

The Lyric-Dramatic Creation of Banat Composers between Tradition and Marginalization: Forgotten Musics

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Abstract: *The present research examines the lyric-dramatic creation of Banat composers between 1900 and 1950 from the perspective of cultural identity and repertorial marginalization. The study aims to recover an insufficiently valorized musical heritage consisting of operas, operettas, musical dramas and other stage genres created under the influence of Central European culture and Romanian folklore. It highlights composers such as Sabin V. Drăgoi, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Emil Monția, Filaret Barbu, Hermann Klee, Vadim Șumski and Zeno Vancea, whose works were gradually excluded from the contemporary artistic circuit. The marginalization of these creations was determined by the ideological transformations following the establishment of the communist regime, by the absence of critical editions and by the difficulty of accessing manuscripts. Therefore, this scientific research seeks to contribute to the recovery of regional musical memory and to the reconsideration of Banat's role in the development of Romanian musical theatre during the first half of the twentieth century.*

Keywords: *Banat; Banat composers; Romanian lyric creation; repertorial marginalization; heritage recovery;*

Introduction

Within Romanian musical culture during the first half of the twentieth century, the Banat region occupies a distinctive position shaped by the convergence of multiple cultural influences: the Austro-Hungarian Central European tradition, the Byzantine and Orthodox heritage, the multicultural urban culture specific to the historical province of Banat, and the constant reference to the Romanian folkloric substratum. This context encouraged the emergence of a complex musical creation in which lyric theatre, operetta, musical drama and stage performances incorporating ethnographic elements became particularly fertile directions of artistic expression².

Nevertheless, in relation to the development of Romanian music historiography, the lyric-dramatic output of Banat composers has remained at the periphery of scholarly research, being only rarely examined systematically and almost entirely absent from the contemporary repertorial circuit. Although certain figures entered the canon of Romanian music — such as Sabin V. Drăgoi, Tiberiu Brediceanu or Filaret Barbu — their stage works were frequently overshadowed by their folkloristic, choral or pedagogical activities. Consequently, numerous dramatic scores remained in manuscript form, received only a limited number of performances or disappeared entirely from active performance memory³.

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² Ion Alexandru Ardereanu. 2023. *Autentic, istoric și actual în practica muzicală din strana bănățeană. Valoroase manuscrise muzicale din arhiva Bibliotecii Mitropoliei Banatului*. 16–18. Timișoara: Editura Eurostampa.

³ Bratu Lava, 2008. „Momente din istoria învățământului muzical interbelic”. *Analele Banatului. Arheologie – Istorie*, vol. 16, Timișoara: Muzeul Banatului, p. 217.

This phenomenon is all the more significant since many of these works constitute some of the earliest substantial attempts to articulate a Romanian lyric-dramatic language inspired by the identity universe of Banat.

Historical subjects, folk mythology, rural imagery, Orthodox spirituality and folkloric expression are integrated into a musical discourse oscillating between tradition and modernity, between the model of national opera and the expressionist, veristic or post-Romantic influences of Central Europe. From this point of view, the stage works of Sabin V. Drăgoi represent one of the most complex aesthetic syntheses of the period.

Operas such as *Năpasta* (1927), inspired by the dramaturgy of I. L. Caragiale, *Kir Ianulea* (1937), constructed upon the fantastic and grotesque dimensions of Romanian literature, and the historical opera *Horia* (1945), outline a compositional direction in which national expression is articulated through a modern orchestral language and a dramaturgy of considerable psychological intensity.

At the same time, the religious opera *Constantin Brâncoveanu* (1929) introduces a spiritual dimension rarely encountered in Romanian interwar musical theatre, a fact that subsequently contributed to the work's marginalization within the post-war ideological context.

A complementary direction is represented by the oeuvre of Emil Monția, whose operas — *Ileana*, *Moștenitorul*, *Fata de la Cozia* and *Haiducul Cercel* — propose a dramaturgical model situated between late Romanticism, national opera and popular musical theatre. Similarly, the musical theatre of Tiberiu Brediceanu develops a distinct type of stage performance located at the intersection of traditional opera, ethnographic tableau and the reconstruction of folk ceremonial practices.

