

Elements of Romanian Folkloric Musical Traditions and Narrativity in George Enescu's
"Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1" and Béla Bartók's "Romanian Folk Dances SZ. 56"

by

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INTRODUCTION

Growing up in an environment where Romanian folk music was performed every day in my household made me connect with this type of music in a powerful way. I heard my father, who makes his living by playing the accordion, practice every day at home for his folkloric events, which might include weddings, baptisms, festivals, and folkloric ensemble competitions. My first introduction to playing folk music was accompanying my father on the keyboard by providing harmonic support. I would accompany him to ensemble rehearsals and performances, which exposed me to not only the music, but also the choreography, often performed by professional dancers. Such exposure from birth engendered in me a fascination with classical music that is inspired by folk material.

Romanian folkloric music has a long, evolving history influenced by many cultures. The most recent contribution came from the gypsies.¹ Romanian folkloric music is defined by its ornamentation, dance styles, instruments, scales and modes, and a predominantly descending melodic contour at the end of the lines.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate Romanian folkloric music from several points of view, historical and analytical. Analyzing music in terms of harmonic progressions, form and structure, melodic contour, etc., does not always access the emotional aspects of a piece. One way performers can discover a deeper levels of meaning is by including narrative elements in their analysis. This was a discovery I made

1. Based on several interviews I had with romani people, the use of term “gypsy” to describe their ethnicity can be perceived as pejorative in certain circumstances, but for the romani that perform music is the opposite. They prefer to be referred to as gypsies because of the perception that gypsies have above average aural skills in music.

in the course of my research. Narrative analysis assists the performer in creating a story in his/her mind, a story with emotional connection that may lead to a more impactful, historically accurate performance.

This document is composed of three sections: 1) delineating characteristics of Romanian folkloric music, 2) examining ways in which narrative concepts in literature can be applied to music, and 3) analyzing the narrative and folkloric qualities of Béla Bartók's "Romanian Folk Dances SZ. 56" and George Enescu's "Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1". Part of the narratological perspective stems from the music's connection to legends, myths, and social life of Romania. From a theoretical point of view, Byron Almén provides a model of integrating literary narrativity theory with musical analysis. His system will be used as the predominant vehicle for the analysis Bartók's and Enescu's works in this paper.

A strong motivation for me to write this paper came from the deep emotions I often experienced while playing this repertoire and from getting feedback from others that my feelings were projecting outwards to them. I became curious about this and was fascinated by the idea of investigating such connections to music. On a further personal note, I found that Almén's analytical approach helped me find that place of emotional connectedness even more quickly. My hope is that this present study will be similarly helpful to others.

CHAPTER I

ROMANIAN FOLKLORIC MUSIC

This chapter provides background information on the history, social context, main genres, dances, forms, instruments and characteristic rhythms of Romanian folkloric music. Understanding this background will help accurately identify and associate elements of narrativity in the music.

Genealogy of the Term “Folklore”

The term “folklore” was introduced for the first time by the British archaeologist William Thoms in 1846. The etymology of the term folklore derives from two distinct words; *folk* (people) and *lore* (knowledge, wisdom), resulting the *knowledge of the people*.² In Romania, the term folklore was introduced for the first time by writer and philologist Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu in the preface of his book “Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae.” He focused on the *poporan*³ phonetics of Romanians and tried to unfold the paths that shaped the Romanian people culturally.

Credințele cele mai intime ale poporului, obiceiurile și apucăturile sale, suspinele și bucuriile, tot ce se numește astăzi – în lipsă de un cuvânt mai nimerit – cu vorba engleză folklore. Voiam să cunosc pe român așa cum este dânsul în toate ale lui, așa cum l-a plăsmuit o dezvoltare treptată de optzeci de veacuri, așa cum s-a strecurat el prin mii și mii de înrâuriri etnice, topice și culturale.⁴

2. Marin Constantin Liviu, “Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul” (PhD diss., Universitatea Ovidius, Constanța, 2013), 7.

3. Romanian archaic term referring to the people of the country.

4. “The most intimate beliefs of the people, the customs and behaviors, the sighs and happiness, everything that is called today - for the lack of a better term – folklore. I wanted to know the Romanian as he is with all of his good and worse, like the slow development of more than eight hundred years shaped him, and how he slipped through thousands and thousands of ethnical and cultural dominations.” Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, “*Etymologicum Magnum*

The popular traditionalist concept was popularized in the British culture by Edward Tylor and Andrew Lang, and in France by Paul Sebillot. They attempted to demonstrate that legends, stories, national traditions and customs are part of the identity that defines the people of a country. B. P. Hașdeu brought this trend to Romania. He believed that folklore demonstrates the psychology, and spiritual state of a nation.⁵

Origins of the Romanian Folkloric Music

The first saved manuscripts that contain evidence of a folkloric creation on the land of present Romania are from c. 1540 and were saved by Jan of Lublin. From the 16th to the 19th century no historian tried to compile and codify the folkloric sphere of the Romanian culture. Between 1850-52, composer and musicologist Anton Pann was the first person to publish a collection of melodic tunes from the countryside of Romania, named *Spitalul amorului sau Cântătorul dorului*. These tunes were orally transmitted from generation to generation or written in a psaltic notation.⁶

There are two main influences that shaped the foundation of Romanian folklore: the Christianity with the Byzantine traditions assimilated by the Dacians and the Eastern Roman Empire. The earliest traces of present Romanian folk culture before Christianity and the Roman Empire date back to the sixth century. At that time the land was occupied by the local Dacians, who lived there before the Roman occupation. Later, in the 15th

Romanie” Dicționarul limbei istorice si poporane a românilor (București: Ed. Minerva, 1972), 11.

5. Marin, *Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc*. Acordeonul, 8.

6. Otilia Pop-Miculi, *Curs de Folclor Muzical și Etnomuzicologie* (București, Editura Fundația România de Măine, 2007), 7.

century, the Ottoman Empire conquered the territory of today's Romania, and occupied it for more than five centuries, leaving a tremendous influence on the musical culture.⁷

The ethnogenesis of the Romanian folk music is related to the authenticity of every culture that passed through the Romanian territory and left their marks. Therefore, the psychologic frame of the people with an inclination towards contemplation, longing, exuberance or joy, and the society are elements that help define the ethnogenesis of Romanian folkloric music.⁸ Regional organization of the country has also added to the growing musical diversity. This has resulted in many different styles and subdivisions of folkloric genres in both instrumental and vocal music.

Characteristics of Romanian Folkloric Music

Romanian composer George Enescu describes the folkloric characteristics of the Romanian music in the following way: "The general characteristic which stands out in the music of our country [...] is: sadness even in the midst of happiness. [...] This yearning ('dor'), indistinct but profoundly moving is, I think, a definite feature of Romanian melodies."⁹ The best way to describe Romanian folk music is variety. This variety reflects in the number of genres such as *Balada*, *Doina*, *Pastorala*, *Bocet*, songs, instrumental music and dance music. Romanian music in general reflects a monodic

7. Stanislas Renard, "The Contribution of the *Lăutari* to the Compositions of George Enescu: Quotation and Assimilation of the *Doina*" (PhD. diss., University of Connecticut, Storrs, 2012), 15-16.

8. Carmen Stoinaov and Petru Stoianov, *Istoria Muzicii Românești* (București: Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2005), 14-15.

9. Mircea Voicana, *George Enescu: Monografie* (București: Academia Republicii Socialiste Române, 1971), 400.

texture with a preponderant direction of the melodic contour downwards reflecting what Enescu described previously as expressing “the yearning... of the Romanian melodies.” Two specific characteristics of the musical language are the *cantabile* created by the text, and the presence of motivic melodic ideas developed through diminution or augmentation, resulting in variations. The diversity of the melodic structure created through embellishments and ornamentation and the use of a restricted number of pitches especially for the vocal music (pre-pentascala) are important traces of the Romanian folkloric music. The symmetrical construction of the works and the melodic-rhythmic presentations of the material in a repetitive manner makes the music easy to remember. These elements along with a variety of combinations of rhythmic, melodic, metric, modal, agogic elements, and tone colors of the instruments make the folkloric realm so rich.¹⁰

The lyric motivic ideas are correlated with the personal values of the individual. They also reflect societal issues or the struggles of the people facing an enemy from inside or outside of the country. Subjects referring to nature and the seasons as well as mythological stories are very common in the countryside of Romania.¹¹ Love is a topic encountered often in the folkloric songs, but most of the time this emotion is associated with yearning and longing. In Romania, love was seen as a “heavy disease,” and many of

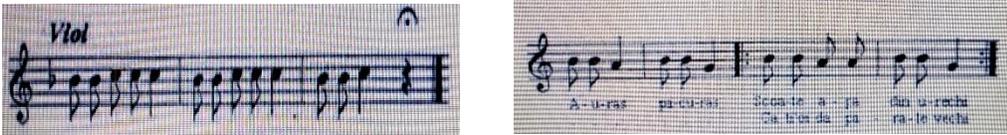
10. Stoianov, *Istoria Muzicii Românești*, 16.

11. Marin Constantin Liviu, “Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul” (PhD diss., Universitatea Ovidius, Constanța, 2013), 17.

