George Enescu: The Complete Musician
A Study of Violin Virtuosity in Enescu’s Third Sonata for Piano and Violin

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis presented by me for the Doctor of Musical Arts comprises only my original work except where due acknowledgement is made in the text to all other material used.

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Abstract

While preparing George Enescu’s third violin sonata (1926) for performance, I was struck by what I considered a completely distinctive musical language. Enescu’s music exploits the tactile joys of being a violinist at the same time as exploring a structurally sophisticated form. After my initial impression of its Romanian folk character, there emerged elements of Brahms and also blues-style portamenti similar to those found in Ravel’s violin sonata, composed in the same year. I was inspired to learn more about George Enescu’s attitude towards violin virtuosity in his time, and how it challenged or aided his composing.

The primary focus of this thesis is to explore the notion of Enescu as the ‘complete musician’ by examining the link between violin virtuosity and composition in his works. I will examine the history of the definition of the term ‘virtuoso’ and discuss the conflict inherent in the roles of performer, teacher, conductor and composer in the first half of the twentieth century. The thesis focuses on the Enescu’s third violin sonata, the most outstanding example of Enescu’s idiomatic writing for violin. Equally a virtuoso piece as well as a composition in the neoclassical mould, it encapsulates the synthesis of roles evident in Enescu’s career.
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Introduction

George Enescu's music is slowly gaining recognition.¹ In December 1989, the fall of Romania's Ceauşescu regime saw an end to the portrayal of Enescu as a supremely nationalist composer, a dismissive representation which had served to narrow his image as one of the most important international musical figures of the twentieth century.

Enescu (1881-1955) was recognised during his life as a violinist, conductor, teacher and pianist. While his multiple skills created confusion over his public identity, Noel Malcolm regards them as being 'simply the partial expressions of a single, extraordinary, total musicality of mind.'² Enescu's own assessment is simple: 'I have only one language: music. I try to speak it.'³

These words may lead us to the impression that Enescu held a clear perception of himself, especially when we also consider his assertion that 'my career as a violinist, even though it has cost me precious time, has not harmed my vocation as a composer.'⁴ However, Enescu's musical life was characterised by a tension which existed between his performing schedule and his need to compose. His two-fold career amounted to a double burden similar to that borne by Liszt, who wrote in Weimar in 1853: 'So long as I am applauded as a pianist, I won't be taken seriously as a composer.'⁵

The aim of this thesis is to examine the notion of Enescu as the 'complete musician' in the twentieth century, an era of specialisation. I will explore the meaning of virtuosity as it relates to Enescu, and consider aspects of virtuosity which appear in his Third Sonata for Piano and Violin dans le caractère populaire roumain (1926). In doing so I hope to clarify Enescu's attitude to violin virtuosity and how that may have influenced the aesthetics of his compositional language.

¹ The Romanian spelling 'George Enescu' will be used throughout this thesis. Bartók explained the alternative spellings of Enescu's name in 1946 'Family names with the suffix -escu are very common in pre-first world war Rumania. The intelligentsia of this part of Rumania was always under the influence of French civilization; scholars and artists who wanted to study or to display their abilities abroad, went first to France. Arrived in Paris, those with -escu names discovered with dismay that -escu sounds very bad indeed to French ears when pronounced in the French way. So they changed -escu to -esco in order to avoid ridicule.' Bela Bartók, 'Some Linguistic Observations', Tempo 14 (Mar. 1946): 7.
⁴ Enescu, Souvenirs, 155.
⁵ As quoted by Bernard Gavoty, ed. Souvenirs, 15.
This thesis begins with a brief overview of George Enescu’s life. In Chapter 2 I will examine ‘virtuosity’ and the meaning of the term ‘virtuoso’ as it relates to violinists. I will also explore whether Enescu’s activities fall within this definition as it stands in the twentieth century. Additionally, Enescu’s attitude to virtuosity will be considered alongside the aesthetics of his compositional language. In Chapter 3 I will evaluate Enescu’s interpretative language from the perspectives of teaching and performance. I will discuss Enescu’s interpretation of Bach’s violin music, and consider what this reveals about Enescu as fulfilling the ideal of the ‘complete musician’ of previous centuries. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of Enescu’s third violin sonata. The third sonata has been chosen because, while marking the pinnacle of Enescu’s writing for the violin, it is also one of his finest works of chamber music.

**Literature review**

A lack of English-language literature on Enescu reflects our neglect of his music on the international concert stage. Considering that his multifaceted identity as a performer, composer and teacher formed the key foundation of his musical language, there is also a notable absence of discussion about Enescu’s performing virtuosity as it may relate to his compositions.

Neglect of Enescu was most apparent during his lifetime. In 1954, the year before Enescu’s death, *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* devoted only a few paragraphs to him, these being little more than a reprint of the 1927 edition. It was not until 1980 that *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* devoted several pages to Enescu, illuminating him as a gifted performer, teacher and composer of international importance.

Most literature covering the life and work of Enescu is primarily published in Romanian or French. Of the books which have found their way to Australian libraries, most are essentially photographic records of Enescu’s life, complemented with well-known quotes from his memoirs. The photographic and literary compilations of Viorel

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Cosma and Andrei Tudor remain the most easily obtainable today. Of the major books detailing Enescu’s life, two must be immediately considered for translation into English: George Enescu, Monografie edited by Mircea Voicuca and Les Souvenirs de Georges Enesco, a condensed autobiography edited by Bernard Gavoty. The latter, a small volume, was taken from the text of twenty Conversations with Georges Enescu which were broadcast in 1951, and then again in 1953, over the national network of the Radiodiffusion Française. These recordings are currently held in the Institut National de l’Audiovisuel, Maison de la Radio in Paris. Les Souvenirs de George Enescu, published under Flammarion, was subsequently published in 1982 as Contrepoint dans le miroir.

Noel Malcolm’s biography, George Enescu: His Life and Music, provides a detailed view of the life and character of Enescu. Published in 1990, it remains the only English language biography available today. Previously, the English translation of Boris Kotylarov’s biography of Enescu was published in 1984.

Known during his life mostly for playing the violin, Enescu is discussed in detail in this capacity. Margaret Campbell, Boris Schwartz and Henry Roth provide valuable information in this regard. Carl Flesch’s memoirs are outstanding in their detailed assessment of Enescu’s character and musicianship, and also in providing a critique of his performance style, compositional output and teaching technique. More personal recollections can be found in the memoirs of Enescu’s students, among whom Yehudi Menuhin and Ida Haendel provide touching accounts. Enescu’s colleagues have not failed to pay tribute to him; the memoirs of Pablo Casals, Alfredo Casella, Fritz Kreisler

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and Joseph Szigeti provide comments and anecdotes which serve to bring the picture of Enescu’s life into sharper relief. Casals’s contribution is particularly revelatory on the topic of Enescu’s interpretation of Bach.

Several interesting articles provide direct transcriptions of Enescu’s masterclasses. In 1977 Dany Brunschwig transcribed Enescu’s teachings on Beethoven, Mozart, Vivaldi and notably Bach’s Chaconne for the American String Teacher. Similar transcriptions by Rose Heylbut and Helen Kaufmann appeared in Etude. These articles remain the most direct source of information on Enescu’s teaching and performance style.

Enescu’s later life coincided with the emergence of recordings and radio. Until recently most of Enescu’s orchestral and chamber music recordings could only be found, with difficulty, on the Romanian label Electrecord. Enescu was recently celebrated in 2005 by Evan Dickerson in MusicWeb-International with a Fiftieth Anniversary Commemoration through Recordings. This site includes a comprehensive survey of Enescu’s compositions and their currently available recordings, and a list of recordings Enescu himself has made as a pianist, violinist and conductor. Lawrence Foster, Cristian Mandeal, Horia Andreescu, Dinu Lipatti and Luiza Borac are all mentioned as being the foremost interpreters of Enescu’s orchestral or piano music. For live performances of Enescu’s music, the site recommends the biannual Enescu Competition and Festival in Bucharest. A review of Enescu’s famous Decca recording of Bach’s Mass in B minor, BWV232 is available at www.jsbach.org. Enescu’s own recording of Bach’s partitas and sonatas for solo violin provide the most valuable insight into his approach to the violin music of Bach. Of the twentieth-century violinists who have recorded Enescu’s music, Yehudi Menuhin, Sherban Lupu and Gidon Kremer remain the greatest exponents. Gidon

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20 www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2005/May05/Enescu_part1.htm


Kremer is particularly committed to producing fine recordings of Enescu’s chamber music with his ensemble Kremerata Baltica.  

In the field of composition, public neglect of Enescu’s own scores is reflected in the relevant literature. Enescu was dismissed in 1936 by David Ewen as ‘a student of Fauré‘ and in 1970 by Harold C. Schonberg simply as ‘a student of Massenet‘. While partially correct, these two brief acknowledgements ignore Enescu’s actual compositional training. Enescu was neither mentioned by Claire R. Reis in 1955 (the year of his death) in her book *Composers, Conductors and Critics*, and nor did Stanley Sadie include him in *The New Grove Twentieth Century French Masters* (1986). This omission points towards Sadie’s judgement that Enescu is not deemed to be French, despite living and working in Paris for much of his life. In 1985 Harold C. Schonberg again dismissed Enescu in a startling way in his book, *The Glorious Ones: Classical Music’s Legendary Performers*. In a large section respectfully devoted to Fritz Kreisler, Schonberg implies that Enescu’s gifts were a circus act unworthy of mention, writing only ‘The Romanian violinist-pianist-conductor-composer Georges Enesco was a frequent visitor.’ Hopefully, in the future, composer surveys will provide a more conciliatory evaluation of this great musician.

America is now more proud of its recognition and appreciation of Enescu’s genius. A ‘George Enescu Collection of Romanian Music’ is currently being amassed in the Geisler library at Central College, Pella, Iowa, and this remains the most centralized source of English information about Enescu. American Enescu scholars retain a strong and supportive relationship with Romania. There is an Enescu Society in the United States from whom I have received a translation of Enescu’s memoirs, the greatest source of inspiration for my study. An official translation of Enescu’s memoirs was published

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22 Gidon Kremer dir., *Octet op. 7 and Quintet op. 29*, by George Enescu, Kremerata Baltica, Nonesuch, 2002.
27 Enescu, *Souvenirs*, translated for John Sorenson by Stanley Applebaum (2003). This translation was held
by Central College in 2005. As previously mentioned, transcriptions of Enescu’s masterclasses can be found in American magazines such as *Etude, Musical America* and *American String Teacher*. Other valuable sources are articles in *Musical Standard*, *The Musical Quarterly*, *Tempo* and *The Canon*. Many of these articles are primarily notes of memoriam published in 1955, the year of Enescu’s death. The Muzeul George Enescu, housed in the Cantacuzino Palace in Bucharest, remains the home of Enescu’s original manuscripts and personal effects.

Prior to Noel Malcolm’s 1990 biography, Enescu was represented in Western literature as a violinist rather than a composer. As if to make up for this misapprehension, a co-ordinated effort has since been made by several individuals to represent Enescu as a violinist, albeit a bitter one, whose true art lay in composition. However previously identified, Enescu is now unquestionably a composer of international and long-lasting importance.

Interest in Enescu’s work exists mostly in the circles of practising musicians and composers. Perhaps it is for this reason that detailed analytical work on Enescu’s music is still scarce. Enescu’s own advice: ‘write music - do not write about music. Do not be a composer and a theorist at the same time’, does not lend him any favours in this regard. The lack of interest in Enescu can be explained by several factors: his own reticence in self-promotion, the inefficiencies of the Romanian communist regime which led to a scarcity of scores and recordings in the West, and a public reluctance to accept or understand the interconnection of his broad range of musical skills. Discussion of this last factor, the misunderstanding of Enescu as a ‘complete musician’, has been particularly

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29 For more information about the gypsy music of Romania, Enescu points to the work of his friend and colleague Constantin Brăiloiu, who succeeded in recording over twelve thousand folk songs. Unfortunately much of this work was lost during World War Two. Brăiloiu’s combined work with Béla Bartók however survives. Béla Bartók, *Rumanian Folk Music Instrumental Melodies*, 5 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).
30 The Enescu Society of the United States and several individual artists (particularly Gidon Kremer) remain central exponents.
31 Despite a scarcity of published analyses of Enescu’s music in English, there is a flourishing industry of Romanian publications, at the forefront of which is the work of Pascal Bentoiu. Pascal Bentoiu, *Capodopere Enesciene* (București: Edutura Muzicală, 1999).
32 Enescu, *Souvenirs*, 162.
neglected in the literature. It is this neglect, and my own performance experience of Enescu’s music, which has provided the initial impetus for my thesis.

