

THEODORGRIGORIU

internet

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Credo

1. I am a Romanian composer, and I have a feeling of force and confidence, one of a noble ideal, when what I write harmonizes at all with the works of the great Romanian creators.
2. My models of beauty are classical art, the monasteries in north Moldavia, and the majestic harmony of space where I saw the light of day.
3. While at work, I often asked myself if, in the centuries to come, our artistic values will be able to protect this space.
4. I only wrote what I have lived.
5. My spiritual parent is Enescu.



STEPPING STONES IN LIFE AND WORKS

(SELECTIVE ITINERARY AND BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES)

1926

Born on July 25, 1926 in Galatzi (a city-port on the Lower Danube).

The father, Vasile (1890-1950), a very gifted painter, never abandoned his easel, but was compelled to work as an engraver and lithographer at the State Printing Office in Bucharest. He contributed to the graphics of the Encyclopedia of Romania (8 volumes) edited by the Royal Foundations, and was praised by Nicolae Iorga. The family still possess some of his paintings, but most are scattered or lost.

On the paternal side, the grandfather, Petrache, was Romanian, from a family of north Moldavia, and the grandmother, Sofia (spelt Sophie - nee Hittel - in official papers, was of German origin; her family, together with other families from the region of Bremen, had settled as colonists in Dobrogea in the 18th century).

The mother, Raritsa (an old Moldavian name, the feminine for Raresh - (1900-1951), a homemaker, knew well Moldavian folk music. On both the paternal and maternal side she comes from Romanian families of Orthodox priests from the region of Tecuci (Hancesti).

1930

Before turning 4, a toy violin becomes a real one, and he takes his first lessons with a teacher.

It was a time of prodigies, after the American model, and parents pinned great hopes on their children's talents.

1931

The family moves to Bucharest to provide the child with better education and, at the age of 5 ½, he plays for the first time in public, in a concert organized by Universul newspaper.

1932

At 7, he is admitted to the Royal Music Conservatoire in Bucharest, in the gifted children's class; his teachers are George Enacovici and Cecilia Nitzulescu-Lupu, who later appoints

1936

her student, Constantin Botez, to continue his instruction; a renowned concertist and an excellent pedagogue, Botez gave him private lessons for free until the age of 10. He recommended him the "Pro Arte" Conservatoire, recently founded by cellist George Cocea under the patronage of Queen Maria.

Theodor Grigoriu's first compositions date from primary school: canons in two parts performed by his classmates.

1936

At the "Pro Arte" Conservatoire he studies violin under Nina Alexandrescu, theory and solfeggio under Romeo Alexandrescu, the history of music under Emanoil Ciomac. He graduates with the highest grade as the only scholarship holder.

1939

In 1937 he is admitted to Mihai Viteazu high school in Bucharest, as a recipient of a scholarship until graduation, in 1944. The high-school orchestra, in which he plays the violin, interprets some of his works written at the time.



Nina Alexandrescu

1939

He continues his studies with private teachers: Romeo Alexandrescu (harmony, polyphony, musical forms) and Nina Alexandrescu (violin). For five years, they taught him free of charge, offering him at the same time a good violin, musical scores and books.

1944

In 1943, when he was 17, his work Quartet No. 1 receives a mention at the George Enescu National Composition contest; according to rules, he becomes a member of the Romanian Composers' Society (SCR).

The composer and conductor Theodor Rogalski, SCR secretary, commissions a work by him,

for the 1944 chamber concert organized annually by SCR.

In 1944, he makes his debut at "Dalles" hall with Magic Mountain Trio for violin, cello and piano.

Performers: Alexandru Theodorescu - violin, Ion Fotino - cello, Coca Fotino - piano.

On this occasion, Romeo Alexandrescu introduces him to Maestro Mihail Jora, who attends the concert, and appreciates his work.

From his teenage years also date the following works:

- Requiem for a Poetess (Iulia Hasdeu) - the first version,
- Three Miniatures for piano - choreographic pieces written for Vera Ciortea, -
- Part I of a string quartet (lost save a few pages)

1944
1945
1945
1949

He attends courses at the Faculty of Mathematics in Bucharest.

He is admitted and attends the courses of the Faculty of Architecture in Bucharest until 1949.

