


The Early Music Festival in Miercurea Ciuc, at its 40th anniversary (Festivalul de Muzică Veche Miercurea Ciuc, la a 40-a aniversare )

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THE HISTORY IN BRIEF

A local Franciscan monk and a fortress brought together by history gave the idea for an early music festival, 40 years ago, in this little city of Eastern Transylvania. Joannes Caioni (1629-1687) was a wide cultivated humanist: a typographer, musician, organ builder, botanist. He co-authored a collection of almost 400 music pieces written down in German tablature, the famous *Codex Caioni*. The Mikó-fortress (built during the 1620s-30s) and its inner courtyard inspired the local cultural elite to bring together music and historical ambience. In 1979 they celebrated 350 years of Caioni's birth, and a year later, they initiated the Early Music Festival. The purpose was the conservation of regional traditions – especially, those of the Hungarian ethnicity. The Festival was suppressed by the communist authorities (1986 to 1989), revived 1990 and still active. Since then, we could listen to such outstanding performers as René Clemencic, *Unicorn*, *Ensemble Renaissance Serbia*, *Ensemble XVIII-21*, *Hortus Musicus*, *La Fenice*, *Musica Historica* Budapest, Tamás Kiss Kobzos and István Kónya (Hungary), Antoni Pilch (Poland).

But first at all, from his beginning, the Festival stimulates the activity of autochthonous ensembles, such as (for music) *Barozda*, *Kajoni Consort*, *Lyceum Consort*, *Musica Antiqua*, *Collegium*, *Carmina Renascentia*, *Flauto Dolce*, The Baroque Ensemble *Transylvania*, *Codex*, *Trei parale*, *Fonte di Gioia*, *Concerto Spiralis*, the Festival Baroque Orchestra and many others, as well as (for historical dance) *Amaryllis*, *Passeggio*, *Passamezzo*, *Dargason*.

The authenticity secret of all these regional ensembles is that their members are acculturated to perform or, at least, to listen to the traditional folk music – with its modal sonorities and rhythmical freedom or mixed patterns.

Since 2008, the Festival has as its artistic director the flautist and university professor Ignác Filip, who also founded the Summer Academy for Early Music Miercurea Ciuc. The teachers of it are mainly the members of the *Musica Historica* Ensemble from Budapest. The educational results of this teaching enterprise could be appreciated at the Festival edition 2020, which had to be held – due to the Covid-19 restrictions – only by musicians from inside the country.

THOUGHTS ON THE 2020 EDITION

The *Codex* Ensemble

Strings and flutes with some percussion are very efficient to recreate nowadays the music of musical sources from between 1650-1850, performed by the *Codex* Ensemble, led by Ignác Filip. In this edition, they chose each a selection from the *Caioni Codex* (middle of the 17th century) respectively a Palóczi Horváth Ádám song collection (1817). Each member sings and plays several instruments offhandedly and if they repeat a piece, it will sound each time with improvisatory variations.

A very dynamic court dance music selection was added by the *Codex* Ensemble to illustrate the folk story-telling of *The Dragon-killer Deacon*, as another program, enchantment for young people of all ages.



An outstanding concert: the Ványolos family

Chamber music in its most genuine aspects was performed and sung by 5 members of the Ványolos family. I have to start with the youngest on the stage: the 10 years old Klára – a Wunderkind in his king as we can only imagine from the age of Vivaldi when such young girls started their career from the church to the operatic style. Her solos and ensemble parts are perfect! The older brothers István (12) and András (16) sing, play recorder and oboe (unfortunately, not a Baroque one), respectively organ as around 1700 w0ith unaffected fulfilment of the affects... The parents are academically trained musicians, dancers, and music teachers. This time mother Orsolya Ványolos sang and played with the children or some solo cembalo sonatas (Scarlatti), the father András Ványolos sang and played recorder as well. Their joy of music is real and transmissible!



String orchestra and chamber music

The same energetic leader – violinist Koppány Hunyadi – created two programs for three evenings. It has to be known that Koppány grew up with the Festival and finished his early music studies at the Music Academy in Palermo. He returned home for the benefit of the early music movement in his country, despite the delays to the Western culture we have to confront. It is also to be mentioned that the Festival has, in his last 12 years, its own Baroque Orchestra, with musicians from all Europe, led by violinist Ulrike Titze (Dresden). This time, Koppány had to assume the leadership of the local core of the orchestra – in a restricted formula, only with bowed strings and cembalo. Both open-air concerts suggested the sound of period instruments – lighter in the Armenian churchyard from Gheorgheni and more intensive between the walls of the fortified castle in Miercurea Ciuc – despite some too large bow movements of some of its passionate members. The composers which we heard are G. B. Buonamente, J. H. Schmelzer, H. Biber. Fr. Tuma, and Vivaldi.



