

IN MEMORIAM VIOREL COSMA (1923-2017): OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY FOR ROMANIAN MUSICOLOGY

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SUMMARY. This year marks a century since the birth of the musicologist and enescologist Viorel Cosma (1923-2017). The purpose of this article is to recall the impact that Viorel Cosma had in musicological research on a national and international level through the thousands of signed articles and through the approximately 100 books published on themes that highlighted Romanian music and musicians. The significant contributions of Viorel Cosma are



recognized in particular for 22 volumes dedicated to George Enescu, for 12 biobibliographical lexicons with personalities of Romanian music, for musical criticism signed throughout 40 years at concerts as well 60 years at opera performances. Viorel Cosma remains in the history of Romanian musical culture as an emblematic personality who successfully combined the role of musicologist, teacher, enescologist, lexicographer and music critic.

Keywords: Viorel Cosma, Romanian Musicology, George Enescu, Lexicographer, Music critic.

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Viorel Cosma (1923-2017), like Ulysses, wandered the troubled waters of the world for almost a century, invented a wooden horse for every closed Troy; reconciled every Agamemnon to his Achilles; he escaped from the sirens thrown in his way; and returned to Ithaca when his journey was over. What an odyssey! What a turmoil! And what a silence at the end!...

On March 31st, 2023, the University of Music in Bucharest organized the 100th anniversary of the birth of Viorel Cosma. At this event was organized a round table to which attended musical personalities who personally knew the “Maestro” – an epithet much loved and used by the multitude of his disciples and friends². The scientific event entitled “Viorel Cosma – complex personality of Romanian musicology”.

Over time, Viorel Cosma’s personality has been described by his colleagues, among whom we mention the statements of Vasile Tomescu (1929-2021):

“The musicological work of Viorel Cosma (...) is a fundamental chapter in the development of our culture (...). Formed under the teaching of some top level masters of our music and in daily contact with the artistic life in all its diversity, specialized at the working table and by participating in musical activities on an international level, Viorel Cosma made and continues to make known the science and experience accumulated over a lifetime as a mentor to generations of students at the University of Music in Bucharest (he headed the first department of musicology), as well as to the public eager to know more in order to better understand the secrets of art.”³

Moreover, Grigore Constantinescu stated about Viorel Cosma that he was: “The mentor who raised the first professional generation of Romanian musicologists and music critics of the XXth century, leading the first musicology department at the National University of Music in Bucharest” and the one who “laid the foundations of modern musical lexicography in Romania, achieving, as author of the 12 lexicons (1965-2017), the most extensive national lexicographical exegesis in the world.”⁴

On the website of the “Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania” (UCMR), 15th of August 2017, in the “Announcements” section, was published the announcement about the moving to the eternity of Viorel Cosma and was mentioned the following:

² Cristina Șuteu, “Viorel Cosma sau opera în șapte acte a unui MAESTRU” (*Viorel Cosma or the Work in Seven Acts of a MASTER*), in: *Actualitatea Muzicală (Music News)*, no. 8/ 2017, p. 4.

³ Vasile Tomescu, “Viorel Cosma” in: *Muzicieni din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol. 2 (Coc-E), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, p. 80-81.

⁴ Grigore Constantinescu, “Viorel Cosma”, in: *Actualitatea Muzicală (Musical News)*, no. 8/ 2017, p. 2.

