

From Propagandistic Exploitation to Post-Communist Sensationalism: Beethoven Reception in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Romania

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ABSTRACT

This paper mainly investigates the way Beethoven's image was turned, during the totalitarian political regimes of twentieth-century Romania, into a tool of propaganda. Two such ideological annexations are striking: one took place in the period when Romania, as Germany's ally during World War II and led by Marshall Ion Antonescu, who was loyal to Adolf Hitler, to a certain extent copied the Nazi model (1940–1944); the other, much longer, began when Communists took power in 1947 and lasted until 1989, with some inevitable continuations. The beginnings of contemporary Romanian capitalism in the 1990s brought, in addition to an attempt to depoliticize Beethoven by means of professional, responsible musicological enquiries, no longer grounded in Fascist or Communist ideologies, another type of approach: sensationalist, related to the “identification” of some of Beethoven's love interests who reportedly lived on the territory of present-day Romania.

KEYWORDS

Romanian Philharmonic Society, political changes, Ludwig van Beethoven, George Enescu

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1. BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC IN THE TERRITORY OF THE PRESENT-DAY ROMANIA: FROM THE 1840S TO THE 1860S

The inhabitants of today's Romania became familiar with Beethoven's oeuvre as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century. In Transylvania and the Banat,¹ then part of the Habsburg Empire, Beethoven entered public consciousness "in a time close to, if not even during, the composer's lifetime."² As early as in the 1840s, audiences listened to the first local performances of important Beethovenian works, among which several symphonies (Symphony No. 6, in Timișoara, on March 20, 1841; the first movement from Symphony No. 2 in Sibiu, on December 17, 1843; Symphony No. 3, in Cluj, on March 11, 1844)³ and his *Fidelio* (in Timișoara, on June 18, 1841).⁴

Moreover, in the context of a process of "becoming European," of adhering to Western values, the extensive cultural exchanges between the Romanian Principalities and Vienna⁵ secured Beethoven a privileged position in these areas as well. The fact that several Austrian musicians⁶ chose to settle in Moldavia and Wallachia is quite significant (the two regions became one country after the Union of 1859);⁷ there they laid the foundations for the later "Romanian School" of composition and performance. The establishment of the first symphony orchestra in Bucharest in 1866, followed by that of the Romanian Philharmonic Society in 1868, led to Beethoven's music being particularly popular in local concerts. In the first six years alone, the programs included, "without exception, at least one work by Beethoven."⁸ The composer's allure was unsurpassed and for decades he remained a constant presence in Bucharest concert halls.

Subsequently, there was also considerable interest in Beethoven in the press. The Romanian Principalities saw the publication of a number of articles,⁹ as well as a Romanian translation of Anton Schindler's monograph, which was published serially in the Bucharest newspaper *Independința* in 1861.¹⁰

¹ Their union with the Kingdom of Romania took place in 1918.

² Eugen PRICOPE, *Beethoven* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1958), 261.

³ See Octavian Lazăr COSMA, *Pagini de istoria muzicii românești. Partea întâi: Cristalizări* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2018), 432 and 436–437.

⁴ Viorel COSMA, "Aspecte ale pătrunderii creației beethoveniene în țara noastră," *Muzica* 20/9 (September, 1970), 26.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Josef Herfner, Eduard Hübsch, Franz Rouszitzka (Ruszitski), Elena Teyber, Johann Andreas Wachmann, Ludwig Wiest. See Haiganuş PREDA-SCHIMEK, "Musical Ties of the Romanian Principalities with Austria between 1821 and 1859," *Spaces of Identity: Tradition, Cultural Boundaries, and Identity Formation in Central Europe and Beyond* 7 (February 2007), 106–109.

⁷ The official names of the country have been: the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (1859–1862); the Romanian United Principalities (1862–1866); Romania (1866–1947; a principality until 1881, when Parliament proclaimed it a kingdom, after gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878); the Romanian People's Republic (1947–1965) and the Socialist Republic of Romania (1965–1989; the country's official names during the Communist period); and Romania (1989–present, after the fall of Communism).

⁸ PRICOPE, *Beethoven*, 263.

⁹ See Cristian GHENEA, "Prezențe beethoveniene în cultura română," *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 35.

¹⁰ See Viorel COSMA, "Beethoven și cultura muzicală românească din secolul XIX," *Muzica* 27/5 (May, 1977), 29.



Seeing the public popularity Beethoven enjoyed in Romania, it is not surprising that his image was converted by the totalitarian regimes of twentieth-century Romania into a tool of propaganda and ideological manipulation. Two such ideological annexations, which I will shed light on, are striking: one took place in the period when Romania, as Germany's ally during World War II and led by Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was loyal to Adolf Hitler, to a certain extent copied the Nazi model (1940–1944); the other, much longer, began when Communists took power in 1947 and lasted until 1989, with some inevitable continuations.

2. THE DISCOURSE ON BEETHOVEN DURING ROMANIA'S ALLIANCE WITH NAZI GERMANY: 1940–1944

In the first decades of the twentieth century, prior to the political exploitation of Beethoven's image, most of the Romanian works on the composer abounded in anachronistic, Romantic clichés. Lacking any updated bibliographical sources or a coherent perspective, they candidly perpetuated various myths about Beethoven:

He knew he was of the same substance as the Gods. He expected kings and emperors to bow before him and it happened: should they meet in the street, the emperor and the empress would salute first, and he would answer their bow by touching his hat with two fingers.¹¹

A first Romanian monograph, well written and documented, but whose author's identity is curiously left anonymous,¹² was published on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the composer's death, *Beethoven 1827–1927*.¹³ That the composer's German (im)purity should be brought up is indicative of the ascension that racial theory experienced at the time, inside and outside the German cultural space:

Beethoven's Flemish origins were often discussed and commented upon in relation to the violence of his being which does not seem to be purely German. Even in the predominant motifs from the *Dance Symphony* [Symphony No. 7] reminiscences of his blood, closer in time to the spirit of Flemish village fairs, were recognized.¹⁴

In the late 1930s, Romania was overt in its curtsseys to Nazi Germany – as the written press testifies – and in 1940, when General (and later Marshall) Ion Antonescu took power, the country's pro-German politics would become manifest. Antonescu was forced at first to share power with

¹¹ “Știa că era plămădit din aluatul zeilor. Aștepta ca regii și împărații să se incline în fața lui și chiar așa se și întâmpla: pe drum, împăratul și împărăteasa îl salutau întâi, iar el răspundea închinăciunii lor plecate cu două degete la pălărie”. Horia BOTEȘCU, “Ludwig van Beethoven” (Conferință cu ocazia centenarului Beethoven) [“Ludwig van Beethoven”], in *Culturale* (Ploiești: Concurența V. Dumitrescu Press, 1928), 34.