Works such as *La șezătoare* and *La seceriș* employ folklore not merely as a melodic source, but also as a dramaturgical and identity-shaping principle. In parallel, the Banat operetta represented by Filaret Barbu and Richard Karol Oschanitzky reflects the direct contact of the Banat region with the Viennese and Central European model of musical entertainment theatre. Operettas such as *Armonii bănățene*, *Florentina* and *Ana Lugojana* demonstrate the existence of an exceptionally active urban lyric tradition capable of generating works that enjoyed genuine public success and possessed a strong regional identity⁴.

However, the political and cultural transformations that followed the establishment of the communist regime radically altered the mechanisms of repertorial selection. The new ideological criteria favoured works compatible with Socialist Realism and official propagandistic discourse, whereas operas based on religious, historical, mythological or identity-related subjects were gradually excluded from artistic circulation. In many cases, the absence of new editions, the difficulty of accessing manuscripts and the disappearance of interpretative traditions contributed decisively to the oblivion into which these scores fell.

From this perspective, the present research aims not only to provide a musicological analysis of Banat lyric-dramatic creation, but also to undertake a critical recovery of an insufficiently valorized stage heritage. The concept of “forgotten musics” thus becomes the expression of a dual reality: on the one hand, the existence of a repertory historically and ideologically marginalized and, on the other hand, the necessity of reintegrating this repertory into the contemporary academic, performative and cultural circuit⁵.

⁴ Lavinia Iațeșen, 2011. „Tendințe expresioniste în opera românească din primele decenii ale secolului XX”. *Journal of Musicology*. Iași: Editura Artes, nr. 11–12, pp. 175–178.

⁵ Roman, Iulia. 2016. „Contribuții la fundamentarea culturii scrise a Banatului – Ovidiu Giulvezan”. *Congresul Internațional de Muzicologie Timișoara*, ediția a III-a. Timișoara: Editura Eurostampa, p. 75.

1. State of Research and Methodological Directions

The analysis of the specialized literature reveals that the lyric-dramatic creation of Banat composers has not yet benefited from a coherent and systematic investigation integrated into a unified historical and aesthetic perspective.

Although Romanian musicology has devoted attention to figures such as Sabin V. Drăgoi, Tiberiu Brediceanu and Filaret Barbu, scholarly interest has focused predominantly on their folkloristic, choral and pedagogical activities, as well as on their contribution to the consolidation of the Romanian compositional school. The stage dimension of their oeuvre has remained largely insufficiently explored, while numerous lyric-dramatic works are mentioned only fragmentarily in dictionaries, catalogues or general historical syntheses⁶.

This situation highlights the existence of a discrepancy between the historical significance of the repertory and the actual degree of its musicological valorization. In most cases, the operas are known merely through bibliographic references, without accessible critical editions, detailed stylistic analyses or comprehensive documentation concerning their stage circulation. Consequently, many of these works have remained outside the contemporary academic and performative circuit⁷.

Research devoted to Sabin V. Drăgoi has primarily emphasized his interest in the valorization of Banat folklore and in the construction of a modern national language. However, operas such as *Năpasta*, *Kir Ianulea* and *Horia* have only sporadically benefited from in-depth dramaturgical and stylistic analyses. In particular, the opera *Constantin Brâncoveanu* remains almost entirely unexplored, despite representing one of the few attempts at religious opera within Romanian interwar creation.

In the case of Emil Monția, the difficulty of research is amplified by the limited accessibility of sources and by the almost complete disappearance of the stage tradition associated with his works. Operas such as *Ileana*, *Moștenitorul* and *Haiducul Cercel* are rarely discussed in musicological literature, although they reflect an important stage in the development of regional Romanian musical theatre.

A similar situation may also be observed in the musical theatre of Tiberiu Brediceanu. Although his contribution to the study and valorization of Romanian folklore is unanimously acknowledged, stage works such as *La șezătoare*, *La seceriș* and *Seara mare* have been examined mainly from an ethnographic perspective rather than as autonomous dramaturgical structures integrated into the evolution of Romanian lyric theatre. By contrast, the Banat operetta represented by Filaret Barbu preserved a certain repertorial continuity, particularly through *Ana Lugojana*, a work that survived within Romanian stage memory owing to the accessibility of its musical language and its popular character. Nevertheless, the composer's other stage works remain insufficiently researched and are rarely recontextualized in relation to the Central European operetta tradition.

