

5. IULIA BUCESCU – BASES OF MUSICAL TEACHING: NOVELTY - ORIGINALITY – CREATIVITY

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Abstract: *Iulia Bucescu, professor at the University of Arts „George Enescu” Iași, was one of the greatest educators of the Romanian musical education field. A remarkable personality of the academic musical life, Iulia Bucescu was renowned especially for her ars docendi, as she served the musical didactic skillfully, with a lot of passion, tenacity and knowledge. She was also a master of musical experiments, thus obtaining exceptional results with her disciples. Her methods, her own system of tools for the formation and improvement of musical skills, her mastership and educational experience find their relevance in the volumes of Music Theory, Solfeggio and Musical Dictation which are to be presented in this scientific paper.*

Key words: *Iulia Bucescu, didactic methods, theory of music, solfeggio, dictation*

INTRODUCTION



The teaching line of *Music Theory – Solfeggio - Dictation* has a tremendous importance for the formation of future musicians, as it points toward the realization of several fundamental objectives, such as : the development of melodic, polyphonic and harmonic musical hearing, the development of memory, internal hearing, sense of rhythm (polyrhythmic), the proper solfeggio of different fragments from the universal literature (structured on stylistic coordinates), writing the melodic, polyphonic or harmonic dictations, and the analysis of musical language. Although in the last decades there were numerous treatises of Music Theory and practical works appeared in our country, a lot of them haven't completely proved their efficiency yet.

In the following, our approach aims to be a journey in the „laboratory” of didactical experiments of the remarkable professor Iulia Bucescu, in order to convey her original methods and procedures, which she successfully applied to her pupils and students, during all her years of musical didactic activity.

During her didactic career in the music teaching at the university, Iulia Bucescu was famous mainly through her ars docendi, as she served the musical didactic skillfully, with a lot of passion, tenacity and knowledge, experimenting and obtaining exceptional results with her disciples. Thus, she elaborated several practical works for Theory-Solfeggio-Musical dictation, a subject most cherished by her, „served” with a remarkable responsibility and exigency. The different levels of musical culture of her groups of students along the years determined her to deeply meditate upon the creation of new methods through which, within a relatively short lapse of time (three years), she could develop and improve the musical writing – reading skills, together with the capacity of aesthetic-stylistic analysis of different scores used in her classes.

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1. CHRESTOMATHIES OF TEXTS FROM MUSICAL LITERATURE

The first volumes, written for the internal use, in collaboration with the university professor Adrian Diaconu, are grouped in chrestomathies of works from universal and Romanian musical literature, joint according to the analytical program of the course: School Solfeggios (Booklet I), Collection of modal and tonal-modal solfeggios (Booklet II), Collection of solfeggios. Examples from the Romanian contemporary musical literature (Booklet III) and Collection of solfeggios. Examples from the universal contemporary musical literature (Booklet IV).

In the debut volume, the musical examples cover a diverse stylistic area, from the Baroque era until the twentieth century, being systematized according to several objectives of acquiring specific knowledge about intonation and metric-rhythmic structures: solfeggios based on arpeggio, modulation, special rhythmic divisions, and solfeggios with a very difficult rhythm or with an alternative metric. The second volume introduces us to the modal and tonal-modal language of the twentieth century, through musical examples of several important Romanian composers (George Enescu, Achim Stoia, Ion Dumitrescu etc.) and teachers of Music Theory (Ioan Șerfezi, Victor Giuleanu). The diversity of universal stylistic trends and directions of the twentieth century can be found in the third volume. The aim of this collection is the solfeggios, the knowledge and analysis of the main elements of impressionistic and post-romantic language, of the diatonic, chromatic modalism or the synthesis modalism, reflected in the creations of composers like: George Enescu, Paul Constantinescu, Mihail Jora, Marțian Negrea, Anatol Vieru, Tudor Ciortea, Vasile Spătărelu and Doru Popovici. The same didactic orientations make the subject of the fourth volume (the final one), but the difference subsists in the usage of movements from the creation of European composers (Benjamin Britten, Igor Stravinski or Béla Bartók).