¹² It may very well be a translation.

¹³ N. N., *Beethoven 1827–1927* (Bucharest: Fundația Culturală “Principele Carol,” 1927).

¹⁴ “Amănuntul că Beethoven e de origine flamandă a fost deseori discutat și comentat în legătură cu violența individualității lui care nu pare curat germană. Chiar în motivele predominante din *Simfonia dansului* [Simfonia a VII-a], au fost recunoscute reminiscențele sângelui său, temporar apropiat de spiritul chermeselor flamande.” *Ibid.*, 13.



the Iron Guard (*Garda de Fier*), also known as the Legion of the Archangel Michael (*Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail*), a Romanian Fascist movement faithful to Nazi Germany. After the period of the National Legionary State (1940–1941), however, Antonescu succeeded in ridding himself of the Iron Guard and in becoming the single “Leader” of a militarized regime, while also remaining loyal to Hitler. This is visible in Antonescu’s harsh anti-Semitic policy which, after the Iron Guard’s removal from government, was no longer driven by ideology as it was by “strong national feelings” and by “some tactical foreign policy goals.”¹⁵

Culture and music bore witness to Romania’s stepping on this political path, as Beethoven’s works were played all over Bucharest and other Romanian cities between 1940 and 1944. Although no extended musicological research on the German composer was published in Romania in the period, he does appear in the Fascist press as one of the unparalleled milestones of German essence and racial purity. Brought into contexts glorifying National Socialism, he is manipulatively used as a sort of embodiment of Nazi values:

German culture contains one of the richest treasures in universal spirituality. J. S. Bach and Beethoven raised musical art to its apogee. ... It has been argued that totalitarian states stifle creative individuality. That is nonsense. ... In Germany, the creator has rights which he has earned, and which are inalienable. ... The German musician, painter and poet cherish this recognition, and so they participate whole-heartedly in the life of their fatherland. The German creator will therefore not be a coffee-shop bum, a neurasthenic, a *Klatschbaba*, but a fighter, a visionary reviving the tradition of the great German creators from the past ... who believed in all sincerity in the constructive value, in the messianic character of their art.¹⁶

Mentions of Beethoven’s music, made to illustrate “the artistic pauperism of the Jews,”¹⁷ are found in virulent anti-Semitic texts. In an article structured around Vincent d’Indy’s anti-Semitic ideas and seasoned with quotations from his compositional treatise, the Jewish composer Felix Mendelssohn is depicted as an eclectic, worthless epigone of Beethoven:

Mendelssohn’s music generally seduces through its exterior qualities, but a constantly eclectic spirit reigns in it ... The piano sonata is a true copy of Beethoven’s, apart from the end, which no longer has anything Beethovenian: it is frighteningly vulgar.¹⁸

¹⁵ Keith HITCHINS, “Desăvârșirea națiunii române,” in *Istoria României*, ed. by M. BĂRBULESCU et alii (Bucharest: Corint, 2012), 386.

¹⁶ “Cultura germană conține unul din cele mai bogate tezaururi ale spiritualității universale. J. S. Bach și Beethoven au ridicat cele mai înalte ceruri pentru arta muzicală. ... S-a afirmat că statele totalitare înăbușă individualitatea creatoare. E o aberație. ... În Germania, creatorul are drepturi câștigate și asigurate. ... Muzicianul, pictorul sau poetul german înțelege să prețuiască această recunoaștere, așa că participă cu tot sufletul la viața patriei. Creatorul german nu va fi, deci, un stâlp de cafea, un neurastenic, un *Klatschbaba*, ci un luptător, un iluminat, reluând astfel tradiția marilor creatori germani din trecut ... , cari au crezut cu toată sinceritatea în valoarea constructivă, în mesianismul artei lor.” Mircea STREINUL, “Cronica germană,” in *Universul literar* 49/49 (November 30, 1940), 8.

¹⁷ Romeo ALEXANDRESCU, “Vincent d’Indy despre evrei,” *Universul literar* 49/35 (August 24, 1940), 5.

¹⁸ “Muzica lui Mendelssohn este în genere seducătoare prin calitățile ei exterioare, dar domnește într-însa un constant spirit de eclecticism Sonata pentru pian este o adevărată copie a lui Beethoven, afară de final, care nu mai are nimic beethovenian: este înspăimântător de vulgar.” *Ibid.*



Beethoven's name did not escape the requirement of rendering music popular and accessible to the wider public, one of the main goals of both Fascist and later Communist propaganda in Romania: "The Reich's masses are able, due to their long tradition, to listen to a Bach oratorio, a Beethoven symphony or Richard Strauss' polyphonic emissions."¹⁹

Anti-Communist propaganda, quite vocal in the Romanian press of the 1930s and 1940s, also deploys the figure of Beethoven, as is apparent from the *Sfarmă-piatră* nationalist calendar from 1938, a strongly anti-Semitic and anti-Communist publication. Excerpts from *André Gide's Soviet Itinerary* (Itinerariul sovietic al lui André Gide) are meant to reveal the "sordidness and the ridicule to which the whole existence of the former Tsarist Empire amounts today."²⁰

The *Sfarmă-piatră* article attempts to suggest the vulnerability of Soviet composers to the totalitarian regime, in order to stress the absurdity of the Party's regulations and conditions on the production of music. It claims that not even Beethoven, had he lived in the Soviet Union, would have been allowed to deviate from the Party line:

X tells me that in the USSR a Beethoven would have to fight to be rehabilitated after ... a first performance the public had not been able to understand. "You see", he continued, "here an artist must first and foremost be everybody's. Art, today, must be for the people or it must not be." "You will compel all your artists to conformism," I told him. "The best, who will not consent to debase or diminish their art, you will reduce to silence." At this he protested and told me I think like a bourgeois.²¹

