

General Aspects of Film Music in the Creation of Tiberiu Olah

Titiana MIRIȚĂ¹

Abstract: *Tiberiu Olah is one of the best Romanian film music composers of the second half of the 20th century. His feature filmography includes 34 productions from 1958 to 1987. In all of these, he exploits the sounds of the small or large symphony orchestra depending on the specifics of the script and the story. The fiction films for which he composed the soundtrack include a wide range of genres such as drama, history, love, adventure, current affairs, war. Until the 70th, the style he approached in his films is a clean, good one, not abusing too much the technique of leitmotif and sound description. One technique he used from the beginning was emphasizing suspense, tension through various signals, chords, short melodic or harmonic motifs in the bass or treble register. There are films with a variety of music scenes and others in which there are only a few short interventions, but all of them placed in essential moments of the action.*

Key-words: *Tiberiu Olah; symphonic music; romanian film; film music techniques*

1. Introduction

Tiberiu Olah was part of the first avant-garde generation of Romanian composers who in the late 50's, in bad conditions and political oppression, tried to break the ice of socialist realism and synchronize the Romanian artistic creation with that made by colleagues from the West, in conditions of total freedom. He was born in 1928 in the village of Arpășel in the Bihor area and graduated from the conservatory in Cluj (1949) and Moscow (1949). Between 1966-1969 he participated in the summer courses in Darmstadt and between 1969-1970 he took part in the Study and Creation Internship of the Academy in West Berlin. Until the age of 74, when he died, he composed four symphonies, the comic opera *The Glaziers from Toledo*, the cycles of the four *Harmonies*, three *Equinoxes*, three *Invocations* and *Translations*, sonatas for piano, for violin, for cello, for flute, for clarinet, etc. He was a master of chromatic modalism, in the sense of that cultivated by Bartok, Enescu or Messiaen. A refined melodist, *Olah* relied in his remarkable creation on the fusion between the intonations of the popular melody and the sounds of percussion instruments. After 1963, when the relative relaxation of the communist party took place, which followed the realistic socialist era, he began to shape its unmistakable style through artistic force and striking modernity. The personal note stands out since the *Sonata for solo clarinet* by the continuous alternation of short and long sounds, the oscillation between fast sound groups, in dancing poses, and the stillness on a few obsessively repeated sounds. It fed on the most precious essences of Maramures and Csango folklore and he grew up in the climate of the ancestral popular modalism of our melody. His style started from the technical suggestions of Webern, Bartok (through neomodal sounds and the tendency of globalization of musical structures) and Enescu (by taking over the heterophonic principle), in order to reach a personal, synthetic language, of a comprehensive suggestiveness and flavor, which gave it a particular, unmistakable expressiveness. His rhythmic universe is based on globally rhythmic surfaces starting from the principle of contrasting logic and reminiscent of the popular parlando-rubato ethos, observable in works such as the *Sonata for solo clarinet*.

¹ Ph.D candidate, National University of Music Bucharest, titianamirita@gmail.com.

The film meant for the composer a permanent challenge of resonances, ideas, expressions, the conquests of these barely perceptible experiments in the world of film, speculating and crystallizing them often in chamber or symphonic concert scores. In order to better understand the social but also musical context in which *Olah* worked as a filmmaker, it is necessary to first make a brief presentation of that period before moving on to elements characteristic of his three decades of creation in this field. Although the communist regime in Romania was restrictive, its direction of investing in the film industry was clear and commendable, but its ultimate goal was propaganda – they wanted to approach the issues that would shed light on the communist regime and its achievements. However, these truths cannot overshadow the immense work and artistic quality of the productions that incited filmmakers to even greater creativity in order to find ways to circumvent the party's censorship. Thus, there was the practice of using scenes in the script or even editing that would obviously have been eliminated by the party representatives so that what really mattered would go unnoticed by them and reach the final product. Music played an important role in this whole process, being part of the big projects. In general, she was not targeted by censorship but was a collateral victim of it, parts of the films that were removed were often loaded with sound emotion. Sudden cuts of melodic lines can often be seen, thus lacking the entire musical picture designed by the composer for those moments. In the case of *Olah*, we can mention three cases in which his music was a collateral victim, namely in the productions *The Endless Shore*, *Beyond the Sands* or *Meanders*, films which were completely banned by the party, and which were released after 1989. Thus the entire soundtrack composed by *Olah* for these will suffer.

