

ROMANIA

EMBRACING A GREEN FUTURE WITH A DANISH TAILWIND



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MATTHIEU ODIJK
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Dear Reader,

In recent years, Romania has had several chances to reveal its treasures to the diplomatic and expat communities in Denmark on the friendly stage offered by the Copenhagen Post.

This year, I have invited onto this stage people from Romania whose lives are dedicated to our country's green transition and continuing digitisation. Another bears testimony to the phenomenon of the New Romanian Cinema – one of the most vibrant cinema movements of the new century.

My invitation to speak on the stage was also accepted by well-known Danes who forged strong connections with Romania many years ago and whose love for my country has been unfolding in many interesting ways. And also Falullah, the great Danish singer, songwriter and musician, who was born to a Romanian father.

Let me briefly zoom in on some of the stories.

I invite you to look at Romania through the eyes of Her Serene Highness Princess Eleonore-Christine of Schaumburg-Lippe, daughter of Prince Waldemar of Schaumburg-Lippe, and of Steffen Gram, the renowned Danish journalist at DR. They have often travelled to Romania, as both their personal and professional courses have intersected

with the country. Their lenses are both cultural and political.

Leaving their experiences behind, we enter the realm of sustainability and the green transition which, coupled with digitisation, are making more and more Romanians busy and prosperous.

Some 160 years ago, Romania was registered as the first oil producer in the world. Then, Bucharest made history as the first city in the world to be illuminated with kerosene lamps.

Today, Romania is a leader again in its region, but in a different direction. In 2019, it was observed that Romania's greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 64 percent since 1990, surpassing the EU 'Fit for 55' goals for 2030. Romania hosts the biggest onshore windfarm in the EU. Some 40 percent of the electricity produced in Romania comes from renewable sources. The only EU-certified electric locomotive with six axles is produced in Romania. The most affordable electric car in Europe is manufactured by the Romanian carmaker Dacia.

The world of Romanian sports fully grasps the impact that it has on society, and its commitment to sustainability is growing with more and more projects. The Romanian Football Federation actively prioritises issues such as

waste management, mobility, water consumption, lighting and raising awareness.

Two Romanian football legends who run a top football club on the coast of the Black Sea – Gheorghe Hagi and Gheorghe Popescu – are very busy turning it into the first club in the world to become carbon-neutral by 2030.

Let us then linger in the realm of culture in order to celebrate 20 years of New Romanian Cinema with Dana Duma, an illustrious Romanian film critic.

Since 2001, hardly a year has gone by without an award for a Romanian film at important festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Locarno.

And finally, you have a chance to hear directly from Fallulah how her indie pop, art rock, and folk music are influenced by traditional Eastern and Central European sounds that accompanied her childhood.

I invite you to open this new supplement on Romania and to immerse yourself into the good vibes coming from all the people I have mentioned above.

Alexandru Grădinar

Ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Denmark and Iceland

THE PRINCESS AND THE KEY TO UNLOCKING ROMANIA

HER SERENE HIGHNESS, PRINCESS ELEONORE-CHRISTINE AF SCHAUMBURG-LIPPE, HAS BEEN A REGULAR VISITOR TO THE COUNTRY SINCE 2008. THE TRUTH IS THAT SHE CAN'T STAY AWAY FOR LONG!

By Ben Hamilton

Regular readers of this newspaper are familiar with the expression 'refugee of love', as it is the label many of them bear for leaving their homeland to start a new life abroad with their partner.

For Her Serene Highness, Princess Eleonore-Christine af Schaumburg-Lippe – a twice great-great-granddaughter of King Frederick VIII of Denmark, who is also in the line of succession to the British throne – Cupid struck in 2008 at an embassy event she was attending in connection with her work for the Danish Navy.



A LONG LOVE AFFAIR

It didn't take long for her and serving Romanian ambassador Theodor Paleologu to "steal one another's hearts", and later that year she travelled with her partner to the country of his upbringing.

And that proved to be the start of an enduring love affair – not with Ambassador Paleologu, but with the country itself!

PROUD OF HER ADMIRATION

Thirteen years later Princess Eleonore-Christine continues to visit Romania whenever she can. Not only has she travelled the whole country, but she has also set up her own company there and been a patron of many cultural endeavours.

Today she is proud to tell CPH POST about her admiration for a country that has made her welcome wherever she has visited. Still to this day, it never fails to amaze her with its vitality, charm and cultural excellence.



How have you ended up visiting Romania so much?

Well, my boyfriend was Romanian. In fact, when I met Theodor, he was the Romanian ambassador to Denmark, so that's where we met. And, sure, he was the reason why I visited Romania for the first time. But, even when we stopped seeing each other – we remain good friends to this day! – I stayed and ended up living there from 2010 until 2014, during which time I helped to build up the UAPR advertising association. Since then I've been back almost every year.

I understand the ambassador was a very learned man, and that his love of Romanian culture rubbed off on you?

Well yes, he ended up quitting the ambassador's post to become culture minister of Romania.

He was a music lover and he is the reason why the ambassador's residence has such a fine piano. He comes from a very prominent, well known family. He has two PhDs! I don't think I'd ever met anyone with two before. I remember I asked him if he'd watched Indiana Jones. He said "No".

So was it love at first sight – with Romania, not the ambassador?

It's true that when I first went to Romania it was out of love, but I didn't know that it would affect and change my life as profoundly as it actually did. I felt it was a little like when Karen Blixen went to Africa and it changed her life. It was supposed to be one year abroad, but I kept going back. It just took me by surprise. I was really having an amazing time there.

How well do you remember your first visit?

I remember I was a bit cautious. Friends of mine had heard stories and told me to take care. So I dressed all in black because I didn't want to stand out. And then I remember these Romanian women ... they were like looking at me, like they were saying: "Come on, what's going on? Dress up a bit!"

So it was quite a bit different from Denmark?

I remember returning to Denmark after four years away and having to readapt to how unimpulsive Danes are compared to Romanians. Let's say you want to get together, but with no planning. All it might take is a concert, or opening a bottle of something, and maybe some cakes, and normally you'd get a positive response in Romania: like 90 percent will say 'why not!'. In Denmark, you can't just show up at someone's house, you have to plan two weeks before. And even then it's like you're stealing family time off them. They really cherish their free time.

Sometimes at the expense of culture?

Well, Romanian culture is very present on a daily basis. Not just the music in the prestigious venues, like the Opera in Bucharest, which is very high quality, but singing and dancing on the street corners, in the marketplaces, in the hills. Yes, I actually remember an amazing concert where the composer had gone out into the countryside of Romania and recorded the songs that people – as old as 90 some of them – sang to their cows. It was the sound of the mountains: a tradition passed on through the centuries. It really was magical.

