

## Cornel Țăranu – *Celan Songs*

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**Abstract:** *The study analyzes the cycle of lieder Celan Songs by Cornel Țăranu, presenting both aspects related to their vast cultural horizon and elements of musical analysis resulting in the intimate symbiosis of musical language and the metaphorical plan of the source of inspiration. The choice of certain translations of the lieder reveals a new dimension of Celan's poetry in the creation of Cornel Țăranu, through the collections and translations of Ion Caraion, whose volume The Table of Silence... was an unparalleled anthology of texts dedicated to sculptor Constantin Brâncuși. The analysis has, finally, the role of capturing the "subcutaneous" relationships of the poetry of Paul Celan with the music of Cornel Țăranu and the sculpture of Constantin Brâncuși.*

**Keywords:** *Cornel Țăranu; Paul Celan; Constantin Brâncuși; Celan Songs; Ion Caraion;*

### Introduction

The images of Paul Celan's life and poetry (1920-1970) merge to the point of faithful reflection. Paul Celan's poetry is the result of his life as a Jewish artist whose family was exterminated in concentration camps. Personal drama intertwined with artistic drama – his father, a practicing Orthodox Jew; his mother, a lover of German language and literature – his mother's side paved the way for him to speak German, the language in which he published most of his poems, "the language of his executioners". Thus, his work is a continuous interrogation of the very possibility of expression, of the ability to communicate through language, a language used and abused in the name of death. He creates poetry anchored in the real world, a world of people, of victims,<sup>2</sup> a poetry that has "a strong inclination towards silence,"<sup>3</sup> a poetry that seeks its words to express what can no longer be contained in words, that transcends the boundaries of the word, which "asserts itself at its very edge."<sup>4</sup>

A Romanian composer also concerned with the topicality of music and art, Cornel Țăranu is an avid and refined reader of contemporary literature, writings he also approached through his music<sup>5</sup> and, moreover, he is an intellectual, who has made friends with contemporary artists (poets, writers, artists, etc.), with whom he shares – through elective affinities – a spirit of the age,<sup>6</sup> even in spite of unfavorable times, as an artistic manifesto.<sup>7</sup> The present study aims to analyze the closeness between the composer Cornel Țăranu and Paul Celan's poetry, through the creation of lieder. Never simple or mundane, when he is in the vicinity of an artistic poetics, Cornel Țăranu reveals such nobility of spirit we only find by digging deep, beyond the actual musical text.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Celan. 1983. "Der Meridian." In Paul Celan. *Gesammelte Werke 3: Gedichte, Prosa, Reden*, ed. by Beda Allemann and Stefan Reichert. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: 190.

<sup>3</sup> „eine starke Neigung zum Verstummen”, in Paul Celan. 1983. "Der Meridian": 197.

<sup>4</sup> „behauptet sich am Rande seiner selbst”, in Paul Celan. 1983. "Der Meridian": 197.

<sup>5</sup> Lucian Blaga, Nicolae Labiș, Nichita Stănescu, Ana Blandiana, Tristan Tzara, Zaharia Stancu, Teofil Bușecan, Leonida Neamțu, Cezar Baltag, Mihai Beniuc, Ion Vinea, Ilie Balea, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Andra Frățilă. 2015. "Interviuri. De vorbă cu Cornel Țăranu." *Muzica* 6: 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ruxandra Cesereanu. 2019. "Cornel Țăranu 85." *Steaua* 7: 18.

This study analytically investigates the new cycle of lieder on lyrics by Paul Celan, composed by the Cluj composer Cornel Țăranu, which includes three lieder: 1. *Bei Brâncuși, zu Zweit* on lyrics by Paul Celan, 2. *La Brâncuși, în doi* [At Brâncuși's, the Two of Us], on lyrics by Paul Celan, translated in Romanian by Ion Caraion and 3. *Plopul* [Aspen Tree], on lyrics by Paul Celan, translated in Romanian by Nina Cassian.

