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Andreea M. Mut

December, 2015

SIGISMUND TODUTA AND SACRED MUSIC IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

An Essay

Presented to

The Faculty of the Moores School of Music

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

Andreea Mariana Mut

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ABSTRACT

Sigismund Toduta is one of the most important figures in twentieth-century Romanian music, but he had the misfortune of living during the communist era when artistic choices were subject to state censorship. Toduta had to walk a fine line between aligning his creative output with the ideology of the state and following his personal artistic views. This reconciliation was particularly challenging for him, as he devoted a substantial percentage of his compositional output to sacred music while the communist society embraced atheism. This study discusses how Toduta reconciled his artistic ideals with the atheist ideology and the censorship of the communist regime. It draws on biographical and stylistic studies that are available almost exclusively in Romanian to illustrate the directions of his work in music. This study also explores Toduta's lifelong admiration of J.S. Bach's music; his constant interest in the Baroque composer is reflected in his explications of Bach's music for Romanian audiences. This study analyzes the musical style of two works for piano. Toduta's *Passacaglia* (1943) is the first work that can be considered part of his overall homage to J.S. Bach. A work written thirty years later, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata* (1974), can be considered part of the same homage to the Baroque master. These two pieces show an evolution of the composer's style; the later piece shows more freedom in the use of form, rhythm, and harmony. Nonetheless, both pieces reveal hidden Christian religious observance; the communist regime's enforcement of atheism made it necessary for Toduta to obscure his spirituality with compositional techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

Although Sigismund Toduță was one of the most highly regarded composers in Romania from the 1940s until his death in 1991, his life and works are unknown to most music scholars in the United States. Toduță gained great recognition in Romanian musical circles through his musical works, musicological studies, and pedagogical career.

Unfortunately, virtually all of the extensive writings about Toduță, as well as Toduță's own writings, are only available in Romanian. This language barrier, together with the socio-political environment of the post-World War II era, drastically limited the international exposure of his life and works. Aside from George Enescu, few Romanian composers had significant exposure outside of Romania in the twentieth century. Part of this lack of exposure was due to the fact that during the communist years (1944-1989), Romanian composers were generally not allowed to travel to Western Europe. Despite these difficult circumstances, Toduță embraced the influx of compositional techniques from Western Europe and combined them with Romanian traditions, aspiring towards a distinct Romanian identity. This study aims to examine the significance of Toduță's contribution to the development of the Romanian modern school of composition.

Toduță had to walk a fine line between aligning his creative output with the ideology of the state and following his personal artistic views. This reconciliation was particularly challenging for him, as he devoted a substantial percentage of his compositional output to sacred music while communist societies embraced atheism. This study discusses how Toduță reconciled his artistic ideals with the atheist ideology and the censorship of the communist regime. It draws on biographical and stylistic studies that are available almost exclusively in Romanian to illustrate the directions of his work in music. The most

important biographical source is *Sigismund Toduță - Destăinuiri, Documente, Mărturii* (Sigismund Toduță – Confessions, Documents, Testimonies), which was published on the occasion of the composer’s birthday jubilee in 2008. Another important source, *Studii toduțiene* (Toduțian Studies), is a collection of the most important stylistic studies on Toduță’s work. Several volumes of the Romanian musicology periodical *Lucrări de muzicologie* are devoted to his works. Several European lexicons include entries about him, proving that he gained recognition in European musical circles during his lifetime.¹

Toduță had a Roman Catholic upbringing, and he developed a lifelong admiration of J.S. Bach’s music. In this study I will discuss two of Toduță’s works for piano. The *Passacaglia* (1943) is the first work that can be considered part of his overall homage to J.S. Bach. Furthermore, I will show that *Prelude-Choral-Toccata* (1974), a work written ca. thirty years later, can be considered part of the same homage to the Baroque master. These two pieces, written thirty years apart, show an evolution of the composer’s style – more freedom in the use of form, rhythm, and harmony. Irrespective of stylistic development, both pieces show his homage to Bach and encode Christian religious observance. Furthermore, both pieces hide the religious references, because after World War II Romania was a communist country and atheism was enforced.

The first section of this study explains Toduță’s contribution to the twentieth-century Romanian compositional school. The second section will explore Toduță’s struggle to cope with the communist pressure. In addition, this section will describe Toduță’s musical output, style, and evolution. The last section will discuss Toduță’s *Passacaglia* and his *Prelude-*

¹ These lexicons include *Encyclopédie de la musique*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, and other major European music encyclopedies.

Choral-Toccata, touching on aspects of style, form, harmony, rhythm, religious references, and the works' relationship to communism.

TODUȚĂ, ENESCU, AND THE ROMANIAN MODERN SCHOOL OF COMPOSTION

Romanian music has a relatively short history compared to the music of Western Europe, and its traditions remain unknown to most of the world today. Romanian music's isolation from the Western tradition was a result of the Ottoman occupation from 1541 to 1878. For over three centuries, the occupation impeded a national cultural growth and the establishment of a tradition of concert music. Instead, the music that was heard at the courts of landowners in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries was primarily of Turkish origin.² During this time, the only sources of inspiration for composers were the oral tradition of peasant music and the sacred vocal music of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Both of these resources contained unison melodies and thus, lacked harmonic content.³

After 1829, when Romanian territories were liberated from the Ottoman occupation, Romanian music gradually started to align itself with the Western tradition. This cultural liberation also led to the establishment of the first symphonic orchestra in 1868, and the inception of professional chamber music groups in 1880.⁴ In the early 1900s, George Enescu (1881-1951) was the first Romanian composer to draw heavily on native folk music, and the first to create a Romanian idiom that would be recognized and appreciated worldwide.

² Cristina Ana Vlad, "Elements of Traditional Folk Music and Serialism in the Piano Music of Cornel Țăranu," DMA diss. (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2013), 4.

³ Ibid., 5.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

George Enescu is widely considered to be the creator of the Romanian modern school of composition. In addition to being the first Romanian composer to combine native folk music with forms and genres rooted in the Western classical tradition, Enescu was among the first Romanian composers to incorporate neoclassical elements into his works. For example, his Suite for Piano op. 1 “Dans le style ancien” (1897), and Prelude and Fugue in C major (1903) make use of imitative counterpoint, canon, and fugue-like techniques.⁵ Toduță followed this compositional path by joining polyphonic structures with archaic chant and folk music, thus creating a synthesis that helped to define his own compositional language.

One of the few American scholars that investigated the post-World War II Romanian school of composition is Nicolas Slonimsky. In his 1965 article “Modern Composition in Rumania,” he remarks that Enescu was still dominating “the minds and the art of musical Romania,” ten years after his death of 1955.⁶ However, Slonimsky finds that Romanian composers were in fact quite prolific. He provides a concise account of the prominent composers from the post-Enescian generation. Along with composers such as Marțian Negrea, Paul Constantinescu, and Mihail Jora, he mentions Toduță, whom he describes as “one of the most eloquent symphonists of Rumania.” In addition, he describes Toduță’s music as possessing “a fine rhetorical quality which is all the more impressive because of the maintenance of classical equilibrium in his melodic, contrapuntal, and harmonic components.”⁷

⁵ Dan Pepelea, “Romanian Musical Neoclassicism – Gateway towards Universality,” *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov*, Series VIII: Performing Arts 6, No. 1 (2013): 42.

⁶ Nicolas Slonimsky, “Modern Composition in Rumania,” *The Musical Quarterly* 51, no.1 (Jan. 1965): 236.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

TODUȚĂ IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

A highly prolific Romanian composer, distinguished educator and musicologist, Sigismund Toduță completed his early studies in Romania. He pursued further studies in Italy. Upon returning to Romania, he had a long and prestigious teaching career. He contributed substantially to the training of other Romanian composers, many of whom are currently at the forefront of the Romanian contemporary musical scene. Toduță published the majority of his works and reached the peak of his pedagogical career during the communist years, and he inevitably faced the censorship of that period.

Toduță's Early Musical Training and Studies

Born on May 17, 1908 in the Transylvanian town of Simeria, Sigismund Toduță grew up in a Roman-Catholic family involved with local musical activities. His father, Gheorghe Toduță, had been the conductor of Simeria's youth brass band in the early 1900s. In addition, his uncle Ioan Toduță, directed Simeria's only choir between 1919 and 1923. There is no evidence of Sigismund's mother, Rozalia, being involved in public musical activities; however, she nurtured Sigismund's love of music and encouraged his musical education.⁸ Rozalia's maiden name, Rothmüller, suggests that she was of Germanic Saxon descent, even though this is not clearly documented.

