



**UNIVERSITATEA NAȚIONALĂ DE MUZICĂ  
BUCUREȘTI**  
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*Defining Nations Musically: Discourses on Nationalism  
in 20th Century European Music*

International Conference

25 June 2021, 10.00 – 18.00 (Bucharest time), Zoom

- 10:00-** Welcome addresses  
**10:10** Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rector, New Europe College, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
Moderator: Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ
- 10:10-** Joep Th. LEERSEN, Professor of European Studies, University of Amsterdam  
**10:40** *Art Nouveau Nationalism and Late-Romantic National Music*
- 10:40-** Florinela POPA, Associate Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
**11:10** *Writings and Rewritings of the History of Romanian Music under Communism (1954-1968)*
- 11:10-** Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
**11:40** *A Romanian Hamlet Opera in the Midst of Debates about the National and the Universal in Music*
- 11:40-** Harry WHITE, Professor, University College Dublin, Fellow, Royal Irish Academy  
**12:10** of Music  
*Beyond "The Soul of a Nation": New Meanings for Irish Music*
- 12:10-** **Coffee Break**  
**12:30**
- Moderator: Valentina SANDU-DEDIU
- 12:30-** Olga MANULKINA, Associate Professor, Saint Petersburg University  
**13:00** *Still in the USSR: 19th Century Russian Composers, 20th Century Soviet Rhetoric, and 21st Century Listener*

- 13:00-** Melita MILIN, Senior Fellow, Institute of Musicology, Belgrade  
**13:30** *Balancing Musical Nationalisms in State-Socialist Yugoslavia*
- 13:30-** Antígona RĂDULESCU, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
**14:00** *J.S.Bach - German National Composer or „Earthly Orpheus”?*
- 14:00-** Rūta STANEVIČIŪTĖ- KELMICKIENĖ, Professor, Lithuanian Academy of Music  
**14:30** and Theatre  
*Nationalism and Lithuanian Music History Writing: from Colonial to Postcolonial Context*
- 14:30- 15:00** **Lunch Break**
- Moderator: Melita MILIN
- 15:00-** Anna DALOS, Head of the Archives and Research Group for 20th-21st Century  
**15:30** Hungarian Music, Research Center for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest  
*Nation Building through Solmization. Nationalism and Music Pedagogy in the Context of Zoltán Kodály's Method*
- 15:30-** Costin MOISIL, Associate Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
**16:00** *Folk Music in Romanian Art Music Histories Under Ceaușescu*
- 16:00-** Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest  
**16:30** *MARCHING THE NATION. Military bands and the construction of a national march in communist Romania*
- 16:30- 17:00** **General discussion**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89315985452?pwd=b3dwQko0WkJWNTE1aTdJTnljc2dnUT09>

Meeting ID: 893 1598 5452

Passcode: 218368

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**Anna DALOS, Head of the Archives and Research Group for 20th-21st Century Hungarian Music, Research Center for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest**

*Nation Building through Solmization. Nationalism and Music Pedagogy in the Context of Zoltán Kodály's Method*

The use of solmization in musical pedagogy is connected to the name of Zoltán Kodály worldwide. However, my paper does not aim to investigate the different musical pedagogical sources or the influence of the Kodály method. It looks primarily for the political and cultural background of the formation of the method, concentrating on the Hungarian nationalism of the 1940s which influenced Kodály's concept about 'Hungarianness', and tries to answer the question why the composer, despite his individualistic modernism, turned to musical pedagogy at all. Thus, the paper aims at revealing the historical context that made possible the development of the method. Similarly, it examines the question of what musical benefit Kodály recognized in the method of solmization for the national and democratic development of Hungary, amidst of the Nazi and fascist orientation of the official state politics. Following this question, the paper turns to the issues of clear singing, of the development of hearing and musical memory, as well as the problems of monophony and polyphony in singing as symbols for the 'unity' of the Hungarian nation.

Short bio:

Anna DALOS studied musicology at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest (1993–1998), and attended the Doctoral Programme in Musicology of the same institution (1998–2002). She spent a year on a German exchange scholarship (DAAD) at Humboldt University, Berlin (1999–2000). A winner of the 'Lendület' grant of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, she is head of the Archives and Research Group for 20th–21st Century Hungarian Music at the Institute of Musicology. Her research focuses on 20th century music, and the history of composition and musicology in Hungary. Her recent book, *Zoltán Kodály's World of Music* was published by University of California Press in 2020.

