

Sacred Music Production from Crișana

Abstract

Sacred music from Crișana is organic part of Romanian church music. In this place are living side by side Romanians, Hungarians, Jews or other nationalities of different religious confessions such as: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Neoprottestant. Based on scientific research one can admit that the sacred music of Țara Crișurilor, ancient ground of Dacia Porolissensis, were given the same cultural privileges as to all the other parts of Romanian ground.

Present scientific research work presents a synthesis of personal academic research and is built of two parts: the first one presents a synthesis of the phenomenology of the monodic and polyphonic church music until our days. Through the prism of documentary proofs and proofs derived from scientific studies one can observe that the ancient character of Christianity, the ethnic continuity, the circulation of money, the ancient organizational form of church, Greek expressions transfered to Christian cult or the existence of voivode Menumorut's and Gelu's reign respectively of some bishoprics of Biharia after the IXth century acknowledge from documentary-historic point of view the north-western part of Romania as being representative for the domestic landscape.

The first chapter offers a general introduction to the beginnings of church music from Crișana where religious books circulating in Țara Crișurilor form a decisive point of reference for a musical tradition of Byzantine origins very close to the psalms of the Romanian principalities. Music historians have correlated historical dates with those of church and religious life in order to prove the existence of a music tradition inspite of lacking music schools or musical manuscripts, the importance of monasteries as determinative preserving, guarding and validating factors of church music. However we consider that the oral character of this music based on practicing songs from religious books without any musical notation builds an element of reference regarding preservation of church music of Byzantine origins. Church music kept on existing in all liturgical manifestations of Romanian Orthodox, the liturgical printings circulated in the region of reference in the same rythmical cycles as in the Romanian principalities: the Book of Gospels from Tinăud (XVth century), Romanian Hymnal (XVIth century), respectively the important contributions of the book copiers Popa Ursu, Vasile Sturza Moldoveanu, Popa Pătru from Tinăud, or Toader Moga. The presence of the youth choir of the Latin Seminary from Oradea, of the Orthodox Confessional School as forerunner of the School for church music from Oradea, respectively the foundation of the Orthodox Theological Academy of Transilvania (1923) in Oradea through bishop Roman Ciorogariu had played an important role in acknowledging and highlighting this landscape in Romanian orthodox regions.

The second chapter deals with significant representatives of monodic and polyphonic church music in Crișana: Nicolae Fîru, deacon, teacher and conductor respectively Cornel Givulescu, priest, teacher, composer and music historian, where based on research in archives in Cluj and Bihor county, on

documents regarding musical life in Crișana we give an outline to the music-historical portraits of the two forefathers and pioneers. Through their contributions in the context of Romanian orthodox education from the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century they are justly reckoned as tireless supporters of the western part of Romania due to the preservation of the style of choir music and to their analytic, aesthetic and composing works, respectively due to differentiating their variants of church music from those of Transilvania (Dimitrie Cunțan and „Blaj“) or those of Banat (Trifon Lugojan, Atanase Lipovan and Terențiu Bugariu). His didactic, composing and research activity made Nicolae Firu well-known in Romanian cultural and music history and remarkable in the eyes of celebrated personalities of those times, such as: D.G. Kiriac, G. Musicescu, T. Brediceanu, I. Vidu, T. Popovici, S. Drăgoi, or Nicolae Iorga, Niculae M. Popescu. Vasile, archbishop of Timișoara and many other people could only utter words of praise when speaking about the activity of Nicoale Firu. He obtained numerous prizes and distinctions of contemporary institutions, in this sense we can mention the Romanian Academy awarding him the „Năsturel“ prize for the „Monography of the Church with the Moon “ respectively the golden medal he won in 1906 together with „Hilaria“ at the celebrations of the Roman Arenas in Bucharest.

On the other hand there is the remarkable teacher, music historian, composer and priest Cornel Givulescu, rising as one of the elite personalities of our ancient church, of church and prophan music in the first part of the XXth century. Trained at the famous universities of the capitals of Hungary, Italy and Austria he presents significant didactic and musicological qualities. His monodic and polyphonic work is of reference in Ardeal and Banat in the period between the two world wars. He collaborated with church personalities of prestige like: Roman Ciorogariu, Nicolae Popovici, Valerian Zaharia, bishops of Oradea, Nicolae, archbishop of Ardeal, Nicolae archbishop of Banat etc. and with well-known lay composers and music historians like: Dimitrie Cuclin, Sabin Drăgoi, T. Brediceanu, Romeo Ghirgoiașiu etc. Their activity in the musical life of choirs in Crișana before and between the two world wars presents a distinctive note on the scale of Romanian choirs.

The third and last chapter outlines the musical life of choirs in Crișana of the XXth century, when through concert repertoires of reference groups like the excellent „Hilaria“, respectively the „Choir of the Orthodox Cathedral “ and the „Camerata Felix“ proving professionalism, patriotism and authentional Romanian character on a national scale defined the polyphonic landscape of the north-western part of the country. The conclusions serve posterity for fixing the coordinates of a significant landscape of Romanian monodic and choir music.

The second part of the work presents the plan of academic evolution, selected bibliographical references regarding church music in the western part of Romania and the immortal figures of church music my personal research work has focused on, respectively notes of reception of the research work through contemporary specialists considering the humble contributions of the undersigned.