

Violeta Dinescu was born in 1953 in Bucharest, Romania. After completing high school with a focus on the natural sciences, she began her music studies in 1972 at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory (today the National University of Music Bucharest). She graduated in 1976 with three diplomas, all with distinction, in composition, piano, and pedagogy. A generous George Enescu scholarship, awarded to students with the highest academic results, allowed her to devote herself intensively to composition. She then pursued an additional year of advanced composition study under Myriam Marbe, who became her most influential teacher.

During her formative years, Dinescu remained closely connected with her teachers and collaborators. Together with the musicologist Emilia Comișel, she conducted field research into Romania's extraordinarily rich and diverse folk traditions. Both traditional Romanian music and Byzantine Orthodox church music have remained enduring sources of inspiration throughout her career.

From 1978 to 1982, she taught music theory, aesthetics, counterpoint, harmony, and piano at the George Enescu Music School in Bucharest. In 1980, she became a member of the Romanian Union of Composers. During this period, she also published journalistic and scholarly articles on musicology and music history and contributed to important editorial projects, including the multi-volume edition of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's works. Concert performances, radio broadcasts, prizes, and commissions increasingly brought her music to wider public attention. Encouraged by Myriam Marbe, Dinescu participated in international composition competitions, winning a prize in Mannheim. During her trip to Germany to receive the award, she was offered a three-month scholarship. Despite the refusal of the Romanian embassy to extend her visa, she accepted the scholarship, which ultimately led her to settle in Germany, where she has lived and worked since 1982.

After relocating, she studied musicology under Ludwig Finscher and rapidly established an active international career as a composer, lecturer, and teacher. From 1986 to 1991, she taught at the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik in Heidelberg (theory, harmony, counterpoint), while simultaneously holding positions at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt (1989–1991) and the Fachakademie für Evangelische Kirchenmusik Bayreuth (1990–1995), teaching theory, harmony, counterpoint, and piano.

Her works began to gain international recognition, performed widely in Europe and beyond. Invitations to universities and institutions in the United States further expanded her global presence.

Between 1996 and 2021, Dinescu served as Professor of Applied Composition at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, where she has lived and worked ever since. At the university, she founded the **International Composers' Colloquium**, an ongoing series of scholarly and artistic meetings that has brought together over one thousand composers, performers, musicologists, and scholars from related disciplines such as philosophy, mathematics, and physics. Many of the participants were women, contributing to the visibility of female composers in contemporary music discourse. Distinguished participants included Romanian composers Ștefan Niculescu, Aurel Stroe, and Nicolae Brânduș, as well as international figures such as Mauricio Kagel and Krzysztof Penderecki. Over the years, the Colloquium has become a key platform for artistic and academic exchange and is now integrated into the university curriculum.

In the same year, she founded the **Archive for Eastern European Music**, dedicated in particular to Romanian composers and contemporary music. Since 2006, she has also organized the annual

interdisciplinary symposium series “**Zwischen Zeiten / Shifting Times**”, in collaboration with the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg in Delmenhorst, exploring the intersections of music, culture, philosophy, and the arts. One of the early editions focused on the life and work of George Enescu.

To date, eight volumes have been published under this initiative through BIS Verlag at Oldenburg University, including:

- *Stefan Niculescu*
- *Pascal Bentoiu*
- *Die Doina*
- *Der Raum in der Musik*
- *Enescu im Kontext*
- *Elemente der Klage in George Enescus Oper Oedipe*
- *Myriam Marbe*
- *Komponistinnen aus Rumänien*

The next volume in the series is *Bartók im Kontext*. These projects collectively represent three distinctive institutional pillars at Oldenburg University: the Colloquium, the Archive, and the publication series. Dinescu’s compositional output is remarkably diverse and includes orchestral works, operas, ballets, chamber music, solo pieces, vocal music, and music for film. Among her most significant works are the orchestral piece **Akrostichon** (Ulm Festival), the ballet **Der Kreisel** (Ulm Theatre), the opera **Hunger und Durst** (Freiburg Theatre), the children’s opera **Der 35. Mai** (National Theatre Mannheim), and music for Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s silent films **Tabu** (Frankfurt Alte Oper) and **Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens** (Berlin Konzerthaus). Later operatic works include **Eréndira** (after Gabriel García Márquez, Munich Biennale) and **Schachnovelle** (after Stefan Zweig, Schwetzingen Festival). In both chamber music and large-scale compositions, Dinescu pursues what she describes as “**embodying life in sound.**” Pitch, rhythm, scale, mode, and structure form a unified musical language. At the outset of each composition, she seeks a rationale for the organization of material, aiming to create a sonic universe where imagination and rigorous compositional thought converge. Her works have been widely recorded on CDs in Europe and the United States.

She has received over **90 international prizes and distinctions**, including the **Grand Prize for Composition (Utah)**, **Carl Maria von Weber Prize (Dresden)**, **Baldreit Prize (Baden-Baden)**, and **NYU Prize for Composition (New York)**, in addition to numerous fellowships and composition grants. Her contributions extend beyond composition to advisory roles and jury memberships for international competitions and cultural institutions. In 2017, she was elected a **member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA)** in Salzburg, and from 2021 to 2026 served as **Dean of Class III** and member of the Academy Senate.

Today, Violeta Dinescu is internationally recognized as a **leading voice in contemporary music**, bridging Eastern European traditions, modern compositional thought, and interdisciplinary artistic dialogue. Her work demonstrates a unique integration of orchestral, chamber, vocal, and theatrical musical forms, establishing her as a pioneer in contemporary music-theatrical expression.