

**Z. BRINZILA-COSLET***Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts (Chisinau, Moldova)***SERGHEI LUNCHEVICH I – VIRTUOSO AND SYMBOL OF VIOLIN ART  
IN MOLDOVA OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

This article begins with an introduction, which outlines the significant impact of the legendary S. Lunchevichi on the musical culture of Moldova and the entire Soviet Union in the second half of the 20th century. It is no coincidence that the main musical temple of the Republic of Moldova, the National Philharmonic, bears his name. S. Lunchevichi's multifaceted creative activity is closely connected with the Philharmonic: he was an academic violinist and soloist of the Symphony Orchestra – and also a lautar-violinist, chief conductor and artistic director of the folk orchestra *Fluieraș*, renowned in the former USSR and abroad. His universal talent also included other incarnations: Lunchevichi was a composer and a Soviet cinema star. His portrayal of the violin virtuoso Toma Alistar from the 1971

cult film *Lautarii* (directed by Emil Loteanu) contributed to winning prestigious awards at international film festivals in Spain and Italy (1972). The central section of the article emphasizes the development of S. Lunchevichi's performing art as an academic violinist. It examines the stages of his musical education and the role of his violin teachers. The article is based on the memoirs of the violin professor Iosif Dailis and his colleagues Constantin Rusnac, Gleb Ciaicovschi-Mereșanu, Isolda Milyutina. The conclusion summarizes the phenomena that shaped the original, unique academic performing style of the violinist S. Lunchevichi.

*Key words:* Serghei Lunchevichi, violin art of Moldova, performing style, national musical culture.

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**З. БРЫНЗИЛА-КОШЛЕЦ***Академия музыки, театра и изобразительных искусств (Кишинев, Молдова)***СЕРГЕЙ ЛУНКЕВИЧ – ВИРТУОЗ И СИМВОЛ  
СКРИПИЧНОГО ИСКУССТВА В МОЛДОВЕ XX ВЕКА**

Данная статья открывается вступлением, в котором обозначено непреходящее значение легендарной фигуры С. Лункевича для музыкальной культуры Молдовы и всего СССР во второй половине XX века. Его имя не случайно носит главный музыкальный храм Республики Молдова – Национальная филармония, с которой была тесно связана многосторонняя творческая деятельность С. Лункевича – академического скрипача, солиста Республиканского симфонического оркестра, скрипача-лаутара, главного дирижера и художественного руководителя прославленного оркестра народной музыки «Флуераш». Универсальный талант этой выдающейся личности ярко раскрывался и в других ипостасях – композитора, популярнейшего актера

советского кинематографа. В частности, исполнение С. Лункевичем роли скрипача-виртуоза Тома Алистары из культовой киноленты «Лэутары» (1971, режиссер Э. Лотяну) способствовало международному успеху фильма, удостоенного наград на престижных международных кинофестивалях в Испании и Италии (1972). В центральном разделе статьи освещается становление исполнительского искусства С. Лункевича как скрипача академической традиции. Здесь рассматриваются этапы академического музыкального образования С. Лункевича и роль его скрипичных педагогов, процесс освоения и диапазон классического репертуара, индивидуальные черты исполнительского стиля музыканта, влияние социально-культурной атмосферы советского

периода. Автором статьи освещается не публиковавшаяся ранее информация биографического характера о сталинских репрессиях в отношении семьи выдающегося музыканта. Наряду с этим, используются материалы воспоминаний о С. Лункевиче его известных современников и коллег: И. Дайлиса, К. Руснака, Г. Чайковско-го-Мерешану, И. Милютиной и др. В заключении

статьи констатируется многообразие стилевых и историко-культурных тенденций, сформировавших оригинальный, неповторимый исполнительский стиль скрипача С. Лункевича.

*Ключевые слова:* Сергей Лункевич, скрипичное искусство Молдовы, исполнительский стиль, национальная музыкальная культура.

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There are specific criteria for validation and homologation of performance in each field of activity. Creative personality belongs to the person of vocation who is focused on innovation, finding in work his/her ideal wholeness. This is also the case of the master Serghei Lunchevichi (29.04.1934, Chisinau – 15.08.1995, Chisinau), a full exponent of the Moldovan musical culture, whose name is currently borne by the National Philharmonic. He falls into the category of personalities who had huge influences, and created a school, generated attitudes, echoes, replicas, even if he had a limited field of action during the period in which he lived. Being a performing artist with a special spiritual conformation, he manifested himself in several fields of musical art and creativity: violinist with an incomparable interpretive profile, exceptional conductor and musical director of the folk music orchestra *Fluieraș*, film actor, being highly appreciated for his unforgettable performance of the role of the old fiddler Toma Alistar from the artistic film *Lăutarii (Fiddlers)* directed by Emil Loteanu.