This thesis will examine the link between Enescu’s performing career and his compositions. I will explore virtuosity as it relates to Enescu in the twentieth century and consider the concept of Enescu as a ‘complete musician’ in an era of specialisation. I will analyse his Third Sonata for Piano and Violin *dans le caractère populaire Roumain* (1926) within this context. To date there have been few published analyses of Enescu’s third violin sonata. Aside from the brief analyses by Boris Kotlyarov and Speranţa Râdulescu there have been two Doctor of Musical Arts theses published in America.\(^{33}\)

I have used where possible direct transcripts of Enescu’s words and teachings. Throughout this thesis I would like to keep in mind a request which he made in 1955 before his death:

I ask you, as a personal favor, to tone down a little, before my book of *Souvenirs* appears, what I said in the past about my violin. ... Just a month ago, I was speaking of it shamelessly, calling it a daily torture. Today, I very much fear I’ll never play it again ... I’m filled with scruples ... I spoke harshly about my old companion ... to whom I’m indebted for great joy, after all ... Well, you understand ... We mustn’t do that; it wouldn’t be right ...\(^{34}\)

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\(^{34}\) Enescu, *Souvenirs*, 16.
Chapter 1: Biography of George Enescu

Enescu's childhood was precious; he was the twelfth and only surviving child of his parents Maria and Costache Enescu. Born on 19 August 1881 in Liveni near Dorohoi, then part of Moldavia, Enescu became accustomed to overprotection and isolation by immersing himself in activities of painting and music. Both of Enescu's grandfathers were Orthodox priests, so Enescu's earliest musical experiences were those of the Romanian liturgy.

The most illuminating insight into Enescu's first experiences of Romanian folk music comes, ironically, from one of his last works for violin and piano, Impressions of Childhood Op. 28 (1940). In it Enescu depicts a Mentrier (strolling musician), perhaps a reminiscence of his first violin lessons with Nicolae Filip ('Squinting Nick'), a Romanian lăutar. When Enescu was three he happened to hear a gypsy band play not far from his village:

[A] strange band [appeared], consisting of a panpipe, a few violins, a cymbalum, and a double-bass! However, I must have been quite impressed since, the next morning, I spent my time attaching a piece of sewing thread to a piece of wood, and, convinced that this was a violin, I imitated what I had heard the evening before, I whistled to imitate the pipe and 'played' the cymbalum with wooden sticks.

Yet it was the violinist and composer Eduard Caudella (1841-1924), Director of the Conservatoire at Iaşi, who first advised the five-year-old Enescu to learn musical notation. At the same time his parents acquired a piano; Enescu's 'craving for polyphony' was given an outlet and he immediately began to compose.

Caudella selflessly advised Enescu to leave Romania for an international education in Vienna. Arriving in the Autumn of 1888, Enescu was accepted into the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde as the second ever entrant below the

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15 Four of his siblings had been stillborn while seven succumbed to meningitis or diphtheria.
17 Lăutar is a Romanian term for 'professional, male gypsy fiddler'.
age of ten. He was present at the premiere of Brahms’s clarinet quintet and also performed Brahms’s works in the student orchestra in the presence of the composer. Beethoven’s music quenched Enescu’s ‘thirst for harmonic fullness’.

Enescu appreciated above all the study of harmony with his teacher Robert Fuchs and with him composed primarily overtures inspired by Wagner. If there was a certain suspicion surrounding the name of Wagner at that time in Vienna it did not affect Enescu’s adoration of his music. The Brahms/Wagner divide did not exist within clear boundaries at the Konservatorium and Enescu attended many performances of Wagner’s operas, often sitting with the orchestral musicians in the pit.

Violin lessons with Joseph Hellmesberger Jr (1855-1907) on the other hand were a source of tension and doubt. He described ‘the sound of burning applause which, since the evening of my first concert, I seemed to hear in its monotonous rattling something like “You will be a virtuoso, and you will remain one - whether you like it or not. You will be a virtuoso, virtuoso, virtuoso...”’. This conflict was to stay with Enescu for his whole life, and raises the question of the identity of the virtuoso-composer in the twentieth century.

In 1895, pursuing his desire to study composition, and also following the natural flow of talented musicians at that time, Enescu entered the Paris Conservatoire. Here he studied composition alongside Ravel, Ducasse and Nadia Boulanger, and performance alongside Thibaud, Flesch and the pianist Cortot. Enescu immediately immersed himself in the composition classes of Fauré, Massenet and particularly the counterpoint classes of André Gédalge (1856-1926). However he did encounter certain cobwebs in that institution, recounting that fugue was taught ‘not in the style of Bach, but in the house style ... this distrust of the pope of music was quite amazing.

This comment demonstrates Enescu’s neoclassical leanings. In performance he broke away from the romantic and full-bodied execution of Bach’s music which was in vogue at this time; his performances of the solo violin sonatas seek to display the melody

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40 Fritz Kreisler had previously passed through in 1882.
42 Enescu, Souvenirs, 113.
44 Enescu, Souvenirs, 103.
45 Enescu, Souvenirs, 64.
with its clearest possible flow. He also wrote several of his own compositions in this vein, notably his First Piano Suite *dans le style ancien* (1897) and his First Orchestral Suite (1903). Noel Malcolm points out that this series of Enescu's works culminated with his Second Orchestral Suite (1915), a precursor to Prokofiev's Classical Symphony (1917).\(^{46}\)

However, Enescu did not restrict himself to this style of composition. Other works of this period reveal a broad range of influences. Of his own First 'School' Symphony (1895), Enescu admitted 'Brahms's influence is apparent on each page.'\(^{47}\) Two works in which Enescu felt himself evolving rapidly show far-reaching influences; his second violin sonata (1899) is indebted to Fauré while his Octet for Strings (1900) combines the richness of late-Viennese romanticism with a rhythmic energy similar to that of Bartók.\(^{48}\)

Enescu's struggle to divide his time between the violin and composing continued through these years at the Paris Conservatoire. He describes violin lessons with Martin Pierre Marsick as not leaving him with any lasting memories and instead claims to be first and foremost Gédalge's pupil. From Gédalge, Enescu reinforced his own doctrine that 'music is in its essence a matter of musical lines, of expressive statements which can be developed, contrasted and superimposed.'\(^{49}\) This doctrine is reflected in the cyclic nature of his Octet (1900), the last movement of which is a conflation of all the melodic elements of the work.

It therefore came as some relief to Enescu when, in 1897, a broken finger excluded him from participating in the upcoming Paris Conservatoire violin competition. This gave him some blissful time in which to complete his *Poème Roumain* (1897). The success of this orchestral piece, which was to become the first of Enescu's mature opus numbers, however inhibited Enescu's career as a violinist. While at its first performance in Bucharest in 1898 Enescu was immediately hailed a figure of national importance, in Paris it served to arouse suspicion.\(^{50}\) Enescu recalled:


\(^{48}\) Enescu, *Souvenirs*, 83.

\(^{49}\) Enescu as quoted in Malcolm, *Enescu*, 56.

\(^{50}\) At the premiere of *Poème Roumain* in Bucharest Enescu attracted the attention of the Queen of Romania, Carmen Sylva, who presented him with a near complete copy of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition of Bach's work on his 17th birthday. Public funds of 9,000 francs were also raised to purchase Enescu a new violin.
The favourable reception by the public and the press of my first work gave me pleasure. I had less pleasure when I found out this small success delayed by a year the awarding of my violin prize. The truth is that I was learning a rather bitter truth which one cannot escape: people don’t like someone with two trades.\textsuperscript{51}

Enescu had another reason to resent this success, as he did the success of his two \textit{Romanian Rhapsodies} (1901). While these works display Enescu’s distinctly Romanian heritage - they are largely programmatic, and contain a distinct nationalist flavour - they do not display his grasp of his Western musical heritage as many of his later works do. For this reason Enescu has been perpetually labelled a ‘nationalist’ composer.

In the opening decade of the twentieth century Enescu established a routine which he was to follow for the rest of his life. He usually spent the summer in Romania but based most of his professional activities in Paris. It was here that much of his chamber music was performed; Casals, Cortot, Thibaud and Casella were all loyal colleagues. Enescu formed two piano trios during this period (the most famous was with Alfred Casella and cellist Louis Fournier), which also saw the brief blossoming of the ‘Enesco Quartet’. He also maintained a connection with Eugene Ysaÿe, although their meetings were few. Enescu is the dedicatee of Ysaÿe’s solo violin sonata \textit{Ballade} (1924) which is the most popular and quintessentially Ysaÿean of the six solo sonatas.\textsuperscript{52}

Enescu’s loyalty to Romania extended especially through the years of war. During both world wars he remained in his country, performing extensively at theatres, hospitals and refugee camps. In 1915 he embarked on a special tour to raise money for an organ in Bucharest’s ‘Atheneum’ concert hall. In 1917 he founded a symphony orchestra and established the Enescu Prize, a competition for Romanian composers. Enescu was generous on a personal level; Alfredo Casella commented that as a student he offered financial help ‘with extreme naturalness and with the dignity of a great gentleman’.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 79. Enescu was eventually awarded the first prize in 1899. He was subsequently invited to serve on the competition jury (which he did almost every year until 1910). In 1904 and 1906 he wrote four pieces for use in instrumental competitions: \textit{Contabile et Presto} for flute, \textit{Légende} for trumpet, \textit{Concertstück} for viola and Alleluia de Concert for harp.

\textsuperscript{52} See Malcolm, \textit{Enescu}, 86. It is no surprise that Enescu was considered to be the foremost interpreter of Chausson’s \textit{Poème}; Ysaÿe had aided Chausson in certain aspects of the composition and received its dedication.

In the 1920s and 30s Enescu devoted himself to orchestrating his masterpiece, the opera *Oedipe*. The idea to write an opera had come to him in 1906, at the suggestion of André Messager who had recently heard and approved of his Dixtuor for Winds (1906). Enescu considers *Oedipe* his dearest work: ‘I have often thought … that each life, whether it be a success or a failure, has its adventure, its secret drama. My drama and my adventure are contained in three syllables which Sophocles made famous: Oedipus’.

That Enescu devoted himself to *Oedipe* for twenty-five years was largely a reflection of his gruelling performance schedule. In 1923 he began regular tours to the United States as a violinist, conductor and teacher. This led him in 1925 to one of the most important relationships in his life; that with Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999). Through Menuhin we have been granted the privilege of many Enescu recordings, and their concerts together remain among the most treasured performances of the twentieth century. Enescu’s American masterclasses have been faithfully transcribed and provide an invaluable teaching legacy. America’s hospitality did not go unnoticed by Enescu, who reported:

> I was simply delighted when America welcomed me first as a composer and only afterwards as conductor and violinist. I was first and foremost awarded the title of composer, which was the supreme bliss for me.

During World War II Enescu returned once again to Romania where he made several valuable recordings (including those of the second and third violin sonatas) with his godson, Dinu Lipatti. It had been Enescu’s dream to buy a plot of land in Romania (which he later did, in the village of Cumpatu, near Sinaia) and spend his days composing. However, the two world wars, two subsequent devaluations of currency and the barbarity of the post-World War II communist regime saw his dream destroyed, along with the royal legacy of his wife, the Romanian Princess Marie Cantacuzino. Enescu and

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54 Enescu, *Souvenirs*, 129.
56 Enescu as quoted by David H. Williams, *George Enescu’s Resonance as Composer with the American Musical Consciousness*, ‘Enescu in America Symposium, Bucharest, 10 September 2005.
58 Enescu built a home here which he named ‘Villa Luminis’.

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Maruca (as she was known to her friends) lost everything and the composer was forced, for financial reasons, to remain on the concert stage. This he did, despite suffering from curvature of the spine and loss of hearing. In the immediate post-war years he recorded the Bach solo sonatas and partitas.

Enescu’s final decades were devoted largely to chamber music (although he did also write his Concert Overture, Third Orchestral Suite, Symphonies Three and Four, and Vox Maris). His third violin sonata (1926) begins his late series of chamber works which also includes his Piano Quintet (1940), Second Piano Quartet (1944), Second String Quartet (1951) and his last work, the Chamber Symphony (1954) which was completed with the help of his friend Marcel Mihalovici.

In remembering Enescu, Carl Flesch argued that ‘in his two main professions, that of composer and of violinist, he did not achieve all that his precocious genius promised.’\(^5^9\) This seems unfair; would Enescu have been even less fulfilled had he sacrificed one of his talents? Perhaps his talents necessarily fed each other. As Ion Vulcan suggested: ‘maybe because he is also a composer, he feels better when playing, and thus his performance is full of fire, piercing and overwhelming.’\(^6^0\)

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Chapter 2: Virtuosity

And if he should be restive, too bad for him. And if he should decide to be something other than a virtuoso, too bad; all-engrossing virtuosity puts a wall around him.61

Marc Pincherle

Virtuosity and the virtuoso

Using the term ‘virtuoso’ to describe any artist, especially a musician, invites debate. In a musical context today, the term has come to refer loosely to a ‘performer who is adroit but limited to the practice of his instrument’.62 However, as Owen Jander points out in The New Grove Dictionary of Music, a ‘virtuoso’ according to the original Italian meaning was ‘more importantly a composer, a theorist or at least a famous maestro di capella’.63 In fact, the first formal definition of the term came from Sébastien de Brossard in 1703: ‘Italians apply this beautiful epithet more customarily and more specifically to excellent musicians, notably to those among the latter who devote themselves to the theory or to the composition of music.’64 De Brossard refers also to the Italian derivative ‘virtu’, which he says alludes not only to an ‘excess of native endowment’, but ‘that disposition which makes us pleasing to God and causes us to act in accordance with the rules of right reason’. This sense of sacrifice and duty encapsulated in the term ‘virtuoso’ was not missed by George Enescu, whose own definition (and very much a twentieth-century one) is revealed in his memoirs, writing, ‘it is not without good reason that the word ‘virtuoso’, derived from the Latin word ‘virtus’, alludes to strength of soul, to virtue. Isn’t he virtuous, that man who deprives himself of so many joys in an effort to entertain the public?’65

If Enescu felt reluctant to embrace the role of ‘virtuoso’ as it was narrowly defined in the twentieth century, his gifts certainly encompassed the broad range contained in the

64 Sébastien de Brossard as quoted in Marc Pincherle, The World of the Virtuoso, 16.
65 Enescu, Souvenirs, 104.
original definition of the virtuoso as composer. It is precisely this aspect of Enescu's all-rounded musicianship which set him apart from his contemporaries on the stage. However, this also caused Enescu much anxiety during his life. He lived in an era of specialisation, a time when expectations placed upon virtuosos eliminated the possibility of them exploring other means of expression. As we shall see, the twentieth century audience was even suspicious of a musician who demonstrated more than one gift.

