

ARTS, CULTURAL STUDIES AND ETHNOGRAPHY

From Nemescian «Imaginary music» to visualized electronic music in the context of the «New Music Days» International Festival, edition XXXI

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Abstract. In this article, the issue of visualizing musical creation, connecting and associating the sonic with the dimensions of color, light and other visual elements is addressed, which marked the concerns of composers especially with the progress of technologies, starting from the 20th century, finding a true revolution in the digital age, in various combinations of video, VR, AR, using a wide range of specialized software, etc. In the Romanian context, the problem in question finds its fertile ground, especially among the generation of the 70s, which launched a new avant-garde, considered the first to aspire to be postmodern, in the Republic of Moldova, the direction of studio music, however, evolving later, from the end of 90s, and the aspect of visualisation becoming topical nowadays. Starting from the concept of "imaginary music" developed by the Romanian composer O. Nemescu, the suggestive title of the Visualized Electronic Music Concert within the New Music Days International Festival, XXXI edition, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, where Nemescian imaginary music was presented in first audition, bringing to Moldovan context various audio-visual approaches of visualized electronic music by Romanian composers, as well as creations of composers from the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: *imaginary music, visualized electronic music, avant-garde, postmodern, international festival "New Music Days", Octavian Nemescu, Mihail Afanasiev.*

In 1975, Romanian composer O. Nemescu asserted that Imaginary Music is "an unexternalized song that does not manifest through the human voice or a musical instrument, an orchestra, or electroacoustic means: an inner, internalized, intimate, introverted sonorization that targets the individual and engages the imagination. The sensory organs would represent the musical instruments of the song, and the timbral materialization, on the imaginary plane, would surpass the real one, whether vocal-instrumental or concrete-electronic. Imaginary music is thus a reaction, an antithesis to the Spectacular, an ANTI-spectacle" [1, p. 3].

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The issue of visualizing musical creation, connecting and associating the sonic with the dimensions of color, light, and other visual elements, marked the concerns of composers with the progress of technologies, starting in the 20th century, undergoing a true revolution in the digital era, encompassing various combinations of video, VR, AR, and the use of a wide range of specialized software, etc.

Visualizing music provides a new interface for music, and among the main objectives are the translation into visual language and the design of semantic and musical expression representations, offering new perspectives for reception and reinforcing new methods of analyzing the synthesis of visualized and sonorized information.

In the Romanian context, this issue finds fertile ground, especially among the generation of the '70s, which launched a new avant-garde, considered the first to have a postmodern aspiration. In Republic of Moldova, this direction evolved from the late '90s.

Renowned Romanian composer Octavian Nemescu had a decisive contribution to the emancipation of the avant-garde movement in Romanian composition. Starting from the concept of "imaginary music" developed by the composer, the conceptual treatment, interpretation, and sonic rendering gave rise to a series of processes in Romanian composition manifested in various musical creations.

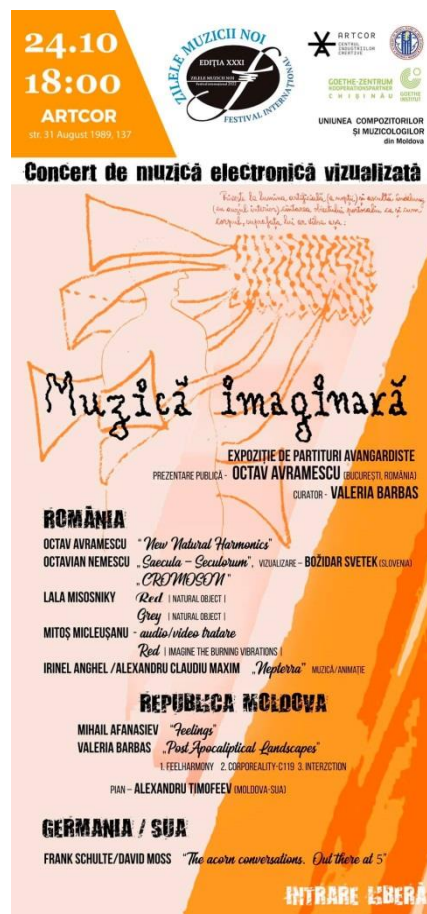
Within the International Festival "Zilele Muzicii Noi," the 31st edition, in Chisinau (October 24, 2022), the Concert of Visualized Electronic Music took place under the evocative theme "Imaginary Music," where Nemescu's imaginary music resonated for the first time in various audiovisual approaches at the Creative Industries Center "Artcor" organized by the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Moldova, the Academy of Music, Theater, and Fine Arts, with partners such as Goethe-Zentrum, Chisinau.

Throughout the thirty editions of this significant musical event in the Moldovan musical landscape, electronic music concerts (electro-acoustic, magnetic tape) periodically stood out in the Festival's program. After a pandemic hiatus, the electronic music concert was eagerly anticipated, bringing the Chisinau audience a diverse multimedia program where sound and video, animation, fused in various interferences and techniques.