2. SOLFEGGIOS WITH COMPLEMENTARY RHYTHMIC ACCOMPANIMENT

By teaching Music Theory for the Instrumental Section, also being a complementary piano teacher, Iulia Bucescu wanted to eliminate the rhythm difficulties manifested by her students in classes. Thus, new inter-disciplinary ideas were born for the intensive study of musical rhythm, as an essential ingredient of an opus dramaturgy. By the intonation of some fragments from the universal literature with rhythmic accompaniment, one can develop the distributive attention, the rhythmic and polyrhythmic sense. Being aware of the overlaps of accents emerged from different (binary or ternary) rhythms and practicing them simultaneously, one is led to develop a maximal rhythmic precision in the collective interpretational act. The three volumes of Solfeggios with complementary rhythmic accompaniment are extremely useful not only for the instrument performers, but for all the lyric interpreters, conductors and teachers. In her Author's Note for this volume, Iulia Bucescu emphasized the idea that this type of solfeggio has the main objective to allow the students to get

used “not merely to correctly execute the score by themselves, but also to ease the habituation to the practice in an instrumental ensemble”⁴⁵ .

Iulia Bucescu reunited in her three volumes 142 musical pieces (from the works indicated in the analytical programs for the students in instrument and chamber music class) of several great pre-Classic composers of Western Europe and Romania, from the twentieth century. She also systematized these solfeggios according to their rhythmic difficulties. “The study of rhythm according to examples from the creations of renowned composers acquires a highly artistic and aesthetic sense, which places it beyond the sterile practice of senseless formulas, usually encountered in the didactic activity”⁴⁶ . In order to prepare the instrumental performance within an orchestra or a chamber music group, to prevent rhythmic deviations and the understanding of the whole work, it is of greatest importance to combine the score study and the general part. The gradual study of these solfeggio is recommended, also using a rhythmic accompaniment, as follows: 1. Separation of solfeggio from the rhythmic accompaniment; 2. Simultaneous solfeggio (executed by a group of students) and rhythmic accompaniment (executed by other protagonists); 3. Individual, simultaneous realization of the solfeggio and measure beating; the other arm is beating the rhythm with a pencil on the desk.

3. BUCESCU „METHOD” - ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY

After her retirement from the university musical education (1992), Iulia Bucescu continued her mission as a teacher, collaborating as senior teacher with „George Apostu” Art College from Bacau. Her direct implication in the college musical education created the frame to readapt and implement her working methods, used years ago with the students. Thus, she wrote four solfeggios volumes (1994) and two didactic works of the greatest importance, where Iulia Bucescu demonstrates her true mastership. These have been conceived as a whole, in a complementary conception, being recommended to apply simultaneously: I. *Music Theory. Autodidact Method: intervals, chords and rhythms*, and II. *Solfeggios Method. Melodic Dictations* (I-VIII classes). In order to implement these new and original methods, Iulia Bucescu organized working sessions with teachers of Music theory from all over the country, where she demonstrated practically the efficiency of the method and her remarkable results with her pupils. As a member of this team, I was impressed of the way pupils were able to solve easily and thoroughly all the exercises with intervals, rhythm and harmonic analysis, from the really complex musical examples. Iulia Bucescu highlighted the importance of forming and fulfilling the technical side of those who wish to perform, in order for them to quickly and successfully decipher the scores, despite the level of difficulties or the types of languages used: tonal, atonal, modal, tonal-modal or serial-dodecaphonic.

⁴⁵ Iulia Bucescu, *Solfeggios with complementary rhythmic accompaniment*, vol. I, Author’s Note, p. 1, manuscript

⁴⁶ Iulia Bucescu, *op. cit.*, p. 2

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD

The autodidact study method addresses to all the beginners in music (regardless the age), as well as those who wish to improve their skills in solfeggios and writing a musical dictation. Iulia Bucescu guarantees, based on her accumulated experience, that a daily study of the intervals, chords and rhythm according to the proposed methods and procedures, will allow anybody to decrypt effortlessly any score. Still, an attentive coordination of pupils by a teacher of Music Theory is needed for the first classes. The volume: *Music Theory. Autodidact Method: intervals, chords and rhythms* is structured in two parts, the first section - *Methods and Procedures for autodidact study of practical matters of Music Theory: Intervals, Chords, Rhythm*, and the second – *Additional Guidance*.