The biggest event has to be the George Enescu Festival, which is held every two years. You know how people travel to Denmark for the food culture, well this



Princess Eleonore with Archbishop Casian

brings in tourists from all over the world for the classical music.

Right, Romania is world-famous for its classic music. What's its secret?

Romania takes classical music super seriously. When you're in Bucharest, you can really feel it on the streets: like there's a venue on every corner, so it's very easy to reach them. There's an array of scholarships for talents, and you often see Romanians studying at the Danish academies. They've produced some pretty big stars, like Angela Gheorghiu. I first met her in the town of Iași, where she was getting an honorary award and giving a concert, and I was like: well, I'm a princess, but she is the queen. She was so good, I went to see her on my birthday in Bucharest, and when we met she was like: 'So you're still here!' It's true she kept us waiting a bit, something like two hours and it was already midnight, but so good.

Any other brushes with Romanian 'royalty' you'd care to share?

I remember there was an event at one of the palaces, and I see this guy and I'm 100 percent sure this guy is the famous boxer, Lucian Bute [the former IBF super-middleweight title holder]. So I asked him if I could have a photo taken with him, and then I told many of the girls there that they too should have their photos taken. And they ended up spending the whole evening with him. But of course it wasn't Bute. Turned out he was a football coach. But he did say he enjoyed the evening. A lot.

What would be your number one recommendation to visitors to this country?

Definitely to visit the UNESCO heritage monasteries, but don't make the same

mistake I made! I remember I was very privileged to be sat up front during a service at the church in Iași and to be the first person to receive a blessing from the bishop who was dressed in the most ornate clothing. I remember when he blessed me, I gave a response – I was reasonably confident speaking Romanian by this point – but it was quite a faux pas to reply, and there was this deathly silence that this unknown blonde woman had blessed the bishop! And that wasn't the end of the problem: everyone wanted a blessing, and they all packed in close to him, and that's the moment when this photo is taken, with me looking at him and most of the crowd looking at me thinking: "Who's the blonde girl with the bishop?"

Aside from the monasteries, what was your favourite place?

Constanța. It's very traditional and quaint. By the seaside.

And favourite Romanian film?

There is one beautiful Romanian movie, which is one of my favourite of all time: Radu Mihăileanu's 'The Concert'. Highly recommended! The music is just perfect.

And favourite Romanian dish?

You must try 'Ciorbă de Burtă'. It's a soup, and you might think it's pasta at first. It's actually cow stomach. So yes, tripe. And delicious!

And finally, your favourite experience in Romania?

I remember with Theodor having a great time making wine, even though I'm not a huge fan myself. So there we were, in the barrel with our socks and shoes off, stamping on all the grapes.



Together with Her Majesty Margareta of Romania, Custodian of the Crown (2019, residence of the Romanian Ambassador in the Kingdom of Denmark)

RECOLLECTIONS OF ROMANIA FROM ONE OF DR'S FINEST

STEFFEN GRAM, ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED NAMES AT DR, HAS A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON EASTERN EUROPE THANKS TO EXTENSIVE TRAVELS AND POSTINGS DURING THE COLD WAR AND HAVING A ROMANIAN WIFE

By Stephen Gadd

Steffen Gram has become a household name for his work for Danmarks Radio. A foreign correspondent par excellence, he cut his teeth with Berlingske Tidende's foreign news desk.

Cold War experience

In 1976 he joined DR where he started reporting on Asia, and from 1983-1987 he was DR's correspondent in the United States.

From 1988-1990 he was DR's foreign editor. In 1990 he became the DR correspondent in Moscow, covering the Soviet collapse. Returning to Denmark in 1994 he became editor and host of the foreign affairs magazine 'Horizont' from 1995.

Radio host

From 2005 to 2013 he was back in the United States as DR's correspondent there. Since then he has hosted the radio program 'The World According to Gram' on DR's P1.

Talented wife

His wife Andra, meanwhile, is a successful businesswoman in her own right, having owned a wine company, started a vineyard, and been a real estate agent in Washington DC. Today she runs an import business in Denmark.



Steffan, Andra and their dog Brownie



I understand that your wife Andra is Romanian and that you've been a regular visitor to that country for several decades. How did you actually come to meet?

We met in a very untraditional way. In 1989 I was DR's foreign editor. We had covered the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and Eastern Europe during 1989 extensively. It was Christmas when I asked a couple of the guys to go to Romania, but they were exhausted after covering what had happened in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Christmas was coming. So I went myself. I went to Budapest and then into Bucharest by train. I think it was on the 25th in the evening. I got hold of Andra through someone in the office who knew her and I asked her to translate for me. She thought I was crazy. There was still a

lot of shooting and violence on the streets. But the next morning she came and we started working.

Christmas Day was incredibly dramatic in Bucharest. There were demonstrations, shootings and the execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu. I had to, however, return to Denmark, but Andra and I felt it was a good idea to continue seeing each other! We got married in April and moved to Moscow where I worked as DR's correspondent. We stayed until the summer of 1994.

Working with Andra, with her experience of living in a communist country, was invaluable. I was also lucky to build a close relationship with the Romanian ambassador, who had been in the USSR before and knew the sys-

tem inside out. He got what nobody else got: information and newspapers from different oblasts and regions in the east. So he knew what was going on in coal mining districts, and in Sakhalin and Vladivostok. In those pre-internet days it was an incredible source of information, offering a completely different perspective on what was happening in Russia.

How has Romania changed since then?

When you go to Romania today you see a totally different country: it has changed dramatically. This is especially true of the bigger cities – Bucharest today is a modern city – but also in the countryside and the small towns, you see much more wealth. You see improved infrastructure, more modern farming, but also respect for the old methods. Prince Charles,

When visiting Romania, do not miss the Danube Delta, Maramuresh monasteries and fortified churches in Transylvania

for instance, bought a property that he's turned into an organic farm.

Before the Revolution, the Romanian farmers produced more or less organic products, simply because of a lack of modern technology. They sold the products at the big markets, and they tasted wonderful: tomatoes, chickens, you name it. The tomatoes were just fantastic! Today there's a huge market in Bucharest and the products are still amazing.

There are so many talented and well-educated Romanians. They're into digitalisation and electronics, maths and engineering, so there is a huge pool of talent. But if they don't think they have the options and the qualities to make a good life in Romania, of course they will move abroad and go and work there – but they are needed at home. It would be fantastic if Romania could keep them and attract sufficient foreign investment to give them the scope. But let's see. It may happen.