In 1947, his lecture on "The Mosaics in Ravenna" (a study of forms and colors) is acclaimed by the History of Architecture Department.

He cannot take his degree for health reasons.

Having inherited a good knowledge of the typographic art from his father, he reveals genuine aptitudes as a musical score and book editor as early as his high-school years. Out of dozens of titles edited by Theodor Grigoriu, mention must be made of a great number of works by Constantin Silvestri: Cantece de pustiu (Melancholy Songs), Sonatas, Quartets, Prelude and Toccata for Orchestra, etc.

The several years' collaboration with Constantin Silvestri proved fruitful to Theodor Grigoriu, although the great musician did not use to disclose his secrets.

During these years, he invented several musical cartography systems, one of which - pantographic transcription (adapted from engraving) - was adopted by Editura Muzicala (Music Publishers) of the Union of Composers and used in all the musical score editions, until the specialized workshop was dismantled in 1990.

In 1948 - The Potter's Song, a previously unreleased piece for violin and piano, performed in a music circle of the Romanian Composers' Society, in the old premises on Lipscani St., not far from St. Gheorghe church.

In 1949 - various occasional choirs and pieces (partially published).

In 1949 - music score for The Seagull by Tchekhov, in collaboration with Maestro Tudor Ciortea. In 1949 - music score for The Bourgeois Gentleman by Moliere, directed by Gabriel Negri.

Many of the ideas from this stage music will be developed in symphonic manner in the classical-style Theatrical Suite, written in 1956 (see the year 1956).

1950

Sinfonia Cantabile Op. 1 (revised in 1966)

The first work with a unitary style, the previous ones being considered "anthumous" by the author. Op. 1 is a landmark in the evolution of the composer: the following works do not bear an opus number.

Shepherd's Songs - three lieder for voice and piano on lyrics by Dinu Athanasiu (Ion Zagan).

The composer incorporates here some characteristics of the Macedo-Romanian melos.

1951
1954

Private lessons with Mihail Jora: harmony, counterpoint, musical forms.

In 1952 - Tatar Dance - choreographic piece on authentic folk themes of Dobrujan Tatars. (Commissioned by the Unions' Ballet Ensemble and Orchestra, conducted by Sergiu Comissiona)

In 1953 - "Along the Argesh River" - suite for string quartet.

This work, dedicated to the Maestro Mihail Jora, represents the composer's first great hit. Released by Electrecord, it was the first LP record in Romania. The performers on this "historic" record: Lucian Savin - 1st violin, Mendi Rodan - 2nd violin, Wilhelm Berger - viola, Alfons Capitanovici - cello.

The 1953 Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania award for "Along the Argesh River".

1954
1955

He is sent by the Committee for Culture and Art to a post-graduate (master) course at the P.

I. Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow. After presenting several recorded works, (Tatar Dance, Along the Argesh River), he is admitted to the class of the great composer Aram I. Hachaturian, who had a limited number of students.

Among his classmates in that year were the future famous composers Rodion Schedrin and Andrey Eshpay, both also virtuoso pianists.

In 1955, he presents as the final-year production a version for two pianos of Symphonic Variations on a Song by Anton Pann, scoring a huge success and receiving laudatory remarks from Hachaturian. He dedicates it to the great composer.

In 1955, Symphonic Variations on a Song by Anton Pann (the orchestral version).

The composer believes that it was a good idea for him to focus on a single, ampler work during the year spent in Moscow, while benefiting from A. I. Hachaturian's exceptional advice regarding the form and especially orchestral coloring, the secrets of which his maestro knew to the highest level, thereby leaving a deep mark on 20th-century music.

Theodor Grigoriu discovered a spiritual relation beyond space and time, admitted by his maestro, between the folk singer Anton Pann and an ashug (Armenian folk singer), as Hachaturian modestly presented himself, hence the motivation to dedicate him the work.

1956

Symphonic Variations on a Song by Anton Pann is performed by the Bucharest Philharmonic conducted by Edgar Cosma, at the Romanian Athenaeum.

The great orchestra head George Georgescu, Director of the Philharmonic, supports the young composer throughout the rehearsals.



With Edgar Cosma in Paris

Theatrical Suite in classical style.