**Nicolae GHEORGHIȚĂ, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest**

*MARCHING THE NATION.*

*Military bands and the construction of a national march in communist Romania*

Folkloric themes have been a major source of constant inspiration for Romanian brass band compositions since their foundation in 1831. However, with the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the transformation of the Society of Romanian Composers into the Union of Composers and Musicologists of the Romanian People's Republic (1949) and the establishment of the Military Music Subsection (1957), following the Soviet model, a body that would manage and guide, at the level of the whole country, the entire creation for brass bands, folkloric music

became dominant and obligatory in all compositions for brass bands, both military and amateur. All the compositions produced during the Romanian Monarchy will be rejected and taken out of use, being replaced by “new” repertoires, accessible and standardized at the Army level, repertoires based on an exclusively folk and Romanian melody.

The study investigates the musical production of the best-known cazon genre, inseparably linked to the existence of brass bands - the march, the ways in which nationalist ideas and themes were assimilated, metamorphosed and expressed by the genre in question during the communist period in Romania, in relation to the political transformations of the state and the “cultural” policies of the Military Music Bureau.

### Short bio:

Nicolae GHEORGHÎĂ is Professor of Byzantine Musical Palaeography, Musical Stylistics and Theories of Byzantine Chant Performance at the National University of Music Bucharest (UNMB), as well as a conductor and performer with the *Psalmodia* Choir of Byzantine music. He is a graduate of the same institution, and has taken higher studies in Greece (Athens and Thessaloniki), and he has been the recipient of research grants from the universities of Cambridge, Saint Petersburg, and Venice. Gheorghîă has also completed two post-doctoral programmes, at the New Europe College and the Musical Institute for Advanced Doctoral Studies, Bucharest. His writings include over fifty articles and 11 books, and edited volumes. Gheorghîă has been a member of the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists since 2001, and has twice won the prestigious institution’s prize, in 2010 (*Byzantine Music between Constantinople and the Danubian Principalities. Studies in Byzantine Musicology*) and 2015 (*Musical Crossroads. Church Chants and Brass Bands at the Gates of the Orient*), and the Music Prize of the Romanian Academy of Sciences in the same year 2015, for the same book, *Musical Crossroads*. Nicolae Gheorghîă is also the editor of the *Musica Sacra* section within the *Musicology Today* international periodical of the UNMB.

### **Joep Th. LEERSEN, Professor of European Studies, University of Amsterdam**

#### *Art Nouveau Nationalism and Late-Romantic National Music*

The notion of “national music” is usually linked to the High Romantic tradition from Weber to Verdi, Liszt and Wagner, combining the use of national-historical topics and demotic-traditional idioms with a Romantic outlook and self-projection. By the late nineteenth century, however, and especially in the provincial peripheries of the European empires, a type of cultural nationalism arose that proclaimed a national (rather than provincial) identity in terms of progressive modernity and participation in a new, cosmopolitan and pan-European culture. We see evidence of such an “art nouveau nationalism” from Barcelona to Riga and from Dublin and Helsinki to Ljubljana and Bucharest. Composers in those environments, in the post-Wagnerian, Late Romantic generation, were turning to “national” musical idioms, not out of rustic or historicist nostalgia, but as a way to extend the harmonic and melodic potential of Western

classical music. My lecture will provide a European comparative outline and attempt to provide a sharper typology and periodization.

Short bio:

Joep Th. LEERSEN (Leiden 1955) studied Comparative Literature in Aachen; following research in Dublin (where he also took a Licentiate in Flute from the Royal Irish Academy of Music) and Toronto, he took his doctorate at Utrecht University on a thesis on the entangled, multicultural roots of Irish nationalism (*Mere Irish & Fior-Ghael*, 3rd ed. 2010). He has been Professor of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam since 1991. His work deals with the theory and history of national and cultural (self-)stereotyping (*Imagology*, w. Manfred Beller, 2007); the comparative history of national thought and national movements in Europe (*National Thought in Europe*, 3rd ed. 2018; *Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe*, 2018); and the theory and history of the humanities (*Comparative Literature in Britain, 1800-2000*, 2019). His work has been honoured by the Spinoza Prize, the Madame de Staël Award, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Bucharest.

