who practised a post-impressionist style on the world-renowned stages of the City of Lights (Ijac had become acquainted with the music of some of the representatives of the Group of Six, Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud, but also with that of Paul Dukas and Maurice Ravel, whose strong personalities dominated the Parisian concert life⁴):

Timișoara, 2012; Constantin-Tufan Stan, *Vasile Ijac. Părintele simfonismului bănățean* [Vasile Ijac. The Father of Symphonism in Banat], Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2013).

² The commune of Teregova is the place of origin of tenor Traian Grozăvescu's father, Constantin (Costi), but also of Nicolae Bica (b. 1943), a remarkable teacher and contemporary choir conductor.

³ We will use the grammatically correct terminology, i.e. *Hedonisme* [Hedonisms] (with an *s* and not with a *z*, as it appears in the composer's manuscript and in the volume published in 1933), which was later adopted by the author himself, and consecrated in Viorel Cosma's *Lexicon: Muzicienii din România. Lexicon bibliografic* [Romanian Musicians. Bibliographic Lexicon], vol. IV (H-J), Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2001, pp. 99-101.

⁴ Cf. Ovidiu Manole, “Convorbire cu compozitorul Vasile Ijac” [Conversation with Composer Vasile Ijac], in *Orizont* [Horizon], Timișoara, XXIII, 4 (219), 1972, p. 5. In an interview with Ovidiu Manole, Vasile Ijac

"The public appearance of young composer Vasile Ijac did not come as a surprise to his few friends and close acquaintances. His typical modesty, doubled by a strong self-confidence grounded in the thoroughness of his special training – first with the renowned composer and professor Marțian Negrea at the Cluj Conservatory, then with the late composer of international repute Vincent d'Indy at the Schola Cantorum in Paris –, as well as in the knowledge acquired in the great musical centre of Vienna, gave sufficient assurances that he would soon make a dignified appearance on the Romanian musical scene, to honour the fruit of his diligent work offered on the altar of the divine art of sounds, in the solitude of the four walls of a secluded room, somewhere in the city of Cluj."⁵

Nicolae Ursu also noticed Ijac's preoccupation with the reworking and adaptation of folk songs to the pattern of the great classical forms, his departure from the flaws of the musical "sămănătorism" [sower's movement] still in vogue and present in the general perception of the music lovers, but also his eagerness to create aural and visual sensations through some of his works (*Preludiu* [Prelude], *Amor* [Love], *La crâșmă* [At the Tevrn], *Dans* [Dance] [...])⁶, as well as through a sound imagery of an undeniable impressionistic flavour, through suggestions and correspondences:

"He forges his aesthetic vision by creating his own modern musical orthography, new rhythms and measures, technical ingenuities, lush harmonies and consistent and complex leading ideas, all of which reflect a very distinct creative individuality, establishing the author from the beginning as a great and genuine composer."⁷

In Cluj, Ijac revelled in the magic of Enescu's music on the occasion of the concerts given by the violin virtuoso on November 18 and 19, 1929, expressing his veneration for the great Maestro, "who has reached the heights of world art [...] through his abilities as a composer, conductor and virtuoso", in the Cluj periodical *Patria*.⁸

also recalls George Enescu's violin recitals which he had the privilege to attend in the French capital during his time at the Schola Cantorum (1928-1930).

⁵ Nicolae Ursu, "Compozitorul Vasile Ijac" [Composer Vasile Ijac], in *Patria*, Cluj, year XV, No. 61, March 18, 1933, p. 2.

⁶ In his review (*op. cit.*), Nicolae Ursu also quotes the titles of some miniatures from the second notebook of *Hedonisme* [Hedonisms] (*Cântec* [Song], *Basm* [Fairy Tale], *Snoave* [Anecdotes], *La moară* [At the Mill], *Vecernie* [Vespers]), published later, in 1936, probably based on the author's manuscript.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Vasile Ijac, "George Enescu", in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XI, No. 257, November 21, 1929, p. 2. In 1929, George Enescu also gave concerts in Arad and Banat (Timișoara, Lugoj and Caransebeș). Cf. Constantin-Tufan Stan, *George Enescu. Consonanțe bănățene – cronici, evocări, interviuri, omagii, mărturii* [George Enescu. Consonances from Banat – Chronicles, Evocations, Interviews, Tributes, Testimonies], Second Edition revised and expanded, Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2018.

