

Documentary contributions from the 1971-1973 press about the musical life of Braşov

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Abstract: *The present article is a result of an extensive research, reflected in several writings on this subject. The musical life of Braşov can not be properly characterized without consulting the local press from the past. Thus, we conducted a research to collect and order information from the 20th century Drum Nou and Astra journals from Braşov. The focus of the present article is the period of time between 1971-1973. The selected material is chronologically presented in order to give the readers a mirror to the musical life of Braşov from about 45-50 years ago, the cultural events and the artistic manifestations of the times concerned being those that assured the prestige of Braşov in the musical-artistic area.*

Keywords: *press, documents, Braşov, musical life.*

1. Introduction

The articles resulting from the documentary and research of the local journals archives have arisen from the need to synthesize and organize the materials about the musical life of Braşov. We are obliged, as cultured people of Brasov, to bring to light the clues about the local artistic route, to create a real context in terms of musical manifestations. Looking at the period 1971-1973 (as a continuation of existing articles), we want to highlight the cultural events that the Braşov press is telling us about and highlight the impact they have had on the local community. As Nicolae Bălcescu says: "*History is the first book of a nation. In it we see the past, present and future.*" From this perspective, the importance of documenting the musical past of the city in which we are pursuing our cultural activity is obvious.

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2. Discussion

2.1. Articles from 1971 to 1973 in the *Astra* magazine

"Braşov is an important center of the Romanian literary press; The first Romanian publications appeared in the town at the base of mount Tâmpa in the beginning of the 19th century and for about a century and a half, as the Romanian literary press dictionaries tell us, about 50 literary magazines appeared here. The most important literary magazine of post-war Braşov is *Astra*." (Buzăşi 2016, 122-124) Monthly political-social-cultural journal of the Braşov Regional Committee for Culture and Art, first published on 20 June 1966, *Astra* magazine offers several articles on the cultural life of Braşov. In the following lines we will refer to those writings that paint opinions about the musical activity of Braşov.



Fig.1. Numbers of "Astra" journal

In the January 1971 issue, we find a section by Gemma Zinveliu called *Music Agenda*, which tells us about the Anniversary Concert of the Faculty of Music, held on the occasion of a year since the establishment of the faculty. The recital was given by students and teachers of the institution. Also in this issue, we are told about Beethoven's anniversary (two hundred years since birth) - marked by a concert of the Braşov Philharmonic, along with the Radio choir and soloists of the National Opera - and the commemoration of Dinu Lipatti (two decades since his death) - marked by a piano concert by Horia Mihail.

The March 1971 issue presents information about the concert halls in Braşov, in the *Music Agenda* section by Gemma Zinveliu. We find out about the Press Club Hall and Auditorium at the Officers' House, spaces suitable for artistic and musical events such as chamber and symphonic performances.

The *Music Agenda* section records, in the June 1971 issue of the *Astra* magazine, the presence of international personalities on the Braşov stages. This fact argues the intent of the research, Braşov as a musical center being one marked by the existence of international concerts with a high professional attitude.

The second edition of the Chamber Music Festival is notified in July 1971 issue, with a brief mention of the participating bands and the chosen repertoire. The continuity of this festival assures us of the quality and quantity of the Romanian chamber ensembles, at that time, for which the city of Braşov has been the center of meeting for the lovers of the chamber music genre.

In November 1971, in *Astra* magazine, an article written by Gemma Zinveliu, in which her fine musicologist qualities are easy to spot, appears. The concert analysed presents clarinetist Ion Nedelciu, pianist Manea Daniela and violinist Roger Grigoriu. The repertoire of the three interpreters and the expectations regarding the interpretative depth convince us of the high artistic level of the Braşov musicians at that time.

The interview with Teodor Liviu Teclu, concert soloist and director of the Braşov Philharmonic, in May 1972 issue, is a micro-history of the philharmonic ensemble, painted with valuable personal impressions.

From the 1973 numbers of the *Astra* magazine, we mention the February issue in which an article called *Culture and Education* mentions the importance of the Faculty of Music in the cultural education of young people. In the May issue, the article *The success of the Faculty of Music* talks about the Ensemble of Old Instruments and the faculty choir, renowned groups in the Romanian musical life, four years after the establishment of the institution. In the same spirit, we find mentions about Braşov, an academic fortress - November 1973 – in the thoughts from the opening of the academic year 1973 in Braşov University.

2.2. Articles from 1971 to 1973 in the *Drum nou* magazine

The *Drum nou* daily paper reflects events, attitudes, opinions about Braşov's musical life in the times we are discussing. Because "*reflecting does not mean to render, but to build*" (***) (1990, 47), the articles about which we will discuss, chronologically, elaborate a coherent historical framework, of great importance for the thorough study of the cultural life in Braşov.

Numbers from 8, 10, 16 January 1971 talk about personalities such as: violinist Gabriela Izsak, soprano Ana Nigrim (soloist at the Musical Theater in Braşov), bass Helge Bomches (soloist at the Musical Theater in Braşov) and their representations abroad, events that ensured the prestige of Braşov on the world's musical map. In the same spirit, April 4 and 8 issues bring in our attention Ilarion

Ionescu-Galați conductor and his study trip to America, as well as violinist Gabriela Izsak with an interview about the tournament concluded in R.F.G.