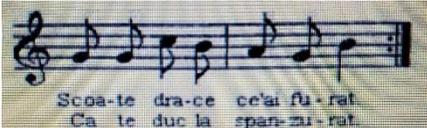
the songs describe love in this way. Other popular topics are related to the work ethic of the peasants working in the fields.¹²

Romanian folk melodies are based on diatonic and chromatic modes. Free improvisation is the foundation of the Romanian folk tunes. The pre-pentatonic, pre-pentachord, pentatonic, pentachord, hexachord scales and the modes are the systems that preceded the tonal system in Romanian folkloric music.”Bichords”, ”trichords” and “tetrachords” are part of the pre-pentachord scales and are built without having intervallic jumps (see Example 1).¹³

Bichord construction Trichord Construction



Tetrachord Construction



The image displays three musical examples of pre-pentachord scales. The first, 'Bichord construction', shows a violin part with a scale of eighth notes. The second, 'Trichord Construction', shows a scale with lyrics: 'A - u - ras pa - cu - ras Scoa - te a - je din a - rech - i / Ca - te duc la pa - ra - te ve - chi'. The third, 'Tetrachord Construction', shows a scale with lyrics: 'Scoa - te dra - ce ce - ai fu - rat. / Ca - te duc la span - zu - rat.'

Example 1. The three possibilities of a pre-pentachord scale (Emilia Comișel, *Folclor Muzical*, no. 20, p. 276).

“Bitones,” “tritones,” and “tetratones” are also part of pre-pentascals but are characterized by the number of acoustic sounds used in the tune and the intervals, which

12. Marin, “Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul” 18.

13. Maria Zlateva, “Romanian Folkloric Influences in George Enescu’s Artistic and Musical Development as Exemplified by His Third Violin Sonata” (Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 2003), 72-73.

must be larger than a whole tone. The intervals vary from thirds to fifths but are not larger than that (see Example 2).¹⁴

The image displays three musical examples of pre-pentatonic scale constructions. The first, 'Bitones Construction', shows a scale with intervals of two whole tones (bitones) and is labeled 'BOCET'. The second, 'Tritones construction', shows a scale with intervals of two whole tones and one tritone. The third, 'Tetratones Construction', shows a scale with intervals of two whole tones and one tetratone, labeled 'cam'chiuind' with a tempo marking of quarter note = 84.

Example 2. The three possibilities of a pre-pentatonic scale (Béla Bartók, *Volksmusik der Rumänien*, no. 20).

The most used modes in Romanian folkloric music are Dorian with the fourth scale degree raised, Phrygian with the third and fourth scale degree raised, and Aeolian with fourth and seventh scale degree raised. The five-note pentatonic scale has been explored in the Romanian folk music in two different manners: hemitonic (with semitones) and anhemitonic (without semitones). The anhemitonic scale is Greek in origin and it comes from the words *hemitonos* “semitone” and *an* meaning “without.” The most used pentatonic scale in Romanian music is the anhemitonic scale¹⁵ (see Example 3).

The image shows the 'Anhemitonic' pentatonic scale on a single staff. The scale consists of five notes: G, A, B, C, D, with a box around the A note to highlight it.

Example 3. “Anhemitonic” pentatonic scale.

14. Ibid.

15. Speranța Rădulescu, “Romania”, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 587.

The next phase of melodic development was the introduction of the major and minor tonal systems but with slight alterations. It was described by scholars “the uncertain mode” due to the multiple possibilities of altering the third, fourth and seventh of the scale (see Example 4).¹⁶ The genres that use this mode the most are: *doina*, dance works and ritualistic performances such as funerals, weddings, baptisms or the annual village festivals. As a convention, it was decided by scholars that the starting and final note of this scale would be “Re” and would be called “Re Mode.”¹⁷



Example 4. “The Uncertain Mode”.

When the fourth scale degree of the Re Mode is raised, it results in an augmented second between scale degrees three and four. This is reminiscent of oriental music that arrived on Romanian territory when it was occupied by the Ottoman Empire.

In traditional folk music, the structure of the musical elements is strictly related to the purpose of that specific piece and the instruments with which it is performed. It could be structured for an individual or a group, voice alone, voice with accompaniment, or only instruments. The construction of the material can be free, based on improvisation, or it can follow specific structures. The Romanian traditional folk tunes have a few basic compositional elements that can be identified when subdividing the musical phrases. The

16. Ibid.

17. Zlateva, “Romanian Folkloric Influences”, 74.

smallest element that can be found is the “subcell.” This is a unit that is smaller than a musical cell; it can be formed from only two notes and is usually identified as a rhythmic pattern. I will discuss this further in the Rhythm in Romanian Folk Music Section later in this paper. The subcell is used to analyze music that is heavily ornamented or rhythmically varied.¹⁸ The next structure is the cell which in vocal music is defined by the text along with the melodic contour. In dance music, it is the equivalent of one beat.¹⁹ The repetition or connection of more than one cell creates the musical motif. The Romanian musicologist and composer Tudor Ciortea defines a motif as “element of expression, characterized through specific contour, rhythmic and melodic poignancy.”²⁰ Usually in folk music two musical motifs are creating a phrase. The phrase in Romanian folk music is divided into two parts: short phrase (four measures) and long phrase (between 8-16 measures). Four short phrases or two long phrases create a period.

All these elements are combined within phrases or periods and are structured and expanded through identical or varied repetition, sequences of the material at specific intervals, mirroring technique like in Baroque music, and augmentation or diminution of rhythmical patterns.²¹ Imitation of material with varied agogic accents is a particularly Romanian flavor of this type of musical expansion.

18. Marin, *Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul*”, 32.

19. Gheorghe Oprea and Larisa Apagie, *Folclor Muzical Românesc*, (București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1983), 274.

20. Pop-Miculi, *Curs de Folclor Muzical*, 52.

21. *Ibid.*

The instrumental music, especially the dance music, has two main forms. The first one is a fixed form that is characterized by an ABA structure with repetitive motivic ideas. This form has strong arrival moments at the ends of phrases and a period that cannot be longer than five phrases. The second form is a free form in which the motifs are either reproduced in an aleatoric manner after the initial statement or musical cells from different phrases are reordered or combined, resulting in new material with a familiar feeling.²²

Rhythmic Characteristics of Romanian Folk Music

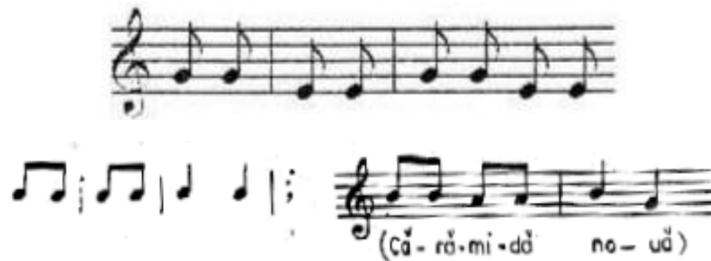
In folk music, rhythm is the unifier between the text and the melody. Within Romanian territory, the rhythmic structures are personalized based on the regions of the country, especially in dance music. Ethnomusicologists have identified five main types of rhythmic structures: children's rhythms, dance rhythms, *aksak*, *giusto*-syllabic, and *parlando-rubato* rhythms.²³

The children's rhythms found in folk tunes are created for the education of the young. The most important element in those melodies is rhythm. Some characteristics that define this rhythmic system are: the values of the notes are in groups of two, each group starts with an accent, the eighth note is the most used metric unit while the quarter value is not used as often. Some irregularity of the rhythmic accents with the text

22. Marin, "Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul", 33.

23. Pop-Miculi, *Curs de Folclor Muzical*, 31-40.

rhythmic accents may be encountered. The most encountered rhythmic combination is presented in the next example (see Example 5).



Example 5. Eighth notes as metric unit (top). Most used combination of eighth and quarter notes in children’s rhythms (bottom).²⁴

Dance rhythms are the result of three main components that may or may not align. The three components are the tune’s rhythmic pattern, specific dance choreography, and the *chiuituri* or *strigate* (shouts). These shouts are produced by male or female dancers throughout the tune in specific places such as cadential moments, specific words of the text that resonate with the dancers, or after specific dance tricks that were just executed. These elements are called distributive rhythms or dance rhythms by Gheorghe Oprea and Larisa Apagie in their book *Folclor Muzical Românesc*, “Romanian Folklore.”²⁵

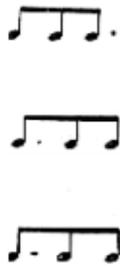
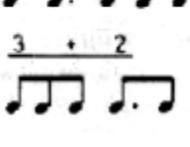
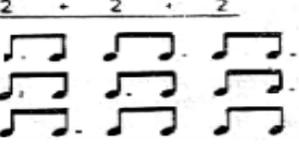
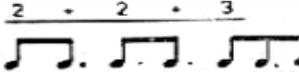
The term *aksak* it is attributed to C. Brăiloiu and he describes it as “irrational elongation of one or more durations, imposing in this way a stuttering character, uneven or shortened.”²⁶ This rhythmic pattern is present in the folk music from all regions of Romania as well as, in other countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, India and

24. Ibid., 38-39.

25. Oprea and Apagie, *Folclor Muzical Românesc*, 82-86.

26. Pop-Miculi, *Curs de Folclor Muzical*, 35.

Albania. It uses unequal measure unit values with a ratio of 2:3 or 3:2. This creates a sense of asymmetry. The *aksak* rhythm can be found in simple binary, ternary, or compound meter. (see Example 6).

