

THE PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL WIND INSTRUMENTS. THE ROMANIAN ALPHORN

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Abstract

This study aims to clarify the organological aspects of the alphorn and to shed some light on aspects related to the history, evolution and construction particularities of this old, popular instrument, which is an important part of Romania's folk culture as regards instrumental music. One of the main objectives of all musicians, performers and researchers who stimulate the collection and preservation of the spiritual productions of Romanians is to increase the value of folklore. With few exceptions, the alphorn has gone out of everyday use, that's why its study is more and more difficult but all the more necessary. As it is connected to the life of shepherds and with shepherding in general, the destiny and evolution of the alphorn has been decisively influenced throughout history not only by the expansion or regression of this ancient activity, by the geographical space in which it was practiced, but also by the progress of civilization and human knowledge.

Keywords: Folklore; Research; Alphorn; Organology; Evolution; Construction

Introduction

Folk organology has been a constant concern for Romanian musicologists since ancient times. In the 18th century, Dimitrie Cantemir, considered "the father of Romanian ethnography", describes many dances accompanied by different fiddler instruments. However, we owe the first scientific notes to Teodor T. Burada who wrote the following works in the 19th century: "On the use of music in some old Romanian customs" (1876), "Research on Romanians dances and musical instruments", study published in Iași in 1877 and "Research on Romanian military music" in 1891. Tiberiu Alexandru published in 1956 a modern synthesis work, "Romanian Musical Instruments", under the care of the Folklore Institute, using all the documents existing at that time and in 1980 he published at the Music Publishing House the studies "Folklore, Organology, Musicology".

The activity at the Phonographic Archive under the Ministry of Cults and Arts began on January 1, 1928, under the leadership of George Breazul, Tiberiu Brediceanu and Sabin Drăgoi. Also in 1928, Constantin Brăiloiu founded the Folklore Archive of the Society of Romanian Composers, and in 1930, the Romanian Academy founded the Folklore Archive in Cluj, managed by the ethnographer Ion Mușlea.

Widely appreciated in his lifetime and elected in 1943 manager of the "International Folklore Archives" in Geneva, Ion Mușlea had influenced ethnomusicological researchers from all over the world. Later on, in 1993, Constantin Brăiloiu's Centenary was organized "with wide participation and at the highest official level, as his name was assigned to the Institute of

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Ethnography and Folklore and many generations of specialists followed him: Ilarion Cocișiu, Harry Brauner, Emilia Comișel, Gheorghe Ciobanu, Tiberiu Alexandru, Ioan R. Nicola, Paula Carp, then Traian Mârza, Ilona Szenic, Mariana Kahane, Vasile Nicolescu, Florin Georgescu, Ghizela Sulițeanu, Vasile Dinu, Lucilia Stănculeanu-Georgescu, Elisabeta Moldoveanu, followed by Corneliu Dan Georgescu, Gheorghe Oprea, Iosif Hertea, Cristina Rădulescu-Pașcu, Larisa Agapie, Speranța Rădulescu, Zamfir Dejeu, Ioan Haplea, Steluța Popa, Ovidiu Papană, Florin Bucescu, Viorel Bârladeanu etc

Taking into account the wishes of all the illustrious ancestors mentioned above and following their examples, I got closer and closer to musical folklore in the sense of collecting data and information regarding: the history, origin, description, construction features and function of some popular instruments which are increasingly rare in modern life.

In what follows, I will use a few, sporadic information collected mainly from Romania, regarding the constructive particularities of the alphorn, its processing technology and the functionality, organological aspects related to the history, evolution, collection and the preservation of Romanian's spiritual productions. With few exceptions, the alphorn, an archaic popular instrument, has fallen out of everyday use. That is why studying it is more and more difficult but all the more necessary.

Nowadays' ethnomusicologists are revaluing the place occupied by folk organology, giving the same importance to both instruments and the vocal sound source, which had a privileged place for a long time. Researching the musical instruments of a country can be a way of knowing its musical culture as a way of expression, used from ancient times.

Brief history of the alphorn

In the "Book of Delusions", Emil Cioran, Romanian philosopher, also recognized as a great stylist of French, said: "Music is the medium through which time speaks to us. It makes us feel its passing and it discovers it for us... There are musical moments in which we feel time. When music speaks to us of eternity, it does so as an organ of time. The desire for eternity, in music, is an escape from time. It is neither the eternal present in continuous actuality nor the eternity beyond time" [1].