### 1. Cornel Țăranu and the artistic horizon

An artist who left Romania to settle in forced self-exile in Western Europe, Paul Celan led the word towards the possible edge of meaning, of thinking turned into silence or, on the contrary, in an absurd convulsion. Influenced by French surrealism, living his life in the shadow of the horrors of war, Paul Celan became a symbol for Europeans who, in exile or in suffering, encipher in their own escape an art of despair. The number of composers who were inspired by his poetry is huge; even if we only look at the musical creation, a rigorous selection of works inspired by Celan's poetry is necessary. The study of comparative musicological analysis delimits, therefore, its perimeter, to the Romanian composers, living both in Romania and outside the borders of the country, analyzing their response to the work of the Bucovina poet. Many European composers approached the poetry of Paul Celan – among the Romanian composers established in the diaspora we mention Mihai Mitrea-Celarianu: *Weil Paul Celan*, 1986-1988, and among the Romanian composers who remained in Romania, we emphasize the contribution of Transylvanian born Gabriel Irányi, as well as that of Anatol Vieru, Dan Dediu and, last but not least, the one to whom we dedicate this study, Cornel Țăranu.

The lyrics of contemporary writers prove to be for the Cluj composer “a permanent stimulus;” the composer confesses that he is interested not only in the semantic content of the poems, but also in “sound problems”<sup>8</sup> of the language. In the *Celan Songs* cycle, completed in 2019, special attention is paid to the source of inspiration for the poems, which do not come from simple translation volumes. If the lied *Plopul* [Aspen Tree] is translated by Nina Cassian, being part of a collection made by her, together with Petre Solomon, both former friends of the Bessarabian poet, the translation of the original poem *Bei Brâncuși – Zu Zweit* belongs to writer Ion Caraion. If the volume edited by Nina Cassian and Petre Solomon is presented as a selection of poems by Paul Celan translated into Romanian, the second volume is, in fact, a tribute of Ion Caraion to Constantin Brâncuși – among its writings we find the poem by Paul Celan, written after his meeting with Constantin Brâncuși in Paris. The volume *Masa tăcerii...* [The Table of Silence...] includes tributes brought by various artists to the work of the Romanian sculptor, texts (poems, essays, sketches) collected from various parts of the world, some written especially for this occasion, others, “arising” during the lifetime of the great sculptor. The nature of the homage texts, as the curator of the edition said, “springed only from the emanations of the structure [...] of content”<sup>9</sup> of Brâncuși's works, in the form of a true interartistic dialogue. The composer's choice for this translation of the poem is relevant to his rebellious nature, especially if we look at the biography of the writer Ion Caraion,<sup>10</sup> who, on April 9, 1964, was released from prison by the communist regime, along with other political prisoners.<sup>11</sup>

The limited space of this study does not allow us to insist on the cultural openness that is manifest in the work of the composer Cornel Țăranu (the only Romanian composer member of the Romanian Academic Society, the highest scientific and cultural forum in Romania).

<sup>8</sup> Cesereanu. 2019: 18.

<sup>9</sup> Ion Caraion. 1970. *Masa tăcerii: simposion de metafore la Brâncuși*. București: Editura Univers, 9.

<sup>10</sup> The poet, writer and critic Stelian Diaconescu (1923-1986), with the pseudonym of Ion Caraion, was imprisoned twice, on political grounds (1950-1955; 1958-1964); in 1981 he emigrated to Switzerland.

<sup>11</sup> Gelu Hossu. 2019. “Revista Steaua între politică literară și literatură politică II: 1964-1967.” *Steaua* 7: 10.

Limiting ourselves to the present research, we reveal from the composer's interviews the information relevant to our topic. After making a name for himself as a young composer and becoming a teacher at the Conservatory in Cluj, Cornel Țăranu was awarded by the French state a scholarship in Paris. That year (1966-1967), along with outstanding musical experiences, he confesses that he had access to art galleries and workshops of visual artists with the help of great personalities of Romanian culture established abroad. Therefore, a letter of recommendation from the art critic Petru Comarnescu to the art historian Ionel Jianu made possible Cornel Țăranu's access into Brâncuși's workshop.<sup>12</sup> We must mention here that, a few years prior, Ionel Jianu had published his first Brâncuși monograph (1963) and in 1967 he published a second book about the great painter (*Témoignages sur Brancusi*).