Simple Binary	Simple Ternary	Compound Duple	
			
			
			
			

Example 6. Possible sequences of the aksak rhythm.²⁷

The *giusto*-syllabic rhythm occurs in vocal music only. It is characterized by the connection between words and music, is written specifically for group singing, and is used in many parts of the world. It is most often seen in Byzantine or Gregorian chants, medieval music, and folk music of Russia, Hungary and Spain.²⁸ The meter of the verses is in closely related to the rhythms.²⁹

27. Ibid., 35-38.

28. Ibid., 32.

29. Emilia Comisel, *Folclor Muzical* (Bucuresti, EDP, 1967), 129.

The *parlando-rubato* rhythmic system includes pieces that convey a sensation of free singing and a permanently changing rhythm. It was defined as *parlando-rubato* by Béla Bartók due to its similarities with verbal speech. He also implies that every eighth note receives its own syllable from the text. It is most used in genres like *doina*, *ballada*, ritual songs, or lamentations. There is a feeling of rhythmic asymmetry driven from the two different metric units used in a ratio of 1:2 and 2:1, and the metric units are indivisible. A sense of smaller units is achieved through melismatic musical material inserted in the tune.³⁰ The *parlando-rubato* rhythmic system shares many similarities in construction with the recitatives of opera from classical period such as frequent cadential moments to emphasize the text, speech-like rhythms, and freedom of tempo.

Characteristics of Romanian Instrumental Folk Music

As the vocal Romanian folkloric repertoire expanded, instrumental music started to gain independence. The folkloric music of Romania started with vocal music which came to life from the need of the people to express and encapsulate their emotions and sentiments in a manner other than written text. In the beginning the instruments were used only to provide harmonic support, always secondary to the voice, leaving room for the text and the melodic contour.

Romanian folk dance music is the most representative of the instrumental repertoire. This type of music demands a more virtuosic way of playing and is technically

30. Lucian Blaga, "From Quotation to Assimilation: George Enescu's use of Romanian Folk Elements in *Rhapsody No. 1* Op. 11 and *The Third Orchestral Suite*, Op. 27" (Thesis, Chicago College of Performing Arts, Chicago, 2005), 19.

challenging. Most of the time it has a fast tempo, and it is heavily embellished. The instrumental folk music has a sense of independence compared to vocal folk music due to the lack of structural limitations imposed by the texts in the vocal repertoire. Because of this freedom, specific construction techniques are used, such as: melodic variation, rhythmic repetition, a mixture of the two, or transposition.³¹ The most common instrument found in all instrumental ensembles is the violin. Depending on the region in which the music is performed, the structure of the ensemble changes to suit the style, construction, and rhythmic characteristics of that specific region.

Main Genres of Romanian Folk Music/Romanian Dances

The most widely spread vocal genre throughout the country is the *doină*. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians defines *doină* as: “A lyric song, defined musically by its flexible structure, rubato rhythm and dense, complex ornamentation.”³² *Doină* is the genre that uses the “*uncertain mode*” the most, which often offers a sensation of being improvised on the spot due to its multiple options of altering the third, fourth, and seventh scale degrees. Because it is a vocal genre and is free in structure, themes about love, sadness or longing are fitting topics. It has the ideal tools to project melancholic and contemplative moods and is also a great way to present the inner struggles of humanity. A *doina* has a melodic contour characterized by the rich embellishments found throughout the tune and strong cadential moments. Initially, it was

31. Marin, “Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul”, 30-31.

32. Anca Giurchescu, “Romania”, in Stanley Sadie (ed.) *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols., (Macmillian, London, 2001, Vol. 21), 588.

performed by a solo singer, but today it can also be performed on instruments such as keyboards, strings, or winds.³³

The *balade* (ballads) come from *cântece bătrânești* (old time songs) and they were rising in popularity until the nineteenth century. Like the *doina*, a *balada* is free in form which gives the performer the possibility to express the text with no restriction. The main difference between a *doina* and a *balada* is that in the *balada* there can be spoken text while in *doina* every line of text is sung. They were originally performed by peasants with no accompaniment, or sometimes with a shepherd pipe or bagpipe as an instrumental interlude between the verses. The *balada* can have an instrumental introduction which had the role of setting the atmosphere. The voice can alternate with solo instrumental sections if the text requires a moment of reflection.³⁴

The song genre has a clear structure and form characterized by a musical refrain and strophic lyric lines even though in some regions the musical refrain may not be part of the construction. Usually after each strophe, the musical refrain is performed. Depending on the region and the different cultures that influenced those areas, variations from the original structure of the genre can appear. Béla Bartók was the first person to create a system to differentiate the songs based on musical idioms such as the musical scale, ornamentation, the presence or absence of the refrain or rhythms. The *giusto* character of the tempo gives the songs a feeling of uplifting energy.³⁵

33. Blaga, "From Quotation to Assimilation, 24-25.

34. Zlateva, "Romanian Folkloric Influences, 60.

35. *Ibid.*, 61

Dance music represents one of the most important traditions in the cultural history of the Romanian people. The most known type of dance is called *hora* where all the participants are holding hands creating a circle. It is a symbol of the country because on December 1, 1918, when all the regions of the country unified to create today's Romania, the people started dancing the *hora* as a sign of brotherhood and union.³⁶ The tempo of this dance ranges from slow to moderate. Similar to Romanian folk songs, the dances are comprised of different elements based on the regions where they are performed. They can be danced in many ways depending on the tempo, rhythm, and the style of the melodic contour. The most popular way of dancing is in a circle, but there are dances that are performed in pairs (especially those that have a fast tempo), in a straight line, men only, or in a semicircle. The rhythm is binary most of the time, and the structure of the dances is based on a fixed form with a standard four-bar phrase. The dances in Romania have a rhythmic pattern that sustains a melody, as opposed to in Bulgaria or Turkey, where they can dance to rhythmic patterns performed by percussion instruments alone with no melody needed. There are other dances as well, such as: *sârba*, *brâu*, *purtata*, *de doi*, *geampara* *învârtita* which are part of the vast number of dances from the Romanian culture.³⁷ Initially, dance music was performed only by instruments, but now the voice is also included to add more emotion to the music through text painting.

36. Blaga, "From Quotation to Assimilation, 25.

37. Ibid., 26-28.

Ornamentation

Ornaments are a very important part of Romanian folkloric music in both instrumental and vocal music. Ornaments are added to the melodic contour of a folkloric tune with the purpose of embellishment and stylistic meaning. The ornamentation of the folkloric music does not follow certain rules, rather, it is used to emphasize the emotion of the tune. As Bartók describes the free spirit of ornamentation: “Usually when the singer is in a bad mood, he hurries on and does not insist on ornamental notes; but if he is in a mood for singing, he tries to show off, singing more slowly, prolonging certain sounds, and using many more ornamental notes.”³⁸ The type of ornaments found most often in the Romanian folkloric scenery are: ascending or descending appoggiaturas, mordents, turns, and trills, which can be simple or with grace notes leading into them (see Example 7).



Example 7. Examples of different types of ornaments found in Romanian folk music.

Other ornamentations used depending on the region of the country are:

portamenti, glissandos, or sliding from defined or undefined pitches. Ornamentation is

38. Andrea Vasi, *The Influence of Some Characteristics of Romanian Folk Music on the Romanian Rhapsody No. 1 Op. 11 by George Enescu* (Hague, 2013), 13.

also used for adding variations to the tune in both vocal and instrumental music (see Example 8).



Example 8. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1, Piano Transcription. Mm. 1-3 (top) the first presentation of the material, mm. 13-14 (bottom) variation of the material through ornamentation.

The density of the ornamentation varies and usually matches the speed of the melodic contour. In a faster tempo, less ornamentation will be present, whereas in a slower tempo, more embellishments can appear that have diverse forms and combinations. The genre that is the most indulgent with ornamentation is the *doină*. Due to its *parlando-rubato* character and lack of tempo, it allows the performer to add as much embellishment to the tune as he wishes. In certain situations, the tunes are so ornate that it can become very difficult to follow the melodic line.

Instruments

The instruments used throughout the history and evolution of the folkloric Romanian music are part of five different categories: pseudoinstruments, idiophones,

membranophones, aerophones, and chordophones. The pseudoinstruments are instruments that come straight from nature such as tree leaves, fish scales, or blades of grass. The idiophones are instruments that produce sounds through the vibration of their own body. Instruments from this family used in Romanian folkloric music are bells, spurs, or *toaca* (wood board hit with a wood hammer). Membranophone instruments are those that have one or two membranes built from animal leather and produce sounds by hitting the membrane usually with a piece of wood similar to drumstick. Instruments in this category are a small drum, big drum, *darabana* (goblet drum, is a percussion instrument ment to provide rhythmic support), and *buhaiul* (friction drum). Aerophone instruments are those that produce sounds due to the vibration of the air that is blown through them. Such instruments are: *buciumul* (part of the family of alphorn instruments), whistle, panflute, ocarina, or *cimpoi* (bagpipes). The last category of instruments consists of chordophones, which are instruments that create sounds through vibrating strings either by being plucked, hit, or bowed. Instruments from this category are the *țambalul* (cimbalom), violin, cello, bass, *cobza* (part of the lute family) and *țitera* (zither).³⁹

Buhaiul (Friction Drum)



Panflute



Țitera (Zither)



39. Pop-Miculi, *Curs de Folclor Muzical*, 54-62.

Cobza



Darabana (Goblet Drum)



Ocarina



Țambal (cimbalom)



Toaca



Bucium (a type of Alphorn)



Figure 1. Musical instruments from Romanian folkloric history.