If we assume that a virtuoso is a performer who displays virtuosity, the questions widen to entail not only what virtuosity is, but how it is relevant to music-making. Does virtuosity help or hinder the delivery of a ‘real’ musical message? Perhaps virtuosity is necessarily indescribable. Marc Pincherle said of a performance by George Enescu that ‘in addition to the prestige exercised by great technique and eloquence of interpretation, one of the singular attributes of virtuosity was revealed to us all. I speak of that mysterious influence which for want of a better name we call magnetism.’

Most literature on the topic of virtuosity occurs within the context of nineteenth-century piano music. This makes sense: the nineteenth century was the battlefield of, as Ernst Newman puts it, the ‘virtuous and the virtuosi’. This was epitomised especially by the Wagner/Liszt and Brahms/Schumann camps. While technical supremacy reached its peak with the piano music of Liszt, Chopin and, in the orchestral genre, Wagner, there remained those whose focus was on the spiritual. The classicism of Brahms and Schumann, and the programmatic revolutions of Joseph Joachim epitomised the ‘virtuous’ musician in this sense. It is ironic that Brahms and Joachim, with their mutual desire to educate the audience rather than entertain them, epitomised the separation of the skills of composition and interpretation. Joachim’s work with Brahms raised the profile of the interpreter to equal that of the composer in the delivery of a ‘real’ musical message. In this way he contributed to the narrowing of the definition of the ‘virtuoso’.

An alternative discussion on virtuosity as it relates to the violin comes from Marc Pincherle. If we consider, as he suggests, that virtuosity is linked to the development

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and perfection of instruments themselves, we see that the violin beat the piano by a few hundred years.

Virtuosity and the violin

Henry Joachim, in *Three Milestones in the History of Violin Playing* (1932) says that ‘perhaps the most striking feature of violin playing is the disproportionate lapse of time between the perfection of the instrument itself and that of its technical mastery’.69 This is true; the bravura virtuosity of Paganini demanded a brighter steel string. Spohr demanded a chinrest with which to hold the instrument more securely, Viotti demanded a taught bow and Vivaldi required a longer finger board. However, it was Corelli, whose focus on the cantilena qualities of violin playing served to inspire violinists and the violin makers of his time towards the highest ideals in violin playing; to emulate the human voice.

It may seem odd to cast our discussion of virtuosity back to a violinist whose music does not contain any idiomatic advances in violin technique. However, Henry Joachim points out that Corelli’s importance is two-fold. Firstly, he created a sonata form which has become the ultimate vehicle for virtuosity in all its definitions and, secondly, he adapted this form thematically and harmonically to ‘the nature and soul of the violin’.70 Enescu followed Corelli’s tradition. He considered sonata form to be the ultimate vehicle of expression for violin music, writing three of them at a time when many considered the form redundant. This neoclassical approach was reflected in his playing style, which many described, especially in his interpretation of Bach, as being modelled on the cantilena qualities of the human voice. Menuhin said of Enescu’s playing:

> There was, to begin with, that gypsy quality, and impetuous burning, an emotion-filled expressiveness which is almost a ‘parlando’ style. It was as if each individual note were saying something unique, as if the violin were almost a human voice, to which you could match a particular meaning in terms of words.71

Most discussions of violin virtuosity centre on Paganini who, as a travelling virtuoso-composer, fulfils all definitions of the term. Henry Joachim considered Paganini to be the

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last great milestone in violin playing, and Pincherle considers that Paganini's contribution to the art of violin playing confirmed the completion of its evolution. This is true if we consider that Paganini was the first violinist to depart completely from Corelli's ideal. Perhaps, however, it is timely to look at Jander's last advice on the meaning of the term virtuoso. Jander points out that 'the true virtuoso has always been prized for his rarity and for his ability to widen not only the technical but also the expressive boundaries of his art'. Paganini could only have marked the climax of virtuosity in this sense if his music served to mute all other original attempts at expression.

When the post-Paganini hysteria of technical display reached its height in the French and Belgian schools of the early 19th century, the audience demand for bravura display threatened to smother Corelli's ideal. However, despite the reputation of the Belgian school for displaying virtuosity for virtuosity's sake, we see that the founder thought otherwise. Bériot advocated the learning of solfège as a prerequisite to initial study of the violin. In the preface to his Violin School he wrote:

The rage for mechanical difficulties, which of late years has taken hold of violin players, has often turned the instrument from its true mission, which is that of imitating the accents of the human voice, a noble mission, indeed, and one that has given it the honour of being titled The King of Instruments.

An important notion to consider is that of rivalry. Rivalry has found its place many times in the history of virtuosity. The famous duels between Paganini and Lafont, Liszt and Thalberg, come immediately to mind. Pincherle points out that 'one can presume...when the art of singing or playing some instrument had barely taken shape, a rivalry arose among the most gifted performers, and that certain of them excited admiration which served as a stimulant and contributed in the highest degree to progress in their primitive technique'. Enescu describes in music the rivalry of gypsy lăutari in the third movement of his third violin sonata for piano and violin. Of this gypsy tradition of rivalry Liszt said:

73 Jander, 'Virtuosity'.
75 Pincherle, World of the Virtuoso, 17.
The master most to be admired is he who enriches his theme with such a profusion of traits (appoggiaturas, tremolos, scales, arpeggios and diatonic or chromatic passages) that under this luxuriant embroidery the primitive thought appears no more prominently than the fabric of his garment appears upon his sleeve, peeping through the lacework which artistically hides it by its closeness of design. But, like the fabric, the melody dare not disappear; for it is the stuff or material which sustains the form.\footnote{Liszt as quoted in Jonathen Bellman, \textit{The Style Hongrois in the Music of Western Europe} (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993) 102.}

To this extent, the virtuosity displayed in Enescu’s third violin sonata is not present for virtuosity’s sake alone, but describes a phenomenon of virtuosity found in Enescu’s native heritage.

Let us reconsider the original meaning of the term virtuoso, which implies the knowledge of theory and, indeed, the simultaneous gift of composition. The history of the violin virtuoso in this sense demonstrates that compositions were written by composers who enjoyed the benefit of a tactile understanding of the instrument. On the other hand, most violin virtuosi have not achieved fame for compositions in any genre other than those which display the idiomatic techniques of the violin. One virtuoso who stood apart from this trend was Louis Spohr. Spohr was considered by many of his contemporaries to stand alongside Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven in the pantheon of great composers and he directly opposed the post-Paganini effects such as the bouncing bow and flying staccato.\footnote{Clive Brown, ‘Louis Spohr’, \textit{The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians}, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Vol. 24, 198. Boris Schwartz, \textit{Great Masters of the Violin} (London: Robert Hale, 1984) 209.} Spohr even went so far as to compose a parody of the new virtuosity, represented by de Bériot:

\begin{quote}
Listening to Ole Bull, as previously to de Bériot, I noticed with how little these violinists managed to arouse the enthusiasm of the great masses. It gave me the idea of writing a piece under the title ‘Then and Now’ in which the ‘Now’ aims at mocking the new style .... Without being more difficult than my other Concertino, it is definitely more brilliant and produces an effect on the public such as I have never observed before.\footnote{Boris Schwarz, \textit{Great Masters of the Violin} (London: Robert Hale, 1984) 253.}
\end{quote}

Like Spohr, Enescu’s oeuvre encompasses operatic and symphonic works, solo instrumental and chamber music. However, while Spohr wrote 15 violin concerti, Enescu
wrote none. In fact, the only pieces of Enescu’s which display idiomatic violin techniques fall within the category of chamber music. Enescu himself admitted:

It is a very unhappy situation. The composer in me is at odds with the violinist. Incompatibility you call it? The violinist wants music that is effective for virtuoso display, while the composer rebels and refuses to write at all unless he can write what he feels. So I compromise and let him write piano music and symphonies.79

**Virtuosity and Enescu**

Given that Enescu’s oeuvre contains relatively few violin works, it is difficult to define him only as violin virtuoso-composer. Rather, Enescu is a composer first and foremost, whose performances on the stage reflect his multifaceted approach to music. Reviews of Enescu’s performances allude to this, one American critic describing him ‘as far as possible from being a “virtuoso” in the more undesirable meaning of that term’.80 Olin Downes, the critic at the *New York Times*, wrote in 1937:

Virtuosity, of which [Enescu] has enough and to spare, or would have if he cared to spend more time on sheer fiddling and less on composing, is with him a secondary consideration. Here is an instance where the nature of the musician and the character of the man far overshadow the details of technique. There are a dozen virtuosó whose performances are infinitely smoother and neater than Mr. Enesco’s, who should sit at his knee and take lessons.81

In 1938 A.J. Warner of the *Rochester Times Union* considered a performance by Enescu to have transcended virtuosity:

Mr. Enesco is far too great a musician to let his own personality project itself into any composition he is interpreting. So it was that one forgot the artist in the eloquence and loveliness of that artist’s re-creation of whatever music he was playing - with results that were the very distillation of that art of the violin. It was almost as if that instrument had never been heard before, so completely did Mr. Enesco stand apart, on a mountainpeak, from his confreres, however virtuosic they may be.82

In a radio interview with Bernard Gavoty, Enescu said that the nature of virtuosity boiled down to a conflict between ‘on the one hand the impeccability which is expected from a

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79 As quoted in Ritz, 'The Three Violin Sonatas of George Enesco', 23.
virtuoso nowadays, and on the other the longing he has to evade the mechanical slavery. Enescu explained how he chose to resolve this conflict:

There are two ways to make music and give concerts, each with its inherent advantages. The first consists of working with a certain number of works and creating a repertoire for oneself. These works should be learnt to perfection and all the details of interpretation should be determined once and for all after most careful deliberation .... The second way is the one I and so many others have chosen. I have made concessions in so far as technical perfection is concerned; this has enabled me to have a repertoire so vast that the word scarcely applies any more. Thus I was able to play, in a single winter concert series at Bucharest, 60 different sonatas. But having a large repertoire is only the secondary benefit of my system. The most important is that my interpretations can evolve; since they have not been fixed forever, they are free from mechanisation.\(^\text{84}\)

That Enescu was also a respected pianist, conductor and teacher only served to confuse people trying to grasp his multifaceted identity. This confusion was compounded because traditionally the performance and compositional gifts of virtuoso-composers were presented to the public in a neat, simultaneous package. When Enescu was engaged for a performance the impresarios often tried to present him in his triple capacity as violinist, composer and conductor. Even Enescu himself felt this amounted to a circus act: ‘They were naïve enough to believe that this “achievement” would suffice to thrill the public: what an illusion!’\(^\text{85}\) On one occasion in Rome in 1909, Enescu was conducting \textit{L’Apres-Midi d’un Faune}, his two \textit{Romanian Rhapsodies Op. 11} and the Brahms violin concerto:

\begin{quote}
While I was conducting my first rhapsody, a group of listeners got up and left conspicuously. Finally, since the exodus was increasing, I could do nothing but break off the concert ... the reviews said ‘As violinist, inadequate. As a composer, worthless. As a man, without manners!’ Did I have to love music, not to throw away my baton after that!\(^\text{86}\)
\end{quote}

Enescu’s approach to performance as being just one aspect of complete musicianship may have been better received had he lived in a previous era when the virtuoso was expected to be also a composer and a theorist. However, in the twentieth century, scepticism of Enescu’s approach was found on both sides of the stage. After the premiere in 1898 of his \textit{Poème Roumain} and its subsequent publication a year later, Enescu said:

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\(^{82}\) As quoted in Ritz, ‘The Three Violin Sonatas of George Enescu’, 12.

\(^{83}\) Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 108.

I began to hear around me some kind of leitmotif, conveyed nobly, like the most beautiful Wagnerian themes, in two opposing sentences, similar to the two sides of a roof: 'He is a violinist,' said the composers. 'He is a composer,' replied the virtuosi. Beside there were some variations: 'Watch out!' some said. 'This is a flash in the pan!' proclaimed others. Basically, it was always the same tune.\textsuperscript{87}

Enescu asserts in his memoirs that 'my career as a violinist, even though it has cost me precious time, has not harmed my vocation as a composer.'\textsuperscript{88} However, Noel Malcolm suggests that Enescu did pay a price for failing to define himself: 'his career as a composer suffered from his dignified but damaging reluctance to engage in any form of self-promotion.'\textsuperscript{89}

One contemporary of Enescu who readily defined himself to the public as a violinist only, was Fritz Kreisler. Kreisler demonstrated his awareness of the twentieth-century public’s distrust of the virtuoso-composer with his infamous hoax, spanning thirty years, during which his original compositions were presented as ‘arrangements’ of old masters. Speaking in 1935, Kreisler admitted that ‘necessity inspired me to this proceeding thirty years ago, when I wished to enlarge my repertory. I felt that to repeat my name constantly on the program would be awkward and lacking in tact...’\textsuperscript{90} This last comment tells us that we should perhaps give Kreisler more credit for the orchestration of his career than is currently granted. He seems to have been aware of the dangers of exposing himself too early in his career as a virtuoso-composer.

