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## The musical life of Carmen Petra-Basacopol and her various contributions to the harp literature

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THE MUSICAL LIFE OF CARMEN PETRA-BASACOPOL  
AND HER VARIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO THE HARP LITERATURE

A Written Document

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agriculture and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
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Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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August 2013

To my parents,  
Daniela Chihăescu and Liviu Chihăescu,  
for their love and support

And to Carmen Petra-Basacopol,  
an amazing person and composer

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To my beloved sister, Camelia Mihaela Nicoară, thank you for opening my eyes to the harp and helping me to find my way in life. I am indebted to my family and friends back in Romania, for their consistent support and encouragement. I could not have made it through this time of my life without you.

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## ABSTRACT

The compositions of Romanian composer Carmen Petra-Basacopol (b. 1926) encompass a variety of musical genres such as solo instrumental music, chamber ensembles, and symphonic concert works, as well as opera, vocal, and vocal-symphonic works. Although not a harpist herself, Carmen Petra-Basacopol demonstrates great knowledge and mastery of idiomatic harp technique, including in her works an assortment of original timbre combinations such as knocking on the wood of the harp, pedal slides (is the sound effect produced when the pedal is moved while the string still vibrates), and *près de la table* (is the French expression for playing as close as possible to the sound board) – effects used rarely, if ever, by other Romanian composers. Her harp compositions can be approached by harpists with different levels of ability, representing a valuable tool in the development of their technique.

The purpose of this research is to inform others about Carmen Petra-Basacopol and her works featuring the harp. I did not find any scholarly materials in my research about the composer's harp repertoire, and even in the few internet sources dedicated to the composer that I found, Petra-Basacopol's harp compositions are only listed.

This document is divided in three sections. The first section will present a broad historical background of Romanian music. It will also introduce several relevant Romanian composers from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, their biographical information, and their relatively limited contributions to the harp literature. The second section is dedicated entirely to Carmen Petra-Basacopol, providing information regarding her life and harp compositions. This section will present a list of her entire harp works, including chamber music with harp. The third, and last section, will focus on three particular works for harp, describing them from a harpist's point of view and ranking them according to level of difficulty. With the material presented in this

paper, I hope to create more awareness of Carmen Petra-Basacopol's presence as an outstanding composer, and to invite other musicians and harpists to explore her music.

## SECTION I: BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Historical Introduction

The music of Romania has contributed to and transformed the world's classical art culture. The traditional Romanian culture is extremely old, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and its age can be observed both in music and in the graphic arts.<sup>1</sup> Romanian music of the nineteenth century showed willingness to synchronize its local artistic phenomenon with the European one, while still maintaining its national character.

For the Romanian musical culture, the 19<sup>th</sup> century represents a period of connection to European culture and the development of a national school of music. Cultural societies started to develop even in small towns.<sup>2</sup> Turkish court music of any kind was removed permanently, and the Western European musical notation system of printing first appeared.<sup>3</sup> The magazines and almanacs of the day began to devote pages to musicological articles and concert announcements and reviews.<sup>4</sup> The first Romanian symphonic work, the *National Moldovian Overture*, based on folk songs, was composed in 1847 by Alexander Flechtenmacher.<sup>5</sup>

In earlier centuries, scholars had looked by default to the Ottoman Empire, located to the south of Romania, for academic studies, and thus the Byzantine musical influence was present in early Romanian culture. After breaking ties with the Turkish, Romanian scholars shifted attention to the West and studied in France, Austria, and Germany.<sup>6</sup> With the new flow of information between the Romanian principalities and France in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Pașcu and Melania Botocan, *Carte de Istoria Muzicii*. (Iași, România: Editura Vasiliana'98. 2003), 286-287.

<sup>2</sup> Viorel Cosma, *Două milenii de muzică pe pământul României* (București, România: Editura Științifică Și Enciclopedică, 1982), 4.

<sup>3</sup> George Pașcu and Melania Botocan, *Carte de Istoria Muzicii*. (Iași, România: Editura Vasiliana'98. 2003), 289-290.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>6</sup> Lavinia Sturzu, "Sonata Românească Pentru Flaut în a Doua Jumatate a Secolului XX" (Diss., Universitatea de Muzică din București, Romania, 2003).



century, the assimilation of French ideas became a new factor in the creation of Romanian music.<sup>7</sup> The creation of the Union of the Principalities in 1859 signified cultural progress.<sup>8</sup> Universities, music conservatories, and schools of fine art (painting) were established in Iasi (1860) and Bucharest (1864). These new institutions played an important role in increasing the general level of cultural and creative activity, and aided the diversification and professionalization of musicians who were now able to compose in a wider range of genres.<sup>9</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, instrumental music was increasingly promoted in concert programs, building more interest in composers of the day. These composers encouraged the Romanian national individualization and folklore tradition, while maintaining existing affinities with Western European music, especially French impressionism. The leading figure of this period, George Enescu, raised Romanian art music to international status. Other influential Romanian composers of this period include Alfred Alessandrescu, Demetrius Cuclin, Mihail Jora, Stan Golestan, Marcel Mihalovici, Theodor Rogalski, Sabin Drăgoi, Martian Negrea, Paul Constantinescu, Michael Andricu, Felicia Donceanu, and Carmen Petra-Basacopol. Their works include all genres of music: symphony, chamber music, solo instrumental, vocal/choral music, opera, and ballet.

One of the instruments less approached by composers was the harp. There are only a few Romanian works for harp dating from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Table 1 is a representative list of the ones that are most widely known.

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<sup>7</sup> Viorel Cosma, *Două milenii de muzică pe pământul României* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Științifică Și Enciclopedică, 1982), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Lavinia Sturzu, "Sonata Românească Pentru Flaut în a Doua Jumatate a Secolului XX" (Diss., Universitatea de Muzică din Bucuresti, Romania, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> George Pașcu and Melania Botocan, *Carte de Istoria Muzicii*. (Iași, România: Editura Vasiliana'98. 2003), 295-296.

**Table 1:** 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Romanian Works for Harp

COMPOSITION	COMPOSER
<i>Allegro de concert</i>	George Enescu
<i>Patru Piese pentru Harpă</i> (Four Pieces for Harp)	Martian Negrea
<i>Concert pentru harpă și orchestră</i> (Concerto for Harp and Orchestra)	Paul Constantinescu
<i>Parlando Rubato: Legenda unui Zbor</i> (“The Legend of a Flight”) – Concert Piece for Solo Harp	Felicia Donceanu

## **1.2 George Enescu**

George Enescu (1881-1955) began his musical training at the age of four in the town of Liveni with his father, Costache Enescu, and with a local folk fiddler, Nicolae Chioru.<sup>10</sup> At the suggestion of Eduard Caudella, a composer and teacher at the Conservatory in the town of Iasi, George Enescu studied music at the Vienna *Konservatorium für Musik und Darsteller Kunst der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (Conservatory for Music and Performing Arts of the Society of the Friends of Music) during 1888-1894 with famous teachers Sigismund Bachrich and Josef Hellmesberger, Jr. (violin), Ernst Ludwig (piano), and Robert Fuchs (harmony, counterpoint and composition).<sup>11</sup> Between 1895 and 1899 Enescu followed up with additional courses at the Paris *Conservatoire National de Musique* (National Conservatory of Music) with José White and Martin-Pierre-Joseph Marsick (violin), Jules Massenet and Gabriel Fauré (composition), Ambroise Thomas and Théodore Dubois (harmony), and André Gédalge (counterpoint).<sup>12</sup>

After completing his studies, and while maintaining residences in both Romania and France, the composer began a multifaceted international career as a virtuoso concert violinist, pianist, conductor and teacher. As a performer, founder and leader of two chamber ensembles, a piano trio (1902) and the George Enescu String Quartet (1904), Enescu performed concerts

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<sup>10</sup> Viorel Cosma, *Muzicieni din România*, vol. II (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală, 1999), 293.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

throughout Europe and the United States.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, George Enescu was heavily involved in the development of cultural institutions in Romania, including the George Enescu Symphonic Orchestra in Iasi and Romania's first national opera company. He also founded the George Enescu National Composition Competition in 1912.<sup>14</sup> Between the World Wars, as a concert violinist and conductor, Enescu was invited to perform and conduct with orchestras through Europe, the United States, and Canada.<sup>15</sup> Throughout these years, Enescu continued to work on his compositional projects. In Romania, during War World II, George Enescu completed several recordings with the famous Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti. When the Communist Party took over Romania after the war, the composer lived in exile in France while continuing his travels in Europe and United States.

