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ON MUSICAL MEMORY IN ĐORĐE MARKOVIĆ'S *MONUMENTS: OVERTURE FOR PEACE*

Abstract: By looking at various theoretical perspectives on the role of memory in contemporary culture and examining the problem of musical memory, this paper explores the significance of reminiscences of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* in Đorđe Marković's (b. 1978) symphonic composition *Monuments: Overture for Peace* (2022). The conclusion is that, due to increasingly rapid social change and the dominance of information and media culture, the urge to refer to the past as is done in Marković's work originates from the tendency to resist both the fear of forgetting and the uncertainty of what is to come.

Keywords: musical memory, Đorđe Marković, *Monuments: Overture for Peace*, *Ninth Symphony*, *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*

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Does every act of memory carry with it a dimension of betrayal, forgetting, and absence?¹ Or is it in some way capable of influencing the future? These questions arise when listening to *Monuments: Overture for Peace* (2022), a composition for orchestra by Đorđe Marković (b. 1978).² The work premiered at the closing concert of the NEO festival in Novi Sad, Serbia, on July 16, 2022, performed by the philharmonic orchestra “For New Bridges” under the direction of Andrej Bursać.³ Considering the *Overture* was commissioned as an appeal for peace, its musical poetics is somewhat predetermined. Marković’s first priority was to address the work’s symbolism, i. e., to connect music with conceptual content.⁴ To do so, he chose simply to refer to other compositions with strong associative potential: Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* No. 9 in D minor, op. 125 (1822–24) and Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960). Marković selected the *Ninth Symphony* because of the symbolism of the *Ode of Joy*, the official anthem of the European Union. The text of Schiller’s poem celebrates the joy of life and aspires towards brotherhood among all people, aligning closely with contem-

¹ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2003, 4.

² Đorđe Marković (b. 1978) earned his BA and MA in music composition under the supervision of Zoran Mulić at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, as well as a BA in Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. He completed his postgraduate studies at the Kunstuniversität Graz, under Beat Furrer, and attended master classes with Alberto Posadas, Wolfgang Heiniger, Franck Bedrossian, Raphaël Cendo, Mark Andre, Tristan Murail, Clemens Gadenstätter, Isabel Mundry, Dmitri Kourliandski, Klaus Lang, Pierluigi Billone, Dieter Ammann, Dimitri Papageorgiou, and Yuri Kasparov. Marković’s compositions were performed at numerous festivals in Serbia, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain, Greece, the United Kingdom, Russia and the USA by the London Sinfonietta, Nickel, DissonArt, United Instruments of Lucilin, Synaesthesia, Klangforum Wien, Studio 6, MotoContrario, Aleph Gitarrenquartett, Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, Vertixe Sonora, and St. George Chamber Orchestra. He is the laureate of the competition *Postal Pieces* (UK, 2013), *Rudolf Bruči* (Serbia, 2015), and *Tesselat* (USA, 2019), and he represented Serbia at the International Rostrum of Composers in Wrocław (2016). His work has been supported by Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung, Serbian Ministry of Culture, and the city of Novi Sad. Marković’s scores are published by the French *BabelScores*.

³ The work was commissioned by the NEO Festival and the Foundation “Novi Sad – European Capital of Culture” as a part of the “Fortress of Peace” program arch and a reminder of the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699). The recording is available at <https://on.soundcloud.com/4sB64>.