Flesch considered Kreisler’s renaissance of the small genre piece to be ‘a necessity to the completion of our programs’.\textsuperscript{91} However, he did concede that ‘we cannot ask a serious composer to write genre pieces for the violin, if all violinists are bound to prefer graceful transcriptions to his productions.’\textsuperscript{92} Wagner had complained half a century earlier of this public demand which dictated what music was performed:

> the obligation imposed on composers to arrange their works in the interest of such and such a special quality of the interpreter is sad enough .... The musician who

\textsuperscript{87} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 79.
\textsuperscript{88} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 155.
\textsuperscript{90} Pincherle, \textit{World of the Virtuoso}, 91.
\textsuperscript{91} Flesch, \textit{Memoirs}, 123.
\textsuperscript{92} Flesch, \textit{Memoirs}, 124.
wants to gain the sympathy of the crowds is forced to keep uppermost in his mind that intractable self-love which is characteristic of all virtuosos, and to reconcile the miracles that are expected of his genius with such a servitude.\textsuperscript{93}

Both Kreisler and Enescu were aware of the difficulties associated with being twentieth century virtuoso-composers. That Kreisler remains the more famous composer today for his simple, light, virtuosic salon pieces reflects his smooth handling of that reality and the choices he made as a result. Enescu’s much more varied and extensive oeuvre reflects a musician whose desire to communicate a personal message overshadowed any awareness that the public was not ready for him. In as far as public demand dictates the scope of virtuosity, Enescu’s works do not fall into that category.

\textbf{Enescu’s aesthetics}

The shape of Enescu’s attitude towards virtuosity was cast by two moulds. As the only son of a Romanian rustic, he felt a lifelong obligation to accept his fate which, in the form of his father, proclaimed him from childhood to be a musician: ‘I have certainly often erred in life – but not in persevering humbly and with all my might, more and more each day, in the path my father had laid out for me.’\textsuperscript{94} This sense of duty was reflected particularly in Enescu’s performing career. It is impossible, in considering this aspect of Enescu’s upbringing, to ignore the climax of his opera \textit{Oedipe}, at which point the hero articulates his determination to triumph over fate. In this music Enescu described a feat which symbolised his own battle: ‘I put myself in \textit{Oedipe} entirely, to the point of sometimes identifying with my hero.’\textsuperscript{95}

Secondly, Enescu emerged at the end of the nineteenth century when demands on the travelling virtuoso reached a climax. At this time the definition of the term ‘virtuoso’ had lost its original meaning. Joachim and Brahms had, especially through their collaboration on the Brahms violin concerto, epitomised the separation of the gifts of composition and performance; it was indeed a difficult time for any violinist to fulfil the expectations of both forms of expression simultaneously.

\textsuperscript{93} Pincherle, \textit{World of the Virtuoso}, 29.
\textsuperscript{94} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 61.
\textsuperscript{95} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 129-130.
Emerging from the shadow of these two great musicians, Enescu was less interested in Joachim the interpreter than in Brahms the composer, whom he placed side by side with Wagner:

In those days I became deeply imbued with the music of Wagner and Brahms, and it seems to me that even today my work shows a combination of their influence. Wagner and Brahms are not all as antithetical as people have made them to be. They were opposed to each other much more by reason of policy than musically. Musically they have many things in common. You can even find in Brahms themes strongly suggestive of Wagner’s. In Brahms’ horn trio you hear the ‘Walküre’; in the Third Symphony, ‘Tannhäuser.’ The aim of both is for the highest and noblest. The main difference between the two consists in the fact that Brahms lacked the sensuous element which one finds in the music of Wagner.66

The organic style of motivic development found in Brahms’s first sonata for violin and piano (1879) appears in much of Enescu’s music, particularly his Octet (1900) and his third violin sonata (1926). This aspect of Enescu’s musical language is also reflected in the music of César Franck (1822-1890) (particularly the violin sonata of 1886) and Vincent D’Indy (1851-1931). That he remained influenced by them rather than the impressionism of Debussy is unsurprising. Upon the premiere in 1902 of Debussy’s Pelléas et Melisande Enescu said:

I was there, with Ravel. My famous classmate was obviously enthusiastic. As for me, I was charmed - of course: how can anyone remain insensitive to Debussy’s revelation? However, I was not entirely conquered. While I deeply admired the mirage of the work, I was too accustomed to Wagnerian abundance not to consider the flow of Pelléas a little too meager. It was a cool spring, compared to the majestic river. The elliptic side of Debussy threw me off: to my taste, there was not enough symphonic element in it. My morbid hunger for music was not stifled: I needed more!67

Enescu claimed to have been ‘an unrepentant lyric poet, Wagnerian to the marrow.’68 Indeed, much of his music is descriptive. Boult wrote of his Romanian Rhapsodies that ‘however impossible musically, [they] showed off finely the virtuosity of the orchestra.’69

This music places Enescu in the category of the tone poets whose descriptive language, according to Pincherle ‘concert artists of the baser epochs have always exploited with

67 Enescu, Souvenirs, 88.
68 Enescu, Souvenirs, 88.
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profit."\textsuperscript{100} This is true. Despite his relative obscurity, Enescu has suffered from this exploitation. He is known posthumously in the concert halls mostly for his \textit{Poème Roumain} which as Malcolm points out "is like trying to form one’s opinion of Ravel when one has heard only \textit{Boléro}".\textsuperscript{101}

\textbf{Perception of Enescu’s aesthetics}

\textit{Poème Roumain}, written in the same year as his first violin sonata (1897) is a luminous work which evokes aspects of Enescu’s homeland; a summer evening, the ringing of church bells, modal singing of priests, a shepherd playing a \textit{doină}, and a series of Romanian folk dances. Although its folk element was contrived with a genuinely national ardour, Enescu later felt strongly against using direct quotations of Romanian folk songs in his music. Because the oriental or modal nature of Romanian folk songs did not suit full Western harmonisation, he cautioned that "the lightest harmonising is the most authentic."\textsuperscript{102}

For this reason, we should be reluctant to call Enescu a nationalist composer. His early works may reveal national pride but they do not give a reasonable impression of his later grasp of Western musical structures and forms. In fact, Enescu’s study of Western forms earned him a reputation for being somewhat of a neoclassicist. His First Piano Suite \textit{dans le style ancien} (1897) contains reminiscences of Bach, Handel and Scarlatti. Likewise, his first violin sonata (1897) displays a conscious exploration of Western structural tools. Furthermore, the prélude to his first orchestral suite was used by Kodály to demonstrate an outstanding example of monody. Similar unison preludes are found at the opening of his second violin sonata (1899) and his Octet for strings (1900).

Geographic influences aside, Enescu defined himself as a polyphonist ‘and not at all a man of pretty, interlocking chords. I abhor anything that’s stagnant. To me, music is not a state, but an action, that is, a combination of sentences expressing ideas."\textsuperscript{103} This is at odds with a career on an instrument of pure melody. Critics have not known how to categorise Enescu, as he himself argued:

\textsuperscript{100} Pincherle, \textit{World of the Virtuoso}, 17.
\textsuperscript{101} Malcolm, \textit{Enescu}, 12.
\textsuperscript{102} As quoted in Malcolm, \textit{Enescu}, 65.
\textsuperscript{103} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 84.
People have been puzzled and annoyed because they have been unable to catalogue and classify me in the usual way. They could not decide exactly what type of music mine was. It was not French after the manner of Debussy; it was not French of the older school; it was not German, they declared. In short, while it did not sound outlandish, it did not closely resemble anything familiar, and people are annoyed when they cannot readily classify one.

So what did the critics think of Enescu's music? The American Herbert F. Peyser, upon hearing a performance in 1912 of Enescu's *Symphonie Concertante* (1901) for cello and orchestra thought it 'refreshingly melodic and harmonically sane.' At the March 1936 premiere of his Opera *Oedipe*, given by the Paris Opéra, the *New York Times* reported that:

Reynaldo Hahn (of the Paris *Figaro*) found the score too ultra modern for his taste in matters of melody, rhythm and tonality, believing it lost attractiveness thereby. But, such as it is, he described it as a work 'imposing, lofty, minutely elaborated, often inspired and always compelling admiration' .... *Oedipe* undoubtedly takes rank as a work of more than ordinary importance, judging from its press.

The successful premiere of *Oedipe* was notable in that Enescu presented himself on that occasion only as a composer, the conductor for the performance being Enescu's dear friend Philippe Gaubert. Enescu wrote affectionately of the evening, and of the favourable reviews the work received (Gabriel Marcel of the *Figaro* wrote 'The final scene of *Oedipe* is one of the pinnacles of music since Wagner'). Perhaps by stepping back from the performance of his own work, Enescu avoided the criticism of an otherwise sceptical audience. That Enescu was declared 'independent' by a public unwilling yet to explore the deeper message of his music is reflected in the words of Richard Aldrich, who said in 1923 'his style shows little or none of the influences now so persuasive [in Paris] and that are so easily perceived in most of the current music that comes out of France. He is singularly independent in his style.' Enescu interpreted this truth in his own way:

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Basically, if it's true that I loved Paris, I felt rather exiled from the artistic point of view. For me, who, despite the many miles I had traversed, had remained the little, warmhearted, stubborn boy born far away on a Romanian plain, too much emphasis was placed on the mind. I was still a savage whom nothing would completely discipline, a fiercely independent man who wouldn't accept any constraint and refused to belong to any school.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{109} Enescu, \textit{Souvenirs}, 89.
Chapter 3: Enescu as Interpreter

Enescu as teacher

In 1926, at the age of 10, Yehudi Menuhin was the first student to awaken the pedagogue in George Enescu. Their first lesson together, taking place in an apartment on the rue de Clichy at six in the morning as Enescu packed his suitcases for immediate travel, marked the beginning of perhaps the most famous student/mentor relationship of twentieth-century violin playing. Menuhin considered Enescu the single most important influence on his musical development, describing him not as a teacher but as ‘the sustaining hand of providence, the inspiration that bore me aloft’.110

It may appear, from the testament of both student and master that these lessons were a musical journey comprehended by only the chosen few. Ida Haendel’s account gives a similar impression. Like Menuhin, she describes Enescu’s teaching style as musical inspiration rather than a lesson in violin playing.111 Carl Flesch confirms this impression of Enescu’s lofty teaching style. Perhaps it is with an understanding of his simultaneous admiration for and rivalry with Enescu that we can consider his judgement:

[Enescu] held violin courses in Paris for advanced students, in which he accompanied them on the piano without touching the violin himself – a kind of ‘coaching’ which necessity had to confine to interpretation. I regard this [Enescu’s] sort of instruction as not only useless, but even harmful, since it separates the technical from the spiritual (for don’t false nuances often have technical origins?) and endangers the independence and inviolability of the student’s personality by forcing a way of feeling upon him that is foreign to his nature. Besides, a violinist as excellent as Enesco had the duty to try and be a living example too.112

This last comment of Flesch’s encapsulates the root of conflict with which Enescu lived for his whole life. While Flesch never erred from his path as a performer and pedagogue, Enescu, primarily a composer, was reluctant to fulfill his destiny as a virtuoso and teacher. His teaching activities were therefore marked by his primary identification with composition. This gave his teaching an alternative focus, one which was remote from the technical aspect and instead centered on the imaginative.

110 Menuhin, Unfinished Journey, 72.
Dany Brunschwig, in the *American String Teacher*, described a series of masterclasses which Enescu gave in 1928-1929: ‘Often we were challenged in following him, finding it complex despite his inherent clarity, for his artistic expression is lofty, pure, noble and graciously given to us.’\(^{113}\) So how, in the twenty-first century, can a violinist begin to grasp this remote concept of Enescu’s musical legacy? More importantly, how can we transfer his concepts into words that will help us bring his music to life? In order to answer these questions, I will examine Enescu’s character as a performer and consider how this may have influenced his approach to composition.

**Enescu as performer**

During his life Enescu avoided discussing the art of performance - even his biographer Noel Malcolm points out the ‘absurdity of searching for some technical secret of his playing.’\(^{114}\) Thankfully Enescu’s performances are available to us in his own recordings. His initial dislike of the gramophone meant that these recordings only represent performances given after 1941.\(^ {115}\) Despite the technical blemishes of his later years, they nevertheless comprise a large and varied body of repertoire. For earlier performances, we must rely on the criticisms of his contemporaries.