“Incredible leaving among us of the Master who was the light and the soul, the thought of Romanian music, the musicologist and scholar Viorel Cosma. The creator of a scientific work of unparalleled value, witness of a century of existence of Romanian musical art, Viorel Cosma represented a model of fulfilled destiny, like a towering oak of our culture nationally and internationally. In the field of didactics, as a professor of musicology, the Mentor raised the first professional generation of Romanian musicologists and music critics of the XXth century, holding the first dedicated chair at the National University of Music in Bucharest. (...) Viorel Cosma laid the foundations of modern musical lexicography in Romania, creating, as the author of the 12 lexicons (1965-2017), the most extensive national lexicographic exegesis in the world. (...) Viorel Cosma’s vocation as a historian is intertwined with that of the literary experience, parallel perspectives that mark the tireless elaboration activity along the musicological highway, the inventory of books signed by the author revealing, for those who did not know yet, the passion with which he carried out, cyclically, the revaluations of the research subjects, accomplished efficiently, without rest, during the work carried out in the many decades of its existence.”⁵

Viorel Cosma publicly presented the results of his research in conferences held at the Sorbonne University, the Académie des Beaux Artes in Paris and at Boston University.

He wrote lexicographic articles for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Dictionnaire des interprètes* (by Alain Pâris) and for the great encyclopedias in the world as *Sohlmans musiklexikon*, *Das Große Lexikon der Musik* etc.

In the table below, I present, in chronological order, the main events of Viorel Cosma’s biographical and professional trajectory.

Table 1

Date	Event
30.03.1923	He was born in Timișoara as the son of Captain Dr. Constantin Cosma;
1929-'31	Musical studies at the Municipal Conservatory in Timișoara: Eugen Cuteanu (violin), Sabin Drăgoi (theory-solfeggio);
1938	Constantin Cosma, the master’s father, dies in the center of Timisoara, following a heart attack;

⁵ Website of Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania (UCMR), at the address: <http://www.ucmr.org.ro/anunturi.htm> (Accessed on November 3rd, 2017).

Date	Event
1945-'50	Studies at the Bucharest Conservatory: Ion Dumitrescu (theory-solfeggio), Mihail Jora (harmony), Marțian Negrea (harmony, counterpoint), Leon Klepper (composition), Theodor Rogalski (orchestration), Zeno Vancea, Vasile Popovici (music history), St. Popescu, D.D. Botez (choral conductor), George Georgescu, Constantin Silvestri (orchestral conductor), Dimitrie Cuclin (musical aesthetics), Jean Bănescu (canto), Fl. Eftimescu, Paul Jelescu (piano);
1945-'47	Professor at the Alberto della Pergola Conservatory, Bucharest;
1945-'54	Choir conductor for amateur artistic ensembles from Bucharest;
1947-'50	Advanced courses: Mihail Jora (musical forms, composition), Paul Constantinescu (modal harmony);
1948-'49	Musical secretary at the Romanian Opera in Bucharest;
1951-'52	Scientific researcher at the Institute of Art History of the Romanian Academy and head of the music sector at the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest; assistant at the Bucharest Conservatory;
1951-'64	Music history teacher at the Music High School no. 1 and no. 2, Bucharest;
1954-'59	Professor of music history and musical forms at the Military High School, Bucharest;
1955	It undertakes research on the lands of George Enescu's childhood. Is awarded the Order of the Star of Romania, class V;
1959-'60	University lecturer at the training courses within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest;
1960-'63	Director at the University of Musical Culture in Bucharest;
1964-'85	University lecturer at the Bucharest Conservatory;
1972	He is awarded the Order of Cultural Merit of Poland;
1972-'73	Specialization at the Musicology Seminar in Erlangen – Nuremberg with Professor Martin Runcke;
1972-2004	Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania: '72; '78; '79; '82; '84; '92; '95; '96; '98; 2004;
1974	Romanian Academy Award;
1982	Béla Bartók Memorial Medal, Budapest;
1984	ARTISJUS award, Budapest;
1985-'86	University lecturer at the Bucharest Conservatory;
1989-2017	Publishes Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographical lexicon in 12 volumes
1992	<i>International Man of the Year</i> – distinction, Cambridge;
1993	He laid the foundations of Romanian lexicography by teaching Lexicography course at the Academy of Music in Bucharest;
1993-'96	Professor of music history at Hyperion University, Bucharest;