⁴ Email correspondence with the composer on June 24, 2022.

porary antiwar sentiment and ideas about peace. Penderecki's composition, representing the tragic nuclear devastation of the end of the Second World War, instead reflects on this lowest point in the history of civilization. According to Marković, the *Threnody* promotes the same concept as the *Ode* but from the opposite direction: through memorialization, a work of art becomes a "place of conscience and admonition".⁵

Poetics of Memory and "Present Past"

References to such important compositions of the European musical canon are familiar to wider musical audiences.⁶ By playing upon their presence in the collective cultural "working memory", Marković intentionally creates a dialogue with the European musical tradition and establishes a creative relationship with the musical past. From this perspective, he expresses a particular preoccupation with musical tradition that has been omnipresent in Serbian art music since the 1980s, a situation musicologist Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman describes as "static" in a Vattimian or "frozen" in a Ligetian sense, by which the constituents of the "synchronism of the entirety of the world musical fund" become unfrozen and combined at will.⁷ At the same time, Marković's choice of musical constituents also draws attention to the conspicuous tendency within the academic and artistic community to problematize the questions of collective memory and popularize the phenomenon of commemoration and memorialization, a tendency which emerged around the same time as the use of "frozen" music history.⁸ In the last decades of the twentieth century, as the tragedies of world wars gradually passed from personal to cultural memory, it was increasingly important not to forget ei-

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ While discussing the process of canonization and its importance for the relationship between cultural memory and collective identity, Aleida Assmann claims that, in the rigorous process of selection, the continuously recycled and re-affirmed cultural capital of a society, gets stored in its "cultural working memory". See Aleida Assmann, "Canon and Archive", in: Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Eds), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin – New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2008, 100.

⁷ Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман, "Српска музика и 'замрзнута историја'", *Нови звук*, 9, I/1997, 15.

⁸ Pierre Nora labels the end of the 20th century as "the age of commemoration". Pierre Nora, "Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory", *Eurozine*, 2002, <https://www.eurozine.com/reasons-for-the-current-upsurge-in-memory/>

ther the limitations of civilization's development or the consequences of abusing those limitations in periods of social crisis—a concept popularized in the slogan “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.⁹ But this new “democratized” relationship to memory does not rely exclusively on scientific methodology, institutionally supported historical narratives, and known facts; instead, it focuses on the examination of personal memories, unrecorded stories, and the fate of neglected participants in historical drama. It is this tendency to question collective memory rather than relying on the historical paradigm that has shaped the relation to knowledge and artistic practices in the last forty years, including “the new status of the overall musical tradition as ahistorical history”.¹⁰ According to literary critic Andreas Huyssen, in this period, modernistic interest in the future was replaced by a constant and at times obsessive examination of the past, or in his words “the focus has shifted from present futures to present pasts”.¹¹ From Huyssen's perspective, the tendency towards memorialization originates in the fear of forgetting in the context of fast-paced social changes in the age of information and media culture.¹² And such an intense interest in the past actually reflects an uncertainty regarding the expectations of what is to come in the future.¹³

Such work on issues of musical memory has found a response in ethnomusicology, popular and film music studies, and psychology.¹⁴ For example,

⁹ George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, 285.

¹⁰ Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман, op. cit, 16.

¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, “Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia”, in: Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy (Eds), *The Collective Memory Reader*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 430. Many authors write about this obsession with memory: Jacques Le Goff, for example, claims that memory has become a best-seller in a consumer society. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, transl. by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, 95.

¹² Ibid., 431. Nora also supports this thesis, emphasizing drastic changes and the “acceleration of history” as one of the main reasons for the modern obsession with the past. Pierre Nora, *ibid.*

¹³ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, 2. Paul Connerton also believes that this is a compensation strategy, which replaces the lack of a vision of the possible future of society. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 64.

¹⁴ See, for example: George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1990; Sandra Garrido and Jane W. Davidson, *Music, Nostalgia and Memory: Historical and Psychological Perspec-*

Caroline Bithell points to Philip Bohlman's "poetics of memory", a term which implies an encounter and coexistence of different musical pasts in the folk music tradition.¹⁵ This same kind of poetics can also be found in art music, corresponding to the phenomenon of "frozen history", where the composer assumes the role of transmitter and negotiator of musical content preserved in the "working memory" of music lovers and connoisseurs, shaping it at their own will. The significance of music as history does not lie exclusively in the musical text but, as Leon Botstein demonstrates, also exists in the transaction between performer and listener and the ascription of meaning that occurs in that process – a process dependent on the role of musical memory in a given culture.¹⁶ In other words, memory (including musical memory) is never a passive process; its reconstruction is always active, and even "wandering".¹⁷ What, then, do the references in the *Overture* to these culturally significant works by Beethoven and Penderecki reveal?