Upon hearing the ‘Enescu Concerts’ in Bucharest in 1898, the reporter Iosef Vulcan underlined the thrill of hearing the composer perform. Vulcan believed Enescu’s works ‘announced the awakening of the Romanian people.’\(^ {116}\) Enescu’s performances of the ‘classics’ inspired similar approval from Vulcan on this occasion:

> It would be hard to say which of the three pieces was more successful. In the Concerto for Violin by Beethoven we admire his technique; in Bach’s Ciaconna he cheered up our hearts; and in the admirable Rondo of Saint-Saëns we saw reunited all the qualities of a perfect artist.\(^ {117}\)


\(^{115}\) Casals cites the gramophone as the culprit for Enescu’s charge that the modern virtuoso is conflicted with, ‘on the one hand the impeccability which is expected...and on the longing he has to escape the mechanical slavery’. Corredor, *Conversations*, 190.

\(^{116}\) It appears that in addition to public concerts, Enescu gave private musical parties, literary-art soirées, charity concerts, and was available wherever his art was requested. Several of Enescu’s own works were performed at various times during his visit to Bucharest in 1898. Iosif Vulcan as quoted in Constanta Ianca Staicovici, ‘The Enescian Personality Reflected in the Pages of the Magazine “Familia” in Oradea’, ed. Mircea Voicu, *George Enescu musicien complexe*, (Bucharest: editura academiei republicii socialiste România, 1981), 32.

\(^{117}\) Iosif Vulcan as quoted in Constanta Ianca Staicovici, ‘The Enescian Personality Reflected in the Pages...
When, two years later, Vulcan again heard Enescu, he commented on the outstanding progress Enescu had made:

The boy of two years ago has become a young man with a more serious appearance and commanding hypostasis. The same change is also noticed in the way he leads the orchestra. Then he was shy and more quiet; now he conducts with fire, sometimes nervously and almost transported in a fairyland, giving the tact with the baton, blending with the body movement, with the face's features, with the sparkling of the eyes. An artist not only piercing, but in love with his art, which he feels in his whole body, which fills up his whole being.\textsuperscript{118}

Despite Enescu's own silence on the subject of his playing, his colleagues and students have left objective and valuable accounts which reveal the techniques of his approach.

The most revealing comes from the memoirs of Carl Flesch:

His fingers touched the strings at an acute angle, which resulted in a kind of smooth, velvety tone without any admixture of metallic colour. In order naturally to achieve this position of the fingers, however, he had to turn his left elbow excessively outward. His tendency towards mystical expression often seduced him into over-refined hardly audible pianissimos; and he easily neglected the difference between strong and weak beats. What gave his playing a pronounced personal quality was his habit of starting expressive, sustained notes a few vibrations below their proper pitch and then to raise them to their correct level by way of his vibrato. This device gave his expression a strange, ambiguous, somewhat lascivious tinge...I came to the conclusion that he was one of the most attractive artistic characters of our time.\textsuperscript{119}

This slight portamento, which gave his playing a 'lascivious tinge', is clearly audible in Enescu's recordings, particularly in his performances of his third violin sonata (with Dinu Lipatti in 1943), and Corelli's *La Folia* (1929). However, this was not a technique used exclusively by Enescu.\textsuperscript{120} In fact Enescu himself describes the more conscious use of portamentos. Discussing this technique in reference to Beethoven's Romance in F Major Enescu wrote:

On principle, the slide must be dictated by the music, and not indulged in because the finger cannot do otherwise. In *portamentos*, diminish the tone gradually, as

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\textsuperscript{118} Josif Vulcan as quoted in Constanta Ianca Staicovici, 'The Enescian Personality Reflected in the Pages of the Magazine "Familia" in Oradea', 34.

\textsuperscript{119} Flesch, *Memoirs*, 180.

\textsuperscript{120} Margaret Campbell describes Thibaud's main influence as 'the introduction of a levelling up of a flat intonation on sustained or expressive notes'. Margaret Campbell, *The Great Violinists* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1981) 130.
good singers do, recovering the note's intensity after the *slide*. Always use slides discreetly.\(^{121}\)

Enescu must also be given a chance to defend himself against Flesch's criticism both of his pianissimo playing and his lack of accentuation. In reference to the opening of Mozart's *Violin Concerto in A major*, Enescu advises violinists to 'play a *piano* intended for a large hall; *spend* the bow and *pursue* the tone .... it is an error to assume that one must use the full bow only for *forte* nuances.'\(^{122}\) In his own memoirs, when describing accentuation in the music of Bach, Enescu says:

> Declare war on speed - with the aim of placing correct accents. A Bach prelude played without accents is something like a running faucet: which means that under such conditions I understand and share the layman's opinion that this music is without expression, boring and without end.\(^{123}\)

All of these comments may lead us to the conclusion that Enescu was a romantic, full-bodied player. Menuhin's observation that Enescu 'had the most expressively varied vibrato and the most wonderful trills of any violinist I have ever known' only confirms this perception.\(^{124}\) However, Enescu's doctrine of the supremacy of melodic line, which had been passed to him by Gédalge, lent his playing a classical sobriety. As Richard Aldrich of the *New York Times* wrote upon hearing Enescu play Bach and Leclair in 1923:

> He is first and last a musician and an interpreter, devoted solely to expounding music and not at all to the display of technical powers .... There is, undoubtedly, a certain austerity in Mr Enesco's playing, he is very little concerned with 'lascivious pleasings', or with obvious sentiment.\(^{125}\)

Enescu's comments on the placement of grace notes in Beethoven's music also indicate a loyalty to classical interpretation. Like Czerny, a pianist's most authentic reference point on this subject, Enescu recommends that 'the grace note is on the beat. One must not play it before, and there must be no slide .... which is purposeless and a waste of time, and

\(^{124}\) Menuhin, *Unfinished Journey*, 73.
\(^{125}\) As quoted in Malcolm, *Enescu*, 242,
results only in sacrificing the cleanliness of the phrase." Enescu believed in the importance of remaining faithful to the score:

No, it is not a sacrilege to assume the identity of the creator of a masterpiece: on the contrary, it is a fruitful illusion which makes it possible to identify better with the magician whose humble interpreter one is. The thing is relatively easy if one lives in a permanent dream. As for me, a person who never stops dreaming in the company of the great men of the past, if I don’t go back to the 18th century when playing a sonata by Bach, if I don’t believe I am Beethoven when attacking the Kreutzer Sonata, it seems that I cannot translate them well.

That Enescu ‘never stopped dreaming in the company of the great men of the past’ perhaps demonstrates that he was indeed a throwback to an era in which a virtuoso was more importantly a composer. This notion indeed lends new light to Enescu’s interpretation of the music of Bach.

Enescu’s own recording (1949) of the Bach solo Sonatas and Partitas does not display the rich, full-bodied sound so prevalent among violinists at the time. Enescu instead focuses on the melodic line, and approaches the fugues with an attack of the left fingers which is clearly audible. Pincherle says of Enescu’s performance of Bach:

One can never emphasize enough how Enescu was haunted by a concern for tonal colour. Even when playing a piece for solo violin, he never ceased to combine or oppose different timbres. Thanks to this he was perhaps the only violinist under whose bow the fugues of Bach held the listener spellbound to the end.

Enescu on Bach

What has become of our Bach concertos? Are people at last beginning to understand? - Oh, if only they would see that rhythm has to be unshakeable, because the rhythm corresponds to the beating of the heart.

George Enescu

Enescu’s famously prodigious memory encompassed nearly the entire collection of Bach’s works. Considered by his contemporaries to be a specialist, Enescu was able to convey an ‘unadorned’ interpretation of the composer whom he considered to be ‘the
Saint Peter of music’. Enescu’s approach emphasized a primacy of melodic line and a faithfulness to Bach’s underlying architecture. Ida Haendel, describing performing the Chaconne to Enescu wrote:

Firm and uncompromising, he removed all the frills which had hitherto adorned my playing of Bach, so allowing the true form and anatomy to be exposed. Freed from all embellishments, the music sounded unfamiliar and strange, but I recognised that this emphasis on simplicity and purity of line served to bring out the true grandeur of the structure; I seemed to be hearing Bach the giant for the first time. Although Enesco gave precedence to the musical thought above all else, he did not neglect technical imperfections, and the slightest inaccuracy never escaped his keen ear. I found it extraordinary that after these lessons with Enescu, I became even more attentive to technical precision than I had before. This was inexplicable, as there was no doubt of Flesch’s rigorousness in technical matters. Yet it seemed to me that Enesco went one degree further, for every note was of equal importance to him, even in the fastest scale, and had to be crystal clear. It was no concern of his what one did in order to achieve this perfection, but the execution had to be flawless. ‘I want to hear this passage until the very last note - the composer wrote them in order to be played,’ he would insist.131

As Malcolm points out, the ‘frills’ which adorned Haendel’s playing probably stemmed from Flesch’s doctrine, ‘that there must be a unity of timbre: each melodic statement must be confined where possible to the same string.’132 This would have necessitated the use of higher positions, something that Enescu did not advocate:

In Bach, it is best not to ascend to the third or fourth position, for in doing so, the tone quality is altered and the intellectual effort of the listener is uprooted - he ought to be able to follow the counterpoint and the procession of the parts one after another.133

It is interesting to consider Enescu’s interpretation of Bach alongside that of his contemporary on the ‘cello, Pablo Casals. Casals embraced the concept of eighteenth-century music as a ‘living’ event, and disdained those musicians who ‘restricted and categorised the degree of expression which may be brought to the performance of music from the “classical” period.’134 At a concert in which Menuhin performed Bach’s E Major Partita, Casals recalled:

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130 Enescu, *Souvenirs*, 114.
After the concert Enesco took me aside to find out what my opinion was. I told him that I thought his pupil was extremely gifted and had a perfect technique, but I also told him what to my mind was missing in his performance of the Partita, namely, that it was not fully alive. To which Enesco replied, 'The reason is that in Bach's day one did not do that sort of thing.' In spite of the admiration I have for this very great artist and a friendship which is so dear to me, I was sorry to find him tied up with this idea, which I consider as a traditionalist prejudice. In Bach's time, people did not use spicatto bowing of course, but why not use it now if the music demands it.\(^\text{135}\) Perhaps the alternative approaches of both Casals and Enescu were not as diametrically opposed as Noel Malcolm, or, indeed Casals, suggest. Casals did, after all, concur with Enescu's declaration of war on speed:

The modern tendency is to accelerate as much as possible all the quick tempi in order to achieve a success which is not very valuable. This tendency seems to me very dangerous and as far as I am concerned I shall do all I can to counteract it.\(^\text{136}\)

Discussion of both Enescu's and Casals' approach to the teaching of Bach's music must not be confused with a debate on authenticity in the performance of the classical repertoire. While Enescu's interpretation remains faithful to original intentions of the composer, this did not extend to the use of original instruments:

Take care not to sink into historical chitchat; the main lines of history are big enough. Don't rely too much on what the experts will tell you about the curved bow which was used in Bach's time. Since a straight bow is used today, learn to play with it as well as you can.\(^\text{137}\)

Rather, Enescu's neoclassical approach came from his loyalty to the continuing musical traditions of the past. He described this in 1949:

As part of life, music, in some form or another, is probably as old as life. The music that has come down to us represents an unbroken continuity of people's thoughts and feelings throughout the ages. It is good to keep this in mind — partly as a means of evaluating the music of the past, and partly because, at some time in his progress, the student must come to regard himself as part of this ever flowing life force.\(^\text{138}\)

Enescu's own compositions display both his desire to embrace the traditions of the past and also to be part of that tradition's continuing evolution. This is demonstrated in the


\(^{136}\) Corredor, *Conversations*, 191.


neoclassical style of his First Piano Suite *dans le style ancien* (1897) and Second Orchestral Suite (1915), and in the original language of his Second Violin Sonata (1897), his Octet (1900) and *Oedipe* (1936).\(^{139}\) His loyalty to this process affected the way he edited his own scores:

I can’t help it if other conductors change *my* works, but I won’t change the works of the classical masters. I mark the effects I want very carefully, indicating everything, even metronome markings every few bars if the tempo is to be changed. I have made up new words to describe the sound I want.\(^ {140}\)

This detailed editing is perhaps a legacy of André Gédalge, but certainly it communicates Enescu’s own valuation of authentic performance. The score of Enescu’s Third Sonata for Piano and Violin *dans le caractère populaire roumain* (1926) stands out in this regard. Menuhin has said of Enescu’s third violin sonata, ‘I know of no other work more painstakingly edited or planned. It is correct to say that it is quite sufficient to follow the score for one to interpret the work’.\(^ {141}\)

\(^{139}\) Enescu’s original musical language derives from his marriage of Western classical music traditions with his native Romanian voice.


\(^{141}\) As quoted in Malcolm, *Enescu*, 184.
Chapter 4: Enescu as composer for the violin

Enescu came close to writing a violin concerto with his Caprice Roumain of 1928, but it remained, like his Symphonie Concertante (1932), in unfinished draft. Previously he had written two movements of a concerto in A minor (1896), and what could have been the slow movement to a violin concerto, Ballade for violin and orchestra (1895). He wrote several works for violin with piano: Impromptu Concertant (1903), Hora Unirii (1917) and his suite, Impressions d'enfance (1940), which remains one of his most frequently performed violin works. The outstanding examples of Enescu’s writing for violin are in the genre of chamber music, notably his three sonatas for violin and piano.