As a composer, Enescu was incredibly prolific, writing for a variety of genres: works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, symphonic works, concertos, and opera, as well as vocal and choral works. Sadly, from a multitude of works only 33 compositions were published.<sup>16</sup>

Enescu embraces the harp in his symphonic and vocal works such as the *Rapsodia Româna Op. 11, No. 1* (Romanian Rhapsody No. 1 – 1901), *Rapsodia Româna Op. 11, No. 2* (Romanian Rhapsody No. 2 – 1902), *Imn Jubiliar* (Jubilee Hymn – 1906) for choir, military band and harp, and *Cantate pour la pose de premiere Pierre du Pont a transbordeur de Bordeaux* (Cantata for the Laying of the First Bridge Stone upon Ferry Bordeaux – 1908) for military band, two harps, string orchestra, solo cello, choir, solo baritone and cannons, with text by Albert

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<sup>13</sup> Adina Sibian, "George Enescu," [http://www.georgeenescu.ro/document\\_2092\\_George-Enescu---date-biografice\\_pg\\_0.htm](http://www.georgeenescu.ro/document_2092_George-Enescu---date-biografice_pg_0.htm) (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Malcolm Noel, "Enescu, George," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08793> (accessed May 15, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Adina Sibian, "George Enescu," [http://www.georgeenescu.ro/document\\_2092\\_George-Enescu---date-biografice\\_pg\\_0.htm](http://www.georgeenescu.ro/document_2092_George-Enescu---date-biografice_pg_0.htm) (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Malcolm Noel, "Enescu, George," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/08793> (accessed May 15, 2013).

Bureau.<sup>17</sup> Included in Enescu's unpublished works is one solo harp piece, *Allegro de Concert for Chromatic Harp*, composed in 1904.<sup>18</sup> Written for chromatic harp, which uses two or even three rows of strings and no pedals, this piece is very difficult to perform on a modern harp (which has only one row of strings and produces chromatic alterations through the pedals) and is rarely performed; nevertheless this piece will be performed in Romania's "George Enescu International Festival" in September 2013 in Bucharest.<sup>19</sup>

Enescu is indisputably the predominant figure in Romanian classical music. As a highly respected violinist, pianist, composer, conductor and teacher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he single-handedly raised the awareness of Romanian music and musicians on the international scene.<sup>20</sup>

The Romanian composers presented in the following pages are known on a national level but less known internationally.

### **1.3 Marțian Negrea**

Marțian Negrea (1893–1973) was not only a composer, but also a choir conductor, musicologist, and teacher. Considered an important figure in Romanian music life, he was one of the contributors of the Romanian school of composition and one of George Enescu's successors.<sup>21</sup> He began his musical training in the town of Sibiu in 1910. A few years later, Negrea went to study music in Vienna at the *Akademie für Music und Darstellende (Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts)*.<sup>22</sup> His main professors were Eugen Thomas (theory and solfege),

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<sup>17</sup> International Enescu Society, <http://www.enescusociety.org/works/works-vocal.php#choralmusic> (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> International Enescu Society, <http://www.enescusociety.org/works/works-chambermusic.php> (accessed May 16, 2013). The difference between a regular harp and a chromatic one is the number of rows of strings. The chromatic harp can have two or even three rows of strings.

<sup>19</sup> International Festival, "George Enescu," [http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Festivalul-International-George-Enescu\\*articleID\\_9148-articles\\_details.html](http://www.observatorcultural.ro/Festivalul-International-George-Enescu*articleID_9148-articles_details.html) (accessed May 16, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni din România*, vol. II (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală, 1999), 299.

<sup>21</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni Români: Compozitori și Muzicologi* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, 1970), 324.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Eusebie Mandicevschi (harmony and counterpoint), and Franz Schmidt (composition and orchestration).<sup>23</sup>

Marțian Negrea became a teacher at the music conservatories in Cluj (1921–1941) and Bucharest (1941–1963). Many music journals, like *Muzica*, *Contemporanul*, and *Contrapunctul* included Negrea's musicology articles.<sup>24</sup> As a musicologist he wrote several reference treatises: *Tratatul Instrumentelor* (*Treatise of the Instruments*), *Tratat de forme musicale* (*Treatise of Musical Forms*), *Tratat de contrapunct și fugă* (*Treatise of Counterpoint and Fugue*), and *Tratat de armonie* (*Treatise of Harmony*).<sup>25</sup>

Marțian Negrea's catalog contains works dedicated to all genres: chamber music, symphonic, vocal-symphonic, choral, vocal, and film music. The most prominent characteristic of his music is its inspiration from Romanian folk music. One example is *Rapsodia Română No. 1, Op. 14* (Romanian Rhapsody No. 1, Op. 14), a symphonic work composed in 1938, which received first prize at the George Enescu International Composition Competition.<sup>26</sup> Martian Negrea composed only one collection for solo harp (1945), *Patru Piese Pentru Harpă Op. 16* (*Four Pieces for Harp*). The four pieces in this collection are entitled *Menuet* (*Minuet*), *Povestioară* (*Little Story*), *Cântec de Leagăn* (*Lullaby*), and *Temă cu Variatiuni* (*Theme and Variations*). They differ in difficulty and are performed independently of each other. This collection is well-known in Romania and is an integral part of Romanian harp department curriculum.<sup>27</sup> The first piece, *Minuet*, follows the traditional style of the French dance by that

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<sup>23</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni Români: Compozitori și Muzicologi* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, 1970), 325.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni din România*, vol. VII (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală, 2004), 326.

<sup>26</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni Români: Compozitori și Muzicologi* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicala a Uniunii Compozitorilor, 1970), 325.

<sup>27</sup> University of Arts "George Enescu", Faculty of Musical Performance. Iași, Romania [http://www.arteiasi.ro/intmuz/other/programe/Instrument\\_harpa.pdf](http://www.arteiasi.ro/intmuz/other/programe/Instrument_harpa.pdf), (accessed May 16, 2013).

name.<sup>28</sup> In terms of the interpretative technique (dynamics, accents, and musical phrasing) and instrumental technique (the repeated action of the pedals in a very short amount of time), this work is addressed to intermediate level harp students. Featuring transparent and uncomplicated melody lines, the two next pieces, *Little Story* and *Lullaby*, can be performed by beginner harpists. In *Theme and Variations*, Negrea includes new elements not found in the previous three pieces, mainly influences of melodic and rhythmic elements from Romanian folk music. The length and complexity of this composition make *Theme and Variations* a virtuosic harp work for advanced harpists.

