

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF SABIN DRĂGOI TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL CULTURE IN THE ROMANIAN RURAL SPACE

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**Abstract:** *This paper analyzes the significant role Sabin Drăgoi played in the cultural development of the Romanian village during the modernization period of the early 20th century. As a prominent composer and ethnomusicologist, Drăgoi drew inspiration from rural traditions and aimed to preserve and adapt Romanian folklore for modern audiences. Through his works, such as Rustic Divertimento and Doina, he reinterpreted folk motifs within classical music, revitalizing rural cultural heritage and promoting music education in these communities. The study highlights Drăgoi's contributions to creating a dialogue between rural and urban cultures, emphasizing the importance of classical music in the educational and artistic development of rural communities.*

**Key words:** *Sabin Dragoi, folklore, classical and traditional music, rural culture, Romania*

### INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 20th century, Romania witnessed an accelerated modernization process that had a profound impact on both urban and rural areas. In this context, the Romanian village played a central role in the consolidation of national identity, being perceived as an authentic depository of traditions and cultural values. For many figures in the arts and humanities, the countryside has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration, essential for preserving a distinct cultural identity in a world increasingly influenced by urbanization and international trends.

Sabin Drăgoi, one of the most influential Romanian composers and ethnomusicologists, was deeply influenced by this context. Born in a village in Arad county, Drăgoi grew up in the middle of rural traditions that formed the foundation of his musical sensibility [3]. His deep connection with the countryside was evident throughout his career, where he aimed not only to preserve folklore, but to adapt and present it in a way that was relevant to a modern audience.

The modernization of the Romanian rural space was not only an economic transformation, but also a cultural one, in which Drăgoi played an essential role. By collecting and processing popular songs from different regions of the country, he managed to capitalize on the cultural wealth of the Romanian countryside and make it accessible on the big stages [2,4]. His contribution was not limited to the preservation of traditions, but he was actively involved in educational initiatives in the countryside, promoting the learning of music in village schools and supporting the creation of local folk choirs and ensembles.

In the context of rural development, Sabin Drăgoi understood that the preservation and promotion of traditional culture is not only a form of preservation of the past, but also an engine for the future development of rural communities. By creating a dialogue between rural musical traditions and classical music, he contributed to a form of cultural modernization that strengthened the identity and cohesion of rural communities. The musical education promoted by Drăgoi in the countryside allowed the villages to actively participate in the cultural life of the country, thus integrating into the national landscape without losing their own identity [11].

This paper examines Sabin Drăgoi's pivotal contribution to the cultural evolution of Romanian rural communities, focusing on the transformative impact of classical music—

particularly that inspired by rural folklore—on education and cultural life in the countryside [20]. The study highlights how Drăgoi harmonized traditional elements with modern approaches, fostering the cultural and social advancement of Romanian villages.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research used a complex, multidisciplinary approach to investigate the role of classical music in rural development, focusing on the contributions of Sabin Drăgoi. The analysis was carried out through a combination of methods, including the study of compositions, ethnographic research, local case studies and consultation of the specialized literature. Methodological details are presented below:

#### 1. Consulting the specialized literature

To ensure a solid theoretical grounding, we accessed and analyzed a wide range of relevant academic sources, using the main international databases such as:

- **Web of Science (WoS):** We conducted extensive searches to identify articles and studies on the impact of classical music on rural development and the role of folklore in preserving cultural identity.

- **SCOPUS:** We used this database to access academic articles that explore the connections between music education in rural areas and the socio-cultural development of these communities, as well as the ethnomusicological work of Sabin Drăgoi.

- **Google Scholar:** Here, we have gained access to a variety of articles and research papers documenting the importance of folklore and classical music in rural education and how they have contributed to the cultural revitalization of the Romanian countryside.

These sources were essential to contextualize the musical and cultural impact of Sabin Drăgoi and to provide a comparative perspective with other similar studies in the field of rural development and cultural preservation through music.

#### 2. Analysis of musical compositions

We have carried out a detailed analysis of some of the most important works of Sabin Drăgoi, from the perspective of the processing of folklore themes and their adaptation in a classical context. For this purpose, we used sheet music available from national archives and historical records.

#### 3. Ethnographic research

The ethnomusicological studies carried out by Drăgoi provided the basis for our analysis. He collected over 3,000 folk songs from the Banat and Transylvania regions, which we reviewed to assess their authenticity and influence on rural communities.

#### 5. Analysis of the educational and socio-cultural impact

The research also included a detailed analysis of how Sabin Drăgoi's initiatives promoted music education in rural areas. We evaluated historical and contemporary data to highlight how these initiatives contributed to the development of the cultural identity of rural youth.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

Sabin Drăgoi is recognized as one of the Romanian composers who managed to remarkably combine the folklore tradition with the techniques of classical music. His impact on the cultural development of the Romanian rural environment is profound, because he brought to the classical stage authentic elements from the folklore of the Romanian village, thus contributing to the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of the rural communities. Through his works, Drăgoi created a bridge between the rural and the urban world, introducing traditional musical themes into a modern orchestral language, thus making rural culture accessible to a wider audience [13].