Part I contains a systematic survey of the exercises for the study of intervals, chords and musical rhythm. At the beginning, the intervals are intoned without notes, on different syllables (ta-ta), then introducing the notes, using as a sonorous material the whole chromatic environment. The construction and the two-way intonation of the intervals are also emphasized, while the intonation directions are realized according to the procedures of chaining, comparison and associativity, including double alterations and different sound notations, ever since the first class in music schools. Iulia Bucescu insists on the importance of studying the expressivity of every interval, beginning from the correct assimilation of the half-tone and tone. The second, the third and the fourth are considered simple intervals, which consequently sustain the building of fifths, sixths, sevenths and octaves. The triple-notes are consolidated in all the states and positions, by the intonation of the arpeggio with a progressive speed.

Although the rhythm represents an essential element of a musical work, it is not studied thoroughly, in most cases. The proof relies on constant displacements between the instrumental parts, the soloists and the orchestra, the equivocal entrances on anacruses or counter-time etc. Iulia Bucescu recommends the separate and systematic study of the rhythm. It is not recommended to beat the measure in the air, because of continuous inequality of the movements and the lack of the exact visualization of duration in the rhythmic formulas, especially in the complex ones. The new beating method is based on the activation of several senses: visual, tactile, acoustical, which will help the conscious and solid assimilation of all types of rhythms. The right hand beats continuously on the bench, while the left hand fingers articulate the divisions of time, starting with the thumb. By means of two-, three- and four-times vocal spelling, one is able to reach in short time a real performance in deciphering the most difficult rhythms from the scores of the twentieth century (see the explanations at pages 54-55 of the volume).

Part II offers a set of solutions to successfully solve the exercises of this volume. The additional schemes, the graphics and tables constitute a real technical unit, of great help for its purpose.

The volume: *Solfeggios Method. Melodic Dictations* (I-VIII classes) represents the practical application, through solfeggios and dictations, of the

above-mentioned method. As the author suggests, “the rhythm problems, as well as those connected to harmonic and melodic sonorous relationships are introduced in a rational, logical order. The approach to every new exercise is based on previous knowledge”⁴⁷. According to the didactic principles of such an endeavor, the volume also contains for each musical interval approximately 70 solfeggios, with progressively added rhythmic formulas, previously studied. These materials have been conceived only in C major and A minor; meanwhile, the author quickly modulates towards the farthest tonal centers, in order to cover as much melodic intervals as possible. Although they might seem difficult at first, the solfeggios (designed as dictations) can be successfully approached if one starts by practicing the schemes of intervals and rhythm from volume I.

3.2. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

I have personally applied this method for a long time, and the success was obvious. The overall conclusions were as follows:

1. Pupils succeed in assimilating much more knowledge in a shorter time, regarding the musical writing-reading. For example, the first class (of musical profile) studies (according to the classic and never-changed scholar curricula) only the C major gamut, and intuitively the associated musical intervals. Pupils spend too much time writing the notes, while they would better practice for the development of hearing, rhythm and musical memory. The alterations are taught sporadically at the end of the year, in a few irrelevant solfeggios. As for the rhythm, the situation is even worse.
2. By applying the methods of Professor Iulia Bucescu, the course of Music Theory acquires a special place for those who study musical instruments. The previous knowledge and skills help the young disciples to save time, also completing their knowledge.
3. Through a systematic study of the intervals and chords, the pupils succeed in solving the tests of Music Theory in a rapid and accurate manner, operating with double alterations, without seeming so difficult for the construction or recognition of some structures. Also, they manage to recognize aurally all the given interval and chords.
4. There is no more “alterations panic”, as the pupils manage to easily read any musical score.
5. As for the rhythm, the gain is enormous, because pupils acquire a great precision in the recognition, execution and writing of the most difficult rhythmic formulas, being able to solve any polyrhythmic problems by this subdivisions method.