Enescu’s first violin sonata (1897), written during his early years in Paris, is the least Romanian in character. It owes a great debt to Enescu’s French and Viennese inspirations and stands in contrast to his distinctly national Poème Roumain of the same year; with it Enescu appears to have turned to a conscious study of Western structural tools. These two contrasting works of 1897 show that Enescu was aware of, but had not yet found, a melding of Eastern and Western music which was to become the feature of his compositional language. The violin is clearly not the dominant instrument; the language is non-virtuosic and has a conservative, straightforward and rhythmically clear structure. The Viennese-influenced outer movements cradle between them a rhapsody which is composed in the style of his new French masters Fauré and Franck.

In his second violin sonata (1899) Enescu felt himself ‘evolving rapidly, I was becoming myself.’ Already he displayed compositional techniques which he further developed in his third sonata: the cyclical development of motives and monothematic principles of the first movement, the descriptive elements of the second movement (here Enescu’s original folk tune shows that he had already outgrown the folk quotations of his Poème Roumain) and the dance-like gypsy character of the last movement. Carl Flesch wrote ‘The second violin sonata is among the strongest contemporary works of this kind.

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142 This is also displayed in his First Piano Suite Dans le style ancien of the same year.
143 Enescu, Souvenirs, 83.
Its emotional content and its technique are on the same high level, and both melodically and harmonically it still seems to us novel, unhackneyed and captivating.\footnote{144}

Enescu’s third violin sonata (1926) was written in the same year as Ravel’s violin sonata and Berg’s *Lyric Suite*. Written 27 years after his previous sonatas, it is an exemplar of Enescu’s mature compositional style; in musical, structural and aesthetic terms this sonata remains the most complex of his violin works. If in the second violin sonata Enescu found his unique musical language by melding his Romanian heritage with his Western education, the language of his third sonata remains further developed in its transcription onto the page of the rhapsodic character of improvised folk music. Enescu explains this process of assimilation:

Before writing my sonata in the Romanian character (all the themes are my own), I waited for the fusion in myself of the world of Romanian folklore, essentially rhapsodic, with my nature as a symphonist. It required a long period of assimilation, before being able to reconcile, as harmoniously as was in my power, these two apparently incompatible genres.\footnote{145}

Enescu used the title *dans le caractère populaire roumain* to demonstrate his continued reaction against a nationalist school of composition:

I’m writing in the character of folk music. I don’t use the word ‘style’, because that implies something made or artificial, whereas character suggests something given, existing from the beginning. You should emphasise that the use of folk material in itself doesn’t ensure an authentic realisation of folk character; it contributes to it circumstantially.\footnote{146}

The aspect of Romanian folk music which exerted the strongest influence on Enescu’s third violin sonata is the *doină*. Derived from the Romanian word ‘dor’, the *doină* describes a slow song of melancholic and nostalgic nature. Enescu said ‘the general character which stands out in music of our country is sadness even in the midst of happiness. This yearning, indistinct but profoundly moving is, I think a definitive feature of Romanian melodies.’\footnote{147} Bartók first discovered and defined this song in Transylvania.

\footnote{145}{As quoted in Ritz, ‘The Three Violin Sonatas of George Enesco’, 98.}
\footnote{146}{As quoted in Malcolm, *Enescu*, 183. Enescu spoke during an interview about the significance of the word ‘character’ in relation to the composition of his ‘Caprice Roumain’, which, if completed, to be the closest thing he ever wrote to a concerto for violin. This is especially significant, because this Caprice was started just one year before the third violin sonata was written. Enescu’s ‘Caprice Roumain’ has been completed by Cornel Taranu.}
\footnote{147}{Malcolm, *Enescu*, 22.}
as the *hora lungă* (long song). Enescu’s friend Constantin Brăiloiu found it throughout the rest of Romania under the local name of *hora frunzii* (leaf song). This title alludes to the hand held oak leaf (used by shepherds as a kind of reed instrument) and, as Noel Malcolm points out, this reinforces Bartók’s finding that the *doină* was essentially of an instrumental character.\(^{148}\) A typical melodic element of the *doină* is the descending augmented second, which Enescu uses as a significant interval in the first movement of this sonata.

Instruments of folk origin which are described in the third violin sonata are the *fluer* (a type of shepherd’s flute which is also featured in Enescu’s opera *Oedipe* and his *Romanian Poem*), the *cymbalum* (a hammered string instrument similar to a dulcimer), the *cobză* (a short necked, unfretted lute) and, in the second movement, a type of bagpipe.\(^{149}\) Many idiomatic violin techniques of the *lăutari* (the Romanian gypsy fiddlers) are displayed in this sonata, especially in the third movement. The American violinist Benno Rabinoff reported that the sonata was:

> analysed by the composer as a fantasy on the life and soul of the gypsy fiddler, the kind of musical vagabond who roamed around Europe in the old days, playing at campfires, imitating not only the sounds of nature but also the stunts and techniques of other gypsy players.\(^{150}\)

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Analysis of the Third Sonata for Piano and Violin dans le caractère populaire roumain Op. 25 (1926)

Enescu’s third violin sonata is often perceived as being dominated by idiomatic violin techniques. Olin Downes of the New York Times said upon hearing Enescu perform the sonata in 1937, that it was ‘phenomenally appropriate for the violin in its writing; very rich and imaginative in the decorative and rhapsodic piano part.’\(^{151}\) However, perhaps because Enescu was as adept on the piano as he was on the violin, the sonata is equally a pianist’s sonata; elements of chamber music dominate.

The first movement appears to be written in sonata form and displays a technique of development which concentrates on motivic repetition; fragments of the first theme reappear transformed throughout. This style of development is also found in the violin sonata of César Franck. That Enescu’s motives do not fall within equal bar lengths adds to the rhapsodic character of the sonata; in this way Enescu transcribed the improvisatory music of the Romanian gypsies into music of clear and organic form.

The second movement will be examined in its descriptive sense; it is entirely programmatic. This movement contains one of the most commonly used descriptions in Enescu’s music; that of a shepherd playing his fluer. The third movement is the most physical of the three. It is dominated by Enescu’s free expression of the idiomatic violin techniques of Romanian gypsy musicians and contains the most idiomatic effects.

First movement: Moderato malinconio

In the first movement Enescu succeeds in transcribing the improvisatory character of the Romanian lăutari into a clear and organic form. In doing this he demonstrates a fundamental difference between the melodic variation found in Romanian popular music and the melodic variation found in his own work. The interpreter of popular music does not embark on a series of variations and ornamentations with a specific end point in mind. Contrary to this, Enescu has a clear cyclical structure already in mind; his method

\(^{151}\) Downes, ‘Enesco Gives Recital’.
of development is such that the initial theme is not a point of departure, but a point of arrival.\footnote{Enescu explained this:}

Laymen have a wrong idea about the function of the leading theme or leitmotif. They consider the theme as some kind of seed which, simply by being planted in the soil and watered, will infallibly produce a plant or a tree. In their view, the application of the prescribed rules should allow the musician to regulate as he pleases the growth of the theme, which is looked upon as the germ from which a whole piece will arise .... Unfortunately, the theme, that much talked-about theme, has no resemblance to the grain of wheat which a gust of wind drops in the palm of your hand. Very often, the theme is not a starting point, but an outcome. A theme is already a material, the work is already in progress, whereas its distant conception is much longer and, at the same time, much more obscure.\footnote{\begin{enumerate}
\item[153] Enescu, Souvenirs, 155-156.
\end{enumerate}}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Exposition Section, third violin sonata, first movement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First subject A (minor)</strong></td>
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| | 6-10 | The line breaks down into smaller nuclei. Bar 9 pre-empts the fourth motive of the violin melody. | The third motive is introduced in bar 6 and 7. A recurring ornamental rhythmic figure is introduced in bar 8: \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{music note} \\
\end{array} \] The fourth motive is introduced. The brief climax of this motive contains the added sixth, a characteristic gypsy harmony. |
<p>| | 11-14 | | |
| <strong>Repetition of first subject</strong> | 15-16 | A return to the initial fluid line at bar 15, however containing rhythmic fluctuations. Answers the violin’s restatement of the first motive in the upbeat to bar 16. | The upbeat to bar 15 contains a tranquil restatement of the first motive. |
| | 17 | Restatement of second motive | |
| | 18-22 | Restatement of third motive | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>23-25</th>
<th>Restatement of fourth motive. The climax of the repeated first subject occurs in bar 24.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second subject</strong></td>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>Initiates the rhythmic character of the second subject in bar 26 based on the dominant minor key of E minor.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E (minor) with a rapid transition into G# (minor)</strong></td>
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<td>Expressive, melancholic melody in the violin is heard against the piano's rhythmic initiation of the second subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32-37</td>
<td></td>
<td>Announces the physical, dance-like second subject in the upbeat to bar 32.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Takes up the second subject in the upbeat to bar 34.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38-43</td>
<td></td>
<td>Piano tremolo from bar 38 imitative of the sound of a codză.</td>
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<td>Climax of the exposition at bar 38 features the distinctive melancholic tone of a doină.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final material</strong></td>
<td>44-48</td>
<td>A return to first subject material from bar 44 pre-empts the development section.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A return to first subject material in bar 45 answers that of the piano.</td>
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</table>

The A Aeolian key centre is established at the start of the sonata.\textsuperscript{154} However, chromaticism used throughout the work serves to blur this harmonic foundation. The opening displays the A Aeolian in the piano, but with a raised fourth (example 1).

Example 1: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 1, piano)

![Example 1 image]

A lack of regular metric pulse is a distinctive feature of the first movement. The main melody in the violin immediately introduces the richly ornamented character of the doină. Bartók coined the term *parlando rubato* (in a free speaking rhythm) to describe the free rhythms and instrumental ornamentation of this type of song. Often the ornamentation becomes part of the melody, as can be seen in the first motive of the first

\textsuperscript{154} In the title of this sonata Enescu quotes 'A minor' as being the harmonic foundation. See Georges Enesco, *Troisième Sonate pour Piano et Violon dans le caractère poulaire roumain*. Paris: Enoch et Cie., 1933.
subject (example 2). That Enescu has placed a turn on the C natural indicates an ornament within an ornament. In his own recording Enescu himself lengthens the initial A natural by playing it slightly early, and he executes an extremely crisp turn. In his way he differentiates the quick ornament from the tranquil, melodic ornament.

Example 2: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 1, violin)

Enescu's tenuto markings in the second motive (example 3) suggest a slight portamento on each semiquaver. This emphasises the descending augmented second which alludes to the yearning nature of doină. Enescu himself plays the A natural slightly early and below pitch, raising it to the correct pitch with a slide. Enescu's own execution of slides and portamenti in this sonata do not always conform with what he has indicated in the score. Menuhin follows Enescu's editorial marking more exactly, however both players succeed in portraying this important characteristic of gypsy playing style. Enescu also specifies quarter-tones to aid the effect of the gypsy portamento style of playing, for example in bar 18 and bar 67.\textsuperscript{155}

Example 3: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 3, violin)

The third motive (example 4) will form the central material for the development. In bar 6 Enescu has specifically written an exaggerated portamento in the slide up to the E natural. In bar 7 Enescu himself plays the tenuto E natural slightly early and below pitch, so that he slides up to it from the D sharp. This almost suggests a slur where none is

\textsuperscript{155} The quarter-tones found in the third violin sonata represent the intonational variation of the music of the Romanian gypsies. Bartók also used quarter tones in his Sonata for solo violin.
written, but careful attention to his recording reveals that he does in fact execute the bowing as indicated.

Example 4: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 6-7, violin)

The fourth motive (example 5), marked *con grazia*, contains a harmonic device of distinctly Romanian character – the placement of a subdominant major third (essentially an added sixth) within a minor key. Here, the F# in bar 12 falls within the general key of A minor. The tenuto suggests that the F# is to be emphasised while the dynamic markings show that it is the climax of not only the motive but the first subject.

Example 5: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 11-12, violin)

It is interesting to note Enescu’s use of the *senza rigore* markings in bar 5, 6, 10 and 14. They serve as preparation and transition between the main motives.

I would argue that the second subject appears in bar 27, after a short introduction in bar 26. It contains two main contrasting elements – a rhythmic element (example 6a and 6b) and a slow, melancholic element (example 7) played by the violin with piano accompaniment. The rhythmic element comprises two similar themes, the first of which alludes to the dominant key of E minor (example 6a).
Example 6a: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 26-27, piano)

The second element (example 6b) alludes to the key of G# minor. These two themes are heard singly or together at various stages.

Example 6b: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 34-35, violin)

This is the first time the two instruments play common music in duet, and this material contains melodic allusions to the third motive. The *staccato al talone* marking describes a technique of the Romanian *lăutari*. Enescu himself does not play this *staccato*, but he does play ‘into’ the string with a rough quality which the marking suggests.

