

Livia TEODORESCU-CIOCĂNEA

MUSIC FOR VOICES AND ORCHESTRA

POPPY FIELDS: ORATORIO 'IN MEMORY
OF THE VICTIMS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR'

THE ANNUNCIATION: CANTATA

L'ISOLEMENT: CANTATA



FIRST RECORDINGS

Soloists
Radio Chamber Orchestra
George Enescu Philharmonic
Orchestra and Chorus
Cristian Brâncuși, Vlad Maistorovici
Nabil Shehata, conductors

LIVIA TEODORESCU-CIOCĂNEA – A BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

by Joel Crotty

Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea was born in Galați, a town in eastern Romania, on 4 February 1959. She studied piano at the Music and Arts College in Galați between 1965 and 1977, where one of her piano teachers was Charlotte Marcovici, who had studied in Vienna in the 1940s. Teodorescu-Ciocănea entered the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatoire (now the National University of Music) in Bucharest in 1977 and graduated in 1981 with a Bachelor's degree in composition. Her teachers there included Myriam Marbe for composition, Ștefan Niculescu for form and analysis and Ioana Minei for piano. She took additional piano tuition privately from Ana Pitiș. In 1985 she also attended the piano master-classes given by Zoltán Kocsis and Imre Rohmann in the 'Bartók Seminar' in Szombathely, Hungary.

After the 1989 Romanian revolution, when the change of system allowed more people to enrol in higher-degree work, she was admitted to a Ph.D. candidature in music (musicology) at the National University of Music in Bucharest in 1996, studying with the composer Anatol Vieru and, later, with Octavian Nemescu. In 1998 and 1999 she obtained a Grant for Excellence from the Romanian government, which allowed her to study for her Ph.D. at the University of Huddersfield in the UK for two consecutive years. There she undertook the composition part of her doctorate, studying with the composer Margaret Lucy Wilkins. In 1995 she was appointed assistant professor at the National University of Music in Bucharest, teaching form, analysis and orchestration. In 1997 she became a lecturer, and between 2004 and 2015 she worked as an Associate Professor in composition, form and analysis. In 2015 she was appointed Professor at the same institution, where she still teaches composition, musical styles and poetics. In 2008 she won an Australian Federal Government grant – the Endeavour Award Postdoctoral Research Fellowship – which was undertaken at Monash University in Melbourne.

In addition to her academic activity at the National University of Music, she was an Adjunct Associate Professor (Research) at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music, at Monash University between 2017 and 2021, and Affiliate Professor until 2025. She is a member of the Union of Composers and Musicologists in Romania, and in 2022 was elected a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, based in Salzburg. For a brief period, in 2021, she held the position of artistic director of the Bucharest National Opera.

Her music has been performed in the USA, Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan and across Europe, and, of course, by leading orchestras in Romania, among them the George Enescu Philharmonic, National Radio and Chamber Radio Orchestras and the Orchestra of Bucharest National Opera. She has been awarded a variety of prestigious prizes for her work as a composer, including that of the Union of Composers and Musicologists in Romania in 2001 (for the ballet *Le rouge et le noir*¹), 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2016. In 2008 she was awarded the ‘George Enescu’ Romanian Academy Award for *Romulus and Remus* (a trio for two violins and piano), and in the same year the National Order ‘Cultural Merit’ (Knight Grade) was bestowed upon her by the Romanian Presidency.

Her sources of inspiration include abstract concepts, mythology, poetry, philosophy, and modern and classical literature. She combines a modern approach with subtle elements from world music, Romanian folklore and religious music, seeking a diversity of timbral quality. Along with free and innovative structural processus, she reinterprets traditional classical and theatrical forms, and proposes new ones, such as multilayered spectralism, hypertimbralism and nanomusic.² She follows in the footsteps of Romanian composers such as Horațiu Rădulescu and Ștefan Niculescu, who both explored the spectral approach to composition. Accordingly, she has written pieces with

¹ Recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0595.

² ‘Spectral music’, which focuses on the acoustic properties of timbre, was developed at IRCAM in Paris in the 1970s and 1980s, but it also has a long history among Romanian composers, with its origins in Romanian folk instruments. Nanomusic is a term Teodorescu-Ciocănea coined for music that creatively reproduces and modulates the three phases of sounds produced by acoustic instruments: transient attack, sustain and decay (plus release).

these characteristics for contemporary-music festivals; on the other hand, she has also written music with post-Romantic or Impressionist features. Her interest in timbre and spectralism is allied to a strong sense of structure. Indeed, she delineates form and structure through a technique she calls 'hypertimbralism', which achieves timbral drama by transforming interconnected instrumental layers of varying density: each layer can be brought to the foreground or sent to the background.³

This new poetic is to be found in its most obvious expression in her concertos: *Déeses de l'Air* (2012) for solo flute and flute orchestra (commissioned and played by Pierre Yves-Artaud and the Orchestre de Flûtes Français, premiered in Paris in 2012), *Rite for Enchanting the Air* (1999, premiered by Artaud with the University of Huddersfield Orchestra conducted by Barrie Webb in 2000, and in Romania in 2002 with the National Radio Orchestra conducted by Alan Tongue)⁴ and *D'Amore* (1997), an oboe concerto performed in 2000 by Eugen Glăvan with the George Enescu Philharmonic conducted by Cristian Mandeal. In 2020 she wrote *Eritrean Ring* for string orchestra, for Martin Anderson's 'Music for My Love' project, in memory of his late partner, Yodit Tekle. It was first performed by the Berlin Academy of American Music Orchestra conducted by Garret Keast during the George Enescu International Festival in 2023 at the Romanian Atheneum Bucharest. A second performance took place in May 2025, during the International Week of New Music in Bucharest, with Radio Chamber Orchestra conducted by Marijn Simons.

The full-length theatrical work *Le rouge et le noir* (a three-act ballet based on Stendhal) was commissioned and produced by the Romanian National Opera in Bucharest in 2000 and remained an important part of the repertoire for the next eight years. The ballet 'gained favour with the general audience via a modernism rooted in the classical style' (*Grove Music Online*). It requires a full orchestra, male choir and two operatic singers (countertenor and soprano).⁵

³ More details can be found at <https://peasa.eu/site/article/view/6>.

⁴ *Rite for Enchanting the Air* was released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0668, alongside the *Archimedes Symphony* and *Mysterium tremendum*, a cantata for mezzo-soprano and orchestra.

⁵ A recording produced by the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company in June 2000 was released by Toccata Classics (TOCC 0595) in 2021, performed by the soprano Mihaela Stanciu, countertenor Romeo Cornelius and the Chorus and Orchestra of Romanian National Opera conducted by Răsvan Cernat.

Her symphonic works aim for monumentality in drama, form and orchestration. Scored for full-size orchestra and organ, her *Archimedes Symphony* (2011, rev. 2017) is a 36-minute-long epic, in four continuous sections. It was premiered by the National Radio Orchestra in 2011 and further performed by the George Enescu Philharmonic in 2017 (revised version), both conducted by Valentin Doni. In 2015 she completed a three-act opera, *The Lady with the Dog*, after Chekhov, commissioned by the Romanian Composers' and Musicologists' Union. In 2021 she revised and augmented the opera with a fourth act. The world premiere of this opera took place on 7 May 2022 in a concert version at the Bucharest National Opera conducted by Vlad Conta. This major work is scored for nine soloists, a quartet of female voices, chorus and full orchestra. Her vocal-symphonic work includes cantatas, such as *The Annunciation* (1997), *Mysterium tremendum* (2016) for mezzo soprano and orchestra, *L'Isolement* (2024) for two sopranos and orchestra and the oratorio *Câmpuri de maci* ('Poppy Fields'; 2018), for baritone, tenor and mezzo-soprano soloists, chorus and orchestra, dedicated to the memory of the victims of First World War.