However, the large state-approved budgets for cinema were the positive part of the regime, with musicians having the opportunity to compose extensive scores for symphony orchestras. Therefore, cult music had a special place in the great productions of those times since the beginning of film development. This musical genre also coexisted with others such as pop, rock, disco, jazz or, since the 80's, the electronic one, conquering new territories of the field. Regardless of these factors, however, the symphony orchestra has always had a place of honor without raising the issue of preference for a certain style over a period of time, the choices being made more depending on the subject of the film. Historical film is obviously a genre in which symphony has excelled, but there are a lot of other topics where we can find this style such as police, drama, war, politics or action. The techniques used by Romanian composers they are similar to those used by those abroad - both in Europe and in the USA - being exploited with predilection: *the theme with variations, the leitmotif, Mickey-Mousing and the accompanied dialogue*. Another thing they had in common with some of these composers is the fact that they orchestrated their scores themselves, without resorting to an orchestrator. This practice was more widely used - but not always due to lack of time - by the older generation of Hollywood, including *Copland, Korngold, Steiner* and *Rószka*, or by Europeans such as *Ennio Morricone, George Delerue* and *Howard Shore*, known for always orchestrating their own scores.² Another important thing is that Romanian composers avoided excessive symphony, their music complementing the action, completing the overall picture and adding value to the film's universe. The technical possibilities were also helpful, the recording studio in Buftea being one of the best and largest in Romania at that time. Unfortunately, the rising costs and lack of funding for cinema after the fall of the communist regime led to a decrease in the importance of the large symphony orchestra in Romanian films. It continues to exist, but large-scale projects are now being replaced by sounds that can be artificially obtained through computer programs specifically dedicated to such a thing.

² Scott D. Paulin. 2000. "Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity: The Idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk in the History and Theory of Film Music". In *Music and Cinema*, London: Wesleyan University Press. p. 65.

The specialized studies on contemporary Romanian film music and that of the 20th century represent unfortunately a territory still unexploited to its maximum capacities. Romanian composers have delivered over time invaluable soundtracks that have made the connection between two distinct worlds: that of concert music and that of film. The possibilities of expression and meaning of the symphony orchestra were exploited by prominent representatives of Romanian composition, who first acquired their well-deserved place in the repertoire of concert programs. *Tiberiu Olah* is one of the most prolific Romanian film music composers of the second half of the 20th century. His fiction feature filmography includes 34 productions from 1958 to 1987. In all of this, he exploits the sounds of the small or large symphony orchestra depending on the specifics of the script and the story. His statements about film music do not give us many details about his work behind the curtain and how he approached it before reaching the stage of recording and editing in Buftea³. There are several articles in which the composer himself sets out his point of view on the direction that music should take in films and what should be put first, music or film. However, the existing information in the specialized studies on the sound language approached in his films is incomplete and fugitive, mostly being found in the general chronicles of the productions, published in the press of the time. His film compositions completed the action, spoke instead of words when dialogue was lacking, shaped feelings, character traits and became independent concert pieces. The restrictive laws of the language of film music did not hedge his creative potential, motivating his belief that in concert pieces there are certain rules and principles of composition that must be taken into account and other changing rules in the case of cinema. Thus, according to him, *film music requires a certain way of thinking: to know how to compose themes that have artistic value and that fit at the same time within the timing (forms without a recapitulation). Ultimately, therefore, film music requires maximum conciseness (expressiveness on given surfaces) and pregnancy.*⁴ Thus Olah denies the composers who consider film music something secondary, worthless, not giving it importance, strongly believing that this segment should be deepened and not ignored.