When Covid hit, it had a growth rate of 7 per cent, which was the highest within the EU. You have seen Microsoft coming in, the Italian textile industry, along with the Spanish who took a lot of the cement and the French car industry. That's where you could see that Romania was really moving.

Their prosperity might surprise many in western Europe, then?

There is an unacceptable lack of understanding in the old Western EU countries about how the old East functions and how people think and why they think as they do. There is culture, there is political tradition, and from a Romanian point of view there is an old sense of being left after WWI and WWII – being left alone over there after the Yalta Conference. And when they were left and the Western Allies didn't come to their aid, there was also a sense of being punished. The USAF carpet-bombed the oil fields in Ploesti to stop them falling into German hands.

I remember a very moving moment when we went to Rome with Andra's parents. The first thing her father wanted was to see Trajan's Column, which depicts the Roman victory over the Dacians. He was standing there and seeing it for the first time. So if you are from Denmark, France, or whatever, you simply need to understand that the Dacian culture helps explain why Hungarians

and Romanians think as they do. People in the West need to be able to understand these sentiments in order to be able to deal with Romanians and Poles.

What are the most important things they should know?

When it comes to Romanians, the Danes ought to know their background. They ought to have an idea about who these people are when they come here. When you go to Jutland, or into Zealand, there is a growing understanding of who the Romanians are, because more and more Romanians have come to live there. They settle in the rural areas and are very good workers. They bring their families. They get an agricultural education and they work very very well. For instance, Borris, a small village near Ringkøbing, would not be there had it not been for immigrants and especially the Romanians living there.

Romania and Denmark are both members of the EU and NATO, but how closely linked are they in other fields?

Let's take NATO. As I understand it, the relationship is pretty close. The Danes and Romanians worked together in Afghanistan. When it comes to missions abroad, Romanians are everywhere. That all started in 1991 when its General Staff had plans to slim down and change the army from a typical communist state people's army into a much more western-orientated army. That moved pretty fast and worked pretty well. One of the features of Romanian foreign policy has been to keep as close to the US and NATO as possible – and to get as far away from Russia as possible.

If I wanted to visit Romania, where would you advise me to go? Are there any places that are off the beaten tourist track that are especially worth seeing?

If you're into nature, the Danube Delta is an absolute must. You go up there, rent a boat and stay a couple of days on the boat and the captain will catch fish and make you a fantastic fish soup. When you anchor, the



Married in Copenhagen in April 1990

captain will barbecue. And you can get huge watermelons. Up on the dykes you will see old churches and Raskolniki (old believers) still living in this area – relics from the big split in the Orthodox church in around 1660. The nature is also absolutely fantastic.

Then you go to the monasteries in Romanian Moldova. They survived the Ceausescu dictatorship. And I love the area called Maramuresh, which is the Northern part of Romania towards Ukraine.

Everyone who visits Romania should visit the fortified churches in Transylvania with their fortified churches surrounded by two or three sets of walls. There's a tranquillity and beauty about them.

Then you can go all the way out to the West to the Drobeta-Turnu Severin, the area where the Danube is coming down – the border region to Serbia. There is also the old spa town of Herculane, which is Agatha Christie-like with the train coming in and the old spas which were previously patronised by royalty and the nobility. There are just so many things to see in the country – and it's big.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY: GOOD NEWS FROM ROMANIA

LIKE DENMARK, THE COUNTRY HAS AN AMBASSADOR CHARGED
WITH OVERSEEING ALL MATTERS IN THE AREA

"Climate change does not take into account state borders and cannot be tackled by one country alone. Climate diplomacy is, therefore, an essential tool to deliver results for our citizens via bilateral and multilateral channels. The network of Romanian green embassies is working very hard towards this goal."



Tatiana Iosiper,
the Romanian
ambassador for
energy and climate
diplomacy at the
Romanian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

COP26 recently finished in Glasgow. There the President of Romania, together with several of his ministers, had the chance to stand on a world-wide stage and announce that Romania has done a lot of homework already in the area of climate change. In fact, it has become a driving force in the region.

ROMANIA'S FIT FOR FIGHT

In Europe, we are talking about 'Fit for 55' and reducing emissions by up to 55 percent by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

So it's good news from Romania! By 2019, the country had already decreased its greenhouse gas emissions by 64 percent. In addition, over the course of those three decades, Romania reduced its CO2 emission intensity per unit of GDP by 77 percent – a percentage more than double the global average. In short, Romania has one of the lowest rates of emissions/capita in the European Union.

Romania is committed to further cutting its emission levels, and its prospects look good. With a solid share of renewable energy (24 percent), Romania has the advantage of a good national energy mix. It is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe in this position – helped, in part, by having the biggest onshore windfarm in Europe (Fântânele-Cogealac wind farm, see cover photo). Moreover, 40 percent of Romania's electricity comes from renewable sources, and plans to expand this share are already part of the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience.

BRAVO FOR BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is central to Romania's vision of tackling climate change. At Glasgow, the President of Romania and Charles, the Prince of Wales, agreed that combatting climate change and preserving biodiversity are connected. President Klaus Iohannis highlighted the fact that the loss of biodiversity exacerbates climate change, which in turn affects ecosystems and species.

Forests represent 26 percent of Romania's land. Endorsing the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use was



Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania, addressing the UN Climate Change Conference, Glasgow 2021

Source: Presidential Administration of Romania

therefore another important priority. In concrete terms, Romania is committed to using 57,000 hectares of new forest to capture carbon and combat desertification.

Agriculture is a leading economic sector in Romania. At Glasgow, Romania joined the US-driven Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate.

And education and research have been crucial. In fact, Romania has been developing its capacity in green technologies for decades. The hydrogen sector and the electric railways are two highlights in this sense. From 2023, Romania will host an innovative World Meteorological Organization Centre that will help agricultural systems in Europe to better respond to climate change.

FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITY

The year 2021 has also brought other turning points in the area of climate change – more specifically in the area of climate diplomacy.

In May 2021, Romania officially launched its first climate diplomacy network, which

already includes more than 20 Romanian diplomatic missions. A new embassy joins almost every week. In September, the position of an ambassador for energy and climate diplomacy became a reality at the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underlining how climate change has officially become a foreign policy priority for Romania.

The network of green embassies is co-ordinated by Tatiana Iosiper, the ambassador for energy and climate diplomacy, who works closely with the Ministry for Environment, Water and Forests, as well as with the counsellor for climate change and sustainability to the President of Romania.