The Structure of the Folkloric Ensembles

Present day Romanian folkloric ensembles consist of instruments that belong to all five categories described above. The string instruments are the preponderant group in a folkloric ensemble due to their soloistic character and include the violin, *titera* (zither) and bass. The second largest group it is represented by the aerophone group of instruments such as flute instruments and all its derivatives. The *torogoata* (part of the

woodwind instrument group, uses a single reed, and has a range similar to clarinet from an E3 to a C7) and later the saxophone became permanent part of the ensembles. These first two groups of instruments are mostly in charge of the melodic contour of the music, while idiophone, membranophone and chordophone instruments create rhythmic and harmonic support. Instruments from last three categories are *tambal* (cimbalom), small and big drums, *cobza*, accordion, *titera* (zither). *Titera* can be used both as soloistic instrument or to contribute to the harmonic support. The size of a folkloric ensemble varies based on the region of the country. It is usually formed from no less than five soloistic instruments, one *tambal*, one accordion, bass and *cobza* as a reduced size and it can go up to 30-40 members.

Romani and their Contribution to Folkloric Music in Romania

The Romani, often referred to as Gypsies are terms used to ethnically identify a group of people originating from present-day Pakistan who began migrating around year 1100 C. E.⁴⁰ Their occupations, such as horse dealers, jewelers, and blacksmiths helped them adapt easily to the locations where they decided to live.

One of the highest ranked occupations which offered the most privileges was of a *Lăutar*⁴¹ (person who performs folkloric music). Initially, the term was used only for

40. Renard, *The Contribution of the Lăutari*, 46-49.

41. *Ibid.*, 52.

those instrumentalists that performed on violin. Later, any person that performed folkloric music on any instrument, was identified as a *Lăutar*.⁴²

Gypsies rarely created any original music. They borrowed material from the musical ideas of the places they were staying and added unusual chromaticism. This passed to younger generations who then added on to that legacy making the music even more unique. One of the most distinguished characteristics of the *lautari*'s music is that it follows an improvisatory style. The music that resulted from this improvisatory approach was taught and passed to the next generations orally because most of the gypsies were illiterate.

Gypsies created a mix between the musical characteristics of the countryside and the urban areas of Romania. This mix bore new song styles such as the *romanță*, a song with a symmetrical structure and refrain, with text referring mostly to tales of love.⁴³ Gypsy music uses western harmonic structure mixed with middle-eastern melodic influences such as the heavy use of chromaticism and augmented seconds, as well as dotted rhythms.⁴⁴

The *lautari* ensemble is called *taraf*. It is smaller in size than a folkloric ensemble. One instrument from each category is enough to complete this ensemble. The most encountered form of a *taraf* in present day consists of *țambal* (cimbalom), violin, accordion, clarinet, double bass.⁴⁵

42. Marin, "Muzica Lăutărească în contextul peisajului folcloric românesc. Acordeonul", 41.

43. Ibid., 42.

44. Renard, "The Contribution of the *Lăutari*", 70.

45. Zlateva, *Romanian Folkloric Influences*, 80.

CHAPTER II

THE NARRATIVE IN MUSIC

The term “narrative” comes from the Latin word *narrare* which means to tell or say.⁴⁶ It refers to the way in which ideas are shared with other humans. The earliest way scholars think narratives were transferred is orally. The concept of narrativity is found in all types of arts: theatre, literature, songs, television, film, entertainment industry, and visual art.

There are many interpretations of the role of narrativity in music. Different theories convey that certain ideas of the music represent the narrating voice or that the narrative is not in the music but in what the listener is imagining in his mind. Hearing the music gives birth to a subjective narrator.⁴⁷ Heinrich Schenker has his own description and way of looking at narrative in music:

In the art of music, as in life, motion toward the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments, and involves great distances, detours, expansions, interpolations, and, in short, retardations of all kinds. Therein lies the source of all artistic delaying, from which the creative mind can derive content that is ever new. Thus, we hear in the middle ground and foreground an almost dramatic course of events.⁴⁸

Some of the influential scholars on this topic are music theorists Robert Hatten, Byron Almén, and philosopher James Jacob Litzka. Their perspectives are different yet at the same time complementary. Litzka’s perspective on narrativity in music is centered

46. John C. Traupman, *The New College Latin & English Dictionary* (Toronto: Bantam, 1966).

47. Kenneth Gloag and David Beard, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 113-117.

48. Fred Everett, Maus, “Music as Narrative,” *Indiana Theory Review*, Vol. 12, (April 1991): 4.

around the concept of Northrop Frye's idea⁴⁹ where all narratives are connected to one of the following archetypes: Romance, Tragedy, Irony or Comedy. These terms are used in the academic, literary manner. For example, in this context, Comedy does not refer to humor but instead refers to characters in a story who begin in an undesirable place and finish in a desirable place. On the other hand, Tragedy includes the inverse order of events. The characters end in an unhappy place even if they begin in a happy place. Romance refers to a plot that fulfills dreams or goals, but not necessarily "romantic love". Lastly, Irony is a narrative that ends differently than what the reader expects. In Liszka's description, there is always a conflict between two entities or characters, in which only one will remain standing victorious. There will never be two characters of the same importance.⁵⁰ In regards to mythical narratives, which will be analyzed later in the paper, Liszka states that "it takes a certain set of culturally meaningful differences and transvalue them by means of a sequence of action to be able to perceive the cultural power of a given narrative."⁵¹

Almén describes narrative as "the process through which the listener perceives and tracks a culturally significant transvaluation of hierarchical relationships within a temporal span."⁵² His idea is that the narrative resolution relies on the perception of the

49. Northrop Frye was considered to be one of the most influential Canadian literary theorists and critics of the 20th century.

50. Mihai Vâtca, "Martian Negrea's Countryside Impressions Op. 6, for Piano a Narrative Analysis" (Thesis, University of Houston, Houston, 2019), 19.

51. James Jakob Liszka, *The Semiotic of Myth: A Critical Study of the Symbol* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 68.

52. Byron Almén, "Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis," *Journal of Music Theory*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 12.

listeners and their level of cultural knowledge. Listeners can identify a sense of story from musical ideas due to the emotional impact of the sounds. These sensations are subjective and vary from person to person based on their life experiences.⁵³ He considers that the performer perceives a better idea of how thematic elements interact and affect the outcome of the message by analyzing any given section alone as well as how it functions within the music. This can also increase the clarity of a narrative outcome in the imagination of the listener. What he describes as “order versus transgression”⁵⁴ in the music helps project a logical outcome to a musical narrative line. From all these concepts, Almén concludes that narrative in music is an idea extracted from the interaction of musical thoughts. Almén offers a plan to map the narrative of a musical work. He believes that the narrative is characterized by four principles. Those principles are conflict, hierarchy, temporality, and the observer’s perspective. Because of this, a certain order of the narrative in a musical work takes shape. There will always be a conflict between at least two characters, ideas, or “agents.”⁵⁵ An initial hierarchy reflecting the status of the agents will most likely undergo changes throughout the work. Those changes are a representation of the temporality inside the work. The last propriety of the narrative in music refers to the perception of the listener.⁵⁶

53. Maus, “Music as Narrative, 6.

54. Order refers to the initial presentation of the “story”; transgressor refers to the elements that destabilize the story. They are new elements that disrupt the “order” or, for example, the initial thematic statement.

55. The term agent is used to describe the possibility of the listener projecting a narrative based on imaginary people as part of the musical story.

56. Almén, *Narrative Archetypes*, 13.

He suggests that there should be three ways to analyze the narrative from the performer's perspective. Those are agential, actantial, and narrative. The first approach, agential, purely identifies the number of agents and their characteristics. Almén has two terms to describe the main agents. Once again, the dominant agent, or character, is referred to as the "order imposing hierarchy" and the weaker, unstable one, called the "transgressor". These terms can identify motivic ideas, themes, harmonic progressions as well as textures. The actantial analysis refers to the dialogue and interaction of the agents and their progress throughout the work. The level of comparative strength between the agents can shift during the composition where the initial strong agent, or order, can become the transgressor, and the initial weak agent, the transgressor, can become the order imposing character. In other words, the order and transgressor can be compared to dynamic characters in literature. A character can begin the story as a horrible person, change throughout the story and learn lessons, then end a different person. This change defines a dynamic character in literature. Based on the actantial development, the third category, the narrative, starts to take shape and will fall into one of Litzka's four mentioned categories that Almén also embraces in his own theory: Romance, Tragedy, Irony or Comedy.⁵⁷ In the Romance and Tragedy categories, the order imposing hierarchy will win over the transgressor. For example, in the music, it will "win" because that form/shape/tune/rhythm being discussed will be most present in the end, which will make the listener remember it over the other agents. In the Comedy and Irony, the transgressor ends up being stronger than the imposing order.⁵⁸

57. *Ibid.*, 14-16.

58. *Ibid.*, 18.