For centuries, music has accompanied human activity, helping it fight against various unfavorable moods, organizing its emotional state and leading it to tonification. With a long history, the alphorn, an archaic instrument, was present since the Dacians and the Romans and was then used especially by Romanian mountain shepherds known as tulnic (bagpipe) in Transylvania and trumpet (from Old Germanic trumba, "to trumpet") in the northern part of the country. The Huțulii, a population of the Eastern Carpathians (Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania) who spoke Ukrainian but shared many traditions and words with the Romanians, use the alphorn under the name of "trumpet" [2].

The Thraco-Dacians cultivated various musical genres and used specific instruments such as the lyre, the guitar, the flute (aulos), the pan flute and the alphorn. "They (mourning songs) had a vocal origin and were sung to the accompaniment of flutes, whistles or tulinics". Thus, the tulinics used to accompany the mourning songs, which were even more archaic than the later on, wailing songs. This instrument, with a restricted musical scale, was used both in funeral ceremonies, in signaling the practices of shepherds and in war contexts: "Xenophon in his work, Anabasis mentions the alphorn as an instrument frequently found in ancient musical practices, especially in those related to pastoral or warlike signals" [2].

It is well known that Romanians use a variety of popular instruments due to the contacts and cultural exchanges they have had with different civilizations throughout its history. In the panoply of Romanians' musical instruments, there were instruments brought by the Romanian

colonists, as well as instruments from the migratory peoples. After the Roman conquest, the use of the calends and the rosaries were added, and as instruments the tuba, the horn, the trumpet and the tibia.

In Western European countries, such as France, England, Germany, Italy, the alphorn is perceived as a horn: fr.: cor de berger – shepherd's alphorn; it.: rustica corno - the alphorn from the country; English: bugle horn - trumpet, horn, bugle etc. The horn, made from the bull's horn, has an even older history, finding its beginning in the gens' period, in the midst of hunting and accompanying the ancient dances with screams, roars and piercing, malicious sounds, produced by the choir of horns.

"Hunting wild animals is usually a great pleasure for the most famous earls on earth, but for the lord of Moldavia this is as common as can be" [3]. On hunting days, the alphorns used to sound very loud in all the surrounding areas, gathering peasants to chase away the animals of the forest. The end of the hunting day was announced by withdrawal signals, produced by playing the alphorn.

The use of such instruments in the past can be proved by the fact that there are many archaeological testimonies, images on the walls of certain buildings, images from icons as well as bas-reliefs on sarcophagi (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The Last Judgment, drawing, 1545–1550, author Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574)
(on the left and right of the photo you can see the two angels playing the trumpets)

During the historical development of Romanian's national language, the names of all instruments, including the name of the alphorn (in Romanian, buciu), underwent various morphological changes, which were researched, overlapped and ordered by G. Breazul in the following way: buciune, buciunele, bucinre, bucinru, bucinrulu, bucinu, buciure, buciuru, buciu, buciune, buciunul, buciumu, bucinî, buciira, buciuma. There is also a string of words of Greek Latin origin with Slavic influences: buccina (Russian: bukfina); bucina (lit.: buccina,

bucina). To Moldavians it is also known under the following names of Ukrainian influence: trumpet - trâmbiță, trâmbită, trompăță.

The word "alphorn", in Romanian "bucium" comes from the Latin words "buche, tronc, billot, bustio-onem, combustion", which means vine bush. Since in the beginning the instrument was made and used by shepherds from the mountains, and here the vine bush is quite tall, the alphorn – bucium, was named as such.

The "Górale ślascy", as the Poles call the Silesian mountains (Fig. 2), are a distinct population with a rich culture and complex history. They lived in the Beskid area, where they settled between the 14th and 17th centuries, being Wallachian shepherds from Transylvania, Bucovina and the Balkans, whom nowadays we call Aromanians.



Fig. 2. Goral from Istebna, watercolor, 1846, author Henryk Jastrzembski (1812-?)

Mihai Eminescu, Romania's national poet, was impressed by the strong and melancholic sound of the alphorn, which he described in his verses: "In the evening, on the hill, the alphorn sounds mournfully". The sound of the alphorn is deeply influenced by the soul of the person playing it and is adapted to the situation - it conveys joy or sadness, fear or intimidation, and it's used both at weddings and funerals, as well as at special events. The sound is stirring, hard to define, it's not a stereotypical song; each musician sings his soulful feelings.