## 2. The musical dimension

Cornel Țăranu stood out ever since his student days, as a disciple of Marțian Negrea and Sigismund Toduță, where the main subjects of study were the style exercises: "With Toduță we went through and worked in all styles [...]", with the mention that "We were allowed [...] to apply the rudiments of the classical forms that we went through in any way we wanted. And we all did that."<sup>13</sup> The emphasis was, therefore, on the one hand, on the acquisition of different types of musical writing and on the other, on the fact that these types of exercises ensured a solid mastery of the significance of musical forms, and the two directions were thoroughly assimilated in an atmosphere of wide cultural openness created by the two masters.

On the one hand, studies and respect for tradition have established in Cornel Țăranu's creation a "musical heritage" resulting from the Toduță-Enescu lineage, but on the other hand his aesthetic orientation has always been directed towards new composition techniques, specific to the musical avant-garde, towards the new directions of serialism, sought and discussed – despite the vicissitudes – together with his fellow composers from the "Golden Generation", Anatol Vieru, Tiberliu Olah, Aurel Stroe, Ștefan Niculescu, Myriam Marbé, Dan Constantinescu, etc. In all this configuration, involving the old-new complementarity, Cornel Țăranu's art manifests itself as an aesthetic belonging not only to the Transylvanian spirituality, but also – due to the remarkable nobility of cultural comprehension – to the spirit of European culture: "Țăranu consistently remained an European, with solid roots in Transylvanian or Enescian traditions that pigmented his originality with local nuances."<sup>14</sup>

The Romanian avant-garde made up of these young composers made Enescu's works into a landmark and explored it through analytical research as well as through personal artistic applications in their own creation. This resulted in studies and monographs dedicated to Enescu – of which *Enescu în conștiința prezentului* [Enescu in the consciousness of the present] by Cornel Țăranu is an essential benchmark, both in Enescu's research and in identifying the relevance of Enescu's creation for Țăranu – from whose music these young composers created new procedures, techniques, compositional orientations, among which the most famous one was the theorizing of heterophony by Ștefan Niculescu. Regarding the works of Cornel Țăranu, the penetration of Enescu's art in his own creation generated a music full of life, in constant motion and variation (visible aspect especially at the level of musical morphology), sensitive to new poetic images springing from the word of poetry, plastic art or other sources of inspiration.

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<sup>12</sup> Ionuț Bogdan Ștefănescu. 2011. "Interviu cu Cornel Țăranu – «Cavalerul artelor»." <https://ionbogdanstefanescu.ro/interviu-cu-cornel-taranu-cavalerul-artelor/>, accessed on January 31, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Frățilă. 2015: 5.

<sup>14</sup> Valentina Sandu-Dediu. 2019. "Beyond Regionalisms and Nationalisms: Cornel Țăranu." *Musicology Papers* 23 (2): 88.

### 3. The cycle of lieder *Celan Songs*

#### 3.1 *Bei Brâncuși, zu zweit*

Paul Celan met Constantin Brâncuși in Paris through Jean-Dominique Rey, who introduced him to various artistic circles in Paris; in 1951, the two visited Brâncuși and, as a result of this visit, his poem was born. Celan's interest in Romanian artists has been obvious ever since 1952 when he met Cioran and got to know Eugen Ionescu, together with his wife, Rodica.