During Toduță's early years, Transylvania experienced several political and territorial changes that, in turn, affected the regional and Romanian cultural scene. Transylvania has had a long history of conflicts between its Romanian, Hungarian and Saxon cohabitants throughout the centuries. Inevitably, a fusion of cultures took place in this

⁸ Ninuca Oșanu Pop, Mihai Ghircoiaș, and Ana-Maria Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță - Destăinuiri, Documente, Mărturii* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2008), 11.

region, as each ethnic group tried to impose its culture and traditions over the others. In 1908, the year of Toduță's birth, Transylvania was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The province was annexed to Romania in 1918, after World War I, then given back to Hungary in 1940. After World War II, it became part of Romania again. Naturally, this political instability had an impact on Toduță's upbringing, as the regional cultural scene significantly changed during those years. Little is known about Toduță's first encounter with the piano, or his early musical training. However, it is known that, after completing elementary school in his hometown, he continued his studies at the Roman Catholic High School of Alba-Iulia. During that time, he studied piano with Elisa Rieszner, a pupil of Franz Liszt.⁹

In 1926, Toduță pursued his pedagogical studies at the Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Arts Cluj-Napoca. By 1928 he was studying piano with Ecaterina Fotino-Negru (1902-1991), a respected piano teacher who had studied at École Normale de Musique in Paris. Fotino-Negru, an advocate of the Cortot school of piano playing, had a significant influence over Toduță's musical development. Toduță reserved special praise for Fotino-Negru, later stating "my deep gratitude for the fact that, by means of her guidance, I am a musician today."¹⁰

Between 1928 and 1932, Toduță focused on his piano studies. The repertoire he studied at the Conservatory is undocumented. However, it can be inferred from the Conservatory's standard requirements, which at the time included Baroque, Classical, and Romantic works. In only four years, under Fotino-Negru's guidance, Toduță made

⁹ http://www.sigismundtoduta.org/en/studii_en.php (accessed November 21, 2014).

¹⁰ Sigismund Toduță, "Sub semnul innoirii pedagogiei pianului," *Lucrări de muzicologie* 15 (1984): 66. "profunda mea recunoștință pentru faptul că prin cele agonisite sub îndrumarea sa, astăzi sunt muzician."

remarkable progress; upon finishing his piano studies, he was offered a solo appearance with the Conservatory orchestra playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 under Marțian Negrea's baton. The concert took place in the Romanian Opera house Cluj-Napoca, in June 1932. The other soloist featured in that concert was another student of Ecaterina Fotino-Negru, Géza Szabó. The concert made a great impression on the critics:

The hard work of the teachers from the Academy fully paid off. This year's graduates proved, in the Festival held earlier, real artistic skills. . . . From the class of Miss Fotino-Negru, Messrs. Toduță and Szabó played two piano concertos, under composer Marțian Negrea's baton. Mr. Toduță, endowed with compositional skills as well, played the piano with great dexterity.¹¹

In 1932, after finishing his piano studies, Toduță pursued his compositional studies under Marțian Negrea (1893-1973), a young teacher who had studied at the Vienna Conservatory in the early 1920s. Negrea's influence on Toduță's compositional career is significant because of his strong connection to the German school; in Vienna, Negrea studied with Eusebiu Mandicevschi (1857-1929), a close friend of Johannes Brahms, and Franz Schmidt (1874-1939), a student of Anton Bruckner.

During the same year, 1932, in addition to starting his composition studies, Toduță also launched his pedagogical career. He started as a music teacher at the Greek-Catholic "St. Basil the Great" high school, in Blaj. After four years, in 1936, the Greek-Catholic Episcopacy of Blaj offered him the opportunity to study in Rome for two years. Toduță pursued this opportunity, and arrived there at a time when Rome was a focal point for the cultural scene in Europe.

¹¹ Ninuca Oșanu Pop, Mihai Ghircoiaș, and Ana-Maria Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță - Destăinuiri, Documente, Mărturii* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2008), 15: "Munca depusă de profesorii acestei Academii își dă pe deplin roadele. Absolvenții acestui an au dovedit la Festivalul ce l-au dat mai dăunăzi, reale aptitudini artistice. . . . La clasa domnișoarei Fotino domnii Toduță și Szabó au executat două concerte de pian cu orchestră sub conducerea compozitorului Marțian Negrea. Domnul Toduță, înzestrat și cu calități de compozitor, a mănuit pianul cu multă dexteritate."

Toduță's Studies in Rome (1936-1938)

Toduță's time in Rome enriched his experience as a performer and shaped his views on composition. As Toduță himself mentions, the pianists that made frequent appearances on Rome's public concert scene at the time included Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Walter Giseking, Alfred Cortot and Arthur Rubinstein.¹² Furthermore, world-class conductors such as Richard Strauss, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Willem Mengelberg, and Igor Markevitch led the symphonic orchestras in Rome. The figures that were dominating the new music scene of Rome were conservative composers such as Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968), and Riccardo Zandonai (1883-1944). In 1932, these composers joined with other reactionaries and signed a manifesto denouncing the avant-garde, and recommending a return to tradition.¹³

Toduță lived and studied in Rome from 1936 to 1938. During his time in Rome, he attended advanced courses at Academia Santa Cecilia, studying with two of the most influential figures of Italian music at the time: Alfredo Casella (piano) and Ildebrando Pizzetti (composition). Casella had returned to Italy in 1915, after being a student and assistant of Alfred Cortot at the Paris Conservatory. During his time in Paris, Casella developed great enthusiasm for the music of Enescu, who had been one of his close friends.

In turn, Casella made a great impression on Toduță, who wrote:

Alfredo Casella, like Enescu, was a complete musician who truly displayed the qualities of a brilliant conductor, composer and world class performer. . . . Casella accepted me at Academia Santa Cecilia, in his advanced piano class. For two years, I benefited from a unique artistic experience.¹⁴

¹² Despina Petecel, *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie* (București: Editura Muzicală a UCMR, 1995), 75.

¹³ Guido M. Gatti, John C. G. Waterhouse, "Pizzetti, Ildebrando," *Grove Music Online* (accessed October 15, 2014).

¹⁴ Despina Petecel, *Muzicienii noștri se destăinuie*, 74.

Toduță also showed great admiration for his composition teacher, Pizetti, claiming that he truly deserved to be called “Palestrina of the new Italian music” and explaining: “Ildebrando Pizetti has fascinated the listeners with the erudition of his thinking, and with the nobility of his creation, which is deeply rooted in the great Italian tradition.”¹⁵

Toduță supplemented his Academia Santa Cecilia studies by attending classes in Gregorian chant, organ, and sacred music composition at Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra. His study of sacred music culminated in his doctoral dissertation: a theoretical analysis and edition of several manuscripts by Giovanni Francesco Anerio (1567-1620). The defense of his dissertation, “Analisi di *Responsoria feriae quintae, sextae, et Sabbati in Hebdomada Sancta quator vocibus, una cum duobus Passionibus Matthaei et Joannis, e della Missa Lateranensis septem vocibus concinenda*, opere giovanili sconosciute di Giovanni Francesco Anerio,” took place on November 14, 1938.¹⁶ On that day, Toduță became the first Romanian composer to be awarded a doctorate in musicology.

The years of World War II brought significant changes in Toduță’s life. He left Rome in 1938 to resume his teaching career in Blaj, Romania. In 1943, he left Blaj to take an assistant repetiteur position at the Conservatory of Music Cluj-Napoca. Shortly afterwards, in the winter of 1943, he was drafted into the army. In a letter dated May 19, 1944, he mentioned that he had suffered a leg injury; luckily, he had been able to get medical assistance immediately, and the wound did not affect his ability to walk.¹⁷

¹⁵ Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 29.

¹⁶ Dan Voiculescu, “Sigismund Toduță și doctoratul în muzicologia din România,” *Muzica* 2 (1998): 115.

¹⁷ Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 59.

Toduță's Pedagogical Career and Compositional Output

After the end of the war, Toduță returned to Romania and started teaching at the Cluj Conservatory. Over the next twenty-five years, he had a long and prestigious teaching career there. He taught almost all theoretical disciplines: theory and solfeggio (from 1948 to 1949); harmony, counterpoint and composition (from 1949 to 1955); and then exclusively composition (from 1955 to 1973). By teaching composition for a quarter century, Professor Toduță contributed substantially to the training of about twenty composers, many of whom are currently at the forefront of the Romanian contemporary musical scene.

His own early success as a composer came in 1940, when his work *Variations on a Folk Theme "Trecui valea"* was awarded the George Enescu Composition Prize. Toduță shared his thoughts about his first composition prize in an interview in November 1983:

The big event for me occurred in 1941 when, to my surprise, a work of mine, one that I consider an early work, showing clumsiness and little artistic skill, *Variations on a Folk Theme "Trecui valea,"* won the George Enescu prize. This first contact with the great maestro, one that made him learn about my humble existence, was the first big impulse [for me] to continue on this path. It probably constituted an assertion, coming from George Enescu, that it would be worth [for me] to continue on this path, to make my voice heard in the compositional field, at least in Transylvania, since I am a Transylvanian.¹⁸

Throughout the years, Toduță garnered numerous other honors for his compositions: the Robert Cremer Prize (1943), the State Prize (1953, 1955), several prizes of the Composers' Union (1973, 1976, 1978), the title Emeritus Master of Arts (1957), the George Enescu Prize

¹⁸ Ibid., 46. "Dar marele eveniment pentru mine s-a produs odată cu anul 1941 când, spre mirarea mea, o lucrare a mea, pe care eu o consider o lucrare de început, investită cu toate stîngăciile și cu slovele așternute cu puțină pricepere artistică, lucrarea "Variațiuni pe o temă populară Trecui valea" a obținut premiul "George Enescu." Acest prim contact prin care marele maestru a luat cunoștință de modesta mea existență, a fost primul mare impuls pentru a continua drumul început. A constituit probabil o afirmare, venită din partea lui George Enescu, că aș avea unele șanse în continuarea acestui drum, de a rosti unele silabe în domeniul creației muzicale, cel puțin în perimetrul Transilvaniei, pentru că sunt transilvănean."

of the Romanian Academy (1957), and The Grand Prize of the Composers' Union (1983). With a rich and varied musical output, three oratorios, nine concertos, five symphonies, a hundred choruses, fifty-four lieder, nine sonatas, and sixty-seven instrumental pieces, Toduță is recognized as one of the first composers to have developed a genuine personal style in twentieth-century Romanian music.¹⁹ The majority of his works were published by Editura Muzicală (Bucharest); his other publishers include Editura MediaMusica (Cluj-Napoca), Editura Mentor (Timișoara), VEB Hofmeister (Leipzig), Gerig (Köln), and Peters (Leipzig).