As shown above, he uses in it themes and a certain atmosphere from the stage music for the Bourgeois Gentleman, written in 1949.

1957

Concerto for double chamber orchestra and oboe, the first work to evince the idea of imaginary folklore, after the model of Bartok and Enescu.

Music score for the film The Eruption, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

It is his first music score written for a film, which opens the composer's decades-long collaboration with Romanian cinema and the director Liviu Ciulei, his former Architecture classmate.

1958

Music score for the play Antigone by Sophocles, directed by Ion Cojar.

1959

Cosmic Dream - orchestral poem (counterpoint and transparency study).

The work is rigorously composed in serial technique, and based on an "undulating" series discovered by the composer (described in this book in the chapter Novel Ideas and Original Solutions in Theodor Grigoriu's Works). Placed outside the framework of his interest in the ethos of Romanian music, Cosmic Dream must be understood as a study on the path of technical evolution. One must notice the composer's lucid idea of subtitling his work a "study".

1960

Homage to Enescu - for four violin groups (32 instrumentalists).

Written five years after the death of the great composer, the work deliberately uses, for the first time in Romanian and world music, the idea of heterophony, in the "gruppo eterofonico" of part II, Melopeea (Melopoeia) (see the page reproduced in this book); due to requirements of concert life, the composer wrote a version for 8 (16) violins.

1961

The music score for the film The Danube Waves, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

The film was awarded the First Prize at the Karlovy Vary festival.

The music score for the play As You Like It by Shakespeare, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

The performance was intended as a return of Romanian theater to genuineness. The show was performed for 15 uninterrupted years, enjoying great success.

The music score for the film The Thirst (two series), directed by Mircea Dragan.

The film was awarded the 2nd Prize at the Moscow festival.

The music score for the film Soldiers without Uniforms, directed by Francisc Munteanu.

1962

Autumn Songs - a cycle of five lieder for voice and piano, on lyrics by Veronica Porumbacu.

The music score for the film Lupeni 29 (two series), directed by Mircea Dragan.

The music score for the play Macbeth by Shakespeare, directed by Mihai Berechet.

For this performance, Th. G. wrote the first tape-music in Romania (see the chapter Novel Ideas and Original Solutions in Theodor Grigoriu's Works).

1963

The music score for the film Codin, after Panait Istrati's novel, directed by Henri Colpi.



With Henri Colpi at Braila

The first French-Romanian co-production.

The Best Novel Adaptation Award at the 1963 Cannes festival.

The music score for the play Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, directed by Valeriu Moisescu.

Ode to My City - cantata for choir and orchestra on lyrics by Nina Cassian.

The city referred to is the composer's native city of Galatzi, which became the greatest steelmaking center of the country.

1964

The orchestral version of Seven Songs (Sept Chansons) on lyrics by Clement Marot by George Enescu.

(The over 400 concert performances of this orchestral version prove that it was necessary)

The music score for the film The Soimaru Family (two series), after Mihail Sadoveanu's novel, directed by Mircea Dragan.

Beginning with this movie, the composer elaborates a language capable of evoking the Romanian medieval epos, based on melodic and rhythmic archetypes existing in the Romanian melos.

1965

The music score for the film The Forest of the Hanged (two series), after Liviu Rebreanu's novel, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

The Best Director Award at the 1965 Cannes festival.

The music score for the play Twelfth Night by Shakespeare, directed by Ginel Teodorescu.

The music score for the play La Cagnotte (Pots of Money) by Labiche, directed by Valeriu Moisescu.

The White Pelican Award, Mamaia, 1965, for the music score of The Soimaru Family.

1966 The music score for the film Golgotha, directed by Mircea Dragan.

1967 He makes a visit to the United States, where he meets the great Romanian-born head of orchestra Ionel Perlea, whom he persuades to embark on a concert tour in Romania. He brings to the country the score of Symphonic Variations on an Own Theme by Ionel Perlea and puts it forward for publication at Editura Muzicala, taking upon himself the editing and the proofreading of the engraving (cartograms).

The music score for the film The Dacians (two series), directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu.

Starting with this movie, the composer elaborates a musical language capable of evoking the ancient epos, based (as shown above) on archetypes existing in the Romanian melos.

The music for the play The Hatchet, after Mihail Sadoveanu's novel, directed by Radu Penciulescu.