#### **1.4 Paul Constantinescu**

Another outstanding figure in Romanian music was Paul Constantinescu (1909–1963), a composer, conductor, and violinist. He started his musical education in his hometown of Ploiești, where he studied violin, harmony, and theory. Constantinescu completed his music courses in Bucharest at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory (1929–1933) and in Vienna (1934–1935), where he studied composition and conducting, and then embraced a teaching career.<sup>29</sup> During 1935-1936, he was a music professor in Lugoj, following which he taught harmony, counterpoint, and sacred music composition at the Sacred Music Academy in Bucharest (1937–1941). Later on he became a professor of music at the Military Music High School in Bucharest (1941–1944), and ended his career teaching harmony at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory (1941–1963), also in Bucharest.<sup>30</sup>

Through his treatises and compositions, Constantinescu sent the message to the next generations of musicians that embracing Romanian folk elements should be a priority. During his

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<sup>28</sup> The minuet is an old French dance, in a slow or moderate triple meter.

<sup>29</sup> Viorel Cosm, *Muzicieni Români: Compozitori și Muzicologi* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, 1970), 131.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

life the composer received numerous awards and titles attesting to his importance in the music world. His style is influenced greatly by Romanian folk music and Byzantine music. The composer focused more upon the melodic elements and less upon rhythmic elements of the folk music.<sup>31</sup> Like Martian Negrea, Constantinescu's works comprise all genres: vocal-choral, vocal-symphonic, symphonic, chamber music, and film music.

One example where Constantinescu embraces the harp in one of his symphonic works is his *Toccata* for flute and orchestra.<sup>32</sup> Within his catalog of works, there is one work dedicated to the harp, the *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* (1960). Although this concerto is the only contribution of the composer to the Romanian harp literature, it is significant because it represents the first of its kind in Romania.<sup>33</sup> In this concerto, Paul Constantinescu combined both melodic and rhythmic elements of national folk music. This concerto features less of the virtuosic aspects of the harp, focusing instead on the particular timbre of the harp presented through a folk melody.

### **1.5 Felicia Donceanu**

The final composer presented in this section is Felicia Donceanu. Born in Bacău in 1931, she represents one of the Romanian female personalities of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Donceanu acquired her composition degree at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory in Bucharest (1949–1956). Felicia Donceanu has developed a reputation as a musicologist. She has written articles and reviews in professional journals, and has given lectures, concerts, and radio programs. Donceanu also wrote lyrics for her own choral works as well as those of other

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<sup>31</sup> Grigore Constantinescu, "Paul Constantinescu, artistul secolului XX," *Clipa*, March 2009, under "Rubrica: Muzica," <http://www.revistaclipa.com/949/2009/03/cronici/muzica/paul-constantinescu-artistul-secolului-xx> (accessed April 29, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> *Paul Constantinescu's Toccata – for solo flute and orchestra*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcesc6NH9ys> (accessed April 29, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Zeno Vancea, *Creația Muzicală Românească* (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Muzicală, 1978), 154.

Romanian composers.<sup>34</sup> Until 1966, she was editor of the Literature and Art Publishing House in Bucharest. She also served as the music department's publishing editor for Romania's Union of Composers and Musicologists.<sup>35</sup>

Donceanu's compositions include all varieties of genre: works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, symphonic concert works, and stage music, as well as vocal, choral, and vocal-symphonic works. Leaning heavily on the *Lied* genre, Donceanu presents the human voice component in chamber ensembles, especially those with ancient sounds.

Felicia Donceanu's artistic credits include numerous awards: Special Mention at the International Composition Competition in Mannheim (1961), seven awards from the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania (1983–1997), and the George Enescu Award given by the Romanian Academy in 1984.<sup>36</sup>

One of the works that Donceanu dedicated to the harp is *Parlando Rubato – Legenda uni zbor* ("The Legend of a Flight"), written in 1990. In a video interview, the composer reveals her opinion regarding this piece: "one of the most important messages I transmit through music."<sup>37</sup> Béla Bartók used the name *parlando rubato* in reference to one of the singing styles used in European folk music; this style stresses the words, departing frequently from strict rhythm.<sup>38</sup> Felicia Donceanu's *Parlando Rubato* is constructed like a big improvisation, with rhythmical freedom.

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<sup>34</sup> Paula Boire, "Felicia Donceanu," <http://www.romanianmusiconline.com/Articles/FeliciaDonceanu.htm>, (accessed April 30, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Octavian Cosma, "Donceanu, Felicia" *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, ed. by Deane Root, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/47507> (accessed April 30, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Paula Boire, "Felicia Donceanu," <http://www.romanianmusiconline.com/Articles/FeliciaDonceanu.htm>, (accessed April 30, 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Beatrice Lupu, "Maestrii-Felicia Donceanu," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrJR11s9qu8>, (accessed April 30, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> Steven Halsey, "Bela Bartok," *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/54394/Bela-Bartok>, (accessed May 23, 2013).



Other harp compositions by Felicia Donceanu include *Două serenade pentru flaut, cello și harpă* (*Two serenades for flute, cello and harp*) and *Retro Tango - Cvintet Instrumental* (*Retro Tango Instrumental Quintet*).

The composers listed above are all descendants of the Romanian musical heritage and although they brought significant contributions to the Romanian culture, they made a relatively small contribution to the Romanian harp literature. One other Romanian composer, however, was totally infatuated by the harp. When she heard the harp for the first time, Carmen Petra-Basacopol fell in love with this instrument. In her own words she explains, “I simply remained pinned, enchanted by its sonorities and I wanted to listen indefinitely.”<sup>39</sup> The next section of this paper will focus on this remarkable woman.

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<sup>39</sup> Ion Bogdan Ștefănescu, “Armonia mărturisirilor- Interviu cu Carmen Petra Basacopol,” January 16, 2011, <http://ionbogdanstefanescu.ro/armonia-marturisirilor-interviu-cu-carmen-petra-basacopol/> (accessed November 4, 2011).

## SECTION II: CARMEN PETRA-BASACOPOL

### **2.1 The Composer's Biography**

Carmen Petra-Basacopol was born in Sibiu, Romania, on September 5, 1926. She came from a family where music played a significant role. Her grandfather played flute and her mother was a multifaceted artist. Embracing a full spectrum of artistic disciplines, her mother was a pianist, painter, and sculptor. Petra-Basacopol and her sisters took piano lessons from their mother. Although her mother believed that age seven is the best age for a child to start playing piano, Petra-Basacopol was an exceptional case. When she was only three years old, Petra-Basacopol showed great interest in music, and by the time she was four she began piano lessons.<sup>40</sup> At age eleven, a well-known Romanian composer by the name of Sabin Drăgoi heard her improvising on the piano and was amazed by her talent. He was so pleasantly surprised that he offered her a scholarship to study music in Paris. Because the girl's mother did not want to leave her alone in Paris, she did not take advantage of the scholarship. Instead she attended a regular high school in town but remained involved with music. Although music was the passion of her life, Petra-Basacopol enrolled in 1945 at the Bucharest's University of Philosophy after graduating from high school.<sup>41</sup> Between 1949 and 1956 she studied composition at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory in Bucharest under the guidance of the illustrious composers Mihail Jora and Paul Constantinescu.<sup>42</sup> Though she never studied directly with George Enescu, she sought out opportunities to observe his rehearsals and performances in Romanian concert halls. She admits that his personality was a great inspiration for her artistic development.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ștefănescu, "Interview with Carmen Petra Basacopol," my translation. The composer confesses her desire of listening to her mother playing piano.