tive, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, 2019; *Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema after the Second World War*, Michael Baumgartner and Ewelina Boczkowska (Eds), New York, Routledge, 2019. Interest in the problem of memory in relation to the history of European music is less common. See: Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005; Maria Cizmic, *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. and Neil Gregor, "Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War", *Music and Letters*, 96, 1/2015, 55–76.

¹⁵ Caroline Bithell, "The Past in Music: Introduction", *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 51, 1/2006, 7; Philip Bohlman, "Sacred Popular Music of the Mediterranean and the Journey to Jerusalem", in: Goffredo Plastino (Ed.), *Mediterranean Mosaic: Popular Music and Global Sounds*, New York, Routledge, 2002, 287–306.

¹⁶ Leon Botstein, "Memory and Nostalgia as Music-Historical Categories", *The Musical Quarterly*, 84, IV/2000, 532. Although ritual performances are most relevant in societies that rely on the oral transmission of knowledge, it is also possible to consider concert performances as rituals because they evoke the musical heritage of a collective in a performative manner, and as such they belong to the culture of memory. In fact, performances of the *Ninth Symphony* have been used as social-performative rituals in various types of ceremonies and celebrations throughout history: from the laying of the foundations of the theater in Bayreuth (1872), through the celebration of Hitler's birthday in Berlin (1942), to the opening of the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano (1998).

¹⁷ David Lowenthal offers a similar definition of memory in: David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 305.

Music and Memory: Between the Perceptual and the Referential

Throughout several stages of his composition, Marković refers to collective musical memory by connecting two opposing musical and conceptual worlds: the *Ninth Symphony* as one of the most commonly recognized musical compositions in the European and global collective “working musical memory” and Penderecki’s *Threnody* as a catalyst for remembering and memorializing traumatic historical moments.¹⁸ On the one hand, music represents the aspiration for utopian existence, strived for continuously despite many obstacles; on the other hand, music memorializes one of the greatest tragedies of modern civilization. The connection of these two opposed works thus reflects David Lowenthal’s point that our human legacy is both divine and diabolical, and Walter Benjamin’s resonant conclusion that there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.¹⁹

Immediately following the brief introduction (bb. 1–8), Marković injects a familiar tremor of fifths into the second violin and violoncello parts from which the *Ninth Symphony* is born, alongside characteristic short motifs of the fourth/fifth jump (e-a, a-e) in the rest of the strings (bb. 9–12). This clearly recognizable musical quote or sample is ‘spoilt’ only by the occasional appearance of a short, ascending chromatic motif in the woodwinds that will turn out to be particularly important as the composition develops and as Marković’s inspiration for the very beginning of the *Overture* becomes clear.²⁰ Beethoven’s tremolos or ‘flickering’ sextuplets – interpreted in numerous ways in the musicological literature but most often as the creation of sound *ex nihilo* – receive markedly different treatment in the *Overture*: repetitive, dense layering in the winds accompanied by brisk, chromatically colored passages in the rest of the orchestra turns the ‘tremor’ into the constructive

¹⁸ From this perspective, Penderecki’s piece belongs to the tradition of music as a means of commemoration, which gained significance after the Second World War, starting with Arnold Schoenberg’s cantata *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947) and including examples of contemporary music memorialization like John Adams’s work *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002). However, it should be noted that the *Ninth Symphony* is also used for commemorative purposes. One such example is the performance of the Vienna Philharmonic under Simon Rattle at the Mauthausen Memorial in 2000.

¹⁹ David Lowenthal, op. cit, 610. Walter Benjamin, “Thesis on the Philosophy of History”, in: *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York, Schocken Books, 2007, 256.