### **1. Rustic Divertimento (1928)**

*Rustic Divertimento* an emblematic work, which brings together elements from Romanian folklore and transposes them into a refined symphonic context. This composition can be considered an expression of the Romanian rural space, where folk motifs are not only preserved, but creatively reinterpreted. The impact on rural development derives from the fact that Drăgoi used authentic folk music, taken directly from village communities, and transformed it into an accessible art form, thus contributing to the preservation of traditions and the promotion of village culture on the big stages. Thus, *Rustic Divertimento* becomes a perfect example of symbiosis between tradition and modernity, inspiring entire generations of rural musicians.

By reintroducing folk motifs in a symphonic setting, this work also contributed to the education of rural audiences, encouraging young musicians to approach folklore and explore the artistic possibilities of local traditions [16]. This led to a greater valorization of cultural heritage within rural communities, strengthening their cultural identity.

### **2. Doina (1925)**

*Doina* represents one of Drăgoi's most important works, in which he uses this traditional Romanian musical form - the doina - as a central element. Doina is a lyrical song characteristic of Romanian rural culture, and Drăgoi managed to capture its emotional essence and transpose it into a sophisticated orchestral work. The impact on rural development is evident in the way Drăgoi transformed a popular tradition into a classical work of art, making it accessible not only to the urban public, but also to rural communities [19, 20]. In this way, he contributed to the preservation of this musical form and to the education of future generations in the spirit of respect for the local cultural heritage.

*Play the doina* was instrumental in revitalizing interest in rural musical traditions, providing a model for integrating these traditions within classical music. This work was used in educational programs in rural areas, stimulating interest in music and providing a framework through which young people in the villages could discover the artistic value of Romanian folklore [1,5].

### **3. Piano Concerto (1940-1941)**

*Piano Concerto* is an important work for understanding Sabin Drăgoi's versatility as an artist. Although the piano concerto is not directly related to traditional Romanian folklore, it reflects the subtle influences that Drăgoi integrated from his experiences with rural music. The impact on rural development comes from the fact that this work demonstrates how Drăgoi managed to combine the techniques of classical music with the sensibilities developed as a result of his ethnomusicological research [18].

Although the *Piano Concerto* is not as linked to folklore as other works, its importance lies in the fact that it provided a framework for the promotion of musical education in the countryside, facilitating the training of young performers in the villages. This work was used to inspire and educate young rural pianists, bringing them closer to classical music and giving them an insight into the artistic possibilities that music offers [21,22].

### **4. Suite of Folk Dances for Piano (1923)**

This piano suite reflects Drăgoi's fascination with Romanian folk dances and his desire to keep these traditions alive. *Suite of Folk Dances for Piano* is a work that processes traditional dance motifs, managing to capture the energy and festive spirit of these dances [6]. The impact on rural development is profound, as this work has been used in cultural and educational activities in Romanian villages, encouraging young people to get involved in local traditions and value them.

Folk dances have always been an integral part of rural life, and Drăgoi, through this suite, managed to transpose these traditions into a classical piano language, accessible to

both rural and urban audiences. Thus, this work contributed to the preservation and promotion of traditional dances, strengthening the connection between the older and younger generations in the countryside [15].

## CONCLUSIONS

Sabin Drăgoi managed to transform rural traditions into an accessible and appreciated art form both in the countryside and on the big stages of the world. His significant contribution to the cultural development of the Romanian countryside can be seen in several dimensions [12]. First, his works such as *Rustic Divertimento* (1928), *Doina* (1925), *Piano Concerto* (1940-1941) and *Suite of Folk Dances for Piano* (1923) brought authentic folk motifs to the stage, reinterpreted through classical orchestral language. This synthesis between tradition and modernity contributed to the revitalization of the rural musical heritage and to the strengthening of the cultural identity of the rural communities [9].

*Rustic Divertimento* perfectly exemplifies the way in which Drăgoi managed to transform popular musical themes into sophisticated symphonic works, providing a modern setting in which rural culture can be appreciated on a large scale. *Doina*, an essential work, preserved the essence of a traditional Romanian lyrical form, conveying the deep emotion of the folk song in an accessible orchestral language [7]. These compositions had a crucial role in preserving and promoting folk traditions in the countryside, educating and inspiring new generations of musicians from Romanian villages.

Likewise, the *Piano Concerto*, although less related to folklore, reflects Drăgoi's artistic maturity and his ability to integrate sensibilities developed from his ethnomusicological research into a classical context [10,14]. This work inspired and trained young rural performers, giving them an insight into the artistic virtuosity that classical music can achieve, thus encouraging them to develop their musical skills.

*Suite of Folk Dances for Piano* he captured the energy and joy of traditional Romanian village dances, transposing them into a piano work of great sophistication [8]. This has been used in numerous educational and cultural initiatives in the countryside, inspiring young people to actively participate in the preservation and transmission of local traditions.

Overall, Drăgoi contributed not only to the preservation of folklore traditions, but also to the creation of an educational and artistic context in which these traditions are reinterpreted and passed on to new generations [17]. The impact on rural development is clearly visible through the way it managed to create a dialogue between past and present, between rural and urban, consolidating the role of classical music in the cultural and educational development of the Romanian countryside. His work continues to be a powerful model for how local traditions can be integrated into a modern cultural landscape, providing rural communities with opportunities for social and artistic development.

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