This document will focus on the narrative analysis of Béla Bartók's *Romanian Folk Dances SZ. 56* and George Enescu's *Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 in A Major*. It will identify the Romanian folkloric elements found in their music and their similarities with the traditions and dances of Romania. These elements can refer to the use of rhythms, ornamentation, pre-pentatonic melodic-motivic ideas, modes, scales, and how these characteristics evolve throughout the works. Being aware of these transformations during the piece along with the analogies of the folkloric traditions, the performer can create a very accurate narrative imagery. The narrative analysis of these works will be made through Byron Almén's perspective on musical narrativity. Romanian folkloric music very closely follows the elements of a narrative in literature because the tunes are inspired by stories, myths and daily life events. Even though Almen's theory is not a well-known mode of analysis, it is most appropriate to use in this context, because it creates a bridge between the narrative in literature and its possible equivalent in folk music. He created a clear system to analyze narrativity in musical works, and he identifies characters in rhythm, melodies, harmonic progressions, articulations, etc. that can help the performer become an even better storyteller by delving into these deeper connections.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

The two works, Béla Bartók's "Romanian Folk Dances SZ. 56" and George Enescu's "Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1" will be interpreted subjectively in this chapter using narratological tools. Each of the dances in the Bartok set and the Enescu Rhapsody will be investigated using Almen's approach. I will focus on specific elements prevalent in each piece using his method of narrativity. I will shift my focus between rhythm, melody, harmony and formal structure. Certain patterns of rhythm, melodic contour, ornamentation, etc. will be identified and labeled based on the characteristics of the Romanian folkloric music discussed in Chapter I.

Béla Bartók, Short Biography

Béla Bartók was a Hungarian pianist, composer, ethnomusicologist and teacher. He was born on March 25th, 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (in present Sânnicolau Mare, Romania) and died in New York, USA on September 26th, 1945. He composed orchestral works, concertos (concerto for orchestra, one concerto for viola, two for violin and three for piano), six string quartets and many chamber works. In 1898, he was accepted to study at the Music Conservatory in Vienna, but he decided to go to Budapest Academy instead from 1899-1903 where he studied piano with one of Franz Liszt's pupils, Thomas Istvan, and improved his compositional skills with Janos Koessler.⁵⁹ Due

59. "Béla Bartók," Bach-Cantatas, accessed March 11, 2020, <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Lib/Bartok-Bela.htm>

to the discovery of Richard Strauss's music, he started to feel a deeper connection with composition. His compositional style is characterized by a personalized use of tonality⁶⁰ and the implementation of folkloric elements in his music. The common interest in folkloric music of Hungary brought together Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. The two collected and transcribed a vast number of folkloric tunes from the Carpathian regions. Besides Strauss's influence, the two other composers that had a heavy influence on Bartók's compositional style are Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg. Because of the Nazi invasion in 1940, Bartók immigrated to United States where he lived the rest of his life.⁶¹

Béla Bartók *Romanian Folk Dances* SZ. 56 for Piano

The "Romanian Folk Dances SZ. 56" is a set of six dances compiled together in 1915 under the original title "Romanian Folk Dances from Hungary" (at that time Transylvania was part of Hungary until 1918, when it unified with Romania). Bartók used seven original folk tunes, which he collected from different regions of Transylvania. Each tune represents a different dance form, and they were originally performed on violin or shepherd flute.⁶² These types of dances were usually performed by the peasants during different occasions such as village days, weddings, baptisms, and important Christian

60. Bartók's compositional style often uses chords that do not belong to the natural family of chords created on a diatonic scale.

61. "Béla Bartók," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed March 11, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bela-Bartok>

62. David Yeomens, *Bartók for Piano* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 75.

holidays. The tunes are taken from the region of Transylvania and are authentic Romanian folkloric tunes.

The original version of this set was written by Bartók for solo piano. In 1917, he wrote a version of it for small orchestral ensemble. Zoltán Székely arranged the piece for violin and piano. Arthur Willner later arranged it for string orchestra, and Gerhard Prasent wrote an arrangement for string quartet. The original set was dedicated by Bartók to Ion Busitia⁶³ who helped organize a tour for him to collect folkloric tunes from Transylvania.

The six pieces that form the set are:

- *Joc cu Bătă* (Stick Dance)
- *Brâul* (Waistband Dance)
- *Pe Loc* (On the Spot)
- *Buciumeana* (Dance from Butschum)
- *Poargă Românească* (Romanian Polka)
- *Mărunțelul* (Lively Dance)

The six dances can be seen as one large work with multiple movements interconnected by folkloric elements and historical background, or as individual pieces with specific characteristics related to rhythm, melody, harmony and construction. The narrative construction of the set can follow the same approach with one overarching narrative idea spread throughout the entire set as well as one independent idea for each one of the pieces.

63. Ion Bușiția (1875-1953) was a music teacher at the grammar school of the village Beiuș.

One specific approach to the compositional texture found throughout the entire set is the way in which Bartók distributes the musical material between the hands of the pianist. Because the folkloric instruments of the ensembles have specific roles, they are divided into two groups—soloistic instruments and harmonic instruments. This same structure is reflected in this set. Bartók assigns the role of the soloist to the right hand only, while the role of the harmonic support is designated to the left hand.

Joc cu Bâță (Stick Dance)

Every piece of this set has its own descriptive title. The first piece, *Joc cu Bâță*, or Stick Dance, is performed by men alone as “a solo dance, with various figures the last of which - as a consummation – consists of kicking the room’s ceiling.”⁶⁴ Bartók paid close attention to the details of the pieces to help the performer accurately convey the style. He accomplished this by paying close attention to the articulations, marking them very meticulously in the score (i.e. accent, *sforzando*, *tenuto*, terrace dynamics, *forte*, etc.). He wants to guide the interpretation as much as possible to the actual idea that he wanted to project with his music. He also indicates very specific metronome marking for the quarter note.

A possible interpretation of the first piece can be related to the two main rhythmic patterns and the sequencing of the material. It is constructed in a binary form (AB). The key of this piece is centered around A with influences of Dorian and Aeolian modes. The

64. Benjamin Suchoff, ed. *Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Music*, (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1967), 40.

motivic idea is formed from sequential rhythmic material spread over a full measure (See Example 9).



Example 9. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Stick Dance mm. 1-4.

The eighth note anacrusis with a *tenuto* articulation marking and *forte* dynamic in the right hand is a very clear suggestion of the energy that Bartók wants for the first statement of the theme. It can be seen as a signal for the dancer that the music is about to start. Also, the fact that he marked the first group of two sixteenth notes *staccato* is an indicator for the energetic character of the tune. In the next three measures the *legato* markings over the sixteenth notes may suggest the idea of fluency in the melody, he takes care of the moving energy by marking an extended *crescendo* over two measures of the motivic idea. The fluency of the phrase may suggest a folkloric dance type that involves gentle body moves. The main notes that constitute the tune in the first four measures are C-D-E-F#-G, which form a pentascale. Measures 5-8 and 13-16 use the same material, but Bartók adds variations and ornamentation to the motivic ideas respecting the idea of folkloric music having no boundaries, from the perspective of free improvisation and

variation on a theme. The B section rhythmic characteristic is the dotted rhythm marked in the red boxes (See Example 10).



Example 10. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Stick Dance, mm. 16-25.

The sixteenth note triplets in m. 17, marked with the yellow circle, should be approached more like an ornamentation (in a somewhat “snappy” way) rather than a precise rhythmic calculation. There are two reasons for that. First, it is very difficult to mark folkloric embellishments in an exact manner as they are performed in a free folkloric manner. Second, any group of rapidly played notes can sound like an ornament quite naturally when they center around one primary pitch.

Rhythmic patterns in the first phrases of sections “A” and “B” are also different in character. The symmetrical structure of rhythm in the opening of the piece creates a sense of an energetic but smoothly moving phrase, suggesting a more gentle dance structure while the dotted rhythm of the “B” section represents a more angular, vigorous character of the theme which indicates a change in the character of the dance. This shift can be seen as an opposing idea (transgressor) from a narrative perspective that interferes to change the already set atmosphere. The new rhythmic-motivic idea suggests a dance closer to the descriptive title of the piece. The dotted rhythm can represent the dancer hitting the sealing of the room with the stick. These two distinct approaches of the rhythm in the two sections is one way to create a narrative construct about the first piece.

From a narrative perspective, one can say that the differences in the motivic rhythms of the two sections create a conflict between two characters/agents. Because in the entire B section there are no rhythmic motivic elements that could remind the listener about the A section, the story of the piece unfolds the idea that the second character is the stronger one. This understanding of the work and the elements that are building it should give the performer a perspective on how to shape the “personalities” of the two characters. In other words, the AB sections can represent two dancers that compete. The first one is obviously overtaken by the second one which presents a more energetic, flamboyant and dynamic dance, characterized by dotted rhythms, more varied articulation, larger range of dynamics.

***Brâul* (Waistband Dance)**

This title describes another type of dance that is most often performed by groups of men or women alone. However, throughout history, they started to change the organization of the dancers by creating a pattern of alternating man, woman, man, woman, and so on. It is an energetic dance where everyone follows the same choreography. This piece is centered around the key of D in Dorian mode, which gives an air of sadness to the tune. The *Allegro* tempo marking with the quarter note at 144 is Bartók’s indication to emphasize the energy behind this dance type. The articulation used is mostly *staccato* both in the accompaniment and the melodic contour, which is contributing to the uplifting energy of the dance. The theme is divided into two phrases of four measures each, mm. 1-4 and 5-8 (see Example 11).