**Olga MANULKINA, Associate Professor, Saint Petersburg University**

*Still in the USSR: 19th Century Russian Composers, 20th Century Soviet Rhetoric, and 21st Century Listener*

On the last pages of her book *Russian Music and Nationalism from Glinka to Stalin* (2007) Marina Frolova-Walker stated that it was “in the writings of critics and musicologists” during the Thaw that “the discourse of ‘narodnost’ and the affirmation of the primacy of Russian classics lingered on.” She pointed out that “while this discourse never recovered its late Stalinist peak, it was never relegated to the background, and if anything it has become much stronger in the last few years, as Russian nationalism has been promoted more assiduously by Russia’s post-Soviet rulers.”

A decade later, in 2020, Evgeny Dobrenko concluded the last chapter of his book *Late Stalinism: The Aesthetics of Politics* (2020) with even darker diagnosis: “After a short pause [‘accidental, short-term and superficial perestroika’] Russia with such inevitability... reproduces the same political culture... and resorts to the same rhetoric that fuelled Soviet propaganda,” the country “has never left its Soviet past” and “naturally returned to the late, never passing Stalinism.” An abstract of the book states that it is “the least studied period of Soviet history”; the same can be said about this period in history of Soviet musicology: neither events of 1949, nor continuity of Soviet rhetoric and approaches of “never passing Stalinism” received enough attention. In the paper I will discuss nationalism remaining an obligatory theme while “national” (together with “narodny”) remaining obligatory definition of works, movements, operatic numbers, composers’ oeuvre, style, and status, in Russian literature on Russian 19th century music: not on the upper level of scholarship, but on the level of textbooks for conservatories and music schools as well as of sites on classical music and opera. Soviet and post-Soviet texts there exist side by side, the new generations learning the same rhetoric that has hardly been revised or de-

Sovietized.

Short bio:

Olga MANULKINA is an Associate Professor at Saint Petersburg State University, a founding director of the MA program “Music criticism”. Founding editor-in-chief (2009–2018) of the journal *Opera Musicologica*, a music critic of the Russian federal newspaper *Kommersant* (1995–2002) and *Afisha* magazine (2003–2009). Fulbright alumna (CUNY Graduate Center, 2002). Manulkina is the author of the book *From Ives to Adams: American Music of the Twentieth Century* (2010), and numerous articles, including: Leonard Bernstein’s 1959 Triumph in the Soviet Union (in: *The Rite of Spring at 100, 1913/2013*, IUP, 2017); ‘Foreign’ versus ‘Russian’ in Soviet and Post-Soviet Musicology and Music Education (in: *Russian Music since 1917: Reappraisal and Rediscovery*, OUP, 2017); Stravinsky & Craft Conversations in Russian and its reception (in: *Stravinsky in Context*, CUP, 2020), and over 500 reviews; contributing editor with Pavel Gershenson of *A Century of Le Sacre — a Century of Modernism* (Bolshoi theatre, 2013) and *New Russian Music Criticism, 1993-2003* (2015).

**Melita MILIN, Senior Fellow, Institute of Musicology, Belgrade**

*Balancing Musical Nationalisms in State-Socialist Yugoslavia*

Disregarding specific features of each of its state socialist members, political leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries worked hard on unifying as much as possible political, social and cultural systems in those countries. Although the political class were aware that nations living in the Eastern bloc had previously, before the establishment of socialist regimes, had different historical pasts and cultural traditions, it was a priority to them to put stress more on their imposed common aspirations than on their distinct features. At the same time, they supported shaping national identities, but on a strictly controlled basis, as a vehicle of stimulating “revolutionary patriotism”.

Yugoslavia shared all the main ideas of the Eastern bloc, but only during the first four post-war years, before its president Tito had a split with Stalin in 1948. The political and cultural climate became progressively more liberal and west-oriented after that. However, like the Eastern bloc as a whole, Yugoslavia had problems to homogenize economically and culturally its constituent nations. As a multinational federal state whose nations and minorities had very different cultural traditions, Yugoslavia was frail because the equilibrium among the six republics and two autonomous provinces within one of them, was hard to achieve and was usually based on problematic compromises. The main slogan in the country, “Unity and brotherhood” was emptied of its meaning already during Tito’s life. One of the main targets of attacks in the sphere of culture, and more specifically arts and music, were nationalistic tones in them, real or imagined. Different aspects of balancing nationalisms will be discussed in my contribution on the examples of positive discrimination of those constitutive nations and minorities which had a very slight, if any, tradition of art music. On the other hand, some other constitutive nations of Yugoslavia that used to be parts of most developed Western nations for centuries, had quite a

rich musical heritage. In my contribution I will also discuss the ways different national identities in the sphere of music were affirmed not only through composed music, but also through media coverage, guest tours and festivals. The question will also be considered whether it was possible at all to achieve a supra-national, Yugoslav musical identity under the given circumstances.