The concert included a program of creations presented for the first time in Moldova, signed by "classic" authors from

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three countries - Romania, Moldova, and Germany - founding composers of the genre, who shaped the direction of electronic music on both sides of the Prut, engaging in a dialogue between generations and their successors.



24.10
18:00
ARTCOR
str. 11 August 1989, 137

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18:00
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CONCERT DE MUZICĂ ELECTRONICĂ VIZUALIZATĂ

Muzică imaginară

EXPOZITIE DE PARTITURI AVANGARDISTE
PREZENTARE PUBLICĂ - OCTAV AVRAMESCU (BUCHARESTI, ROMANIA)
CURATOR - VALERIA BARBAS

ROMÂNIA

OCTAV AVRAMESCU - "New Natural Harmonics"
OCTAVIAN NEMESCU - "Saccula - Saccularum", VIZUALIZARE - BOZIDAR SVETEK (CLUJ-NEA) / "CREMOSOM"
LALA MISOSHIKY - "Red" | NATURAL OBJECT |
GREY | NATURAL OBJECT |
MITOȘ MICLEUȘANU - "audio/video tralare"
"Red" | IMAGINE THE BURNING VIBRATIONS |
IRINEL ANGHEL / ALEXANDRU CLAUDIU MAXIM - "Neperra" | MUZICĂ ANIMATĂ

REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

MIHAIL AFANASIEV - "Feelings"
VALERIA BARBAS - "Post Apocalyptic Landscapes"
1. FEELHARMONY 2. CORPOREALITY-C115 3. INTERSECTION
PIAN - ALEXANDRU TIMOFEEV (MOLDOVA-SUA)

GERMANIA / SUA

FRANK SCHULTE/DAVID MOSS - "The acorn conversations. Out there at 5"

INTRARE LIBERĂ

An exploration into the imaginary music domain was undertaken by the guest of honor, Octav Avramescu (Bucharest, Romania), a proficient connoisseur and expert in Nemescu's creations, curator of numerous projects, including "Săptămâna Sunetului," "Sâmbăta Sonoră," "Semi Silent," "Pfa Orchestra," and "Studii de sunet." Over the past 15 years, as the co-founder of the Jumătatea Plină Association, Avramescu has conceptualized multiple projects encompassing new music, sound, installations, and performances. In Chisinau, within the framework of FIZMN, he introduced the CD "Octavian Nemescu: Muzica minutelor orei fatale," published by Electrecord in 2022.

The prelude to the concert featured the projection of

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"New Natural Harmonics" (2022), a video creation by Octav Avramescu, performed by the Hyperion Ensemble, in collaboration with composer Iancu Dumitrescu, a notable experimenter and founder of Romanian spectralism. This hybrid creation, involving electronic and acoustic instruments, had been previously showcased at the International Festival "Săptămâna Sunetului" and City Sonic #16 of sound arts.

Romanian avant-garde found exemplification through the works of composer Octavian Nemescu, a pioneer in the domains of electroacoustics, multimedia, imaginary music, and metamusic in Romania during the 1970s, as well as in Romanian spectralism. Nemescu's foray into sonic imagination commenced with music for the end of a century, marked by the composition "Saecula - Seculorum" for tape in 2000, later animated by Božidar Svetek (Slovenia). This cosmic conglomerate, articulated both graphically and in terms of sound accumulation, unfolded in a perpetual, slow, multicolored evolution, layer by layer. It was noteworthy that the animation was not generated automatically; all visualizations were manually drawn by the artist. Božidar Svetek, a researcher and video artist, focused exclusively on the connection between music, painting, and technology, dating back to 1979. He transferred "classical" experiences, including works by Bach, into a new environment with the advent of modern information technology. In 1996, he obtained a patent for a method of visualizing a sound event, rendering the distinct content of musical works in color through specialized equipment.

The conceptual-musical nucleus of the concert centered on "Cromoson" or the "Song of Objects" (1974-75) by O. Nemescu, part of the Imaginary Music series, a manifesto providing extensive and precise instructions for transposing visual sensations into sound. The score is meticulous, describing treatments for each color in the ROYGBIV spectrum (rainbow), alongside additional elements of black, gray, white, and mixed colors such as brown. Nemescu developed a comprehensive system for interpreting sounds, employing categories such as pitch, timbre, spatialization, intensity, and duration. Moreover, he made distinctions among variables like natural and artificial light, shadow, and between natural and man-made objects. The practice of this system is intended not only to lead the subject towards healing but also towards a deeper understanding of the world, becoming more attuned to its vibrations.

