

Article received on November 30th 2023

Article accepted on December 5th 2023

UDC 78.071.1:929 Радић Д.(082)(049.32)
78(082)(049.32)

IRA PRODANOV*

University of Novi Sad

Academy of Arts

Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology*

Borislav Hložan (Ed.): *Opsednute vedrine Dušana Radića* [The Besieged Gaieties of Dušan Radić]. A Collection of Papers Presented at the Musicological Conference Held in Novi Sad on 25 and 26 November 2021. Novi Sad: Kulturni centar Vojvodine “Miloš Crnjanski”, 2022, 242 pp.

ISBN 978-86-82096-04-7

86-82096-04-8

Eleven years after the death of our esteemed composer, pedagogue, fine artist, and author Dušan Radić (1929–2010), an academic conference was held in Novi Sad, where invited participants discussed his oeuvre from various aspects. The gathering was hosted by the Miloš Crnjanski Cultural Centre of Vojvodina in Novi Sad, but an equal part in the conception and realization of the event was played by the Institute of Musicology at the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Finally, as a result of their joint efforts, in 2022 this collection of essays was printed and published by the Cultural Centre, encompassing a total of 13 scientific papers and an appendix offering analyses of Radić's oeuvre from various angles, from his art and applied music to

sound recordings, wherein it found its “mode of realization”.

The collection is framed by two papers that, in different ways, shed light on the biography of Dušan Radić. In “Kompozitorska poetika Dušana Radića u kontekstu njegovog vremena i estetike modernizma” [The Composition Poetic of Dušan Radić in the Context of His Time and the Aesthetics of Modernism], Katarina Tomašević reminds us right at the outset that it is both commendable and worrying that a conference on such a deserving artist took no less than 11 years to organize following his death. She asserts that part of the reason may also be that Radić was an introverted and modest man. In reality, he was an erudite intellectual *par excellence*, who pursued a rich palette of professional activities crowned with his pedagogical work starting in 1979, thus at a time when he had reached

* Author contact information:
iraprodanovkrajisnik@gmail.com

full maturity. Tomašević interprets Radić's biography by comparing him to his university classmates: Dragutin Gostuški, Vladan Radovanović, Enriko Josif, and others. Her paper mentions Radić's musical models: Debussy, Scriabin, Mahler, later Bartók, Shostakovich, as well as his literary tastes, including Gide, Bora Ćosić, Zmaj, Dis, Ujević, and the philosophers Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spengler, Bergson, and Freud. One of the composer's statements quoted by Tomašević explains his position in the contemporary world of art (as well as, perhaps, the 11 years it took to organize a scientific conference about him!), with the composer concluding that, however good or bad the times were, whatever was happening, he was never on the "chosen side of the successful". Tomašević's lines imply the conclusion that Radić may have chosen that path himself, striving to spend much of his creative working life as a free artist. There is also the conclusion that the composer, judging from his works, had decided to "approach life not too tragically, but rather like a burlesque, comedy, grotesque..." and to engage in a "harmonic dialogue with the national tradition, contemporary poetry, his own historical and musical time". Borislav Hložan's paper, which concludes the collection, titled "Ozvučavanje nemira veka – odjeci stvaralaštva Dušana Radića" [Sounding the Restlessness of the Century – Echoes of Dušan Radić's Creative Oeuvre], underscores the importance of Dušan Radić in various aspects of his work in a manner that is perhaps warmer and more intimate. The atmosphere of

this concluding text demonstrates a thorough familiarity with the poetics of Dušan Radić, coming from an author who also made a documentary film about the composer.

The remaining essays in the collection are focused on Radić's early oeuvre, innovative procedures in his musical language, the impact of national cultural heritage, etc. It goes without saying that these texts also include those that are focused on Radić's work in the sphere of applied music. Thus Borislav Čičovački in "Elementi originalnog stvaralačkog izraza u ranim delima D. Radića" [Elements of Original Creative Expression in the Early Works of D. Radić] analyses his works *Spisak* ["The Name List"] and *Opsednuta vedrina* ["The Besieged Gaiety"], noting in both a unique type of integration of musical elements from folk and popular music, an "authentic integration that led toward a peculiar type of stylistic expression gesturing toward repetitivism, i.e. minimalism in Serbian music". He also singles out Radić as the first Serbian composer to introduce elements of polystylism, citing his cantata *Čele kula* ["The Skull Tower"] as an example. In "Različite emanacije stvaralačkog duha Dušana Radića: *Spisak, Upravna zemlja i Smrt majke Jugovića*" [Different Emanations of Dušan Radić's Creative Spirit: "The Name List", "The Stand-up Country", and "The Death of the Jugović Mother"], Melita Milin explores the kinships and differences between the neo-classicist shaping of these three works by Radić, made in different periods of his life. In the first piece men-