#### Short bio:

Melita MILIN is Senior Fellow at the Institute of Musicology, Belgrade (retired since 2020). She graduated musicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade and obtained her PhD degree from the Philosophical Faculty in Ljubljana. She was member of international projects on musicians' correspondences (2001–2003) and migrating musicians (2007–2008), both organized by Prof. Helmut Loos, University of Leipzig. She was leader of the Serbian team on the bilateral project *Serbian and Greek art music. Basic research for a comparative study*, 2005–2007. Melita Milin was co-founder and editor-in-chief of the first five issues of the international journal *Muzikologija* (2001–2005); vice-president of the Serbian Musicological Society (2006–2012), leader of the main project of her Institute (2010–2017) and the Institute's director (2013–2017). Melita Milin's research is focused on 20th-century Serbian music in the context of contemporary musical developments in Europe. Her investigations include the study of influences of dominant ideologies (national and political) on composers' works and their relations to aesthetical programs and practices elsewhere in the world. Besides numerous studies, she has published a book on Serbian music after WW2 (1998), a monograph on Ljubica Marić (2018), and was editor of a book on Slavenski-Schott correspondence (2020) and of a number of collections of articles.

#### **Costin MOISIL, Associate Professor, National University of Music Bucharest**

##### *Folk Music in Romanian Art Music Histories Under Ceaușescu*

The Ceaușescu regime's increased interest in folk music is hardly surprising. Peasant music, in its version altered by cultural activists, had been used as a propaganda tool since the beginning of the communist period in the late 1940s. Two decades later, with the distancing from the USSR and the abandonment of socialist internationalism in favor of nationalism, folk music was seen not only as the music of the progressive social classes, but also as the 'backbone of the musical being' of the Romanian nation.

Folk music was even a part of the history of Romanian art music syllabus under Ceaușescu: it occupied an important place in the textbooks written by Octavian Lazăr Cosma and Petre Brâncuși, the two professors who taught the latter subject at the Bucharest Conservatory. This seems all the more curious as the history of Romanian art music was studied for only one year, while folk music, as a separate subject, for two years.

My paper investigates the way in which folk music is presented in the books of the two mentioned professors; the reason for the presence of folk music in volumes on the history of

Romanian art music; and the connection between the image of folk music in these works and national-communism in Ceaușescu's Romania.

Short bio:

Costin MOISIL is an associate professor at the National University of Music in Bucharest. His research focuses on Byzantine church music and oral musics in Romania. His latest book is *Constructing a Romanian Identity in Church Music* (2018, in Romanian). Moisil is an editor for the Ethnophonie CD series of Romanian traditional musics, and he was an executive editor of *Musicology Today: Journal of the National University of Music Bucharest* (2015-2020). He was a Ștefan Odobleja fellow at the New Europe College (2012-2013) and is currently a member of the *Nationalism and Its Effects on Music in Central and Eastern Europe since the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century* research group in the same institution.

**Florinela POPA, Associate Professor, National University of Music Bucharest**

*Writings and Rewritings of the History of Romanian Music under Communism (1954-1968)*

The construction of a national identity – including through music – in post-war Romania was marked for decades by Communist ideology. Local musicology has kept pace with the subtlest political-ideological changes – and not because the authors necessarily wanted this –, but because writing about music has always been guided, regulated, sometimes forced to the point of absurdity to fit into the matrix of Romanian Communist nationalism.

What I propose in this paper is to trace how the Bureau of the Musicology Section of the Composers' Union has been involved in this process. The Bureau's main role was to guide and control the members of the Section, to evaluate the professional and ideological level of musicological projects or works. The minutes of the Bureau meetings held between 1954-1968, documents belonging to the archives of the Romanian Composers and Musicologists Union, are the main source of documentation for this work.