<sup>41</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author (recorded for reference), Bucharest, Romania: 30 July, 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

One night while attending Enescu's opera *Oedipe* in Bucharest, Petra-Basacopol met the physician Alexandru Basacopol, who she would later marry.<sup>44</sup> A few years into their marriage, they traveled to Morocco where she founded a music school and gave piano lessons for children. She also taught at the Conservatory of Rabat.<sup>45</sup>

Carmen Petra-Basacopol took advantage of her geographic proximity to France and applied to a Ph.D. program in Paris. She considered this a good opportunity, knowing that she would be living in Morocco for several years. She realized that once she returned to Bucharest, advanced studies would be "almost impossible to happen," due to the controlling nature of the Romanian Communist regime, especially if she was considering an international institution. She was accepted to the doctoral program at the Sorbonne University, and while continuing her obligations as a teacher in Morocco, she commuted to Paris to complete her degree requirements. She feels that her admission to the program was a major achievement given the attitude towards women. "In France, I was told that [*liberté, égalité, fraternité*] did not reign, and that it is a great miracle that I managed to be admitted to the doctoral program, because women were not quite accepted."<sup>46</sup> Under the guidance of Jacques Chailley, a French composer and musicologist, she received the Doctor of Musical Science degree in 1976.<sup>47</sup>

Her doctoral dissertation, focusing on the topic of the originality of Romanian music, was titled *The Compositional Art of Great Romanian Composers: Enescu, Jora and Constantinescu*.<sup>48</sup> These composers were three of Petra-Basacopol's most important musical parents. Jora and Constantinescu were two influential teachers she had studied with back in

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<sup>44</sup> Ștefănescu, "Interview with Carmen Petra Basacopol," my translation.

<sup>45</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Ștefănescu, "Interview with Carmen Petra Basacopol," my translation.

<sup>47</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Octavian Cosma. "Petra-Basacopol, Carmen," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/44995> (accessed April 30, 2013).

Bucharest, and Enescu was the figure for whom she had much fascination and admiration from her earliest years.

After her return to Romania, she taught composition, harmony and counterpoint for several years at the Spiru Haret Music University in Bucharest.<sup>49</sup> When she retired from her teaching position, she was able to focus even more on her lifetime passion for composing. Though in her day women composers were few in number in Romania, Carmen Petra-Basacopol never felt intimidated by these circumstances because her male colleagues considered her to be an equal, “I have had colleagues like Ștefan Niculescu, Anatol Vieru, Aurel Stroe. We were a tightly connected group and age didn’t matter, and neither did the fact that I was a woman, so the issue never entered my mind.”<sup>50</sup>

## **2.2 The Composer’s Works**

Carmen Petra-Basacopol’s *oeuvre* presents a variety of musical genres: works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and symphonic concert works, as well as vocal, choral, and vocal-symphonic works. Petra-Basacopol’s ballets and operas are still being performed on the opera houses stages of Romania. She wrote for diverse instruments in her solo and chamber compositions but showed a preference for piano, violin, cello, and flute (as illustrated in Table 2).

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<sup>49</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Ștefănescu, “Interview with Carmen Petra Basacopol,” my translation.

**Table 2:** Selected list of Petra-Basacopol's solo and chamber compositions

ORIGINAL TITLE	TRANSLATED TITLE	INSTRUMENTATION
<i>Din Psalmii lui David</i> , Op.84	From the Psalms of David	cycle for soprano and piano
<i>Lied pentru Tenor si Harpă</i> , Op. 22, No. 1	Lieder for Tenor and Harp	tenor and harp
<i>Lied pentru Bariton si Harpă</i> , Op. 22, No. 2	Lieder for Bass and Harp	bass and harp
<i>Nostalgii</i> , Op. 23, No. 1	Nostalgia	baritone and English horn
<i>Primăvară</i> , Op. 31, No. 1	Spring	poem for soprano, clarinet and piano
<i>Tablouri Dacice</i> , Op. 46	Dacian Pictures	trio for flute, vibraphone, and cello
<i>Preludiui, Interludiu si Postludiu</i> , Op. 59	Prelude, Interlude and Postlude	cycle for organ
<i>Impresii din Muzeul Satului</i> , Op.15	Impressions from the Village Museum	suite for piano
<i>Ciclul Sângele pământului</i> , Op. 55	A Cycle: Earth's Blood	bass and piano
<i>Liedul Greierele</i> , Op.23, No. 3	Cricket Lied	voice and woodwind trio
<i>Concertul de Vioară</i> , Op. 21, No. 1	Violin Concerto	violin and orchestra
<i>Elegie pentru Vioară si Pian</i> , op. 35	Elegy for Violin and Piano	violin and piano
<i>Cântece ritual pentru Vioară si Violă</i> , Op. 119	Ritual Songs for Violin and Viola	violin and viola
<i>Confesiuni pentru Violă Solo</i> , Op.132	Confessions for Solo Viola	Viola
<i>Două Suite pentru Violoncel</i> , Op. 48 & 114	Two Suites for Violoncello	Cello
<i>Sonata pentru Violoncel Solo</i> , Op. 131	Sonata for Solo Violoncello	Cello
<i>Fantezii pentru Patru Violoncele</i> , Op. 92	Fantasies for Four Violoncelli	four cellos
<i>Studiu pentru Contrabass</i> , Op. 135	Study for Double Bass	double bass
<i>Improvizatii</i> , Op. 37	Improvisations	Flute
<i>Sonata pentru Flaut si Harpă</i> , Op. 17	Sonata for Flute and Harp	flute and harp
<i>Trio pentru Harpă, Flaut si Clarinet</i> , Op. 57	Trio for Harp, Flute and Clarinet	harp, flute, and clarinet

The one instrument closest to the composer's heart was the harp. In the composer's own words, "Harp is the instrument I identify with... It sounds in my head, in my heart. I have it, it's mine."<sup>51</sup>

In recent years, the music of Petra-Basacopol has been a topic of scholarly writing, including encyclopedia articles, academic and music journals, and dissertations. One Romanian dissertation, by Ruxandra Mirea, focuses on Petra-Basacopol's compositional style.<sup>52</sup> Ion-Ivan Roncea's dissertation, also in Romanian, addresses Petra-Basacopol's *Concertino for Harp, String Orchestra, and Timpani* among other harp concert pieces.<sup>53</sup> I have located two interviews with Carmen Petra-Basacopol. One of them appeared in the Fall 1991 issue of *World Harp Congress Review*, an international harp journal.<sup>54</sup> The other interview is written by Romanian flutist Ion Bogdan Ștefanescu and can be found on his personal website.<sup>55</sup>

### **2.3 The Composer's Harp Works**

Out of Carmen Petra-Basacopol's 143 opus numbers, 24 compositions feature the harp in either a solo or chamber role; these harp pieces represent roughly seventeen percent of her total catalog. Her harp music can be studied by harpists of different levels and abilities.<sup>56</sup> Her simple natural instincts for writing for the harp include an assortment of harp effects, such as knocking on the wood of the harp, pedal slides and *près de la table* – effects used rarely, if ever, by other Romanian composers. Petra-Basacopol's great knowledge and mastery of idiomatic harp technique is evident in all her works. She exploits the full spectrum of capabilities, functions, and idiosyncrasies of the instrument, an accomplishment quite extraordinary for someone who does

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ruxandra Mirea, "Repere Estetice și Stilistice în Creația Compozitoarei Carmen Petra-Basacopol" (MDA diss., Universitatea de Arte "George Enescu" din Iași, Romania, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> Ion Ivan Roncea "Repertoriul Concertant al Harpei. Repere Tehnice și Interpretative" (MDA diss., Universitatea de Muzică din București, Romania, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> Stanea Bunea, "Carmen Petra-Basacopol," *World Harp Congress Review* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1991): 22-24.

<sup>55</sup> Ștefanescu, "Interview with Carmen Petra Basacopol," my translation.