Date	Event
1996-'99	Associate professor at the departments of music history, musicology, musical lexicography, Bucharest Conservatory;
1998	"Music Critics Award" awarded by the College of Music Critics A.T.M.; The title of "Doctor in Musicology", specialization Higher Theory of Music awarded by the Ministry of National Education;
2002	The title of "Honorary Citizen of the City of Timișoara"; The title and diploma of Doctor Honoris Causa of the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts of the Republic of Moldova;
2003	Awarding of the Patriarchal Cross, issued by the Romanian Patriarchate, signed by Teoctist, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church;
2004	Order of Cultural Merit in the rank of great officer; The title of corresponding member of the Tiberina Academy in Rome;
2008	National Award for Art;
2011	Diploma from the Romanian Biographic Institute for the contribution to the Dictionary of Romanian Personalities;
2013	Diploma of excellence, issued by the "Military Music Service"; The awarding of the title of Doctor Honoris Causa at the "George Enescu" University of Arts in Iasi (December 9);
2016	Honorary Member of the National Association of War Veterans;
15.08.2017	Viorel Cosma died in Bucharest; Over 40 sites announced the news of his passing; Radio Romania Cultural broadcasts the transmission <i>In memoriam Viorel Cosma</i> ;
17.08.2017	The ceremony honoring the master's personality in the Aula of the Cantacuzino Palace in Bucharest; Funeral service at Andronache Cemetery;
26.10.2017	The book launch: <i>George Enescu – The Genius Musician in Pictures</i> , vol. 2, Publishing House of the Romanian Cultural Institute and National Museum "George Enescu", Bucharest, signed by Viorel Cosma, volume presented by musicologist Mihai Cosma.

During his life, Viorel Cosma signed around 5000 articles⁶ and in this present paper I list only his books, which sums a total of around 100 titles.

⁶ Tiberiu Alexandru, Ruxandra Arzoiu, "Viorel Cosma", in: *Grove Music Online*, published in print in 20 January 2001, Published online: 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06598>

- 1954:** *Erkel Ferenc, élet és munkássága, mint összekötő kapocs a magyar és román zenekultúra között (Ferenc Erkel, his life and work as a fundamental link in the Hungarian and Romanian culture)* s.n. Budapest
- 1956:** *Ion Vidu (1863-1931). Monografie (Monography)*, Editura Casa Centrală a Creației Populare Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1957:** *Ciprian Porumbescu (1853-1883). Monografie (Monography)*, Editura de Stat pentru imprimare și publicații Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1958:** *Ciprian Porumbescu. Opere alese (Selected Works)*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1958:** *George Fotino (1858-1946). Schiță monografică de popularizare (Popularization Monographic Sketch)*, Editura Militară Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1958:** *Maiorul I. Ivanovici (1845-1902) (The Major I. Ivanovici)*, Editura Militară Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1958:** *Gheorghe Dima. Opere alese (Selected Works)*, Editura de Stat Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1960:** *Figuri de lăutari (Figures of fiddlers)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1962:** *Cântăreața Elena Teodorini. Schiță monografică (The singer Elena Teodorini. Monographic Sketch)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House Publishing House, Bucharest,
- 1965:** *Ion Vidu: un maestru al muzicii corale (Ion Vidu: a Master of Choral Music)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1965:** *Compozitori și muzicologi români. Mic lexicon (Romanian Composers and Musicologists. Little Lexicon)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1965:** *Mărturii ale istoriei locale în muzeele din județul Ilfov (Testimonies of local history in the museums of Ilfov county)*, Sectorul de Propagandă (Propaganda sector), Ilfov
- 1966:** *Nicolae Filimon. Critic muzical și folklorist (Nicolae Filimon. Music Critic and Folklorist)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1966:** *Teatrul muzical din Galați. (1956-1966). Schiță monografică (The Musical Theater from Galati. Monographic Sketch)*, Editura Teatrului Muzical Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1966:** *Teodor Burada. Viața în imagini (Teodor Burada. Life in Pictures)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1966:** *Musikwissenschaftliche Literatur sozialistischer Länder: S. R. Rumänien 1945-1965 (Musicological literature of Socialist Countries: S. R. Romania)* Elena Zottoviceanu (co-author), vol. 1, Neue Musik Publishing House, Berlin