<p><i>Bei Brancusi, zu Zweit (Paul Celan)</i></p> <p>Wenn dieser Steine einer verlauten ließe, was ihn verschweigt: hier, nahebei, am Humpelstock dieses Alten, tät es sich auf, als Wunde, in die du zu tauchen hättest, einsam, fern meinem Schrei, dem schon mit- behauenen, weißen.</p>	<p><i>La Brâncuși, în doi (Paul Celan)</i></p> <p>Dacă piatra aceasta ar mărturisi ce taină ascunde: aici, chiar lângă toiagul acestui moșneag, s-ar deschide ca o rană în care te-ai afunda solitar, departe de strigătul meu, o dată cu ele – cioplitele, albele</p> <p style="text-align: right;">translated by Ion Caraion<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>At Brâncuși's, the Two of Us</p> <p>If one of these stones were to give away what it is that keeps silent about it: here, nereby, at this old man's limping stick, it would open up, as a wound, in which you would have to submerge, lonely, far from my scream, that is chiseled already, white.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">translated by Michael Hamburger<sup>16</sup></p>
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The poem *La Brâncuși, în doi* [At Brâncuși's, the Two of Us] is an exploration of the mystery of Brâncuși's creation, where the material – the stone – with its permanence manages to pass time and space, to defy eternity which proves inflexible when faced with human sufferings. The critic Dragoș Vinea sees in this poem a “discursiveness of withdrawal (cathabasis),”<sup>17</sup> a dimension to be explored by the dramatic tension and by composer Cornel Țăranu.

The dynamic curve of this lied is generally downward, suggesting a tension that, after a climax, ends up falling apart. The solid image of the stone is illustrated by a determined force, with short phrasing, whose rhythm retains its identity in variation by the reverse dotted rhythm, followed by a long note.

The monolithic character of the poetic image is welded together, from the intonation point of view, by the unitary structure of the sounds and it is varied by angular rhythms, becoming a composite which, starting from several generating intervals (9m, 2M, 3m),

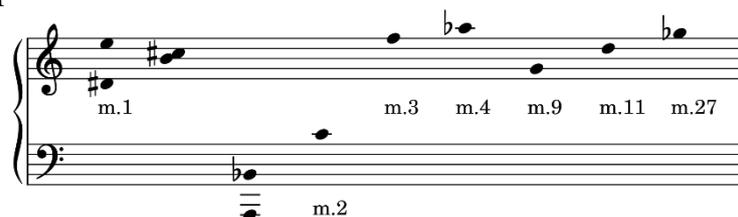
<sup>15</sup> Caraion. 1970: 101.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Celan. 1989. *Poems of Paul Celan*. Translated by Michael Hamburger. New York: Persea Books, pp. 290-291.

<sup>17</sup> Dragoș Vinea. 2010. “Emulația lui Caraion față de Brâncuși și spațialismul poetic european.”

[https://www.poezie.ro/index.php/article/13932246/Emula%C8%9Bia\\_lui\\_Caraion\\_fa%C8%9B%C4%83\\_de\\_Br%C3%A2ncu%C8%99i\\_%C8%99i\\_spa%C8%9Bialismul\\_poetic\\_european](https://www.poezie.ro/index.php/article/13932246/Emula%C8%9Bia_lui_Caraion_fa%C8%9B%C4%83_de_Br%C3%A2ncu%C8%99i_%C8%99i_spa%C8%9Bialismul_poetic_european), accessed on April 12, 2022.

accumulates the chromatic total in stages, reaching for the twelfth sound to be added exactly at the climax of the piece.



The dodecaphonic row and the bars in which the sounds appear

The moment is full of drama, because the twelfth sound,  $Gb$ , appears only twice in the whole piece – if the first eleven sounds of the chromatic total appear in the first eleven bars, the twelfth sound is delayed until bar 27, respectively 31, being located in the vicinity of the golden section. The composer's strategy or intuition emphasizes the center of gravity of the poetic content: “tauchen hättest, aber fern meinem Schrei” (the underlined syllables correspond to the  $Gb$ ). Therefore, the words *tauchen* (submerge) and *Schrei* (scream) fulfill their meaning through the oxymoronic opposition, through the amplitude with which they “open” towards one another.