Example 11. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Waistband Dance, mm. 1-10.

The D minor measures 1-4 can represent the longing and yearning of the Romanian people and the G major measures 5-8 can suggest the hope or the joyful memories of youth. This associations can be supported by the harmonic colors of the two phrases (D minor versus G major)

This contrast between the two sections of the theme creates a conflict from a narrative point of view. The first four measures can be identified with the order imposing character because that is what is presented first, and it sets up the atmosphere of the tune (see Example 11). The next four measures (5-8) are bringing something unexpected in the scenery by the change of color in the harmony, being built around a G major chord, increase in dynamic level and higher in register (see Example 11). These differences can suggest an interference over the normal course of music creating another character that wants to take over the main role. The fact that the last phrase of the piece uses the same pentascale as the first one and it returns to the home key of D major suggests that the “story” of this piece ends up in the same mood in which it started.

By knowing this outcome of the narrative map, the performer can choose how to present the middle section of the piece in contrast to the beginning and the end. Since the dance is performed by both men and women in present day in Romania, the minor section can represent the men that respect the basic steps of the dance. The major section can symbolize the women that add embellishment through motion to the dance. These can be reflected in the performance by the way in which the performer chooses to present the colors of the G major section. It can be done by having a clear difference in dynamic levels, or a different type of *staccato* articulation in the right hand in comparison to the first phrase *staccato*. Also, because the narrative map suggests there is a return home at the end of the piece, the reiteration of the initial phrase should be similar in interpretation to its initial statement.

Pe Loc (On the Spot)

The title of this piece perfectly describes the atmosphere of the music. It is centered around the key of B and uses the “uncertain mode” with the fourth scale degree raised (E#). The augmented second resulting from D and E# marked with a red circle in the score suggests middle-eastern influences. This work is binary in construction—“A” (mm. 1-18) and “B” (mm. 19-40). Each phrase is built from a four-measure unit. Bartók uses a drone type of texture in the left hand as an accompaniment and a motivic pentascale in the “A” section which underlines the idea of the title of a dance performed on the same spot. The first three measures of just left hand have two roles—to set the tempo and to create the atmosphere for the theme entrance. The ornaments on the down beats and the added syncopated rhythm on top of that in mm. 6-7 and 10-11, green boxes

in the score, are musical suggestions that represent the free improvisation of the dancers to the main choreography to emphasize emotions (see Example 12).



Example 12. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, On the Spot, mm. 1-10.

In m. 19, the “B” section starts with a shift in the harmony, and the new key center becomes D. This can be perceived as an attempt of the dancer to break the dance pattern, but Bartók uses the same melodic motivic ideas in the “B” section as he did in the “A” section just around a different central pitch (see Example 13).



Example 13. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, On the Spot, mm. 19-22.

The narrative characters can, for the first time, be distributed between harmony and melody in this set. The order character is represented by the harmony. This association is supported by statement of the first three measures of solo harmony and the steadiness of the quarter notes in the accompaniment as a pedal point. The melody represents the second character that is richer in articulations and it is less static. The melody's accents, together with the ornamentation, syncopated rhythms, and the change of the key center in the "B" section, are elements that could be seen in the music as a sound representation of the variety of visual gestures done by the dancer to make the dance attractive.

Being aware of the elements that define the two characters and the fact that the theme (the transgressor character) overpowers the harmony (order character) by the end of the piece suggests that the narrative archetype would be Tragedy. This implies that the initial strong character in this case the harmony ends up in a weaker position by the end of the work than when it started.

***Buciumeana* (Dance from Butschum)**

The fourth piece of the set is the perfect example of what Enescu describes as "the yearning of the Romanian music" because every phrase has a downward direction of the melodic contour (see Example 14).



Example 14. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Dance of Butschum, mm. 1-15.

The piece has a binary construction: “A” section mm. 1-10, “B” section mm. 11-18, and each section has its own musical theme. It is centered around the key of A with mixolydian influences. It is the first piece of the set written in 3/4, but the tied notes over the bar line in the first two measures make it difficult to understand the meter until the melody comes in measure three. Because of these ties the listener could interpret the opening in a 2/4 meter causing metric displacement. Bartók’s long *legato* lines in both harmony and melody combined with the descending contour of the pitches are clues of a thoughtful mood. The similarities between the two themes are very visible. The first two measures of each phrase are what set them apart. Bartok uses the same musical material for the last two measures of each phrase in both sections.

The two agents are described in the first two measures of every phrase (in the “A” section, the order character mm. 3-4, 7-8 and in the “B” section the transgressor mm. 11-12, 15-16, due to the unexpected rhythmic change). The conflict between the two results from the rhythmic differences (see above Example 14). The order imposing character has triplets in its construction and dotted rhythms which makes it contrasting in itself due to the instability between the triplets and dotted notes. The transgressor has running sixteenth notes, syncopation over the bar which makes it feel weaker, and dotted rhythms. Even if the last phrase of the piece starts with the thematic idea of the transgressor, Bartok reminds the listener about the order imposing character with the last two measures of the phrase. This places the piece in the narrative archetype of Romance meaning that the order character is fulfilling its objective over the one that wanted to interfere. Because of this rhythmic instability between the characters, the performer has the opportunity to express varied nuances of yearning or longing which are characteristic to Romanian music. The fact that the piece ends with the same two measures that end every phrase up to that point it can be interpreted as recurrent obsessive statement.

Poargă Românească (Romanian Polka)

The fifth piece of the set is bringing a complete change in character. Bartok is preparing the end of the set with an uplifting, spirited melody. The key centers around Dorian mode starting from D with the fourth scale degree raised (G#), as Romanians mostly use this mode in folk tunes. It has a binary structure “A” mm. 1-16 and “B” mm. 17-28. The *staccato* articulation used by the composer is another element that contributes to the high energy of the piece, and the grace-note appoggiaturas contribute to the

Romanian folk music style. The changes in meter between 2/4 and 3/4 create a sense of asymmetrical hypermeter. The result of this is a three-bar phrase with the last measure shorter than the first two (see Example 15). These features are representative of the dances performed in pairs. This type of dance is full of pirouettes with a stop and change of direction at the end of the phrases. The pirouettes can be symbolized in this piece by the arpeggiated movements of the right hand throughout the entire work.



Example 15. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Romanian Polka, mm. 8-10.

The A section can be seen as the order imposing character because it presents the musical material in a theme with variation form. The changes that happen during the A section are not strong enough to be seen as a secondary character. The transgressor element can be characterized by the syncopated rhythm of the B section (see Example 16). Usually, in the Romanian dances, the syncopated rhythms are associated with the moments where the dancers show their best moves and are given the freedom to step outside of the boundaries imposed by choreography. Bartok adds *sforzandos* on the down beats of the right hand starting with the B section to balance the syncopated rhythms of the accompaniment. From m. 20, he adds *sforzandos* on both the first and third beats (see Example 16). This syncopated motive creates the contrast with the opening character, so it can be labeled the transgressor character.

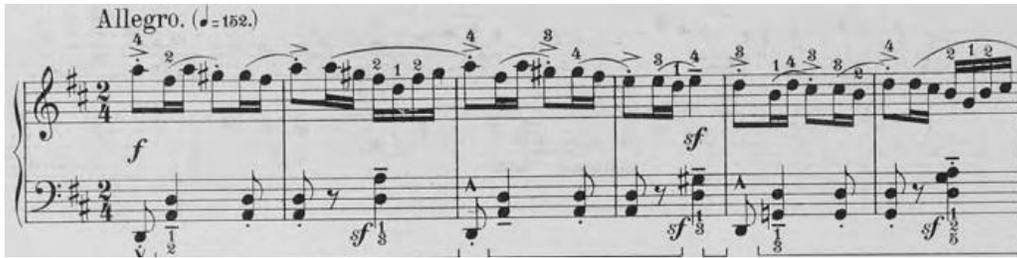


Example 16. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Romanian Polka, mm. 26-28.

The weight of the three-note chords on the weak part of the beat against a single note with an accent still does not feel strong enough to place the transgressor over the order character. Because the transgressor does not appear until the “B” section, leaving the impression of only one character, the performer needs to play softer to save energy for the “B” section. Otherwise, there is no room to grow into the “B” section, or transgressor character, and the piece would become stagnant. The climax of the piece happens in the “B” section where both characters are present and try to take the power from each other.