Short bio:

Florinela POPA is Associate Professor at the National University of Music in Bucharest, where she previously studied music education and musicology. She is also director of the Department of Musicology and Music Education Sciences of the same institution and executive editor of the academic journal *Musicology Today* of UNMB. She was postdoctoral research fellow at New Europe College, Bucharest (2008; 2011-2012; 2021-2021) and in Musical Institute for Doctoral Advanced Studies, National University of Music, Bucharest (2012-2013). Her publications include the books *Mihail Jora. A European Modern* (Bucharest, 2009), *Sergei Prokofiev* (Bucharest, 2012), as well as about 100 studies and articles in musicological journals and collective volumes. She is also co-editor of the ten volumes in the series *Documents in the Archive of the National Museum "George Enescu": Articles on George Enescu in Periodicals* (Bucharest, 2009-2017). In 2012, she was awarded the Union of the Romanian Composers and



Musicology Prize for historiography.

**Antigona RĂDULESCU, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest**

*J.S.Bach - German National Composer or „Earthly Orpheus”?*

A study of Romanian musicology during the communist regime in Romania is an undertaking that still requires re-evaluation. Apparently, the main flaw of the period for writing about music would be the political entrenchment, the discourse becoming a tool of narrow interests, directed by several forces in power. But it can also reveal other coordinates - not only those subject to the totalitarian mentality, but also those that indicate the relationship with the national theme, with the place of a culture often understood through the filter of binomials such as national-universal, center-periphery, formalism-realism, etc.

Even at the level of a punctual analysis around the texts written or translated in Romanian on J.S. Bach, from which the present study starts and will be largely based, some of the tendencies of Romanian musicology, with their hidden aspirations, complexes and intentions, are quite clearly visible, in close relation to the evolution of historical events on the scale of the whole society: the contradictory relation with the tradition of the interwar period, the submission to the Soviet model, the awakening of the national problem and, last but not least, the glorification of a national and ethnic specificity through the protochronistic attitude.

Short bio:

Musicologist and PhD in music since 2002, Antigona RĂDULESCU is Professor at the National University of Music Bucharest teaching courses of polyphony, semiotics and musical narratology. Her musicological activity includes: published books - *Perspective semiotice în muzică* (2003), *Johann Sebastian Bach* (2010), *Introducere în semiotica muzicală* (2013) - book for which she received the Romanian Academy Award (2015), *Odiseea muzicală/Musical Odyssey 1864-2014*; main collaborator of the volume *Muzica românească între 1944-2000* by Valentina Sandu-Dediu (2002), translated into German (2006; Rumänische Musik nach 1944); coordinator and co-author of the collective volume *Estetica. Un alt fel de manual* (2007); author of several university courses on counterpoint and musical semiotics and studies on various themes, from semiotics to modern and contemporary creation, published in academic journals.

**Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rector, New Europe College – Institute for Advanced Study, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest**

*A Romanian Hamlet Opera in the Midst of Debates about the National and the Universal in Music*

In that period of communist Romania, when composers were intensely debating the relationship between the national and the universal (in articles published in the *Muzica Magazine* of the Romanian Composers and Musicologists' Union), more precisely between 1964-1970, Pascal Benteiu (1927-2016) worked on his three operas, all inspired by world literature. After *Jertfirea Ifigeniei* (The Sacrifice of Iphigenia based on Euripides, radio opera, 1964) and *Amorul doctor* (*Doctor Love* based on Molière, *opera buffa*, 1968), he released *Hamlet* after Shakespeare as a concert opera in 1971, on his own libretto (he had finished writing the score in 1969). Stage productions of this work followed in Marseille and Bucharest, and the score and performances have been extensively reviewed by Romanian musicologists. In this paper I will focus on its reception in the 1970s in the particular ideological context of Bucharest concert life, drawing on the unique archive of the Romanian Composers and Musicologists' Union.

Short bio:

Valentina SANDU-DEDIU graduated in musicology from the National Music University of Bucharest in 1990. She has been teaching at the same institution since 1993 (professor of musicology and stylistics). She wrote and edited 12 books, over 40 studies and 300 articles, see *Ipostaze stilistice și simbolice ale manierismului în muzică* (Bucharest 1995), *Rumänische Musik nach 1944* (Saarbrücken, 2006); *Despre stil și retorică în muzică* (Bucharest 2010); editor of *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești* (Bucharest, 2020). Valentina Sandu-Dediu was a fellow of Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, she is rector of New Europe College, Bucharest (since 2014), and received the Peregrinus-Stiftung Prize of Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften in 2008.

