
REVIEWS

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**Немања Совтић, Несврстани
хуманизам Рудолфа Бручија:
композиитор и друштво
самоуправног социјализма, Матица
српска, Нови Сад, 2017. [Nemanja
Sovtić, *Nesvrstani humanizam Rudolfa
Bručića: kompozitor i društvo
samoupravnog socijalizma – The
Nonaligned Humanism of Rudolf
Brucci: The Composer and the Society
of Self-management Socialism, Matica
Srpska: Novi Sad, 2017]***

The author offers an approach that departs from the existing and not too extensive literature on the composer and academician Rudolf Brucci (Rudolf Bručić / Рудолф Бручи), because, in his view, “music has in the meantime become het-

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erogeneous, fragmentary, and fluid and, as a testing ground for various but interconnected strategies of interpretation, sensible to theoretical nuance”. Such an ‘agglomerative’ [*разбокорен*] treatment of Brucci’s legacy as a composer and, simultaneously, of his socially committed activities, which received an equally thorough analytic examination, as well as every major element of the perception of his oeuvre in a specific historical period, resulted in an impressive monograph of a ‘different kind’. With its complexity and depth of insight, Sovtić’s work is absolutely fascinating, even when it becomes ‘too hard’ and, dominated in a way by a sense of obligation toward complex conceptual and linguistic constructs, less spontaneous and readable. Above all, Sovtić consummately demonstrates his outstanding musicological breadth of knowledge in a large number of professional directions. This “negotiating approach”, in his words, to the dialectic between Brucci’s thought and singing produces a sort of exciting parallelism between Brucci’s authorial individuation in the domain of his musicological views and the individuation of the author himself – Nemanja Sovtić. Thereby, this musicological study definitely matches the autonomous position/category/value of

the compositional sample analysed therein as well as its overall socio-artistic phenomenality.

In the introductory chapter, titled “Not Yet an Author, between Memories and Reception” (*Još ne autor između seћања i recepcije / Još ne autor između sećanja i recepcije*), in four subchapters, Sovtić explains his choice of topic and methodology. In the chapter titled “*Damnatio memoriae?*”, he seeks to familiarize us with the condition of oblivion that has covered Rudolf Brucci as a historical figure and Sovtić’s object of study, formerly a highly regarded and award-winning composer focused on pursuing contemporary tendencies in 20th century composition and one of the most socially and politically influential figures in the domain of socialist Yugoslavia’s musical culture. Nonetheless, the breakup of that country and discontinuation of Brucci’s manifold activities, starting from those pursued at state cultural institutions, saw the onset of his suppression from the sphere of concert and, in general, musical life, which is why today we are confronted with an almost complete marginalization of his compositional oeuvre and social contribution in the domain of music. As the determining cause of this condition Sovtić rightly stresses “revisionist demonization, on the one hand, and nostalgic apologia on the other, as opposed to cultures of remembering socialism”, taking into account the full complexity of both discourses.

Regarding the references of the types of memories that enable a more detailed treatment of Brucci’s personal and professional contacts, Sovtić treats them separately, in the second subchapter –

“Excursus: Memories, Myths, Anecdotes” (*Екскурс: сећања, митови, анегдоте / Ekskurs: sećanja, mitovi, anegdote*), while in the third subchapter, “Excursus: Nostalgia, Revisionism, and the ‘Civil War’ of Memory” (*Екскурс: носталгија, ревизионизам и ‘грађански рат’ сећања / Ekskurs: nostalgija, revizionizam i ‘građanski rat’ sećanja*), he discusses the nature of these categories in light of the social, political, moral, and value order of Western, Eastern, and Southeast Europe, focusing on the region of former Yugoslavia. With the contents of this subchapter, the author in fact situates Brucci in the corresponding – transitional! – social context, which he presents in a critically rather acute way, viewing it in terms of a basis necessary for a comprehensive and proper understanding of Brucci as a phenomenon, as well as the methodology of his musical interpretation. Sovtić follows the criteria of Foucault’s definition of the author, fulfilling them in the following ways: by approaching the analysis of Brucci’s music itself by searching for its shared, personifying stylistic elements, as well as their sources/stimuli and development in Brucci’s oeuvre; by examining the degree of correspondence between the composer’s auto-poetic/theoretical stances and the philosophical-aesthetic postulates of ‘his’ society; by interpreting and assessing the significance, meaning, and value of the composer’s oeuvre in his corresponding social environment.

