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# ROMANIA



enescu

infant prodigy in vienna

education in paris

paris-bucharest allez-retour

founder of the

romanian music school

composer

conductor

performer

enescu festival

**The name.** Enescu was the most significant Romanian composer reaching the dimension of universal genius; we can say, just like an important Romanian poet (Tudor Arghezi) speaking about the outstanding poet of the Romanian people: being very young E(mi)nescu and being universal. *Eminescu* and *Enescu* are comparable in the Romanian culture because due to them it became better defined and settled in the most exquisite modernity, conveying an imprint in the universal cultural background through the symbolic traits of profound traditions and folklore strata; they are figures of elevated definition in the Romanian poetry and music.



# ROMANIA

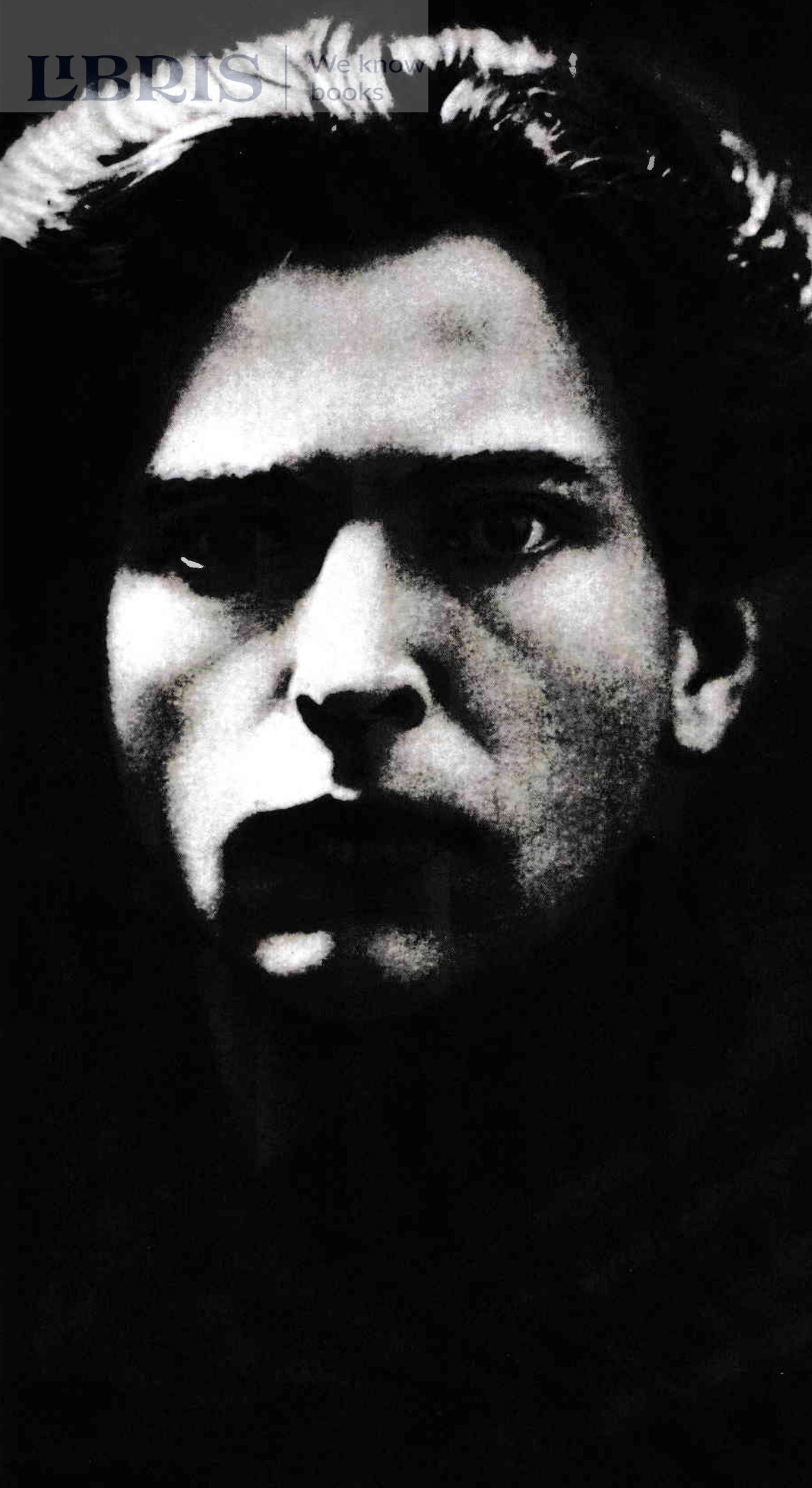
iconic - enescu

fundamentals

George Enescu was the most significant Romanian composer reaching the dimension of universal genius; we can say, just like an important Romanian poet (Tudor Arghezi) speaking about the outstanding poet of the Romanian people: being very young E(mi)nescu and being universal. *Eminescu* and *Enescu* are comparable in the Romanian culture because due to them it became better defined and settled in the most exquisite modernity, conveying an imprint in the universal cultural background through the symbolic traits of profound traditions and folklore strata; they are figures of elevated definition in the Romanian poetry and music. Absolutely comparable is also *Constantin Brâncuși* from the perspective of art. *These people had the urge to make the national spirituality known and proudly resonated at the wonder of its affirmation through a synthesis of its essence that only the art creation can portray.* The inventory of George Enescu's talents and qualities: composer, conductor, performer, remarkable in violin and piano concertos, unforgettable professor. As a multi-gifted instrumentalist, he was a viola, violin, cello, pianist, organ, flute and horn player; he was also a remarkable folklore preserver, poet and memorialist, a skilled actor and singer, an introvert theologian and passionate collector of instruments; he also had a liking for the plastic art and stamp collecting, plant growing, sports (cycling, equestrianism and golfing); *he was always animated by beautiful thoughts and charity endeavours.* The most durable contribution in his art was the composition which oftentimes was marked by Romanian folklore themes and beats; in this direction, he was a symbiotic genius; and it is for that reason that Romanians honored him. Until the communist epoch, Romania saw him as its most representative music figure. In his honor, every three years (as of 2001, every two years) an international music festival named after him is organized in Bucharest; in between years there is also an award winning competition organized as a most valuable pathway opening for young musicians.