The network focuses on four lines of action: bilateral co-operation (projects for financing and exchange of know-how); promoting Romania's interests in EU and international negotiations; multilateral co-operation (supporting EU goals and actions outside the EU); and co-operation for development (mainstreaming green goals in the projects covered by the official development assistance).

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ONTRACK IN SCANDINAVIA

HOW SOFTRONIC HOLDING HAS QUICKLY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS A LEADING MANUFACTURER AND OPERATOR IN THE ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE SECTOR

Electric locomotives are pretty much a religion in the Romanian city of Craiova, so it was no surprise when it spawned one of today's giants in the industry back in 1999.

Softronic Holding doesn't just manufacture locomotives, it operates them: both railway freight and passenger transport.

This means it really understands the needs of private operators in the sector – most notably in Romania, but also in Bulgaria, Hungary, Turkey, Slovakia and Sweden.

Today it is one of the most respected premium railway freight and passenger transport operators – for both its safety record, environmental friendliness and professionalism.

And according to Radu Zlatian, the R&D director at Softronic Group Craiova, there is plenty more to come!

■ ***The Softronic group is rather a young company. Yet, your electric locomotives brought you international recognition long before the green transition era began. How did you manage to be so many years ahead of the tide?***

Indeed, we started 22 years ago and yet we now compete with European companies with a tradition of 100 years. However, we have built upon a long tradition in designing electric locomotives in Southern Romania. We started out with five enthusiastic employees in a small workshop in Craiova. Now we are 450. We knew that the market of electric locomotives was dominated by very big companies and so we had to find our own niche. And we did. It was the market of electric locomotives with six axles (four is the norm in Europe). To put it in layperson's terms, the higher the number of axles, the higher the power for traction. This means that our locomotives can tow very heavy trains on any type of railway (steep, covered with leaves, frost or snow), and in any kind of weather (they reach the North Pole region on a daily basis). Softronic is the only company with EU certificates for locomotives with six axles.

We also boast how our locomotives are able to retrieve kinetic brake energy (i.e., around 20 per cent of their total energy consumption). Their specific fuel consumption per tonne for every km they travel is less than the amount required by most locomotives on the market. All this means that the Softronic locomotives consume less and are more energy-efficient.

We meet all the EU requirements for interoperability and environment protection, which are



not exactly easy to acquire. Today, our locomotives run in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Sweden.

■ ***The European Green Deal is shaping the business landscape in all EU member states. Is its impact on the private sector already beneficial to such a future-orientated company such as Softronic?***

Most certainly. And yet, there is still so much to do in this sector. We need solid research if we really aim to continue increasing the efficiency of the transport equipment, to fuel the railway vehicles with high quality energy, and to optimise the weight of the trains. Our company works very hard to stay sustainable and competitive at the same time. In practical terms, we strive on a daily basis to enhance the reliability, availability, maintainability and safety (RAMS) of our locomotives. I know this RAMS concept may sound very abstract, but it means the daily bread and future to our industry.

■ ***Manufacturing electric locomotives is not sufficient for Softronic. Your company also aims to follow a logic of sustainability and lower its carbon print significantly. Tell us more about your efforts.***

Softronic wants to stay sustainable and competitive. For that, innovative technologies are key. In our own centre for R&D, we are looking at ways to best adapt to the specificities of the supply voltage in countries where we sell. Here we see room for more collaboration with the suppliers of electricity.

We argue that, for less carbon footprint and more interoperability, more countries should

opt for the 25 kV/50Hz supply voltage, as we see in Denmark and Romania. True, in many places this requires massive investments in infrastructure, but they do pay off. Right now, the European railway system is fragmented, as one side implements the 15 kV supply voltage (Austria, Germany, Norway, Sweden etc), while the other opts for the 25 kV (Romania, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Western Balkans, Russia, Ukraine etc). Softronic makes locomotives for both systems.

■ ***In 2020, Softronic Craiova Group signed a contract with the Swedish company Green Cargo to supply 100 electric locomotives by 2030. So, do you have any plans for further expansion? Would Denmark sound like an interesting destination to you?***

Green Cargo became the first operator in Scandinavia to buy our locomotives – in 2017 in fact. It uses them intensively to tow heavy trains in a difficult environment. A made-by-Softronic locomotive runs 25,000 km each month in Sweden (15,000 is the norm in Europe). We are very proud of this. In addition, our experts offer just-in-time maintenance – another key concept in our industry. This makes us rather competitive in the Swedish market.

Our success in Sweden could definitely open doors to new markets in the north. We could easily see Denmark as our next business partner. I will give you two solid reasons for this: a Softronic locomotive has all the required EU certificates for interoperability, and it can be connected to the supply systems of both 15 kV and 25 kV. That is a guarantee for easy transit on the rail networks linking Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

EASY ON THE MILEAGE, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND YOUR POCKET

WITH OVER 7 MILLION CARS SOLD IN THE LAST 15 YEARS, DACIA IS A HUGE SUCCESS STORY IN THE AUTOMOTIVE WORLD. NOW THE FOCUS IS ON ELECTRIC CARS



Born in 1968, Dacia became part of the Renault Group in 1999. Sales really picked up speed around 2004-05 when the Dacia Logan model was launched. With the modern model in production, a large number of European countries began to import and sell Dacia.

Since then, there has been only one way for Dacia – namely up, up, up. A total of 7 million cars have been sold over the past 15 years – including quite a few in Denmark, where Dacia was introduced in 2013 as a brand that was shockingly affordable.



A REVOLUTION PRICE-WISE

Today, the Dacia Duster and Dacia Sandero, both icons of the brand, are among the best-selling models in Europe. Clearly, Dacia is in rapid development. Not only has it just launched the new seven-seater family car Dacia Jogger, but it has also launched the 970-kilo Dacia Spring.

If that sounds light, it's because it is. With just a 27 kWh battery, and a much smaller engine than other similar cars, it's easy on the environment and your pocket!

"Dacia Spring is simply a revolution in the world of electric cars. The market is swarming with electric cars that cost much more – but there has been no-one yet who can offer an electric car most people can afford. But Dacia Spring can do it," enthuses the communications manager for Dacia in Denmark, Søren Hyltoft.

BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

The Dacia Spring is a smart, small four-seater electric car with a range of 230 km for mixed driving. If you use it almost exclusively in the

city, then the range is over 300 km on a single charge. That's quite a return.