1968 The music score for the film The Column (two series), directed by Mircea Dragan.

He carries on with the idea initiated in The Dacians.

Elegia Pontica for bass-baritone, women's choir and chamber orchestra, on Latin verses by Ovid.

He adapts, for the first time in Romania, Luigi Nono's "bundle of sounds" technique, but as an application stemming from the Byzantine canon (see the chapter Novel Ideas and Original Solutions in Theodor Grigoriu's Works).

He is elected secretary general of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania, the symphonic and chamber music, opera and ballet section. He will occupy this position until the beginning of 1990.

Under the energetic leadership of president Ion Dumitrescu, Th. G. contributes to the organization of the UCMR, making sure, together with the other secretaries, that the creative activity of the musicians composers and musicologists - enjoys the best conditions, the royalties service works efficiently, works are commissioned and paid for twice a year, music is present in the concert life all over the country, and at the same time chamber and symphonic scores, as well as musicology works, are published.

Owing to his knowledge in the field, he contributes to the establishment of the UCMR print shop, as well as the score copying and musical cartography services which - as mentioned above - applied his methods.

Concerned, alongside his colleagues from management, with training specialists in musical score and musical book editing, in two decades they succeed in publishing about 3000 titles, which constitute the bibliographic basis of Romanian musicians to this day.

Editura Muzicala constantly exploited his editorial competence in order to reach an international competitive level, especially in score editing.

1969 Ionel Perlea conducts his work Homage to Enescu, in the concert of the National Radio Orchestra (during his three- concert tour in May 1969).

With Ionel Perlea, after the Radio Orchestra concert



Ionel Perlea at the Philharmonic



The music score for the play The Comedians at Galatzi State Theater.

The music score for the film The Castle of the Condemned, directed by Mihai Iacob.
Infinite Melody for string orchestra dedicated to the "great shadows of Bayreuth - Wagner and Liszt".

The 1969 UCMR Award for Elegia Pontica.

1970

The music score for the play Leonce and Lena by Buechner, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

1971

He becomes the legatee in Romania of the copyrights of Ionel Perlea (who died in 1970).

Although rather modest, these copyrights allow Th. G. to set up a prize for young conductors and to edit some scores of works by Ionel Perlea, among which 1st Symphony.

1972

The music score for the film The Explosion, directed by Mircea Dragan.

The music score for the film Because They Love Each Other, directed by Mihai Iacob. The music score for the play After the Fall by Arthur Miller.

The second trip to the United States, to bring to the country Ionel Perlea's works and manuscripts. On this occasion, he puts order in the composition and drafts archive left after the death of the great musician. Several copies are made from the originals, and the originals are sent to Romania by ship, for security reasons. They arrive in good condition and taken in custody by the UCMR. The second copy of each work was donated to the Library of Congress in Washington.

1974

The music score for the film Stephen the Great - Vaslui 1475 (two series), directed by Mircea Dragan.

He carries on with the idea exploited in The Soimaru Family.

The music score for the film The Martens Brothers (two series), after Mihail Sadoveanu's novel, directed by Mircea Dragan.

With the music written for this film, he concludes the trilogy of movies with medieval themes.

The music score for the play Volpone by Ben Jonson, directed by Ion Cojar.

Tristia - In memoriam Ionel Perlea, for chamber orchestra.

The 1974 UCMR Award for Tristia.

1977

The George Enescu Award of the Romanian Academy for Tristia.

1978

Canti per Europa, oratorio for choir and orchestra, on lyrics by Dante, Shelley, Pushkin, Eminescu, Rimbaud, Rilke, Lorca.

The work enjoyed great success, and was used in a TV film directed by Henri Colpi. It was inspired by the composer's visit to Dresden and the tragic contemplation of the ruins of the famous Opera house, where masterpieces by Weber, Wagner, Richard Strauss were premiered. The antagonism between the constructive spirit and the diabolism of destruction, characterizing the history of Europe, is the theme of the oratorio.

The music score for the film Aurel Vlaicu, directed by Mircea Dragan.

The 1978 UCMR Award for Canti per Europa.

1979

The music score for the play The Tempest by Shakespeare, directed by Liviu Ciulei.

The show ran for almost a decade.