Although mindful of the traditions of choral composition, Teodorescu-Ciocănea also brings a spectral dimension to her writing for chorus. Her approach results in powerful contrasts of density and dynamics in the choral fabric: from hieratic monodic lines to densely chromatic sound-blocks presented isorhythmically, polyphonically or heterophonically. One can hear these stylistic features in such works as the *Oratio Sanctae Brigittae* (2002) for a *cappella* SATB choir, which was performed by the Latvian Radio Choir conducted by Sigvards Klāva at the George Enescu International Festival on 28 August 2025; *Prunc luminos* ('Luminous Child'; 2005), with lyrics by Vasile Voiculescu, for a *cappella* SATB choir; *Vecernia* ('Vespers'; 2015), for baritone solo and a *cappella* SATB choir; and *Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead* (2019) for mezzo-soprano solo, violin solo, organ and SATB choir (which was the basis of Part V of the *Poppy Fields* oratorio). All these works have been performed over the years by the Choir of the Astra Chamber Music Society in Melbourne, conducted by John McCaughey in various concerts as world or Australian premieres or on tours in Italy and Romania. The *Oratio*

Sanctae Brigittae and *Prunc luminos* were given their first performances by the George Enescu Philharmonic Choir, conducted by Iosif Ion Prunner.

Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea has written numerous works for solo piano, duet or piano duo. Much of her most recent piano music has been inspired by her collaboration with the Australian pianist Tamara Smolyar, dating back to 2001. Since then, Smolyar has commissioned and premiered a number of her piano works in Melbourne and at other venues around the world, such as *Endeavour Bells* (2008), *Calypso* (2013), *Enceladus* (2016), *Briseis* (2016), *Aphrodite* (2018), *Berenice* (2019) and *Viva Beethoven* (2020).⁶ In 2017, Teodorescu-Ciocănea composed a two-piano piece entitled *Magna Mater – Cybele*, premiered by the composer and Smolyar at the Athenaeum in Bucharest in the same year. In 2019 *Magna Mater – Cybele* was selected and performed during the World Music Days Festival organised by the International Society of Contemporary Music in the Estonia concert-hall in Tallinn. Also in 2019 the *Sonatina buffa*, for piano four hands, was transformed into a *Concertino Buffo* for piano solo and orchestra, premiered by the Arad Philharmonic conducted by Barrie Webb, with soloist Andreea Olariu.

Her chamber-music output has focused on various duo and trio combinations, the most recent being *Au café Momus* (2024) for violin and piano, *Golden Spirals – Dacian Gold Bracelets* (2020), *Namagiri* (2018) for horn, violin and piano, *Moebius Loop* (2019) for flute, clarinet and piano, and *Entanglement* (2019) for horn, trombone and viola. Solo works include *Chalumeaux de Fontainebleau* (2023) for B flat clarinet and *Velvet Garden* (2019) for viola solo (with optional electronics). Her String Quartet No. 2, *Infloribus*, was performed by the Bayberry String Quartet in the Weil Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall on 1 July 2024.⁷

Songs form a substantial part of her *œuvre*. Among her most frequently performed songs are *Autumn Gospels*, setting lyrics by Nichita Stănescu (2002), *Chanson d'automne*

⁶ This collaboration featured on an album released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0448 in 2019, with *Endeavour Bells* and *Calypso* joined by *Nocturniana: Fantasy for Two Pianos on Chopin's Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2* (2013), the *Sonatina* for solo piano (1985), *Sonatina buffa: Homage to Charlie Chaplin* for piano duet (1986) and the two-piano arrangement of the Piano Concerto No. 2, *Lebenskraft* (2013).

⁷ A recording of this piece was released by Cicerone MA: <https://ciceronema.com/cima-records-livia-teodorescu-infloribus/>.

(2004), settings of Paul Verlaine, and *S'amor non è* (2007), which sets Petrarch's Sonnet No. 132.

As a concert pianist she has performed many classical and modern works of the solo and duo repertoire and has accompanied numerous vocal and instrumental recitals. She has played solo recitals (with Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Liszt and Schubert among the composers featured) in Romania, Italy and France, and concertos with several Romanian orchestras. She gave the Romanian premiere of two major works by Messiaen: *Visions de l'Amen* for two pianos (with Luminița Berariu) and the piano part of the *Turangalila* Symphony with the George Enescu Philharmonic in Bucharest conducted by Alain Pâris. In 2011 she performed her Second Piano Concerto, *Lebenskraft*, with the George Enescu Philharmonic conducted by Paul Nadler. Apart from her activity as a soloist and chamber-music pianist, she worked for the Bucharest National Opera as accompanist and vocal coach between 1985 and 2001. She has been a Price Attractions artist based in the USA since 2021.

Her scores have been published by Editura Muzicală Grafoart and UNMB (Bucharest), ArsPublica (Camino al Tagliamento, Italy) and Hoeflich (Munich). Commercial recordings of her music have appeared from Toccata Classics in the United Kingdom, Move Records in Australia, Cicerone MA in the Netherlands and Electrecord in Romania.

As a musicologist, she is the author of three books: *Musical Timbre – Composition Strategies* (Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2004), *Treatise of Musical Forms and Analysis* (Editura Muzicală, 2005, and Grafoart, Bucharest, 2014) and *Streams of Thought in the Music of the 20th and 21st Centuries* (Editura Muzicală, 2015). She has published articles in *Contemporary Music Review*, *Perspectives of New Music*, *Proceedings of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts* and *Tempo*.

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TWO CANTATAS AND AN ORATORIO

by Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea

This fourth Toccata Classics album of my music presents three vocal-symphonic works spanning a broad time-frame, from 1992/1997 to 2024. I have always loved the human voice, and I was glad to be able to write across the full range of vocal timbres and expressive possibilities. Although vocal-symphonic music differs from opera, I sought to retain an operatic splendour in the melodic lines and, where appropriate, a powerful dramatic intensity, all immersed in a symphonic discourse and a vivid sonic landscape.

***L'Isolément*: Cantata for Two Sopranos and Orchestra, Op. 80 (2024)**

The cantata *L'Isolément* – for two sopranos and orchestra – is a dramatic projection of Alphonse de Lamartine's poem into a vocal-symphonic medium [1]. It reflects moments of profound solitude and evokes natural and cosmic landscapes charged with psychological meaning. Several unsettling philosophical assertions, cast in apodictic, aphoristic form, receive musical emphasis: 'Au coucher du soleil, tristement je m'assieds' ('When the sun is going down, I sadly take a seat'); 'Le soleil des vivants n'échauffe plus les morts' ('The sun of the living no longer warms the dead'); 'Un seul être vous manque, et tout est dépeuplé!' ('A single being is missing, and all becomes a barren waste!').

The two soprano lines intertwine, merge or oppose each other through registers and textures tailored to the shifting moments of the text. The orchestra serves as a sonic matrix, imparting depth, timbral variety and poetic resonance.