Going further, he did not rule out the possibility of the birth of a new kind of opera specially designed for the screen, thus composing an opera-parody for puppets, *The Glaziers from Toledo*, which will later be screened. In this study, a brief presentation will be made on some of the techniques used by him during his career as a filmmaker, focusing on the patterns he created and adapted according to the possibilities offered by the script. The ability to remain faithful to a symphonic language but not deviate from the primary goal of completing the universe of action, thus avoiding excessive parallel symphony to the film has managed to strengthen the position of faithful collaborator of some of the greatest Romanian directors. Of course, in order to be able to make an appreciation of his entire cinematographic creation, a thorough research of his films was needed, which involves not only watching them but also consulting the manuscripts. Unfortunately, the inclusion of all the defining aspects of Olah's music as well as the particularities related to each film is impossible to do in a single article, their treatment requiring a space for a larger work. So in this material will be exposed some of the essential techniques that have characterized his evolution as a filmmaker, key moments in

³ Călin Căliman. "The movie fortress from Buftea". *Istoria filmului românesc*, <http://www.istoriafilmuluiromanesc.ro/ifr~cetatea-filmului-de-la-buftea~110>. Studiourile Buftea is the largest and most advanced studio complex in Romania and one of the most important in Central and Eastern Europe where production and post-production services were provided. Its construction began in 1950 and in 1959 all 5 film sets, the sound studio and the building for combined filming were put into use.

⁴ Tiberiu Olah. 1959. "Some current issues of film music". In *Tiberiu Olah. Restituiri*, ed. by Olga Lupu. 2008. pp. 25-30. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală.

his career and situations that have become successful patterns for the development of musical moments.

2. *Michael the Brave* - his most famous and valuable soundtrack

His leading creation in this field is the score written for the movie *Michael the Brave*. Although he had composed before it the soundtrack for 13 other productions, the maturity of his cinematographic compositional style was reached in 1970, *Michael* being able to be used as a landmark in shaping some stylistic periods of his career as a filmmaker. Of course, the generous general framework of this production allowed him to express a rich and valuable musical language based on a large symphony orchestra. With this film he confirmed the position he had acquired in the 60's in the world of film music, consolidating a path in which cinematic achievements were and would become even more obvious, being a faithful collaborator of the successful team of that period: *Nicolaescu - Popovici*. If we turn our attention to the film *Michael the Brave*, his contribution to the quality of the movie is also recognized by *Călin Căliman* who stated that „the music of Tiberiu Olah contributes essentially to the artistic accomplishments of the film, some of the passages of the score - such as the moment of the release of the soldiers of the Brave - being anthological”⁵. Due to the profound quality and complexity that many musicologists believed is absent in a film music score, this work sets a precedent and is sung in concert halls in the form of a suite – *Michael the Brave Suite*.

The real arguments for which the music in this film lasts over time is the ease with which he created an avalanche of sound characters identified by leitmotifs. In his past productions he has used this technique but the depth of the suggestion has not reached maximum levels, trying to find a balance between contemporary symphony and the limitation of it in short moments. However, during his entire career as a filmmaker he remained faithful to this modern style, adapting it according to the situation, *Michael the Brave* being no exception. We therefore encounter overlaps of fifths that create tension by joining at a major 2nd interval, the chaining of two major chords to the small third – an homonym-relative relationship used mainly by Béla Bartók. Also the rhythmic sphere is an important factor in his cinematographic creations, in this case having two popular systems as main sources of inspiration: parlando-rubato and folk dance rhythms. The junction between the long sounds and the short ones articulated in short melismatic fragments is characteristic for the first system while the dancing character has attributed a pulsating rhythm, vivavce, fed by the asymmetrical placement of accents specific to heterogeneous rhythms.

