

4. THE ENESCIAN PIANISTIC NOTES AND COMMENTARIES (2st part)

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Abstract: *George Enesco was a remarkable composer, conductor, teacher, violinist and pianist. He is one of the few "chosen" ones who lived under the emblem of the idea of BEAUTIFUL in its multiple images: by art, in the name of art and under the sign of art. Being in the circuit of authentic spiritual values, his entire pianistic creation is delicate, subtle, refined and elegant but extremely difficult as an artistic technique and expression; it calls for the intelligence accordingly, a lot of common sense, potential of much spiritual unrest, very much scenic experience, by determining the interpreters to very special refinement and expressive elevation, in addition to a worked touché trained in the art of the pianistic expression.*

Key words: *Enesco's pianistic art, expressivity, instrumental technique*

1. Introduction

George Enesco is a musician of the synthesis between national and universal, where the journey of the Classics, Romantics, Impressionists, Expressionists and of modernist audacities finds a suitable place for secrets, mysteries, confessions and interpretations in a wide range of special expressions and experiences, impregnated with Romanian perfume. "The story of Enesco's life and art begins somewhere far away ... on the Moldavian lands. The maestro reveals us the nostalgia of his native places and of his past childhood: "I feel bounded with all my fibers. Nothing can unbind my relationship with the Moldavian earth, sky and waters. Here, in the mild Moldavian landscape, among proper people of discrete soul nobility from this blessed province, is where I most feel at ease. I feel close to everything that is Moldavian. The native landscape seems to invigorate me. At Liveni I go back through people and things, and seeing this again ravishes my memory. We all bear our native soil inside of us, which is also part of our inner song, poem, sculpted rock, canvas and our deeds."⁶⁴

2. Discussions

Enesco's pianistic art has the prestige of sovereignty that emerged in the stone of the musical time for eternity. Its musical "speech" is so rich and so original that its eloquence releases the thought from the entire material universe. The instrumental register is generous, large and offering, and it covers the saying *unity in diversity*. Science and conscience, logics, proportion and harmony, measure and inspiration - these are the artistic imperatives. George Enesco, the ideal composer who is to be searched especially in the area of the inexhaustible fantasy

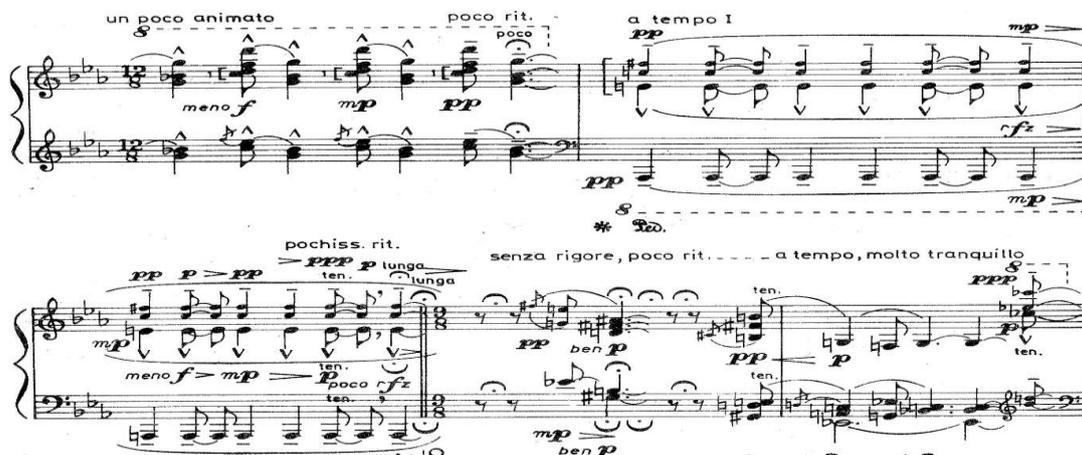
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⁶⁴ Sbârcea George, *Veșnic tânărul George Enescu*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1981, pg. 114

in inventiveness, transfers ornamental elements specific of the violin to the imagistic art of the piano. It is about the violinist tremolos that find their pianistic correspondence in the pages of *Suite op. 10* (*Sarabanda* and *Appassionata*) in order to dynamise and amplify the motive of the bells. Being a composer and an interpreter, George Enesco lends and suggests to the piano (a hammer instrument) the *cantabile* finale in *vibrato* of the violin. (Eg 1: *Mazurk mélancolique* from *3rd Suite*)