Composed in 2024, the work received its premiere on 22 May of that year at the International New Music Week festival in Bucharest, performed by the Radio Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Vlad Maistorovici, with sopranos Iulia Țugui and Teodora Gheorghiu as soloists. The Romanian Radio recording was awarded a 'Gold' rating by the commission of the institution and admitted to its Golden Archive.

L'Isolement

Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869)

Souvent sur la montagne, à l'ombre du vieux chêne,
Au coucher du soleil, tristement je m'assieds ;
Je promène au hasard mes regards sur la plaine,
Dont le tableau changeant se déroule à mes pieds.

Ici gronde le fleuve aux vagues écumantes ;
Il serpente, et s'enfonce en un lointain obscur ;
Là le lac immobile étend ses eaux dormantes
Où l'étoile du soir se lève dans l'azur.

Au sommet de ces monts couronnés de bois sombres,
Le crépuscule encor jette un dernier rayon ;
Et le char vaporeux de la reine des ombres
Monte, et blanchit déjà les bords de l'horizon.

Cependant, s'élançant de la flèche gothique,
Un son religieux se répand dans les airs :
Le voyageur s'arrête, et la cloche rustique
Aux derniers bruits du jour mêle de saints concerts.

Mais à ces doux tableaux mon âme indifférente
N'éprouve devant eux ni charme ni transports ;
Je contemple la terre ainsi qu'une ombre errante
Le soleil des vivants n'échauffe plus les morts.

De colline en colline en vain portant ma vue,
Du sud à l'aiglon, de l'aurore au couchant,
Je parcours tous les points de l'immense étendue,
Et je dis : « Nulle part le bonheur ne m'attend. »

Isolation

*Often, on the mountain, in the old oak's shadow,
When the sun is going down, I sadly take a seat
And let my gaze meander haphazardly across the plains,
Where a changing panorama unrolls below my feet.*

*Here, the river roars as it cascades down the slopes;
It snakes across the landscape, and fades from sight
in fields afar.
There, the placid lake stretches forth its sleeping waters
And catches in its depths the rising evening star.*

*On the summits of those mountains, crowned
with their dark woods,
The last rays of twilight are slowly growing dim,
And the misty chariot of the queen of shadows
Ascends, already whitening the horizon's rim.*

*Flooding from the gothic spire, sweet religious tones
Carry through the air, and the traveller on his way
Pauses in his steps to listen as the rustic bell
Blends its holy concert with the last sounds of the day.*

*But none of these tableaux moves my indifferent soul:
In the face of all their beauty, it remains unaffected.
I contemplate the earth the way a wandering shadow
would:
The sun of the living no longer warms the dead.*

*From hill to hill in vain I turn my restless eyes,
From north to south, from dawn to sunset, I trace
the compass clear around,
Scanning every point of the lands laid out beneath me,
And I conclude: 'Nowhere can happiness be found'.*

Que me font ces vallons, ces palais, ces chaumières,
Vains objets dont pour moi le charme est envolé ?
Fleuves, rochers, forêts, solitudes si chères,
Un seul être vous manque, et tout est dépeuplé !

Que le tour du soleil ou commence ou s'achève,
D'un œil indifférent je le suis dans son cours ;
En un ciel sombre ou pur qu'il se couche ou se lève,
Qu'importe le soleil ? je n'attends rien des jours.

Quand je pourrais le suivre en sa vaste carrière,
Mes yeux verraient partout le vide et les déserts :
Je ne désire rien de tout ce qu'il éclaire;
Je ne demande rien à l'immense univers.

Mais peut-être au-delà des bornes de sa sphère,
Lieux où le vrai soleil éclaire d'autres cieux,
Si je pouvais laisser ma dépouille à la terre,
Ce que j'ai tant rêvé paraîtrait à mes yeux !

Là, je m'enivrerais à la source où j'aspire ;
Là, je retrouverais et l'espoir et l'amour,
Et ce bien idéal que toute âme désire,
Et qui n'a pas de nom au terrestre séjour !

Que ne puis-je, porté sur le char de l'Aurore,
Vague objet de mes vœux, m'élancer jusqu'à toi !
Sur la terre d'exil pourquoi resté-je encore ?
Il n'est rien de commun entre la terre et moi.

*Of what avail these valleys, these cottages, these palaces,
Vain objects that for me have lost all their charm
and grace,
These rivers, rocks, and forests, beloved solitudes?
A single being is missing, and all becomes a barren
waste!*

*Whether the sun is starting or finishing its daily journey,
I follow it along its course with an indifferent gaze;
In the midst of storm clouds, or in brilliant azure,
What do I care about the sun? I expect nothing
from its days.*

*If I could follow it on its wide circuit through the sky,
I would see only desolation, empty wastelands
of no worth.
I don't wish for anything that it ever shines on,
I don't ask anything of the entire earth.*

*But maybe somewhere else, beyond the boundaries of
its sphere,
Some place where the real sun shines in other skies –
If only I could leave my husk lying on this earth,
Everything I've dreamed of might appear before my eyes!*

*There, I could refresh myself from the springs I long for;
There, the hope and love that I once had would be
restored,
And I would find that perfect good that every soul
desires,
And which has no name in our terrestrial abode.*

*If only I could travel on the chariot of Dawn,
Then, vague object of my wishes, straight to you I'd fly!
Why do I remain here upon this earth of exile?
Not a single thing in common do we have, the earth
and I.*

Quand là feuille des bois tombe dans la prairie,
Le vent du soir s'élève et l'arrache aux vallons ;
Et moi, je suis semblable à la feuille flétrie :
Emportez-moi comme elle, orageux aquilons !

*When the leaves fall from the trees and lie scattered
in the meadows,
The evening wind will rise and sweep them
from the vale;
I have no more substance than the withered leaves –
Oh, carry me away with them, wild autumn gale!*

—Translation Peter Shor, 2019

***Bunavestire* ('The Annunciation'): Cantata for Bass, Soprano, Four Horns and String Orchestra, Op. 23 (1997)**

As it now stands, *Bunavestire* ('The Annunciation') is a cantata for string orchestra, four horns and two vocal soloists – bass and soprano. Its first version (1992) was scored for string quartet, horn quartet and two soloists, conceived as a musical response to my experience of motherhood. The work was subsequently rewritten and expanded in 1996–97 in Huddersfield and Bucharest. It comprises two parts: I – *Pietà*; II – *The Annunciation*.

The piece presents a biblical scene through contemporary musical means. It seeks to let the emotion of the biblical word reverberate in sound, pursuing a transfer from language to music – first as purely instrumental expression, then as vocal–instrumental discourse. The dramaturgy suggests a fracture of time itself: before and after the Annunciation.

Part I, *Pietà* [2], evokes the world before the Archangel Gabriel's words – a state of despair and suffering that precedes the proclamation of the divine miracle. Superimposing temporal planes, it also alludes to the outcome of Christ's sacrifice and to the world that follows, pointing toward Michelangelo's masterpiece. Entirely instrumental, this part embeds a string quartet within a surrounding string orchestra. The orchestra provides a diffuse, fog-like heterophonic fabric, against which the quartet steps forward with fragments reminiscent of a Romanian lament. I sought a shift between light and shadow, between diffusion and clarity – akin to Rembrandt's chiaroscuro. Toward the close, the horn quartet enters as a majestic herald, providing a bridge to Part II. Structurally, Part I emphasises the number four – four string instruments (the string quartet), four horns –

here a symbol of universality. In the melodic lines the number three is outlined: the opening fragment of the lament is built on three diatonic notes (G–A–B), set in contrast to the chromatic three-note cell that shapes the next part.