The dynamic slope, from the initial, determined, *forte*, to the last, *piano* section of the lied, reflects in music an essential characteristic of Celan's poetry – the tendency towards quietness, towards such a complex structuring, towards such mirroring of the inner tension that silence remains the only solution. The climax played through music – *tauchen-Schrei* – exposes two opposing and complementary thematic fields whose distance can no longer be traveled by words, but remains only in silence, in the white stone.

### 3.2. *La Brâncuși, în doi* [At Brâncuși, the Two of Us]

Ion Caraion's translation in Romanian of the poem *Bei Brancusi, zu zweit* was used by Cornel Țăranu for a new lied from the cycle, *La Brâncuși, în doi* [At Brâncuși's, the Two of Us] (*Paul Celan*). Both the similarities and especially the differences between the two scores are interesting, as they show us different ways of thinking about the musical material itself. The two versions were completed a few days apart – on May 11, 2019 (German) and on May 15, 2019 (Romanian) – and propose, in fact, two different versions of the same poetic idea and also of the same thematic material.

Comparisons of the vocal phrases show that the author started from the same generative musical ideas: similar rhythmic structure, similar intonation structure, descending profile of the song, even some moments that contribute to the drama of the lied show obvious correspondences (unlike the previous lied, where the word *Wunde* [wound] was associated with the *glissando* slip of the voice, in the Romanian version, the word *rană* [wound] marks the appearance of a new element in the intonational field).

If the lied *Bei Brancusi, zu zweit* brought a gradual accumulation of the chromatic total, an accumulation which in the second half of the lied coincided with key moments of understanding the poetic meaning, in Romanian version the vocal melodic line consists of only 9 sounds (completed by a tenth in accompaniment at an inconclusive moment). The first appearance of the sound  $G$  coincides with the key word of the poem, *rană* [wound], and that of the sound  $Gb$ , with that of the word *afunda* [submerge], which is also the longest note in the acute register sung by the soloist. We are surprised, instead, by the descending profile of the text *de țipătul meu* [from my scream], which in the German version is the culmination of the lied (long note, in *forte*, with crown). This choice reverses the poles of the musical tension: while an ascending melodic profile is sung on the text, with a long note in the treble, the verse

*de țipătul meu* [from my scream] is placed on a descending melodic profile, indicating tension relief.

The characteristic of Cornel Țăranu's work is the economy of means. The song in Romanian, *La Brâncuși, în doi* [At Brâncuși's, the Two of Us] (*Paul Celan*) develops its musical material starting from a single generating intonation cell, which sums up inside its construction the interval quintessence of the whole song. Starting from the 2m – 3m/4- structure (in terms of defining the melodic structures in semitones, 1-3), the author makes a whole scaffolding that stays true until the last note of the lied; certain moments in the piece, with the obvious intention of poetic emphasis, subtly but not completely evade this self-imposed limitation, thus ensuring a homogeneous sonority. Structure 1-3 (st) can be repeated, transposed and overturned by juxtaposition – especially in a single breath. Therefore, in a sentence, we can find semitones (2m), 3m/4- (3 st) or their inversions: 7M (11 st) or 6M (7 st). A new phrase can reposition this interval on a new sound, at which point the sound construction is completed with new sounds from the chromatic total.

Da - că pia-tra a - ceas-ta ar măr-tu-ri -  
 si ce tai - nă as - cun-de a - ici, foar-te a -

^ = 2m (1 st)  
 v = 7M  
 < = 3m (3 st) / 10m  
 > = 6M

Therefore, the sound material of the lieder is oriented around a well-established melodic cell, both in the European serial space and in the Romanian one. Made up of the interval of 3m and 2m, the melodic cell is found both in the serial creation (especially in Alban Berg and Anton Webern) and in the works of Enescu, known under the musical cipher E (n) EsC (u) ( $E - E^b - C$ ), in its various variations of structure. The whole image of the Romanian artistic culture, represented here by Paul Celan, Constantin Brâncuși and Ion Caraion, is completed by encrypting Enescu's name.