In the past, the alphorn was used in the Principalities of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia as a signaling tool in military conflicts, to announce certain important events throughout the Romanian space, in popular gatherings or in the stable to drive away wild animals, for signaling and communication with shepherds from the forested mountains, as well as for guiding sheep and dogs, it was a real "telegraph" of the mountains.

The alphorn, an aerophone instrument, is very well represented in terms of the variety of forms in which it can be found due to the particularly meaningful possibilities of expression, both from an ethnic and timbral viewpoint as its sonority can reproduce a wide range of ideas and feelings.

Shepherding

One of the oldest occupations in Romania is without a shadow of doubt, shepherding, and the alphorn accompanied the life of shepherds since ancient times. Shepherding developed along the Carpathian Mountain chain, thanks to the extensive alpine pastures, as well as the existing hayfields in the hilly area near the mountains; this occupation was carried out unevenly in this space. The penetrating sounds of the alphorn can be found both in the southern and eastern areas of the Carpathians, as well as in the northern part of the country, in the Vrancea, Tarcău Mountains, in Oaş, Maramureş, Bistrita, as well as in Bucovina.

Practicing sheep farming as the main economic activity was and still is a characteristic found in sheep farmers in the villages from Țara Bârsei, some villages in Făgăraş and Mărginimea Sibiului, territories that until the 16th century belonged to the lords of the Wallachia, but it can also be found in the north-western area of Transylvania, especially in the territory of Bihor county, among the Hungarians from the north of Oltenia, the Bretscans from the Eastern Carpathians, as well as among Maramureş shepherds or in the mountainous areas from Moldavia.

As it is in such a close connection with the life of shepherds and with shepherding in general, the evolution of the alphorn was decisively influenced by the expansion or regression of this ancient occupation, throughout history, in the geographical space in which it was practiced, but also by the progress of civilization and human knowledge. Despite the physical distances that separated them from the civilized world, these people proved receptive to everything that meant progress.

Both the Romanians and the Dacians were good animal breeders, and this tradition was taken over and perpetuated by the Romanians, ensuring their survival in the troubled times of the migration of barbarian peoples.

A detailed description of shepherding and even some popular beliefs regarding animal husbandry can be found in Cantemir's *Descriptio Moldaviae*, because shepherding has old and uninterrupted traditions. Embracing it with all the strength of their being, aware of its benefits, the Romanians attributed to this ancient occupation a divine and sometimes even mythical origin.

This attitude is typical for the archaic, integrating mentality which gives exceptional virtues to the instruments they use, as well. Both a weapon and a tool marked by sacredness, the horn, the trumpet and the alphorn were meant to protect (Fig. 3): the temples, the shrines, the fortresses, the performance of the great ceremonies (from coronations and triumphal marches to feasts), starting the battle (cancelling the magical powers of the enemies and fortifying the soldiers) etc. [4-10].

Pastoral traditions and customs can be found throughout the entire calendar year, but most of them are grouped around important moments in the cycle of specific activities to the work of shepherds. Although at the beginning these traditions and customs were integrated into a popular calendar, correlated with the stages of the plant cycle, marked by the celebration of some pre-Christian deities, under the influence of the church calendar they were grouped around some Christian holidays: the Advent, the Lent, Saint George, Saint Constantine etc., which overlapped the other customs.

Shepherding (Fig. 4) represented not only the foundation of economic life, but also a way of life, of a civilization that is distinguished, in the wider context of Romanian popular culture, by unique features of its traditional costume, domestic activities, musical-choreographic creations, customs, beliefs, all of which are emanations of this ancient occupation whose practice in these places has known the most varied forms, among which transhumance occupies a special place.



Fig. 3. Fresco from the Voronet Monastery: an angel "trumpets" the beginning of The Last Judgment



Fig. 4. Shepherd with a "trumpet", in Giulesti (Maramureş), 1921

Shepherding, practiced ever since ancient times, is characterized by the herds going up to the alpine pastures at the beginning of the summer and moving them to the plain areas with a milder climate, for the winter. The procedure made possible the circulation of many economic goods, but shepherds' fairs were not only opportunities for commercial exchanges, but also on a large scale, social, spiritual and cultural meetings. For many centuries, such events have helped the shepherds' approach, cultural exchanges and, certainly, they also helped the oral creation, gathering it, confirming it mythically and making it circulate more intensively among all Romanians. Thus, this led to a somewhat isolation, but also a circulation of values over large areas, and this environment generated, on the one hand, some of its own creations, and on the other hand, it adapted to its specific folklore categories from the general repertoire. However, this unique repertoire, born and perpetuated within the pastoral life, was also taken over in the peasant environment, due, first of all, to the natural interpenetrations between the two occupations, even the names of some dances, ballads, carols, songs indicating this origin.