<sup>56</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

not play the harp herself. Composing for the harp is a pleasure for Carmen Petra-Basacopol, and she explained, “After a very stressful and hard composition I relax by writing something for harp.”<sup>57</sup> Petra-Basacopol is familiar with the scores of other harpist-composers, which enables her to be well-informed about what makes a good harpist’s style of composition.<sup>58</sup> When asked whether she finds composing for the harp difficult, Petra-Basacopol responded, “Not for me, it is true harp is not an easy instrument to write for, because the chromaticism is made with the feet, it needs more attention.”<sup>59</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol confesses with modesty that everything she is doing is through an inspired process. Throughout the compositional process, she is carried by inspiration, “The moment I start to compose I don’t plan a thing. I get in to a certain spiritual sphere and let myself become overwhelmed by what I hear.”<sup>60</sup> She knows how to capitalize on the use of the harp not only in solo compositions but also in the genres of chamber music and symphonic writing. Other works that make Petra-Basacopol different from other Romanian composers are her songs for voice and harp, and songs for voice, harp, and other instruments, including the *5 Lieder for Tenor and Harp*, *2 Lieder for Bass and Harp*, *Diptic* for oboe, harp, clarinet and soprano, and *Rugăciunile Împăratului David (King David’s Prayers)* for bass, harp and percussion.

At the suggestion of the great Spanish harpist Nicanor Zabaleta, Carmen Petra-Basacopol wrote the *Concertino for harp, string orchestra and timpani* in 1975, a piece which has enriched the modern harp literature. When Zabaleta saw the final version of the score he congratulated the composer without suggesting any changes.<sup>61</sup> In recognition of her stature within the elite harp

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<sup>57</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Marcel Tournier, Elias Parish Alvars, and Nicholas Charles Bochsa were three such harpist-composers that she mentioned.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

world, the organizers of the International Harp Contest (one of the most important international harp competitions) invited Petra-Basacopol to sit on the jury of the 1979 contest in Israel.<sup>62</sup>

Realizing the value and depth of Petra-Basacopol's works, Romanian harp departments have consistently included her music in their curriculum.<sup>63</sup> Harpists have kept her music alive over the years on the national and international scene through its performances in concerts, competitions, and festivals. Prominent figures of the harp community who have performed her pieces include Romanian harpists Liana Pasquali, Elena Ganțolea, and Ion-Ivan Roncea, and also international harpists such as Elena Zaniboni (Italy), Vera Badings (Netherlands), and Edward Witsenburg (Netherlands).

As a harpist and performer, her harp compositions have played an important aspect in my development as a musician, and they have opened new musical horizons that I had not explored before. As she expressed herself in our interview, there is a special link between the composer and this instrument, almost as if the harp represents an important component of her artistic personality.<sup>64</sup> Her music combines strength and fragility, density and transparency, turmoil and tranquility. These characteristics create a musical picture that is very unique.

Table 3 is a list of all Petra-Basacopol compositions written for solo harp or harp and other voice/instruments arrangements, in order to create a reference catalog of her harp repertoire.

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<sup>62</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> University of Arts "George Enescu", Faculty of Musical Performance. Iasi, Romania [http://www.arteiasi.ro/intmuz/other/programe/Instrument\\_harpa.pdf](http://www.arteiasi.ro/intmuz/other/programe/Instrument_harpa.pdf), (accessed April 30, 2013).

<sup>64</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.



**Table 3:** Carmen Petra-Basacopol's Solo Harp Compositions and Chamber Music Containing Harp

TITLE	TRANSLATION	YEAR
<i>Suita pentru Harpă</i> , Op. 10 1. <i>Preludiu</i> 2. <i>Cântec de leagăn</i> 3. <i>Țesătoarele</i> 4. <i>Clopotele</i>	Suite for Harp 1. Prelude 2. Lullaby 3. The Weavers 4. The Bells	1958
<i>Sonata Pastorală</i> , Op. 14 nr.1	Pastoral Sonata	1958
<i>Șase Preludii</i> , Op. 14 <sup>65</sup> nr. 2	Six Preludes	1958
<i>Sonata pentru Flaut si Harpă</i> , Op. 17	Sonata for Flute and Harp	1961
<i>Cinci Lieduri pentru Tenor si Harpă</i> , (versuri de Mariana Dumitrescu), Op. 22, nr. 1	Five Lieder for Tenor and Harp, (lyrics by Maria Dumitrescu)	1963
<i>Două Lieduri pentru Bas si Harpă</i> , Op. 22, nr. 2	Two Lieder for Bass and Harp	1963
<i>Divertisment pentru Harpă, Cvintet de Suflători, Contrabas si Xylophon</i> , Op. 30	Divertimento for Harp, Wind Quintet, Double bass and Xylophone	1969
<i>Concertino pentru Harpă, Orcheastră de Coarde si Timpani</i> , Op. 40	Concertino for Harp, String Orchestra and Timpani	1975
<i>Varațiuni pe o Temă Macedo-Română, pentru Harpă si Violoncel</i> , Op. 44	Variations on a Macedo-Romanian Theme, for Harp and Cello	1979
<i>Cartea Junglei - Suită pentru Harpă</i> , Op. 61	Jungle Book-Suite for Harp	1979
<i>Trio pentru Harpă, Flaut si Clarinet</i> , Op. 57	Trio for Harp, Flute and Clarinet	1987
<i>Imagini Europene pentru Harpă Solo</i> , Op. 59	European Pictures for Solo Harp	1990
<i>Elegie pentru Harpă si Clarinet</i> , Op. 98	Elegy for Harp and Clarinet	1990
<i>Passacaglia</i> , Op. 62		1991
<i>Dansuri</i> , Op. 76 1. <i>Dansul Timpului</i> 2. <i>Dansul Cerului</i> 3. <i>Dansul Pământului</i>	Dances 1. The Time Dance 2. The Heaven Dance 3. The Earth Dance	1991
<i>Portrete</i> , Op. 76 1. <i>Portretul unei Harpiste (Liana Pasqualli)</i> 2. <i>Auto Portret</i> 3. <i>Portretul unui Harpist (Ion-Ivan Roncea)</i>	Portraits 1. Portrait of a Harpist (Liana Pasqualli) 2. Self Portrait 3. Portrait of a Harpist (Ion-Ivan Roncea)	1991
<i>Mica Sirenă</i> , Op. 69	Little Mermaid	1993
<i>Musica per cinque</i> (flaut, harpă, vioară, violă, violoncel), Op. 72	Music for Five (flute, harp, violin, viola, cello)	1994
<i>Concertul Nr. 2 pentru Harpă si Orchestră</i> , Op. 75	Concerto No. 2 for Harp and Orchestra	1994
<i>Rugăciunile Regelui David pentru Bas, Harpă si Percuție</i> , Op. 77	The Prayers of King David for Bass, Harp and Percussion	1998
<i>Fantezie pentru Flaut si Harpă</i> , Op. 103	Fantasy for Flute and Harp	2003
<i>Variatiuni pe o Temă Elegiacă</i> (pentru două harpe), Op.106 <sup>66</sup>	Variations on an Elegiac Theme (for two harps)	2004
<i>Aforisme</i> , Op. 117	Aphorisms	2007
<i>Anotimpuri pentru Harpă Solo</i> , Op. 81	Seasons for Solo Harp (Award V.C.M.R)	2007

<sup>65</sup> The published score identifies this piece as Op.13.

<sup>66</sup> This piece was not present in the list provided by the composer for my paper.

## SECTION III: CARMEN PETRA-BASACOPOL'S COMPOSITION STYLE

### 3.1 Harp Effects and Technique

The harp pieces of the other contemporary Romanian composers portray the image of the harp as a genteel instrument with soft, flowing sonorities. However, Carmen Petra-Basacopol's perception of this instrument has much more variety. Through her music, she presents the harp in multiple moods: as a delicate instrument with transparent and calm sounds, but also as a percussive instrument with aggressive and strident sounds. This second mood includes effects such as knocking on the wood of the harp (see Example 1) and syncopated rhythms (see Example 2).