The second element of the second subject appears in bar 38 (example 7) where the violin breaks into a melody suggestive of a *doină*. This serves as the climax of the exposition. Enescu has marked the violin glissandos with a crescendo, so that the violinist should emphasize the emotional ‘pull’ of these notes. Beneath the violin melody the tremolo in the piano describes what could be the accompaniment of a Romanian *cobză*.\(^{156}\)

\(^{156}\) Another example of this technique appears in the second movement, see bar 63-64
Example 7: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 37-39)

Table 2: Development Section, third violin sonata, first movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49-52</td>
<td>Recalls the first subject’s third motive. Initiates repetition of the ornamental rhythmic figure of this motive.</td>
<td>Recalls the third motive, which first reappears in the violin in bar 51.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-54</td>
<td>Restatement of the fourth motive which contains a C# major chord (subdominant major third) within the G# minor mode.</td>
<td>Repeated rhythmic ornamental figure of the third motive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasises the C# major chord introduced by the piano. The third motive recurs in bars 58, 61 and 63.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overlapping motives culminate with a resolution to G major at bar 69.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-72</td>
<td>Transition into the recapitulation is marked by the repetition of the ornamental rhythmic figure of the third motive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A return to the first subject material marks the beginning of the development section (see Table 2). The third motive dominates this section. The piano takes a more active role, articulating the third motive in the bass (example 8). This creates tension and gives an ominous expression which remains unresolved.
Example 8: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 49-50, piano)

In the restatement of the fourth motive (example 9), Enescu emphasises the appearance of the subdominant major third, in this case a C# major chord within the context of G# Aeolian.

Example 9: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 54-55)

Motives from the opening continue to overlap with increasing frequency until they culminate at bar 69 with a resolution to G major.
Table 3: Recapitulation Section, third violin sonata, first movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Subject</td>
<td>73-74</td>
<td>Restatement of the first subject occurs within the rhythmic character of the second subject. The left hand maintains a strong, rhythmic, dance-like accompaniment throughout.</td>
<td>Melodic elements of the first subject's opening appear within rhythmic parameters of the second subject. First motive reappears in the upbeat to bar 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75-76</td>
<td>The left hand continues a strong, rhythmic accompaniment.</td>
<td>Second motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>77-81</td>
<td></td>
<td>Third motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82-83</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fourth motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Subject</td>
<td>84-92</td>
<td>A new rhythmic figure recalls the second subject. This alternates with the rhythmic character set up at the start of the recapitulation.</td>
<td>Expressive, melancholic melody in the violin is heard against the piano's rhythmic echoes of the second subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93-103</td>
<td></td>
<td>The melodic material of the second subject appears, containing allusions to the third motive. The expressive character of the doină is heard above the rhythmic elements of the piano accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>104-105</td>
<td>Final statement of the rhythmic figure of bar 84 marks a transition into the coda.</td>
<td>Resumes the expressive melodic line heard in bar 84. This calms as it leads into the coda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>106-109</td>
<td>Echoes of the third motive lead into the coda.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>In bar 110 the initial calm fluidity of mode is heard as the movement gradually comes to a close.</td>
<td>The final statement of the first opening motive in the upbeat to 110 leads the movement to a close.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enescu’s recapitulation contains only one theme which combines melodic elements of the first subject with rhythmic elements of the second subject. All four motives (examples 10 to 14) from the first subject reappear with altered rhythmic character. The initial modal accompaniment from the first subject (example 10) reappears with the marking *ben ritimato alla punta del arco*. This is also found in the opening melody of the third movement. Enescu’s recording at this point reveals a suspiciously fast tempo, which leads me to be distrustful that it is a faithful reproduction of his original performance.
Nevertheless, he almost double-dots this rhythm, emphasising the character of improvisation and ornamentation. The first motive reappears at the end of the bar.

Example 10: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 73, violin); a variation of the first bar of the movement

![Musical notation]

When the first motive reappears (example 11) in bar 76, a *senza rigore* marking is accompanied by the absence of the original turn on the C natural.

Example 11: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 76-77, violin); first motive

![Musical notation]

Example 12: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 75, violin); second motive

![Musical notation]

Example 13: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 77-78, violin); third motive

![Musical notation]
When the fourth motive reappears (example 14) Enescu demonstrates the quick-changing whims of the Romanian lăutari. His marking marcato all punta del arco in bar 82 indicates a lively mood which changes immediately in bar 83 to piacevole (peaceful).

Example 14: Enescu, third violin sonata, first movement (bar 82-83, violin); fourth motive

The second subject of the recapitulation is vague. Enescu does not quote previous melodic material, but he does allude to rhythmic material. As heard previously in the second subject, the violin states a long, melancholic melody above these rhythmic figures. This melody contains motivic elements from the first subject. As occurred similarly in the exposition, a restatement of elements of the first subject brings the recapitulation to a close. The violin rearticulates the first motive in increasingly higher registers, until it is lost completely.

Second movement: Andante sostenuto e misterioso

The structure of Romantic sonatas offered a broad range of expressive possibilities for the second movement. In Enescu’s third violin sonata the second movement is an example of his descriptive writing. As he did in his previous violin sonatas, Enescu wrote in the free form of a rhapsody. Enescu’s statement that ‘the musical form suited to Romanian music is that of the rhapsody’ is appropriate in describing the second movement.\(^\text{157}\) While Enescu includes nearly all of his descriptive compositional techniques for the violin, the piano writing remains atmospheric, with the exception of

\(^{157}\) Speranța Rădulescu, ‘Caractère spécifique roumain dans le langage harmonique de la IIIe Sonate pour piano et violon de Georges Enesco’, 93.
the climax at which point the pianist takes up the dominant role of the *cymbalum* player.  

The opening of this movement was described by Alfred Cortot as ‘an evocation in sound of the mysterious feeling of summer nights in Romania: below, the silent, endless deserted plain; above, constellations leading off into infinity.’ The distant, bell-like ostinato in the piano (example 15) is rhythmically disconnected from the violin part. As with the first movement, there is a distinct lack of rhythmic pulse. Noel Malcolm points out that the pianist Céline Chaillley-Richez, after studying the score with Enescu, had written the word ‘toads’ here on her score. Of course the music is not directly imitative of toads, but the allusion is to the natural world in general.

Example 15: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 1-4)

The opening harmonics in the violin are imitative of a *fluer*; thus as the piano evokes the night, the violin directly describes an inhabitant of the night. The *non vibrato* marking is important for the realistic imitation of a *fluer*. The image of a shepherd playing his flute is found in much of Enescu’s music, from his earliest works (*Poème Roumain* op. 1) to his latest (his opera *Oedipe*). The image here is similar to that evoked in *Poème Roumain*, of which Enescu said ‘night comes...the moon is shining...a shepherd’s flute sounds in the silence, breathing in the distant sigh of the nostalgic *doină*.’ Here the shepherd’s melody is slow, bitter and unhappy; it is a beautiful example of a song written by Enescu in the Romanian folk character. Kotylarov points out that the melody here is an inversion of the second motive of the first movement’s first

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156 See Liszt’s description below (page 66)
subject. A similar song of Enescu’s is found in the second movement of his second violin sonata. The shepherd’s dissatisfaction and unease is enhanced by the unsettling and unhalting quintuplet ostinato in the piano. The drone which at times accompanies this ostinato (example 16) was interpreted by Ritz as imitating a type of bagpipes used in Romanian folk music.

Example 16: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 11, violin)

Enescu also describes elements of the natural world. Kotylarov suggests that the streaming figuration in bars 20-21 (example 17) describe a gust of wind which interrupts the shepherd’s doină.

Example 17: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 20-21)

162 Kotylarov, Enescu, 81.
The violin is marked *sul ponticello, quasi scivolando* (like a slide). This effect is achieved with the bow by using the crescendo to connect the notes of the chromatic scale as closely as possible. On a programmatic level, this interruption brings a sense of relief to the music, but the shepherd soon resumes his plaintive song.

Enescu develops the opening melody in the same way as he developed the first subject in the first movement. At bar 33, the melody is now heard in the bass of the piano (example 18a).

Example 18a: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 33-34, piano)

Over the continued unsettling quintuplets, the violin’s naturally stopped notes rearticulate the secondary melody (example 18b) which the piano alludes to in the previous bar.

Example 18b: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 35-36)
Enescu’s marking, *flautando sulla tastiera colla punta del arco*, is specifically combined with his characteristic tenuto markings above the notes; as in the second motive of the first movement this technique enhances the yearning character of the *doină*.

From bar 43 we arrive at a moment of relief which precedes the climax. Interpretation of this section is personal. Ritz interprets it as marking a *strigături* (a point where the elements of song attain the percussive elements of speech), however I believe Enescu is alluding to the natural world. The violin evokes various natural elements in quick succession. I interpret example 19a as an evocation of light (perhaps reflected on a pond) similar to the descriptions found in Enescu’s *Impressions d’enfance Op. 28* (example 19b).

Example 19a: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 44, violin)


The following (examples 20a and 21a) are perhaps imitations of crickets and birds, similar to descriptions found in Enescu’s *Impressions d’enfance Op. 28* (examples 20b and 21b).
Example 20a: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 45, violin)

Example 20b: Enescu, Impressions d’enfance, sixth movement - Grillon (Cricket) (bar 1-4, violin)

Example 21a: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 45, violin)

Example 21b: Enescu, Impressions d’enfance, fourth movement - L’Oiseau en Cage et le Coucou au mur (The Bird in the Cage and the Cuckoo on the Wall) (bar 1-3, violin)

Enescu then alters the opening melody. It first reappears in bar 53 (example 22) at a faster tempo and with a more lively rhythm. In bar 54 the violin tremolo is imitative of a cobză.
Example 22: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 53-54, violin)

The opening melody then reappears in bar 59, transformed from the introverted expression (characterised in the sound of the harmonics) to an extroverted expression (naturally stopped octaves). This marks the climax of the movement. Enescu uses virtuosic piano runs with a sustained pedal to imitate a cymbalum (example 23).\textsuperscript{164}

Example 23: Enescu, third violin sonata, second movement (bar 59, piano)

Liszt describes the function of the cymbalum player in a gypsy band as:

[the one who] supplies the rhythm, indicates the acceleration or slackening of time, and also the degree of movement....he is necessarily one of those who conduct the musical poem....and he imposes upon others the duty of surrounding him, sustaining him, even guessing him in order to sing the same funereal hymn or give himself up to the same mad freak of joy.\textsuperscript{165}

Here (in example 23) Enescu clearly places the piano in this dominant role; the part is of an extremely virtuosic nature and it dictates the melodic line.

The climax of this movement can be associated with these words of Enescu: 'A man of the soil, a farmer, does not talk if he feels great pain - never! He moans, which is


\textsuperscript{165} As quoted in Bellman, \textit{The Style Hongrois}, 108.
a form of singing. As the music slows to the original tempo the ostinato returns, bringing with it a sense of surrender. The violin returns to the internal expression of the *fluer* as the movement comes to a close.

**Third movement: Allegro con brio, ma non troppo mosso**

This movement resembles ternary form. It features a central rhapsodic episode cradled between two outer sections of a dance-like nature, each of which displays a modified rondo form.

### Table 4: Section A, third violin sonata, third movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (piano)</td>
<td>1-15</td>
<td>Initial statement of first dance melody.</td>
<td>Provides a rhythmic chordal accompaniment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (violin)</td>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>Takes over the rhythmic accompaniment, with some doubling of the violin melody in the right hand of the piano.</td>
<td>Takes over the first dance melody <em>ben ritmato, alla punta del arco</em> indicates the rhythmic style of gypsy playing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (violin)</td>
<td>30-44</td>
<td></td>
<td>A sudden outburst in <em>râvido</em> (rough) gypsy style. The descending modal scales alternate between <em>legato</em> and <em>spicatto gettando</em> bowing and between elements of melody and melodic ornamentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (piano)</td>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>First theme reappears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (violin and piano)</td>
<td>60-103</td>
<td>Initiates the fast semiquaver motive which will dominate the outer sections of the movement; rhythmic accompaniment continues in the left hand</td>
<td>Longer vocal lines are secondary to the new virtuosity of the piano. <em>Scherzo, alla punta del arco</em> marking emphasises continuation of elements of dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (violin)</td>
<td>104-117</td>
<td></td>
<td>Takes up a final extended statement of the initial dance melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>118-137</td>
<td>Only elements of the first subject remain as the dance slows</td>
<td>Rhythmic dance accompaniment gradually slows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The movement opens with an extended dance, the piano interestingly providing the melodic line with a strong rhythmic drive. The melody contains an allusion to a kuruc-fourth in the third and fourth bars. Bellman mentions the kuruc-fourth as a rebounding figure of Hungarian gypsy origin that alternates between the fifth scale degree and upper tonic, for example in Liszt’s *Hungarian Fantasia* (example 24a). \(^{167}\)

Example 24a: Liszt, *Hungarian Fantasia*, hallgató section.

![Example 24a: Liszt, *Hungarian Fantasia*, hallgató section.](image)

Enescu uses this device in the third and fourth bars of the opening melody (example 24b).

Example 24b: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 1-4, piano)

![Example 24b: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 1-4, piano)](image)

Enescu’s articulation marks and accents displace the barline, giving a sense of the unpredictable whims of the gypsy musicians. Throughout this opening the violin and piano play very much as partners. When the melody appears in the violin part (example 24c) Enescu indicates the style of the Romanian lăutari; the marking, *ben ritmato, alla punta del arco*, frequently occurs.

\(^{167}\) Bellman, *The Style Hongrois*, 122.
Example 24c: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 16-19, violin)

In bowing indication and mood this theme holds interesting similarities to the fourth motive in the first movement as it reappears in bar 82 (see example 14). Enescu specifies many quarter-tones in this melody, obviously representing for the făutari's rustic 'out of tune' character which Menuhin describes:

Anyone who carefully observes every little marking Enesco left in the score will play it exactly the right degree 'out of tune', will perform glissandos at precisely the right spots, and will convey the exact rhythmical attenuations.\textsuperscript{168}

The melodic content of the second part of theme A (example 25) recollects the oriental gypsy mode of the opening bars of the first movement. This figuration appears later in the violin part, variously as melody (bars 26-28 and 114-117 etc) or as melodic ornamentation (bars 42-44, 49-50 and 88-91).