3. BEETHOVEN AND ROMANIAN COMMUNISM

After the radical political changes at the end of World War II, Romania, once trapped in the USSR's sphere of influence, imported the entire paraphernalia of Communist ideology. In the more than five decades of Communist rule, Romanian literature on Beethoven had plenty of time to develop significantly creative interpretations of the composer's life and work, while still having to toe the Party line. The translations published in this period were either limited to works from the Soviet cultural space (the works of Arnold Alshvang, for example) or were of authors whose writings did not contradict Communist ideology, such as Romain Rolland. Musicologists, though toeing the party line, were by no means like-minded, as it might seem to the casual eye; instead, the view on Beethoven underwent changes, "reinventing" itself according to the various phases and meanders of local Communism: the Sovietization of Romania and the *ad litteram* importation of Socialist Realism (1948–1965), the breaking away from Moscow and the relative cultural openness to Europe and the West (1965–1970), and the isolationist nationalism from 1971. In these circumstances, the investigation of the various types of discourses on Beethoven and of the way his image was, each time, more or less distorted, must necessarily be finely shaded.

¹⁹ Romeo ALEXANDRESCU, "Climatul muzical al Germaniei," in *Universul literar* 50/2 (January 4, 1941), 8.

²⁰ André GIDE, "Itinerariul sovietic al lui André Gide," in *Sfarmă-piatră* nationalist calendar from 1938 (Bucharest: Universul, 1938), 58.

²¹ "X îmi spune că în URSS un Beethoven ar avea de luptat ca să se reabiliteze după ... o primă audiere neînțeleasă de public. – Vedeți, continuă el, la noi un artist trebuie să fie mai întâi al tuturor. Artă, astăzi, trebuie să fie populară sau să nu fie deloc. – Veți constrânge pe toți artiștii voștri la conformism, îi spusei, și pe cei mai buni, pe aceia care nu vor consimți să-și injosească arta lor sau măcar să și-o coboare puțin, îi veți reduce la tăcere. Atunci el protestă și îmi spuse că judec ca un burghez." Ibid., 58.



4. THE SOVIETIZATION OF ROMANIA AND THE *AD LITTERAM* IMPORTATION OF SOCIALIST REALISM: 1948–1965

The conditions under which Romania finished World War II – unexpectedly turning arms against Germany at the last minute and being “liberated” by the Red Army – rendered inevitable its regimentation to the Soviet Bloc. Becoming the People’s Republic, led by a single party (the Romanian Workers’ Party) on December 10, 1947, Romania marched at full speed towards totalitarianism. As all other sectors of Romanian cultural life, music was shoved in the mixer of Sovietization: music institutions were reorganized and subjected to political control, the dominant method of creation was that of Socialist Realism, and formalist tendencies in music were “exposed.”

Such circumstances inevitably led to a brutal reinterpretation of Beethoven in Romanian musicology. All of the conventions of Stalinist ideology were activated to make him fit the Procrustean bed of a new image, that of a composer with a vision deeply rooted in a Socialist Realism *avant la lettre*. Beethoven is seen, above all else, as a militant, politically active musician, as a fierce critic of German feudalism, imbued with the Republican and radical ideas of the French Revolution.²² The social, political, and cultural climate of his time is presented, in sundry local musicological sources, as a true field of battle between “opposing social forces.” The *Sturm und Drang* movement is also described as the dedicated main transmitter of the “progressive social groups, which had begun playing an important role in the country’s political life.”²³ Beethoven did not – several authors confidently maintain – remain indifferent, but put all his creative force in the service of “class struggle”: “the class of the brilliant composer of that day, the environment in which he formed his conscience, the nature of his temperament, all this did not allow him to break away from the soil of immediate reality.”²⁴ And: “He intended his music to serve the masses, those crushed by want, who were reawakening centuries of obscurantism and disregard.”²⁵

The periodization of Beethoven’s work also bears witness to this tendency, as some critics seek to delimit “different social stages.”²⁶ Thus, a first phase (1784–1803) would be that in which “Beethoven frequented the aristocratic circles and in a way adhered to their principles.”²⁷ The second one (1804–1814), during which he wrote his third to seventh symphonies, “corresponds to the period of revolutionary ascension which brings with it the defeat of feudalism.”²⁸ The third one (1815–1827) “corresponds to the era of the strong reactionary wave sweeping over Europe.”²⁹

“Class struggle” and “class hatred” were also present there when Beethoven’s relationship with the aristocracy was discussed, the demand for a rich imagination to support this new view

²² See Eugen PRICOPE, *Caiet program al ciclului de concerte Beethoven* (Bucharest: State Philharmonic, 1954/1955 season), 11.

²³ Gheorghe MERIȘESCU, *Curs de istoria muzicii universale*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1964), 199.

²⁴ PRICOPE, *Beethoven*, 87.

²⁵ MERIȘESCU, *Curs de istoria muzicii*, 200.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.



notwithstanding. Musicologists did not miss any opportunity to show how bad the influence of the dominant class on Beethoven was, or how the composer willingly distanced himself from it: “The musician from Bonn would not lose himself in the frivolous world of the Viennese aristocracy, would not waste time with the many fashionable gatherings he was invited to.”³⁰

The consequences that Beethoven had to suffer after momentarily losing his sanity and recklessly trying to fit in with the high society are often emphasized (albeit in a cautionary vein):

Despite the official honours bestowed upon him, the great composer was beginning to fall into oblivion. He would shortly become convinced of how “reliable” the “high respect” that the nobility and the potentates of the day had for him actually was.³¹

Beethoven’s physical portrayal also became an occasion and the pretext for scalding the aristocracy:

The aristocratic salons, eager for entertainment, looked with interest at Beethoven’s behavior and appearance. He was short, thickset, but broad backed. His massive pockmarked face seemed set in stone. His hair was black, ruffled. The eyes, shining, like an eagle’s, were sometimes covered by a veil of melancholy, of shyness.³²