Part II, The Annunciation [3], opens with an introduction and initial solo phrases built on three pitches placed in different registers – C, C sharp, D – as a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The orchestral introduction creates a trembling texture, suggesting an earthquake that precedes the revelation. Interludes carry echoes of archaic Romanian music. The soprano line is intended to convey humility and simplicity, often hovering in a quasi-transcendent realm, while the bass line unfolds across a wide compass that enables powerful, complex expressivity.

To amplify its spectral presence and expressive force, the bass voice is paired with low strings and horn pedals. By contrast, the soprano is heard either solo or within a highly transparent string context (harmonics, high-register trills, *sul ponticello*, *sul tasto*, *flautando*). The four horns, combining with low strings and bass voice, are treated alternately homophonically and heterophonically – at times as pedal points, at others as melodic events in the middle–upper register. At certain moments, the bass employs *Sprechgesang*, and the instrumentalists contribute a free, spoken texture that echoes the soloists' text, which is taken (adapted) from the Gospel according to St Luke (1:28, 29–35, 37, 38).

This version of the cantata has never been performed in public; the recording heard here was made in a dedicated session by Romanian Radio and is preserved in its Archive.

Arhanghelul Gabriel: Bucură-te, Marie, ceea ce ești plină de har, Domnul este cu tine, binecuvântată ești tu între femei. [1:28]

Fecioara Maria: Ce fel de închinăciune să fie aceasta? [1:29]

Arhanghelul Gabriel: Nu te teme, Marie, căci ai aflat har de la Dumnezeu. Iată, vei lua în pântec și vei naște fiu și vei chema numele lui, Iisus. Acesta va fi mare, și Fiul Celui Preaînalt se va chema și Domnul Dumnezeu Îi va da Lui tronul lui David, părintele Său, și va împărăți peste casa lui Iacov și Împărăția Lui nu va avea sfârșit. [1:30, 31, 32, 33]

Fecioara Maria: Cum va fi aceasta, de vreme ce eu nu știu de bărbat? [1:34]

Arhanghelul Gabriel: Duhul Sfânt Se va pogori peste tine și puterea Celui Preaînalt te va umbri; Acela ce se va naște din tine va fi Sfânt și se va chema Fiul lui Dumnezeu. Iată, că nimic nu este cu neputință la Dumnezeu. [1:35, 37]

Fecioara Maria: Iată, roaba lui Dumnezeu. Fie mie după cuvântul Tău. [1:38]

The Archangel Gabriel: Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. [1:28]

The Virgin Mary: What manner of salutation should this be? [1:29]

The Archangel Gabriel: Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. [1:30, 31, 32, 33]

The Virgin Mary: How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? [1:34]

The Archangel Gabriel: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. For with God nothing shall be impossible. [1:35, 37]

The Virgin Mary: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. [1:38]¹

¹ Text (adaptation): Luke 1:28–35, 37, 38 from the King James Version.

***Câmpuri de maci* ('Poppy Fields'): Oratorio for Baritone, Tenor, Mezzo-Soprano, Mixed Choir and Full Orchestra, in memory of the victims of the First World War, Op. 65 (2018)**

1. Big Ben at Eleven – Declaration of War: baritone, chorus and orchestra
2. In Flanders Fields: tenor, chorus and orchestra
3. Rugăciunea Reginei Maria pentru cei căzuți (Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead): mezzo-soprano, chorus and orchestra

Câmpuri de maci ('Poppy Fields') is an oratorio originally conceived as a five-part vocal-symphonic work for soloists (baritone, tenor, mezzo-soprano), chorus and orchestra. Composed in 2018, it is dedicated to the memory of the victims of the First World War. The work has come to public life in stages. First, an arrangement (2019) of the fifth and final part, 'Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead', for mezzo-soprano, violin, organ and SATB choir was premiered on 2 June 2019 in the Carmelite Church, Melbourne, performed by Elisabeth Campbell (mezzo-soprano), Erkki Veltheim (violin), Kim Bastin (organ) and the Astra Choir, conducted by John McCaughey. Then Part V (as it became) was first performed independently on 2 September 2021, when the mezzo Alina Dragnea and the Braşov Philharmonic (i.e., without choir) Orchestra were conducted by Răzvan Apetrei, as part of that year's Enescu Festival.¹ Lastly, to date, Parts I, II and V were given twice, in concerts on 21 and 22 November 2024; this recording features the performance on the second of those evenings. Since there are as yet no plans for a hearing of the full, 45-minute version of the work, I have taken the view that three birds in the hand are worth five in the bush, and so this shorter version must stand service until a fuller realisation comes about.

The scenario provides a framework for reflection on historical moments related to the Great War in Europe and Romania. The title evokes the symbolism that poppies assumed in connection with the First World War, inspired by the renowned 1915 poem 'In Flanders Fields' by Major John McCrae, a Canadian military doctor and artillery commander. The oratorio opens with the charged emotion surrounding the outbreak of

¹ This performance can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsVyaGGkOqw>.

the First World War in Europe, marked by Britain's entry into the conflict, and closes with a prayer penned by Queen Marie of Romania for the souls of soldiers who fell for their country. The work preserves the original languages of its texts: English and Romanian.

Part I, 'Big Ben at Eleven – Declaration of War' [4], evokes the moment when Big Ben, the bell of the Westminster Clock Tower,² struck 11:00 p.m. (midnight in Germany), signalling the expiry of the ultimatum to Germany to withdraw from Belgium and thus Britain's entry into the war. The music draws inspiration from Winston Churchill's account of the event in his memoirs;³ indeed, the text given here was read out in Romanian as a preface to the first performances. The text sung by the baritone includes excerpts from the Declaration of War, delivered by the Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith, on 4 August 1914. The choral texts incorporate newspaper headlines and telegrams announcing the imminence of war, as well as a fragment of the British national anthem.

Baritone:

It was eleven o'clock at night – twelve by German time – when the ultimatum expired. The windows of the Admiralty were thrown wide open in the warm night air. Under the roof from which Nelson had received his orders were gathered a small group of admirals and captains and a cluster of clerks, pencils in hand, waiting. Along the Mall from the direction of the Palace the sound of an immense concourse singing 'God save the King' floated in. On this deep wave there broke the chimes of Big Ben; and, as the first stroke of the hour boomed out, a rustle of movement swept across the room. The war telegram, which meant, 'Commence hostilities against Germany', was flashed to the ships and establishments under the White Ensign all over the world.

I walked across the Horse Guards Parade to the Cabinet room and reported to the Prime Minister and the Ministers who were assembled there that the deed was done.

—Winston Churchill, VIII: The Mobilisation of the Navy, *The World Crisis (1911–1918)*

Chorus:

War! Europe in arms at war! War! War! War! War! Ultimatum expired! Germany didn't retreat! Belgium on fire! Germany didn't answer! All Europe is in arms!

—Newspaper headlines; telegrams

² It was renamed the Elizabeth Tower in 2012 to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

³ Winston Churchill, VIII: The Mobilisation of the Navy, *The World Crisis (1911–1918)*, Thornton Butterworth, London, 1931, p. 136/new edn., Odhams Press, London, 1938, p. 186.

God save our gracious King!
Long live our noble King!
God save the King!