The master left us too early, leaving a name that will not be forgotten, a gap that we do not know which of the many imitators of his style of interpretation will fill and, especially, to what extent. The records that reproduce the songs performed by Serghei Lunchevichi will transmit to the next generations the perfect art of a creator of genre and interpretive originality.

For the special merits in the propagation of the musical art, Serghei Lunchevichi was awarded high titles of People's Artist of the MSSR (1966), State Prize of the MSSR (1967), People's Artist of the USSR (1976), and in 1993 he was decorated with the highest distinction of the country – the Order of the Republic.

As the performance art of the violinist Serghei Lunchevichi is an exceptionally unique case in which the academic performance style was harmoniously combined with the fiddle performance style, this article is focused on highlighting the specific features of the master's academic violin style.

The chronology of the creative biography of S. Lunchevichi is an evidence of the fact that at the beginning he asserted himself as an imposing academic music soloist. As a proof, we will offer several opinions of his contemporaries: "S. Lunchevichi, as a violinist, left no one indifferent. Those who heard him at least once became admirers of his performing talent. His violin produced a sound of fierce emotional power, rich in subtle nuances: a sound that convincingly inspires and expresses musical thinking, mood and atmosphere... The violin has been his only great love", – Constantin Rusnak writes<sup>1</sup> [1].

He began studying music when he was five, being brought by his father to the private music school of Veaceslav Bulychov – Russian choir conductor, composer, schoolmaster and publicist who worked in Chisinau. At the same time, he also studied at the School of Applications, which was located closer to the house where he lived. The first teacher to put the violin in his hands was Naum Vilic. As regards his path of musician-violinist, S. Lunchevichi tells in the article *The violin has united centuries* that: "Many things have happened in my life otherwise than

<sup>1</sup> Constantin Rusnak (born in 1948) – University Professor, winner of the State Prize (1976), Master of Art (1984), holder of the Labour Glory Order (1998), Secretary General of the National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO (1993), Chairman of the Delphic National Council (2000), First Vice-Minister of Culture (1975–1984), Rector of the G. Musicescu State Conservatory (1984–1999).

like in the life of everyone else. For example, I did not begin studying the violin from the age of six or seven. I was enrolled at the Music Boarding School in Chisinau in 1946. For the first time I took the violin in my hands, or rather, Naum Isacovici Vilic put the violin in my hands when I was twelve! My colleagues were ahead of me at a distance of six years in terms of basic knowledge of violin handling, the most difficult and important thing" [2, p. 49].

The events referred to above took place in 1951. Thus, under the guidance of N. Vilic, S. Lunchevichi studied during five years and graduated from nine grades. During this time he achieved remarkable results as confirmed by the following fact: in April 1951 he was delegated by the Central Committee of the Union of the Leninist Komsomol of Moldova, Culture Department, to go to Moscow to participate in the selection of young performers who would have the right to participate in the Berlin International Democratic Youth Festival. However, in July 1951, the young Serghei Lunchevichi had to leave the Republic of Moldova due to the tragic family circumstances, as his father Al. G. Lunchevichi, being unjustly accused of counter-revolutionary activity, was arrested and deported for ten years to the village of Krasnogorka in the Djambul region of Kazakhstan.

The family followed him in solidarity. Unfortunately, there was no music school in Krasnogorka, but the great love and desire to study, which were rooted by his first teacher, determined the young Sergei Lunchevichi to study independently the violin, therefore during a year he learned all the three parts of the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra by D. Kabalevski. The family returned to Chisinau in 1952 after the master graduated from the tenth grade of Krasnogorka secondary school. He fulfilled his big dream – he was enrolled at the Chisinau Conservatory after passing successfully the admission examinations.

During his student years (1952–1957) the master studied the violin at the eminent teacher 'endowed with grace from God' Iosif Dailis<sup>2</sup>. As Serghei

<sup>2</sup> Iosif Dailis (06.10.1893–07.12.1984) in 1902–1913 studied at the Private Music School in Chisinau of V. P. Gutor in the violin class of Vasiliy Salin and at the Music School of the Chisinau branch of the Russian Music Society, in the violin class of Joseph Finkel. In 1913–1917 he studied at the Geneva Conservatory under the guidance of C. Thomson, in 1913–1914 he passed the internship at the Brussels Conservatory under the direction of G. Hermann. From 1920 to 1940 he was first violinist and soloist of the orchestra of the Union of Cultural Societies of the Royal Philharmonic in Bucharest. In 1940 he returned to Chisinau and was appointed professor and head of the Department of String Instruments of the State Conservatory. In the post-war years and until the end of the 1980s he was the most famous violin teacher in Moldova, who

Lunchevichi himself noted, I. Dailis was for him a teacher, mentor, advisor, friend and last but not least, a wise educator, under whose guidance he managed to reach the highest peaks in the beauty and accuracy of sound reproduction, which is the essential goal for a violinist.