²⁰ Despite the fact that Beethoven’s introduction has undergone certain changes, it is immediately recognizable as the “musical sample” as defined in Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, *Fragmenti o muzičkoj postmoderni*, Novi Sad, Matica srpska, 1997, 22.

element that will reoccur throughout the composition, and ultimately connect the two poetics.

The Beethoven quote retroactively contextualizes the beginning of Marković's composition. Its utopian recollection reinforces an impression of initial sonority while at the same time expressing Marković's compositional language as an exploration of the relationship between different constituents of sound, in this case, in a symphonic medium.²¹ However, while Beethoven's tonal musical dramaturgy always "wants" to move forward, Marković's compositional principle is more vertical, based on examining the quality of sound and the relations of different orchestral components, which also influences his relationship with the borrowed musical material. In this sense, the quotations from the introduction of the *Ninth Symphony* act as a kind of musical chimera in the *Overture*, briefly appearing and then quickly withdrawing in front of the sounds it itself inspired – sounds that are now transformed into a different musical reality.

This reality is complex and contains several motivic layers.²² For example, the ascending chromatic motif that "spoils" the quotation of the *Ninth Symphony* then completely suppresses it, only to be exchanged, blended and developed in the woodwinds and strings, energetically leading forward as it becomes more complex and dominates the musical flow (bb. 13–16). It is not a traditionally developed musical motif but a recognizable complex of sounds created through textural layering and combination which leads to the next quotation. This "exploration" or "conversation" also includes other motivic layers or timbral and structural elements, including chromatically colored passages from the beginning of the composition, new chromatic passages, chord layers inspired by spectralism, and the transformed "murmur" (bb. 17–83). The focus is on structurally understood sonority, emphasized through various timbral effects, which, in a quiet climax, leads to the reminiscence of

²¹ Marković's musical poetics is influenced by the "instrumental musique concrète" of Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935), the experimental spirit of Morton Feldman (1926–1987), as well as the musical logic of spectralism. It is based on an interest in the perceptual in music and sound, and not on the exploration of musical affect or musical conceptualism.

²² It is not based on playing with musical conventions and extramusical references, but on the exploration of the timbral and structural potential of sound, with a focus on its temporal dimension. Given that Marković's music often "waits" and pauses, relying on silence as a constructive compositional element, temporality is even more pronounced in his poetics. This is why in discussing the *Overture*, I prefer to use the term "stage" in relation to its development, rather than "part" or "section".

the finale of Beethoven's symphony and the unmistakable appearance of the *Ode to Joy*.

Interestingly, at this point Marković chooses to quote instrumental material from Beethoven's choral finale, a passage often called the Turkish version of the *Ode*, due to the *alla marcia* rhythm and the use of characteristic instrumentation and "janissary" percussion.²³ This quotation, like the previous one, appears as a kind of sonic hallucination, now highlighted by the clusters in the double basses and abruptly interrupted by a dissonant *glissando* in the horns (bb. 84–99). In the context of the musical language of Marković's full composition, the clusters and *glissando* may function coloristically; yet, in the act of performance or interpretation, it is difficult to ignore their conventionally disruptive and dissonant quality against the quotation itself.

This instance suggests that it is difficult to avoid addressing musical conventions in the reception of a musical work even if its poetics resists it. But in fact, the cluster accompaniment to the *Ode* only announces a new poetic layer in the continuation of the piece: a reminiscence of the beginning of Penderecki's *Threnody* through the cluster layering of the seconds in the high register of the strings (bb. 100–106).²⁴ This is the central section of the *Overture*, in which the two musical memories are directly opposed. After a "negotiation" with already familiar thematic materials and a second reminiscence of the *Threnody*'s opening, this time in the woodwinds, Marković introduces new simulations of Penderecki's musical language primarily through the layered *glissando* in the strings (b. 140). This new material has strong representational potential as a sonic imitation of movement in the air (such as falling, flying, or swarming), demonstrating that although Marković's personal poetics of sound as an acoustic and phenomenological category corresponds