The actual discussion of Beethoven’s music is under the umbrella of its so-called *democratic character*, to which a number of attributes are subsumed: “the programmatic tendency,” the “healthy, robust, fundamentally country folk” humour,³³ approaching “accessible” genres and forms such as song, dance, romance, which he brought “to superior artistic heights,”³⁴ the “folk music influence” over his work, and so on. The insistence on the idea that Beethoven is some sort of a “founder of the programmatic tendency”³⁵ – despite the fact that “his works are not based on any programmatic literary text”³⁶ – can be explained in two ways: on the one hand, it is designed to contradict “bourgeois musicology” in its support of the “abstract” character of Beethoven’s music, and on the other hand it aims to “testify” to the “realist tendencies of the brilliant composer,” to his efforts “towards clarity and accessibility.”³⁷ There is also mention of a “new content”³⁸ of Beethoven’s music and other themes are introduced, such as: “the revolutionary-heroic atmosphere,” “the firm protest, the willingness to fight and the faith in victory,”

³⁰ PRICOPE, *Beethoven*, 19.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

³² “Saloanele aristocratice, dornice de spectacole, priveau cu interes felul de a fi și făptura lui Beethoven. Era mic de statură, îndesat, dar spătos. Figura-i masivă, ciupită de vărsat, era parcă sculptată în piatră. Părul lui era negru, zbârlit. Ochiul scânteietori, ca de vultur, iar uneori acoperiți de un val de melancolie, de timiditate.” MERIȘESCU, *Curs de istoria muzicii*, 202.

³³ PRICOPE, *Caiet program*, 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁶ Nina TURCU et al., *Simfoniile lui Beethoven*, Caiet-program (Bucharest: George Enescu State Philharmonic, March 1961), 25.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.



“the life, death, fate of man and mankind, the fight for happiness,”³⁹ or “the poetic sentiment ... of bright joy that man harbors in nature.”⁴⁰

What some critics propose to prove with regard to Beethoven’s conception as based on “dramatic conflict” is that it is seemingly the expression of the fight against feudalism:

Beethoven was convinced that he must reflect the rebellion of the independent spirit against feudal order ... Here originates that essential trait of the Beethovenian symphonism, namely the embodiment of a deep *dramatic conflict*, a conflict which characterizes the great artist’s musical thinking and which has a real basis, being caused by the surrounding reality itself.⁴¹

Not only texts discussing the “new content,” but also those dealing with *form* suggest an adamant devotion to the precepts of Socialist Realism. Beethoven is for instance said to have borrowed the “progressive tradition” (of Bach, Handel, Gluck or Mozart) “creatively, developing, enriching and transfiguring it through the lens of his personality, joining it with the accomplishments of contemporary art, of the era of the French Revolution.”⁴²

A trait regarded as highly significant is the appeal to folk music:

Beethoven’s music is first and foremost distinguished by the close ties with German folk song, which had become the material of his musical language. ... In order to be understood by the millions he wanted to bring music closer to, Beethoven turned to the people’s creative genius, and this all the more as the people are at the center of his concerns.⁴³

No less relevant for this type of approach are the references to other “popular, folk music” sources setting his oeuvre in motion: fanfare signals, march rhythms, mass songs and dances, hymns, melodies of other nations (Russian, Hungarian, Scottish, Slovak etc.). The idea that Beethoven the composer would deliberately have made certain gestures to cater to the taste of the masses is pushed to the absurd and comical: “The great composer, in his desire to make contact with the large popular masses through his oeuvre, also turned to one of the most popular instruments, the mandolin, for which he even wrote a sonatina.”⁴⁴

When dealing with ideologically sensitive topics – such as the so-called “compromises” Beethoven made by dedicating works to aristocratic patrons or writing religious compositions, which were undesirable from the perspective of Communist atheism – writers go to great lengths to tailor them to the official party line and often test the limits of their talent for mystification.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24–25.

⁴¹ “Beethoven avea convingerea că trebuie să reflecte revolta spiritului independent împotriva orânduielilor feudale ... De aici decurge și acea trăsătură esențială a simfonismului beethovenian și anume întruchiparea unui *conflict dramatic* adânc, conflict ce caracterizează gândirea muzicală a marelui artist și care are o bază reală, provocat fiind de însăși realitatea înconjurătoare.” Ibid., 23. Italics in the original.

⁴² TURCU et al., *Simfoniile lui Beethoven*, 23.

⁴³ “Muzica lui Beethoven se caracterizează în primul rând prin legătura strânsă cu cântecul popular german, care devenise materialul limbajului său muzical. ... Pentru a fi înțeles de milioane de oameni cărora voia să le apropie muzica, Beethoven s-a adresat geniului creator al poporului, și aceasta cu atât mai mult cu cât poporul stă în centrul preocupărilor sale.” MERIȘESCU, *Curs de istoria muzicii*, 206.

⁴⁴ TURCU et al., *Simfoniile lui Beethoven*, 31.



Wellingtons Sieg oder Die Schlacht bei Vittoria (Wellington's Victory or the Battle of Vittoria, 1813), written to celebrate Wellington's victory over the French troops, and the cantata *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (1814), an homage to the rulers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, are from the beginning labelled as "circumstantial works, which do not measure up to the Beethovenian genius."⁴⁵ Comments on such compositions which posed a challenge to Communist ideology and its habitual distortion sometimes border on the grotesque: in *Wellingtons Sieg*, Beethoven "mocked the crowned heads of the time, and the other important figures intent on applauding them as well."⁴⁶ The composer's lowered productivity is also presented as a sort of punishment for the compromises he had made: "It is without doubt a crisis, a crisis concentrated on the years 1813–1814, *those of the vain glorifications*."⁴⁷

An attitude of derision, if not downright vehemently denying the religious character of such works as the *Missa solemnis* or the Mass in C Major, also occupies an important place in the politicized interpretation of Beethoven's music. For this, authors will resort to a new strategy of manipulation: "Some commentators affirm that Beethoven considered himself an earthly messenger of divinity. But for Beethoven, music itself was the divinity, the religion of religions, his only religion."⁴⁸ As to the *Missa solemnis*, "Beethoven, [when] writing [it], disregarded the usual practices of the religious service Beethoven's revolutionary traits, as paradoxical as it might seem, are present in this work too Indeed, in the *Missa solemnis*, Beethoven does not limit himself to pious, submissive prayers, but asks for vindication."⁴⁹

Until around 1965, writings on Beethoven are confined to such doctrinaire patterns, mechanically and blindly imported from Moscow. Signs of a relaxation, of a "normalization" in the composer's reception, become apparent with Romania's foreign and domestic policy changes.

