

ROMANIAN STYLISTIC CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN GEORGE ENESCU AND LUCIAN BLAGA. AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

Mădălina RUCSANDA¹

Abstract: *In this paper I am trying to capture the extraordinary correspondences established between two of the great minds in the Romanian culture: George Enescu and Lucian Blaga in terms of worldview and life, death, destiny and attitude. Their work is based on a common archetypal layer – the spirituality of the Romanian village, to which a professional training at the highest Western level is added. The similarities between the three are not dependent on the existence of any direct contact, not even by means of creation, because there is no data to confirm any direct contact between the composer Enescu and the philosopher Blaga. The two great artists are part of a larger tradition giving inexhaustible sources of creativity, resulting in the crystallization of language, by taking over the characteristics of the Romanian folklore.*

Key words: *stylistic, Blaga, Enescu, folklore, philosopher, culture.*

1. Introduction

George Enescu and Lucian Blaga were two great poets: one of the sounds and the other of the words, men of great insights, with whom we see a remarkable coincidence in the fundamental themes, a common ethos that reaches a final essentiality. Apart from the contact with the folklore, the return to the village theme, the passion for the great myths: The Ewe, The Master Manole, the idea of returning to childhood, its recollection, evoking the lost happiness, are just some of the common themes for both personalities, and similar to the philosopher, the musician is somehow out of time in his music, out of the momentary

anxieties and trends, he vibrates with tenderness to the mysterious, hidden echoes of the past and of the homeland roots.

2. Content

George Enescu, composer, violinist, pianist, conductor and teacher, one of the most prominent musicians at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, has promoted the Romanian music to the level of the world music values through its exceptional quality to note the virtues of the music expression latently contained in the national folklore treasure and intensifying them to the experience level acquired by the universal art.

¹ Dept. of Performing Arts, *Transilvania* University of Braşov, Romania.

Aphoristically formulating one of the fundamental attributes of his existence and art, George Enescu said to an editor of the "Rampa" magazine in 1929: *"A man's life is like a bowstring that, when stretched out, oscillates and slowly returns to its original simple and straight position. I return to where I got it from, to those who presided over my first steps"*. The meaning of this undulating movement has some similarities to Blaga's mioritic concept, with estrangements and returns, with ups and downs, with approaching and detachment, in an ascending development, confirming the truth that the man, the artist George Enescu was strongly linked to the people and the environment where he was born and where he was trained, his native land, with the specific spirituality it gives, becoming, *in the context of the eternal wanderings, the creator's propensity force, the orientation pole, the identity and reference factor*.

During Enescu's artistic ascent, the Romanian culture and science have reached maturity, by means of the original elements compatible with attaining a universal feature, and the writers: Mihail Sadoveanu, Octavian Goga, Liviu Rebreanu, Tudor Arghezi, painters such as Stefan Luchian, Theodor Pallady, Nicolae Tonitza, the sculptor Constantin Brancusi, the philosophers Mircea Eliade, Eugen Ionescu, Emil Cioran and not least the philosopher Lucian Blaga, have built multiple and strong bridges between the horizons of the national culture and the universal culture.

Poet and philosopher with a great vocation, essayist, thinker, writer, faithful folklore lover, **Lucian Blaga** is one of the most important artists in the history of the national culture; he had a clear contribution to the development of the Romanian poetry and in the completion of our people's self-awareness, founding the

philosophy of the cultural styles, crowned with an original metaphysical vision.

The philosopher has taken over and has dealt with the highly discussed problem of the Romanian culture, that of the folklore poetry, but joining the same tradition, he conceives folklore in a different way as compared to his predecessors and the folklore creations no longer appear only as artistic values, or as ethnographic remains from distant eras, but they are all a living organism, an organic folklore culture connected to the land and the past; he did not pursue the development of an aesthetic system or a treaty, but has created an original philosophical system, where an art vision is also involved.

Almost all great thinkers - from Plato to Bergson - have also produced poetics or aesthetics integrated to the general thinking, but unlike them, for whom contact with the major cultures has caused a feeling of inferiority or has taken them away from the national realities, Lucian Blaga cherished our national spirituality and tried to include the national treasure in the context of the universal culture.

Convinced that our tradition merges with the creative artistic potential, the philosopher *"has sensed an opportunity to report to the depths of the Romanian mentality, building himself what he nostalgically imagined for a visionary spirit: a system of thought, a vision of the world in the spirit of the popular heterodoxy"* [1].

Enescu's connection to the folklore and especially its representatives: the fiddler Lae Chiorul from Dorohoi, Christache Ciolac, the dulcimer player Lică Ştefănescu (which was his partner in Paris) and the violinist Nicu Buică has been established since his early childhood. In creation, the folklore was initially used affectively, instinctually, and during adulthood in an increasingly complex manner, rationally, deliberately. The

composer's artistic heritage summarizes the consciousness of his people and the melody of Enescu's work, typical through the intimate lyrical confession, comes from the inexhaustible and pure source of authentic folklore, whether peasant or musical, filled with the most expressive and relevant features of originality and artistic truthfulness.