Example 25: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 10-14, piano)

A feeling of suspense is created at bar 60 (theme C) and perhaps to enhance this Enescu makes use of many quarter-tones in the violin part, particularly from bar 84. Interestingly, the violin does not take up the challenge and eventually the dance slows, at

\textsuperscript{168} As quoted in Ritz, 'The Three Violin Sonatas of George Enescu', 151.
which point the music enters a central rhapsodic section around which the rest of the
movement lies.

**Table 5: Section B – ‘rhapsody’, third violin sonata, third movement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhapsody theme</td>
<td>138-143</td>
<td>Provides rhythmic chordal accompaniment.</td>
<td>Phrase 1 of the rhapsody has the melancholy character of a <em>doimá</em>. The phrase is based on the A minor Aeolian key found at the opening of the sonata. The first phrase centres around the major interval of the fourth motive from the first movement, and contains the major subdominant on the <em>fa</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>144-149</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase 2 mirrors phrase 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150-155</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase 3 settles on the tonic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>156-160</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase 4 concludes the first statement of the rhapsody theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 1</td>
<td>161-165</td>
<td>Phrase 1 of the rhapsody repeated in the A minor Aeolian mode. The piano plays the rhapsody in the virtuosic style of a <em>cymbalum</em>.</td>
<td>Provides the tremolo accompaniment of a <em>cobzâ</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166-169</td>
<td>Phrase 2 mirrors phrase 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>170-173</td>
<td>Phrase 3 settles on the tonic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>174-177</td>
<td>Phrase 4 concludes the first variation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 2</td>
<td>178-193</td>
<td>The rhapsody melody is transformed with a straight, boisterous rhythm. Staccato chords in the piano are doubled with pizzicato chords in the violin. The four phrases are each of four bars length.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 3</td>
<td>194-206</td>
<td>Indicates the conclusion of the rhapsody by recalling that melody with a more challenging rhythmic drive.</td>
<td>Pizzicato accompaniment pre-empts the piano part at each point. The final tremolo pizzicato in bar 204 is imitative of a <em>cobzâ</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>207-211</td>
<td>Second subject material marks a transition to the third section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lynette Ritz has analysed the central section as being a theme and variations based in the key of B major. While ‘variations’ is an appropriate term to describe the repetition of the theme as it appears in the violin and piano parts, the underlying harmony is rather more complex. I contend that the harmony here is of the key of A minor which is established in the opening bars of the first movement. The collection of pitches which make up the rhapsody theme (example 26) are found in the first bar of the sonata (see example 1). The B maj third around which the theme of the rhapsody centres, and from where Ritz has taken her argument, comes instead directly from the fourth motive of the first movement (see example 5).

The violin plays the rhapsody (example 26) while the piano continues a rhythmic accompaniment:

Example 26: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 39-44, violin)

![Image of musical notation]

Upon first study, Enescu’s fingering here seems inappropriate; by following it exactly a violinist will reduce the effectiveness of the indicated glissandi. But this fingering (followed by both Menuhin and Enescu in their recordings) does enhance the pesante character. This rhapsody is not indulgent in the romantic sense. Additionally, the con suono marking indicates the melancholic character of a doina which contrasts with the physicality of the previous section.

In bar 161 the rhapsodic improvisation is played by the piano; rapid demi-semiquavers allude to the technique of the cymbalum. At the same time the accompaniment of the violin imitates a cobza. By combining the rhapsody melody (cymbalum) with accompanimental elements (cobza), the violin and piano are together imitating the performance style of a Romanian taraf orchestra.
The piano dominates the texture of this central rhapsody, as it did the climax of the second movement. The piano initiates the rhythmic variations, dictates the length of phrase and enjoys the final statement of the melody. Thus, Enescu has used the piano equally to evoke the gypsy character of the 'fantasy on the life and soul of a gypsy fiddler.'

Table 6: Section A1, third violin sonata, third movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Bar</th>
<th>Piano</th>
<th>Violin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (violin and piano)</td>
<td>212-227</td>
<td>Theme A material answers the violin in stretto.</td>
<td>Theme A returns, muted with a less energetic <em>poco spiccato</em> marking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>228-237</td>
<td>Combines melodic elements of theme A within a semiquaver motion.</td>
<td>Combines melodic elements of theme A within a semiquaver motion, answering the challenge set by the piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>238-247</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (violin)</td>
<td>248-262</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudden outburst recalls theme B, distinctly lacking the <em>ritardo</em> marking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (piano)</td>
<td>263-273</td>
<td>Combines melodic elements of theme A within a semiquaver motion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (piano and violin)</td>
<td>274-294</td>
<td>New virtuosity as semiquaver music transforms into sextuplets. The piano sets increasingly more difficult challenges of ornamentation for the violin.</td>
<td>Longer vocal lines are secondary to the increasing virtuosity of the piano. <em>Scherzo, alta punta del arco</em> marking emphasises continuation of elements of dance. Increased use of virtuosic ornamentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>295-297</td>
<td></td>
<td>Markings indicate rapid changes of style in gypsy improvisation: <em>Flautando</em>, <em>veloce</em> for the ornamentation contrasts immediately with <em>al talone</em> for the transition into repeated C material (bar 298).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>298-330</td>
<td>Rearticulates C material at a faster tempo.</td>
<td>Holds the longer vocal lines of theme C, but plays elements of theme A at ever increasing intensity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*169 see footnote 150*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition-rhapsody</th>
<th>331-344</th>
<th>Rhapsody returns, played simultaneously in both the violin and the piano. The tremelando spicatto at bar 343 again indicates a <em>coshá</em>, with increased intensity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final material</td>
<td>345-369</td>
<td>The violin dominates; precise bowing indications are placed alongside the descending modal figure, which is rearticulated with increasing fury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>370-384</td>
<td>The <em>kuruc</em>-fourth reappears in bars 370-372 and 381-382. Unison between piano and violin increase the tension of the final statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>385-403</td>
<td>Thundering tremolo continues to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final statement of the rhapsody.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At bar 212 the dance returns, muted but at full speed. Enescu combines and develops themes with ever increasing intensity; interplay between violin and piano brings opportunity for competitive display in the gypsy tradition.

Enescu’s indication of ornamentation is precise. When played at the correct speed, the ornaments are heard as descending runs of trills (example 27). Enescu’s marking, *flautando, molto tranquillo*, indicates that the passage should fall easily, as trills do under a single bow. Menuhin said of Enescu’s trills:

He had the most wonderful trills of any violinist I have ever known. Depending on the speed and lightness of the trill, his trilling finger struck the string higher than the actual note, thus keeping it in tune although the light, fast motion of the finger did not push the string to its full depth on the fingerboard.\(^{170}\)

Example 27a: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 282-284, violin)

![Example 27a: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 282-284, violin)](image)

Example 27b: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 291-293, violin)

![Example 27b: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 291-293, violin)](image)

\(^{170}\) Menuhin, *Unfinished Journey*, 73.
Enescu also specifies quarter-tones in similar passages to give, as Menuhin said, an ‘out of tune’ character to the ornaments, for example in bar 259-262.

The modified rondo form of this final section breaks down to a profusion of elements, especially from bar 274. Here the material from C (bar 60–) in the first section is drawn out and decorated with elements of ornamentation, improvisation and rhythmic variation.

Bar 345 marks the final accelerando. Enescu has indicated specific spicatto and non-spicatto markings in the violin part. In performance Enescu himself exaggerates the non-spicatto with a portamento slide up to the start of every descending run, which he then plays with absolute bow contact with the string.

The movement ends not with the virtuosity of dance, but with the melody of the rhapsody. Elements imitative of the voice which have been used by Enescu at the conclusion of his sonata are described, independently, by Bellman as grace notes of more than a fifth above the principal note (see bar 116 of example 28). This aspect of gypsy music is found in much of the style hongrois of Western Europe, for example in Schubert’s Divertissement à l’Hongroise (example 28).171

Example 28: Schubert, Divertissement à l’Hongroise (bar 113-120)

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171 Bellman, The Style Hongrois, 110.
This effect is found in the final bars (example 29) of the third movement of Enescu's sonata. The rustic vocal character is enhanced by Enescu's use of quarter-tones. Example 29: Enescu, third violin sonata, third movement (bar 397-403, violin)

Summary

Enescu's third violin sonata is his most outstanding contribution to the genre. Often misrepresented as a nationalistic work displaying idiomatic violin techniques this sonata, on the contrary, is dominated by motivic interplay between two equal instruments. The sonata divulges Enescu's neoclassical loyalty to sonata form. Richard Strauss had complained in 1888 of an 'ever increasing contradiction between the musical-poetic content that I want to convey and the ternary sonata form that has come down to us from the classical composers.' 172 If Enescu, as a self-confessed 'lyric poet' felt this contradiction, his third violin sonata shows that he resolved it.

Enescu's resolution came perhaps in his demonstration of a different compositional technique for each of the movements. The first movement demonstrates Enescu's cyclic development of sonata form, in which the layering of melodic material creates contrapuntal tension. The second movement is a beautiful example of Enescu's descriptive writing while the third movement displays unashamedly the unpredictable and rustic whims of gypsy performance technique within an adapted rondo form.

Enescu demonstrates his preference for treating the violin as a melodic, often vocal, instrument at the expense of virtuosity. In this sense, the violin dominates the emotional language of the sonata, with expressions of the doină appearing in the climactic sections of the first and second movements. Despite the sonata's distinctly Romanian flavour, Enescu has pulled away from contemporary prescriptions of

nationalism by using no original folk tunes. All of the melodies in the third sonata are his own.

Traditionally, the final movement of a sonata provides an opportunity for the greatest display of technical virtuosity. Enescu has complied by mimicking the gypsy tradition of competitive display, but he never creates virtuosity for virtuosity’s sake. Rather, he has transcribed into music the style of fiddling peculiar to the Romanian lăutari. The second subject of the third movement is a perfect example: while the piano initiates the technical challenges, the violin actually holds equal place in the texture with longer vocal lines.
Conclusion

’The twenty-first century will be the century of Enescu’

Yehudi Menuhin

The name ‘George Enescu’ is slowly becoming recognised outside a small arena of practicing musicians and theorists. For much of the half-century since his death, Enescu’s reputation has remained stunted due to various factors: the restrictive communist regime in his native Romania, his own reticence in self-promotion, and confusion over his roles as a composer and performer.

Enescu declared himself first and foremost a composer. To this end his performing career, his teaching and his conducting were all simply extended expressions of one language: music. It is important to understand why Enescu felt bitterness towards the violin. His feelings of resentment were directed not at the instrument itself, but rather towards the demands placed upon performers in the twentieth century. Despite maintaining a gruelling performance schedule until his final years, he chose not to subject himself to the duties which technical brilliance demanded. It was Enescu’s unique gift of communication which offered the receptive listener much more; that of a spiritual experience.

Enescu was more than a ‘virtuoso’ in the twentieth-century definition of that term. His broad range of gifts encompassed Sébastien de Brossard’s original outline (1703) which defined the virtuoso as a ‘complete’ musician. It was therefore difficult for Enescu to work in the twentieth century, an era of specialisation.

Enescu’s composing and performing gifts were received with scepticism. Enescu did not fit the twentieth-century definition of the ‘virtuoso-composer’ because he did not write music to display only the virtuosic capabilities of the violin. Equally adept on the piano, Enescu erred towards writing music that satisfied his craving for polyphony. For this reason most of Enescu’s 33 opus numbers comprise orchestral, chamber or piano music.

Enescu’s third violin sonata is the most outstanding example of his chamber music because it illuminates multiple aspects of Enescu’s complete musicianship. The sonata is rich in Romanian folk language, refined in its loyalty to Western classical principles, and has an idiomatic style which is undoubtedly that of a composer who is as much a pianist as he is a violinist. Within the score Enescu meticulously recorded idiomatic descriptions for performance. This points towards his own detailed considerations of performance practice, his loyalty to a written score and to his belief in passing down an understanding of musical traditions to the next generation through teaching.

Enescu’s teaching reflected his essence as a composer. His string masterclasses, given from the piano, involved a discussion of musical language rather than technical guidance. Students most receptive to Enescu’s teaching were those who already possessed a solid technical foundation. Enescu’s style of interpretation was neoclassical; he believed in performing works with the details that were originally indicated.

The originality in Enescu’s musical language lies in his discovery of how to transcribe onto paper the improvisatory nature of Romanian folk music, both vocal and instrumental. For Enescu, the song which best displayed the emotional range of the Romanian people was the doină. This style of melody is heard in much of his music, but particularly in his third violin sonata. Enescu’s description of instrumental music covers the idiomatic gypsy styles peculiar to a Romanian taraf orchestra. But it is Enescu’s motivic interplay which shows the sophistication of his compositional language. His work is not merely decorative or picturesque, but has a complex underlying structural plan. That Enescu has been perceived as a nationalist composer is a limited view which surely demands correction.
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