5. BREAKING AWAY FROM MOSCOW AND THE RELATIVE CULTURAL OPENNESS TO EUROPE AND THE WEST: 1965–1971

After Stalin's death, Romania made initially timid and then increasingly insistent attempts to gain autonomy from Moscow. As part of the Warsaw Pact, the country was involved in the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, but not in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The assistance given to the USSR by Romania in the invasion of Hungary influenced, some historians believe, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania in 1958.⁵⁰ The refusal to participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia and its condemnation led to an interesting reconfiguration of Romania's foreign and domestic policy. The West became interested in Romania and it was not long before it exploited this apparent breach in the Socialist Bloc.⁵¹ Nicolae Ceaușescu's deft openness to the Western Bloc also had some local echoes. The 1960s were Romania's only period of relatively relaxed domestic policy and liberalization, with the slackened ideological

⁴⁵ PRICOPE, *Caiet program*, 26.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ PRICOPE, *Beethoven*, 140. Italics are mine.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 168 and 170.

⁵⁰ See Dennis DELETANT, "România sub regimul comunist (decembrie 1947–decembrie 1989)," in *Istoria României*, ed. by Mihai BĂRBULESCU et al. (Bucharest: Corint, 2012), 431.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 446.



control reaching its lowest point between 1965 and 1970. By a lucky coincidence, the 200th anniversary of Beethoven's birth was celebrated during this time.⁵²

The journal *Muzica* from 1970 reflected a special interest in Beethoven in Romania. Works on Beethoven (mainly essays, musical analyses, concert reviews) had at that time almost nothing in common with the politicized literature of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. Traces of the Socialist Realist thinking pattern were barely visible; for instance, in a reference to the first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 on May 7, 1824, one author was anxious to highlight the greater popularity Beethoven enjoyed compared to the imperial family: "It is a known fact that the police had to intervene to stop the crowd from cheering Beethoven, who had been received with five rounds of applause, when – traditionally – the imperial family was welcomed with only three such rounds."⁵³

Apart from such rather isolated ideological tinges, the articles from *Muzica* are proof of an almost completely depoliticized musicological agenda. At around the same time, the congress *Ludwig van Beethoven* was held in Berlin in December 1970; the most relevant avenues of research from the Eastern Bloc converged and were treated as "The Profound Humanism of Beethoven's Œuvre," "The Power of Conflict in His Classical Realism," and "The Dialectics of Fight in Beethoven's Music."⁵⁴ Synthesis studies written by Tudor Ciortea,⁵⁵ Anatol Vieru⁵⁶ or Wilhelm Georg Berger⁵⁷ suggest an updated understanding of Beethoven's reception. What is striking in this period, is the fact that Romanian authors were free to consult any Western bibliographical sources, completely ignoring their Soviet peers. The Romanian distancing from Moscow resulted in the rejection of Soviet musicology. Under the influence of Mauricio Kagel, but in some respects disputing his de-mythologizing measures,⁵⁸ Ciortea addresses Beethoven's deformed reception over time, attributing it to the "caricature-like" reports of his contemporaries, to the "distorted" drawings from books and magazines, to the "dramatic exaggerations of German Romanticism" and to the "historians prone to fantasizing and to writing literature."⁵⁹ He lists the famous names Beethoven was called and which he notices "are still circulated today in relation to the legendary figure, such as: the Titan from Bonn, music's new Prometheus, the formidable gladiator for the victory of humanitarian ideas, the prophet of a new ethics, the implacable, the irreverent ... the deaf genius."⁶⁰ Yet he does not breathe a word as to Beethoven's

⁵² In Romania, the event was also marked by numerous concerts and recitals. An analysis of the repertoire of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company's Symphony Orchestra reveals a significant increase of the number of works by Beethoven included in its programs (18), compared to the previous year (10) and following two years: 1971 (0) and 1972 (9). See Octavian Lazăr COSMA, *Simfonicele Radiodifuziunii Române, 1928–1998* (Bucharest: Casa Radio, 1999), 735–750.

⁵³ Dumitru BUGHICI, "Ciclul de trei concerte Beethoven ale Orchestrei simfonice a Radioteleviziunii Române," *Muzica* 20/2 (February, 1970), 33.

⁵⁴ See Olga GRIGORESCU, "Congresul *Ludwig van Beethoven* Berlin, decembrie – 1970," *Muzica* 21/2 (February, 1971), 40.

⁵⁵ Tudor CIORTEA, "Criterii vechi și noi în interpretarea creației beethoveniene," *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 1–4.

⁵⁶ Anatol VIERU, "Beethoven, azi," *Muzica*, 20/12 (December, 1970), 8–11.

⁵⁷ Wilhelm Georg BERGER, "Hommage à Beethoven," *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 47–48.

⁵⁸ "Mauricio Kagel proposes ... a longer, perhaps decade-long, pause during which no Beethoven work be performed. ... Addressed in such terms, the issue conforms to a number of existing tendencies in contemporary art towards an exacerbated abstractionism." CIORTEA, "Criterii vechi," 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*



ideological mythologizing – a line of enquiry that would remain taboo in Romania until the period after the fall of Communist rule.

In addition to such texts, some investigations of Beethoven's works stand out,⁶¹ as well as analyses of renditions by Romanian soloists or conductors⁶² and historiographic articles on Beethoven's presence in Romanian culture as early as the nineteenth century.⁶³ A review of Romanian Beethovenian discography⁶⁴ shows that “with the exception of George Enescu, Beethoven is the composer with the greatest number of works released on Romanian LPs.”⁶⁵ Several important volumes published during this time are noteworthy for their in-depth analytical approach to Beethoven's oeuvre: Tudor Ciortea's book on his quartets (1968)⁶⁶ and Georg Wilhelm Berger's volumes of dense aesthetic and stylistic comments on his symphonies, quartets, and chamber music (1965, 1967, 1970, 1981, 1990).⁶⁷ Apart from Berger, who continued his vast theoretical enquiries, with Beethoven representing an important part, until 1990, Romanian musicology registered a sensible decrease in the interest in the German composer starting in 1971. The reasons are complex, and the political factor again played a significant role.