The culture philosopher Lucian Blaga explains the rediscovery of the autochthonous Romanian folklore culture as a deep layer of an "Eternal mother", which he includes in the vision of a poetic modern myth, in which time and space, phenomena of the objective world, become the foundation of life in the sense of a *unity of existence*.

In his reception discourse, held with the occasion of his admittance to the Romanian Academy, Lucian Blaga asks permission to talk about the timeless presence that is the folklore culture: "*I praise the Romanian village, the creator and preserver of the folklore culture, the carrier of our style matrix ... A major culture has never risen only from a genius buoyancy. Of course, the genius is a condition. But a major culture also needs a foundation, and this sine qua non foundation is always the style source of a folklore culture... Achieving a superior work, its level and complexity seem to hang, in other words, not only by the existence of genius as such, but also by the inherent possibilities of a collective stylistic matrix*" [2].

In other words, the immortal presence that the philosopher refers to is an archetypal presence, highly stratified in the unconscious mind, an ancestral presence, it is the Romanian village, the keeper of our folklore culture, our genesis, our ancestry and our feature. Nevertheless, the philosopher did not take into account the real village, but the *village idea* or the idea of village, emanation of an objective

reality. On the basis of his own childhood reminiscences, Blaga built up a hypothetical village, simple, full of fabulous poetry, myths and legends, a village that tried to focus on the quintessential Romanian phenomenon.

The mirage of the return to the origins is not an abandon of the professional acquisitions during the studies, but an enrichment of the style range, of the fantasy which revives the artist's buoyancy and insures the indissoluble organicity of the musician with the ethos and the spirituality of the generating matrix.

George Enescu regularly expresses the nostalgic feeling towards his native village, the unspoiled source of the oral musical substance, as well as the lure of returning to childhood in his works: *Impressions from childhood, Romanian Poem or Suite III, The Rhapsodies in A and D, Op.11*.

The Romanian Poem strikes by its rustic vitality brought into an esoteric musical atmosphere, imposing the Romanian village ambience through what was most musically characteristic: the melancholy song and the Romanian folklore dance, which were the favourite folklore genres of the Romanian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The exuberant dances and songs of the lyric-epic songs are highlighted even more in *Rhapsodies Op. 11: no. 1 in A major (1901) and no. 2 in D major (1902)*, becoming for many listeners "*a type of heraldry of the modern Romanian music school in its difficult ascent on the universality slope*" [3]. If in *Rhapsody 1*, completed in August 1901 in Sinaia, an unstoppable love of life is expressed, a strong people's joy of living, serene and full of temperament, *Rhapsody II in D major* evokes in a deep tone the moral strength of the people who faced the vicissitudes of history for centuries, having as a background the beautiful scenery with its wonderful sunrises and sunsets, with the

ancestral figures of the shepherd and the fiddler. Thanks to the mastery of handling the thematic material, the Rhapsodies are "the highest point so far in the Romanian music, the symphonic expression of the Romanian folklore song" [4].

Another work, deeply imbued with peasant sonorities, in a typical vision of the fiddler art – the authenticity and tradition expression carrier that identifies with the folklore - composed in an era of maturity is *The Village Fiddler* from the suite for violin and piano *Childhood Impressions in D major* (1938), in which the return to the primary sources is highlighted; the composer's experience from the memorable *Third Sonata for piano and Violin* [5], *Op. 25 in A minor* (1926) is added, which reiterates on a higher, absolutely original level, the unaltered concern for the refinement of the folklore music with that Romanian folklore feature specified in the subtitle, a concept which appears as "a portrayal of elevated emotionality, a secret reverie and a fertile source sublimation" [6]. It is another proof that the Liveni period has deeply marked his heart.

Envisioning a consistent assertion by reference to the initial impulse, George Enescu highlights an extraordinary consistency both in his life and in his art, confirming the rule of the great artists who convey fundamental ideas, such as returning to the origins.

In Blaga's poetry, this nostalgia for the native village appears as merged with the idea of returning to childhood, as in the poem "Return": "Near the village there I was again, / With the shadows as companions, / Many things are different, the man, the year / Only the village is unchanged."