From a methodological perspective, the present research proposes an interdisciplinary approach situated at the intersection of musicology, cultural history, heritage studies and dramaturgical analysis. The investigation will address the historical and institutional contextualization of Banat lyric-dramatic creation, the relationship between folklore and

⁶ Ioan Tomi. 2009. *123 de compozitori, dirijori, muzicologi. Personalități ale culturii muzicale din Banatul istoric*. Timișoara: Editura Banatul, pp. 51–60.

⁷ Ion Alexandru Ardereanu. 2023. *Autentic, istoric și actual în practica muzicală din strana băănățeană. Valoroase manuscrise muzicale din arhiva Bibliotecii Mitropoliei Banatului*. Timișoara: Editura Eurostampa, p. 23.

dramaturgical construction, the identification of Central European influences and national opera models, the examination of repertorial marginalization mechanisms, the relationship between ideology and stage circulation, and the reevaluation of forgotten musical heritage from the perspective of contemporary culture.

The methodology therefore aims to employ a comparative analysis of sources, the study of available archival materials, and the investigation of period reviews and theatre programmes. At the same time, the research will examine the presence of these operas within the contemporary digital environment — including online archives, databases, audio-video recordings, theatrical repertoires and digitized documents — in order to reconstruct their historical and artistic trajectory. Through this approach, the study seeks to contribute to the reconfiguration of an insufficiently explored area of Romanian musical heritage and to the reintegration of Banat lyric-dramatic creation into current musicological discourse⁸.

2. Performance Dynamics and Repertorial Marginalization of Banat Lyric - Dramatic Creation

Despite the artistic value and historical importance of Banat lyric-dramatic creation, the stage dynamics of these works proved profoundly uneven. Certain titles benefited from significant premieres and favourable contemporary reception, whereas others remained at manuscript level, received only a single performance or disappeared entirely from the repertoires of Romanian lyric institutions.

A representative case is the opera *Năpasta* by Sabin V. Drăgoi, considered one of the most important Romanian lyric creations of the interwar period. The premiere took place on 30 May 1928, the work being appreciated at the time for the modernity of its musical language and for its valorization of Caragiale's dramatic expressivity. At the same time, the opera represented a decisive moment in Drăgoi's affirmation as a dramatic composer, contemporary criticism associating him with the modern directions of Central European music⁹.

Nevertheless, after the interwar period, *Năpasta* experienced a significant decline in stage circulation. At present, the existence of the opera is documented mainly through concert excerpts, discographic selections and audio-video archives. The absence of complete contemporary productions highlights the process of the work's gradual withdrawal from the active repertory.

A different situation may be observed in the case of the operetta *Ana Lugojana* by Filaret Barbu, one of the few Banat lyric works that survived within Romanian repertorial memory. The work entered the repertory of Opera Națională Română din Timișoara during the 1954–1955 season, the premiere being recorded on 30 December 1954. Subsequently, the operetta continued to be staged on important Romanian stages, including Opera Națională Română Cluj-Napoca, where a new production was presented on 24 March 2013, performed by the institution's chorus, ballet and orchestra under the musical direction of Horváth József and staged by Mihaela Bogdan.

Moreover, the chronologies of Romanian lyric theatres indicate numerous revivals of the work within the repertoires of operetta and opera theatres, transforming **Ana Lugojana** into a distinctive case of repertorial continuity within Banat stage creation.

By contrast, other works disappeared almost completely from stage memory. The operas of Emil Monția — *Ileana*, *Moștenitorul*, *Fata de la Cozia* and *Haiducul Cercel* — are mentioned

⁸ Ioan Tomi. 2009. *123 de compozitori, dirijori, muzicologi. Personalități ale culturii muzicale din Banatul istoric*. Timișoara: Editura Banatul, p. 56.

⁹ Iordănescu, Darius Divian. *Opera „Năpasta” de Sabin Drăgoi*. București: Editura Universității Naționale de Muzică, pp. 32–35.

in historical sources and musical catalogues, yet documentation concerning contemporary productions remains extremely limited. At present, these works appear to survive primarily at an archival and bibliographic level, without an active performance tradition or significant repertorial reintegration.

A similar situation may also be identified in the stage creation of Hermann Klee. The fairy-tale opera *Făt-Frumos* premiered in 1924 and was subsequently included in the repertory of Opera Română din Timișoara, where it reappeared during the 1956–1957 season. Nevertheless, the work failed to preserve its stage continuity and today remains almost unknown to contemporary audiences.