tioned in her title, Milin notes a radical type of modernism, while in the remaining two, later works, she finds a musical language reflecting Radić's "national affiliation". In "Pijanistički izazovi mladosti u 'Sonati lesti' Dušana Radića" ["The Pianistic Challenges of Youth" in *Sonata lesta* by Dušan Radić], the pianist Dubravka Jovičić reminds us of Radić's student oeuvre created under the supervision of his professor Milenko Živković. The author, drawing from her own experience of having interpreted the piece, asserts that the composer's exquisite familiarity with piano music, choice of keys and harmonic design of the piece enable the pianist to imprint the work with their own mark and type of expression. In 1972, this Sonata formed part of Jovičić's final examination at the end of her secondary music piano degree, under the supervision of Prof. Mirjana Šuica Babić, the dedicatee of this opus, who had premiered it in 1954. The paper quotes Radić, who always used to say that "it is not enough just to compose fine music – it is also important to serve it well", asserting the importance of adequate artistic interpretation. In her contribution, titled "*Spisak* Dušana Radića i Vaska Pope" ["The Name List" by Dušan Radić and Vasko Popa], Marina Aleksić, a young scholar stemming from Novi Sad's "school of musicology" at the Academy of Arts, surveyed for the first time Radić's *Name List* from the perspective of a suite cycle, highlighting some of the work's semiotic aspects that no one had discussed before. Therefore, her paper might be considered an entirely novel view of this

anthological work by the composer. In her paper, "Dušan Radić i film: prodaja duše Mefistu poručene muzike" [„Dušan Radić and Film: Selling His Soul to the Mephistopheles of Commissioned Music"], Gorica Pilipović, an expert on Radić's oeuvre who has also published a monograph about the composer, surveys his work in the domain of applied music, noting that he never emphasized his works made in this genre, in which he was especially active during the 1960s. The reason for that, Pilipović maintains, must reside in the fact that contemporary critics savaged him at the time, viewing applied music as an inferior type of music, based on a compromise and made for the sake of monetary gain. Pilipović rightly challenges that view, citing many examples to suggest that this is an extremely rich oeuvre of music for feature and documentary films in which one may recognize the same poetics that made Radić stand out in the creation of music beyond the sphere of applied music. The same subject encompasses Ira Prodanov's contribution, "Muzika Dušana Radića na nosačima zvuka" ["Music by Dušan Radić on Sound Recordings"]. It cites every recording and CD with music by Radić. Furthermore, several examples are singled out as study cases, whether on account of their status as rarities or unusual publisher and performer. Thus special attention is paid to a re-release of Radić's music soundtrack for the 2001 Hollywood spectacle *Genghis Khan*, praised by foreign critics as a "must have", as well as a recording published by the Russian label Melodiya, featuring an in-

terpretation of Radić's *Simfonijski stav* ("Symphonic Movement") by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra in 1962. It turns out, according to Prodanov, that numerous works by Radić found their way onto LP or CD recordings, and that Radić gave a big contribution to sound recordings of fairytales that used to be released in large numbers in our country. An extremely interesting view of Radić as an artist is found in Ivana Medić's "Uniformnost vodi entropiji. Dušan Radić u prvom licu" [Uniformity Leads toward Entropy: Dušan Radić in First Person]. Medić analyses the contents of an interview she conducted with Radić in 2005, for which he had written down his answers in advance, and the revised version he published in his book titled *Tragovi balkanskih vrleti – vreme, život, muzika* [Traces on the Rugged Terrain of the Balkans: Time, Life, Music]. A comparison of these two texts suggests that Radić later partially revised his initial answers, the way he often did with his musical works as well. In his contribution, "Modernizam svakodnevnog života u delima Dušana Radića" ["Lifestyle Modernism in Works by Dušan Radić"], Miloš Bralović draws on a phrase coined by the eminent American musicologist Richard Taruskin, "lifestyle modernism", and seeks to explore it in Radić's "French years", when he was pursuing further training with Darius Milhaud, and even later. "Idejna preplitanja Dušana Radića" ["The Conceptual Entanglements of Dušan Radić"] by Dragana Bedov discusses the modernist performances of the authors Vasko Popa and Miodrag Pavlović, who,

in 1952 and 1953, made the first dramatic deviation from post-WWII ideological stylistic premises. Bedov compares these two authors with Radić and Josif's performance at a concert in 1954. Her text also analyses the link between music and literature, which was always relevant for Radić. In his study, "Dušan Radić i Jugoslovenska muzička tribina" ["Dušan Radić and the Yugoslav Music Forum"], Miloš Marinković addresses a hitherto lesser known side of Radić's work – music criticism. Older composers, musicologists, and performers remember very well the Forum in Opatija as a meeting point for all the leading musical poetics in what was then Yugoslav music. In this contribution, Radić is presented as a reporter who provided a realistic and uncompromised view of this festival's modernist tendencies and politicisation. The pianist Julija Bal, whose talent in producing piano transcriptions has already won her multiple awards, presented a paper titled "Muzika kao dah sa drugih planeta i Radićeva vokalno instrumentalna dela" ["Music as a Whiff from Other Planets and Radić's Vocal-instrumental Music"]. Her contribution begins by defining the phenomenon of transcription and then proceeds to analyse results in the field by Busoni and Radić. It is well known that the composer in his later years transcribed his vocal-instrumental works for smaller instrumental ensembles, seeking to have them performed in those versions as well. Of course, Bal includes in her contribution an analysis of Radić's "Five Songs" for a low voice and orchestra Op.

7, No. 2 and her own transcription of the work for a piano duo.

At the very end of the collection, as an appendix, there is an essay by the recently departed composer Svetozar Saša Kovačević, who sought to present his professor and mentor from an entirely personal perspective, full of respect and appreciation.

The editor, Borislav Hložan, ensured that the volume, apart from scientific

studies, contains appendices featuring the composer's works in the domain of fine arts. These works, at times strange, at other times surreal or witty, comprise collages by Radić, which provide for moments of respite in between the texts, lending an artistic atmosphere to this scientific volume and bringing the reader closer to Radić as a composer and visual artist.