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The echo of *Hedonisme* [Hedonisms] (published at the same publishing house from Cluj as the first movement of the chamber work for violin and piano *Dor* [Longing] from *În Banat* [In Banat]) had also reverberated in Timișoara, whose tumultuous and complex cultural atmosphere had created a favourable climate for a strong and sensible receptivity to everything related to the European as well as Romanian musical avant-garde (let us remember Béla Bartók's surprising and extremely flattering reaction to the publication of Sabin Drăgoi's *Suite of Romanian Folk Dances for Piano* in Timișoara, in 1924). Driven by the same enthusiasm that had animated Nicolae Ursu in front of a unique expression in Romanian composition, Alma Cornea had published a review in one of Timișoara's periodicals.⁹

In an advertisement published in *Patria*, inviting the Cluj music lovers to attend the symphonic concert held under the auspices of the "Gheorghe Dima" Philharmonic Society, there was a mention of the first performance of the *Symphony in E minor*, Op. 3, which was the first foray into the universe of the symphonic genre by a Banat composer (composed in 1928, the first in the suite of five symphonies), "of young composer Vasile Ijac, one of the most gifted graduates of the Music Conservatory of Cluj. The fact that his own composition *Maestro*, Prof. M. Negrea, the conductor of the Philharmonic, will present one of his many symphonic works provides further proof of the musical qualities of this young composer, already known to the Romanian public for two years, when his *Rhapsody* was broadcast on Radio Bucharest, as well as from several chronicles on the musical life of Paris and Vienna,¹⁰ which he published long ago in the pages of our newspaper."¹¹ In his thorough review published in the columns of *Patria*, Nicolae Ursu emphasized the significance of the first performance of the *Symphony No. 1* (an extensive work, in four movements: *Allegro moderato* – sonata form –, *Adagio molto* – a three-part song –, *Allegro scherzando* – minuet –, *Allegro con brio* – rondo), a work composed by a quasi-unknown name of the Cluj musical scene, albeit "an element with real and highly promising qualities for the Romanian composition", remarking on the new elements of compositional technique (the cyclic form) used in the treatment of the thematic material:

"His first symphonic work, [...] although treated, so to say, scholastically, through the musical conception of the idea of symphony whereby the component elements of the main nucleus recur repeatedly throughout the

⁹ Alma Cornea-Ionescu, "«Hedonisme»" [Hedonisms], by Banat composer Vasile Ijac", in *Vestul* [The West], Timișoara, Year IV, No. 778, April 4, 1933, p. 3.

¹⁰ see "Muzica contemporană în Franța" [Contemporary Music in France], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 37, February 17, 1930, p. 2, "Viena, orașul muzicii I" [Vienna, the City of Music I], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 100, May 9, 1930, p. 2, and "Viena, orașul muzicii II" [Vienna, the City of Music II], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 101, May 10, 1930, p. 2.

¹¹ Unknown author, "Spectacole populare de muzică la Opera Română din Cluj" [Popular Music Shows at the Romanian Opera in Cluj], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XVII, No. 11, January 13, 1935, p. 4.

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work, through the plasticity of the chosen themes, reworked and varied to exhaustion, through its rich sonorities and orchestral harmony, as well as through the colours emerging from the fortunate combination of the various instruments, earn him the dignified title of composer."¹²

The somewhat unexpected appearance of Vasile Ijac's work on the stage of the Cluj Philharmonic was also recorded by pianist Ana Voileanu-Nicoară, a chronicler of undeniable professional probity, presenting in fine nuances the content and significance of musical events, extremely sensitive to the axiological aspects of the interpretative act:

"We particularly note the name of young composer Ijac, whose work, with interesting and refined sonorities and rhythms grafted onto Romanian folk music themes, contains much more than the promise of a future interesting personality of the Romanian musical scene."¹³

The event had also been made known to the readers of the Timișoara magazine *Fruncea* [The Forehead]:

"The new *Symphony* by Vasile Ijac from Caransebeș, Vincent d'Indy's esteemed student at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, for whom there is no working place available here in Banat, was successfully performed by the "Gheorghe Dima" Symphony Orchestra from Cluj, under the direction of Marțian Negrea."¹⁴

The sonorities of the *Symphony No. 1*, offered in the ambiance of Mozart's and Tchaikovsky's music, aroused the enthusiasm of the chronicler of another Cluj periodical, *România nouă* [New Romania], who dedicated a biographical sketch to its author, highlighting one of Ijac's fundamental behavioural traits, his modesty, which characterized him throughout his entire career:

"His modesty, typical of those who believe in the final victory, has kept him away from the buzz of dubious publicity. Ijac did not elbow his way to prominence, which would be only a fleeting success. He preferred taking a road filled with difficulties, placed before him by inexperienced people, or by wicked ones. Those present [...] were able to see the undeniable qualities of Ijac's talent."¹⁵

In the cultural circles of Cluj, Vasile Ijac was well known for the fervour of his journalistic endeavours. In February 1930, during his second year at the Schola

¹² Nicolae Ursu, "Pianista Hevesi Piroska și compozitorul Vasile Ijac" [Pianist Hevesi Piroska and Composer Vasile Ijac], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XVII, No. 14, January 17, 1935, p. 2.