The same process of repertorial marginalization may be observed in works such as *Kir Ianulea*, *Horia* and *Constantin Brâncoveanu* by Sabin V. Drăgoi, the pantomime *Ivan Turbincă* by Vasile Ijac or the opera *Meșterul Manole* by Vadim Șumski.

In these cases, the absence of information regarding recent performances, the lack of accessible recordings and their exclusion from the repertories of lyric theatres suggest an almost complete interruption of artistic circulation.

The phenomenon becomes relevant not only from a repertorial perspective, but also as a symptom of a broader cultural reconfiguration in which certain aesthetic directions — historical opera, musical theatre with a religious dimension or works inspired by the traditional Romanian imaginary — were gradually removed from the centre of official artistic discourse during the post-war period.

3. Bibliographic References and the Presence of Banat Lyric-Dramatic Creation in Specialized Literature

Although many lyric-dramatic works by Banat composers have disappeared from the active repertorial circuit, they continue to be mentioned fragmentarily in musicological literature, historical studies, dictionaries, monographs and research dedicated to Romanian musical heritage. Nevertheless, the analysis of sources reveals a significant aspect: most of these operas are merely listed, without the existence of in-depth analytical studies, a fact confirming their status as insufficiently valorized cultural heritage¹⁰.

In the case of Sabin V. Drăgoi, specialized literature consistently acknowledges his contribution to Romanian lyric theatre. Contemporary sources and musicological studies regularly identify the operas *Năpasta*, *Constantin Brâncoveanu*, *Kir Ianulea* and *Horia* as major landmarks of interwar dramatic creation.

A particularly important document for the present research is the volume dedicated to the opera *Năpasta*, in which the stylistic coordinates of Drăgoi's creation and its relationship with modern Romanian dramaturgy are analysed. The author emphasizes that Drăgoi "opened a new path in Romanian lyric drama" by integrating authentic folklore into a dramatic language of considerable originality. The study explicitly refers to the dramatic opera *Năpasta*, the comic opera *Kir Ianulea*, the historical opera *Horia* and the religious opera-oratorio *Constantin Brâncoveanu*¹¹.

Furthermore, various commemorative articles and biographical syntheses confirm the existence of these works and their importance in shaping Romanian musical theatre.

¹⁰ Sandu-Dediu, Valentina; Gheorghită, Nicolae (coord.). *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești*, Vol. 2: *Ideologii, instituții și direcții componistice în muzica românească din secolele XX–XXI*. București: Editura Muzicală, pp. 54–59.

¹¹ Demenescu, Veronica Laura. 2021. „Direcții în muzica lui Sabin V. Drăgoi”. *RevArt*, nr. 2 (37). Timișoara: Editura Eurostampa, pp. 95–98.

With regard to the creation of Emil Monția, the situation is even more relevant for the concept of “forgotten musics”. Contemporary studies present him primarily as a folklorist and collector of Christmas carols, whereas his operas are rarely analysed in depth. Nevertheless, existing sources confirm the existence of an extensive lyric-dramatic repertory including *Ileana*, *Moștenitorul*, *Fata de la Cozia*, *Haiducul Cercel* and *Peștera din munți*.

The article by Tiberiu Ardelean, “Emil Monția – Hearty Transylvanian Folklorist and Carol Picker,” published in the journal *Teologia* (2019)¹², represents one of the few recent studies explicitly referring to his operatic creation. The study notes that many of these works remained unpublished and almost unknown to contemporary audiences. The author also highlights the existence of manuscripts and materials preserved in museum and memorial archives, an aspect essential for heritage research.

In the case of Tiberiu Brediceanu, musicological literature predominantly addresses his folkloristic activity and his role in shaping Romanian musical identity. His stage works are frequently classified as “rural tableaux” or ethnographic musical performances, without benefiting from substantial dramaturgical analysis. Over time, this perspective contributed to the placement of his theatrical creation within a secondary area of Romanian lyric theatre history¹³.

The Banat operetta represented by Filaret Barbu occupies a distinct position owing to the repertorial survival of *Ana Lugojana*. Nevertheless, his other stage works – *Armonii bănățene*, *Florentina* and *Privighetoarea albă* – are rarely discussed in specialized literature and remain almost absent from recent musicological research.