In addition, there are other refined aspects specific to his violinist art such as:
 - the ways to attack the sounds in variants such as: *marcato*, *marcato staccato*, *portato*, *staccato-portato*, *marcatissimo*, *marcatissimo-staccato*.
 (Eg: *Mazurk mélancolique* from *3rd Suite* and Eg. 2, 3: *Carillon nocturne* from *3rd Suite*)



- the beautification of the pianistic speech by mentally increasing the sonorous intensity on a kept sound - ex: *Choral* from *3rd Suite*

Besides, any interpreter feels in *Mazurk mélancolique* from *3rd Suite*, in the sonorous line of the right hand (*grazioso e malinconico*, *senza rigore*, *leggier*, *delicatamente*) on the background of *moderato un poco allegretto*, many resemblances with Enesco's violinist technique and ability to sing. The left hand bears the print of a warm round accompaniment, supported by a thorough refined pedalling. In addition to the beautification of Enesco's pianistic sound, there is that mastery of the pedalling technique in the smallest details of artistic expression. *His hand* (Enesco's), supple and comprehensive that he could adapt to any requirement of expression extremely generous and demanding, capable of covering the entire range of technical – instrumental difficulties, acquired a cosmic dimension. This is proved particularly by his pages of pianistic creation and the recordings left over time.

The art of Enesco's pedalling is the art of a great architect who penetrated with his brilliant intuition in the middle of the sonorous movement. Enesco's pianistic art has the prestige of sovereignty that torments and deepens the audience's emotions. Each note, each musical phrase needs unconditionally the

help of the pedal in a variety of combinations that reveal to us the beauty in the brightest argumentation. The pedal may be used only on one sound or on several sounds, on a measure or on very large spaces, it mixes harmonies and it pushes the speech to Romantic, Impressionistic or very often orchestral sonorities, in classical or special notations, and thus it fulfills the joy of the artistic perfection. Being used with mastery, it breathes in phrases and it immediately imposes the musical atmosphere.

“The colours created by the pedal – says Cella Delavrancea - in its different uses, can be compared to the range of green tones from a drop. Matching the science of the plans and the rich nuances, the paintings can communicate to us the sensation of the air and of the breath as a consequence of the vibration. In the same way, the pedal, tuned to the sonorous vocabulary, transfers its fluid and outlines the musical rustling, or, on the contrary, allows the sonorous moisture descend above the phrase that loses its shape in the fog and becomes the atmosphere of an idea”.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Enesco's imagery requires at times the necessity of an extremely plastic vocabulary by specialty terms such as: *una corda*, *due corde*, *tre corde*, thus suggesting the necessity to use the silence gradually (Eg: *3rd Sonata for piano in Re major*, op. 24, no. 3)



In addition, there are other new graphicsigns of pedalling that are special and typical to Enesco:

- noting the semi pedal - O
- using the semi pedal (O) with immediate consequences in making the effect of special pedalling (see *Suite op. 18, no. 3* and *3rd Sonata, op. 24, no. 3*)
- adopting a new pedalling way such as by reference to the violinist vibrato
- adopting a generous pedalling, on several measures (the spinning of the sonority)

(Eg. 5: *Nocturna in re b major*)



“The orchestral treatment of the piano, the tendency to engage the entire

⁶⁵ Cella Delavrancea – *Dintr-un secol de viață*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1988, pg. 177

keyboard, the colourful effects of a unique refinement, sometimes involving a speed that reaches the physiological threshold of the human motor potential of the fingers (about 18 sounds per second), these are just some features of Enesco's pianistic writing that require from the interpreter an instrumental technique of the highest quality virtuosity and fineness".⁶⁶ As for the structural particular features, the composer's language is also distinguished by the mixture of orchestral timbralities by indications such as: Eg: *3rd Sonata, op. 24, no. 3 (quasi campana, strascinante, tutta forza per, marcatiss, rùvido, strepitoso, con suono il canto, con brio, quassi trillo, vibrante, con suono giocoso, aspro, con vigore, sost. appassionato, esitando, giocoso)*. The composer's brilliant fantasy takes us to organ sonorities - with the right indications stipulated clearly in the musical score: *avec une sonorité d'orgue lointain*. (Eg. 6: Choral from *3rd Suite*)



The same organ sonorities can be seen in *The Prelude* from *Prelude and fugue for piano in Do major*, but also in *Prelude* from *Suite in an old style for piano op. 3*