In line with the methodology outlined above, in the chapter titled “The Author as Stylistic Unity” (*Аутор као стилско јединство / Аутор као стилско јединство*) Sovtić provides an extremely functional music analysis, in musicologi-

cal terms, of a large number of Brucci's works in every genre he attempted, systematized in eight areas, each treated in a chapter of its own: 1. Operas and Ballets; 2. Cantatas and Oratorios; 3. Lieder; 4. Orchestral Music; 5. *Concertante* Works; 6. String Quartets and Works for Larger Chamber Ensembles; 7. Chamber and Solo Music; 8. Accordion Music. In the ensuing chapter – 9. “The Parameters of Musical Expression/Construction” (*Parametri muzičkog izraza/konstrukcije / Параметри музичкој израза/конструкције*) – Sovtić points to the indicators of stylistic unity in Brucci's music, explicating and illustrating them on the basis of the following parameters: 1) Forms and Genres; 2) Melody; 3) Rhythm and Metre; 4) Harmony; 5) Texture; 6) Timbre and Orchestration; 7) The Treatment of Text.

In the concluding chapter, 11. “The Limits of Stylistic Analysis” (*Dometi stilске analize / Дометји стилске анализе*), the author offers a stylistic identification of Brucci's works “in the intersections between them as objects of analysis and the analytical tools used (stylistic models)”, ‘verifying’ his identifications in Brucci's auto-poetics and ‘social being’. This segment of Sovtić's research begins in the ensuing chapter, “The Author as the Field of Conceptual/Theoretical Coherence”. He sets out by analysing Brucci's autobiographical discourses, including his memories of important figures and events, as well as reflections and critical statements about the condition of contemporary musical culture.

Unpacking issues pertaining to the aesthetic of “an engaged expression of contemporaneity” in the chapter titled

“Human Works and Equilibrium in a Scientific-Technological Civilization” (*Хумано дело и равнотежа у научно-техничкој цивилизацији / Хумано дело и равнотежа у научно-техничкој цивилизацији*), Sovtić asserts that Brucci's humanist thought ‘looks for support’ not ‘on the basis of socialist realism’, but “in the ‘great and eternal issues of human existence’, which is in Sovtić's view especially prominent in Brucci's operas, where his “humanist thought develops utopian and dystopian elements, refusing to yield to the existentialist feeling of absurdity or the ancient image of tragic destiny”. In what follows, Sovtić rightly concludes that, in Brucci's view, “the human musical work, based on an equilibrium between the rational-constructivist and emotional-poetic demands, could be invested in the balanced condition of the social field, provided it was able to achieve communication and relay a message”.

In three chapters (“Self-management as the Zero-degree Institution” / *Самоуправљање као нулта институција / Самоуправљање као нulta институција*; “(N)either-(N)or Nonalignment” / *(H)и-(h)и несврстаност / (N)i-(n)i nesvrstanost*; and “Nonaligned Modalities of Culture” / *Несврстани модалитети културе / Nesvrstani modaliteti kulture*), Sovtić parses the “political territorialisations” that “in the case of Brucci” originated from the practice of Yugoslavia's self-management socialism, nonaligned foreign policy, and cultural policy as conditioned and defined by it. In that context, he rounds off his theoretical interpretation of Brucci in terms of “nonaligned humanism”, in the composer's own phrase, which “conceptualizes the intersection of

aesthetic and political flux in the creative practice of Rudolf Brucci viewed as a consistent authorial oeuvre”.

In this major work, Sovtić tackled what is today an unpopular topic in an extremely accomplished way, showing a high degree of professional dignity in avoiding clichés and commonplace simplifications in interpreting and perceiving a politically engaged composer. Therefore, this is a bold study in terms of its topic, consistent in terms of its impartial problematization, methodologically consistent in every element of its scholarly mooring – from the thesis to the evidence presented and the conclusions reached. The main interdisciplinary viewpoint is pursued in this work between Rudolf Brucci’s creative and social authorial ‘being’, wherein his music sets up one of the most complex ‘traps’ to today’s musicology: the transitional position of a composer who accomplished his oeuvre by correlating his aesthetic and socio-political being, authentically belonging to the self-managed and non-aligned environment of socialist Yugoslavia. Nemanja Sovtić superbly managed to avoid that ‘trap’, unpacking and explaining the complex aspect of Brucci’s oeuvre by means of a non-standard and un-dogmatic discussion of Brucci’s *nonaligned humanism*, compellingly led and argued in professional terms, carefully thought out and shaped in interdisciplinary terms. Sovtić articulated his discussion in a precise and multilayered language, making a visible effort to push the boundaries of our analytical and scholarly terminology.

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***The Relentless Pursuit of Tone: Timbre in Popular Music*, Robert Fink, Melinda Latour, Zachary Wallmark (eds.), New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.**

In its history, musicology has often posed the question of its research subjects, methodologies, goals, and the sustainability of its autonomy and authority in relation to the academic studying of music. Academic musicology has especially been fortified regarding the exploration of popular music. In the “Afterword” of the book we are reviewing, Simon Frith suggests that ‘serious’ musicology has always had an issue with people who “just listen” to music, as opposed to taking music seriously (p. 374). Also, with all of the other social sciences like anthropology and sociology that already deal with ‘the music of the masses,’ the dilemma always lingered in terms of the plausible musicological contribution to popular music scholarship. What is a musicologist to do in this field – to study *the music*, musical works, composers, performers? In a musical area which functions a little differently from the institu-

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