Toduță's compositional output has been divided into two periods: 1933 -1958 and 1959 - 1991. Vasile Herman claims that Toduță's use of harmony and chromaticism is the essential factor in delimiting his compositional periods. Herman identifies four stylistic elements of Toduță's musical vocabulary: Medieval chant (Gregorian and Byzantine), the tradition of Western classical music, Romanian folk music, and the musical heritage of the early twentieth-century Romanian composers.²⁰

In his first compositional period, Toduță displayed a diatonic language, colored with modal inflections. The most representative works of this period are Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano (1953), Sonata No. 1 for Flute and Piano (1952), and Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1955). During his second period, he turned towards heterophony, and a more intensely chromatic modalism. Some important works of the second period are *Miorița*, a ballad-oratorio for soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra (1957-58), Concerto for Wind Instruments and Percussion (1970), and Symphony No. 3 (1974).

¹⁹ *Dicționar de mari muzicieni* (2000), s.v." Toduță, Sigismund."

²⁰ Vasile Herman, "Formă și stil în creația compozitorului Sigismund Toduță," *Lucrări științifice ale cadrelor didactice* (1986): 20.

In addition to establishing himself as a well-respected composer and professor, Toduță also pioneered in Romanian musicological field. In 1970, he became the first professor entrusted with the supervision of doctoral studies in musicology in a Romanian university, the Gheorghe Dima Conservatory of Music in Cluj-Napoca; the Dima Conservatory is one of Romania's most important conservatories. He made his mark on the subsequent generation of Romanian composers by supervising a significant number of musicological and theoretical studies. The doctoral theses published under his guidance cover a wide range of musical disciplines: history of Romanian music, folk music, aesthetics, semiotics, modal theory, and harmony.

Toduță's greatest contribution to Romanian musicological research is his study *Formele muzicale ale Barocului în operele lui J. S. Bach* (Baroque Musical Forms in J.S.Bach's Works), published in three volumes (1969, 1973, 1978). Toduță declares that his study is not a treatise on composition, but rather "an incentive to the comprehension of Baroque music, as reflected in J.S.Bach's works."²¹ The three volumes include studies on the Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach, Twelve Short Preludes, and Six Little Preludes (volume 1); Two Part and Three Part Inventions (volume 2); and variations and rondos (volume 3). His study was originally planned as a five volume series, however, the last two volumes, analyzing *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, were never written.

Toduță's Career under Communism

During Toduță's years as a teacher at the Conservatory, Romania experienced a new cultural era. The end of World-War II also brought significant political changes that inevitably impacted the musical scene. In 1945, the Yalta agreement made Romania part of

²¹ Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 124.

the Soviet system, and a communist government was installed. This represented the beginning of a new cultural system imposed on Romania by Russia.

Since Toduță wrote the majority of his works during the communist years, he inevitably faced censorship. There are several articles in local newspapers and periodicals proving that he was subject to ideological pressure. A 1952 article in *Contemporanul* spelled out the limits of what was culturally acceptable. It claimed that cosmopolitanism was the greatest danger for composers, critics, and musicologists. Cosmopolitanism permeates music through formalism. Formalism implies the abolition of melody, the use of atonality, the use of dissonance and sound effects as ends in themselves, and the lack of unity between music and text. The article also stated that

One of the unrealistic trends, most dangerously decadent, is impressionism. . . . By trying to convey external and isolated aspects of reality as subjective impressions, impressionism uses refined, subtle resources, and explores harmonic and orchestral effects in order to hide the lack of ideas. . . . The influence of impressionism is manifested in Theodor Rogalski's *Trei dansuri românești* for orchestra, Sigismund Toduță's *Sonatina* for piano, and Mex Eizicovici's *Sonatina* for violin and piano. . . . The progressive composers, critics and musicologists consider the fight against all forms of cosmopolitanism as a chief task of every musician who loves his country and wishes for the progress of musical art.²²

Another 1952 article in *Făclia Ardealului* provides a review of the pedagogical and compositional activity at the Gheorghe Dima Conservatory. After acknowledging the

²² "Despre dezvoltarea muzicii în R.P.R.," *Contemporanul*, February 8, 1952, in Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 78. "Unul dintre curentele antirealiste, decadente cele mai periculoase, este impresionismul. . . . urmărind redarea unor aspecte izolate și exterioare ale realității sub formă de impresii subiective, impresionismul folosește mijloace rafinate și subtile, exploatează efecte armonice și orchestrale pentru a ascunde sărăcia de idei. . . . Influențe ale impresionismului se manifestă în "Trei dansuri românești" pentru orchestră" de Teodor Rogalski, în "Sonatina pentru pian" de Sigismund Toduță, și în "Sonatina pentru vioară și pian" de Max Eizicovici. . . . Compozitorii, criticii și muzicologii progresiști consideră combaterea hotărâtă a cosmopolitismului sub toate formele lui ca o sarcină de căpetenie a fiecărui muzician care își iubește patria și dorește progresul artei muzicale."

initiative of several professors (including Toduță) for collecting folk music from Transylvania, the author states

Still, there are many essential shortcomings at the Conservatory. . . .The Composition Department, led by professor S. Toduță. . . . neglected training students in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist aesthetic. As a negative consequence of this, a complete neglect of the vocal, choral genre has been noted, in favor of instrumental music. It is known that the dominant factor of the mass musical culture is vocal music, and the hypertrophy of instrumental music is a result of the abstraction and decadence of the bourgeois Western music.”²³

Several other reviews reveal the same attitude towards music that is too complex to be appealing to the masses. In a 1951 article in *Lupta Ardealului*, one critic observes that “one of the most valuable choral works written in Cluj, *Hora*, by S. Toduță, is impressive because of its ample sonority, complex polyphonic structure, and melodic and rhythmic variety;” however, he claims that the work suffers as a whole because of its complexity which seems forced, making it too challenging even for professional choirs.²⁴ The same year, another critic reviewed Toduță’s *Sonatina* for piano in *Scânteia*:

I also listened to Sigismund Toduță’s *Sonatina* for piano, and Max Eisicovici’s *Sonatina* for violin and piano. There is no doubt that these works are very interesting, hence I want to advise these composers to free themselves from the influence of the impressionism that can be heard in these works as soon as they can.²⁵

²³“Pentru întărirea activității Conservatorului ‘Gheorghe Dima’,” *Făclia Ardealului*, April 9, 1952, in Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 79.”Cu toate acestea însă în munca Conservatorului se pot constata încă multe lipsuri esențiale. . . . Catedra de compoziție de limba română, condusă de profesorul S. Toduță. . . neglijând formarea studenților în spiritul esteticii marxist-leniniste. Ca o consecință negativă a acestei atitudini s-a constatat neglijarea complectă a genului vocal, coral, în favoarea unei exclusivități instrumentale. Ori e știut că factorul dominant al culturii muzicale de masă, este muzica vocală, corală și că hipertrofia muzicii instrumentale este o urmare a abstractizării și decadentei muzicii apusene burgheze.”

²⁴ Ibid., 72. “Suferă prin complexitatea adeseori prea căutată, fapt care face executarea ei greu accesibilă chiar unui cor profesionist foarte bun.”

²⁵ Ibid., 74.”Am ascultat deasemenea sonatina pentru pian a lui Sigismund Toduță și sonatina pentru vioară a lui Max Eisicovici. Este în afară de orice îndoială că ne aflăm în fața a două compoziții foarte interesante și, deaceia vreau să urez autorilor lor să se elibereze cât se poate de repede de influența impresionismului care se face simțită în aceste sonatine.

After 1951, critics had an increasingly positive response to Toduță's works. A review from 1952 acknowledges the fact that several composers who "made mistakes in the past, falling in the formalist trap, were making a conscious effort to escape it." This critic claimed that Toduță progressed towards a more dramatic form in his latest composition, Sonata for Cello and Piano, after being criticized for the impressionist influences in his earlier Sonatina for Piano. Not only was he rehabilitated by the communist critics for the "progress" he made in his Sonata for Cello and Piano, he was granted the State Prize of 1953 for this work. Furthermore, a 1953 article in *Făclia* salutes Toduță's intention to write a symphonic poem inspired by the great construction sites of the socialist era.²⁶ There is evidence of Toduță's authorization to visit a steel mill in Hunedoara, asking local authorities to offer him any help needed in order to complete this task. However, there is no evidence that this piece was ever written.

Toduță's rehabilitation was not permanent. In the 1960s, his relationship with the communist leaders of the Composers' Union became increasingly tense. According to him, "In 1961. . . the press speculated more and more about the mystical-Catholic character of my works. Balada [Steagului for Soprano, Mixed Choir, and Orchestra], was suddenly considered to be a religious work, one that could be dedicated to a figure of the church." Furthermore, Alfred Mendelsohn, the communist party secretary of the Composers' Union, disapproved the fact that Toduță chose to publish his Sonata for Oboe in Leipzig with the Hofmeister Publishing House; Mendelsohn considered this an act of "betrayal that needed to be sanctioned."²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., 80.