Since the battery in an electric car makes up over 40 percent of the car's price, it is clear that the smaller the battery, the cheaper the car. This helps save money and make electric and sustainable mobility accessible to all, which is precisely the idea behind Dacia Spring's motto: "Dacia Spring – Exclusive for Everybody".

AND SUSTAINABLE TOO

"If we want to cut CO2 emissions from the transport sector, we need more options – not only expensive ones. In order for more people to replace their petrol or diesel car with an electric car, accessible variants should come to the market – and the first one is the Dacia Spring," concludes Hyltoft.

The Dacia Spring is already on the streets in France, and it is expected at Danish dealers in November. It may be the only electric car from Dacia right now, but next year the Jogger will also be launched as a hybrid car, so there is no doubt that Dacia will be moving in a more electrified direction in the coming years.

GREEN MOVEMENT IN FOOTBALL

ROMANIAN FOOTBALL LIT UP THE PLANET IN THE 1990S. THREE DECADES LATER, THEY ARE LEADING THE FIGHT TO SAVE IT



The Voluntari Stadium

In 2021, Romania hosted for the first time games at a European Championship and it was a great success. Not only did the capital's National Arena, with its amazing retractable roof, host three group games involving Austria, North Macedonia and Ukraine, but it then went on to stage the game of the tournament.

When Paul Pogba sublimely put France 3-1 ahead in the 75th minute at the National Arena, few were expecting the Swiss bounce back, but they did with two late goals, eventually prevailing on penalties.

ALL EYES ON ROMANIA

On that night all eyes were on Bucharest as a capital of football, and they are again thanks to the Romanian Football Federation's commitment to bringing sustainability to the game.

Romanian football might not be lighting up the planet like it did in the 1990s, but it is still very much under the spotlight for its environmental focus.

CPH POST caught up with the federation's president, Răzvan Burleanu, to find out more about Romanian football's very own green revolution.

In recent years, the Romanian Football Federation has shown increasing interest in sustainability. How does one connect football and sustainability in practice? Could you elaborate

on the initiatives that you have been developing in Romania?

We started initiatives in this area in 2018. At that time, the Federation joined a European project, called 'Life Tackle', along with other federations, local authorities, universities and waste management companies from Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Sweden. The project aims to improve the environmental management of football matches by reducing waste, increasing the efficiency of its collection and recycling, as well as by numerous measures related to energy-efficiency. It raises awareness of sustainability in the football world and involves key stakeholders, such as organisations, clubs, stadium managers and fans.

In a nutshell, we are committed to making the Romanian sport more sustainable. In order to achieve that, we prioritise waste management, mobility, water consumption, lighting, fan environmental awareness, and an environmental governance system of football associations and clubs.

Was sustainability a priority for Romania this year when it hosted a series of EURO 2020 football matches?

The Federation implemented several concrete actions to bring sustainability closer to the matches at the National Arena and to the training sessions at the Anghel Iordănescu stadium in Voluntari near the capital, which the Ukraine

national team used in June (see photo). We focused on reducing plastic waste by recycling seats that deteriorated at the matches and by distributing reusable plastic cups only. But also earlier, in 2019, in the Euro 2020 preliminaries, we distributed 20,000 reusable glasses at the match between Romania and Spain with the support of PENNY, the sponsor of the national team. In addition to that, the Federation has financed a feasibility study for the installation of renewable energy production equipment at the Voluntari stadium.

It is clear that the Romanian Football Federation fully grasps the impact that football has on society and the responsibilities that come with this unique power. How do you use the power of this very popular game in the area of education and sustainability?

True, football has a significant impact on communities, and we are aware of this advantage. Firstly, we started with our own internal rules. We relied on the power of example. The Federation has been selectively collecting paper and plastic for around four years. Then we made plans to reduce the consumption of plastic – especially PET – throughout the activities of the national teams. And we looked for solutions to increase the energy efficiency of the sports facilities used by the national teams, which the Federation owns. For instance, we installed LED lighting, which has 30 percent less consumption and a longer operating life.

We are committed to monitoring all data relating to football activities in our bid to have stadiums that are more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly. The 'Life Tackle' project has an educational component, which involves a series of training sessions focused on sustainability for employees, along with a public information campaign that will soon be implemented.



**FEDERAȚIA ROMÂNĂ
DE FOTBAL**

EARNING HIS SPURS IN SUSTAINABILITY

FACING GHEORGHE POPESCU AT FCV FARUL CONSTANȚA, THE CLUB OF WHICH HE IS PRESIDENT, IS THE BIGGEST GOAL OF HIS LIFE: MAKING IT CARBON-NEUTRAL BY 2030!

As a player who graced the top leagues of Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and England, as well as three World Cups, Gheorghe Popescu is a legend of Romanian football.

But today he is making a name for himself in the field of sustainability.

He is still involved in football: as the president of FCV Farul Constanța.

And it is there that he is intent, alongside fellow initiator Gheorghe Hagi, on creating the first carbon-neutral club in the world.

We caught up with him to find out more.



Source: Mediafax

Mr Popescu, you're the president of FCV Farul Constanța, a Romanian top flight club situated on the coast of the Black Sea. In Romanian, 'Farul' means lighthouse: would it be fair to say you have a better view of the future than most other football clubs?

We are very optimistic. We like what we do. We have a great team and a very solid academy. One of the biggest in Europe. Our main goal is to educate teenagers to be successful in their lives and some of them to be the next champions.

We understand you have a bold ambition to become the first carbon-neutral football club in the world by 2030.

Yes, it is true. We would like to become carbon-neutral by 2030. According to our information we are the first league club in the world with such a goal regarding direct emissions generated by us, our employees and children.

In September, you referred to an action plan and the necessary investment to achieve it. Could you tell us a little bit more about your plans? For example, we understand you've launched a renewable energy production project at your base in Ovidiu to generate the power you use: at the club and all your transport needs.

Our plans have several dimensions: producing renewable energy for our consumption, using only electrical vehicles, improving the efficiency of our operations, our buildings and lighting, and planting a significant number of trees. We already have a project, using EU funds, to install numerous solar photovoltaic panels. Soon we will initiate a collaboration with our partners

at BMW in order to turn our vehicle fleet completely electric. ENEL, the local distributor of electricity, will help us install charging stations – including for the supporters who drive to the stadium.

Realistically, how achievable are your plans for the club to become carbon-neutral by 2030 without the help of your league, fellow clubs, government and the international community?

Any support is more than welcome. Any help will increase the chances to achieve this important goal. We want to try to lead the way in decarbonising the sport activities. We do it for our society. The need for action is bigger than ever.