- 1968:** *Filarmonica "George Enescu" din București (1868-1968)* ("George Enescu" Philharmonic from Bucharest), Editura Filarmonicii Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1970:** *Muzicieni români. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Romanian Musicians. Bio-Bibliographic Lexicon)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1971:** *Corul „Madrigal” al Conservatorului (The “Madrigal” Choir of the Conservatory)*, Editura Arta Grafică, Bucharest
- 1972:** *Istoria muzicii universale. Antichitatea (History of Universal Music. Antiquity)*, Litografia Conservatorului, Bucharest
- 1973:** *Ion St. Paulian în lumina izvoarelor documentare (Ion St. Paulian in the Light of Documentary Sources)*, Editura Dobreta-Turnu Severin, Turnu Severin
- 1974:** *Teodor T. Burada. Opere. Istoriografie muzicală (Teodor T. Burada. Works. Musical historiography)*, vol. 1, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1974:** *George Enescu. Scrisori (George Enescu. Letters)*, vol. 1, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1975:** *Teodor T. Burada. Opere Folclor și etnografie (Teodor T. Burada. Works. Folklore and ethnography)*, vol. 2, Editura Muzicală Publishing House Bucharest, 1975
- 1977:** *Două milenii de muzică pe pământul României. Introducere în istoria muzicii românești (Two Millennia of Music on Romania Land. Introduction to the History of Romanian Music)*, Ion Creangă Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1978:** *Teodor T. Burada. Opere (Teodor T. Burada. Works)*, vol. 3, Editura Muzicală Publishing House Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1978:** *De la „Cântecul Zaverii” la „Imnurile unității naționale”. Contribuții la istoria cântecului patriotic (1821-1918) (From “Zavera’s Song” to “National Unity Hymns”. Contributions to the History of Patriotic Song)*, Facla Publishing House, Timișoara
- 1980:** *Teodor T. Burada. Opere (Teodor T. Burada. Works)*, vol. 4, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1980:** *Zweitausend Jahre Musik auf dem Boden Rumäniens: Einführung in die Geschichte der rumänischen Musik (Two Millennia of Music on Romania Land. Introduction to the History of Romanian music)*, Ion Creangă Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1980:** *România muzicală: instituții lirico-dramatice, filarmonici și formații muzicale (Musical Romania: Lyric Drama Institutions, Philharmonics and Musical Ensembles)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest

- 1980:** *Vocatia universala a folclorului romanesc (1688-1970) (The Universal Vocation of Romanian Folklore)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1981:** *Romanian musical acoustics: brief historical overview, achievements*, Ministry of Forestry and Building Materials, Bucharest
- 1981:** *Enescu azi. Premise la redimensionarea personalității și operei (Enescu today. Premises to the Resizing of Personality and Work)*, Facla Publishing House, Timișoara
- 1981:** George Enescu. *Scrisori, (George Enescu. Letters)* (vol 2), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1982:** *A Concise History of Romanian Music*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest
- 1983:** *Dimitrie Cuclin. Corespondența. O istorie polemică a muzicii (Dimitrie Cuclin. Correspondence. A polemical history of music)*, Editura Junimea Publishing House, Iași
- 1984:** *Die Universalberufung der rumänischen Folklore (1688-1850) (The Universal Vocation of Romanian Folklore)*, Pomeranian Philharmonic I. Paderewskiego, Bydgoszcz
- 1984:** *Exegeze muzicologice: studii de istorie (Musicological Exegesis: Historical Studies)*. Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1984:** *Interferenzen in der Musik. Studien und Aufsätze (Interference in Music. Studies and Essays)*, Editura Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1986:** 40 de ani în fotoliul de orchestră: eseuri, studii, cronici muzicale (1946-1976) (*40 years in the Orchestra Chair: Essays, Studies, Musical Chronicles*), vol. 1, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1987:** *Dirijorul George Georgescu. Texte și documente. Mărturii în contemporaneitate (Conductor George Georgescu. Texts and Documents. Testimonies in Contemporaneity)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1989:** *Muzicienii din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol.1 (A-C), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1991:** *George Enescu. Cronica unei vieți zbuciumate (George Enescu. Chronicle of a Turbulent Life)*, Editura Odeon Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1996:** *Interpreți din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Performers from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol.1 (A-F), Editura Galaxia Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1996:** *Marte și Euterpe. Muzică și armată (Mars and Euterpe. Music and the Army)*, Editura Universală Publishing House, Bucharest