Film music has the advantage of universality, the composer being able to create in any style he wants, of *Bach* or *Debussy* - he can even break the barriers between classical and modern, symphonic and electronic, tonal / atonal and modal. But there is also the reverse - the danger of depersonalizing it, losing its own style. This problem cannot be posed in the case of *Olah*, his unmistakable style focusing on a modern language which finds its origins in the folk quote. Olah's quality of assigning musical themes to characters or situations with the same character intensifies in *Michael the Brave*. This practice gradually grew in the 6th decade of XX century as he added films to his professional portfolio. He found the perfect framework for developing the technique in this production, the action itself being extremely permissive for the in-depth development of the musical means used. One of the most important leitmotifs of this film is *Mihai a big heart* that unlike other sound structures that accompany him during the action which are focused on creating the image of a fearless ruler defending the country, this is

⁵ Călin Căliman, 2017. *The history of Romanian film (1897 - 2017)*. Bucharest: Ideea Europeană. p. 231.

a reflection of his human feelings, that outlines his soul portrait, an image that we can say could have been highlighted mostly through music.⁶

This affective melodic core of the film is a cantilena of a melodic theme (figure 1) composed of alternations between values of long notes with short ones. The intense expressiveness is supported by accumulations that culminate in a jump stopped also on a long sound like the accumulation that acted as a trampoline. Long sound - short sound pendulum and sinuous melodic path advancing towards the acute register are exponents of the popular melody in *parlando-rubato* style, and further having elements of the infinite Wagnerian melody. All these elements combined together remind of the very complicated destiny of *Michael* and of the mioritic space. The first time this motif is heard is at 00:18:00 when *Michael* meets Rossana, being induced by music for the first time the connection between the two. This is also the first moment in which it is shown that the man has a human side that can feed feelings of love. However, this relationship between the two will remain at a platonic level, without being developed in any particular way, the attention focusing further on the politico-military side. What is also important to mention is that this theme will be found in a single scene in which Mihai is with his wife, their relationship being assigned other musical themes such as the death of their son - the main factor linking the two - or the heroic motive, the one that emphasizes the indestructible side of the ruler. However, its soft character will disappear in this situation, against the background of the misunderstandings between *Michael* and *Stanca*, the theme being interpreted by the trombone in the low register, a sign that indicates the tension between the two. Other moments in which human features are attributed to the prince through music, sincere emotions but which he does not show, occur when he arrives with his army at the seaside and manages to conquer that territory or when he enters Alba Iulia and is applauded by the enthusiastic crowd.



Fig. 1. – The musical leitmotif *Michael a big heart* from the moment number 3 –

Michael a big heart called for big facts in movie *Michael the Brave* initially sung by saxophone⁷, bars 1-8

⁶ Cristian Tudor Popescu. 2011. *The deaf film in mute Romania*. Iași: Polirom. p. 192-194. Outlining a human image with weaknesses but also natural feelings of love for *Michael*, a vision that the director Sergiu Nicolaescu really wanted to put into practice was a subject of dispute between him and Nicolae Ceaușescu. The leader of the Romanian Communist Party did not approve love scenes or any kind of scene in which *Michael's* human weakness could be read. He considered that this position is not worthy of a ruler, especially in the context in which the films from the National Epopee served as propaganda to inspire Romanian citizens with the idea of unity and fighting for the rights of the homeland against the oppressors. Under these conditions, weaknesses of the soul or any deviation from the ideal image was not accepted.

⁷ Tiberiu Olah. *Michael the Brave*. [manuscript]. 188. Bucharest. Romanian National Film Archive.