Allegro - moderato

Flaut

Clarinet in Sib(\*)

Harpă

*mi ♯ fa ♯ sol ♯ la ♯*  
*si ♯ do ♯ re ♯*

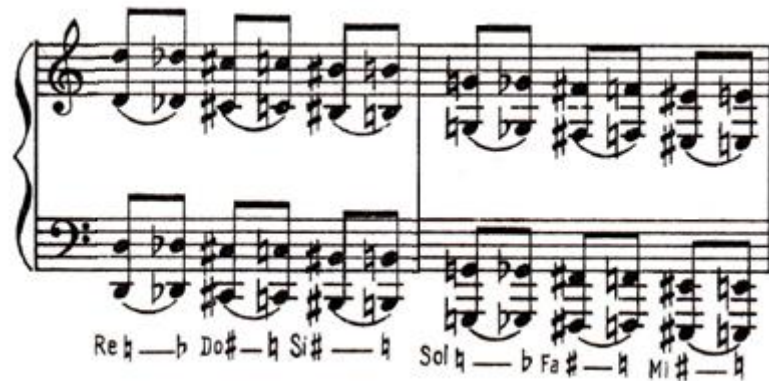
*en bas des cordes*

**Example 1:** Knocks on the wood, *Trio for harp, flute, and clarinet*, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt. (mm. 1-2)

*près de la table*

**Example 2:** Syncopated rhythm, *Prelude No. 6* (mm. 5-6)

The manner in which the composer uses these and other harp effects create her signature in her harp compositions. Other effects include (pedal slides), glissandos, harmonics, arpeggios, and *près de la table*.<sup>67</sup> Examples 3-7 illustrate her use of these effects.



**Example 3:** Chromatic pedal slides



**Example 4:** Glissandos, Prelude No. 2 (mm. 20-21)



**Example 5:** Harmonics, Prelude No. 4 (mm. 14-17)

<sup>67</sup> *Près de la table*, or p.d.l.t., is the French expression for playing as close as possible to the sound board.



**Example 6:** Arpeggios, Prelude No. 3 (mm. 23-26)



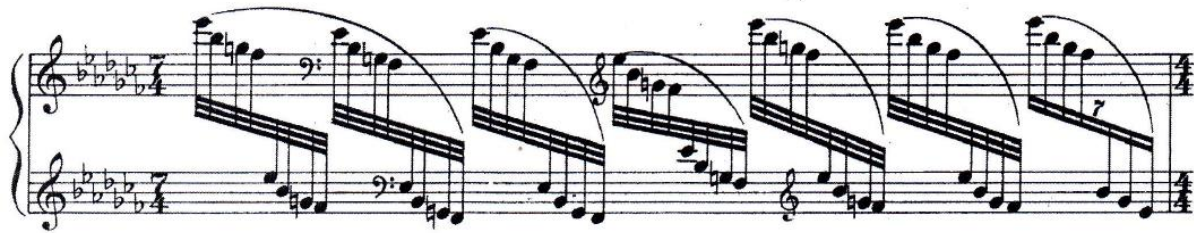
**Example 7:** *Près de la table*, Prelude No 6 (mm. 1-4)

Carmen Petra-Basacopol's compositions develop the harpist's skill in several areas of technical ability. One of these important areas is the independence of the arms, which includes moving in opposite directions and crossing each other. Another skill is the agility of the hands as they quickly jump from one register to the other (as seen Example 8).



**Example 8:** Left-hand jumps of register, Prelude No. 5 (mm. 15-17)

A third area is successive repetition of intervals or chords; this technique will be described below in connection with the *Six Preludes*. A fourth technical skill involves arpeggios across the whole harp; these are usually executed rapidly, creating the sensation of waves (see Example 9).



**Example 9:** Arpeggios across the whole harp, Prelude No. 6 (m. 33)

In the area of pedal technique, the composer's music does not present an extreme challenge, because she successfully avoids any pedal situations that are impossible to execute, even though she has no experience in playing this instrument. In all of her harp compositions, Petra-Basacopol includes most of these harp effects and techniques, but always finds new ways of bringing them together.

In her solo harp music, Carmen Petra-Basacopol challenges the harpist through her tempo indications, but without imposing a particular metronome marking. She gives liberty to the performer to use his or her own metronome marking within the character she establishes. In my interview with the composer, she stated, "The composer is not important; important and wonderful is the one performing the piece."<sup>68</sup>

### **3.2 Representative Pieces**

*The Jungle Book* suite, the *Six Preludes*, and the *Sonata for Flute and Harp* are three diverse pieces of Petra-Basacopol's harp literature. My analysis of these pieces, although not from a theoretical, formal, or harmonic standpoint, but instead from a performer's perspective, will emphasize for the reader the composer's vision of the harp.

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<sup>68</sup> Carmen Petra-Basacopol, interview with the author, July 30, 2012.



Inspired by the book by British author Rudyard Kipling, Carmen Petra-Basacopol composed in 1979 a work for solo harp titled *The Jungle Book*, Op. 61. This suite contains seven short pieces that can stand alone or be performed together as a collection. Since she addresses this work for young harpists, Petra-Basacopol appeals to their interest by announcing the story's characters in each movement's title. The pedal changes in this music are few in number, making the pedal technique appropriate for less advanced players. In contrast with the liberty she grants to more mature players, the composer indicates a specific metronome marking for each of these pieces.

I. "The Panther Bagheera" (*Moderato ben sostenuto*) – In this movement, a possible challenge might be the interlaced position of the hands as they play most of the time in the same octave. This procedure repeats in both bass clef and treble clef registers.



**Example 10:** The Panther Bagheera (mm1-5)

Toward the end of the piece, there is a passage containing multiple descending glissandos requiring great precision; these glissandos are executed by both thumbs in rapid alternation.



**Example 11:** The Panther Bagheera (mm24-25)

II. “The Council of Birds” (*Allegro moderato*) – As in the first piece, Petra-Basacopol brings the hands close together, but this time instead of interlacing the fingers on the harp strings, the harpist uses alternate hands on neighboring strings. Apart from this finger technique there are no other exceptional difficulties.



**Example 12:** The Council of Birds (mm 1-4)

III. “The Bear Baloo” (*Allegretto – tempo di vals*) – The title of this third piece announces the presence of a bear which appears to be dancing. This beautiful steady waltz tempo presented in the left hand accompaniment, is joined by two harp effects in the right hand: glissando and *près de la table*. The right hand alternates repeatedly between these two effects, developing the technique of rapid shifts of position.



**Example 13:** The Bear Baloo (mm 1-9)

A second passage, featuring both hands playing at a two-octave unison, develops the technique of fast thumb articulation on a succession of grace notes.



**Example 14:** The Bear Baloo (mm 11-18)

IV. “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” (*Allegro giusto*) – Throughout this piece the right hand plays a very simple sixteenth-note accompaniment which must be kept steady and even. Meanwhile, the left hand is challenged to highlight the melodic line which jumps from one octave to another, covering both bass and treble clef registers.





**Example 15:** Rikki-Tikki-Tavi (mm 1-5)

V. “The Serpent Kaa” (Adagio languido – molto rubato con fantasia) – This movement begins with a cadenza-like passage in which the harpist plays accelerating arpeggios. Then the accompaniment is introduced with delicacy in the right hand, while the left hand presents a simple melodic line composed of harmonics.

**Example 16:** The Serpent Kaa (mm 1-9)

VI. “The Monkey Falk Bandar-Log” (*Allegretto*) – This piece is the simplest of all seven, focusing on a quick articulation brought by all fingers of both hands. The constant motion of the sixteenth-note pattern, culminating in an *accelerando*, leads the performer in an increase of energy until the end of the piece.



**Example 17:** The Monkey Falk Bandar-Log (mm 18-25)

VII. “The Man Cub Mowgli” (*Allegro giusto*) – This last movement of the suite brings a new technical element. During the left hand sixteenth-note accompaniment, the right hand brings a strongly accented melodic line. For this passage to be successful, finger articulation is not enough; when the right hand plays two to four notes simultaneously, the wrist must help the hand detach more from the harp, followed by a quick return to the strings.