²⁷ Ibid., 101.

In spite of these tensions, in 1962 Toduță was appointed rector of the Gheorghe Dima Conservatory. Moreover, he started receiving international recognition; in 1965 he was invited to be a jury member of the International Frédéric Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. In 1970 he was offered yet another position as Director of the Transylvania State Philharmonic Cluj-Napoca. Upon his appointment as Director, Toduță sent a letter to the Communist party leadership, addressing the institution's major financial problems. He also requested the establishment of a full-time professional choir that would enable him to present to the public masterpieces of the choral-orchestral literature. After eight months, since his efforts were unsuccessful and none of his requests were granted by the party leaders, Toduță signed his resignation letter. However, his resignation was not approved, and he continued as Director of the Philharmonic until 1974.²⁸

After rejecting Toduță's resignation letter, the Communist leaders decided to grant his main request. In a letter dated May 1972, the Minister of Education informed Toduță that his petition for the establishment of a permanent Philharmonic Choir had been approved. Thus, due to Toduță's efforts, a professional choral ensemble came into being, one that quickly became one of Romania's most prestigious choral ensembles. The choir's first tour to Italy took place in 1976, followed by a 1981 invitation to perform in the Lucerne Festival. During the following years, they were also invited to perform in Spain, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, and Israel.²⁹

Even though Toduță held highly regarded positions in the Romanian musical scene, he had to face strict communist regulations and restrictions, which eventually had a negative impact on his health. In the 1980s, his vision began to deteriorate, and his doctors urged him

²⁸ Ibid., 139.

²⁹ <http://en.filacluj.ro/index.php/about-us-philharmonic> (accessed December 2, 2014).

to seek treatment in Germany. Perhaps suspecting that he might seek asylum there, the government officials did not allow him to receive a passport so he could not travel to Germany. In order to avoid any risks, the doctors in Bucharest decided to remove his eye. Hans Peter Türk (n.1940), composer, musicologist, professor at the Cluj Conservatory, and former student of Toduță remarked: “The composer Sigismund Toduță, Emeritus Master of Arts, was denied, in a crucial moment of his life, the support he greatly needed!” Furthermore, Türk claimed that Toduță expressed his disappointment by stating that the loss of his eye was less painful than the distrust he was shown by the government.³⁰

Despite the fact that Toduță garnered many honors and prizes under the Communist regime, and had a prestigious compositional and pedagogical career, he was not one of those composers who devoted themselves to writing music that praised the communist ideology, and the creation of a “new man,” in order to be promoted to the forefront of Romania’s musical scene. Nevertheless, looking at his catalogue of works, three titles stand out as having communist connotations: *Imn pentru pace* (Peace Hymn) written in 1956, *Cântec pentru pionieri* (Pioneers’ Song) of 1976, and *...pentru pace* (... For Peace) written in 1987. These pieces were probably written as a result of continuous ideological pressure. As Dan Voiculescu, musicologist and former student of Toduță, noted, *...pentru pace* is “deliberately modest, even terse, being an adequate response to the cult of personality.”³¹ After Toduță’s death in 1991, Voiculescu and Türk discovered two unpublished manuscripts dated 1974, hidden in Toduță’s house. Both of them were religious works: *Liturghia nr. 2 pentru cor mixt* (Liturgy no.2 for Mixed Choir), and *La râul Babilonului* (At the River of Babylon). They were published posthumously, receiving their premieres on May 17, 1992, and May

³⁰ Oșanu Pop, Ghircoiaș, and Bularca, eds., *Sigismund Toduță*, 157.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

17, 1993, respectively. Toduță's choice to not publish these sacred works demonstrates his fear of the system, or perhaps his understanding that these works would never get approval for publication due to widespread censorship.

HIDDEN RELIGIOUS REFERENCES IN PIANO WORKS BY TODUȚĂ

Toduță had a lifelong admiration for J.S. Bach's music. This is reflected in many of his keyboard works. Toduță's *Passacaglia* (1943) is the first work that can be considered part of his overall homage to J.S. Bach. A work written thirty years later, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata* (1974), can be considered part of the same homage to the Baroque master. These two pieces show an evolution of the composer's style. Nonetheless, both pieces reveal hidden Christian religious observance. Such subversive compositional techniques were necessitated by the communist regime's enforcement of atheism.

Passacaglia

Toduță's *Passacaglia* represents his first published work. The theme of the *Passacaglia* is a star song (*cântec de stea*), a type of Romanian Christmas song with a religious text. The piece is structured as a set of baroque ostinato variations on the star song. The theme of the *Passacaglia*, *Doamne Isuse Cristoase*, (Lord Jesus Christ) was first published in a book of *colinde* collected by George Breazul.³² According to Sabina Păuța Pieslak, Romanian *colinde* and star songs are "not simply festive Christmas carols in the sense of many Western European carols."³³ Rather, she claims, the *colinda* occupies a

³² George Breazul, *Colinde* (Bucuresti: Ed. Fundatiei Culturale, 1935), 281.

³³ Sabina Păuța Pieslak, "“Lenin in Swaddling Clothes’: A Critique of the Ideological Conflict between Socialist State Policy and Christian Music in Cold War Romania,” *Current Musicology* 78 (Fall 2004), 8.

sacred space within the history of Romania, playing a key a role in considerations of Romanian ethnic, religious, and national identity.

Although both *colinde* and star songs both correspond to winter caroling practices of the Orthodox Church, there are a few features that make them distinct from each other. As Păuța Pieslak observes, *colinde* are typically performed from Christmas Eve to Epiphany by groups organized according to age or gender. *Colinde* are usually translated as “carols,” and their themes vary, including the celebration of Christ’s birth, pre-Christian winter solstice rites, and blessings of prosperity, joy, and health addressed directly to their listeners. Star songs, on the other hand, are generally entirely on religious themes, and they are performed by groups of children who represent the Magi and carry an ornament representing the star of Bethlehem from one household to another.³⁴

There is an intrinsic connection between the star song *Doamne Isuse Hristoase* and Toduță’s *Passacaglia*; not only did he preserve the melodic and rhythmic skeleton of the star song as the theme, he conceived the whole structure of the *Passacaglia* around its text. In fact, the first page of the manuscript of the *Passacaglia* consists of the text of the song, structured in twelve stanzas that correspond to the twelve segments of the piece (the theme and eleven variations).

There are three different sources for the *Passacaglia*: Toduță’s manuscript (1941) and two printed editions (1944 and 1957). The manuscript and its first printed edition both include the subtitle *Cântec de stea Doamne Isuse Cristoase* (Star song “Lord Jesus Christ”). As discussed above, the first printed edition consists of the theme and eleven variations, and it is dedicated to the distinguished pianist and professor Ana Voileanu Nicoară, who premiered it. A 1957 reprint, released under the Romanian communist regime, however,

³⁴ Ibid.

presents a version with twelve variations, and does not include the subtitle. Thus, it avoids making the connection between the *Passacaglia* and an archaic religious text. The revisions may have been made in order to align the work with the communist ideology, which embraced atheism. Although I chose to focus on the 1957 version, I will also discuss the significant differences between the 1941 and 1957 editions.

Despite the fact that it is one of his early works, Toduță's *Passacaglia* illustrates his profound understanding of Baroque techniques and his compositional craft. What begins as a simple Romanian folklore melody turns out to be a grand architectural structure. In fact, several Romanian scholars have discussed the connection between Toduță's *Passacaglia* and J. S. Bach's *Passacaglia* for Organ in C minor. The generally accepted idea is that Toduță wrote his *Passacaglia* as a direct response to Bach's, which he thoroughly analyzed it in his third volume of his study of Bach's works. However, Toduță's theme in fact is laid out in quite opposite ways compared to Bach's. Bach's theme has an up-beat anacrusis that leads to a downbeat that carries harmonic and melodic weight through the longer duration (see Example 1). Toduță's theme is based on the *giusto* syllabic system (short-long), having the accent on the downbeat even though the notes on the downbeat have shorter durations than the notes in the later part of the measure (see Example 2).

Example 1. Bach, *Passacaglia* in C minor BWV 582, mm. 1-8



Example 2. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Theme, mm. 1-8. Star song *Doamne Isuse Hristoase* in soprano line.



Toduță translates the poetic meter of the Romanian folk song text into musical rhythm and then varies it throughout (see Table 1). The meter of Toduță's theme is iambic or, short-long, while the meter of Bach's theme is trochaic, or long-short. Furthermore, Bach's C minor theme is strongly anchored in its tonal-functional harmonic pillars of every downbeat, whereas Toduță's theme employs the Aeolian mode. One of the defining melodic characteristics of Toduță's theme is the leap of a fifth; he also inserted the interval occasionally into the variations. Another feature of the theme is its descending melodic contour, which is a characteristic of folk melodies.