6. BEETHOVEN AND NATIONAL ISOLATIONISM FROM 1971

After the fund of good will that Ceaușescu accumulated in 1968 for his courage in condemning the Warsaw Pact troops' invasion of Czechoslovakia, the leader of Bucharest soon showed a completely different face. The paradox is that Romania's gaining external autonomy was counterbalanced by a disastrous, nationalist-isolationist domestic policy, inspired by the “cultural revolutions” from China and North Korea. With the so-called July Theses of 1971, Ceaușescu imposed a new version of Socialist Realism, under the name of “Socialist Humanism.” Even if in theory it vehemently criticized the old Soviet dogma for its various “errors,” Socialist Humanism shared with Socialist Realism the ubiquity of ideology and the insistence on a militant, “politically engaged” art. The main difference was the fact that it no longer argued for a “single” method of creation, but, in theory, left Romanian composers with the freedom to choose from a “diversity” of styles. In reality, though, the tendency towards the experimental, the avant-garde

⁶¹ Dumitru BUGHICI, “Dialectica expoziției în Sonatele pentru pian op. 2 nr. 1 și op. 14 nr. 2 de Beethoven,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 17–20; Dragoș TĂNĂȘESCU, “Probleme de înțelegere și redare a textului pianistic beethovenian,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December 1970), 31–35.

⁶² George MANOLIU, “Concertul pentru vioară de Beethoven în interpretarea lui George Enescu,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 5–7; Eugen PRICOPE, “Pe marginea Simfoniei a 5-a; George Georgescu în repetiții,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 11–17; Theodor BĂLAN, “Concertele pentru pian de Beethoven în interpretarea pianistilor români,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 22–31.

⁶³ Viorel COSMA, “Aspecte ale pătrunderii creației beethoveniene în țara noastră,” *Muzica* 20/9 (September, 1970), 24–27; Cristian GHENEA, “Prezențe beethoveniene în cultura română,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 35–39.

⁶⁴ Edgar ELIAN, “Discografia românească beethoveniană,” *Muzica* 20/12 (December, 1970), 40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Tudor CIORTEA, *Cvartetele de Beethoven* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1968).

⁶⁷ Wilhelm Georg BERGER, *Ghid pentru muzica instrumentală de cameră* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1965); *id.*, *Muzica simfonică, ghid*, vol. 1: *Barocă-Clasică* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1967); *id.*, *Cvartetul de coarde de la Haydn la Debussy* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1970); *id.*, *Estetica sonatei clasice* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1981); *id.*, *Clasicismul de la Bach la Beethoven [Classicism from Bach to Beethoven]* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1990).



or the mathematical was severely criticized and contested.⁶⁸ As such, Beethoven is on occasion given as an example, precisely in order to recommend that composers hold fast to a middle path of moderation, and in order to make any attempt at joining the avant-garde thinking seem derisory: “The evolved musical language and grammar, of today, contain, by their nature, neither that absolute novel element nor that extraordinary freshness which instantly delight us in the music of Mozart or Beethoven.”⁶⁹

Beethoven’s music is even more cynically invoked in an article with a similar stake, of steering Romanian composers away from the alleged “danger” of the new music:

in the “avant-garde” contemporary music there is the danger of a process of levelling, of stylistic standardization, of dehumanization ... It seems ... there is the tendency in some European countries to crystalize a single European contemporary style little differentiated from one composer to another, regardless of their national belonging ... A twentieth-century *Anonymous!*⁷⁰

The author concludes with an ample *Post-scriptum*, in which he apparently turns the limelight on Beethoven:

In December 1813, in the great Viennese Redoutensäle Mälzel, the inventor of the metronome, organized a wholly unusual concert during which Beethoven was to present among others his programmatic symphony *Wellington’s Victory* ... Beethoven conceived the work for three orchestras; that is a symphony orchestra and two brass bands to which two huge drums were added, built for this purpose, imitating cannon shots, and another two instruments built for this purpose imitating gun shots. The two brass bands, conducted by Salieri and Weigl, symbolizing the two armies, the British and the French, were disposed in two opposing corridors, creating the illusion of approaching armies ready to begin the battle through movement, trumpet signals and drum rolls. The cannon-drums were operated by the gunners: Hummel and Meyerbeer. Main conductor: Ludwig van Beethoven. Thus, more than 150 years ago, a mischievous inventor and a genius presented a concert of concrete and stereophonic-spatial music with three conductors and three orchestras, *without having attended the Darmstadt summer courses.*⁷¹

⁶⁸ See “Referatul prezentat de tov. Nicolae Călinoiu, directorul Direcției Muzicii din Consiliul Culturii și Educației Socialiste, la consfătuirea din 12 august 1971, privind repertoriul instituțiilor muzicale de spectacole și concerte pe stagiunea 1971–72,” *Muzica* 21/9 (September, 1971), 1–10.

⁶⁹ Nicolae CĂLINOIU and Petre BRĂNCUȘI, *Muzica în România Socialistă* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1973), 101–103.

⁷⁰ Ovidiu VARGA, “Muzica și știința,” *Muzica* 21/3 (March, 1971), 7.

⁷¹ “În decembrie 1813, în marea sală a Redutelor din Viena inventatorul metronomului Mälzel a organizat un concert cu totul neobișnuit în care Beethoven urma să prezinte printre altele și simfonia sa programatică *Victoria lui Wellington* ... Beethoven a conceput lucrarea pentru trei orchestre; adică o orchestră simfonică și două fanfare la care se adaugă două tobe uriașe construite special, care imitau salvele de tun, și încă două instrumente construite special care imitau zgomotul împușcăturilor. Cele două fanfare, având ca dirijori pe Salieri și Weigl, simbolizând cele două armate, engleză și franceză, au fost dispuse în două coridoare opuse față de scenă, dând iluzia prin mișcare, semnale de trompetă și răpăit de tobă că armatele se apropie pentru declanșarea bătăliei. La tobele-tunuri se aflau tunarii: Hummel și Meyerbeer. Dirijor principal: Ludwig van Beethoven. Iată dar că acum peste 150 de ani, un inventator neastâmpărat și un geniu au prezentat un concert de muzică concretă și stereofonic-spațială cu trei dirijori și trei orchestre, *fără a fi urmat cursurile de vară de la Darmstadt!*” Ibid., 8. The italics are mine.



The article's conclusion is meant as a rebuke to Romanian composers, seeing that one of their very few chances to connect and exchange ideas with their European colleagues was precisely by attending the Darmstadt summer courses.