A lot is often said of footballers being role models for young people, but not so much clubs. Or at least in terms of fighting climate change. How big an impact do you think you could have if all the world's major clubs made the same pledge?

I think that the impact of the entire society could be significant when the need to be united in our actions is higher than ever.

We understand you intend to ask UEFA and FIFA to set up a working group for clubs to exchange information on how they can work together to combat climate change. Are the bodies and clubs a little too consumed by making money, or is there room for optimism?

We will see how they react. I am positive because they are, between the organisations, open to new ideas.

The owner and manager of the club is none other than Gheorghe Hagi, your former teammate on the national team, and together you are the driving force behind this initiative. The world remembers him as special, and it would appear not much has changed in that respect!

Yes. He was an amazing player and he is now a brilliant coach. I am happy being his colleague and friend. He is an ideal model for the current generation – very talented and hard working.

Both your clubs, and one other, merged earlier this year, and before that he enjoyed a lot of success with his academy. Presumably that is a driving force: providing today's youngsters with a brighter future.

Educating the kids has always been our priority. It will remain the same. We want them to be aware of the challenges faced by our society today. We want to see them aware and engaged in specific actions to protect the planet.

Finally, it would be criminal to not ask you at least one question related to your playing career. Everyone remembers the stunning manner in which Romania beat Colombia and Argentina at the 1994 World Cup and the cruel way you lost to Sweden in the quarters. Personally, for this interviewer, that was the moment the tournament ended. But really, that was the one that got away, surely? With Brazil running out of goals, it was your World Cup for the taking.

Nice memories! We were a great team. If we hadn't lost to Sweden, then the Brazilians would have had problems with us. Denmark also had a good national team. It was always a pleasure competing with them.

ROMANIAN ROBOTICS: CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC

FROM AGRICLOUD, WITH ITS FOCUS ON OPTIMISING CROP YIELDS, TO ROBOHUB, WHICH ORGANISES WORKSHOPS TO PREPARE STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE FUTURE, THE INDUSTRY IS FLOURISHING

We all hear the hype about new technologies and digitalisation.

And indeed, technology is all around us; we can now hold it in our hand or control it through simple vocal commands.

But it also raises several questions: What else can it do for us? Are there downsides to the technology? How should we prepare for them?

PRECISION IN THE OPERATING THEATRES

More and more robots are used nowadays – particularly over the last two years – in the medical field.

Of the many robots that help humans with their work in hospitals, one of the most used is the first disinfection robot in the world. Using UVC, it can automatically disinfect large spaces, such as hospital corridors and receptions, which normally can't be disinfected using traditional methods.

Also popular are the surgical robots. They are not fully automative, as one might expect, but manipulated by surgeons to ensure much more precision than they could achieve by hand. They are programmed to make smaller incisions, which accordingly leads to shorter recovery periods. Most commonly they are used for brain surgery and to treat spinal cord injuries.

RESPONSIVENESS IN THE FIELDS

Another very important field where automation, digitisation and robots are gaining more and more ground is agriculture.

There are now several digital solutions on the market that can provide an overview of the farm and the activities in it. For example, the farm management solution from the Romanian startup AgriCloud can provide an integrated solution that contains data from sensors, weather stations and satellites, and a phenotyping

solution, which can ascertain the development stage of a plant and accordingly time different treatments – for example, against possible diseases.

All these solutions help the farmers to identify which plants need treatment and which parts tend to be attacked by pests. Furthermore, they monitor the weather and know when a particular type of treatment, for example in cases of humidity, is needed.

This is what agriculture with high precision means: there is no need to apply pesticides to the entire crop, if only a small area needs them. And it ensures that certain crops, like grapes, are only picked when they are ripe enough for their purpose.

COMPREHENSION IN THE CLASSROOMS

These are brief examples of the technology solutions available in just two industries, but now the question is: how can children be prepared for this very technological future.

One might immediately think that children are natively digital, but being users of technology does not necessarily mean they understand the big picture of how technology works.

This is a very important aspect for two reasons: if they don't know how it works, they could end up becoming pawns in the industry, and secondly, they will have a problem adapting to future labour markets.

This is why RoboHub organises workshops where programming and robotics are introduced, not just to children, but also to SMEs and other stakeholders interested in the future and learning about the impact of new technologies.

It is a practice equally used in developing and developed countries' educational systems.



GOOD TECH, BAD TECH

One thing we have to keep in mind when talking about technologies is that they are just tools. They ultimately depend on how we will use them, for good or for bad.

For example, face recognition can be used to track down offenders very fast, but it can also be used by states imposing a high level of surveillance on their citizens.

Artificial Intelligence can be very good at analysing data and making predictions based on it, but if the data is biased, the system will also pick up on that bias and might even increase it.

DIFFICULT TASK AHEAD

It is a very thin line and the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as other international institutions, are looking at ways to regulate these new technologies without hindering their development.

It is a difficult task ahead and it is very important that citizens are also aware of what is happening in this field to make sure their rights are protected.

WARM FEELINGS INSIDE GUARANTEED

Therme Bucharest, an urban oasis offering guests fun and relaxation since 2016, was only just the beginning, as many more locations are springing up all over the world

Since 2016, Therme Bucharest has been welcoming millions of guests every year to its spectacular urban oasis. As well as offering an affordable day of fun and relaxation, Therme looks to boost the mental and physical health of all visitors.

Created by the global wellbeing organisation Therme Group, the concept is now being taken worldwide, with locations in the likes of Toronto, Frankfurt, Manchester and Glasgow. Further projects are in development in the US, UK, mainland Europe and Asia Pacific.

WELLBEING FOR EVERYONE

Based on an inclusive vision of 'Wellbeing for All', Therme Group combines next generation indoor water parks with expansive thermal bathing and wellbeing spas to create integrated wellbeing destinations.

Beyond just leisure and attractions projects, Therme is a multi-faceted centre of social connection and learning, offering experiences such as botanical gardens, immersive digital art, live entertainment, fitness programming and educational activities.



Therme Canada | Ontario Place on Toronto's Lakefront
(a new project developed by Therme Group)

HEALTHY, FULFILLING LIVES

The success of Therme Bucharest is paving the way for the next evolution of Therme Group's approach, as it seeks to help people in cities worldwide to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

And indeed, there are plans to build sustainable high-tech vertical farms at Therme Bucharest and every future Therme, where produce will be grown and then served at onsite restaurants and wellbeing treatments.

CONSUMER AND BUSINESS

Aimed at both consumer and business travellers, the Therme destinations bring a new aspect to city trips.