3. Results

General features of the works for the piano

- *Suite in an old style op. 3*

One can feel the influence of the German music studied in Vienna, especially the creation of Johannes Brahms

Prelude: accord in counterpoint style, improvisation of baroque type – J. S. Bach

Fugue: polyphony in 3 voices

Adagio: Brahms' Romantic style

Finale: synthesis Classic – Romantic

- *Variations for 2 piano op. 5*

The variation transformations lead to:

- the Classical path and the Romantic – Brahms influence
- the influence of the style belonging to the composer César Franck
- symphonic amplexness

- *Suite in Re major op. 10*

Suite for piano op. 10 is a work of great expressivity and instrumental force where the elements of purely pianistic technique turn into interpretation creation. From a stylistic point of view, the titles remind of the dances and the baroque suite. In essence, it contains Classic – Romantic pianistic writing with

⁶⁶ From the Preface of the musical score - *George Enescu – Nocturne in Re major for piano and 3rd Suite for piano*, Editura Muzicală, București, 1982, pg. 6, edition supervised by professor Aurora Ienei

Impressionist incrustations and Romanian perfume (that embodiment of the Romanian "doina"). Therefore, this work is rich in flowers and Romanian clothes, it wears the print of the ceaseless variation in all its detail elements (expressivity, pedalling, agogics, tempo and dynamics), and it opens the window to a rainbow of timbre – pianistic expression (the piano shows its qualities of instrument - orchestra). This work enjoys the greatest popularity and it is in the repertory of all the pianists who graduated from academic studies. “**The violin** used to represent the fight to reach perfection, the effort to perform with the most generous offer of the own qualities with a view to casting an illuminating vision upon the works of other composers, whereas **the piano**, lacking in the label of an acknowledged professionalization, was the space for releasing constraints, fertile lands bearing the rich fruit of its creative imagination, always colourful and really complex.”⁴

Toccata

- spectacular sonorities of bells
- well-outlined rhythmic formulas
- the improvisational aspect in making sequences

Sarabanda

- the closeness to the French music by sonority
- using the orchestral resources of the piano

Pavana

- improvisational elements that make us think of Maurice Ravel (Eg. 7)

The image shows a musical score for a piece, likely a Pavana. It consists of two systems of piano and violin staves. The first system is marked 'diaphane' and 'pp tres doux'. The second system is marked 'cédez' and 'pp'. Pedal markings are present at the beginning and end of the piece.

Bourrée

- dense rhythmic development
- the sonorous flow approaches us to the pianistic style of Camille Saint – Saëns
- **Prelude and fugue in Do major**

Prelude

- it is close to the baroque model and it occurs on pedal lengths that approach it to the organistic style
- sequences of tetrachord formulas that render modal colours

Fugue

- it has colours and nuances in the Romantic style
- it is crossed by classical and Romantic ornaments

● **Nocturne in Re b major**

It is a work with traditional writing, in an infinite series of artistic and emotional expressions, whereas the effect is accordingly. Its complexity and

refinement make an oasis of light in the scenic space. The sonorous speech undulates sometimes slowly, with gentle consonant harmonies (quiet cantilena), at other times tumultuous (in interrupted profiles), with complex, tense harmonies. The horizontal polyrhythmy represents a common element of Enesco's rhythmic expression. The elevated character of the contents as well as the audacity and the modernity of the sonorous language are noted by:

- many chromatic passages
- ornamentations: ornamental – glissando garments
- long pedals in bass

The spirit of Debussy is obviously seen in: rich consistent pedalling, large passages, agglomerations of harmonies, in the frequent use of arpeggiated passages, in nuances of *pp légèrement, expressif*, and the urge to *librement*. It is a dense and complex work from a pianistic point of view with a technical potential, obviously expressive, in the evaluation of the concepts of sublime, emotional and beautiful. The entire acoustic - musical range in the plan of the dynamic – timbre contrasts (from *pppp* to *ffff*) as well as in the plan of the tempo- agogics (with horizontal polyrhythmies at both hands or at only one hand, leading the sonorous fluid, represent the composer's care and preoccupation for the development and valorification of the orchestral timbre of the piano.