Baritone:

Owing to the summary rejection by the German Government of the request made by His Majesty's Government for assurances that the neutrality of Belgium would be respected, His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin has received his passport, and His Majesty's Government has declared to the German Government that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Germany as from 11 pm on August the fourth.

—Declaration of War by H. H. Asquith, 4 August 1914

Part II, 'In Flanders Fields' [5]: the poem by John McCrae, written after the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April–25 May 1915), first appeared in *Punch* that same year and was later included in *In Flanders Fields and Other Poems*.⁴ It depicts poppies blooming and fluttering among the crosses on the battlefields of Flanders. Their symbolism is intensified by the fact that poppies flourished in soil scarred by explosions and among the graves of soldiers killed during the first large-scale use of poison gas in history. It became the most famous poem of the First World War.

Tenor solo and chorus:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

⁴ G. P. Putnam's Son, London and New York, 1919, pp. iii (autograph facsimile) and 3.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

—John McCrae, 'In Flanders Fields'

Part V, 'Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead' [6], is drawn from the Queen's writings after the Great War.⁵ Nicknamed 'the Mother of the Wounded', Queen Marie was held in deep affection by the Romanian people and especially by the soldiers who, as this prayer shows, fought for her because she was 'their home, their mother, their faith and their hope'. She was active in wartime hospitals, aiding the wounded and comforting the dying, and she played a significant role in post-war diplomacy, contributing to the realisation of what became Greater Romania.⁶

Rugăciunea Reginei Maria pentru cei căzuți

Mă rog lui Dumnezeu pentru toate viețile
jertfite,
mă rog pentru cei care au murit părăsiți și
neștiuți,
mă rog pentru mulțimea celor fără nume,
care aveau același drept la viață ca tine și ca
mine,
mă rog lui Dumnezeu să-i ierte și să dea odihnă
sufletului lor

Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead

*I pray to God for all the sacrificed lives,
I pray for all those who have died abandoned
and unknown,
I pray for the great multitude of them that are
nameless,
each of them having just the same right to living
as you do, or as I do,
I pray to God that he might grant them
forgiveness and rest unto their spirits*

⁵ *Gânduri și icoane din vremea războiului* ('Thoughts and Images from a Time of War'), Pavel Suru, Iași, 1919, p. 157.

⁶ Queen Marie (1875–1938) offers a further British connection: she was born Princess Marie Alexandra Victoria of Edinburgh, being the issue of several royal lines – her father, Alfred, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, was the son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and her mother was the Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia, daughter of Alexander II of Russia and Marie of Hesse and by the Rhine. 'Greater Romania' refers to the inter-war territory of the country, which included present-day Moldova, and thus covered the area inhabited by speakers of Romanian.

în locurile de verdeață, unde nu este nici durere, nici înfrîntare...
căci sute de soldați muribunzi mi-au șoptit cu ultimă suflare că pentru mine luptaseră, pentru că eu eram casa, mama, credința și speranța lor.

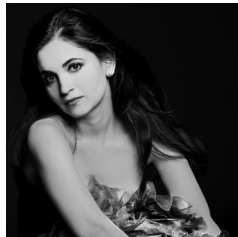
*in those verdant places where there is neither pain nor sorrow.
For dying soldiers in their hundreds whispered to me in their final breathing, it was for me they had battled, I was their hearth and their home, mother, their faith, their belief, their hope.*

—Translation John McCaughey

Diana Țugui, soprano, is widely recognised in Romania for her expressive artistry and versatility. She has performed on numerous national and international stages, bringing to life some of the most demanding roles of the operatic repertoire. Currently a soloist of the Romanian National Opera, Cluj-Napoca, she has also appeared as guest soloist at the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, the Stadttheater in Regensburg and the Teatro Politeama Greco in Lecce, Italy. She is a graduate of the George Enescu Music Academy of Bucharest. The renowned artists with whom she studied include Jaume Aragall, Dalton Baldwin, Teresa Berganza and Viorica Cortez. She has won numerous awards, among them the Lya Hubic Prize for Best Soprano and First Prizes at the Elena Teodorini and Vox Artis International Competitions. She has worked with prestigious orchestras and performed in opera houses and festivals across Europe – in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland – establishing herself as one of the leading Romanian sopranos of her generation.



Teodora Gheorghiu played the flute before focusing on singing. She studied at the Academia de Muzică Gheorghe Dima in Cluj-Napoca and went on to participate in several competitions, including the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition and the Julián Gayarre International Singing Competition. She later furthered her vocal training with David Jones and Nelly Miricioiu. She made her debut in 2003 at the Romanian National Opera, Bucharest, singing the role of the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*. Soon after, she was invited to appear at several European opera houses, such as La Monnaie in Brussels, the Opéra national de Lorraine



Photograph: Caroline Doutre

in Nancy, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, and various Swiss theatres, including the Luzerner Theater, the Grand Théâtre de Genève and the Opéra de Lausanne. In 2007, she was engaged as a member of the ensemble of the Wiener Staatsoper, where she continued to sing regularly until 2010. In 2014 she made her UK debut at Glyndebourne, singing the role of Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, a performance which has been also recorded on DVD. Her first album, *Arias for Anna de Amicis*, alongside the conductor Christophe Rousset, was recorded in 2011; her second, of Lieder in duet with pianist Jonathan Aner, was released in 2012. Recent engagements have taken her back to Romania and led her to France, Spain, Switzerland and Japan. They encompass vocal-symphonic repertoire and roles such as Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Mimi (*La bohème*), Violetta (*La traviata*) and Nedda (*Pagliacci*)

Mariana Colpoș, soprano, graduated from the class of Magda Bălan at the Bacău Music High School; she also studied with Eugenia Moldoveanu and Georgeta Stoleriu. She attended master-classes at the Accademia Teatro alla Scala in Milan as part of the Opera Studies project, obtaining the title of teacher trainer. Within this project, she worked with Renato Bruson, Enza Ferarri, Marco Gandini and Lucian Serra. In 2014, she defended her doctoral thesis entitled ‘The Soprano in Puccini’s Compositions’ and since 2015 she has been an Associate Professor at The National University of Music, Bucharest.



Her solo career began at the Ion Dacian Operetta and Musical Theatre in Bucharest, and in 1993 she became a soloist of the National Opera; between 2010 and 2013 she was Artistic Director of the same institution. She received the distinction ‘Class I Cultural Merit’ bestowed by the President of Romania. Her operatic roles encompass Verdi (Violetta in *La Traviata*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, Desdemona in *Otello*, Abigail in *Nabucco*, Aida), Leoncavallo (Nedda in *Pagliacci*), Puccini (Tosca, Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly*, Manon Lescaut and Mimi in *La bohème*), Gounod (Marguerite in *Faust*), Bizet (Micaëla in *Carmen*), Mozart (Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Idamante in *Idomeneo*) and Richard Strauss (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), and her vocal-symphonic repertoire embraces the Requiems of Mozart and Verdi, Britten’s *War Requiem*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Mahler’s Second, Fourth and Eighth. Her recordings feature arias from classical repertoire and contemporary opera. She has sung with orchestras and opera houses across Europe and taught vocal mastery and

technique courses in the USA, at the National Opera in Bucharest programme and at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, as part of the Erasmus Programme.