**Rūta STANEVIČIŪTĖ- KERMICKIENĖ, Professor, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre**

*Nationalism and Lithuanian Music History Writing: from Colonial to Postcolonial Context*

In the Soviet Union, historiography was one of the most strictly controlled areas of science. The impact of the Soviet science doctrine on music historiography manifested itself primarily through ideological schemas, defining the field of research in national cultures from the geopolitical and chronological viewpoints. Paradoxically, the Soviet Union as an imperial state officially declared internationalism in the area of science but did not promote any real cultural comparativism. Individual histories of music of the Soviet republics were modelled after a single methodological cliché, without undertaking a comparative analysis of broader processes. Due to the political and historical context, the Lithuanian music history writing highlighted the heterogeneity of historiographical paradigms as reflected in the expressions of the official discourse (syntheses of

national music history) and individual historic narratives.

In recent years, the theory of postcolonialism has become a productive tool for the development of comparative studies of the culture of the USSR and post-Soviet countries. That allows the reconsideration of the discourse of nationalism and internationalism, as well as the representations of authenticity and hybridity as colonial and postcolonial identities under the imperial regime. Both in the Russian Empire and in the Soviet Union, the dominating colonisers realised their power through power distance. The expression of nationalism tolerated by the official ideology in the Soviet Union vividly illustrated such a hybrid colonial identity based on double optics: observing and accepting one's own identity from outside and inside, through the eyes of the colonisers and the colonised (cf. Etkind 2011). In the 1960s to 1970s, post-colonial motifs started taking shape in both Lithuanian music creation and its musicological reflection that reflected a new approach to cultural differences as well as representation of national identity. The paper is dedicated to re-assessment of Lithuanian music history writing from the post-colonial perspective.

#### Short bio:

Rūta STANEVIČIŪTĖ is a full professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Her field of interest are modernism and nationalism in 20–21-c. music, philosophical and cultural issues in the analysis of contemporary music, music and politics, and the studies of music reception. She has conducted research at the universities of Warsaw University, Cambridge University, King's College London, Berlin University of Arts, CUNY, Paul Sacher Stiftung etc. She is the author of the book on the ISCM and Lithuanian music (2015), co-author of the books on music and the Cold War (2018) and microtonal music in Central and Eastern Europe (2020), also edited and co-edited 12 collections of articles on twentieth- and twenty-first-century musical culture, and music philosophy. In 2005–10, she served as a chair of the Musicological section at the Lithuanian Composers' Union. Since 2020, she is a chief editor of the international scholarly journal *Lithuanian Musicology*. In 2020, she was awarded the National Prize of Lithuania.

#### **Harry WHITE, Professor, University College Dublin, Fellow, Royal Irish Academy of Music**

##### *Beyond "The Soul of a Nation": New Meanings for Irish Music*

The reception history of Irish music as 'the voice of nature' (Joseph Cooper Walker in 1786) and as 'the soul of a nation' (John Millington Synge in 1903) has had a long innings. Although a romantic attachment to Irish traditional music as the definitive signature of Irishness itself abides to the present moment, its capacity to define Ireland musically, and to engender national identity, has been overtaken by more recent modes of cultural transmission within the past half-century. This is partly because Ireland no longer adheres to a cultural self-awareness defined by the authority of church and state (as in the regeneration of Catholic-Gaelic images of Ireland nurtured by the Irish Free State from 1922 onwards), and partly because the global reception of Irish music bypasses its national signatures in favour of other distinctive agencies of

interpretation.

My purpose in this short paper is to examine two such agencies. The first of these concerns the current reception of Irish traditional music in Germany, where its mutation from an exotic ‘other’ (originally within the parameters of German music itself) to an increasingly popular means of refuge and redress on its own terms, imbues the music with fresh significance and value. The second agency of meaning can be located within the domain of Anglo-American cinema, in which Irish music functions as a signature of violence or protest, or both. Although it is self-evident that neither refuge nor violence are exclusive to Irish music as agencies of expression, both deepen the meaning of Irish traditional music as a global presence more generally, and both decisively transcend its nationalist reception history.

Short bio:

Harry WHITE is Professor of Music at University College Dublin and a Fellow of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. His many publications include *The Keeper’s Recital. Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (1998); *Musical Constructions of Nationalism. Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture, 1800-1945* (edited with Michael Murphy, 2001); *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (2008); and *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (edited with Barra Boydell in 2013). In 2020 he published *Music, Migration and European Culture: Essays in Honour of Vjera Katalinić* (edited with Ivano Cavallini and Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak), and *The Musical Discourse of Servitude. Authority, Autonomy and the Work-Concept in Fux, Bach and Handel*.