Without strictly metronomic explanations and urging to an interpretation *à volonté sans rigueur*, the pianist is guided note by note, phrase by phrase, by a variety of indications (in French) of agogics, dynamics, timbres and expression - all with a view to interpret accurately the intentions of our beloved Maestro. The piano seems to be an actor who presents his role in an obvious colourful palette: *murmuré, chantant, pian chanté, très doux pathétique, sans précipiter, avec élan, cristalline, lié et soutenu, avec suavité, mystérieux, passion*. Nothing useless, nothing except for a musical artistic painting in a rainbow of spiritual moods. His imagery has no limits. The composer seems to be wearing a composer's cloak but also an artistic director's cloak. Thus, the colourful palette proposed by our remarkable musician is truly wonderful. His creative, vigilant demanding eyes do not miss anything.

● **3rd Suite op. 18**

As general elements, this work is going through the entire pianistic technique at the top of the instrumental requirement.

“As for *Nocturne* and *Suite op. 18*, where the features of Enesco's mature language are clearly shaped, his creations, apart from the specific of the language and of the contents, acquire *Enesco's specific of interpretation*. We have the sensation of translating in the writing the infinitesimal dynamic-agogic deviations shown by only the spontaneity of a creative interpretation. The abundance of the interpretation indications rises vertiginously. This complication modifies gradually and subtly its quality and signification, turning from *text interpretation indications* into *work interpretation text*. That is, the indications are so thorough and they point out the slightest details of the work that they are not only an

interpretation program but also its mirror. (...) One can thus speak of *Enesco's interpretation style* hard to notice for the ones who cannot penetrate the entire breath of its work”⁶⁷.

- **Choral and Nocturne Carillon**

Since these two works contain many similar details, we shall analyze them together. The parameters indicated by the composer in the spectrum of the dynamics and timbrality announce a calm quiet atmosphere. The accord writing adopted by the composer has the ability to outline this nocturnal silence that is troubled only by the 12 phantomatic clock beats from *Nocturne Carillon*. (Eg. 8)



Besides, the bell sonorities are frequent in Enesco's pages. We find them again in *Suite op. 10*, in a phenomenal colourful potential, due to the timbral - colourful instrumental - pianistic resources. By continuing the interpretative analysis, we note that Maestro Enesco also adopts for the two works, apart from the metrics and classical expression, a free expression far from the metric traditional constraints, whereas the measure bars are often elevated and replaced by a free speech in a sonorous mixture of nocturnal mystery. As a principle of accord instrumental execution, we shall have in view the attainment of a legato not only by the pedal managed so scrupulously by the composer but also by fingers and suple poigné. The right hand in the nuance required by the composer, *pp*, fluid, profound and homogenous shall try to keep the weight on each accord. So much music and so wonderfully expressed in balanced inner phrases, in harmonies conceived with modern freedom and independence, but with supreme and useful logics.

- **Appassionatto**

It is a work with spectacular sonorities. The density of the writing entitles us to appreciate the composer's taste and pleasure for the brilliance and virtuosity at both hands on large rhythmic densities in arpeggios or leaps over the hand in different registers of the piano. The result is an instrumental texture of maximum fluidity, articulated enough in its important elements (melody, rhythm, harmony) whereas its tense dramaturgy fully requires the pianistic ability and technique. The cavalcade of Enesco's sonorous events from this special work is impressive and

⁶⁷ Aurora Ienei, *op. cit.*, pg. 5,6

imposes the perfect mastery of the pianistic extension moments and a sonorous equalization in the arpeggial figuration passages. Maestro George Enesco continuously offers to the left hand passages of great virtuosity, passages of thorough technique on the background of a generous pedalling, in a mixture of sonorities and harmonies and in a well controlled constellation of polyrhythmies.

4. Conclusions

The perfect maestro George Enescu dominates and controls the pianistic art in all its essential elements: technique, brilliance, touche, cantability and pedalling. The proof of the passage by the universal tradition (the counterpoint of Bach, the monumentality and philosophy of Beethoven, the dramatism of Brahms and Wagner, the impressionist stylistics of the French school by Debussy and Fauré, the pianistic symphonism in addition to the strong adhesion to the aesthetic values of the Romantics Chopin and Schumann), decanted in a very personal mode (that distinct note of rhythm, that unmistakable *parlando rubato*, in addition to a modal melos and the embodiments created so masterly in relation to the art of polyphony) form *Enesco's style*. "Enesco's art conquered us immediately and even for a long time after we heard him, either playing the violin, or playing the piano, or conducting the orchestra. Listening to Enesco was not only delight and artistic ascension but also an infinitely profitable lesson."⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ Ninuca Oşanu, *op. cit.* pg. 133