The Romanian mezzo-soprano **Antonela Barnat** started her professional career as an oratorio singer in Bucharest during her university studies and sang with the three main orchestras there. From Pergolesi to contemporary composers, her growing repertoire of the genre enabled her to perform alongside most of the main orchestras in Romania and as a guest in concerts in Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Lebanon and Lithuania. Graduation from the National University of Music in Bucharest was followed by her debut at the National Opera House, where she was a permanent guest for thirteen years, performing around 40 roles, ranging from the lyrical and trouser ones by Rossini, Mozart, Bellini, Gounod and developing towards the slightly more dramatic ones: Venus in *Tannhäuser*, Carmen, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Eboli in *Don Carlo*. There followed invitations to perform on all the national operatic stages and at international opera festivals: the George Enescu Festival in Romania, the Festival of the Aegean in Greece, the Gut Immling Opernfestival in Germany and the March Festival in Bulgaria. She is currently a permanent member of the Timișoara Romanian National Opera House ensemble.



Antonela Barnat is frequently involved with contemporary music. She has recorded music by Alexandra Cherciu, *Una Volta alla Corte del Principe* by Felicia Donceanu and Livia Teodorescu-Ciocăneală's *Mysterium Tremendum*. She promoted Aurel Stroe's music on two anniversary tours in Romania, France, Germany and Switzerland, recorded the film-opera *Fidelio bist du!*, performed the mezzo roles in Marc-Anthony Turnage's opera *Greek* in Lithuania and the three mezzo roles in the contemporary-music project *Opera in your Pocket*.

She won first prize in the Rhodes Singing Competition in Greece, second prize in the International Magda Ianculescu Competition in Romania, third prize in the Malmö Singing Competition in Sweden and was finalist in the New Talent competition in Slovakia. She has sung under the baton of conductors such as Leo Hussain, Marek Janowski, Cristian Măcelaru and Cristian Mandel.

Born in Tulcea, Romania, **George Virban** is considered one of the most promising and outstanding lyric tenors of his generation. His refined and sparkling voice makes him perfectly suited for a wide range of operatic roles, such as Don Ottavio, Ferrando, Tamino, Nemorino, Fenton, Alfredo and Lensky, as well as classic operetta characters like Eisenstein, Alfred, Koltay, Sou-Chong, Mister X and Marco Polo.

He began his musical studies in 2009 at the Dimitrie Cuclin Arts High School in Galați, and four years later was admitted to the National University of Music in Bucharest, where he completed both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees by 2019. His international debut came in 2016 as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* at the Saransk Opera House in Russia. He has since won numerous awards at prestigious competitions in Romania and France, including the Jeunes Espoirs Singing Competition in Avignon, the Georges Enesco Singing Competition in Paris and the Virginia Zeani Singing Competition in Târgu Mureș. From 2013 to 2015, he held a scholarship in the Young Talents Programme of the Margareta of Romania Royal Foundation.

His most recent international accolade came in 2024, winning a prize at the inaugural edition of the Sumi Jo International Singing Competition held at Château de La Ferté-Imbault in France. Even during his studies, he appeared regularly as a soloist at the Romanian National Opera in Bucharest and the Ion Dacian National Operetta and Musical Theatre, where he is currently a permanent soloist in the ensemble.

From 2019 to 2021, he was a member of the Opera Studio at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. In the 2023–24 season, he joined the ensemble of the Aalto Theater in Essen, where he performed roles such as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and Valentino in *Fausto* by Louise Bertin. In the 2024–25 season, he returned to the Aalto Theater as a guest artist for his debut as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and covered the role of Tamino in Simon McBurney's production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, followed by a concert tour in South Korea with the internationally renowned soprano Sumi Jo. Also in 2025, he made his debut at the prestigious George Enescu Festival in Bucharest in Enescu's *Vox Maris*, alongside Sinfonia Varsovia, and closed the 2024–25 season in Haifa with a series of performances as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*. The 2025–26 season brought new collaborations with major opera houses, such as the Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv, the Shanghai Opera House, and the Bavarian State Opera in Munich.



Adrian Mărcan, baritone, born in Feleac, Romania, began his music studies at the age of nine at the Music High School in Cluj-Napoca, where he studied cello. After graduating in 1990, he continued at the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy. A year later, his teacher, the renowned Romanian bass Mircea Moisa, recognised his exceptional vocal potential and encouraged him to develop it further. From 1991 to 1996, he studied with Iulian Jurja, Ion Țibrea and Gheorghe Roșu while already singing in the chorus of the National Opera and the Transylvania Philharmonic in Cluj-Napoca. Working with various conductors and stage directors on operatic and vocal-symphonic repertoire, he gained his first stage experience. In the same period, he attended master-classes with Ion Buzea, Eugenia Moldoveanu, Ionel Pantea and Cornel Stavrul.



In 1995 he became a soloist at the Brașov Opera, a collaboration that continues to this day, and since 2016 he has been a soloist of the National Opera in Bucharest, singing over 40 of the mainstream operatic roles. He has worked extensively with opera houses and philharmonics throughout Romania. Between 1996 and 2020, he taught at the Music University in Brașov, first as Assistant (2000–4) and later as Associate Professor (2006–20).

He worked with the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company (2007–8) on a number of national premieres, among them Manuel de Falla's *El retablo de maese Pedro* and Luigi Cherubini's *Il giocoliere*. He also participated in the world premieres of contemporary works, including Gil Shohat's *Eichmann Trial*; Livia Teodorescu-Ciocănea's *Poppy Fields* and *Doamna cu câțelul* ('The Lady with the Dog'); and Dan Dediu's *D'ale Carnavalului*. Between 1995 and 2013, he performed in Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain, with the Brașov Opera ensemble and with other Romanian companies, including the Romanian National Opera in Cluj-Napoca, the Iași Opera, the Theodorini Lyric Theatre in Craiova, the Nae Leonard Musical Theatre in Galați and the Philharmonic Orchestras of Iași, Bacău and Craiova.

Pompei Hărășteanu (1935–2013) was a distinguished Romanian bass, renowned for his ample, noble timbre and commanding stage presence; he was considered one of the most important Romanian basses of the second half of the twentieth century.

He graduated from the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatoire in Bucharest, sang as a soloist at the Bonn Opera between 1968 and 1972, and then as a soloist of the National Opera in Bucharest from 1972. He became known for roles such as Osmin in Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*. He performed dozens of roles in over 8,000 opera performances staged in Romania and abroad and served as General Director of the National Opera in Bucharest from 1994 to 1997. As a soloist of the National Opera, he performed major roles from the Italian, French and Russian repertoires, among them Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov, Filippo II in Verdi's *Don Carlo*, Zaccaria in *Nabucco*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and Ramfis in *Aida*, as well as Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*.

He gave numerous concerts and recitals in Romania and abroad, covering opera, Lieder and oratorio repertoire. He made radio and commercial recordings for Romanian Radio and Electrecord, and received distinctions and honorary titles for his contributions to opera. He supported younger generations through mentorships and collaborations with Romanian musical institutions. He taught at the Lied class of the National University of Music in Bucharest. He was awarded The National Order 'For Merit', knight rank, by the Romanian Presidency in 2002.

Cristian Brâncuși, born in 1951, is a Romanian conductor, composer and educator. A graduate of the National University of Music in Bucharest in orchestral conducting and composition, he pursued advanced studies and master-classes with Igor Markevitch (Weimar, 1975), Witold Rowicki (Vienna, 1976), Sergiu Celibidache (Germany, 1978–82) and at the Vienna Academy of Music with Karl Österreicher.