²³ It is important to mention that there are various interpretations of this section of Beethoven's symphony, and the most interesting one is by Slavoj Žižek. Namely, Žižek heard the performance of the *Ode to Joy* on the occasion of the signing of the *Treaty of Lisbon* (2007) as an ironic provocation, given the continuous impossibility of Turkey to join the European Union. It is in the *alla marcia* Turkish version of the *Ode* that he hears this lack of belonging, which is also expressed by Schiller's verse "But he who cannot rejoice, let him steal weeping away". See Slavoj Žižek, "Ode to Joy, Followed by Chaos and Despair", *The New York Times*, December 24, 2007. The question remains whether Marković's choice to quote this material has a similar meaning.

²⁴ I do not use the term "quotation" or "sample" here because the cluster layering is insufficiently specific motivic material. Regardless, the allusion to the beginning of Penderecki's composition is quite clear.

more easily with reminiscences of Penderecki's work, it is not entirely devoid of extramusical associations. On the contrary, it is more concrete and accessible because it refers not only to musical but also to sonic conventions.²⁵

The final stage of the *Overture* is a return to the beginning of the work. After a reiteration of the first introduction (bb. 188–194), the allusion to the beginning of the *Ninth Symphony* is transformed: instead of the chromatic exchange in the woodwinds over the familiar “tremor” – which has now become a descending glissando – and the equally familiar movement in fourths and fifths, there are ascending passages in D minor as a reminiscence of the well-known end of the *Ninth's* first movement (bb. 195–201). With this simple musical gesture, Marković sets the stage for a new quotation or sample, steadily repeating a short excerpt of the D minor passages (bb. 202–215).²⁶ As these repetitions slowly disappear, the tone D remains in the entire orchestra, “spoiled” by the effect of strings playing behind the bridge and near the tailpiece, which gradually spreads throughout the entire string section (bb. 216–226). The work certainly offers different possibilities of interpretation, but both musics coexist until the very end, problematizing the issue of musical memory on several levels. How should we understand the utopian and heroic today, concepts which have already been questioned and reinterpreted countless times in relation to Beethoven? And are the horrors of the bombing of Hiroshima still a potent cautionary tale? How does Marković understand and reconcile these disparate impulses and musical memories?

The Past Cannot Give Us What the Future Has Failed to Deliver

In the *Overture for Peace*, interest in the musical past does not carry the burden of the signifying potential of the musical text, an obsession of musical poetics at the turn of the twentieth century that still persists today. Marković's

²⁵ The fact that Penderecki dedicated his work to the victims of Hiroshima only after composing it, did not influence the questioning of the relationship between the work's title and its musical poetics, which is often recognized for its potential to sound disturbing. Its associative power has been especially recognized in popular culture, where the connection with the title is often taken quite literally as, for example, in the television series *Twin Peaks* (2017).

²⁶ Marković took four measures from the very end of the first movement of the *Ninth Symphony* (bb. 541–544), of which the first two are chords, and the second two are passages in D minor. Fascinated by these passages, Marković repeats them several times, although they appear only once in Beethoven's symphony. If they can be represented as *a a1* in the original, Marković repeats them as follows: *a a1 a a1 a a a1 a a1 a1 a1*.

relationship with the quoted material is neither obsessive nor burdensome – he does not tend to comment or reinterpret it. His own musical poetics and musical memories are instead reconciled by focusing on the orchestral sound and its expressive potential, while additional interpretations of the piece may be constructed through the process of reception. Thus, despite the consistent use of quotations, the *Overture* is more aligned with Huyssen’s “present futures” than the “present pasts”. Marković’s memory is not nostalgic or deconstructivist, but a kind of dedication (monument) to different sound worlds from the past.²⁷ Nevertheless, in the process of reception, listeners do not have to recognize this “objectivist” tendency in the poetics of the composer, especially in the case of the frequently interpreted and resignified *Ninth Symphony*. Despite Marković’s modernist and avantgarde aspirations towards the “present futures”, his memories of Beethoven’s and Penderecki’s music weave a separate story, which seems to break away from the rest of the musical flow.