For consumer travellers, Therme's natural environment is an eco-tourism destination in the heart of a city.

With business travellers in mind, the group plans to work with local conference and exhibition organisers to incorporate the Therme experience into delegate packages, adding much-needed revitalisation to professional lives.



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THE GROWING MANIA FOR ROMANIAN FILMS

LIKE DENMARK'S DOGME MOVEMENT, THE RECENT CINEMATIC SUCCESS BEGAN AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

By Dana Duma

The bleak pandemic context of the last year and a half has undermined our desire to celebrate 20 years of New Romanian Cinema, one of the most vibrant cinema movements of the new century.

THE ROMANIAN RENAISSANCE

Most theorists and film critics consider Cristi Puiu's 2001 film 'Staff and Dough'/'Marfa și banii' as the milestone of the phenomenon. Spanish critic Eulàlia Iglesias is among its biggest fans. In his paper *Nuevos cineastas/ Nuevas miradas*, he wrote: "The arrival of the 21st century welcomed the rebirth of Romanian cinema and, with it, a group of great directors such as Cristi Puiu (Bucharest, Romania, 1967) who maintain this cinema as one of the most powerful of the contemporary panorama."

Internationally recognised as an innovative, coherent cinematic movement, New Romanian Cinema was initiated by Puiu, who assimilated and adapted the theory and practice of realism.

After 'The Death of Mr Lăzărescu' was crowned by Cannes in 2005 as the best film in the 'Un Certain Regard' section, the prestigious French festival became the framework by which other Romanian directors achieved fame, receiving several

important prizes: Cristian Mungiu (Palme d'Or for '4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days' in 2007; Best Screenplay for 'Beyond the Hills' in 2012) and Corneliu Porumboiu (Camera d'Or for '12.08 East of Bucharest' in 2006 and the FIPRESCI and A Certain Talent prizes for 'Police, Adjective' in 2009).

FESTIVAL FAVOURITES

New Romanian Cinema has had a notable influence on cinema in the country, but while the national movement continues through movies from directors belonging to the 'first wave', new filmmakers' works are making it more and more visible in the world panorama.

Since 2001 hardly a year has gone by without an award for a Romanian film in important festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Locarno and Odense. We also find enthusiastic comment on New Romanian Cinema in international specialised media, although some of its representatives refuse to be 'labelled'.

If we look only at the last two years of results (released and awarded Romanian films) we find enough proof of this continuity. The pandemic era started with Puiu taking the main award in the 'Encounters' section of the Berlin Film Festival for 'Malmkrog' (2020), a

bold adaptation of Vladimir Soloviov's 'Three dialogues and the Antichrist Story', which was adapted by the Romanian director into a meditation on Europe's future.

Then the documentary 'Collective' by Alexander Nanau was nominated twice at the American Academy Awards, while another remarkable documentary, 'Home' by Radu Ciorniciuc, was awarded at the Sundance Film Festival. Other important documentaries released during the pandemic years are 'Wood/Lemn' by Monica Lăzurean Gorgan, first presented last year at the Copenhagen festival CPX:DOX, or 'Holy Father'/'Tatăl nostru' by Andrei Dăscălescu, selected this year for the 'East by South-East Film Festival' in Copenhagen. At the same time, we have to mention that Romanian films have regularly participated and won prizes at the film festivals in Odense.

LOONY PORN AT THE OSCARS?

The second year of the pandemic crisis, 2021, brought Romanian cinema another important trophy: the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for 'Badluck banging or loony porn'/'Babardeală cu bucluc ori sexi balamuc', directed by Radu Jude, which has been chosen to be the Romanian candidate at this year's Oscars.



The motivation of the jury emphasises the "rare and essential quality of a lasting art work". It also remarks that Jude's film "captures on screen the very content and essence, the mind and the body, the values and the raw flesh of our present moment in time".

A witness of these pandemic times, the film also captures the spirit of our time "by slapping it, by challenging it to a duel". Whether we accept or reject its furious tone, we should appreciate the resolve of the director to question our social and cinematic conventions.

FEMALES ON THE FRONT FOOT

But Jude's achievement is not the only Romanian title being acclaimed internationally, as 2021 has undoubtedly been a breakthrough year for female directors. Following in the footsteps of women directors such as Adina Pintilie ('Touch me Not'/'Nu mă atingem' – Golden Bear at Berlinale, 2019) and Ivana Mladenovic ('Soldiers. Story from Ferentari'/'Soldați. Poveste din Ferentari' – Special Mention at San Sebastian, 2017), more female auteurs have been coming to the fore – most notably Alina Grigore, who was previously better known as an actress (Cristi Puiu's 'Aurora') or screenwriter ('Illegal', directed in 2016 by Adrian Sitaru).

When her debut film, 'Blue Moon'/'Crai Nou', recently won The Golden Shell at the San Sebastian Festival, it was the first Romanian film to do so. The review published by Elisabeth Cabeza in Screen International emphasises the importance of the topic: the marginalisation of a young woman within her own family, hostile to her emancipation. It concludes: "The triumph of Alina Grigore at San Sebastian adds

a new important voice to the vibrant scene of Romanian cinema."

Another notable winner this year, this time of The Courage Prize in the 'Un Certain Regard' section at Cannes, went to the French-Romanian-Mexican co-production 'La Civil' by Teodora Mihai, a frightening story told in the well-mastered form of a thriller about young women kidnapped by Mexican gangs, beautifully shot by Romanian director of photography Marius Panduru.

Even more recently, Monica Stan received the Leone del Futuro debut award at the Venice Film Festival for co-directing 'Immaculate', the tale of a dutiful daughter and student whose drug addiction led her to a terrific rehab experience, together with George Chipper Lillemark. And Ruxandra Ghițescu won the Romanian Days section prize at the Transilvania Film Festival in Cluj-Napoca for 'Otto the Barbarian'/'Otto Barbarul'.

POTENT DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

Other recent winners at international festivals held in Romania include 'Unidentified'/'Neidentificat' by Bogdan George Apetri, which won the FIPRESCI Award at the Transilvania Film Festival, and the hybrid thriller 'Miracle', the winner of the Main Award of the Warsaw Film Festival, which was also directed by Apetri.

In spite of the unbearable restrictions of the pandemic years (closed cinemas, suspended productions), Romanian cinema continues to display an incredibly creative and vital shape.

Let's hope it continues and brings many more memorable films.