From 1977 to 1983 he served as principal conductor of the Paul Constantinescu Philharmonic Orchestra in Ploiești,



later holding the same position with the Romanian Radio and Television Studio/Symphony Orchestra in Bucharest. Since 1990 he has been the conductor of the Radio Romania Chamber Orchestra, with which he has presented hundreds of concerts, encompassing a wide repertoire from pre-Classical works to contemporary music. A highlight of his career has been tours with the Radio Chamber Orchestra in South Korea, enthusiastically received by large audiences.

Dedicated to promoting young artists, he has frequently offered them opportunities to appear as soloists, while also collaborating with leading performers from Romania and abroad. A multifaceted musician, he is a member of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania and of the ISCM, and the composer of chamber, orchestral and vocal-symphonic works. Passionate about avant-garde music, he is regularly invited to conduct at specialised events such as the International Week of New Music and the ISCM World Music Days. In 2003 he earned the title of Doctor of Music at the National University of Music in Bucharest.

Cristian Brâncuși has made numerous recordings for radio, television and film, with releases on the labels Electrecord in Romania and Aksak in France. He has toured widely – in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, the Philippines, the United States, Venezuela and Uruguay – earning public ovations and high critical praise.

Another important facet of his work is mentoring young conductors. Since 1992 he has taught orchestral conducting at the National University of Music in Bucharest; among his students, alongside Romanians, are young conductors from Argentina, Greece, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland and the United States. He has given lectures and conference papers, appeared on radio and television, led master-classes in Romania and abroad, and in 2006 published the volume *Musical Aesthetics in Dimitrie Cuclin's Vision*.

Ioșif Ion Prunner is a distinguished Romanian conductor, chorus-master and pianist, with over four decades of artistic activity. He has been associated since 1980 with the George Enescu Philharmonic in Bucharest, where he also served as Deputy General Manager (2018–21). He has been the conductor of the George Enescu Philharmonic Choir for nearly three decades. Born into a renowned family of musicians (Prunner-Silvestri) who have appeared on the Philharmonic stage for over a century, he began studying piano with his father at the age of five. After graduating from



the National University of Music, he pursued an intensive career as a concert and chamber pianist in Romania and abroad (the Czech Republic, Germany, Russia, Switzerland). At the same time, he studied conducting with Constantin Bugeanu and Sergiu Comissiona.

As an orchestral conductor, in addition to concerts and performances with the George Enescu Philharmonic, the National Radio Orchestra and the Bucharest National Opera, he has collaborated with renowned European ensembles such as the Orfeón Donostiarra Choir in San Sebastián, the Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse and the Russian Philharmonic, on major stages around the world. As guest conductor, he has led the Berliner Philharmoniker, Berlin Radio Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and other prestigious ensembles. As a chorus master, he has collaborated with legendary conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Vladimir Jurowski, Zubin Mehta and Kirill Petrenko. His repertoire embraces both classical masterpieces and works by Bernstein, Britten, Enescu, Ligeti, Penderecki and Schoenberg.

Equally active as a pianist, he has performed in more than 2000 concerts across Europe and Asia. Since 1997, he has been Principal Conductor of the Ermil Nichifor National Symphony Orchestra of Medical Doctors. He is also President of the Constantin Silvestri Foundation, honouring the legacy of his uncle, the major Romanian conductor and composer. With frequent tours abroad, he has brought Romanian music to audiences in London, Berlin, Paris, Stockholm, Moscow, Tokyo and beyond.

A faithful performer of the masterworks of the past, **Vlad Maistorovici** is known for balancing established and familiar repertoire with innovation in appearances – as composer, conductor or soloist – at major venues and festivals, such as the South Bank Centre in London, the Musiekgebouw in Amsterdam, the Salle Flagey in Bruxelles, the Studio Ernest Ansermet in Geneva, the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, the Athenaeum in Bucharest, the Great Hall of the St Petersburg Conservatoire, Merkin Hall in New York, Verbier Festival, Spoleto Festival, Enescu Festival, in the company of such orchestras as the London Symphony Orchestra, European Union Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre des Jeunes de la Méditerranée, Sinfonia Cymru Cardiff, Lausanne Chamber



Orchestra, Estonian Sinfonietta, Bucharest Radio Orchestra, under the baton of a variety of conductors, among them Jonathan Berman, Jonathan Bloxham, Baldur Brönnimann, Thierry Fischer, Gottfried Rabl and Neil Thomson. He plays on and is the custodian of the 1751 Nicolò Gagliano violin kindly provided by the Rațiu Family Charitable Foundation.

He has inspired, in collaboration with orchestras or as part of the London-based Mercury Quartet, over twenty new works by composers such as Mark-Anthony Turnage (who composed the *Romanian Rhapsody* violin concerto dedicated to Maistorovici), Charlotte Bray, Jonathan Cole, Steven Daverson, Dan Dediú, Laurent Durupt, Edmund Finnis, Diana Rotaru and Mark Simpson. With the same ensemble he has explored improvisation with *Mercury Acoustic*, an album produced by Gabriel Prokofiev on the Nonclassical label. His passion and admiration for the rock band Queen has seen him venture further into crossover with *QUEENClassics*, where ‘As bandleader, Maistorovici cuts a kind of Stephane-Grappelli-meets-Brian-May figure’ directing ‘classic songs, superbly arranged by Maistorovici’ (Wales Arts Review).

His compositions, published by Universal Edition, are as diverse as the artists and institutions that commission them: from the ‘wonderful swirl of sounds’ (The Classical Reviewer) of *Halo* (commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and recorded on LSO Live), to the ironic dadaist *R.E:MIX* (commissioned by Bucharest International Week of New Music), and the rhapsodic *Concert Transilvan* (premiered by Dmitry Sitkovetsky and the New European Strings). In 2023 he created *Metamorfosen: A Musical Journey into the World of MC Escher* at the Tuinzaal of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag with the New European Ensemble and motion-reactive video projections by DeFrame, as part of the *Escher – Andere Wereld* 125th-anniversary exhibition of M. C. Escher, uniting the music of Bach, Webern, Pärt and Maistorovici in ‘a musical/visual spectacle par excellence’, ‘a brilliant concept, brilliantly executed’ (ArtsTalk Magazine). In 2024 he composed *B.A.C.H.: Passacaglia for solo violin*, commissioned by the George Enescu Festival as the mandatory work at the George Enescu International Violin Competition.

Born in Romania in 1985, he is a former pupil of the Yehudi Menuhin School and Royal College of Music in the UK, the Haute École de Musique in Lausanne and the Scuola di Fiesole in Florence. He had influential violin master-classes with Lera Auerbach, Zakhar Bronn, Anna Chumachenko, Ivry Gitlis, Ida Haendel, Boris Kuschmir, Gordan Nikolich, Ferenc Rados and Gábor Takács-Nagy and at prestigious courses such as Verbier Academy and Keshet Eilon. He studied composition with Oliver Knussen, Magnus Lindberg and Colin Matthews in Aldeburgh, Giacomo Manzoni in Florence and, as a Ph.D., with Dan Dediú in Bucharest. He is a winner of

the George Enescu Composition Prize, the Clive Christian Composition Award, Golden Medal of the Berliner International Competition, The Tillett Trust Performer Platform, Young Concert Artist Trust and Remember Enescu International Competition. He has himself given violin and composition master-classes at the Lilla Akademien in Stockholm, the Dartington International Summer School, Geneva Conservatoire and Bucharest National University of Music. In 2015 he founded *vibrate!festival* with pianist Diana Ionescu, an event that brings together world-class innovative classical artists, reaching out to wide audiences through eclectic repertoire and cross-discipline projects in alternative spaces.