Koppány Hunyadi also founded 2012 and leads the chamber music ensemble *Concerto Spiralis*, with a variable structure. This time, the strings added the sung voices of Orsolya (soprano) and András Ványolos-senior (alternatively, as a male alto or tenor) as well as András Szabó as a baritone. The very interesting program was built complementary, confronting some intimate religious pieces from the *Codex Caioni* and virtuosic Italian violin chamber pieces (such as by G. Gabrieli, G. B. Buonamente, G. P. Cima, D. Castello), from the early Baroque – with the collaboration of Előd Gábor (violin, viola), Dávid Csibi (violin), Zsombor Lázár (cello), and Paul Cristian (cembalo).



Other programs, online recommendation, and a conclusion

Some other very appreciated programs included the alto Bach-cantata BWV 170 with mezzo-soprano Noémi Karácsonyi and organist Geanina Sălăgean, an organ recital of the church musician Hans Eckard Schlandt, two cultural pilgrimages in the footsteps of Caioni with a well-chosen organ recital break (András Szabó).



The Caioni documentary exhibition made by researcher Erzsébet Mückenhaupt and photographer Gyula Ádám has to be kept for the next festivals.



A wine tasting evening was made more pleasant by the music played on viola da gamba by Árpád Szögyör, a member of the *Codex* Ensemble.

All these events, as well as a selection of the past years' programs, are posted online at [Festival web address](#) – so that everybody can enjoy them anytime, for free. I strongly recommend the presentation of the organs in the churches in the county, made by Erich Türk.

The main achievement of the 2020 edition is that with financially limited means, but endless enthusiasm, the organisational team of the Early Music Festival Miercurea Ciuc was able to highlight the local forces more intensively as ever before.

REZUMAT

Festivalul de Muzică Veche Miercurea Ciuc a sărbătorit 40 de ani de existență. Deși împrejurările stării de alertă actuale au restrâns anvergura programelor, totuși, ediția 2020 a fost organizată de echipa Centrului Cultural Județean Harghita, cu respectarea măsurilor de prevenție, cu concerte în aer liber, în spații bisericești și multe transmisii online. Cea mai importantă realizare este aceea că Festivalul a putut să aibă loc cu desfășurarea exclusivă a forțelor artistice din România – ceea ce este și un rezultat relevant al Universității de Vară de Muzică Veche, inițiate în 2008, și care a dus la maturizarea unei generații de noi interpreți valoroși.

În principal, concertele *live* s-au desfășurat pe patru zone interpretative.

Ansamblul de muzică veche *Codex*, condus de Ignác Filip – care este, totodată, directorul muzical al Festivalului – a susținut trei concerte. Primul, cu o selecție de piese din *Codex Caioni*, celebrul manuscris muzical din secolul al XVII-lea, a însoțit vernisajul excelente expoziții documentare *Ioan Căianu*, realizată de cercetătoarea Erzsébet Mückenhaupt și fotograful Gyula Ádám, o expoziție itinerantă prin țară. Al doilea program al aceleiași formații (voci, fluiere, corzi) a cuprins cântece dintr-o culegere de cântece maghiare, de Palóczi Horváth Ádám (1817), redade cu vivacitate. Povestea populară a „Diacului-vânător de dragoni” a prilejuit o savuroasă călătorie muzicală, pentru cei mici și „copiii” de toate vârstele, prin dansuri populare și de curte din Europa.

O revelație prin puterea autenticității și firească artisticitate au fost concertele susținute de familia Ványolos. Părinții – András și Orsolya – sunt muzicieni, dansatori și profesori de muzică, iar trei dintre copiii lor li s-au alăturat într-un concert de muzică barocă, în diferite formații vocale, de flaute drepte, cu orgă, clavecin, oboi. Mezina Klára, la cei 10 ani ai ei, este exemplul viu al vocalității baroce, cultivate de Vivaldi însuși, ca profesor la o școală venețiană de fete.

Orchestra de cameră Ciuc s-a dovedit a fi „inima” Orchestrei Baroce a Festivalului, care ființează de 12 ani, cu muzicieni din toată Europa. De această dată, au evoluat 15 muzicieni autohtoni, într-un program spectaculos de muzică vieneză și venețiană, condus de tânărul violonist Koppány Hunyadi. Originar din Miercurea Ciuc, el a revenit acasă după studiile universitare de muzică veche efectuate la Palermo, pentru a susține dezvoltarea acestui domeniu și la noi. O face și prin ansamblul cameral *Concerto Spiralis*, cu care a prezentat acum un program construit complementar, cu piese lirice din Codicele Căianu – în care s-au alăturat vocal Orsolya Ványolos, András Ványolos și András Szabó – și piese violonistice de virtuozitate din Barocul italian timpuriu.

Un alt domeniu din această ediție au fost concertele de orgă. Ele au avut ca invitați pe renumitul organist din Brașov, octogenarul Hans Eckart Selandt, pe discipola sa Geanina Sălăgean, alături de mezzosoprana Noémi Karácsonyi și pe András Szabó. Acesta din urmă a agrementat popasul făcut de participanții la un pelerinaj cultural pe ruta lui Ioan Căianu – o noutate a acestei ediții.

Online, pot fi accesate liber filme de prezentare a instrumentelor din muzica veche (subtitrate în limba română), precum și concerte din diferite ediții ale Festivalului, la adresa web a [Festivalului](#).

* Photos by/Fotografii de Gyula Ádám.