Similarly, operas such as *Făt-Frumos* by Hermann Klee, *Meșterul Manole* by Vadim Șumski and the pantomime *Ivan Turbincă* by Vasile Ijac are mentioned in catalogues and musical dictionaries, yet remain nearly absent from contemporary critical discourse.

In the case of Zeno Vancea’s stage creation, repertorial and historical documentation reveals a distinctive situation within Banat lyric-dramatic heritage. Although his compositional and musicological activity is well known within Romanian culture, his stage works experienced limited and fragmented repertorial circulation, many of them being today almost absent from contemporary performance practice. The catalogue of his theatrical creation includes three important works: *Priculiciul* (1933) – a one-act ballet-pantomime; *Oedip rege* (1943); and *Moartea lui Neptun* (1943).

Among these, *Priculiciul* represents the best documented stage creation. Historical sources concerning the beginnings of lyric theatre in Timișoara indicate that the work was presented on 24 June 1945 within a symbolic context significant for Banat musical life after the war. Studies dedicated to the interwar and post-war periods frequently mention it alongside representative works of modern Romanian musical theatre, confirming its aesthetic relevance during the period.

An especially important aspect for the present research is the existence of recordings and discographic documents associated with the work. Electrecord editions and discographic materials including the *Suita Priculiciul* are documented, demonstrating that the music circulated, at least partially, within the Romanian concert sphere. Nevertheless, no information currently exists concerning recent complete stagings of the ballet-pantomime, which suggests the interruption of its repertorial continuity.

Regarding casting and musical direction, documentary information remains fragmentary. Musicological literature and theatrical archives indicate the existence of historical productions, yet

¹² Ardelean, Tiberiu. 2019. „Emil Monția – Hearty Transylvanian Folklorist and Carol-Picker”. *Teologia*, Arad: Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă „Ilarion V. Felea”, vol. 80, nr. 3, pp. 122–124.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

complete details concerning casts, soloists and production teams are difficult to reconstruct in full today. By contrast, historical studies dedicated to Opera Română and the interwar repertory mention that Zeno Vancea's works were associated with modernist and expressionist directions within Romanian musical theatre¹⁴.

In the case of *Oedip rege* and *Moartea lui Neptun*, the repertorial situation is even more problematic. Although these works are recorded in catalogues and historical syntheses, documentation regarding stable stage premieres or contemporary revivals remains extremely limited. Online research reveals mainly indirect references associated with Zeno Vancea's interest in ancient theatre and expressionist dramaturgy.

This almost complete absence of contemporary stage circulation transforms Zeno Vancea's theatrical creation into a relevant example of the repertorial marginalization phenomenon examined in the present research. Despite the historical and aesthetic value of these works, the absence of modern editions, the lack of recent productions and the limited accessibility of musical sources contributed decisively to their withdrawal from active artistic memory.

From a musicological perspective, the recovery of Zeno Vancea's stage creation appears today as a necessary direction not only for the reevaluation of Banat musical heritage, but also for understanding the relationship between Romanian musical modernism, interwar lyric theatre and the Central European expressionist influences that shaped Banat culture during the first half of the twentieth century¹⁵.

Within Banat lyric-dramatic creation, the compositional activity of Richard Karol Oschanitzky occupies a distinctive position, illustrating the direct influence of the Central European tradition upon Banat musical theatre during the first half of the twentieth century. The catalogue of his creation records three stage works: *Miranda* (1925) – an operetta in three acts; *Madel aus dem Kokeltal* – an operetta in three acts; and *Fräulein Doktor* – an operetta in two acts.

These titles define the composer's aesthetic orientation toward the Viennese operetta model and German musical entertainment theatre, both highly influential within the multicultural environment of interwar Banat.

From a stylistic perspective, Oschanitzky's creation belongs to an artistic context dominated by the circulation of Austro-Hungarian and German repertory, within which operetta represented one of the most popular urban stage genres.

Historical sources and documents concerning musical life in Timișoara confirm that Richard Karol Oschanitzky's operettas were associated with German-language theatrical activity and with the urban musical repertory specific to interwar Banat. Nevertheless, detailed documentation concerning premieres, casts and musical direction remains fragmentary, reflecting the difficulty of recovering regional stage heritage from this period.