DANA DUMA is a film critic based in Bucharest. She is currently teaching at the Bucharest National University of Theatre and Film. A member of FIPRESCI, she is a regular contributor to both mainstream and specialised film media outlets in Romania and abroad and a frequent member of international festival juries. The Director of 'Film' magazine since 2013, she is also the editor of the journal 'Close up'. She has published several books: 'Self-portraits of cinema' (1983); 'Gopo' (1996); 'Woody Allen: a Buffoon and a Philosopher' (2003); 'Benjamin Fondane Cineaste' (2010); and 'The History of Romanian Animation 1920-2020' (2020). Additionally she co-edited the anthologies 'Cinema 2000' (2000); 'Tendencies in European Cinema' (2003); and 'The Personality of Latin-American Cinema' (2006). She also collaborated on international volumes of '1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die' (2003).

Find out more at seminci.es/en/jurado/dana-duma.



BALKAN-POP STAR FALLULAH'S ROMANIAN UPBRINGING

THE HERITAGE OF THE SINGER'S LATE FATHER, THE FOUNDER OF A FOLKDANCE GROUP IN THE EARLY 1970S, IS PALPABLE IN HER WORK TODAY

By Lena Hunter

Maria Apetri, better known by her stage name Fallulah, is a platinum-album Danish-Romanian singer-songwriter. Her career so far spans eleven years and four albums under Danish and American record labels.

Though she grew up in Tårnby on the island of Amager in southern Copenhagen, her upbringing was distinctly Romanian.

CPH POST caught up with Apetri to talk Balkan influences, musical style and where the name Fallulah really came from.

How would you describe your creative DNA?

I grew up with my mom and dad, my dad being from Romania, and they met through Romanian dance. So, it was a very big part of the vibe in my home. Our house was decorated with things like Romanian platters and little knick-knacks and carpets.

My dad had a Romanian dance group, so we would only ever travel to dance at festivals and celebrations. It was very much the centre of my whole upbringing.

Yes, your dad was a choreographer and founded a Romanian folkdance group called Crihalma in 1972 here in Denmark – were you dancing in that?

I was dancing after he passed away because I was only nine when that happened. With these kinds of Romanian folk dances, they didn't allow kids to join. I had to wait till I was around 12 or 13.

My mom took over the dance group when my father passed away. But I was starting to become a teenager, so I found it a little bit embarrassing. I grew up with Romanian music and it's a big part of our lives.



Photo: Julie Montauk

Is it still a part of your life now?

It continues to be, even though I haven't been able to go back to Romania as much as I would like to. I was supposed to go in 2019, but I wasn't allowed to travel as I was pregnant with twins. It was such a big part of my upbringing, but I feel this weird detachment to that identity now, so I feel I have to seek it out actively.

A lot of people who grow up with two cultural identities have that experience. So the dancing was big for you growing up; how important is dancing in Romanian culture?

Oh yeah ... music and dancing is very big. Even if you don't join a dance class, you know all the steps. Romanian villages get together for celebrations and they have different dances and everyone knows them. It's such a big part of the culture.

It's something that really brings people together and, growing up in Denmark, I saw that we didn't have anything similar. So, I was really happy to have that and it was very different from my Danish upbringing.

Do you see anything resembling Romanian musical and social culture in Danish life?

I feel like Denmark is a little bit culturally poor. We don't really care too much about our traditions ... unless it has something to do with sport. I think it's a bit of a shame that we don't have anything expressive and intergenerational bringing us together in that sense.

You've been releasing albums for about 10 years. Do you think there are any Balkan influences in your music?

It's been an interesting one: that question. It's been brought up since the very beginning, and when I made my first album I was really aware of those influences.

But it just happened – I wasn't thinking about it. It felt strange when people started to describe my music as Balkan-pop ... It kind of freaked me out a little because then I started to question whether people expected me to incorporate it, though I didn't do it on purpose to begin with.

So it started feeling a bit phony to me and I rebelled against it on my second album. I took a step back and went in a different direction.

What about your inspiration? What kind of emotions do you start from?

Oh man, sometimes it just hits me and I don't know until afterwards where that urge came from.

Other times I have this feeling bottled up and I'm trying to get it out by writing. So it varies. Sometimes a scene in a movie will inspire me and I want to try and capture the feeling and make it into a song.

I'm mostly inspired by literature and movies and walking in nature.

Are there any books or films that spring to mind when you say that?

Haruki Murakami, a Japanese author. I have all his books. I love how he plays with alternate universes and you never really know when something's real or surreal.

I've always loved toying with things that seem cheery, but underneath there's something a bit eerie. I love



Photo: Julie Montauk

playing with those magnetic fields.

I also love Joan Didion's 'A Year of Magical Thinking'. If you've ever been through grief, it's amazing. It really puts things into perspective because she lost her husband and then her daughter very soon after. It's a beautiful book.

Can you tell me about the name 'Fallulah' and the whole identity? Where does that come from?

Oh man. I just wish I had lied from the beginning and found a really cool story. The truth is I just made it up and it felt right.

I was on my bike in Copenhagen late at night and I just had this word pop into my mind: 'Fallulah'. I liked something about it, so held onto it for some years and then, when I made my MySpace, which was a thing back then, I used it as my artist name.

Actually, I was told when I was signed to a label that they wanted me to change the name. They said: "Why can't you just be Maria Apetri?" They were afraid Fallulah sounded too ethnic.

What new things are in the works for you right now?

I can't say what it's called because it's not official yet, but I'm working on composing an entire musical. So 25 pieces of music.

The script is the lyrics, of course, and I have to make the music around it, which is something I've never done before. It's

such a big challenge because I usually write my lyrics and melodies together. It's such a cool experience and an opportunity to learn something new.

So a last question about your 2019 song 'Bloodline'. The lyrics are "I have my father's mind, I got his OCD... I have my mother's legs, they're strong and running free..." and later you mention your grandmother peeling oranges, apples and pears. It sounds from our conversation like a lot of your cultural references came into your music intuitively. Now that you have your own children, do you feel you're passing any of that personal history on to them too?

Yeah. I had just had my first daughter when I wrote 'Bloodline'. So the idea of family generations was very present in my mind, though I had never thought about it much before.

I was thinking "What are the good things that you're bringing with you?" When I was younger I had a tendency to focus on the negative, and having children gave me a new appreciation for my life and my family and made me reflect a lot.

Just writing that song felt so scary to me. I was shaking writing it because it was so personal, like a diary entry. I thought "Oh my god, am I actually releasing this into the world?" But I think it resonated because of that. It's the beauty of creating music – that communication.



TRENDSETTER AND SUCCESSFUL BRAND IN PROJECTS



Office building - Bucharest