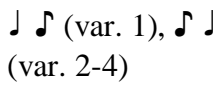
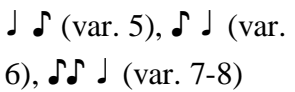
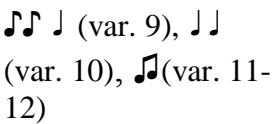
Table 1. Toduță's *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Rhythmic profile of the theme

Metrical foot	Musical notation	Time signature	Variation
trochaic (corresponding to the text of the <i>stea</i> song)	♪ ♪	triple	I, V
iambic	♪ ♪	triple	II, III, IV, VI
anapest	♪ ♪ ♪	duple	VII, VIII, IX
spondee	♪ ♪	duple	X

Toduță conceived his *Passacaglia* as a slow, gradual buildup that culminates in the last variation. The piece starts out with a simple folk melody in unison octaves, lacking harmonies and contrapuntal treatments. Over the course of the eleven variations, Toduță incorporates more textural layers, weaves countermelodies into the contrapuntal textures, and adds chromatic harmonies, culminating in a final variation that evokes the majestic sound of an organ.

The variations can be grouped according to the particular placement of the theme within the texture (see Table 2). Variations 1, 2, 3 and 4 have the theme in the discant; then it moves among tenor, alto, discant, and bass over the course of Variations 5, 6, 7, 8. Finally it appears in discant in Variation 9, in the alto in Variation 10, and returns to discant in the final two variations. Toduță gradually added layers. The layers are either linear - contrapuntal, vertical - chordal figuration, or combine the two (see Table 2 row 3). For example, Variation 1 consists of the theme and counterpoint, Variation 2 consists of the theme and blocked chords; and Variation 4 consists of the theme, blocked chords, and counterpoint. The theme also has different modal treatments (see Table 2 row 4).

Table 2. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Register, rhythmic profile, texture, modality, and harmonic support of the theme

Variation	Theme	1-4	5-8	9-12
Register of the theme	middle, unison	discant (var. 1-4)	tenor (var. 5), alto (var. 6), discant (var. 7), bass (var. 8)	discant (var. 9), alto (var. 10), discant (var. 11-12)
Rhythmical profile of the theme				
Texture	unison	T+Cs (var. 1), T+block chords (var. 2-3), T+block chords+Cs (var. 4)	T+block chords (var. 5, 7), T+block chords+Cs (var. 6), T+block chords+tremolo figure (var. 8)	T in block chords+Cs (var. 9-10), T in block chords +diminution (var. 11), T in block chords + diminution + organ pedal (var. 12)
Theme modality	Aeolian	Aeolian (var. 1-2), E Dorian (var. 3), A Mixolydian (var. 4)	Aeolian (var. 5-7), E Aeolian (var. 8)	Aeolian (var. 9-11), A Dorian (var. 12)
Harmonic support	-----	<i>Passus duriusculus</i> (var. 2), added sixth chords, seventh chords (var. 3), seventh chords (var. 4)	Seventh chords, augmented chords (var. 5-6), altered chords+ <i>Passus duriusculus</i> (var. 7), altered chords (var. 8)	Added sixth chords, augmented chords, altered chords (var. 9-11), added sixth chords, altered chords, pedal point (var. 12)

Variations 1-4 (Group 1)

By the first variation, Toduță has already abandoned the iambic meter of the theme to a trochaic metrical feel (see Example 3). He alludes to Bach's model by placing tenutos on the notes on the second beat of the measure, thus creating a metrical conflict (placing the

weightiest note on the second beat of the measure shifts the perception of the downbeat to what in fact is the second beat of the measure). The texture is very thin; the theme acts as a cantus firmus, accompanied by a delicate stream of eighth-notes set as countermelody. Both the theme and the first variation lack a sense of functional tonality, partly due to the lack of leading tones; instead, they have a modal Aeolian sound.

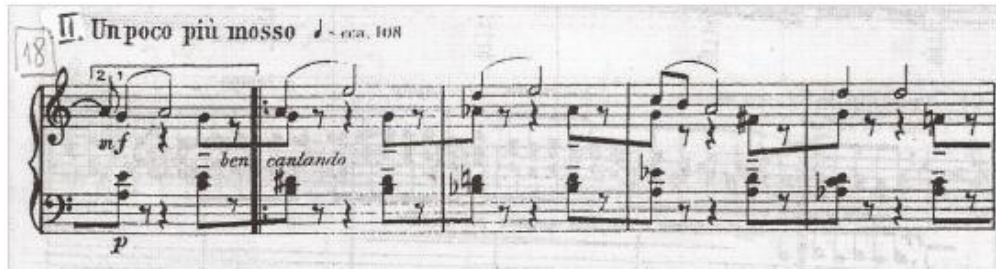
Example 3. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 1, mm. 9-17



In the second variation, the theme returns to the original iambic meter, and it introduces an important textural change: it adds a harmonic dimension that maintains the prevailing A Aeolian sonority established by the theme (see Example 4). As discussed above, up to this point there is no sense of harmony, as the theme is set in unison octaves, and the first variation displays polyphonic writing. In the second variation, the accompaniment consists of blocks of chords that enrich the sonority and gradually expand the range in the lower register of the piano. In the bass line Toduță uses the chromatic tetrachord *passus duriusculus* (melodic fragment spanning a fourth with all chromatic intervals filled in). The *passus duriusculus* harkens back to his illustrious Baroque

predecessors. Toduță juxtaposes the chromatic harmonies in the lower voices onto the diatonic modal theme, creating a unique sonority.

Example 4. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 2, mm. 18-22



The third variation preserves the cantus firmus in the discant, launched in the E Dorian area (due to the C#; see Example 5). Toduță uses this particular modal area only in the first and the last measures of the variation; he builds all the other measures on altered chords, creating a colorful and chromatic harmonic movement. To accompany the theme, Toduță uses an alternation of parallel second inversion and first inversion chords. There is still a clear distinction between the diatonicism of the theme and the chromaticism of the chordal accompaniment.

Example 5. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 3, mm. 28-31



The fourth variation expands the range even further (see Example 6). It has a four-layer texture: the bass line, which is reminiscent of an organ pedal bass line; a middle

harmonic layer that moves homorhythmically with the bass line, completing the harmony; and two upper layers comprising the thematic cantus firmus and a continuous sixteenth-note counter melody. The counter melody builds momentum through increased rhythmic activity.

Example 6. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 4, mm. 36-39



Variations 5-8 (Group 2)

The fifth variation, marked *Tranquillo come un soffio* (murmur), marks a detensional move as the tempo slows down from $\text{♩} = 126-132$ to $\text{♩} = 94$ (see Example 7). In addition, there is a significant change in texture, compared to the previous variation. The musical material is now reduced to a *pp* alternation of first inversion and second inversion close position chords that allow for some rhythmical flexibility (as demanded by Toduță's markings *movendo*, *esitando*). Despite the concentrated and thick chordal texture, Toduță marks the variation *leggerissimo*, *e con una agogica particolare*. This gives the sonority a shimmering, almost impressionistic quality. Regarding harmony, this variation is similar to Variation 2, being settled in the Aeolian mode. The theme per se occurs only in the second half of the variation, and it is set as a trochee, similar to Variation 2.

Example 7. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 5, mm. 44-49



The sixth variation has two distinct textural levels: the discant, consisting of a sixteenth-note counter-melody, and a combined homophonic melodic-harmonic layer, incorporating the theme in the alto line, and altered chords that offer harmonic support in the lowest voice (see Example 8). The melismatic counter-melody in the discant is marked *flautato con rilievo* (in the manner of a flute, in relief). The term *relief* comes from the Latin verb *relevo*, to raise, and it is a term used in sculpture. To create a sculpture in relief is to carve into a flat surface (usually wood or stone), giving the impression that the sculpted material has been raised above the background plane. Toduță's use of a sculptural technique term demonstrates his understanding of music almost in an architectural way, with a clear distinction between the different layers of the texture.

Example 8. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 6, mm. 61-64



Another significant feature of the counter-melody is that it incorporates the melodic leap of a fifth from the theme, as well as its downward melodic contour. Therefore, it seems

to assume a melodic identity of its own; it is not a quiet background commentary. Instead, it is longer, more rhythmically active, and more melodically developed than the countermelodies from the previous variations. Bach employs this type of texture in his *Passacaglia* in C minor as well (see Example 9).

Example 9. Bach, *Passacaglia* in C minor BWV 582, mm. 79-87



The harmonic language of Toduță's *Passacaglia*, Variation 6, consists of seventh and ninth chords with altered tones. In addition, chromatic passing tones in the discant create local modal deviations. However, the variation ends in the A Aeolian modal area.