E(n) - es - c(u)  
 Anton Webern, *Das Augenlicht*

Cornel Țăranu, *La Brâncuși, în doi*

### 3.3 *Plopul* [Aspen Tree]

The lied *Plopul* [Aspen Tree] is also composed for voice and piano; both the singer and the pianist also play the role of percussionists: while the singer has percussion instruments (toms) to beat the rhythm indicated in the score, the pianist treats their own instrument in a percussive way, both through the articulation indicated in the score and by acting directly on the piano strings. Unlike the previous two lieder, here, the two versions of the text (the German original and Nina Cassian's Romanian translation) stand as alternatives for the same musical score.

Espenbaum	Plopul	Aspen Tree
Espenbaum dein Laub blickt weiß ins Dunkel. Meiner Mutter Haar wird nimmer weiß.	Plopule, ești alb în întuneric. Părul mamei n-a fost să albească.	Aspen tree, your leaves gaze white into the dark. My mother's hair ne'er turned white.
Löwenzahn, so grün ist die Ukraine. Meine blonde Mutter kam nicht heim.	Păpădie, verde e Ucraina. Maica-mi blondă nu s-a-ntors acasă.	Dandelion, so green is the Ukraine. My fair-haired mother did not come home.
Regenwolke, säumst du an den Brunnen? Meine leise Mutter weint für alle.	[Nor de ploaie, -ntîrzi la fîntînă? Plînge pentru toți, tăcuta-mi mamă.]	Rain cloud, do you dally by the well? My quiet mother weeps for all.
Runder Stern, du schlingst die goldne Schleife. Meiner Mutter Herz war wund von Blei.	Nea, încingi o panglică de aur. Rana mamei a născut plumbul.	Round star, you coil the golden loop. My mother's heart was seared by lead.
Eichne Tür, weg hob dich aus den Angeln? Meine sanfte Mutter kann nicht kommen.	Cine te-a scos, ușă, din țâțână? Maica mea nu poate să mai vină.	Oaken door, who ripped you off your hinges? My gentle mother cannot return.

translated by Nina Cassian<sup>18</sup>

translated by Pierre Joris<sup>19</sup>

The formal structure of the lied *Plopul* [Aspen Tree] follows the structure of the couplets of Paul Celan's poem, in a continuous alternation between piano and voice: once the voice enters, the piano ceases the accompaniment, entering again only after the voice ends the verse, respectively the stanza. Coda is the only time when the voice is accompanied by the piano, but even here, the voice becomes a partner that has the role of timbre diversification, because the voice adds its musical comments with the vocalise *a*.

Instrumental introduction	Stanza 1	Stanza 2	Stanza 3	Stanza 4	Coda
1-8	9-21	9-22	23-26 / 23-[26]27	28-38	39-46
1-8	9-20*i + 21*v	9-20*i + 22*v	23-25*i + 26, 27*v	28-34*i, 35*v 36-37*i, 38*v	39-46, *iv
	<i>Plopule, ești alb... Părul mamei...</i>	<i>Păpădie... Maica-mi blondă...</i>	<i>Stea, încingi... Rana mamei...</i>	<i>Cine te-a scos... Maica mea...</i>	<i>a_____</i>
8 bars	18 bars	18 bars	8 bars	11 bars	8 bars

\*i = instrumental; \*v = voice; \*iv = instrumental and voice

The alternation between piano and voice phrases is asymmetrical – the instrumental transitions are obviously more extensive than the vocal phrases, which include one bar in the score (without being framed metrically and rhythmically). By choosing the metrical freedom only in the vocal part, the voice opposes to the instrument new musical parameters, the metric and the rhythmic one. If the piano score frames the speech (even if only indicative) in conventional bars (2/4, 3/4, 4/4), the melodic line of the voice does not fit in any bar, being treated and noted freely, highlighting the deliberate melismatic nature of the vocal discourse.

The intonation system of this lied is extremely chromatic, treated with special rigor in terms of the available piano registers. Each sound in the available color palette generally has a

<sup>18</sup> Paul Celan. 1973. *Versuri. În românește de Nina Cassian și Petre Solomon*. București. Editura Univers, 13.