The meaning of using alphorns

The alphorn, the bugle and the horn are especially known as instruments of sound signaling, but the meaning of the sound of alphorn is never used, in the environment of oral culture, only as a "signal". It has a multitude of meanings that are directed, like a beam of rays, in the direction of the presumed receivers. These, in turn, can be different both according to their nature (human, animal or supernatural) and according to their degree of competence in reception. In other words, one evening, the sound of the shepherds' alphorn, at the sheepfold, can have different meanings: for the shepherds who hear it near the area, they understand the end of a day's work, for a villager far away it can be the pleasure of hearing the sound of rustling, for wolves or evil spirits that the shepherd imagines lurking in the darkness of the night the sound can stand for a warning. The meanings of the signals determine each other, according to their own logic, and must exist together, for a balanced material and spiritual world in which the man guided by oral culture lives. Any changes in his way of life or in his convictions and beliefs will have the consequence of modifying or canceling, partially or fully, the points of the gesture in question and implicitly of the mediating instrument.

The meanings that make up the significance of the use of words in the different contexts in which it appears can be as a simple signaling or "calling":

- the blowing in the horn of the cowherds, swineherds, goatherds in the morning and in the evening announces to the householders the gathering of the herd for grazing or the return of the herd;

- the alphorn's "sayings" of the head shepherd (head of the flock of sheep) also called "major shepherd" or of the shepherds call the owners to milk the sheep;

- the "call" of the horn by which the "trumpeter" informs the village, on Christmas Eve, that the group of carolers starts caroling or rehearsals the carols and hence, they will be received in the host's house;

- playing the alphorn on Sundays and on important Christian holidays, in the evening, in a kind of dialogue between the small villages, between the hills. The (mandatory) accompaniment of the alphorn - "sîngiorz", ("bloajă", "păpălugă", "goțoi") [5, 6], so that the meaning of these signals acquires a significant ceremonial and festive, celebratory connotation of expressing joy

- the children's competition in building alphorns that are as long as possible or that sound as good, as strong as possible;

- the pleasure of the grown-ups trying their skill to play the alphorn signals learned "in the army" which have also replaced, in many parts of the country, the old pastoral songs.

The disinterested playing, the contemplation of one's own performances, achieved by combining certain formulas characteristic of the instrument, adopting the appropriate tempo, imitation, create a real repertoire of melodic signals. Even if some of these melodic-rhythmic compositions combine a small number of elements or descend (probably) from vocal onomatopoeia, as Bartók [11] states, their aesthetic value fully legitimizes the belonging of these performances of instrumental virtuosity to the Romanian musical culture.

Danger was announced by long signals, especially the danger of wolves, and the children were taught by the elders to distinguish the messages by syllabizing rhythms similar to the Indian language "tabla": "tâ-tu tâ-tu-tu-tu-tu", "do-do do-do-do-do-do", very difficult to transcribe. They were often memorized through poems associated with onomatopoeic features. Other songs signaled someone in the valley, or showed his/her direction, or call signals for going to the mill to grind wheat or corn. The alphorn players had to be able to play signals, to be able to communicate, to learn the signals in a transgenerational way, and to know their meaning.

In Oaş - Maramureş, Béla Bartók [12] observes that the same melodic formula is also used by shepherds as a vocal wailing signal. This fact could be explained as a functional extension of music or of the sound of the alphorn, from daily pastoral practice to an artistic or ceremonial context.

In Bucovina, playing the alphorn or the horn is still practiced as a sign of announcement, mass disclosure of an event, or a message of great importance. "Here we are talking about a sound language among the traditional ones, used at large intervals in human life, a signal that stops anyone who thinks about it" [13].

For shepherds, the main purpose for playing the alphorn in the evening is to ward off wolves, thus the alphorn can be perceived as a prevention tool. However, the defense gesture is not directed exclusively at the wolf as a biological species - in fact, the voice used in direct defense is rather noisily - scary, while the preventive voice is a "saying". It targets a much more dangerous and difficult to control enemy, that is, beings with a human appearance, even people, men or women, endowed with magical powers, capable of damaging the animals of the herd or the gifts of the household (the fruits, the abundance, the value) of their milk, wool, lambs, but also of the field sown with products. One of their occult "virtues" is the ability to metamorphose into wolves so that they can haunt the folds. It is customary for anyone passing by the fold to be offered hospitality and the best available products in order to prevent a possible reprisal. The value of the sound of the alphorn, in this circumstance, resides precisely in its ability to neutralize the spell over the entire extent of the space in which it can be heard [14]. It is therefore, associated with the magical practices of exorcism and protection of the place of the fold, a place exposed to the aggression of the evil forces, especially at night, due to its distance from the village and its proximity to the forest.