S. Lunchevichi himself spoke about the secrets of I. Dailis' teaching mastery with great piety and especially in his memoirs: "I passed the admission exams at the Chisinau Conservatory and was enrolled at Iosif Dailis's violin class. An experienced teacher, a wise mentor, an attentive psychologist and a great musician – I. L. Dailis for the first time was dealing with an indeterminate, relentless, unpredictable explosive material, as I was. He started by proposing me that I listen carefully to the way I played. Apparently he gave me a simple task: to learn *Study No. 42* by Kreutzer. Undoubtedly there are other 'methods' to correct intonation. But what Iosif Lvovici proposed me, brought wonderful results and they were imprinted in my memory for all my subsequent activity of violinist" [2, p. 50].

I. Dailis had his own vision and model for choosing the program for each examination, considering decisive the action to base the violin repertoire of S. Lunchevichi on the works of classical composers, as evidenced by the fact that he entrusted to the violinist, who at that time was a second year student, the difficult mission of performing the first part of the Violin Concerto by L. Beethoven. The mission was successfully fulfilled also due to the fact that he had the great privilege of being accompanied by "the impeccable, kind, true goddess of musical thinking, sensitive partner, renowned pianist Ghita Strahilevici" [2, p. 51].

From the memories of I. Dailis about his student: "Serghei became nice to me from the first day. I was sure that I had in front of me an exceptional talent, an absolute hearing, an impeccable rhythm, an enviable memory. He especially liked folk music, which he performed with great sensitivity. As regards the creations of classical and contemporary composers, he had a predilection for creations in which the folk element prevailed. His favorite composers were *inter alia* St. Neaga, A. Haciaturian, A. Maciavariani" (quoted on: [4, p. 9]). The romantic vocation of S. Lunchevichi found a fertile ground in the violin works of romantic composers, penetrated by a pronounced lyricism, full of strong folk motifs, benefiting from a colourful musical language, which required from the performer a style of great refinement.

Here is an interesting fact that I. Dailis recalls in the monograph signed by the researcher Gleb

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educated dozens of famous musicians. More information is in the book of memoirs of I. Dailis himself [3].

Ciaicovschi-Meresanu<sup>3</sup>: “During the IVth year, Serghei was invited to pass the admission exams at the P. Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, and he prepared for the admission commission the Violin Concerto by A. Maciavariani, which he performed in front of the illustrious violinist L. Kogan who highly appreciated the performance mastery of the young violinist. The management of the Moscow Conservatory proposed to Serghei to continue his studies at this prestigious musical institution. I don't remember why this proposal was not fulfilled” [4, p. 9]. In our opinion, this proposal could not be fulfilled because Serghei Lunchevichi was considered the son of an enemy of the people.

During his studies at the G. Musicescu Conservatory, S. Lunchevichi participated in several large-scale artistic events, including: The First Republican Youth Festival in the MSSR (1957) and the Moscow Union Festival (1957), and in the last two years of studies he performed as a member of the group of first violins of the symphony orchestra of the State Philharmonic. For S. Lunchevichi, not only the Conservatory meant a real oasis of artistic building, as he had the opportunity to listen to the illustrious Soviet performers who repeatedly performed in Chisinau: G. Barinova, I. Bezrodny, E. Ghilels, L. Kogan, D. Oistrach, S. Richter, M. Rostropovich, M. Vaiman etc. Attendance of all symphonic concerts by the entire course with ‘discounted’ tickets was initiated and encouraged by the eminent I. Dailis. Serghei Lunchevichi ends his stories about his teacher I. Dailis, emphasizing: “And the brightest guide in this life was Iosif Dailis. Iosif Dailis – student of Salin, Vasilii Salin – student of H. Wieniawski. Me – the student of I. Dailis, so it turns out that by violin I am the great-grandson of H. Wieniawski. The violin has united centuries” [2, pp. 50–51]. Thus, the traditions of the academic school of violin performance served as a foundation for creating the brilliant performance style of S. Lunchevichi with which he charmed the listeners throughout his life, involving as a violinist soloist, first conductor and artistic director of the famous folk music orchestra

*Fluieras*, where he was distributed by the Ministry of Culture of Moldova.

Analyzing the few videos on the Youtube platform in which S. Lunchevichi appears as a concert violinist, we can say with certainty that he had his own technical model in which both hands worked accurately and safely, without making any particular effort. S. Lunchevichi's opinion about the mastery of the violin aimed at cultivating the sound emission that is subordinated to the handling of the bow, more than vibrato because he compared the feature of the bow with the breath – a native gift that can be learned. The master considered that a beautiful sound should penetrate not only the cantilena episodes, but also any technical passage, and a violinist performer should develop his inner hearing, that intrinsic element that allows anticipating the musical sentence from the solo part in its sound sequence, in order to produce a memorable performance in front of the public.