The seventh variation offers a significant dramatic contrast. The sudden *ff* outburst of the theme in the high register is supported by complex, dissonant chords on the downbeats of each measure (see Example 10). Here, the horizontally-layered texture of the previous variation is replaced by contrasting static blocks of sound, which slide down chromatically, following the *passus duriusculus* outlined in the bass line. The thickness of sound is realized through the use of *sfz. ff* closed position chords on every downbeat; Toduță includes split-

thirds sonorities (mm. 73-75) and chords with added chromatic tones (mm. 77-80). The use of clusters will become a prominent feature of Toduță's late style.³⁵

Example 10. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 7, mm. 73-76



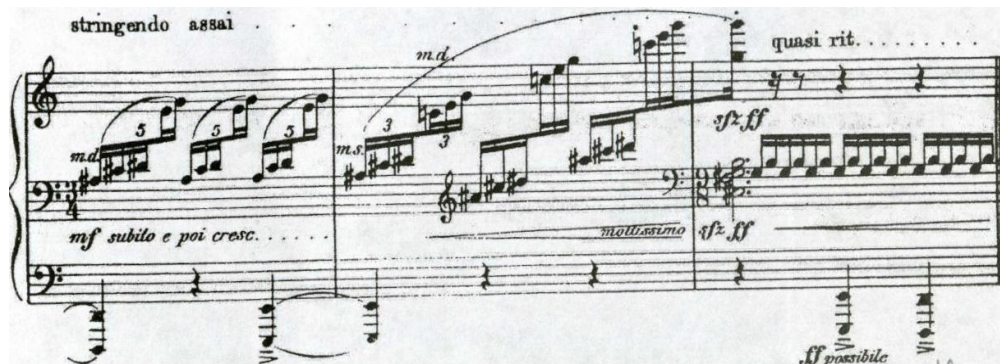
The eighth variation continues with great momentum, increasing the tension accumulated in the previous variation by adding layers of texture. The ostinato theme is now split between the low and high register of the piano. It is presented antiphonally, whereas the middle layer consists of a constant tremolo that adds intensity (see Example 11). The thematic response in the discant is in asymmetrical groupings of sixteenth-notes, and it is marked with terms such as *precipitando*, *stringendo*, *affretare un instante*, every time it appears. This variation is centered around E Aeolian, but it also includes brief whole tone sonorities (m. 91) and juxtaposed tritone sonorities (m. 87). This variation builds up forward momentum by means of *stringendo* and *moltissimo crescendo*, and then it segues to Variation 9 (see Example 12).

³⁵See Dan Voiculescu, "Clusterul în creația lui Sigismund Toduță," *Lucrări de muzicologie* 22: 103.

Example 11. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 8, mm. 81-83



Example 12. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 8, mm. 94-96



Variations 9-12 (Group 3)

The last four variations are grouped in two pairs: 9-10 and 11-12. Their connection is evident through the use of similar figurations, and the consistency of texture and voicing within the pairs. Variations 9 and 10 are set in double counterpoint, as Toduță inverted the musical material between hands, and Variations 11 and 12 are built around a figure consisting of two slurred eighth notes.

The ninth variation starts with an ostinato sixteenth-note figuration that seems to grow out of the constant tremolo of the previous variation. Toduță demonstrates his

advanced compositional craft by using polyrhythms and different meters between hands: the right hand is written in 3/8, and the left hand in 8/8 (see Example 13). The thematic material is presented in chords in the right hand. It starts off-beat, giving the theme a new rhythmic profile — that of the anapest (♩♩♩). This new rhythmic formula is framed in 3/8 meter, and it is juxtaposed with the constant figuration of the bass, written in 8/8.

Example 13. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 9, mm. 100-101

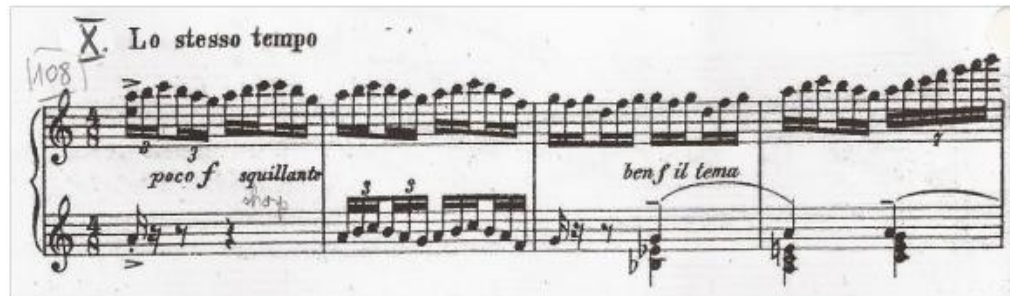


There is a strong resemblance between Variation 9 and a Baroque gigue. The gigue is a lively dance that usually appears at the end of the suite, and so does the variation within the structure of the Toduță's *Passacaglia*. A gigue is usually in 3/8 or in one of its compound meter derivatives — so does Variation 9. A gigue often has accents on the third beat of the bar (true for some of the 3/8 groupings in the right hand of Variation 9). And finally, a gigue usually consists of two sections in which the theme used in the first section is inverted in the second section; Variations 9 and 10 have similar inversions.

As stated above, Variation 10 uses material that is closely related to that of Variation 9. In Variation 10, the musical material of Variation 9 switches between hands: the upper register of the right hand plays the constant figuration, and the ostinato theme is presented in a chordal configuration in the lower range of the left hand (see Example 14). This procedure, double counterpoint, goes back to the 1500s; it allowed composers to maximize material

already presented in a piece. The technique thus serves the artistic principle of unity in variety, presenting the same material in a new way. Invertible counterpoint was also a sign of compositional mastery.

Example 14. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 10, mm. 108-111



The texture displayed in Variation 10 can be observed in Bach's *Passacaglia* as well (see Example 15).

Example 15. Bach, *Passacaglia* in C minor BWV 582, mm. 138-140



Toduță even preserves Bach's sixteenth-note triplet figuration; he frames it within a binary meter, 4/8, and gives the theme a spondee metrical feel (long-long) that, yet again, starts on an off-beat (see Example 14). Thus, the weightiest beat is the second beat of the measure, and it creates metrical dissonance as the two metrical levels are not aligned. The prevailing

harmonic zone of this variation is Aeolian, supported by first inversion and second inversion chords enhanced with chromatically altered tones.

The eleventh variation returns to a ternary meter, and presents the theme in diminution, arranged in groups of two eighth-notes that rapidly move from the piano's middle register to its high register and back (see Example 16). The respective changes of register happen on every beat of each measure, challenging one's agility at the keyboard. The harmonic rhythm is slower than in the previous variations — most measures employ just one harmony. This technique is characteristic of Bach as well, and it can be observed in his *Passacaglia* in C minor (see Example 17).

Example 16. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 11, mm. 122-124



Example 17. Bach, *Passacaglia* in C minor BWV 582, mm. 121-124



The prevailing mode of Toduță's Variation 11 is Aeolian. There is a strong pull towards A throughout this variation, as well as a heightened sense of forward momentum. What makes this variation sound so dramatic is the constant, almost declamatory repetition of the short motive throughout. In addition, there is a sudden change of texture, from the contrapuntal texture of Variation 10 to a homorhythmic texture consisting of chordal blocks of sound on each beat of the measure. According to the metronome marking, ♩ = cca. 168, this should be the quickest variation of the piece. This indication seems to go against the character implied from the texture: in order to gain a growing sonority, the motive has to be played emphatically, with grand gestures that require broadness and large movements, rather than quick, light movement from one chord to another. In addition, Toduță added *tenuto* markings in order to show the shape of the overall melodic structure; those markings, too, require more weight and more time, in order to be realized.

The final variation continues with eighth-notes in groups of two, but on a grand scale (see Example 18). The musical discourse is amplified by the A pedal point, the lowest pitch in the entire piece. The pedal builds up intensity, driving the music to a melodic and harmonic climax at the coda. This variation has an organ-like texture due to the low pedal point and the three-staff writing, evoking yet again Bach's style of writing. The theme is diluted; the initial ascending line articulates the Dorian mode on A, and the following descending gesture stays in the same Dorian, but colored with B ♭ (see Example 18). The final arrival occurs at the coda, where, through a plagal cadence, the final A is reinforced with *ff* chords that cover the entire range of the piano, ending in a grand musical apotheosis.

Example 18. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., mm. 130-134. A Dorian, mm. 130-132



Toduță's tempo markings in the final variation create a sense of rubato: there are eleven tempo markings notated over the course of twenty-one measures. This elasticity of phrasing stems, perhaps, from the suppleness and capriciousness of folk melodies. While the organ-like texture clearly alludes to Bach, the repetition of the brief, melodious motive and the modal language seem to be rooted in Romanian folksong. Toduță thus integrates the characteristics of his native folk music into neoclassical forms and textures.

Differences between the 1941 and 1957 Versions of the *Passacaglia*

There are few differences between Toduță's 1941 and 1957 versions of the *Passacaglia*. He only revised the end of the piece (see Example 18 and 19). They both end majestically; however, the early version is more calm and solemn, marked *con tutta la forza e grave assai*, whereas the later version displays virtuosic writing, and a thicker and much busier texture. In addition, the two versions are contrasting in terms of tempo: the early one moves at a slower, steady pace, whereas the later displays an increased rhythmical flexibility, and moves at a faster, more agitated pace.

Example 19. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1941 ed., Variation 11, mm. 122-125



The harmonic trajectory of the two versions is similar: Toduță uses mostly A Dorian sonorities (sometimes colored with B \flat), as well as several harmonies on the flat side, in both versions. The five-measure coda is also identical. Yet, there is an interesting harmonic shift in the measure preceding the coda: the early version displays an A Aeolian sonority, whereas the later one closes with a plagal cadence, a subtle “Amen” before the end (see Example 20). This may have been Toduță’s way of encoding the religious message in the body of the music, since he was probably advised, if not forced, to remove the religious subtitle of the piece for the 1957 edition.

Example 20. Toduță, *Passacaglia*, 1957 ed., Variation 12, mm. 145-151. Plagal cadence, m. 145.