¹³ Ana Voileanu-Nicoară, "Cronica muzicală a Clujului" [The Musical Chronicle of Cluj], in *Societatea de mâine* [Tomorrow's Society], Bucharest, Year XII, No. 3-4, March-April 1935, pp. 74-75.

¹⁴ Unknown author (pseudonym Eusebius), "Din manifestările geniului muzical al Banatului" [From the Manifestations of the Musical Genius of Banat], in *Fruncea* [The Forehead], Timișoara, Year II, No. 18, May 4, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁵ Unknown author, "Compozitorul Ijac" [Composer Ijac], in *România nouă* [New Romania], Cluj, Year III, No. 15, January 19, 1935, p. 2.

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Cantorum, Ijac expressed his impressions and appreciations on the musical trends dominating the Parisian cultural life, in the columns of the Cluj periodical *Patria*: the César Franck “trend”, represented by Vincent d’Indy, the founder of the prestigious Schola Cantorum, “a direct descendant of Wagner and Brahms”, and the Claude Debussy “trend”, through which the ancient Greek modes make their way into art music, along with the hexatonic scale, refined harmonies and luxuriant orchestral colourism: “everything to illustrate the musical text and keep the listeners’ attention always awake; this is, in a few words, the characterization of modern art equivocation.”¹⁶

In the two parts of *Viena, orașul muzicii* [Vienna, the City of Music], Ijac invokes the hegemonic spirit of the Austrian capital, which, “while always preserving its queenly appearance, offers us aural delights of a unique ingenuity and elegance.”¹⁷ Among the musicians evoked, from an aesthetic perspective, through concise and colourful critical appreciations, are Bruckner (“the embodiment of the respect for the depth of classical beauties”¹⁸), Mahler (“the genius architect of the modern symphony”, promoter of the ironic spirit, where he is “of a grotesque and bizarre diabolism”¹⁹), Max Reger (who, “through the spontaneity of his inventions and the originality of his style is called the Bach of modern times”²⁰), Richard Strauss (“the true creator of the symphonic poem, with everything he created in this respect constituting the final form”, the one who, under cyclopean circumstances, created his naturalistic trend, this Heracles of modern times, considered today the greatest contemporary composer, [...] who excels in describing simple or philosophical scenes while deftly revealing the general meaning, the inner life”²¹) and Arnold Schoenberg. Referring to *Gurrelieder* (a work for soloists, chorus and orchestra, from the composer’s tonal, post-Romantic period), Ijac emphasizes the expressionist character of a work “of an extravagant originality, of a genuinely Romantic character, of an unnatural intensity and exaltation. [...] it seems that the artistic fantasy and the power of imagination are left free to the expansion of the technical apparatus. His exaltation goes as far as the dilution of sound contours. Except in these manifestations, there is no more beauty.”²² Referring to *Verklärte Nacht* in terms of style, Ijac rightfully perceives the projection of the Wagnerian sonorities (“both works are the belated flowers of the development of the Wagnerian style”) as well

¹⁶ Vasile Ijac, “Muzica contemporană în Franța” [Contemporary Music in France], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 37, February 17, 1930, p. 2.

¹⁷ Vasile Ijac, “Viena, orașul muzicii I” [Vienna, the City of Music I], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 100, May 9, 1930, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Vasile Ijac, “Viena, orașul muzicii II” [Vienna, the City of Music II], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XII, No. 101, May 10, 1930, p. 2.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ibidem*.

as the new aesthetic categories (the “ecstatic lyricism” and the “frightfully dramatic pessimism”) embraced by the representative of the New Viennese School, while nevertheless deploring Schoenberg’s compositional approach (“today he has forgotten, like a fanatic, all the musical past, [...] in his eyes all these are mere ghosts of the past”). The radical reformation of the elements of language and compositional technique (the disintegration of the principle of tonality, with dramatic consequences at melodic, harmonic and contrapuntal level), based on new aesthetic principles, still leaves room for a conclusive positive appreciation from Ijac, as a sensitive observer and perceiver of the Western European musical phenomenon of the first half of the twentieth century: “Schoenberg is nevertheless a brilliant genius artist with an enormous knowledge base.”²³