1980

Carpathian Suite for string orchestra.

The orchestral version of the 1953 Along the Argesh River suite for string quartet.

The music score for the film Burebista, directed by Gheorghe Vitanidis.

This film concludes the trilogy of film music with Antiquity themes. The other movies in the trilogy are The Dacians and The Column.

1984

Vocalisms, a choral symphony for mixed choir and organ (in a backup role).

A meditation on the cosmic infinite, the work uses the undulating series from Cosmic Dream, which does not convey any special ethos.

(see the chapter Novel Ideas and Original Solutions in Theodor Grigoriu's Works).

Transylvanian Pastorals and Idylls - a large orchestral rhapsody in five movements.

The work combines two forms - rhapsody and suite.

The music score for the film The Vlashing's Leaving, directed by Mircea Dragan.The music score for the (nine-episode) series The Vlashing's, directed by Mircea Dragan.

(The series expands and details the movie The Vlashing's Leaving.)

1985

The Modal Column - investigations into the ethos of Romanian music, for piano.

Book I - 6 pieces (three couples)

Book II - 6 pieces (three couples)

The composer considers it a "workshop" capable of determining a higher level of musical expression in the future.

Wagner considers the major-minor system the German people's outlook of the world; similarly, our musical modes may be considered the Romanian people's outlook of the world.

The 1985 UCMR Award for The Modal Column.

1986

Music and the Aura of Poetry - studies, essays and articles (478 p.)

1987

Partita a sonar No. 1 for flute (2 flutes).

The application of the ideas formulated in The Modal Column may be observed in this work.

1988

The Four Seasons (Romanian Seasons), four concertos for violin and chamber orchestra with piano.

The work is recorded integrally in 1990, and performed in a concert in the US and, 14 years later (2002), in Romania.

Partita a sonar No. 2, for oboe.

1989

During the 1989 Revolution (22-23 December), he is seriously wounded in the exchange of fire, in his home, nearby Romanian TV. He miraculously makes it to the Emergency Hospital and is operated on in time. He spends a long time in hospital, surviving the incident and saving his wounded leg.

1990

In a fair approach to history, it must be noted that, between 1990 and 1998, Th. G. was marginalized by the new leaderships of the Union of Composers and Musicologists, and the Bucharest Philharmonic, where he made his debut at 25, stopped performing his works, a state of affairs that has been going on until the present day (2006). He has maintained contact with audiences through the many recordings of his works from the Radio sound archives which have been broadcast. The National Radio Orchestra continues to put his works on its concert bills.

In 1990, he receives the Gold Medal of the French "Arts-Sciences-Lettres" Academy for his entire oeuvre.

In 1990, he is elected a definitive member of the French "Arts-Sciences-Lettres" Academy.

Beginning with 1991, he seems increasingly determined to settle in Paris, where he lives intermittently for almost five years, supported by one of his disciples, the composer Vladimir Cosma, the professor Hélène Dussaut and her daughter, the pianist Thérèse Dussaut, the sound engineer Jean-Claude Marchetti, the great musicologist Jacques Chailley, and his publisher, the composer Patrick Marcland, manager of Editions Musicales Transatlantiques.

In Paris, he enjoys the appreciation of many French musicians; the quartet sponsored by the Baron of Rothschild performs in public his suite *Along the Argesh River*; he undertakes a vast research of the string quartet in the 20th century. He continues to supervise the publication of his works, at Editions Musicales Transatlantiques in Paris, which publish his first titles; his film music is recorded on CD by Musique Cinéma Télévision.

Larghetto publishers in Amsterdam join in for a wider distribution of his music.

Having no taste for emigration, despite the proposals to settle in the West (where he is considered a great specialist in deciphering old manuscripts and in musical semiology), he returns to Romania.

1992 The Sea Vocalisms symphony - a vocal-instrumental version of the 1984 work.

1993 Quartet No. 2 "In Search of the Echo" for strings

The work, a result of the vast research mentioned above, was written in Paris.

Poets and the Abyss of Time - a 6 lieder cycle on lyrics by Eminescu, Blaga, Ion Barbu, Arghezi.

He uses here the undulating series, as before in *Sea Vocalisms* and *Cosmic Dream*.