Toduță's *Passacaglia* is recognized as one of the most important works of Romanian Neoclassicism, and its connections to the Bachian model have been discussed above. Neoclassical features of the piece include the linearity of the polyphonic discourse (as in Variation 1); the expansion of range by means of creating a layered texture (as in Variation 6); the specific contrapuntal treatment (as in Variations 9-10); and the logic of construction and formal balance. Toduță's compositional craft proves to be deeply rooted in Baroque compositional practice. However, he preserves the specificity of the Romanian musical language by using predominantly modal harmonies, melodic figures that strongly evoke vocal folk melodies, and occasional rhythmic liberties associated with such melodies.

Prelude-Choral-Toccata

Prelude-Choral-Toccata, written in 1974, thirty years after the *Passacaglia*, represents the pinnacle of Toduță's pianistic compositional output. It is the most difficult of his piano works from a technical and musical standpoint. Two components define the musical vocabulary of this work: Byzantine chant and Romanian folk music. Toduță alludes to Bach in form, harmony, and rhythm, but more subtly than in the *Passacaglia*.

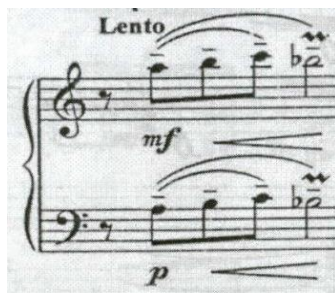
Prelude

The *Prelude*, marked *Improvvisando - Lento*, displays a monophonic texture throughout (except for three chords at the end). Toduță conceived his piece as an expressive melodic arch that is not enhanced with harmony and polyphony. The piece has a rubato melismatic feel throughout; it has no bar lines or time signatures, and it unfolds in a free, improvisatory manner. As in his *Passacaglia*, Toduță builds the *Prelude* as a gradual

accumulation of energy and intensity that culminates in a climax supported by explosive *ff* chords. The unison melody builds intensity and then blooms into sonorous chords.

The *Prelude* grows out of an opening motive, a melodic cell that displays the simplicity of a Byzantine chant (see Example 21). The opening motive represents a slightly modified version of the B-A-C-H motive (B \flat , A, C, B \natural). Toduță switches the arrangement of the pitches in order to give the motive a chant-like ascending melodic contour, rather than the descending contour of the B-A-C-H motive. Thus, Toduță inserts a subtle homage to Bach into the heart of this piece.

Example 21. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Prelude*, opening motive



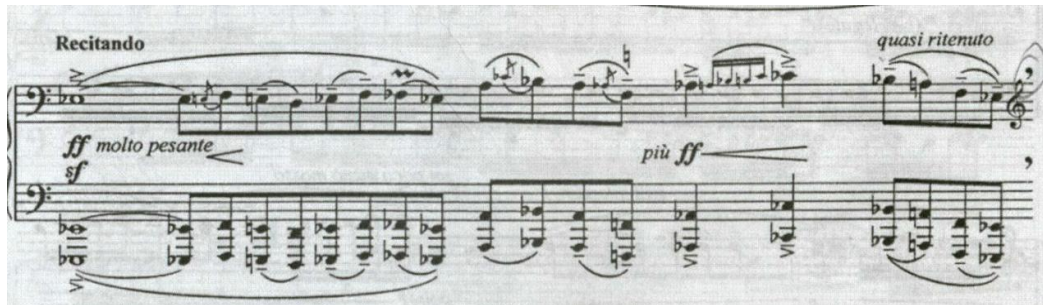
The *Prelude* alternates sections that present the opening motive and *parlando-rubato* sections (see Example 21 and Example 22). The *parlando-rubato* rhythm is a phenomenon associated with Eastern-European folk music. Bartók was one of the first composers to use the term. According to Csilla Mária Pintér and Boldizsár Fejérvári, in Bartók's thinking,

[P]arlando-rubato does not mean complete rhythmic freedom; it is not necessarily accompanied by rubato tempi or rubato modes of interpretation. Musical declamation approximating to the rhythm of speech can be regulated by strict metrical structures, even if these do not follow a regular beat.³⁶

³⁶ Csilla Mária Pintér and Boldizsár Fejérvári, "The Significance of the Varieties of Parlando-Rubato in the Rhythmic Language of 'Bluebeard's Castle,'" *Studia Musicologica* 49, No. 3/4 (Sep., 2008): 371.

Even though he does not designate a meter here, Toduță uses note values and tempo markings in an attempt to recreate the rhythmical peculiarities of folk music — he marks this section with slurs, tenutos, and accents.

Example 22. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Prelude*, 14th system



The melismatic passages in the *Prelude* are highly chromatic; the musical effect is that of a chromatic slide at times. In addition, Toduță uses an octatonic collection in one passage (see Example 23 and Example 24).

Example 23. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Prelude*, 8th system



Example 24. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Prelude*, 23rd system



The Byzantine modal flavor and the chromatic melodic material that wanders quite freely, unrestricted by any bar lines, challenge the ear of the modern Western listener. The meditative atmosphere created by Toduță has an abstract quality, as this piece does not employ more familiar techniques such as regular phrase structure, tonal-functional cadences, or any kind of metrical regularity. Thus, it is harder for the listener to discern the concrete structural elements of musical syntax, and follow the musical “text” he is invited to decode.

Choral

Like the *Prelude*, the *Choral* has no bar lines, nor does it employ tonal-functional cadences or metrical regularity; in addition, it follows the same kind of ascending dynamic trajectory. It starts from an initial *pp*, *sotto voce* unison melody and gradually expands into powerful, chromatically rich chords. The *Choral*, marked *Recitando*, is structured as a dialogue between the unison chant-like melody in the bass and polyphonic commentary in the upper registers (see Example 25). Toduță’s approach is quite different from the more familiar Lutheran chorale idiom — the typical four-part setting of a hymn. Toduță takes a Byzantine *troparion*³⁷ and adds his own musical commentary between its verses. This

³⁷ “collective term for several genres of hymn in the Byzantine liturgy,” Christian Troelsgård, “Troparion,” *Grove Music Online*, (accessed November 16, 2015).

procedure is similar to troping in Gregorian chant practice: by adding new music to pre existing chants, composers added their own voice to the body of liturgical music. Toduță's *Choral*, then, represents a trope on a *troparion*.

Example 25. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Choral*, 1st system



The connection between the *Choral* and the Byzantine chant adds a new level of meaning to this piece, as the chant, *Troparul Înălțării Domnului* (The Troparion of the Resurrection of Christ), is part of the Orthodox liturgy — usually troparia function as poetic intercalations or refrains used in the recitation of psalms, canticles and doxologies.³⁸ The fact that Toduță does not acknowledge the close relationship between the *Choral* and the liturgical chant raises the question of whether he had the liberty to do so. The most plausible answer is that he did not, since this piece was published under the communist regime. Toduță encoded the religious message.

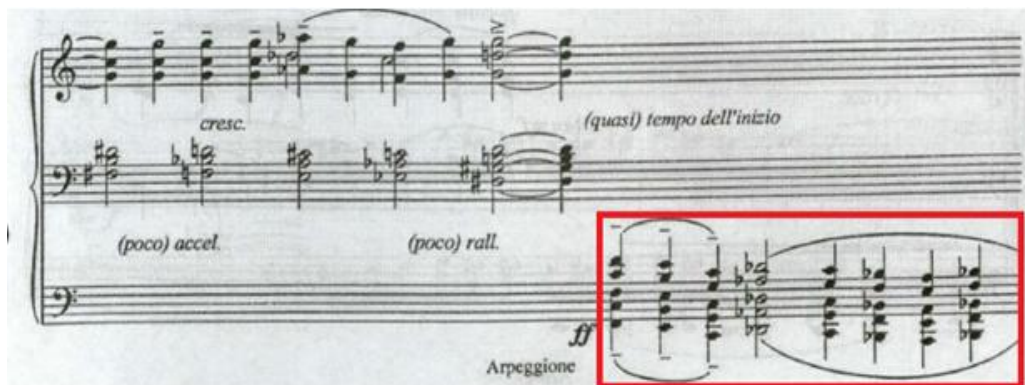
³⁸ Ibid.

Example 26. Ioan Chirescu, *Troparul Înălțării Domnului* (The Troparion of the Resurrection of Christ), chorale arrangement, mm. 1-3



The piece is structured as an alternation of chant segments and subsequent responses. Toduță sets all the verses of the chant in unison octaves in the bass except for the segment at the loudest dynamic, *ff* (see Example 27). This setting of the verse includes sonorities of open fourths and fifths. The harmonic language of the responses is also dominated by open fourths and fifths; this chant segment and the responses move in parallel motion. This technique evokes two different periods of Western music history: Ars Antiqua and the parallel *organum* of the twelfth century, and the chordal planing of late nineteenth-century Impressionism. With these sonorities, Toduță brings together the old and the new.

Example 27. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Choral*, 8th system



As seen in the *Prelude* and the *Choral*, Toduță utilizes unusual tonal and rhythmic structures such as modal and octatonic scales, *parlando-rubato* rhythm, and chordal planing. His intervallic progressions, tonal design, and melodic development at times resemble folk song and Byzantine chant.

Toccata

Toduță's *Toccata* represents another piece that includes folk influences and Western compositional practices. It is one of the most technically challenging pieces in the Romanian pianistic repertoire, displaying dramatic harmonic clashes and agitated virtuosity. The piece is dominated by a sixteenth-note pattern in perpetual motion, once again recalling J.S.Bach's fugal toccata sections. Toduță layers his own musical language onto the traditional features of toccatas. The piano's *moto perpetuo* creates a sound that resembles the sound of the cimbalom, a musical instrument commonly found in Eastern-European folk ensembles.