3. Means of musical language used before and after *Michael the Brave*

The fiction films for which he composed the soundtrack includes a wide range of genres different from the ones from the National Epopee⁸. In his filmography we find productions such as drama, history, love, adventure, current affairs, war, but lacking comedy. The one of two comedy for which he composed music is *A Merry Lament* in 1963. It is easy to understand why it is absent from this genre, namely because usually in these types of productions is used pop music and estrade orchestra, *Olah* being part of the category of classical symphonic music composers. The 32 feature films made over three decades are: *Avalanche* (1958) - drama, *The Streets Remember* (1961) - action, *The Endless Shore* (1962) - psychological, *The Treasure of Vadul Vechi* (1963) – drama, *The Catfish* (1963) - police, *The Kiss* (1964) - drama, *The Uprising* (1965) - drama, *The Castle-Dwellers* (1966) - comedy, *Meanders* (1966) - psychological, *Virgo* (1966) - dramă, *Summer Days* (1967) - comedy, *The Malicious Adolescent* (1968) – love story, *Sick Animals* (1970) - police, *Ipu's Death* (1971) - dramă, *Taking Off* (1971) - drama, *The Power and the Truth* (1971) - politic, *The Seawolf* (1972) - adventure, *The Revenge* (1972) - adventure, *Beyond the Sands* (1973) – drama, *Fleeting Loves* (1973) – psychological drama, *Immortals* (1974) - adventure, *No Trespassing!* (1974) - action, *Evening Guests* (1976) - police, *The Doom* (1976) - drama, *Vlad the Impaler: The True Life of Dracula* (1978) - historical, *At the Crossroads of Great Storms* (1980) - historical, *Mountains in flames* (1980) - historical, *The Convoy* (1981) - political, *Loving... Leaving...* (1982) - drama, *A Merry Lament* (1983) - comedy, *Castles Aflame in Transylvania* (1984) - historical, *The Extinct Vulcano* (1987) - action.⁹

Regardless of the genre he approached, his scores complete the image and the emotional palette generated by the action. His ability to adapt was reflected both in the soundtracks of war films where the entire production effort was huge and for psychological dramas where he captures the essential through a small number of musical moments, highlighting the depth of emotions. Until the 70's, the moment of *Michael the Brave's* appearance, the style he approached was a clean, good one, not abusing too much the technique of leitmotif and sound description. A first use of the leitmotif we find in *The Endless Shore*, the composer characterizing the love of the two young protagonists through a cantilena on strings in the first version, the main melodic idea being then exposed on trumpet or saxophone. *The Virgo Zodiac* is another film in which he created a guiding love theme for the tragic destiny of two young people, joining next to this structure another one that accompanies the failed destiny of the young people's parents. In the case of the cantilena, it shows its mastery in the field of heterophony, being sometimes imperceptible the transition from clarinet to violin or flute of the main idea, a change made several times during the musical moment. From the first collaborations with cinematography, *Olah* exploited the technique of combining various timbres for highlighting the qualities of various instruments by using them alternately as soloists. However, the novelty of the 70s highlights his ability to use metamorphosed versions of these themes not only through timbre but also melodic, agogic, rhythmic and dynamic changes. All these parameters came under the incidence of *Olah's* pen, which went from purely

⁸ Elena Saulea. 2011. *National Cinematographic Epopee*. Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor. p. 7-12. Revisiting the past through a national orientation was a political priority of the communist regime that supported cinematography in creating historical films in which to outline the image of past leaders fighting for the country. Thus was born the series of films from the National Epopee, which also includes productions such as *Dacians*, *Columns*, *Burebista*, *Mircea*, *Stefan*, *Cantemir*, etc.

⁹ "Tiberiu Olah composer". *All About Romanian Cinema*, <http://aarc.ro/personalitate/view/tiberiu-olah>.

illustrative themes to a dramatic depth with a crucial role in the film, creating musical characters.

A case in which we will find the feeling of love and fulfillment of some ideals reflected in the musical plan is in the movie *Power and Truth*, one of the most powerful propaganda films of the 70s. Here the cantilena presented since the pregeneric will not reflect a love story but some ideals, some pure feelings that a follower of the communist regime must have. The drift from these values is included in the conclusion of this musical number, which has the role of foretelling the struggle for truth and the supreme common good, starting with a lyrical melodic line and ending in a harmonic and timbre density. From an orchestral point of view, the instruments chosen by the composer differ depending on the situation in which the sound moment is placed on the screen.



Fig. 2. The leitmotif theme from the generic of the film *The Power and the Truth*, bars 1-9, section A¹⁰.