1994 The "Trinity" Concerto for violin and orchestra, from the Byzantium after Byzantium cycle.

Commissioned by the Trinity Episcopal Church in Indianapolis, USA, where the first audition took place, with the participation of the Romanian-born American violinist Sherban Lupu. The works in the *Byzantium after Byzantium* cycle (which include two more titles: "The Great Passage" Sonata for solo violin and "The Eternal Return" Sonata for violin and piano) are a result of the study of *The Paleography of Byzantine Melodics* by I. D. Petrescu.

The ambivalence of Nicolae Iorga's title indicates the research of Byzantine sources, as well as their posthumous fate. The cycle is dedicated to the violinist Sherban Lupu.



Sherban Lupu

1996 Orchestral Chopin - orchestral versions of 25 famous works by Frederic Chopin, for an imaginary ballet.

The Union of Romanian Filmmakers awards him a Diploma of Merit for outstanding achievements in cinematography, on the Centenary of Romanian Cinema (1896-1996). He delivers a lecture on Romanian Film Music at the Romanian Academy.

1997 Requiem for a Poetess (Iulia Hasdeu) - for soprano and chamber orchestra, on lyrics by Iulia Hasdeu.

The resumption and finalization of the project from his teen years.

1998 Muzica Op. 10 by Ionel Perlea, orchestral version of the "Ein heiteres Quartett" Quartet Op. 10.

1999

9 Haikai - "Beyond the Silence - Jesus", for voice and piano, on lyrics by Serban Codrin.

See the preface about music set to this genre of Japanese poetry.

"The Great Passage" Sonata for solo violin, in the Byzantium after Byzantium cycle.

He receives the Great Prize of the Union of Composers and Musicologists for his entire oeuvre.

The marginalization he was subjected to seems to end here as far as the Union of Composers is concerned, but is still in force with the Philharmonic.

11 Haikai - "Beyond the Silence - The Spirit of the Plain", for voice and piano, on lyrics by Serban Codrin.

Virgilian Bucolic Polyphonies - for seven instruments (dedicated to Archaeus ensemble).

2000

Aeterna verba in anno MM (2000), for choir and orchestra - a liturgical meditation on the text of a 1st-century prayer of Christians from Rome (A.D. 59).

Prize awarded by the European Choral Center, the Metz Philharmonic and the Council of the Region of Lorraine at the 2000 International Composition Contest.

II Dio Verdi - concerto for string orchestra - an orchestral version of Verdi's Quartet (on the centennial commemoration of the great composer).

Concerto "In Memoriam Paul Dukas" for string orchestra by Stan Golestan - orchestral version of Quartet No. 2.

The 2000 UCMR Award for 11 Haikai.

2001

7 Haikai - "Beyond the Silence - Road with Birds", for voice and piano, on lyrics by Serban Codrin.

The last cycle of the project, comprising 27 lieder.

Polyphonic piece (Fugue for 4 voices) - anthumous opus by George Enescu, transcription for string orchestra and five short cadences for the soloists of the sections of the orchestra.

33 Psalms - for mixed choir, on biblical texts by David.

Choral book written in the spirit of the great classics of Romanian choral music, tending to express anonymous authors rather than auctorial pride. The same method was used in Transylvanian Pastorals and Idylls.

2002

A Liturgical Symphony - for choir and orchestra, on religious texts.

The three-part work - Lux angelica (Soft Light), Tragissima visione and Aeterna verba in anno MM (2000)- integrates into this vocal-symphonic construction the work written in 2000, which may be performed separately.

Part III, Aeterna verba in anno MM (2000), contains five sections, to be performed without interruption:

1. Sound monstrence on the word "THOU"
2. The first entreaty
3. Divine stanza
4. The second entreaty
5. Divine stanza in apotheosis

2003 Ovid In Tomis - two evocative moments, for choir and orchestra, with reciter, on lyrics by Ovid:

- I. The last four verses
- II. Vibration over millennia

2004 "The Eternal Return" Sonata for violin and piano, in the Byzantium after Byzantium cycle.
The last work of the cycle.

The 2002 UCMR Award for A Liturgical Symphony.

Letter to the Birds - lied on texts by St. Francis of Assisi.

2005 Impressions from Childhood by George Enescu - orchestral version.