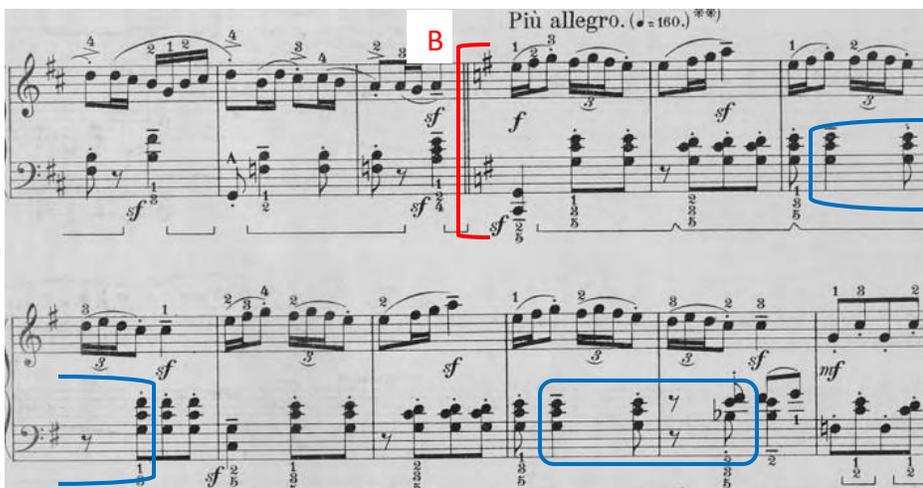
***Mărunțelul* (Lively Dance)**

The last piece of the set presents a binary form (section A mm. 1-16, section B mm. 17-52) plus a Coda mm. 53-61. The piece starts around the key center D suggesting a Dorian mode with the fourth scale degree raised (G#) and ends in the key center of A. The right hand melody describes perfectly the title of the piece which refers to a fast dance with fast step sequences. The sixteenth notes between the beats suggest the fast step sequences of the dance which implies that they should not be over played. Bartók adds accents on almost every beat to emphasize the metric accent and to balance the power against the rhythmic pattern of the harmony (see Example 17).



Example 17. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Lively Dance, mm.1-6.

The B section brings an increase in tempo, the presence of triplets which sound as ornamentation due to the speed in which they have to be performed, and a syncopated rhythm in the left-hand mm. 19-20, 23-24 marked in the blue boxes (see Example 18).



Example 18. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Lively Dance, mm. 16-25.

Because the B section is twice as long as the A section, Bartók repeats the melodic material of the B section starting with m. 32. He brings a variation of the harmonic progression in the left hand and eliminates the rhythmic syncopations of the first part of

the section. By doing so allows the listener to channel the attention fully towards the right hand which has the last few statements of the melody before the coda.

One interpretation of the narrative based on the above elements can refer to the fight of the two characters, melody against harmony. The order imposer can be represented by the harmony due to the energetic, strong, rhythmic patterns marked with *sforzandos* and *tenutos* as articulation. The transgressor is represented by the right hand through the melody. The opposition of the melody through its forward moving direction against the imposing rhythms of the harmony can support the idea of a contrasting character. These two characters can be associated with the wish of the Romanian peasant for a better life (melody) and the reality of daily living (harmony). In measure 33 the melody starts to gain strength over the harmony. Bartók creates that by eliminating the complex rhythm in the left hand. This is a shift that was unexpected. The tradition of the Romanian stories never allows wishes to come true because they are always vanished by the reality of life. The *sforzandos* he marks on the downbeats in mm. 33 and 37 are reminiscent of the power that the order imposing character had up to that moment (see Example 19).



Example 19. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Lively Dance, mm. 33, 37.

All these together, with the lack of chords in the accompaniment during coda, suggest that the character of the theme wins over the order imposer character. This places the narrative in the category of Irony because the melody started in a weaker place than it ended, which is unexpected. The wish comes true in the story. This conclusion is reached because of how Bartók approaches the coda. He unexpectedly removes the power of the harmony, reducing the number of notes to a monodic line and adds intervals to the melody in the right hand (see Example 20). To reproduce this narrative image for the listener the performer does not have to do much. The texture of the piece takes care of it.



Example 20. Béla Bartók Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56, Lively Dance, mm. 53-61.

George Enescu, Short Biography

George Enescu was a Romanian composer, violinist, pianist and conductor. He is considered to be one of the top composers of the 20th century being described in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as: “Romania’s greatest composer [...] and one

of the best-known violinists of his generation”.⁶⁵ He was born on August 19th, 1881 in a northeast village in Romania called Liveni. He was the only child out of his eight siblings to survive past adolescence. His first contact with music was at the age of three when he heard local people performing folk tunes on their instruments. In 1888 at the age of seven, Enescu was accepted in the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna where he studied violin with Sigmund Bachrich and Josef Hellmesberger, composition with Robert Fuchs, and piano with Emil Ludwig. In 1893 he graduated from Vienna’s Konservatorium.

Between 1895-1899 he studied in Paris at the Paris Conservatoire.⁶⁶ At that time, very few foreigners were accepted into the institution, especially at a young age like Enescu. He was only thirteen years old when he started school in Paris. The only foreign students that were accepted there before Enescu, were H. Wieniawski, P. Sarasate and F. Kreisler.⁶⁷ In Paris, he studied composition with two of the most prestigious composers of that time—Jules Massenet and Gabriel Fauré. These musicians heavily influenced Enescu’s compositional style.

Enescu’s first composition that was successfully accepted by an audience was the *Romanian Poem*, Op. 1 which he composed when was fifteen years old. He “wanted to tell the public about his native country in sound pictures, recreating specific character of

⁶⁵. Noel Malcolm, “George Enescu,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 199.

⁶⁶. Lucian Blaga, “From Quotation to Assimilation: George Enescu’s use of Romanian Folk Elements in *Rhapsody No. 1* Op. 11 and *The Third Orchestral Suite*, Op. 27” (Thesis, Chicago College of Performing Arts, Chicago, 2005), 7-8.

⁶⁷. Boris Kotlyarov, *Enesco: His Life and Times*, trans. Boris Kotlyarov and E. D. Pedchenko (Neptune City, New Jersey: Paganiniana, 1984), 26.

its life and landscape.”⁶⁸ The same desires behind the *Romanian Poem* made him compose the two Romanian Rhapsodies, which, for a long period of time, were the most well-known works of Enescu. One of his last wishes was to return to Romania, especially after the second World War. However, due to his health condition, that did not happen, and he died on May 4th, 1955 in Paris.

Enescu is perceived in Romania as one of the most important ambassadors of the country throughout the world. His childhood home was transformed into a museum, and the name of the village was changed from Liveni to his name. An international festival and competition was created in his memory and take place every two years in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, where the most renowned artists and orchestras of the classical world are invited to perform.

George Enescu Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1

The first Romanian Rhapsody is part of what should have been a set of three Romanian Rhapsodies, but Enescu never finished the third installment. The first rhapsody was composed in 1901 and the second just one year later, in 1902. His main source of inspiration in this first Romanian Rhapsody is the folkloric music of the native land.

The piano solo version of the first rhapsody was written by the composer himself, and the folkloric narrative analysis of this work will be done based on that version of the composition, not the original orchestral version. Due to Enescu’s attention to detail and meaning behind every note that he puts in his compositions, the piano transcription that

68. Kotlyarov, Enesco: His Life and Times, 28.

he made has a very dense texture. It is difficult to perform from the technical perspective, because he transfers almost every line of the orchestral version into the piano reduction. Because of this, I found myself having to rearrange some sections of the score in order to accommodate the heavy texture of the music to my hand size.

The first Romanian Rhapsody is formed around six folkloric dance tunes that Enescu heard throughout his childhood. Since the form of a rhapsody is free in structure, and relies on themes and episodes, Enescu took those themes and built the work around them. Some of the themes are not an identical recreation of the original tunes. For example, he might take the second phrase of the original tune and place it first in his composition, thereby reordering the phrases. Or he may take just part of a tune and finish the musical idea in a different way than in the original. The tunes used in the rhapsody are representative of two types of dances from Romania, the *hora* and *sârba*.⁶⁹ The main differences between them are the tempo of the melody, where in *hora* the tempos are slower than in *sârba*, and the sequence of steps in the choreography. The first three tunes that form Enescu's Romanian Rhapsody number one are *hora* type of dance while the last three are *sârba* six original tunes are:

- “*Am un leu și vreau să-l beau*”, (I have a *leu* and I am going to drink it)⁷⁰
- “*Hora lui Dobrică*”, (The dance of Dobrică)
- “*Mugur- Mugurel*”, (Bud, Oh Bud)
- “*Ciobănașul*”, (The Shepherd)
- “*Hora morii*”, (Mill's Hora)
- “*Ciocârlia*”, (The Lark)

69. *Sârba* is a mixed men and women energetic dance performed in fast tempo moving always forward holding hands with the people in front of you and in the back.

70. *Leu* represents the name of the Romanian currency.

The analysis of the work will refer only to the six themes that are at the foundation of the rhapsody. They will be looked at from a Romanian folkloric perspective and how those folkloric elements can give an idea about a possible musical narrative of the composition.

The first theme “*Am un leu și vreau să-l beau*”, (I have a *leu* and I am going to drink it), is formed from two musical phrases and represents a *hora* dance. Enescu starts the work with the second musical phrase of the original tune mm 1-2. In mm. 3-4 he repeats the first two measures but adds grace notes to the ascending arpeggio on measure three. This creates a symmetrical, four-bar phrase, which is common in most folkloric tunes of Romania. The song uses the exact words of the title over this section of the melody which describe the desire to drinking of the character. Enescu introduces the theme unaccompanied to make a clear statement of the musical idea (see Example 21).

Example 21. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano Transcription, mm. 1-2.

This simple tune will be modified later by adding embellishments, rhythmic variations, tempo changes, or phrase expansions, which are specific ways to create variations on a melodic line in the Romanian folklore. The notes at the cadential

moments of the first theme, marked with red boxes (see Example 21) are lower in pitch than the previous notes. Enescu describes this descending figure at the end of the phrase as the yearning of Romanian folklore expression.

