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"Sergiu Comissiona - A Romanian Rhapsody"
by Dumitru Avakian

(It is the title of the first "authorised monograph" dedicated to the memory of this prominent chief of orchestra, so deeply attached to our country, to our musical life - the specification is from the cover of this impressive book of about 600 pages.)

The work has been published recently in the United States, by the corporate Xlibris (Philadelphia), through the dedication of this passionate literate who is Cecilia Burcescu, a literature professor in Vancouver, BC, Canada. We are pondering upon this book at this moment, when five years have passed since the Maestro's passing into eternity.

The book is meant to be an exhaustive monograph of the life and activity of this important conductor, originally from Romania, a musician whose career path started in Bucharest, over six decades ago. It continued to ascend, even spectacularly so, in many of the great musical centres of the world, from the stand of an ensemble violinist to the stature of an internationally renowned Maestro – a profound musician, a loved and respected artist by both orchestra musicians and a broad audience. "The Life of Conductor Sergiu Comissiona" is the subtitle of this book, a work conceived and written with obvious passion and dedication. It is the work of a literate, also originally from Romania. The author becomes a passionate lover of music due to the inclination and high appreciation she gains by attending concerts and rehearsals and collaborating with the Maestro towards conceiving and publishing this monograph. It is not the result of a musicologist's analysis, but the result of devotion nurtured by the passion of an intellectual lover of music, who meditates upon the events of a life lived within and through music.

There are some important ideas that the book highlights with maximum clarity. First of all, it is about the deliberate intention of the Maestro to present himself to the Westerners as a natural emanation of the Romanian intellectual-artistic context, and, on the other hand, to reveal to the Romanians the hardships confronted in his harsh struggle for affirmation in the musical arena of the Western world – everything with the keen intention of guiding the steps - the career - of a young conductor who would face the challenge of significant accomplishments, with "passion, patience, and perseverance".

It is interesting to acknowledge the fact that the volume is ingeniously structured following the pattern of a concert in two ample parts. The first one – quite extensive – is dedicated to the dialogue with Maestro Comissiona, whereas the second one is based exclusively on the retrospective testimonials of those who have collaborated with the Maestro, attended his concerts, or issued musical criticism. Between the two sections, the "Intermission" is reserved to the moment of his unexpected final departure, in Oklahoma City, at the beginning of March 2005. Finally, the closing of the biography has been reserved to a professional musician, conductor Murry Sidlin, a close friend of the Comissionas, formerly an assistant conductor to the Maestro. It is the section of the book in which the components of the conductorial art of the Maestro are analysed, from the achievement of the orchestral sound to the way he approaches the score - the musical piece - with its stylistic aspects. The closure of the book is reserved to reactions from all over the world (the Romanian media, included) regarding Sergiu Comissiona's parting with this world. The book also provides a rich reference tool. Conceived through a natural affection for the artistic personality of Maestro Sergiu Comissiona, the book proves to be an authentic fresco of the growth through music of a personality endowed with the precious gift of communication. A destiny is outlined – one of an outstanding significance. "Conducting"- the Maestro would say – "is a matter of giving and receiving. It's like making love." Maestro Comissiona has fulfilled his destiny by sharing his gift and, to the very last moment, his great love was music.