Indeed, how does one quote the *Ninth Symphony* without being caught in interpretative stereotypes? In current times, the message “All people will be brothers” represents an almost utopian burden as the ideals that inspired it seem increasingly out of reach. Pointing out that this utopian tendency has in fact always elicited a certain amount of skepticism, David Benjamin Levy recalls Maynard Solomon’s conclusion that Beethoven’s and Schiller’s ecstatic communality is actually a serious threat to the principle of individuality.²⁸ And Solomon goes further, suggesting the *Ninth Symphony* is the result of Beethoven’s frustration with the failure of the Enlightenment project.²⁹ The heroic forcefulness of Beethoven’s musical poetics can be experienced in ways that interpret the idea of the utopian brotherhood as repressive, a sentiment that resounds like the composition itself throughout the Anthony Burgess 1962 novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, as well as in prominent feminist readings of the work by Adrienne Rich and Susan McClary.³⁰ But these interpre-

²⁷ The composer points out that the title of the composition refers to the culture of memory (as a monument, memorial), but also expresses something big, grandiose, and even sublime. From email correspondence with the composer, June 24, 2022.

²⁸ David Benjamin Levy, *Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003, 16.

²⁹ Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven*. New York, Schirmer Trade Books, 1998, 405.

³⁰ Adrienne Rich, “The Ninth Symphony of Beethoven Understood at Last as a Sexual Message”, in: *Diving Into the Wreck: Poems, 1971–1972*, New York, Norton, 1973, 43; Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, 127–130.

tations do not carry over into the *Overture for Peace*; fitting into Marković's musical poetics of fascination with the phenomenology of sound, the references to the *Ninth Symphony*, including the introduction and the conclusion of the First movement as well as the melody of the *Ode to Joy*, function as a short homage to Beethoven.³¹ The quotation of the *Ode* is a kind of border line: the specific sonority of the composition prevails until that central moment in the *Overture*, and reminiscences of Penderecki's work dominate afterwards. Or in other words, the short utopian digression is quickly interrupted by the sounds of the tragic *Threnody*.

While this kind of dramaturgy might suggest a more pessimistic interpretation of the piece, such a reading is directly refuted with another, rather provocative return to Beethoven's introduction as the *Overture* concludes. This final reminiscence of the *Ninth Symphony* does not involve the typical Beethovenian tonal drama and sudden thematic shifts that have inspired so many interpretations of the work; instead, it is an admiration for heroism that persists in Marković's work, expressed by the repetition of quoted D minor passages in the *tutti* orchestra. But how can the original motif now be "forgotten" to hear Beethoven's euphoria in a new way? The composer answers by silencing the orchestra in the final unison, a silence he gradually "spoils" with the effect of the strings playing behind the bridge. Beethoven's dramatic heroism is here only an echo, because, in comparison to the *Ninth Symphony*, the conclusion of the *Overture* emphasizes static tonality and timbral 'deconstruction'. In the end, Marković's personal musical expression focused on the perceptual prevails.

How then is it possible to understand the poetics of musical memory in the *Overture for Peace*? Many theorists agree that reaching for the past speaks of the problems of the present, explaining the contemporary fascination with memory as a response to the fear of its being lost in time when, paradoxically, and despite constant efforts to prevent it, memory still slips away.³² This par-

³¹ On the other hand, a musical text like Beethoven's has many interpretations, uses, and readings, and can certainly cause diverse and conflicting audience reactions. The *Ninth Symphony* has undergone various contextual resignifications, which result in extremely diverse ways of receiving this piece. It is very different if the listener relates Beethoven's piece to Leonard Bernstein's performance during the celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) than to references to the love for violence in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), for example.