- 1996:** *Lăutari de ieri și de azi (Fiddlers of Yesterday and Today)*, Editura Du Style Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1998:** *Sergiu Celibidache – Concertul de adio (Sergiu Celibidache – The Farewell Concert)*, Editura Arc Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1998:** *Dirijorul Egizio Massini (Conductor Egizio Massini)*, Editura Geneze, Bucharest
- 1998:** Enciclopedia marilor personalități din istoria, știința și cultura românească de-a lungul timpului (*The Encyclopedia of the Great Personalities from Romanian History, Science and Culture Throughout Time*) (100 Personalități muzicale), Editura Geneze Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1999:** *Panoramic Romania Overview*, trilingual volume: Romanian, English, German, Monitorul Oficial Publishing House, Bucharest
- 1999:** *Muzicienii din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol 2 (C-E), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2000:** *Eminescu în universul muzicii (Eminescu in the World of Music)*, Editura Libra Publishing House, Bucharest
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- 2003:** *George Enescu – Un portret lexicographic / A Lexicographic Portrait*, bilingual edition, Editura ARC 2000 Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2004:** “Oedipe” de *George Enescu. Dosarul premierelor (1936-2003)* (“Oedipus” by *George Enescu. The File of Awards*), Editura Institutului Cultural Român Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2004:** *Muzicieni din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol. 7 (N-P), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
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- 2012:** *George Enescu. Edin veliki muzikant (George Enescu. A Great Musician)*, translation into Bulgarian by Ognean Stamboliev, Editura Avangard Print Publishing House, Sofia
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- 2014:** *“Cartea de onoare” a Filarmonicii din București (1906-1919). Epoca Dimitrie Dinicu – George Enescu (“Book of Honor” of the Bucharest Philharmonic. Dimitrie Dinicu – George Enescu Era)*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2014:** *Burada T. Teodor. Opere 5. Biserică. Călătorii în Orient. Palestrina (Burada T. Teodor. Works 5. Church. Travels in the East. Palestrina)*, Editura Basilica Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2015:** *George Enescu. Scrisori (George Enescu. Letters) vol. 3*, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2015:** *125. Ateneul Român, în oglinda istoriei (125. The Romanian Athenaeum, in the Mirror of History)*, Editura Magic Print Publishing House, Onești

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- 2016:** *“Poema română” (1898) în oglinda presei (“Romanian Poem” (1898) in the Mirror of the Press)*, Camelia Anca Sârbu (co-author), Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2016:** *Muzicieni din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol. 11 (B-D), Editura Magic Print Publishing House, Onești
- 2016:** *Mari personalități muzicale românești (1500-2015) (Great Romanian Musical Personalities)*, Editura Magic Print Publishing House, Onești
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- 2017:** *Muzicieni din România. Lexicon bio-bibliografic (Musicians from Romania. Biobibliographic Lexicon)*, vol. 12, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, Bucharest
- 2017:** *George Enescu – Muzicianul de geniu în imagini (George Enescu – The Genius Musician in Images)*, Editura Institutul Cultural Român Publishing House, Bucharest

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