There is this prohibition regarding the accidental playing of the alphorn as a way of bringing a "damage" to something or as a sign of poverty. It emphasizes the magical status of the instrument which derives the guarantee of its magical effectiveness from its very materiality. Each of the materials from which it is usually built of accumulates a number of values regarding the animal or plant species it represents: the ox [15], the linden tree, the hazel tree, the willow, the fir tree etc. there are just as many entities involved in numerous legends, magical beliefs and practices, customs, songs etc. [16]. The animal horns, the tree bark, the wood (but also "tree", "shrub" or "bush") signify, in essential lines, "vitality", "strength", "fertility", "rebirth" "not being alien to the idea of sacredness either.

It is not at all inconsequential or spiritually inconsequential that pieces made of wood or bark need to be moist in order to function, either through the rich absorption of sap in the spring season or through their immersion in water (from the well, "pit", spring, stream or the "wave" of cattle). This places them in a significant area in terms of fertility [17]. The practical motivation of the gesture does not contradict or render useless its magical meaning, but rather strengthens it, harmonizing with it, in the mentality of traditional culture.

Against the background of these ancient meanings, even the terminology of playing the alphorn will appear in a different light: "a tutui", "a pupui" are simple onomatopoeia, "to say - saying", "to sing - song" refer to the ability to communicate messages, as well as "to shout", and "to play the alphorn" and "to play the tulnic" or "to trumpet" instead names the instrument itself - in action in the fullness of its ancient virtues.

Organized according to strict laws, established over time, the shepherds' life flows between austerity and belonging to a distinct world with its own mentalities, but also with a wide openness to other favorable lands, generally known, but also unknown. Their uneven territorial distribution corresponds to a good extent to the position of some areas of more intense alpine and subalpine pastoral practice.

Construction materials, forms and functions of the alphorn

Most of the popular instruments used in oral culture were not built according to a certain template as happened in the case of the aerophone instruments in classical music. However, through their simplicity, they preserved a certain acoustic concept, used by the builders, which was transmitted from generation to generation according to the model found in all forms of manifestation of oral culture. Popular instruments have not known important innovations in construction over time. Many of them have disappeared from the practice of popular music precisely because of this fact, being replaced by other classical instruments, which have become much more efficient.

Organologically, the alphorn, in Romanian, "bucium", the word derived from the Latin buccinum - bent horn, is a traditional aerophone musical instrument, rather long, with a tubular shape, open at both ends. The musician blows into the narrow end and produces musical sounds with the help of the current of air directed through the interior of the instrument. Unlike other aerophone instruments, the alphorn does not have digital holes, like the natural horn, trumpet, and tulnic. In the upper part, the tube is very narrow, gradually being slightly widened towards the lower extremity, taking the shape of a cornet (piece of paper twisted in the shape of a funnel that children use as a toy, called a signal).

The instrument is held with both hands or placed on a support, either artificial (a goat) or natural (a fence made of reeds, bushes, etc.). The performer stands and blows into the mouthpiece with pursed lips, and sometimes he can also perform gentle rotations with the body of the instrument. The alphorn is a monophonic instrument, functioning as an oscillator with a characteristic timbre in the sound spectrum, where lip vibration is the exciter.

The technique of emitting the sound consists in tightening or loosening the lips, similar to the technique of playing the horn. Some musical instruments, such as telenka ("tilinca"), the alphorn and mouth harp ("drâmba"), use the acoustic system, which is based on the string of natural harmonic sounds. This system is centered on a fundamental sound, and the frequencies of the harmonic sounds are multiples of the original sound benchmark.

The conical or cylindrical shape of the instrument has a significant influence on the sound impedance and the notes these instruments can produce. The length of the instrument influences the possibility of producing lower notes. The longer an instrument is, the more it has the ability to produce lower frequencies. However, it is important to note that a longer length can make the instrument more difficult to blow and may require more effort from the musician to produce the desired sounds.