³² The previously mentioned Huyssen, Le Goff, Connerton, Nora, and others agree on this issue.

adox involves the contradictory processes of amnesia and obsessive memorialization, testifying to a crisis of collective identity. For, as pioneering memory studies scholar Wulf Kansteiner suggests, memory is valorized where identity is problematized.³³ If this is so, the memories of the *Ninth Symphony* and the *Threnody* appear in Marković's work because the cultural values they reflect are in the process of reevaluation. The tension between Beethoven's utopian vision and the crisis of civilization depicted by Penderecki in historical reality reflects the mood caused by today's geopolitical reality. On the one hand, there exists a constant feeling of powerlessness in the face of global politics, and unending war is a daily reminder that such disasters may be repeated. On the other hand, modern civilization is immersed in an ever-present vision of progress, fueled by an ideal of "the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us". The poetics of memory in the *Overture for Peace* is clear: a crisis cannot justify forgetting. And for this musical memory to be as realistic as possible, it must be understood as an objective, almost acoustic phenomenon. Yet because these musical references cannot be heard as "pure" sound, or music without contextualization, musical memory in the *Overture* becomes wandering and fluid, completed only in the process of listening.

Although "the past cannot give us what the future has failed to deliver", the obsession with memory does not cease.³⁴ Provoked by today's sensory and informational overload, it reflects the need for stability in a time of paradoxes – including that between an accelerated collective amnesia and the powerful desire for its prevention. The poetic conflict between Marković's personal musical language and the use of quotation in the *Overture* evinces the still-relevant dilemma surrounding the essential role the past plays in defining collective identity. This is where the concepts of "present pasts" and "present futures" collide. But because modernity by definition always moves forward and never "looks back", Marković's musical language, based on the modernist and avantgarde musical heritage, can itself be understood as the "present past". How, then, can one understand all these reminiscences and memories? Exactly as the theorists suggest – as a symptom of the crisis and a lack of confidence in what is to come. When the need for constant reminiscences and memorialization subsides, then we will know that the fear of memory loss has passed, and that we have once again remembered the future.

³³ More on Kansteiner's claim in: Tijana Bajović, "Poplava sećanja: nastanak i razvoj *memory booma*", *Filozofija i društvo*, XXIII/3, 2012, 100.

³⁴ According to Andreas Huyssen, op. cit., 435.

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Summary

Created at the initiative of the Novi Sad NEO Festival and the Foundation *Novi Sad 2022 – European Capital of Culture*, the composition *Monuments – Overture for Peace* (2022) by Đorđe Marković (b. 1978) was performed on July 16, 2022 as part of the *Fortress of Peace* program initiative. In the *Overture*, the composer uses reminiscences of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, thus problematizing the meaning of musical memory. As some theorists suggest, contemporary culture's interest in the past and memory reflects contradictory processes of the perpetuation of general collective amnesia and the simultaneous tendency to overcome it by memory. In other words, reaching for the past speaks of the problems of the present. From this perspective, the memories of the *Ninth Symphony* and *Threnody* appear in the *Overture* as the reexamination of the cultural values they reflect, as evidenced by Marković's compositional procedure. The composer's specific modernist/avantgarde musical poetics, which is based on the exploration of the perceptual in sound and music, collides with the compositional practice of musical quotation, indicating two different approaches to musical material. Although Marković's use of quotation is not nostalgic or deconstructivist, but a kind of dedication (or, monument) to different sound worlds from the past, it is still focused on the "present pasts", as Andreas Huyssen calls the dominance of memory in contemporary society. But since the composer's modernist/avantgarde poetics is also a tribute to the musical practices that preceded it, the question arises whether it is even possible today to overcome the dominance of memory and invoke the "present futures". In conclusion, the present-day insistence on (musical) memory is actually a symptom of crisis, created by the fear of forgetting as well as by the dread of the future.