A controversial and uncompromising spirit, sensitive to any social or cultural slippage, Vasile Ijac was pleading, in the Cluj press, for the resumption of the activity of the “Gheorghe Dima” Philharmonic Society (suspended two years earlier)²⁴ and for the establishment of a musical journal²⁵, while also expressing his sympathy for the death of Eusebie Mandicevschi, in whose memory he had published an extensive tribute article²⁶. Later, in 1941, Ijac formally acquiesced to a similar initiative to the one he himself had tried to promote in Cluj, this time proposed by Filaret Barbu (who had previously had the experience of publishing, in Lugoj, *Revista Corurilor și Fanfarelor Române din Banat* [The Journal of the Romanian Choirs and Fanfares from Banat], a singular presence in the Banat musical publishing landscape in the Romanian language, though with a temporary and inconclusive appearance in terms of quality and representativeness), who wanted to establish a musical journal of national significance entitled “România muzicală” [Musical Romania], a project that unfortunately remained at the level of some theoretical principles, never put into practice. In a letter addressed to Sabin Drăgoi, the Lugoj musician tried to polarize the interest and efforts of a large group of outstanding Romanian musicians with George Enescu in the front line, for the implementation of certain editorial principles: thus, the projected journal was to appear “on the horizon of the western border, standing on the historical foundation of the Banat folklore and being written by Transylvanian musicians largely grouped around the musical institutions of Timișoara, but also by the most skilful pens from Bucharest and other Romanian centres.”²⁷ The journal was intended to have an international impact through the contribution of correspondents from several

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Vasile Ijac, “O lacună muzicală” [A Musical Gap], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XI, No. 24, February 1, 1929, p. 2.

²⁵ Vasile Ijac, “Viena, orașul muzicii I” [Vienna, the City of Music I], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XI, No. 23, January 30, 1929, p. 2.

²⁶ Vasile Ijac, “Figuri reprezentative. Eusebie Mandicevschi” [Representative Figures. Eusebie Mandicevschi], in *Patria*, Cluj, Year XI, No. 225, October 12, 1929, p. 2.

²⁷ Vasile Ijac, *Scrisoare către Sabin Drăgoi* [Letter to Sabin Drăgoi], Timișoara, July 1, 1941, Miloia family archive.

important Western European cultural centres, and to include several permanent columns: an editorial, folklore studies, specialized articles, profiles of local and foreign composers, a musical chronicle of the events taking place in the capital city and across the country, the chronicle of the Cluj Romanian State Opera at Timișoara, an external chronicle, Radio chronicles from across the country and from abroad and a column dedicated to musical education. The publication of a supplement was also envisaged, to include various musical creations.

With his impetuous arrival on the interwar Romanian musical scene, as a brilliant product of the Cluj music school, Vasile Ijac, an artist endowed with great and complex capabilities, attracted attention, from the beginning, through an obvious talent polished and dynamized at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, in an effervescent musical atmosphere. The City of Lights as well as the other European musical centres he visited gave him the opportunity to become familiar with the avant-garde artistic trends in the field of fine arts and music, which also influenced, to a certain extent, the compositional language of his first creative period. His musical activity unfolded on multiple levels: composition (with a surprising première, in 1932, of the *Banat Rhapsody*, broadcast on Radio Bucharest and performed by the Orchestra of the Romanian Broadcasting Society), musicology (a prodigious publishing activity in the Cluj and Timișoara press, including sketches of music history, essays with an aesthetic-philosophical touch and also musical chronicles, which revealed him as a fine and competent observer and analyst of the various and rich musical events of the interwar period), and a substantial and consistent teaching activity, a true vocation crowned by his accession to the elite teaching staff of the higher musical education in Timișoara. Claiming his affiliation to neoclassicism during the period of his maturity and acknowledging the rightness of Enescu's compositional path, detached from the temptations of the early twentieth century trends that proposed a new vision of the sound space and message by denying tonality, harmony and the classical architectural structures (Enescu, in turn, had rejected the possibility of applying the serial technique, viewed as a gratuitous concession to modernism²⁸), Vasile Ijac was organically anchored in the compositional principles promoted by the main representatives of the national school of composition. His studies at the Schola Cantorum under the guidance of Vincent d'Indy opened up for him new horizons in the art of orchestration as well as the perspective of approaching the large forms, which he first applied to the Banat music, through the *Symphony No. 1* and then the *Symphony No. 2*, which, through the first honorary mention conferred by the prestigious jury chaired by George Enescu at the 1937 edition of the National Composition Prize, established him as one of the leading representatives of Romanian music, alongside Zeno Vancea, Eugen Căteanu

²⁸ Noel Malcolm, *George Enescu. Viața și muzica* [George Enescu. Life and Music], Humanitas, Bucharest, 2011, p. 272.

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and Mircea Popa, under the protective aura of Maestros Tiberiu Brediceanu and Sabin Drăgoi.

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Translated from Romanian by Marcella Magda