3.3. PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This working method should be consolidated by every pupil at home, by practicing at least 30 minutes, in order to obtain the maximum efficiency. It is

⁴⁷ Iulia Bucescu, *Metodă de solfegii, dictări melodice (clasele I – VIII) (Solfeggios and Melodic Dictations Method (I-VIII)*, with an Introduction by Gheorghe Gozar, Ed. C.P.E. Loreley, Bacău, 1996

called “Autodidact Study Method”, precisely because it offers all the recipes, allowing the individual approach.

2. Pupils should be urged to understand the importance of this method, as its applications are very pleasant, structured as games with outdoors connections. Use the expressivity of intervals and chords, the beauty and dynamism of the rhythm itself.

3. During the implementation of this method one needs to revise deeper the concepts of tonality (types of scales, armors, tonal functions, tonal quadrant, rhythmic-melodic formulas specific for Classic-Romantic styles) through additional examples from the universal musical literature, found in the works studied by pupils in instrument classes⁴⁸.

4. It is advisable not to skip the study of half-tone and tone, if those notions were not enough assimilated, because these entities are the foundation of simple and composed musical intervals formation.

5. As for the triple and quadruple vocal spelling, it can be applied also by using other types of counting, easier for the pronunciation.

6. I personally recommend that, before teaching new lessons, one should revise the previous ones. Anyway, the author’s solfeggi are conceived accordingly, in order to renew and continuously stratify previous skills.

7. Finally, an advice: never give up the exercises proposed by Iulia Bucescu. You should spend 10 minutes with them, at the beginning of every new lesson.

4. MUSIC THEORY – A SYSTEMATIC TUTOR FOR THE ADMISSION AT CONSERVATORY⁴⁹

This paper represents a real treatise of Music Theory, being one of the most valuable scientific and didactic contributions in the Romanian musical literature. As its title already suggests, it is addressed mostly to pupils who prepare themselves to enter the Conservatory, but also to all the people willing to improve their theoretical musical knowledge. This volume magisterially crowns a life-time experience of the author, by permanently offering practical solutions which complete and explain the theoretical content. According to the musicologist Gheorghe Dutica, “the key-phrases which define the complex scientific and methodical approach fuse in a semantic triad: essential – systematic-typological, a strategic entity which sums up the force lines of every fundamental research /.../. Through her way of treating the theoretical matters, Iulia Bucescu proposes in this volume real “thinking system, which can become general solutions for solving many practical aspects”, a rare performance, considering that most of the manuals and specialty treatises contain “explanations accompanied by examples which produce thinking blockages”. As the author herself emphasizes in her introductory words, “the deficiency of these books consists of going from the particular to the general aspect – often an

⁴⁸ We recommend the volumes: Constantin Rîpă, Nelida Nedelcuț *Solfegiu pentru toți*, vol.I, II, Ed.Institutului Biblic Emanuel, Oradea, 1998

⁴⁹ Iulia Bucescu, *Teoria muzicii. Îndrumar metodic pentru Admiterea în Conservator*, Ed. Corgal Press, Bacău, 1998

unaccomplished intention – without proposing the reversal, from general to particular”⁵⁰ .

The work of Iulia Bucescu is structured in seven chapters, summing up the main elements which define the musical phenomenon circumscribed to the tonal-functional grammar of the major-minor system: Chapter I – Classification of Intervals; Chapter II – Sound Notations; Chapter III – Polysemy; Chapter IV – The Chromatic Character of Scales; Chapter V – Classifications of Measures; Chapter VI – Exceptional Rhythmic Formulas Related to Usual Ones; Chapter VII – Exercises and Problems. Solutions.