The construction of popular instruments uses a primitive system of calculation aimed at establishing ratios between (tube) lengths and pitches, similar to the approach used in the case of the Pythagorean monochord. These ratios are derived practically and are not based on known theorizing. The tuning of the instrument depends on the dimensions of the tube and the diameter of the mouthpiece opening, taking a holistic approach to these elements in the construction process. The alphorn's scale does not have a well-defined constant, because the number of sound steps depends on the skill of the performer, and the raising or lowering of the sound depends on the degree of tightening or weakening of the labial muscles. However, it has been observed that the deeper, more sonorous tone the alphorn can produce are Fa, Mi or Do in the high octave. Usually, both in case of the alphorn and in case of other instruments such as the bugle or the horn, performances do not center upon songs, but upon melodic intervals such as thirds, seconds, fourths, and fifths. etc.

For example, to signal a call, the alphorn uses the ascending fifth (Fig. 5a), and to signal the withdrawal action on the instrument, a lower fourth is used (Fig. 5b and c).



Fig. 5. Melodic intervals

The alphorn produces a powerful and penetrating sound that can be articulated in various ways such as legato, staccato, glissando and portamento.

By referring to the geographical dimensions and in comparison, with other countries of the world, Romania has a wide variety of forms and uses of aerophone instruments. The construction material and the explanation of the functionality of the instruments are aspects of significant importance in the field of research on the historical evolution of instrumental forms [18].

We know very little information about the diversity of forms or morphological details of the alphorn from the more distant past, but we can structure the types of alphorns according to the construction material, from beef horn, wood, plant stems or tin, the length of the instrument, which can reach between 40cm and over 300cm, the shape of the pipe, which can be straight or curved, conical along its entire length or cylindrical, with a slightly conical lower end.

The instrument made of beef horn (Fig. 5) is called bucin, "duda" or "tutornic" and it is still used by "ciurdari" (cowherds), swineherds, goatherds, less often forest rangers and hunters, and in the past, it could also be found by the guards of vineyard or field. The corneous covering of the natural horn is used, preserving the original shape of the horn (slightly bent conical and/or in a helical spiral) without ornamental additions. The horn is processed briefly, it is cleaned and cut at the tip, possibly carved to shape the embouchure - when one is not added, the length of the instrument varying between 40 and 80cm.



Fig. 6. A signal horn for a forest ranger

In the southern region of Moldavia, pieces with a relatively short length and a curved shape, instead of a straight one, are found, thus indicating that the predecessor of this instrument in this area was most likely the horn.

The stem of the sunflower ("herb"), cut into a length of about 120cm, was used by children. The similarity between the stems of the sunflower and the canes, in this form, can be attested to the oldest trumpet technology: that of the natural tubes from plant stems [19]. In support of this hypothesis, we could refer to the term "tulnic" (a type of alphorn from Romania) itself.

The alphorns made of tree bark have, after horn, the most extensive territorial distribution. They receive various names, such as "bucen" or "bucin", "trîmbita" or "trîmbită",

"tulnic" and sometimes "bucium, tuturez, surlita, tarasipa" etc. [5]. They are often referred to only as "toys", which implies a supposed label of "primitiveness" on the part of the interlocutor. In terms of shape and size, they can be conical (small, medium and long or elongated) or conical-cylindrical (long). The dimensions of a small alphorn can vary between about 30-60cm in length, with a diameter of about 8mm at the ear and 5cm at the wing. In the case of medium alphorns, 100-150cm long, performers prefer the version with a mouthpiece, which sounds easier, even if on a single tone.

The mouthpiece or embouchure can be cylindrical in shape, formed by wrapping the construction material (tree bark), to blow into it like a trumpet, or it can have a flattened and thinned shape, carved in a trapezoidal shape, forming a double reed, like an oboe. This reed is added to the cornet, it being built separately, from a small shell cylinder detached from a stick (wicker, hazel etc.) and can constitute an independent sound toy. The reed can also be found under different names: "caraba, bucin, drimboaie, mustuc, muzicută, pliscol."

The building material for tree bark alphorns is wicker or willow bark, suitable for all forms of relief, or linden, hazel, walnut, cherry, maple tree, alder, fir tree, dogwood and others for the mountainous area. The procedure consists of detaching a "strap" approximately 10cm wide, which is wrapped in the shape of a cornet, starting at the tip and ending at its base.

If for children making the longest possible alphorn is a source of playful competition, presupposing skill and dexterity, for adults it becomes an acoustic necessity. The longer the instrument, the more tones can be produced and less effort required to play it.

For the construction of medium and long alphorns, which can reach impressive sizes, between 1.3 and over 3 meters, a change in technology is recommended.