Other than such base manipulations of Beethoven's name, proper references to the German composer are scarce. The 150th anniversary of his death in 1977 passed almost unnoticed, and *Muzica* only published two texts: one historiographic – an expanded version of Viorel Cosma's earlier work on the topic of "Beethoven and Romanian Musical Culture in the Nineteenth Century,"⁷² and one analytic, stressing the novel methodological solutions proposed by Gheorghe Firca, "Musical Analysis and the Possibility of a New Reading of Beethoven's Œuvre."⁷³

In the following years, a new ideological turn in Romanian culture would entail occasional remarks on Beethoven: Protochronism. Grounded in the speculation of Romanian "precedence" or "superiority," Protochronism was essential to Romania's nationalist-isolationist policy. One of its most fervent advocates in musicology, Ovidiu Varga, writing about "Enescu, Beethoven and Tolstoy, three titans,"⁷⁴ described Enescu's rendition of the *Kreutzer Sonata* in the following manner: "Enescu reveals, enriches and delivers the expressive meanings of the tempi, of each sound, rhythm, motif, phrase, of each dynamic or tempo marking, *even where such indications are missing*."⁷⁵ If one might argue that this is just a somewhat faulty and awkward formulation, the way Varga next twists reality to fit his agenda leaves no room for doubt as to his intentions:

How valuable performance-wise would a record collection be, if it contained the *Kreutzer Sonata* with Enescu on violin and by re-recording with Enescu on piano in his full maturity. Or, by a leap of imagination, with Enescu on violin and ... Beethoven on piano! Upon hearing them, Tolstoy would have perhaps felt differently, and the three titans would have thought as one: as the Romanian titan.⁷⁶

Certainly, Enescu remains one of the best violinists of the twentieth century. But why would Beethoven or Enescu himself be his only worthy partners? And, all things considered, why would "the three titans have thought as one: as the Romanian titan?" Such problematizations had no other role than to nurture the aggressive nationalism promoted in the 1980s by Ceaușescu's dictatorial regime.

⁷² Viorel COSMA, "Beethoven și cultura muzicală românească din secolul XIX," *Muzica* 27/5 (May, 1977), 26–29.

⁷³ Gheorghe FIRCA, "Analiza muzicală și posibilitatea uni noi lecturi a creației lui Beethoven," *Muzica* 27/5 (May, 1977), 23–25.

⁷⁴ Ovidiu VARGA, "Enescu, Beethoven și Tolstoi, trei titani," in id., *Quo vadis musica? Orfeul moldav și alți șase mari ai secolului XX* (Bucharest: Editura Muzicală, 1981), 120–125.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 123. The italics are mine.

⁷⁶ "Câtă valoare ar fi prezentat din punct de vedere al interpretării o discotecă cu *Sonata Kreutzer* interpretată de Enescu la vioară și prin reimprimare Enescu la pian în perioada lui de deplină maturitate. Sau, prin absurd, de Enescu la vioară și ... Beethoven la pian! Ascultându-i, Tolstoi, poate și-ar fi schimbat opiniile, iar cei trei titani ar fi gândit ca unul: ca titanul român." *Ibid.*, 125.



7. BEETHOVEN AND THE DAWN OF ROMANIAN CAPITALISM

Even in the post-Communist period, the distortions suffered for over half a century would not fade quickly. Neither could, with regard to Beethoven's reception, the mutations imposed by the two successive totalitarian regimes be reversed or corrected overnight. Still, compared to other composers, Beethoven's work received serious scholarly attention, at least in the Bucharest academe. In 1997, Valentina Sandu-Dediu published a monograph that was neither overtly political, nor grounded in Fascist or Communist ideology.⁷⁷ The volume covers the stylistic evolution of Beethoven's musical genres, linked to the relevant aspects of the composer's biography. But besides such professional, responsible musicological enquiries, the new paradigms of Romanian capitalism from 2000 onwards facilitated the emergence of another type of approach, sensation-al and superficial – related, for instance, to the identification of some of Beethoven's lovers who reportedly lived on the territory of today's Romania.

Beethoven's "first love," Jeanette d'Honrath from Cologne, had been cited as early as 1838 by Franz Gerhard Wegeler, an old friend of the composer's and later his biographer.⁷⁸ What made his story interesting to the Romanians was the fact that d'Honrath moved to Timișoara when her husband, Carl Greth, a captain in the Austrian army, was appointed garrison commander there in 1823.⁷⁹ By no means a recent discovery in Romania,⁸⁰ this episode gained visibility in the local media around 2010, following the determination of a music teacher from Timișoara, Luciana Ianculescu, to expand on and popularize the subject.⁸¹ In the written press such titles appeared as "Beethoven's First Love Lived in Romania,"⁸² "Beethoven's First Love Lived in Timișoara ... in the House of the Army,"⁸³ "Timișoara: Luciana Ianculescu Blends Poetry with Music and History (Interview)."⁸⁴ A documentary was also shot, by the local station of the Romanian Television, TVR Timișoara, called "Impossible Love Stories. Ludwig van Beethoven and Jeanette d'Honrath."⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, *Beethoven* (Bucharest: Academy of Music Press, 1997).

⁷⁸ Franz Gerhard WEGELER and Ferdinand RIES, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* [Beethoven Remembered: the Biographical Notes of Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries] (Koblenz: K. Bädcker, 1838), 42.

⁷⁹ See Georgeta PETROVICI, "Secretul unui mare compozitor. Detalii picante despre logodna tainică a lui Beethoven cu o tânără din Banat" ["The Secret of a Great Composer. Spicy Details of Beethoven's Hidden Betrothal to a Young Lady from Banat"], *Evenimentul Zilei* (January 6, 2017), <https://evz.ro/secretul-unui-mare-compozitor-detalii-picante-despre-logodna.html/2>. (Accessed August 3, 2019).

⁸⁰ It seems that she died the same year. See, for instance, E. LESSL, "Dragostea din tinerețe" ["The Love of His Youth"], *Magazin Literar al Asociației Scriitorilor din Timișoara* (1982), 118–120.

⁸¹ Luciana IANCULESCU, *Însemn în inima cetății. Ludwig van Beethoven, Jeanette d'Honrath* [Ensign at the heart of the citadel. Ludwig van Beethoven, Jeanette d'Honrath] (Timișoara: Editura Quatro, 2011).