Among his works, *Miranda* appears most frequently in catalogues and musical chronologies, being considered representative of the Banat operetta tradition inspired by Central European models. Even so, current research indicates the absence of significant contemporary revivals and the nonexistence of a continuous repertorial tradition after the interwar period.

With regard to subsequent stage circulation, no information has yet been identified concerning recent productions of the operettas *Miranda*, *Madel aus dem Kokeltal* or *Fräulein*

¹⁴ Bratu, Lava. 2007. „Evoluția vieții muzicale timișorene în perioada modernă.” *Analele Banatului. Arheologie – Istorie*, vol. 15. Timișoara: Muzeul Banatului, pp. 78–83.

¹⁵ Tomi, Ioan. 2009. *123 de compozitori, dirijori, muzicologi. Personalități ale culturii muzicale din Banatul istoric*. Timișoara: Editura Banatul, pp. 63–65.

Doktor. Access to scores and orchestral materials is likewise limited, many of them probably remaining in insufficiently explored archival collections or private holdings.

The discographic situation is similar. At present, no complete commercial recordings of these operettas or modern editions accessible to the general public are known. The absence of audio documents and stage revivals contributed decisively to the withdrawal of Richard Karol Oschanitzky's creation from contemporary repertorial memory.

From a musicological perspective, the composer's case is particularly relevant for understanding the multicultural dimension of Banat musical heritage. His operettas reflect the existence of an urban theatrical life situated at the intersection of Romanian, German and Austro-Hungarian culture, demonstrating that Banat functioned during the interwar period as a space of artistic interference and European repertorial circulation¹⁶.

At the same time, the subsequent marginalization of these works highlights the fragility of regional musical heritage dependent upon specific cultural and linguistic contexts. Following the political and ideological transformations of the post-war period, German-language musical theatre and the Central European operetta repertory gradually lost visibility, accelerating the disappearance of these creations from the Romanian stage circuit.

Consequently, the recovery of Richard Karol Oschanitzky's creation represents not only an act of repertorial restitution, but also an important contribution to the reconstruction of Banat's multicultural identity and of its historical relationship with the Central European artistic sphere.

This discrepancy between the documentary existence of these works and their absence from current musicological research confirms the necessity of a critical reevaluation of Banat lyric-dramatic heritage. From this perspective, the present research assumes not only an analytical function, but also a recuperative one directed toward the reconstruction of a fragmented cultural memory.

4. The Necessity of Re-establishing Banat Cultural Identity through the Recovery of Lyric-Dramatic Heritage (1900–1950)

The recovery of the lyric-dramatic creation of Banat composers from the period 1900–1950 represents today not only a necessary musicological undertaking, but also an act of cultural and identity reconstruction. Within the current context of reevaluating regional European heritage and the growing interest in recovering marginalized repertoires, the musical heritage of Banat emerges as an insufficiently explored field of research marked by an evident imbalance between its historical value and its actual degree of cultural visibility.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Banat constituted one of the most dynamic cultural spaces in Romania, characterized by multiculturalism, artistic mobility and openness toward Central European models. Within this context, an original lyric-dramatic creation developed at the intersection of Romanian national opera, the Viennese operetta tradition, popular musical theatre and interwar musical modernism. Nevertheless, a large part of this heritage remained outside the contemporary cultural circuit, being affected by institutional discontinuities, post-war ideological transformations and the absence of a coherent policy of repertorial valorization.

From this perspective, the publication and systematization of the catalogue of Banat musical creation related to the period 1900–1950 becomes a fundamental stage in the reconstruction of regional cultural memory.

¹⁶ Vancea, Zeno. 1968–1978. *Creația muzicală românească. Secolele XIX–XX*, Vol. 1, 2. București: Editura Muzicală.

The catalogue represents not merely a documentary instrument, but also a form of historical legitimization of the existence of a Banat compositional school with a distinct profile, capable of generating operas, musical dramas, operettas, pantomimes and stage performances of remarkable stylistic diversity¹⁷.

At the same time, the intensification of research dedicated to this repertory is essential for overcoming the fragmentary character of existing information. At present, many of the identified works are known exclusively through bibliographic references or historical catalogues, without in-depth musicological analyses, critical editions or systematic investigations concerning their stage trajectory, critical reception or institutional context. In the absence of dedicated research, these creations risk remaining within a sphere of “latent heritage,” existing only at an archival level.