The hallmark of toccata writing is virtuosity, and Toduță exploits this feature through techniques such as intertwined hands, large leaps, alternating fourths or fifths, and rapidly repeating notes. In the alternation of single and double notes, the interlocking hand position is one of the most characteristic features of this piece (see Example 28).

Example 28. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 7-8



Toduță's *Toccata* is cast as an AB A' ternary form (see Table 3); the A and A' sections have a motoric quality that demonstrates the percussive capabilities of the piano,

allowing for little rhythmic flexibility, whereas the B section includes passages with an improvisatory quality as well as a contrapuntal section (see Examples 29 and 30). The passages include embellishments, unsteady rhythms, and a flexible tempo. The addition of small flourishes and grace notes to the continuous sixteenth notes undermines the rhythmic drive of the first section.

Toduță notates several articulation markings such as tenutos on the first notes of the groupings, as well as accents on unaccented beats; these markings do not appear in the more percussive opening section, which is marked *ugualissimo* (in a very equal manner), and they are the main factors that contribute to liberating the melody from the rhythmic rigidity of the previous section (see Example 29).

Table 3. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, Contour, texture, and rhythm

Section	Characteristics
A (mm. 1-28)	Fifths, fourths, and seconds played in hand-alternation Single linear texture with occasional chordal figuration (mm. 15-16, 19-23) Strict rhythm
B (mm.29-73)	Fifths and seconds still prominent, as well as chordal structures (mm. 29-31); tone cluster-like sonorities (mm. 40-45) Contrapuntal texture (mm. 46-71) that reaches a climax at m. 74 Rhythmical flexibility
A' (mm. 74-101)	Opening pattern with octave doubling Thicker chordal texture, dissonant sonorities (mm. 87-92) Strict rhythm
Coda (mm. 102-116)	Extreme registers, with constant fast figuration, lowest to highest register (mm. 102-116) Thickest chordal texture, most dissonant sonority (mm. 102-103)

Example 29. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 32-33



Example 30. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 46-49, B-A-C-H motive

The contrapuntal part of the B section is reminiscent of the toccatas of the Baroque. Here, the texture has three layers: the ostinato sixteenth-note in the right hand, a middle layer with a quasi-melodic figure, and a pedal point in the lowest register. At the beginning of the segment, the low bass notes outline the B-A-C-H motive (see Example 30).

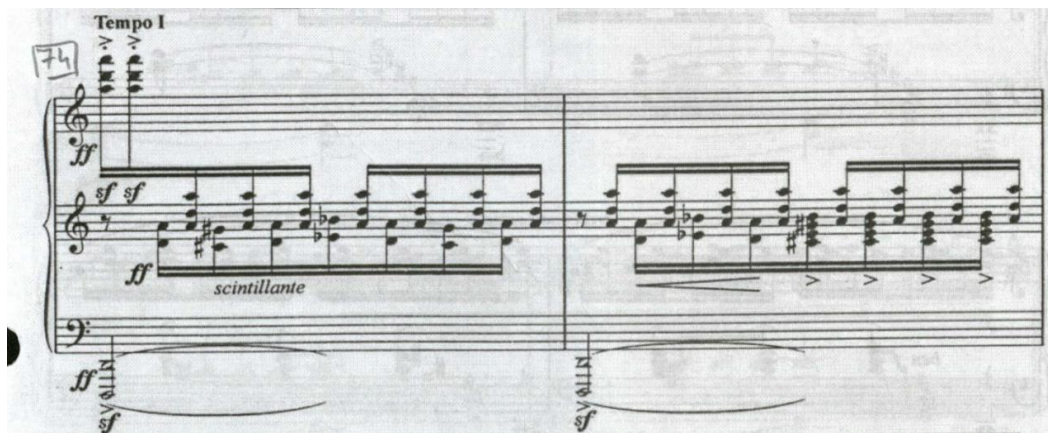
In this section Toduță creates a dramatic build-up by progressively expanding the distance between the bass pedal point and the middle layer (see Example 31). This segment is particularly demanding because there are rapid jumps between registers in the left hand,

sometimes from one extreme to another. The passage reaches a climax at m. 74, when the A section returns. The A' section employs the same relentless sixteenth-note pulsation as the A section, but it has a thicker texture realized through the use of octave doubling in the right hand (see Example 32).

Example 31. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 66-67



Example 32. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 74-75



The predominant intervals in this piece are the second and the fourth (with its inversion, the fifth). The melodic contour is articulated through an alternation of chromatic tones (see Example 33). In other instances, Toduță creates a melodic line that is hidden in

the thick chromatic texture (see Example 34). Here, the melody emerges out of the successive chromatic seconds, split between hands.

Example 33. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 9-10



Example 34. Toduță, *Prelude-Choral-Toccata, Toccata*, mm. 13-14



Toduță uses a variety of technical features in the *Toccata*, including alternating and crossing hands, rapid repetitions of fourths and fifths, wide leaps with dynamic contrasts, and note clusters including fourths, fifths, and seconds. He incorporates both thin and thick textures based on percussive sonority; this work begins with a single line, but finishes with tone clusters. The *Toccata* employs a relentless sixteenth-note pulsation and it demands technical endurance and stamina to perform.

CONCLUSION

Toduță published the majority of his works and reached the peak of his pedagogical career during the communist years. The socio-political environment inevitably had an impact on his career, as the new cultural system imposed by the Soviet Union, and adopted by Romania viewed the arts as an instrument of state politics. The Soviet and Romanian political ideology viewed the role of arts as serving the creation of a “new man”; artistic messages needed to be clear, engaging, and accessible to workers. In the realm of musical expression, this ideology rejected modernism and the avant-garde, which were considered “decadent, antihuman, and diversionary.”³⁹ As a result, the works of artists who pioneered the modernist art movement, such as Schoenberg and Messiaen, were banned. Furthermore, several Romanian artists who refused to conform to the socialist ideology were incarcerated.⁴⁰

Eugen Simion, Romanian critic and literary historian, identifies four types of attitudes among artists who had to work under the communist rule. Some artists refused to collaborate; in several cases, they were sent to jail for as long as fifteen years or even sentenced to death. Other artists collaborated, became “official” composers, and were published and rewarded. Yet others chose to flee the country and seek refuge in Western Europe; Enescu did so in 1955. Lastly, there were artists who kept a low profile or made some compromises without totally betraying their art.⁴¹

There are differing opinions on how Toduță’s career fit into the fabric of communist artistic life. George Catalan mentions Toduță among the collaborators, party activists, and

³⁹ Valentina Sandu-Dediu, *Muzica Românească între 1944-2000* (București: Editura Muzicală 2002), 12.

⁴⁰ Constantin Noica, Nicolae Steinhardt, Vladimir Streinu, Constant Tenegaru, Gheorghe I. Brătianu.

⁴¹ See Sandu-Dediu, *Muzica Românească între 1944-2000*, 32.

members of the Nomenklatura. However, he also claims that Toduță belongs to the category of composers that “did not completely adhere to the new ideology, nor fully compromise themselves.”⁴² Therefore, Toduță’s case does not seem to fit into any of the categories proposed by Simion.

Indeed, Toduță, as one of the most important figures in twentieth-century Romanian music, had the misfortune of living in a period when artistic choices were subject to state censorship. As a consequence of this censorship, two competing imperatives pervade Toduță’s work. One part of this dichotomy (the survival instinct while subject to an oppressive regime) can be seen in Toduță’s use of coded forms. Toduță’s use of structural elements signifies a reverence for sacred works and possibly his own religious beliefs, while hiding such beliefs or homage from state censors. The other half of this dichotomy, following his artistic ideals, ironically can be seen in the creativity and virtuosic prowess deployed in coding works in such ways as to hide their inherent religiosity.

This dichotomy or reconciliation was particularly challenging for composers of sacred/religious music, including Toduță, since he devoted a substantial percentage of his compositional output to sacred music. His Roman Catholic upbringing, as well as his close study of Renaissance music and works of J. S. Bach during his training in Rome, founded his deep appreciation of sacred music. However, Toduță aligned his works with Western contemporary trends by using modernist techniques such as frequent changes of texture and range, freedom of meter and rhythm, a harmonic language consisting of seconds, fourths, and clusters, and the treatment of the piano as a percussion instrument.

⁴² Gabriel Catalan, “Teatrul și muzica din România în primii ani de communism,” *Revista Arhivelor* 87, no.1 (January 2010): 208.

This analysis of the style of two piano works written thirty years apart shows how Toduță managed to reconcile his artistic ideals with the censorship of the communist regime. He produced works with often purely technical titles that to all appearances did not refer to religion. These works, however, possess an implicit religious meaning that was encoded in the body of the music, being unavailable at a first glance. Working in a compositional environment that was becoming more and more science-driven, and that was encouraging atheism, Toduță did not give up his spiritual commitment. He joined archaic formulas with chromatic sound surfaces, Byzantine chant with polyphonic structures, and Baroque compositional tools with the Romanian modal sound. The use of Bach references, textures and genres reflect the way in which his works are in dialogue with generic norms and expectations. Thus, the revival of genres such as the passacaglia, prelude, chorale, and toccata, is no superficial “borrowing” or “imitating”, nor is it in any sense a “going back”, but is an actual regeneration, as well as a homage to a historic master.

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