„Based on a judicious dosage of the theoretical discourse, the author’s methodological vision articulates three types of content analysis: 1. Quantitative analysis – grids, classifications, sampling, assembling categories; 2. Typological analysis – unifying groups, paradigmatic columns, typological systems; 3. Structural analysis – modulation/modeling of the information ”⁵¹ .

This volume constitutes an authentic and original scientific approach, based on a vast experience, thinking and imagination, strongly recommended to all the people interested in improving their musical knowledge.

DICTATIONS/ SOLFEGGIOS

The concern of Mrs. Iulia Bucescu as a university professor was to find the most efficient methods for a good formation, in a relatively short time, of the musical skills. This proved to be a stringent necessity, which guided all her volumes. The basis of the present volume Dictations / Solfeggios are the methods previously described, through which the author guarantees the successful solfeggio of the musical scores, regardless their difficulty. Although apparently complex, this musical matter was studied by the author with the pupils of the final High-school classes, from the Music section of “George Apostu” Art High-school in Bacau. The solfeggios were conceived based on the principles of tonal-functional, major-minor system, also containing some dense modulating fabrics, mostly chromatic. Iulia Bucescu sustained in her Author’s Introductory Words: „all the 40 examples have been tried sometimes through writing, as dictations, and sung as solfeggios; thus, they can be approached at any moment by those who want to obtain professional performances, according to their skills and not to their convenience”⁵² . As a conclusion, Professor Ph. D. Iulia Bucescu noticed that Romanian musical education needed new and efficient didactic strategies, which were able to keep and eventually raise the level of performance of future artists. The author was often invited in juries at musical contests and Olympics; in the last years, she noticed a tendency to decrease pupil’s level of knowledge and the interest for this topic, which is very important for all who study music.

⁵⁰Gheorghe Duțică, Referat-manuscris pentru Biroul secției de Muzicologie a Uniunii Compozitorilor și Muzicologilor din România

⁵¹ Gheorghe Duțică, op. cit.

⁵² Iulia Bucescu, *Dictări/Solfegii*, Cuvântul Autorului, Ed. Artes, Iași, 2011

Iulia Bucescu will remain in the memory of her former disciples as a guiding light, a true builder of musical didactic and education in Iasi who, by her “knowledge to teach others to learn” succeeded to inoculate to a lot of people the desire to know and continuously improve themselves in the musical field. We consider it is our duty to continue the mission of the exceptional pedagogue Iulia Bucescu, by developing in our pupils and students a greater desire to learn, to improve and excel, through an enlargement and renewal of methods and procedures of teaching-learning at Music Theory – Solfeggio – Musical Dictation. Iulia Bucescu offered us the solution, now it is our duty to apply it!

LIST OF PAPERS – IULIA BUCESCU

1. *Solfegii de școală*, Caietul I, manuscris (*School Solfeggios*, Booklet I, manuscript)
2. *Colecție de solfegii tonal-modale și modale*, Caietul II, manuscris (*A Collection of Tonal-Modal and Modal Solfeggios*, Booklet II, manuscript)
3. *Colecție de solfegii. Exemple din literatura muzicală contemporană românească*, Caietul III, manuscris (*A Collection of Solfeggios. Examples from Romanian contemporary musical literature*, Booklet III, manuscript)
4. *Colecție de solfegii. Exemple din literatura muzicală contemporană universală*, Caietul IV, manuscris (*A Collection of Solfeggios. Examples from universal contemporary musical literature*, Booklet IV, manuscript)
5. *Solfegii cu acompaniament ritmic*, volumele I-III, manuscris (*Solfeggios with Rhythmic Accompaniment*, volumes I-III, manuscript)
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6. Duțică, Gheorghe, Luminița Duțică *Conceptul ritmic și tehnica variațională. O viziune asupra Barocului și Clasicismului muzical (The Rhythmic Concept and the Variation Technique. A Vision on the Musical Baroque and Classicism)*, Iași, Ed. Artes, 2004
7. Duțică, Luminița *Teste de solfegiu și dicteu musical (Solfeggio and Musical Dictation Tests)*, Iași, Ed. Artes, 2010
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