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# ROMANIA

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## infant prodigy in Vienna

*When he was only 4 years old, George Enescu played a child's violin with three strings, just by ear, making an impression on his father... who had a music background and conducted a choir in Liveni, a village near Dorohoi.*



When he was only 4 years old, George Enescu played a child's violin with three strings, just by ear, making an impression on his father... who had a music background and conducted a choir in Liveni, a village near Dorohoi, where he lived; a "real" violin was immediately bought and he was taken to the rector of the Conservatory of music in Iași, Eduard Caudella, who said that great attention had to be paid to the very gifted child, recommending a music education for him... When he was 7, he arrived in Vienna where, from 1888 to 1894, he studied composition, harmony and the counterpoint, taking violin and piano classes and being drawn to the classic-romantic style of German symphonism; at 11, he was the concerto violin player in the concert hall "Bösendorfer" in Vienna, being accompanied by the Conservatory orchestra. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January **1892**, he played *Faust* – Fantasia by Pablo de Sarasate, a very technical piece, and in **1894** he played the first part of the Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Concerto for violin and orchestra in E minor. He left for Paris in 1895. The musical critique in Vienna named him "the Romanian Mozart" for his remarkable virtuosity.

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# ROMANIA

iconic - enescu

## education in paris

When he was 14, George Enescu left Vienna and moved to Paris where he followed the Conservatory (1895-1899) with famous professors: José White and Martin-Pierre-Joseph Marsick – violin, Jules Massenet (replaced by Gabriel Fauré) – composition, Ambroise Thomas and Théodore Dubois – harmony and André Gédalge – counterpoint and fugue. Massenet said that George Enescu “was born as a symphonist” and Fauré, who later on became the director of the Conservatory, had intensive work with George Enescu whom he described as being “intelligent and very gifted”. The atmosphere in Paris differed a lot from Vienna, impressionism colour accents were used and imagination was set free in accordance with the structure and style. Enescu was moulded in the symbiosis of the German music vigorous strength and the French music refined vagueness, oftentimes using, as a theme and style vector, the Romanian folklore music in such an amazing and innovative way. While attending the Conservatory in Paris, being highly influenced by the discourse of Gabriel Fauré, Enescu frequented other prestigious disciples of the French composer, such as Florent Schmitt, Charles Koechlin, Alfred Cortot, Nadia Boulanger and Maurice Ravel. He became good friends with Ravel who composed a Sonata for violin and piano (1927) for his friend whom he admired a lot: “At Gédalge [...], the best of us all was Enescu. We all composed more or less good fugues, but never he, he «Enescu» never failed”. The young Enescu was introduced to several music rooms in Paris, especially to that of princess and pianist Elena Bibescu, where many of the contemporary personalities showed up: musicians (Gounod, Delibes, Saint-Saëns, d’Indy, Massenet, Fauré, Chausson, Debussy), painters (Bonnard, Puvis de Chavannes) and writers (Anatole France, Jules Lemaître, Marcel Proust). As regards his spiritual connection with Queen Elisabeth, the patron known under her pseudonym of Carmen Sylva, when back from abroad Enescu was often invited to Peleş Castle in Sinaia to have concertos and violin solo recitals. A series of lieder in German resulted from this artistic amity between the composer Enescu and the queen writer. During his education in Paris, he composed the four “school symphonies”, *Sonata no. 1 for piano and violin in D major, op. 2* (1897), *Piano Suite no. 1 in G minor, in the ancient style, op. 3* (1897), *Romanian Poem, op. 1 for orchestra and male choir* (1898), *Sonata no. 2 for piano and violin in F minor, op. 6* (1899), *Strings Octet* (1900) and several Cantatas for piano and strings – as many works which brought recognition to the young composer George Enescu from the specialists and the public. The composer started his work with two extremely mature chamber music pieces, *Sonata no. 2 for piano and violin in F minor* and *Strings Octet*. Enescu was not even 18 when he finished the sonata and not yet 19 when he finished the octet. The latter is a masterpiece of counterpoint manifested in an outstanding architecture. The composer George Enescu made his debut on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, at the Théâtre du Châtelet, with *Poème roumaine* for symphonic orchestra conducted by Edouard Colonne; on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the same year, Enescu himself conducted the *Romanian Poem* at the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest. From the beginning, the *Poem* was a resounding success; the critiques were undivided in their commendations about the quality of his writing and the refinement of the orchestration showed by the young, 16-year-old musician. Paul Dukas, composer of the *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* (1897), unhesitantly spoke about the “remarkable accord between the rhythm effects and the opposing colours”, underlining the precocity of Enescu’s talent. After finishing his studies, Enescu was in between Paris and Bucharest; as he became more and more known, the gateway to the big music world was opening to him.