A fundamental dimension of the recovery process consists in the publication of scores. Numerous Banat lyric-dramatic works still survive only in manuscript form or in copies that are difficult to access, making their reintegration into contemporary performance practice impossible. The absence of modern editions affects not only repertorial circulation, but also the possibility of conducting rigorous academic research.

In this respect, the critical editing of scores must be regarded as an essential condition for the reactivation of Banat stage heritage and for its reintegration into the repertoires of lyric institutions, university curricula and the national and international cultural circuit.

Moreover, the recovery of this repertory contributes to redefining the relationship between regional heritage and national heritage. Banat lyric-dramatic creation demonstrates the existence of alternative aesthetic directions within Romanian music distinct from the dominant models associated with established cultural centres. Through the synthesis of folklore, Central European influences, Orthodox spirituality, historical dramaturgy and interwar expressionism, these works configure a distinct artistic identity that complements and diversifies the traditional image of Romanian musical culture¹⁸.

At the same time, the reevaluation of these “forgotten musics” responds to current directions within European research concerning intangible cultural heritage, the recovery of marginalized repertoires and the reconstruction of regional cultural memory. In this sense, Banat lyric-dramatic heritage may become not only the object of historical research, but also an active resource for reconnecting contemporary culture with its own profound identity layers.

5. Catalogue of the Lyric-Dramatic Creation of Banat Composers (1900–1950)

Iosif Velceanu (1874–1937)

Sărăcie lucie (1903) – musical comedy in one act, after Iosif Vulcan;

Bărbații fermecați (1911) – comedy in three acts with songs and dances;

Unde dai, și unde crapă (1919) – comedy in two acts with songs and dances;

Inocenția – comedy with songs in one act.

Tiberiu Brediceanu (1877–1968)

Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana și Maramureșul în port, joc și cântec (1905) – ethnographic musical poem;

¹⁷ Stan, Constantin-Tufan. 2020. „Vasile Ijac și viața muzicală clujeană în interbelic”. *Musicology Papers / Lucrări de Muzicologie*, vol. 35, nr. 2. Cluj-Napoca: Academia Națională de Muzică „Gheorghe Dima”, pp. 74–75.

¹⁸ Cinci, Eugen. 2006. „Câteva repere în cercetarea conexiunilor dintre muzica populară și cântarea de strună bănățeană”. *Analele Universității de Vest din Timișoara. Seria Muzică*, vol. 2. Timișoara: Editura UVT, p. 57.

La șezătoare (1908) – rural tableau in one act, libretto by Constantin Sandu Aldea and I. Borcea, after a project by Tiberiu Brediceanu;

Seara mare (1924) – lyric scenes in three acts, libretto by Tiberiu Brediceanu based on verses by Adrian Maniu;

Înviere (1932) – pantomime in four tableaux, after Lucian Blaga;

La seceriș (1936) – rural tableau in one act, libretto by Tiberiu Brediceanu.

Emil Monția (1882–1965)

Ileana (1915) – musical drama in three acts, libretto by Emil Monția;

Moștenitorul (1917) – comic opera in three acts, libretto by Emil Monția;

Fata de la Cozia (1930) – opera in three acts, libretto by Emil Monția;

Haiducul Cercel (1936) – opera in three acts, libretto by Emil Monția.

Hermann Klee (1883–1970)

Făt-Frumos (1924) – fairy-tale opera in three acts, libretto by Ion Dan.

Sabin V. Drăgoi (1894–1968)

Năpasta (1927) – musical drama in three acts, after I. L. Caragiale;

Constantin Brâncoveanu (1929) – religious opera in one act, based on verses extracted from *Acatistul Sfântului Dimitrie cel Nou Basarabov* by Sandu Tudor;

Kir Ianulea (1937) – comic-fantastic opera, after I. L. Caragiale;

Horia (1945) – historical opera in seven tableaux, libretto by Sabin V. Drăgoi.

Vasile Ijac (1899–1976)

Ivan Turbincă (1936) – pantomime.

Vadim Șumski (1900–1956)

Meșterul Manole – opera in three acts.

Zeno Vancea (1900–1990)

Priculiciul (1933) – one-act ballet-pantomime, libretto by Zeno Vancea;

Oedip rege (1943) – stage drama after Sophocles;

Moartea lui Neptun (1943) – stage drama after Ovid Densusianu.