<sup>19</sup> <https://poets.org/poem/aspen-tree>, accessed on May 4, 2022.

specific register in which it can appear. Thus, the distance obtained by placing certain sounds exclusively in certain registers generates a wide, generous sound space, avoiding direct collisions of dissonances caused by small intervals, whose rhythmically varied repetition throughout the lied supports a stable and complex color palette. Any movement of sounds within the register (as is the case in the last two bars of the example below) is done with their previous appearance in their normal register.

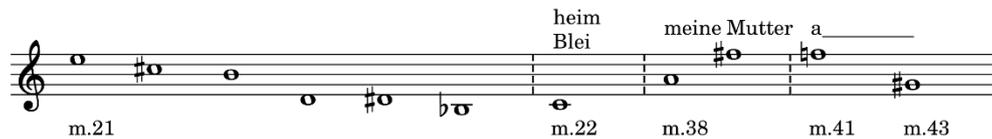
Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* [Aspen Tree], bars 9-14

Thus, the intonation scale of the piano accompaniment, which can be comprised in an octave, would add up to 10 sounds (in the absence of *D#* and *F*). While the *D#* sound is present in the melodic line of the voice – as an oscillating intonation movement of the descendant sixth (*B-D* and *B-D#*), on the symbolic word *Dunkel* [darkness] – the note *F* appears only in the last section of the lied, in the coda, as a totalization of the chromatic total.

Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* [Aspen Tree], intonation scale (piano)

The rigor with which the composer puts order in the intense chromatic sound material is impressive: the piano exposes from the beginning a complex and immutable material, whose variety results from its own complexity and whose possibility of variation lies in slight changes of registers, in rhythmic variations and geometric polyphonic configurations through which the sounds are exposed; on the contrary, the voice exposes a series of six sounds, which, during the lied, will be completed, with additions resulting from its variations, reaching to 11 different sounds. The cohesion between the intonational structure and the poetic significance is reflected in the placement of these new sounds at the same time as certain key words of the poetic text. The first occurrences of the sound *C* are in the words *heim* [home], in bar 22, and *Blei* [lead], in bar 27. The association of the two keywords is, in fact, the key to deciphering the poem – the tragedy of that “[at] home” of Ukraine, which (How true that proves these days!) is reflected in the deadly substance, lead. The next two added sounds, *A* and *F#*, are on the words *meine* [mine] and *Mutter* [mother], respectively, both in bar 38, as an island of bliss, with characteristic intervals 5P, 3M and 4P. The two notes that complement each other (*my mother*) are in opposition to the last two sounds, which reaches the eleventh different sound in the melodic

line of the voice: *F* and *G#*, are intoned on the vocalization of *a* and can stand as a mediator for one of the interpretations of the literary specialists on the poetics of Celan, which is mired in silence. The first appearance of the *G#* sound is a short posterior apoggiatura (bar 43), but the second and at the same time the last presence of the *G#* note is in the last bar of the lied, as a wavy probe, to finally settle on *A*.



Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* [Aspen Tree], intonation scale (voice)

This is how the intonation organization of the sound material comes to be constituted not only on small sections, but on the whole musical form of the lied. Chromatic modalism is placed in a globalizing intention, which only reaches the chromatic totality through the complementarity between voice and piano.

New relations of complementarity emerge between the singable, lyrical expression of the human voice and the rigorous, rhythmic, percussive rhythm of the piano, between the sinusoidal profile of the vocal melody related to the text and the percussive element of the tom-tom and, last but not least, between the linear dimension of the voice, compared to the spatial depth of the vertical-harmonic dimension of the piano. The voice (poetic text) is presented in isolation, unaccompanied by piano or percussion, instrumental accompaniment appearing consequently as a comment before or after the enunciation of the solo voice. Thus, the types of speech that surround the vocal line are in the above-mentioned oppositions and at the same time in complementarity with the voice.