The alphorn, this unique instrument is created from wood with great precision. For the construction of the instrument is used maple wood, fir tree, spruce, ash, linden, hazel or even (partially and more recently) metal, curved or not at the bottom. Creating an alphorn takes a long time and must be followed exactly, because if the typical is not respected, the alphorn will only produce several broken sounds (Figs. 7 and 8).



Fig. 7. Romanian alphorn player ("buciumaş")



Fig. 8. Construction of the alphorn's mouthpiece

The wood for the instrument is carefully chosen. The big wood is dried well, it is sectioned in the middle into two equal parts, then a tube is hollowed out with the wood hammer until "the heart is taken out".

The stave (body) of the alphorn, trunks or board are carved in a truncated shape, then split in two halves and hollowed out so that the walls are as thin as possible (4-6mm), like a violin, to be as easy to handle and to have as much resonance as possible. The narrow end of the tool is rounded, until the inside diameter reaches 15mm, to serve as a socket.

Fit in place, the two hollow halves are glued with glue, resin or beeswax at every 15-20cm distance, joined to increase the tightness. The stave, in Apuseni, ends with wooden circles placed at a distance of 20-25cm. The circles are obtained by splitting some hazel, wicker or spruce sticks, which are then peeled and boiled in water. These are wound around the body of the instrument in two turns, with the ends intertwined.

The mouthpiece is carved from cherry wood and perforated with a 1.0cm awl, and at the end where the lips are placed, the hole is widened to 2.5cm in diameter. The total length of the muzzle is 14-16cm, of which only a quarter is visible outside.

Another way of the previous technology is to make the alphorn from three truncated cone segments joined and increasing in diameter, from linden bark, then wrapping the entire tube obtained, with strips (free from linden), fine strands of branch bark, approx. 6cm wide.

At the upper extremity, the thin end fits the mouthpiece (blower), which must be made of hard wood, mostly yew or hornbeam (tree with white and hard wood).

Wrapping the tube involves wrapping two superimposed coils (on average 2cm wide), wet, coil next to coil slowly and tightly, with one hand holding the sheet, with the other twisting the tube. When you reach the end of the first sheet, pass it under the last loop, then tie it to the end of the next sheet and continue wrapping as before.

In North-West Transylvania, considered the "homeland" of alphorns, also known as tulniks, there are still craftsmen from the villages of carpenters - "vasari" in the Apuseni Mountains who continue to build alphorns, with lengths between 40-50cm and over 4m. The small ones are sold as "toys" or "memories" at craft fairs and are decorated on almost the entire surface by pyrography, with ancient motifs that are also used on wooden dishes. Medium and long alphorns (between 1.50 and 3m) are purchased or ordered by private beneficiaries, such as shepherds, while the extremely long ones are made especially at the request of Romanian lady's band playing the alphorns or the tulnik ("tulnicăre"), in this case their unitary tuning is a very important condition (Fig. 9).

The Romanian alphorn or the tulnik, this ancient instrument, is now on the verge of extinction. Its history is closely related to that of the Romanian village, but in the age of information, traditions are beginning to get lost.

Blacksmiths, craftsmen who make iron tools that can be used to shape wood, are becoming rarer and rarer. Craftsmen's tools called woodcutters, the essential tools in the construction of popular instruments - the big knives, responsible for contouring, the awl used

for hollowing the trunk, the auger for piercing the mouthpiece and the rasp for finishing the instruments, seem to be on the way out of traditional use.



Fig. 9. Romanian ladies band playing the alphorns or the tulnik ("tulnicăreșe")

"Fulgeriș", a type of spruce that grows on the hilltops of the Apuseni Mountains, has become increasingly rare; this phenomenon is due to either excessive cutting or the exploitation of stone quarries. Like other old trades from here, the craftsmen who make the alphorns are getting old and the instrument is meant to be more like the history of a symbol.

The tin pieces differ morphologically from the traditional ones, because they are simple transpositions of them, made by the local craftsmen, with more or less accuracy of the traditional forms described before. We find them in the north of Romania in Țara Lăpușului, Maramureș and Bucovina, but also across the border in Ukraine. In the not-too-distant past, wooden blocks were produced in the Oaș-Ugocea area, predominantly cylindrical, with conical, long (over 3m) and straight pavilions. Currently, however, only tin alphorns are produced, similar in shape, but much shorter.