The first phrase uses an ascending musical line, but the second phrase does exactly the opposite. It starts from a D5 and descends to a G#4 (see Example 22). This change in tempo and direction of the melody can symbolize the fulfillment of the initial desire of drinking.



Example 22. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano Transcription, mm. 5-8.

Due to the difference in tempo, dynamics, direction of the phrases, it can be justified to name the first phrase as the order imposing character representing the wish, and the second phrase can be labeled the transgressor. Following the evolution of the two characters, Enescu presents the phrases in the same order and adds the same type of variations to them. The variations can represent the degradation stage in which the character gets by continuously fulfilling his initial desire of drinking. The fact that last statements of the two phrases are varied through texture, ornamentation and rhythmic variation suggest that the character ends up in a different emotional state than he started.

The second theme of the Romanian Rhapsody, “*Hora lui Dobrică*”, (The dance of Dobrică), starts at rehearsal number four in the score. It is written in 6/8 in a slow

tempo which is characteristics of a *hora* dance. Enescu uses only the first part of the tune because he considers it the most appropriate material for his musical idea.⁷¹ The theme has the shape of an arch starting with a two-octave, A major arpeggio. The middle section is in the high register, and it is followed by a descending melodic line to the lower register, which ends on the downbeat of m. 42 (see Example 23).

Example 23. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 35-42.

This presentation of the theme reflects the improvisatory style and the freedom of the folkloric music of Romania. The interval of the augmented second marked with green in the score and the chromaticism in m. 37 are elements found in the uncertain mode. The use of this mode creates opportunity for an unexpected outcome. After the first statement

⁷¹ Mircea Chiriac, “Rapsodiile Romane de George Enescu” (Muzica 7, 1958), 20.

of the theme, Enescu brings in, at rehearsal number 5, a new, contrapuntal inner voice.

This new element adds variety and color to the already presented theme.

The descending chromatic contrapuntal material tries to shift the attention from the main tune but is not strong enough to overcome the higher register and the articulation of the melody. This short presence of the new material suggests Enescu's intention to create conflict inside a free spirit melody. Failing to do that the transgressor character represented by the contrapuntal material fades away after four measures into rehearsal five. This leaves room for a new statement of the theme, but this time rhythmically varied and ornamented. This suggest that the theme ends up in a stronger and better place than when it started (see Example 24).

Example 24. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 43-46.

The third tune used by Enescu in this composition is “*Mugur, Mugurel*” (Bud, Oh Bud) and it starts at rehearsal eleven in the score. He follows the same approach as with the previous theme, by keeping only a part of the original version and writing it in a slow 6/8

time signature suggesting the *hora* dance. Because of these characteristics, he creates a metric connection between the second and third theme. This new theme is characterized by almost exclusively a stepwise, ascending motion. The meter, paired with the *legato* articulation of the tune, the lack of large leaps, and the title of the piece are elements that can suggest the frail attempts of the nature to blossom (see Example 25). The narrative perspective of this theme should be analyzed in a parallel manner with the remaining three themes that Enescu uses in this work, due to the fact that it is the last tune that represents a *hora* dance and it makes the transition of what is called the second half of the work.



Example 25. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 99-102.

The fourth theme is called “*Ciobănașul*”, (The Shepherd), and is the opposite of the character of the third theme. It starts at rehearsal thirteen, and also marks a change in energy regarding Enescu’s intentions from here to the end of the piece. The articulation is mostly *staccato*, the meter changes to 2/4, and the tempo is considerably increased. All these elements suggest a change to the dance type as well. From this moment on, all the themes will represent a *sârba* dance, characterized by fast tempos, vigorous moves of the body and a high frequency of steps. The articulation of this theme also fits the title of the

tune, underlining the happy and simple life of a shepherd. Every once in a while, at the end of a musical phrase there will be a sensation of a slower pace due to the longer notes of the melody. Those places symbolize the short moments dancers have to catch their breath before a new section of the music starts again. (see Example 26).

Example 26. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 122-128.

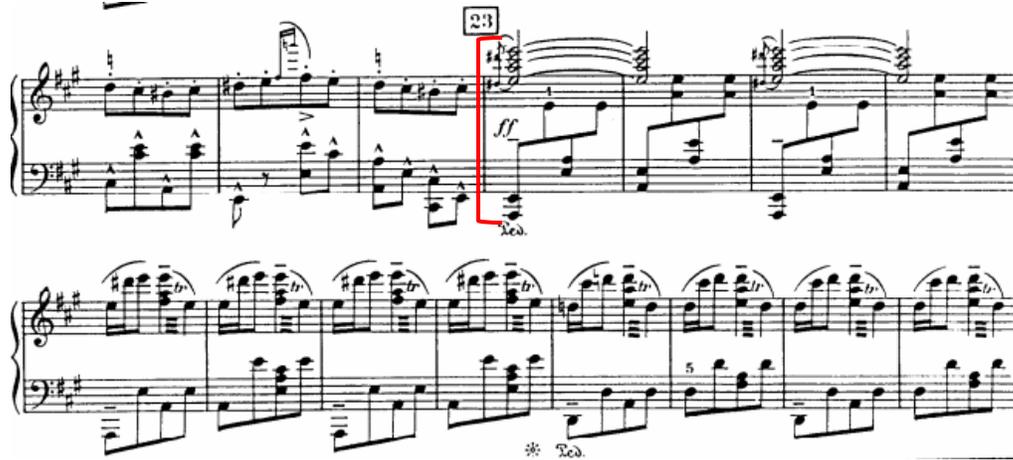
The fifth theme called “Hora morii”, (Mill’s Hora), is a *sârba* type of dance. It starts at rehearsal fourteen with nine measures of an A major chord which prepares the actual theme.

Even though the title has the word *hora*, because the original tune was in the form of a *hora* dance, Enescu took the tune and adjusted it to a *sârba*. He changed it to a faster tempo, shortened the articulations, added ornamentations on the weak beats, and did not have rhythmic cadential moments at the end of each musical phrase. This creates a sense of continuous forward motion, as in the choreography of a *sârba* dance. The structure of the tune on an A major chord moving up and down on the main notes of the chord can

suggest the mill which is spinning or the dancers that are holding hands and dance spinning in a circle (see Example 27).

Example 27. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 146-158.

The last folkloric tune that Enescu uses in the first Romanian Rhapsody is called “*Ciocârlia*”, (The Lark), beginning at rehearsal twenty-three. This tune in the original folkloric version is a purely instrumental piece performed initially on folkloric flute. The first four measures of the section establish the key of A Major. In measure five of rehearsal twenty-three, the melody begins with a broken octave with a leading tone into the highest pitch of that interval. This motion, along with the following trill on the same note, are Enescu’s attempts to reproduce the sounds of a lark through music. The motivic idea is four measures long. After that, he uses the same musical material in a different key for the next four measures, which can symbolize the presence of more than one lark, (see Example 28).



Example 28. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 283-294.

The second part of the tune involves rhythmic syncopation marked with green boxes in the score, and small sixteenth-note runs which can be perceived as the excitement and the energy of the nature in its full beauty. The virtuosic element of the line does not affect the liveliness of the melody and the expression of pure energy. The diversity in articulation with the two note legato, *tenutos*, non-legato are tools that help to recreate an accurate image of the diverse sounds produced by nature (see Example 29).

Example 29. George Enescu, Romanian Rhapsody Op. 11, No. 1 Piano transcription, mm. 307-314.

To summarize this composition, from a musical narrative perspective, one way to build the narrative is through the only two type of dances, *hora* and *sârba*, found in these six tunes. The first three tunes belong to a *hora* dance while the other three are from *sârba*. The principal characteristics of the music of *hora* dance type are a slower tempo, smoother melodic contour (no large intervallic leaps) and not a very diverse articulation to keep a sense of calmness. On the other hand, the musical characteristics of a *sârba* dance are on the opposite side. Fast tempo, rich in ornamentation, varied types of articulation, and a very virtuosic sensibility. Based on these criteria of the music and the organization of the work in two big sections, around two dance types, it is appropriate to identify the first three tunes as the order imposing character and the last three tunes as the transgressor character because it introduces the change in the dance type. Due to the fact that Enescu does not bring back any musical elements of the *hora* structure from the middle of the piece to the end, makes it clear that the order character will be forgotten by

the listener. Because of this structure of the tunes, the narrative line will fall under the archetype of Comedy implying that the main character (*sârba* dance) ends in a better situation than it started.

CHAPTER IV

AFTERWORD

Working on this document, I found myself navigating through an unexpectedly enriching experience in a variety of ways. The narrative manner of analyzing music has been helpful for me as a performer for the emotional reasons that have already been stated, but I now see that the benefits of this investigation go beyond this particular genre of music. Narrativity has been used in this paper with folkloric music, but I found myself being able to apply it to other genres. From now on, when I study music of Bach, Beethoven, Prokofiev or Cage for example, I will apply narrative-based analysis because of its power to break the wall between the performer and the emotion behind the work. On a more practical level, I discovered that it helps the speed with which I memorize music, due to the extra layer of connections made in the brain. My hope is that the present study will be similarly helpful to others.

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