Both hands of S. Lunchevichi were of exceptional suppleness, overflowing with flexibility, an inner strength of the fingers and the entire violin apparatus, which ensure an exact and safe functionality, an indispensable exponential quality for a high class violinist.

His stage posture was a combination of a slight external exhibition with an unbridled inner temperament. According to the memories of his contemporaries, he had a huge intellectual force: he worked and reworked his repertoire seeking always to enrich it, listening and re-listening to his own records with an unrestricted self-critical sense. I. Dailis characterized him as an extraordinary musician, who is harmonious in every aspect, and what strikes in his performance is the simplicity and perfection that go hand in hand with full mastery of the instrument.

S. Lunchevichi's right arm was of a classical perfection, producing a variety of joints by using it for strength and the wrist for elasticity in both cantilenas and technical passages with accelerated arch features. He was the first violinist from the Republic of Moldova to use the special bow grip, discovered by the Polish violinist H. Wieniawski, in which the emphasis is made on the function of the index finger and its ability to balance the weight of the bow, thinking that this technique ensures the transmission of a heavier weight on the string, while the excessive pressure of the bow shall be controlled.

As mentioned earlier, the basic characteristics of S. Lunchevichi – a violinist highly appreciated by music critics and notorious musicians of those times, are virtuosity, temperament and velvety sound of the violin.

<sup>3</sup> Gleb Ciaicovschi-Mereșanu (01.05.1919 – 20.06.1999) – Art Director of the State Philharmonic in Chisinau (1957–1967); head of the Folklore Department at the G. Musicescu Institute of Arts (1968–1976); member of the Union of Composers of the Republic of Moldova (1968). In 1973–1984 he is a consultant in the field of folklore and head of the Folklore Section of the Union of Composers of Moldova. He passed the internship at the Choral Singing and Vocal Department at the Gnesins State Musical-Pedagogical Institute (1986). In 1994–1998 he holds the position of head of the Folklore Department at the G. Musicescu Music Academy. He is the author of the monograph “Serghei Lunchevichi” (1982).

Reiterating the above, we consider that the main direction in which the master was guided remains the respect for classical values. In times when concert virtuosity is increasingly applauded, when technical agility has become synonymous with interpretive art, the master's musical education has been maintained in the sphere of the most valuable classical traditions without slipping into the sphere of technical bravery. It can be said that S. Lunchevichi owed to his teachers the sobriety of his artistic taste, the noble spirit and the balance of his violin art.

Another feature of the performance art of S. Lunchevichi, mentioned by most of those who listened to him, was his legendary transfiguration during the performance of a musical piece, his deeply emotional involvement, which resulted in the essential change of appearance, expression, form and character.

S. Lunchevichi's partner in the chamber ensemble, Isolda Milyutina<sup>4</sup> recalls: "Serghei was always extremely close to the world musical classics... Various composers caught his attention, especially he was captivated by the expressive play of certain stylistic features that bore the imprint of the authors – whether it was the rich colours of Hacıaturian music or the impressionistic delights of Debussy's music... With what dedication, devoting himself uninterestedly to the musical element, he

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<sup>4</sup> Isolda Milyutina (born in 1932) – musicologist; he studied at the Chisinau Conservatory piano and musicology. Ph. D. of Arts (1973); Head of the Composition and Musicology Department (1973–1978) at the G. Musicescu Conservatory in Chisinau; Emeritus Master of Art of the Republic of Moldova (1992); author of numerous works of musicology.

plaid Saint-Saens, Brahms, Prokofiev... And the beautiful Sonata by Franck on which we worked hardly, all this remained in my memory for many years..." [5].

Here is an excerpt from the laudatory description by the writer Gheorghe Ciocoi of the master's performance: "The violin of Serghei Lunchevichi plays. It plays loudly and deeply. Higher than the oak leaf. Deeper than the root of the spring" (quoted on: [4, p. 23]).

In conclusion, we reiterate the moments that contributed to the formation of the academic violinist S. Lunchevichi:

Native talent of genius with grace from God.

The social environment – a delimiting factor from his childhood that cultivated the love for folklore.

Constant tendency towards self-improvement.

The teachers who contributed to the identification, development and foundation of S. Lunchevichi's brilliant performance style and served the traditions of the violin academic school are N. Vilic and I. Dailis.

Those who listened to him were deeply impressed by the intensity with which he managed to penetrate the emotional-figurative structure of academic music of different styles that he approached: Baroque (Bach), Classicism (Beethoven), Romanticism (Brahms, Saint-Saens, Franck, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov), Impressionism (Debussy, Ravel), works by the 20th century composers (Prokofiev, Hacıaturian, Enescu, Machavariani), local composers (St. and Gh. Neaga, C. Porumbescu etc.).

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