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The presentation of musical creations by maestro O. Nemescu was accompanied by a colorful exhibition of avant-garde graphic scores, pages from the Cromoson manifesto. The exploration of ideas conceived by O. Nemescu, the implementation of the sonorization of graphic scores, were undertaken by his successors, generating an audiovisual dialogue between generations of composers. Following O. Nemescu's instructions, Lala Misosniky produced several audiovisual compositions, including the projection of "Red - natural object, in shadow" and "Grey - natural object, natural light" (2020), presented within the concert. Lala Misosniky, a performance and sound artist, operates in the field of sound art, field recordings, poetry experiments, and audiovisual performances, relying on new materialist ideas of uniting nature and culture from her perspective as a nomadic subject.

A unique treatment of the work "Cromoson" is provided by Mitoș Micleușanu in the audiovisual composition "Red | Imagine the Burning Vibrations" (2020), adopting a noise music style combined with sequences from Sergei Eisenstein's film about the October 1917 Revolution in St. Petersburg (1928). "Cromoson" begins with the directive "Imagine burning vibrations" and develops concrete explanations for the imaginary interpretation, culminating in historical, political, and philosophical references in a quasi-metaphoric collage. The composer mentions that he focused on two layers of references—one concrete, pertaining to instructions and interpretation, followed by a deeper, poetic layer inspired by the fluctuating, lyrical, and dynamic aspects of the original text: "This made me think of Ernst Junger's work *On the Marble Cliffs*, German expressionism represented especially by Otto Dix or Georg Grosz, and the 'outsider' artists from the Prinzhorn Collection, as well as those exhibited in the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne. I tried to create a post-processing color effect (using filters) for the film and created the soundtrack (my voice, reading the score) for a temporal concordance with the video material and, of course, to amplify the historical imprint of the chosen passage" [2].

The intermedia dialogue included mixed genres such as animation and sound in the works of Alexandru Claudiu Maxim and composer Irinel Anghel, renowned for her sonic experiments, performances, and happenings, and a disciple of maestro O. Nemescu. They presented the work "Nepterra" (2021), adopting a posthuman fantasy style within the realm of fusion

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music. The animated film recounts the story of an imaginary planet reacting to an extraterrestrial organism landing on it. The work premiered at notable festivals such as Simultan Festival (2022, Timișoara, Romania) and Meridian International Festival (2021, Bucharest, Romania).

From the cycle of post-apocalyptic soundscapes, two audiovisual creations by the undersigned were showcased: "Corporeality, C119" (2020) and "InterZction" (2021), marking two humanitarian crises from the past two years—the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The electronic music and tape composition "Corporeality C119" was performed according to a score painted and sonorized on the piano in four hands by the author and pianist Alexandru Timofeev (Moldova-USA).

Another highlight of the evening was marked by "Feelings"—an audiovisual creation representing the studio music direction from the Republic of Moldova, founded by Moldovan composer Mihail Afanasiev, a renowned mentor in the genre. The work was visualized by the composer's disciple and the undersigned. At the invitation of maestro M. Afanasiev, the musical and dramaturgical concept was developed in the visual and corporal dimensions, presenting the work for the first time.

The culmination of the Concert of Visualized Electronic Music was dedicated to creations by notable figures in German electronic music—composer Frank Schulte and vocalist David Moss (Germany/USA). From the cycle "The Acorn Conversations" the audiovisual creation "Out there at 5" was presented, exploring memory, poetics, and visual narratives with David Moss on vocals, stories, and contrasts, and Frank Schulte on electronics, guitar, objects, and light. The musical partnership and friendship between Moss and Schulte have endured for over 20 years, collaborating on various projects and live shows.

German sound creator Frank Schulte has been experimenting in electronic sound art since the 1970s, having studied under Joseph Beuys. He collaborates with performance artists, dancers, actors, and lyricists, also composing music for theatrical productions, utilizing new electronic sound generation techniques, multi-channel sound installations, and shows, creating soundtracks for films. In collaboration with video artists, he develops mixed-media conceptual projects.

David Moss is an American composer, percussionist, and vocalist, founder of the David Moss Dense band, co-founder, and artistic director of the Living Voice, Anvers. His

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performances are noted for their innovative style, multimedia approach, and improvisation. Moss's improvised and provocative music spans from the extreme to the experimental, encompassing compositions, sound collages, and hybridizations.

The concert of imaginary music unfolded within the realm of intertextuality, where music and imagination, sound and visual elements, or animation collaborated in different relationships from one work to another. The endeavors to fuse, or rather interpret, the visual through sound, or the sonic through visuals, spurred the creativity of both composers and visual artists, yielding a diversity of mixed-media creations. In addition to the fundamental idea of visualizing music promoted by Nemescu and successive generations in Romania, the Republic of Moldova, and the German electronic music context, the concert brought to the forefront contemporary and revolutionary themes placed in a primordial cosmic thematic framework, with the aim of sensitizing the audience and transporting them into a hypnotic sensory reverie.

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- [2] Micleușeanu, M. Author's Text, from the leaflet of the Visualized Electronic Music Concert