**Example 18:** The Man Cub Mowgli (mm 1-8)

A more elaborate solo harp piece by Carmen Petra-Basacopol is the suite *Six Preludes*, Op. 13/14.<sup>69</sup> This piece is one of Petra-Basacopol's favorites, and was dedicated to the founder of the Romanian harp school, harpist Liana Pasquali (1915–2010).<sup>70</sup> Composed in 1958, this work is one of Carmen Petra-Basacopol's most performed solo harp works, and can be studied and performed by advanced harpists.

The first prelude, *Allegro vivo*, features rapid triplets in the right-hand accompaniment while the left hand plays a simple melody (ex. 19). The atmosphere of the beginning of the prelude is fluid, and then in the middle section Petra-Basacopol introduces a second motive which is more aggressive and percussive (ex. 20). After the end of this second passage the composer brings back the first motive.

<sup>69</sup> The published score specifies "Op. 13," but the composer calls the *Six Preludes* "Op. 14" in the list of works she provided to me.

<sup>70</sup> Radio Romania Muzicala, <http://www.romania-muzical.ro/articole/art.shtml?c=49&g=5&arh=1&y=2010&a=980301> (accessed 28 April 2013).



Example 19: Prelude I (mm 1-7)



Example 20: Prelude I (mm 22-36)

In the second prelude, *Allegro risoluto e trionfale*, the hands move in contrary motion in a fanfare-like statement. To accomplish the composer's vision of this passage, the harpist is challenged to replace his or her fingers from a great distance from the harp to play the repeated three-note chords in the right hand and the perfect fourth interval in the left hand. To correctly



execute this passage both hands should lift upward, bending at the wrist; this will give the cleanest articulation and avoid hitting the strings already vibrating (ex. 21).



**Example 21:** Prelude II (mm 1-5)

Throughout the third prelude, *Allegretto con spirito*, the right hand must keep the fast accompaniment light and steady, while supporting the left hand's melodic line composed of intervals, chords, and arpeggios (ex. 22). In the middle part of the prelude, Petra-Basacopol breaks this idea momentarily to present a passage of flowing arpeggios executed across the full length of the harp (ex. 23).



**Example 22:** Prelude III (mm 1-12)

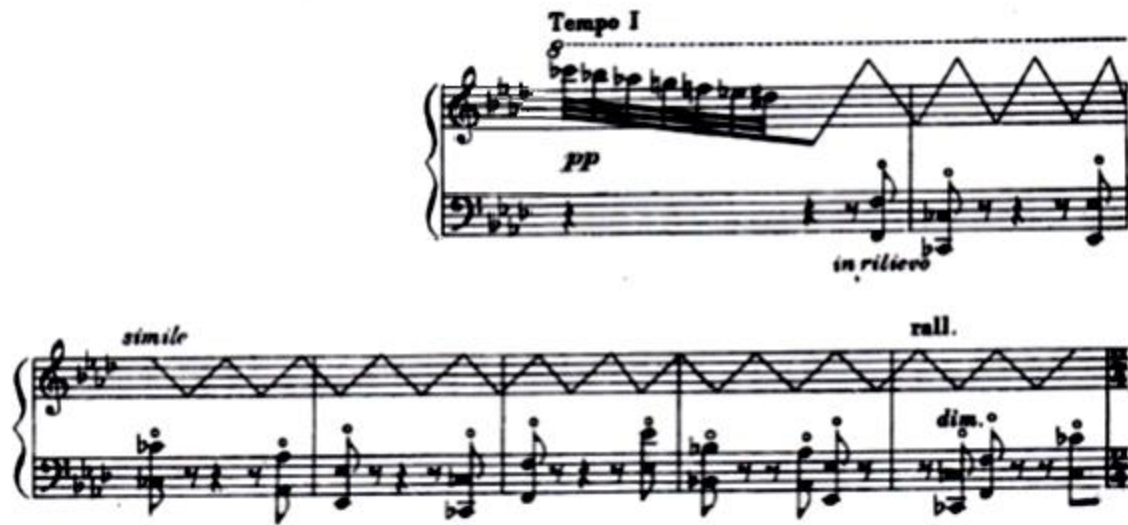


**Example 23:** Prelude III (mm 22-25)

The opening motive of the fourth prelude, *Andantino semplice*, is very transparent and simple in both the melody and accompaniment. The composer splits these elements equally between the hands (ex. 24). Moreover, the idea of the ethereal persists throughout the fourth prelude. A *piu mosso* passage features a right-hand accompaniment of continuous sixteenth notes while the left hand plays a simple melody using the harp effect of harmonics. To emphasize even more the idea of ethereal weightlessness, the composer changes the right-hand accompaniment from sixteenths to a multiple continuous glissandos (ex. 25). The return of the transparent opening motive concludes this prelude.



**Example 24:** Prelude IV (mm 1-5)

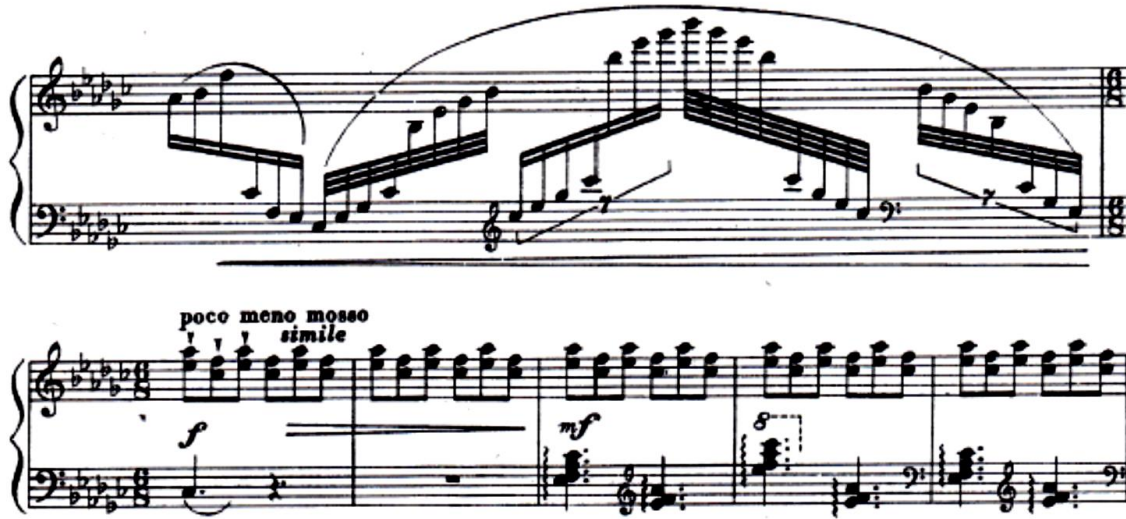


**Example 25:** Prelude IV (mm 22-28)

Throughout the fifth prelude, *Presto*, the main motive is a tumultuous accompaniment shared by both hands, with sparkling octaves in the right-hand melody (ex. 26). All the tension that grows throughout this passage is temporarily set aside while flowing arpeggios transition into a *poco meno mosso* motive, in which the right hand accompanies the left-hand melody (ex. 27). The concluding passage features the reappearance of the main motive, restoring the accumulation of tensions and emotions.



**Example 26:** Prelude V (mm 1-3)



**Example 27:** Prelude V (mm 12-17)

The sixth prelude, *Allegro Moderato quasi grottesco*, picks up on the energy left off at the end of the previous prelude, grabbing the listener's attention by its melodic motive of repeated, syncopated octaves. The left hand plays a double role of sustaining the accompaniment and presenting an accented melodic motive in the thumb (ex. 28). These two melodic motives highlight the *grottesco* character presented in the title.