Carmen Kehiaian performs a radiograph of Brașov's musical life, recalling in his article on March 28, 1971, the performances of popular and classical music in the city at the base of mount Tâmpa. Regarding the popular music, the author discusses the Cerbul de Aur Festival, the First Guitar Festival, and in the perimeter of the classical music he praises the Chamber Music Festival and the weekly performances of the Brasov Philharmonic.

The May 14, 1971 issue features an article written by Mircea Gherman about the song *The Season of Beauty* for soloist, chorus and orchestra by Mihai Walter Klepper, performed in a recital by Collegium musicum Juventus - the prestigious group of the Faculty of Music. The author points out the perfect unity between the musical textures and the literary text of the composition, but also the qualities of the choir directed by Nicolae Țurcanu, with a remarkable artistic performance.

On May 23, June 13, July 3, July 4, July 6, and July 11, 1971, the Drum Nou daily journal presents portraits of the bands participating in the second edition of the Chamber Music Festival: The Madrigal Choir (named by the author -Gemma Zinveliu – „one of the finest musical ensembles in the world”), the Dresden Quartet (Ulbrich Quartet), the Old Instruments Group of the National RadioTv (“descend like a vintage painting” according to G. Zinveliu), Musica Nova, Trio Gheorghiu, Musica Viva Ensemble.



Fig.2. Title – “Chamber music ensembles from the 2nd Festival of Chamber Music – Brașov 1971” – from “Drum nou” daily paper

The choral group Gheorghe Dima made an important contribution to the aesthetic taste of the Brașov public. On Tuesday, June 8, 1971, an article titled *The anniversary of the centennial of the choir Gheorghe Dima of Brașov* appears in the daily paper about which we are discussing. Professor Petru Istrate makes, through

this paragraph, a historical look about the activity of the choral reunion involving personalities such as Ciprian Porumbescu and Gheorghe Dima.

On August 18, 1971, the *Drum Nou* paper published a short anniversary article - the 90th anniversary of the birth of our great composer George Enescu, in which the Romanian people are urged to realize the dream of happiness of the genius by approaching its repertoire. The writing also refers to the modest attitude and the unforgettable work in the service of the music, characteristics of the great Romanian composer.

The musicologist Constantin Catrina, chairman of the County Cultural and Art Committee, writes on September 12, 1971 an article highlighting the importance of each institution's effort to form the musical taste of the general public, referring to clubs, cultural houses, cultural homes, discos that have the means necessary for a complex artistic education. Human receptivity to the elevated musical phenomenon does not appear naturally without a gradual exposure to the expressions of sound art in multiple forms. The interest in general music education at that time speaks of a society for which culture occupies a high place on the scale of values.

At the National Student Art Festival in Cluj, 1972, the first prize was awarded to the University of Braşov, for the choir of the Faculty of Music, which impressed the public with a beautiful performance and a great stylistic diversity of the chosen repertoire, interpreted at a high level. These impressions appear in the article of April 5, 1972. The author Gemma Zinveliu considers that students use art to inflate imagination, stimulate the thought and passion of the man of tomorrow's society. This student portrait is useful to us as a model to follow.

Founded recently, the Faculty of Music in Braşov succeeded in gaining a well-earned appreciation of the music-loving audience through the chamber choir concerts, as well as the instrumental recitals held in the studio of the faculty. Thus, one of the youngest bands formed by: Harald Meschendörfer (blokflöte), Hary Wondraschek (viola pomposa), Eva Marko (viola da gamba), Wolfgang Güttler and Anselm Honigberger (violin) using antique instruments is one of the praised ensembles. This group of old instruments in Braşov is mentioned in the article of July 1, 1972.

On April 1, 1973 we find an article talking about the artistic quality of the choir of the Faculty of Music. Originally conducted by the lecturer Nicolae Ţurcanu, the dean of the music faculty, and the assistant Dorel Munteanu, the band was known for the precision of intonation, the homogeneity of sound and its admirable dynamics. Also, the issue of April 17, 1973 puts in the foreground the choir members, winners of Lauri '73. Confirmed by the jury as the best music ensemble,

the choir of the Faculty of Music achieves a more meritorious performance as it has had similar competitors of the Music Faculties from Cluj, Iași, Bucharest.

3. Conclusions

The research undertaken underlines the importance of integrating the current cultural life in Brașov into a historical context. International personalities were present on the Brașov scenes and Brașov's musicians proudly represented the Romanian school in artistic performances abroad, facts demonstrating the characteristic of music as universal language, as well as the professional level of Brașov musical school, equal to the international one. The appearance of articles about the musical phenomena in the *Astra* and *Drum Nou* journals, in the years 1971-1973, shows us a general concern for the high culture education. From this point of view, modern society has only to learn, the hermetization of high musical life specific to the times in which we live, not being beneficial to the contemporary man.

"Art can reveal to us new modes of perception and feeling which jolt us out of our habitual ways" (Small 1996, 2), so public participation in musical events means an attempt to transcend immediate reality. Through the writings of past musicologists, the layman reader has the opportunity to assimilate competent opinions and, in this way, to develop a genuine musical taste.

References

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