Richard Karol Oschanitzky (1901–1971)

Miranda (1925) – operetta in three acts;

Madel aus dem Kokeltal – operetta in three acts;

Fräulein Doktor – operetta in two acts.

Filaret Barbu (1903–1984)

Privighetoarea albă (1924) – vaudeville in two acts, libretto by Octav Moiesescu;

Armonii bănățene (1935) – operetta in three acts, libretto by Iosif Titel;

Florentina (1940) – operetta in two acts, libretto by Luca Vidu;

Ana Lugojana (1950) – operetta in three acts, libretto by V. Timuș, P. Andreescu and Al. Șahighian.

6. Conclusions

The present research therefore highlights the existence of a Banat lyric-dramatic heritage of remarkable complexity and stylistic diversity, developed during the first half of the twentieth century at the intersection of Central European musical tradition, Romanian folklore, popular theatre and interwar compositional modernity. The operas, musical dramas, operettas and pantomimes created by composers such as Sabin V. Drăgoi, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Emil Monția, Filaret Barbu, Hermann Klee and Vadim Șumski demonstrate the existence of an authentic regional stage tradition that nevertheless remains insufficiently integrated into the contemporary Romanian musicological canon.

Repertorial and documentary analysis reveals that the marginalization of these creations was determined not exclusively by aesthetic criteria, but also by historical, institutional and ideological factors. The political transformations following the establishment of the communist regime, the reconfiguration of official repertoires and the orientation of culture toward models compatible with Socialist Realism contributed decisively to the withdrawal from circulation of works inspired by spirituality, national history, mythology and rural tradition. At the same time, the absence of critical editions, the difficulty of accessing manuscripts and the disappearance of interpretative traditions intensified the process of cultural oblivion.

Within this context, the expression “forgotten musics” acquires a profoundly recuperative meaning, designating not works devoid of artistic value, but creations gradually excluded from active repertorial memory. The research demonstrates that Banat musical theatre represents an essential segment of Romanian musical heritage and that its reevaluation is necessary from both musicological and cultural-identity perspectives.

Consequently, the publication of the catalogue of Banat musical creation, the intensification of interdisciplinary research, the critical editing of scores and the reintegration of these works into the contemporary performative circuit become fundamental directions for restoring regional cultural memory. The recovery of Banat lyric-dramatic heritage represents not merely an act of historical restitution, but also a genuine possibility for reactivating a repertory capable of enriching contemporary artistic discourse and reconnecting Romanian musical culture with its own plural and multicultural traditions.

During recent decades, the process of recovering and reevaluating Banat musical heritage has been supported through the contributions of researchers, musicologists, university scholars and artistic personalities concerned with the investigation of regional cultural identity, Banat compositional creation and insufficiently valorized repertoires from the perspective of Romanian music history. In this direction may be situated the research, studies and scholarly initiatives undertaken by Veronica Laura Demenescu, Dana Sorina Chifu, Horia Făgărășanu, Dumitru Gîrz, Elena Săbăduș, Darius Iordănescu, Constantin-Tufan Stan, Rodica Giurgiu, Eugen Cinc, Ion Alexandru Ardereanu, Tiberiu Ardelean, Mircea Sturza, Iulia Roman, Lava Bratu, Adrian Călin Boba, Ovidiu Giulvezan, Damian Vulpe, Ioan Tomi and Carmen Stoianov, contributions that encouraged the deepening of musicological research dedicated to the Banat cultural space and brought back into academic attention works that had remained for a long period within an area of repertorial and documentary marginality.

Through their activity — materialized in musicological studies, volumes, editions, archival research, pedagogical and performative work, as well as projects dedicated to cultural valorization — these authors contributed to consolidating a research direction oriented toward the recovery of

regional musical memory and the reintegration of Banat lyric-dramatic heritage into the contemporary cultural and scholarly circuit.

The catalogue of works highlights the existence of a substantial Banat lyric-dramatic tradition developed between 1900 and 1950 within a cultural space situated at the intersection of Central European influences, Romanian musical theatre and regional folkloric expression. The diversity of genres — historical opera, musical drama, operetta, pantomime, ballet-féerie and ethnographic performance — demonstrates the complexity and maturity of a repertory which, although later marginalized from the perspective of stage circulation and musicological research, represents an essential component of Romanian musical heritage.

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