If the voice is linear, in two dimensions (the intonational and rhythmic one), the piano exposes, in the introduction and during the lied, harmonic structures whose chord elements are exposed one by one, generating angular geometric formulations, like the blocks of duration described by Boulez.<sup>20</sup> We notice the composer's option for both the symmetrical blocks and for the asymmetrical ones, in various forms of manifestation:

The image shows the piano introduction of 'Plopul' in 2/4 time, marked 'Moderato'. It consists of three staves: a drum set staff, a vocal line, and a piano accompaniment. The drum set staff shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The vocal line starts with a quarter note on F# and is followed by a series of chords. The piano accompaniment features a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. A diagonal line is drawn across the piano accompaniment staves.

Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* [Aspen Tree], bars 1-5 (entry at a quarter note)

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Boulez. 1963. *Penser la musique aujourd'hui*. Genf: Denoël / Gonthier: 59ff.

In the following example, the duration block presents some peculiarities that reveal a much more refined conception of the duration blocks: on the one hand, the chord elements enter at an eighth note; on the other hand, the fan-shaped form exposes the divergent entries at irregular intervals of duration (from the second  $A^b-B^b$  upwards: quarter note – half note – dotted half note; from the second  $A^b-B^b$  downwards: eighth note – quarter note – eighth note):

Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* (Aspen Tree), bars 9-14

Cornel Țăranu, *Plopul* (Aspen Tree), bars 28-31

Cornel Țăranu's creation abounds in "explicit references,"<sup>21</sup> in clues that open new horizons in contemporary art, but which are encrypted in his compositions.

<sup>21</sup> In the sense used by Werner Wolf (2002), that of a mandatory reference for understanding the artistic meaning. Cf. "Intermedialität: Ein weites Feld und eine Herausforderung für die Literaturwissenschaft." In *Literaturwissenschaft: intermedial-interdisziplinär*, ed. by Herberg Foltinek and Christoph Leitgeb. Viena: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: 163–192.

## Conclusions

The relationship between poetry and music, from the perspective of composer Cornel Țăranu, leans towards the primacy of poetry and poetic image over music: “Certain lyrics simply do not fold on any contemporary music. The lyrics dictate a certain way. These are key lyrics or phrases that are repeated and must be found in one’s music.”<sup>22</sup> The creation of music according to the structure of the verse is visible on several planes:

1. In terms of formal structure. The lied *Plopul* [Aspen Tree] is closely followed by the construction of poetry from couplets; this has as a consequence a form where the vocal part is delimited from that of the piano, entering into a confrontational dialogue, “resolved” in the coda, by eliminating the connotative meaning of the words;
2. In terms of pitch. The development in time of both arts – poetry and music – would assume that this is the most important parameter that generates space and time, structure and shape. The above analyzes show that in serial thinking not only the rhythm unfolded in time, but also the pitch brings its own contribution to the configuration of the sound space and to the validation of musical meaning;
3. In terms of texture. The abstract structures of configuration in space – such as geometric ones, of sound blocks – reveal the composer’s inclination towards the harmony of forms, in the way that the composers of the European avant-garde applied it. Here, however, this technical composition process is used to emphasize the spatiality, related to Brâncuși’s sculpture. The sound blocks, the unitary consistency of the intonational material, the petrified, abrupt attacks, are sublime metaphors for Brâncuși’s art;
4. In terms of artistic metaphor. The condensation and conciseness of the musical language are analogous to those of the poetic language; the complex structure of the semantic content present in Celan’s poetry is directly reflected by the density of the musical discourse, which, starting from small units, develops a whole musical scaffold. The richness of the poetic discourse does not consist in the abundance of images but, on the contrary, in the intensity of the few ideas, in search of the essence, of the truth. Similarly, the richness of musical discourse does not lie in the abundance of musical ideas, but, on the contrary, in their intensity, in the construction that can be reduced to a single musical idea (in the case of the first two lieder: a tritone).

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<sup>22</sup> Frățilă. 2015: 12.

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