⁸² "Prima iubire a lui Beethoven a locuit în România" ["Beethoven's first love lived in Romania"], *artLine.ro* (October, 2009). <<https://www.artline.ro/Prima-iubire-a-lui-Beethoven-a-locuit-in-Romania-22024-1-n.html>> (accessed August 3, 2019).

⁸³ "Prima iubire a lui Beethoven a trăit la Timișoara ... în Casa Armatei," in *Ziua de Vest* (June 9, 2009), <<http://www.ziuaDEVest.ro/prima-iubire-a-lui-beethoven-a-trit-la-timioara-in-casa-armatei/>> (accessed August 3, 2019).

⁸⁴ "Timișoara: Luciana Ianculescu împletește poezia cu muzica și istoria" [Timișoara: Luciana Ianculescu blends poetry with music and history (interview)], *Adevărul* (June 18, 2009), <https://adevarul.ro/locale/timisoara/timisoara-luciana-ianculescu-impleteste-poezia-muzica-istoria-1_50acd8fb7c42d5a6638a8c4b/index.html> (accessed August 3, 2019).

⁸⁵ See "Iubiri imposibile: Ludwig van Beethoven și Jeanette d'Honrath" ["Impossible love stories: Ludwig van Beethoven and Jeanette d'Honrath"], *TVR* (April 12, 2014). <http://www.tvr.ro/iubiri-imposibile-ludwig-van-beethoven-si-jeanette-d-honrath_7848.html#view> (accessed August 3, 2019).



The sensationalist, breaking news potential of identifying other women Beethoven was romantically interested in who lived on the territory of present-day Romania was further exploited. In 2014, Luciana Ianculescu published a monograph on the Săvârșin Castle in Arad County,⁸⁶ one of whose chapters is titled “Ludwig and Therese.”⁸⁷ Here is an excerpt:

Over the years, the castle belonged to the families: Brunswick, Forray, Nádasdy, Hunyady. And, since 1934, to His Majesty, King Michael I of Romania. In the summer of 1807, the soul of composer Ludwig van Beethoven was hurt and needed love. It was then that he would become close to Therese von Brunswick, who was the cousin of Baroness Júlia Forray, the mistress of Săvârșin Castle. And the composer knew the Forrays, whom he had met in Vienna and Martonvásár. *The elders of Săvârșin tell of a secret visit by Theresa von Brunswick and the young composer.* The two would wander in the park but never went outside. The inhabitants of the commune knew that noble guests were visiting, Therese von Brunswick and Ludwig van Beethoven.⁸⁸

Based on more than doubtful sources – how credible could the hypothesis be that around 2010 “the village’s elders” recount an event which had taken place in the summer of 1807? –, such suppositions were nonchalantly shared and passed off by the local press as certainties. Newspapers competed in selling titles such as “Love Story at the Castle,”⁸⁹ or, uppercasing some of the words, “The Secret of a Great Composer: Spicy Details of Beethoven’s Hidden Betrothal to a Young Lady from Banat.”⁹⁰ The readers thus learn that the number of Beethoven’s lovers “from Banat” ... is growing: “Two others of the great composer’s lovers, sisters, have a connection with the Banat area. Sisters Josephine (1779–1821) and Therese (1775–1861) Brunswik, daughters of Franz Brunswik from Săvârșin, met Beethoven via their brother, Karl, with whom he was a close friend.”⁹¹ The candour with which the author of the article talks about “the daughters of Franz Brunswi(c)k from Săvârșin”⁹² is symptomatic of the ever-lower standards of professionalism in Romanian journalism in recent years. Information is no longer filtered; the truthfulness of such reports is no longer questioned. And if comments of the likes of “Nice, it’s been long known that Romanian women are beautiful ... it seems even Beethoven saw this to be true”⁹³ come to be

⁸⁶ Luciana IANCULESCU, *Tandrețea neîngăduită a toamnei* [Autumn’s forbidden tenderness] (Timișoara: Editura Quatro, 2013).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 29–36.

⁸⁸ “În timp, castelul a aparținut familiilor: Brunswick, Forray, Nádasdy, Hunyady. Și din anul 1934, Majestății Sale, Regele Mihai I al României. În vara anului 1807, sufletul compozitorului Ludwig van Beethoven era rănit și avea nevoie de iubire. Și atunci se va apropia de Therese von Brunswick, care era verișoara baroanei Julia Forray, stăpâna castelului din Săvârșin. Și compozitorul cunoștea familia Forray, pe care o întâlnește la Viena și la Martonvasar. *Bătrânii din Săvârșin povestesc despre o vizită în taină a Theresei von Brunswick cu tânărul compozitor.* Cei doi se plimbau pe aleile din parcul castelului dar nu ieșeau pe străzi. Locuitorii comunei știau că la castel se aflau oaspeți alesi: Therese von Brunswick și Ludwig van Beethoven.” Ianculescu, quoted by Vasile FILIP, “Tandrețea neîngăduită a toamnei,” in *Aradon* (October 22, 2013). <<http://www.aradon.ro/tandretea-neingaduita-a-toamnei/1346116>> (accessed August 3, 2019). The italics are mine.

⁸⁹ “L. B.,” “Poveste de iubire la castel,” in *Aradon* (October 29, 2013). <<http://www.aradon.ro/poveste-de-iubire-la-castel/1348614>> (accessed October 29, 2019).

⁹⁰ PETROVICI, “Secretul unui mare compozitor.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.* The italics are mine.

⁹³ JANINA, comment on the article “Prima iubire a lui Beethoven a locuit în România,” *artLine.ro*. <<https://www.artline.ro/Prima-iubire-a-lui-Beethoven-a-locuit-in-Romania-22024-1-n.html>>, (accessed August 3, 2019).



made by the average reader, bombarded with texts of this kind, we can only draw some succinct conclusions.

The “masses” suffocated for decades by Romanian Fascist and then Communist propaganda, and therefore deprived of the practice of discerning the veracity of the news they were “served,” now avidly consume the most sordid information available in an aggressive media landscape infested by fake news. As to Beethoven’s reception in Romania from the nineteenth century to the present day, it remains a mirror faithfully reflecting perpetually changing and realigning times, ideologies, and mentalities.

Translated by Maria Monica BOJIN