The ox horn was replaced a long time ago, in Arad in Syria, with one made of "plev" or "badig", which is a tin reproduction of the medium-length alphorn - (120-200cm). A horn mouthpiece, made of bronze, is usually attached to it, but sometimes we find a "pipe" made of tin or a carved wooden one. It is built to order by the tinsmiths in the cities or by occasional artisans from larger villages.

The trumpet is an aerophone instrument similar to the alphorn or tulnik, found in Oaș, Maramureș, Năsăud and Bucovina. It is hand-made from thin sheet iron, but has no well-defined size or shape, rarely exceeding 3m in length because its fragility increases proportionally with length. It was used in the past for long-distance communication in mountainous areas. The instrument produces a series of frequencies, thus, the signals made vary and they have a melody line influenced by local rhythmic formulas.

The "curved" version of the trumpet has more advantages and hence, more common, as it is similar to the military trumpet (Figs 10 and 11), which served as its model even before it was made of tin [20].

Founded not long ago, on ancient occupations, such as agriculture and shepherding, the life of the traditional Romanian village has preserved and perpetuated over time traditions,

beliefs, customs and a rich dowry of songs and dances inherited from ancestors, all together representing evidence indisputable of the sensitivity of the Romanian people, of their love for beauty and harmony.



Fig. 10. The trumpet



Fig. 11. The "curved" trumpet

People's concern, in order to improve and facilitate their work, took the shape of technical inventions, which amaze even today with the ingenuity of the conception, the design, the shape and the originality of the execution, reveal the creativity, the gift and the skill of the Romanian peasant who, in order to express the heart-joys and sorrows, invented song and musical instruments.

In the last decade of this century, radical changes took place in the life of the Romanian village, in the mentalities of its inhabitants and especially in those of the youth who obstinately renounced almost to everything that meant tradition, indiscriminately adopting oriental customs of which they built a screen behind which they try to hide their peasant origins.

Conclusions

Collecting, preserving and promoting Romanian folklore are important objectives for musicians, performers and researchers, as they contribute to the conservation and promotion of the spiritual productions of Romanians. Romania gave the world exceptional material and spiritual values, which are the fruit of its diligence, spirituality and aspirations.

Ever since its appearance, the popular interpretive art has had its specific milestones according to which it has developed; for example, the form of perception and transmission of the musical phenomenon is primarily deductive. It is not learned, it is "stolen" from one individual to another, in popular artistic practice the perception through such procedures is less accurate, so that the whole musical phenomenon belongs to musical variants and implicitly to the formation of personal styles of interpretation.

The changes that the country experienced after the events of December 1989 negatively influenced the practice of shepherding. The difficulties related to selling specific products, particularly, wool, to finding places for wintering and moving the herds, have determined the alarming decrease in the number of sheep in areas with a pastoral tradition. These are felt in the decrease in the tone of spiritual life through the alternation of traditions and the disappearance of some of its essential components. Only sometimes you can still hear the sound of the alphorn

at the sheepfold, its place was taken by new technologies. In such conditions, the demand for alphorns decreased, and because of this fact, their builders will gradually disappear. This long series of transformations determined an obvious detachment of the entire contemporary Romanian society from its traditional values. The urban industrialization of folklore is in deep contrast with what Constantin Brăiloiu, Tiberiu Alexandru, and Bela Bartok once described.

All this endangers the survival of the forms of popular culture that have been preserved, of musical folklore and the instruments related to it. We cannot be satisfied with the fact that the representative vestiges of traditional popular spirituality have been preserved in museums, that many of the traditions and customs of the Romanian village have been immortalized on photographic paper, on celluloid film or on magnetic tape. It is important that at least the forms that have adapted and withstood the technological civilization should be given the chance to survive, even if only as elements of color, in the life of the Romanian rural communities of the third millennium.

From several villages there are signs that hearty people are trying to instill in the young generation interest and love for the legacy left by their ancestors, using organized, cultural forms for this purpose: traditional circles, artistic formations, bands etc., through which they aim to initiate young people into the secrets of traditional crafts, in learning some musical instruments, such as the alphorn.

Folklore research and its exploitation is currently done in all folklore fields, having modern means of communication with the general public such as the press, television and radio. Folklore collections are kept in the archives of the institutes of ethnography and folklore or in the archives of radio-televisions. Fieldwork plays a very important role in folklore collections and they should be carried out at an appropriate scientific level. The purpose of field research is not only to collect folklore material, it touches all the scientific steps of research: the collection and systematization of folklore data passes on to their interpretation and theoretical framing.

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Received: October 02, 2023

Accepted: February 24, 2024