The poems dedicated only to childhood are very few, "Three-sided" and "The thorns" in the debut volume *Poems for the*

Light: "... I smile / and roam the valleys / frisky in the wind. I was a child. "

Plunging into the atmosphere of early childhood is done in the second volume, *The prophet's steps*, in the poem "From my Childhood" in which a scene from a village tradition is evoked, where the children's duty was to look after the geese and their goslings in the plain, showing mercy and attachment to the scarecrow in whose hat a sparrow made its nest, which resembles a harlequin for the child, the man reaching decrepitude, for which you can only feel pity: "All the children were laughing at her, / but I was feeling sorry / and I loved her. // I was little / and my only thought was: she is my fellow / and I loved her. "

In the poem *Biblical* from the "Praise sleep" volume the Virgin Mary is described teaching her child to stand up among tall grass, then she looks after his sleep in the atmosphere of the peasant house where the quiet is disturbed only by the angels who "slam the doors too loudly / coming in or going out." The same atmosphere, close to the cosmic Christianity of our people described by the philosopher in the *Mioritic space* is presented in the poem "The Carol", dedicated to his daughter Dorli and published in the book "At the water shed."

The last poem "My daughter sees her country" dedicated to childhood, *the heart of all ages* through the ability to marvel at the miracles, faced with the *charming substances of the world*, is found in the book "The unexpected steps", a hymn dedicated to the child who discovers the world with his or her eyes, with the smile, the touch but also with wonder at the changing treasures of the world.

Along with the poems, in the autobiographical volume *The Chronicle and the song of the ages* we encounter a world full of stories, superstitions, riddles, starting with the incredible absence, but also the shy discovery of the word, taking

possession of the native house and yard, the shed, then the village with the playmates, mother's stories, the partial separation with the native village of Lancrăm, the school, the religious feeling, the mountain, all embedded in the heart of the child when departing to Braşov.

The pastoral, mioritic lyricism, represented for Blaga by the plain where the shepherd looks after his sheep, a space for contemplation and longing, the undefined waiting and serene resignation, with the most archaic times of the Romanian people is present in almost all of Enescu's works. Moreover, the composer's unfulfilled desire to transpose *The Ewe* into music is well known.

Some features of this vision – the sweet nostalgia, the slow swaying and the view of the plain - overlap with Enescu's way of understanding the Romanian spirit, suggested by most of his works but also by the composer's philosophical and aesthetic concepts. Moreover, in the musician's life spiral there are some marked wave movements, prefiguring the similarities with the mioritic concept: estrangements and returns, ups and downs, approaching and detachment in an ascending development that shows an intense inner struggle, a tormented, obsessed consciousness deeply attached to the fundamental incipit, which coincides with the very first one.

Blaga considers that spatial skyline with which the Romanian feels an organic solidarity has the configuration of the plain, of the rhythmic undulations hill-valley, all the Romanian art creations - folklore or classical – being the expression of this regular rhythm of gentle ascent and descent, opposed both to the endless rising of the Gothic and the boundless extent of the soul and of the Russian music, and the Romanian, wherever he was throughout history, has never ceased to evoke, through the rhythm of the melancholy song, the

undulated space of its original landscape. In fact, this undulated, hill-valley space is a metaphor for the Romanian stylistic matrix and not a condition for the spiritual reality.

Enescu's music overlaps perfectly with the coordinates of the undulated infinite that Blaga speaks about, the scenery is always the plain, it is not rocky or arid, the melancholy song lyricism is expressed by *parlando-rubato* and the rhythmic variation, the nostalgic dreaming are intertwined with a specific sense of serenity before death.

"The man's destiny is creation" Lucian Blaga said. Indeed, both his life, during which he held multiple activities: academic, diplomat, playwright, philosopher, journalist, poet, teacher, translator, and that of the great composer, violinist, pianist, conductor and teacher, were creation; both melted ideas and interwar European poetic and dramatic means in a highly original creation, while drawing from a specific fund of Romanian culture and spirit, borrowing themes from the Romanian traditions and aesthetic procedures.

"Giant mixture of modesty and artistic genius, a healthy flower grown in the aromas filled mixture of the Romanian plain, George Enescu's art remains, together with the art of the immortals Eminescu, Lucian, Brâncuşi, Arghezi, a rich essence in the seedbed of our culture" Adrian Iorgulescu characterizes the creation of our great composer.

3. Conclusions

Cornel Țăranu [7] stated that *"... Lucian Blaga has predicted Enescu, as the archaeologist predicts the urn from the rock"*. Listening only to fragments from the Oedipus concert, Lucian Blaga immediately realized the full consonance between Enescu's music and his own

aesthetic conceptions and, as the musicologist Gheorghe Firca states, regarding the discussions he had with the great Transylvanian poet about the satisfaction of seeing the Greek tragedy transposed into music, just as he imagined.

And although these two great values of our culture have never met, we can say about both that they are a perpetual "Romanian energy", a model for the young generation of today and tomorrow, forever in remembrance, because their roots were planted in the depths of the true, sincere and powerful feeling, and, as Blaga said:

*My life
Were it only for one moment,
I have interrupted with it
an eternity...*

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