The first part of the generic, A, starts in B flat Major, following a transition to G minor in part B made with the subtonic f # well highlighted and reaching to B flat Major again in C part. The first two phrases that include volta I work in the antecedent consequent relationship even if F1 has an imperfect authentic cadence on step I while F2 contains the presence of do #, subtonic of the dominant in G minor sung by oboes (1 and 2), clarinet 1, bassoon, horn 1 (figure 2). However, the connection between the two phrases does not consist in the main melodic line but in the intervention of the trumpet which will enter with a bar containing a gradually walking forward ending with the subtonic on A sound as an echo while the flutes sat on a long note as a connection between the two phrases. This echo effect is also supported by the dynamics noted in the score, starting from mezzopiano to forte.

The subjects that *Olah's* soundtrack accompanies in all the aforementioned productions are various. In *Avalanche*, *The Sea Cat*, *Taking Off*, *The Power and the Truth*, *The Convoy* or *Evening Guests*, the patriotic spirit that the communist regime instills in the citizens and the justice that its followers propagate is highlighted through action. The world of the village, the way of life of the Romanian villagers as well as the psychology related to it are also very well captured in the films in which he collaborated. The musical scenes depicted the rhythms and the specific modal universe of the regions where the action took place. In the case of the production *Zodiac of the Virgin*, the specific heterogeneous compound rhythms of Dobrogea are used with priority to highlight to emphasize the cultural characteristics of the territory where the action takes place - a village by the sea side. These mixed rhythms are also present in the case of *Michael the Brave* where a fight takes place during the winter. The territory that Mihai managed to occupy after winning the fight is Dobrogea. The actual description of folk customs is not the only technique used by *Olah* in his films. He emphasizes the sound character and psychological drama that the protagonists go through. This came either from the lack of money

¹⁰ Tiberiu Olah. *The Power and the Truth*. [manuscript]. 107. Bucharest. Romanian National Film Archive.

and land, or from repeated attempts to do justice to the political regime that led to a practice of oppression and impoverishment of the Romanian villagers.

Love is rarely favored in films where the tumult of the soul is focused on life during the war, on the struggle for power or the desire of the villagers to have their own land. In the film *Taking off* we have for example a musical theme attributed to love but placed in the same time in the background because of the personal drama that the main character faces professionally, being assigned to a job where he did not feel fulfilled. However, Olah creates even in such various situations a musical exponent of feelings of love. Some of the movies where there are situations like this are: *The treasure Vadul Vechi*, *The Uprising*, *Virgo Ipu's Death*, *Beyond the sands*, *The doom*, *The Convoy* or *Castles Aflame in Transylvania*. One of the most well-known leitmotif themes of his love is used in *The Doom*, a soundtrack that was also included in the anniversary album of UCIN 50¹¹. Regarding this film, the composer *Cornelia Tăutu* stated in an interview that when she musically analyzed the score, she realized that the theme and the orchestration are very simple but they come from a great talent on which a special study case can be made.¹² The desolate Romanian rural universe after the First World War is a framework for the development of a psychological drama through which the rights to a happy life of those without financial means are brutally eradicated by the bourgeois class and the corrupt authorities. The theme that accompanies the main character's path is easily recognizable, a quality that the composer exploited more after the beginning of the 70's. The composer uses only a few instruments for this musical moment, but together they create a suggestive force. The punctuated harmonic accompaniment is provided by the harp and the string compartment on the main steps from A minor key while the main melodic line is played by flute, oboe and clarinet, being added in the second part the bassoon and horn.



Fig. 3. The melodic theme of the *Generic* from the movie *The Doom*, bars 1-14.¹³

Historical productions offer, in addition to a sense of belonging to a nation for Romanian citizens, a framework for usage of more complex compositional techniques worthy of a concert work being at the same time simple enough for not to stifle the film with the symphonism taken to the extreme. Three examples from Olah's career where large-scale musical scenes accompany complex battles and also human features put in the main plan through leitmotifs can be found in *Michael the Brave*, *Vlad the Impaler: The True Life of Dracula* and in *No Trespassing!* Often in such types of scenes the movement in the battles is suggested by melodic means using short

¹¹ Andra Văsii, "The Union of Filmmakers celebrates 50 years since its establishment". *Ziarul Metropolis*, 15th October 2013. <https://www.ziarulmetropolis.ro/uniunea-cineastilor-aniverseaza-50-de-ani-de-la-infiintare/> UCIN 50 represents the 50th anniversary of the Union of Romanian Filmmakers, on which occasion an album containing the soundtracks considered to be the most valuable in Romanian films was released.