**Example 28:** Prelude VI (mm 1-10)



Although any of these six preludes can be played separately, when performed together the contrasts are more obvious and the six individual preludes complete each other. Diverse technical elements including glissandos, harmonics, arpeggios, and pedal slides are presented in each prelude.

In her chamber music compositions, regardless of the instrumentation, Carmen Petra-Basacopol always writes for the harp in a way that combines well with the other instruments. The *Sonata for Flute and Harp*, Op. 17, was composed in 1961, and represents a combination of two instruments so treasured by the composer. The special sonority of this sonata captures and keeps the interest of both listeners and performers through the energy and dynamism of the outer movements and the dreamy and melancholic mood of the middle movement.

The first movement of the sonata, *Allegro appassionato*, begins with a tumultuous tempo set by the solo harp introduction, which invites the abrupt line of the flute to join in. This tempo with such intense feeling, calms down when it reaches the *poco rubato* passage. With this passage Petra-Basacopol challenges the performers to continue the contrast between tumult and rubato throughout the movement.

In the second movement, *Andante espressivo, rubato*, the musical discourse between flute and harp is given more time and space, as each instrument expresses its own characteristic beauty and splendor in solo appearance. Regarding the harp part, Petra-Basacopol respects the simple traditional role of the instrument with one exception, namely the pedal slides. This effect brings an exotic, timeless aspect to this enchanting musical picture. The last movement, *Allegro vivo*, retains the lively spirit of the first movement while bringing in a more percussive character. Both instruments have shorter articulations and attacks, suggesting an eccentric dance.

Carmen Petra-Basacopol's musical thought, creating a meaningful harmonic universe,

draws the appreciation of many performers. From my perspective, the progression of harmonic ideas in Petra-Basacopol's works and her unique approach to the music, proves her outstanding level of compositional technique.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to inform the musical world about the Romanian composer, Carmen Petra-Basacopol (b. 1926), and her works featuring the harp. The harp did not receive much attention from Romanian composers throughout history. Between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Romanian harp literature grew very little. The composers who focused on writing for this instrument were George Enescu, Martian Negrea, Paul Constantinescu, Carmen Petra-Basacopol, and Felicia Donceanu. Among these composers, Carmen Petra-Basacopol is the exception because of her numerous contributions to the harp literature. Petra-Basacopol is the only Romanian composer who consistently wrote music for this instrument. Having a great love for harp, her music provides opportunities for this instrument to shine in solo works, chamber music formats, as well in symphonic works and operas in ways never heard or thought of before. Although not a harpist, Carmen Petra-Basacopol gives proof of great knowledge and, mastery of idiomatic harp technique. Petra-Basacopol's harp works can be studied by harpists with different levels of ability. By studying her music the performer benefits from the standpoint of instrumental technique, and also connects to Carmen Petra-Basacopol's musical creativity. The pieces analyzed in this document represent only a fraction of the composer's imagination regarding the harp capabilities. Not only as a harpist, but as a musician, I find that Petra-Basacopol's music refines and matures my artistic experience.

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## APPENDIX 1: PERMISSION LETTERS

Carmen Petra-Basacopol  
Bl. Eroii Sanitari Nr. 14, Sector 5,  
Bucuresti, Romania, cod 050474.  
(004-021/317-50-61)

Date: March 10, 2013

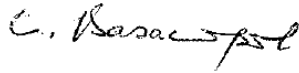
Dear Gabriela,

As requested, a *gratis* is hereby granted for the use of musical examples from the compositions of Carmen Petra-Basacopol, solely for educational purposes as included in your doctoral monograph entitled *The Musical Life of Carmen Petra-Basacopol and Her Various Contributions to the Harp Literature*.

Please retain a copy of this letter as evidence of this permission.

Thank you,

Carmen Petra-Basacopol

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Basacopol', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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# EDITURA MUZICALĂ

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Aprilie 25, 2013

Gabriela Chihaescu  
849 Geranium St,  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Chihaescu,

Thank you for your e-mail correspondence requesting permission to include excerpts from Carmen Petra-Basacopol's harp collection *Works for Harp* in your DMA thesis.

As requested, a *gratis* is hereby granted for the use of musical examples from the compositions of Carmen Petra-Basacopol, solely for educational purposes as included in your doctoral written document entitled *The Musical Life of Carmen Petra-Basacopol and Her Various Contributions to the Harp Literature*. Please retain a copy of this letter as evidence of this permission.

Sincerely,

Editura Muzicala



## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF HARP WORKS PROVIDED BY THE COMPOSER

### Carmen Petra - Basacopol compozitie p. harpa

1. Suita pentru harpa, op. 10 (1958)
2. Sonata pastorală pentru harpa solo, op. 14 nr. 1.
3. Sase preludii pentru harpa solo, op. 14 nr. 2.
4. Sonata pentru flaut și harpa, op. 17 (1961)
5. Cinci liederuri pentru tenor și harpa, versuri de Mariana Dumitrescu  
op. 22 nr. 1 (1963)
6. Doua liederuri pentru bas și harpa, op. 22 nr. 2
7. Divertisment pentru harpa, vîntul de inflatori, contrabas  
și xylophon (octet), op. 30 (1969)
8. Concertino pentru harpa, orchestra de coarde și timpane, op. 40  
(1975)
9. Variațiuni pe o temă macedo-română, pentru harpa și  
violoncel, op. 44 (1979)
10. Castea Junglei - Suita pentru copii op. 61
11. Mica Sirenă op. 69 (1993)
12. Passacaglia op. 62 (1991)
13. Dansuri  $\begin{cases} \rightarrow \text{Dansul timpului} \\ \rightarrow \text{Dansul cerului} \\ \rightarrow \text{Dansul pămîntului} \end{cases}$  op. 76
14. Portrete  $\begin{cases} \rightarrow \text{P. unui harpist (Liana Pargnelli)} \\ \rightarrow \text{Autoportret} \\ \rightarrow \text{P. unui harpist (Ion Ivan-Romea)} \end{cases}$  op. 76
15. Aforisme op. 117 (2007)
16. Anotimpuri pentru harpa solo op. 81 (Premiu V.C.M.R.) -
17. Trio pentru harpa, flaut și clarinet op. 57 (1987)
18. Mușca, per singula (flaut, harpa, vioară, violă, violoncel)  
op. 72 (1994)
19. Concertul nr. 2 p. ~~harpa~~ harpa și orchestra, op. 75
20. Rupăciunile Regelui David p. bas, harpa și pian, op. 77 (1992)
21. Imagini europene p. harpa solo op. 59 (1990)
22. Elegie p. harpa și clarinet op. 98
23. Fantazie p. flaut și harpa op. 103 (2003)



## VITA

Gabriela Chihăescu is a native of Bucharest, Romania, where she began her early harp studies at the “George Enescu” Music High School. She received her bachelor degree in harp performance at the Music University in Bucharest in 2004. She came to the United States of America in 2006 to complete her master’s and doctoral degrees in harp performance at the Louisiana State University under Dr. Kimberly Houser.

Chihăescu won first prize at the National Music Olympics in 1993, 1996, 1997 and 1998. Two years later she is the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner at the International Harp Competition in Sofia, Bulgaria. Ms. Chihăescu has performed as a soloist with the Giurgiu Symphony Orchestra “Wallachia” (Romania) in 2003, with the Iași State Philharmonic (Romania) in 2005, with LSU Symphony Orchestra as a winner of the 2007 and 2009 LSU concerto competitions, and with the Louisiana Sinfonietta in 2008. As a harp educator, Chihăescu has experience in private studio instruction and has taught at the “George Enescu” Music High School in Bucharest, Romania.