Nabil Shehata, born in 1980, is a German-Egyptian conductor and double-bass soloist, who since 2019 has been conductor and artistic director of the Philharmonie Südwestfalen. He began to study the piano at the age of six under the guidance of his mother; at nine he started double-bass lessons with Thomas Zscherpe. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik Würzburg with Michinori Bunya and subsequently under Esko Laine at the Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. While still a student, he won an audition for the principal double-bass position at the Staatskapelle Berlin and in 2004 was appointed principal double bassist of the Berlin Philharmonic, a position he left in 2008 to pursue his conducting career.

He began his career as a conductor in 2006, enjoying the support and mentorship of Daniel Barenboim, Lawrence Foster, Rolf Reuter and Christian Thielemann. He made his conducting debut in Cottbus in 2007, followed by his first international appearance conducting the Simon Bolivar Orchestra in Venezuela. Since then guest engagements have taken him to the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic, Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, Munich Radio Orchestra, the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Berlin, Robert Schumann Philharmonic in Chemnitz, the Stuttgart Philharmonic, the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra and New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and Kioi Sinfonietta, both in Tokyo. During his tenure as chief conductor at the Kammeroper München (2011–19) he led several new productions and conducted concerts with singers including Okka von der Damerau, Robert Gambill and Waltraud Meier and broadened his



Photograph: Peter Adamik

experience at the Berlin State Opera as an assistant to Daniel Barenboim. He recently made his conducting debut in the sold-out Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg. He has developed a conducting style deeply rooted in chamber music, believing that this approach fosters the kind of music that delivers what audiences, orchestras, and conductors alike desire: unforgettable concert experiences. In January 2025 Daniel Barenboim personally handed over the directorship of the Barenboim-Said Academy Orchestra to him.

As a professor of double bass in Munich and Berlin, as well as a member of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, he has passed on his experience to younger musicians for many years. In his hometown of Verden, between Bremen and Hanover, Shehata founded the 'Maiklänge' chamber-music festival, which is a heartfelt project for him to organise high-quality concerts where he grew up.

In 1947 the management of Romanian Broadcasting decided to establish a Studio Orchestra, which since 1990 has borne the name of the **Radio Chamber Orchestra**. In over 30 seasons, this ensemble has combined the activity of making special recordings in the studio for radio broadcasts with a presence on the concert podium. The promotion of young Romanian conductors and performers is part of the management strategy of the orchestra, which is composed, in turn, mainly of young musicians. Tours outside Romania (to Austria, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, Ukraine and South Korea), CD recordings, television films and participation in the annual George Enescu International Festival in Bucharest and the International Week of New Music Festival have gained the Orchestra the appreciation of the public and music critics alike.

The **George Enescu Philharmonic** is Romania's foremost musical institution, with an uninterrupted history of more than one and a half centuries. Founded in 1868, the Romanian Philharmonic Society, under the directorship of Eduard Wachmann, took for its aim the establishment of a permanent symphonic orchestra in Bucharest, as a means to foster musical culture and gain a wider audience for classical music. Under the baton of its founder, the Orchestra gave its first concert on 15 December 1868. Since the inauguration of the Romanian Athenaeum palace on 5 March 1889, concerts have been held here uninterruptedly. More than just the home of the Philharmonic, the Romanian Athenaeum has therefore also become a symbol of Romanian culture. Wachmann, who conducted the first symphonic orchestra until 1907, was followed by Dimitrie Dinicu (1868–1936), who was succeeded in 1920 by the outstanding conductor George Georgescu (1887–1964), a pupil of Arthur Nikisch.

Georgescu, who held two periods at the helm of the Orchestra (1920–44 and 1954–64), modernised its repertoire and launched its international career, embarking on tours and also inviting to Bucharest some of the leading figures of interwar music, among them Pablo Casals, Alfred Cortot, Herbert von Karajan, Enrico Mainardi, Yehudi Menuhin, Maurice Ravel, Jacques Thibaud, Richard Strauss and Igor Stravinsky. It was also thanks to Georgescu that the orchestra made its first landmark recordings, such as Beethoven's complete symphonies.

After the Second World War, the orchestra broadened its activities, under the directorships of Constantin Silvestri and, again, George Georgescu. The Academic Choir was founded, an outstanding body of vocal and instrumental concert soloists took shape, and various chamber ensembles were established, ranging from orchestras to piano trios. The name of George Georgescu is also linked to memorable concerts given by the Philharmonic Orchestra during the first editions of the George Enescu International Festival. After the war, Mircea Basarab, Dumitru Capoianu, Ion Voicu and Mihai Brediceanu succeeded each other as directors of the Philharmonic. After the death of George Enescu in 1955, the Philharmonic was renamed after this great Romanian musician and composer, thereby keeping his memory alive, honouring his outstanding body of work, and perpetuating his rich legacy.

Since the fall of the Communist régime, the orchestra has been directed by the pianist Dan Grigore (1990), conductor Cristian Mandeal (1991–2009) – under whose baton the Orchestra regained its former brilliance – and director general Andrei Dimitriu (2010–22). The Philharmonic has recorded extensively, producing a body of work that includes the complete symphonies of Enescu and Brahms. In addition to its current 300 or so annual symphonic and chamber concerts, the Philharmonic has made successful tours of Europe, Asia, and the Far East, garnering an international reputation. Since April 2022, the director of the Philharmonic has been the cellist Marin Cazacu, a longstanding soloist and member of the Philharmonic and university professor. During his directorship, the symphonic season has substantially enriched the programme of its concerts, promoting a varied and ambitious repertoire and inviting prestigious international musicians to the Athenaeum.



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Sound engineers: Lucian Zbarcea (*L'Isolement*), Viorel Ioachimescu (*The Annunciation*), Cătălin Duminiță (*Poppy Fields*)



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LIVIA TEODORESCU-CIOCĂNEA Music for Voices and Orchestra

[1] <i>L'Isolément</i> : Cantata for Two Sopranos and Orchestra, Op. 80 (2024)*	19:50
<i>Bunavestire</i> ('The Annunciation'): Cantata for Bass, Soprano, Four Horns and String Orchestra, Op. 23 (1997)	22:44
[2] I Pietă	8:25
[3] II The Annunciation	14:19
<i>Poppo Fields</i> : Oratorio for Baritone, Tenor, Mezzo-Soprano, Mixed Choir and Full Orchestra, in memory of the victims of the First World War, Op. 65 (2018): excerpts*	25:27
[4] I Big Ben at Eleven – Declaration of War	7:21
[5] II In Flanders Fields	9:12
[6] V Prayer of Queen Marie for the Dead	9:04
	TT 68:12

FIRST RECORDINGS, * LIVE

Diana Țugui and Teodora Gheorghiu,
sopranos [1]
Mariana Colpoș, soprano [3]
Antonela Barnat, mezzo-soprano [6]
George Virban, tenor [5]
Adrian Mărcan, baritone [4]
Pompei Hărășteanu, bass [3]
Radio Chamber Orchestra [1]–[3]
Vlad Maistorovici, conductor [1]
Cristian Brâncuși, conductor [2] [3]
George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra
and Chorus [4]–[6]
Iosif Ion Prunner, chorus-master [4]–[6]
Nabil Shehata, conductor [4]–[6]