¹² Mariana Ioan. 2008. "The investigation what movie music tells you. An interview with Cornelia Tăutu: Every film, an artistic exploitation". In *Tiberiu Olah. Restituiri*, ed. by Olguța Lupu. 230. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală.

¹³ Tiberiu Olah. *The Doom*. [manuscript]. 286. Bucharest. Romanian National Film Archive..

note values constantly repeated by an ostinato, using imprecise sound heights or by emphasizing the suspense by the percussion instruments. A slightly recognizable motif but which accompanied many fights in *Michael the Brave* can be found in the interpretation of the strings (example in figure 4). This motif is maintained for 14 pages with slight changes in places. After hearing it for 12 bars the tension will intensify by the intervention of the horn (1, 2, 3, 4) and trumpet (1, 2, 3) with sforzando chords in G minor on long sounds of 6 bars.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is in 6/8 time and G minor. The Viola part begins with a sforzando (sf) chord in the first bar, followed by rests in the subsequent bars. The Violoncello part starts with a sforzando (sf) chord in the first bar, then continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Contrabass part also starts with a sforzando (sf) chord in the first bar, followed by a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A 'dim' (diminuendo) marking is placed above the Violoncello part in the second bar.

Fig. 4. The beginning of the moment *Generic – The chase*, bars 1-4¹⁴

The musical anticipation of fatidical situations or the outcome of the action is a technique used by the composer since the generic of the films, the melodic sound character foretelling the tragedy. He manages to achieve this in different situations, either on a visual background where only the title of the film appears, or in full sequential action. Although film music has the advantage of universality and any style can be approached, be it Bach or Debussy, the barriers between classical and modern, symphonic and electronic, tonal / atonal and modal, are dilated, but there is also the reverse of the medal. to depersonalize himself, losing his own style. This problem cannot be posed in the case of *Olah*, his unmistakable style focusing on a modern musical language mixed with folklore origins. The composer managed to maintain a perfect balance between the contemporary musical language of the 20th century and the one springing from the sap of Romanian folklore. This style, complemented by the oscillation between the low and the high register through various signals, chords, short melodic or harmonic motifs in the low or high register, was used by the composer to emphasize suspense and tension. The severity of the situation, the placement next to female or male presences, the high or low level of fear were factors that guided this pendulum. Another very important element that is introduced since his first film, *Avalanche*, will become a cornerstone of *Olah's* creation is the imitation of the alphorn sound, a tool characteristic for the heroism of the Romanian people since antiquity. The perfect 4th or perfect 5th intervals specific to these signals are most often found in the interpretation of the horn. This technique is used in many of his films such as *Michael the Brave*, *Vlad the Impaler: The True Life of Dracula*, *No Trespassing!*, *The Uprising*, *The Convoy* etc.

4. Conclusions

The quality contribution that *Tiberiu Olah* brought through his music to the films he worked on is indisputable. After each of his films, he had to readjust to a new subject, with many variables on the periods presented in the action, on the social status of the characters and on the subject on which the conflict is focused. However, he did not encounter any problems in moving from a historical film to a psychological drama or a police one, managing to prove that

¹⁴ Tiberiu Olah. *Michael the Brave*. [manuscript]. 188. Bucharest. Romanian National Film Archive.

he deserves his place in this cinematographic field, as he had already done in the world of concert music. Going over the prejudices and answers that the art world of those times was trying to find in terms of film music, he understood that the main goal is to find a middle ground that highlights not only the soundtrack but the universe of action as a whole.

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