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*Faculty of Music*

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Editorial Board and Office:

Faculty of Music  
Kralja Milana 50, 11000 Belgrade  
E-mail: [new.sound.journal@gmail.com](mailto:new.sound.journal@gmail.com)  
[www.newsound.org.rs](http://www.newsound.org.rs)

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## IN MEMORIAM: SRĐAN HOFMAN (1944–2021)

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UDC 78.071.1 Хофман С.

*[E]verything is both childishly naive and perplexed, and new for every individual and already experienced, eternal for mankind. The meaning of the familiar is not necessarily always a familiar meaning. Srđan Hofman<sup>1</sup>*

The untimely departure of Srđan Hofman on 25 September 2021 is a great loss for our entire musical community and the sheer expanse of the resulting void is as yet impossible to gauge.

Hofman's brilliant creative and intellectual capacities did not only radiate through his rich and varied oeuvre, populated as it was by his vibrant, Luddite, innately glowing, analytically shaped, and masterfully structured music, but also permeated his committed and highly fruitful work in pedagogy, informing every mode of social engagement in which he wholeheartedly invested himself, when he believed in its goals. Among musicians of various professions and ages, he remains remembered as someone who – in the belief that the nature of musical art is universal, synthetic,



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<sup>1</sup> Tijana Popović, "Multiplicity and Coherence: A Conversation with Srdjan Hofman", *New Sound*, 3, 1994, 13–14.

indivisible, and incorruptible, that the musical life of a community may develop only in a harmonious and equitable evolution of all its actors – supported and brought together composers, performers, musicologists, writers on music and media workers, organizers of musical life and sound engineers, unfailingly securing the artistic worth of the results of this polyphonic creative effort.

As musicologists, we felt and, we hope, duly appreciated the great support that Srđan Hofman lent our discipline, which was at times, within the musical profession, questioned as “non-artistic”, while in academic circles its academic, scholarly status was sometimes disregarded. From the administrative positions in which he served at the Faculty of Music as much as in places where decisions were made, such as Sokoj (Organisation of Music Authors of Serbia) and other forums where he took an active part, and equally in his published writings and interventions in various discussions, Srđan Hofman often emphasized the import not only of musicology’s scholarly but also its creative and inter-disciplinary dimension, enabling it to improve its social standing and secure more adequate funding.

As a member of the editorial board of the *NEW SOUND* International Journal of Music since its founding in 1992, I can attest that Professor Hofman, alongside Dr. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, amidst the dramatic circumstances brought on by the breakup of Yugoslavia, helped our publication both to preserve and renew and improve its international profile and standing, which had hitherto languished in the restrictive framework of former Yugoslavia’s “federal republic quotas”.

With this eulogy and note of appreciation, the Journal’s editorial board is not saying farewell to Srđan Hofman.

With this tribute that his closest friends, students, and colleagues made to Srđan Hofman on 2 October 2021, interspersed with quotations from interviews with the composer published in our journal, the *New Sound* is announcing future explorations and work on affirming his multifaceted creative oeuvre in general.

A.K.

*My ideas are initially grains of unprecisely defined sound, or insufficiently resolved series of procedures that could perhaps be applied to some sound, or to some specific treatment of the medium, or some sonic sensation which I think might possibly be used in some way, some impulse activated by a painting, or book... On the basis of such ideas you cannot fill up note sheets. Thinking through the idea, its development, reassessing its usability, "strengthening" and trying contours of the future totality.<sup>2</sup>*

Our dearest Srđan,

I'm standing here in disbelief and addressing you the way I never thought I would have to address you. We spent decades together, moving in each other's orbit, without ever thinking that it might come to an end and that someone might have to write it down for us in this way. We fight with all the misfortunes that befall us. The outcomes of our struggles are not certain and none of us can foresee them. This calamity, however, which assailed you and got the upper hand, is the worst we have seen, experienced, or felt. Until the final hour, we expected it would yield and that you would emerge victorious once more. I still cannot believe that it didn't happen. I'm still waiting for everything to come around and end the way we all wanted and expected. What is this force that set about so ferociously to take you away from us and, contrary to all our wishes and desires, succeeded in its endeavour? Had our pleas been granted, even in a small part, none of this would have transpired. You would have returned, cheerful and strong as ever, to all the endeavours that were still awaiting you.

Our dearest Srđan,

I don't know if anyone in our more recent past has done so much for our music as you did. This is not the time to enumerate all of it, but it's impossible not to mention what is most important and what makes you and your achievement eternal.

You were one of the founders and the first programme selector of the International Composers' Forum in Belgrade. Also, you were our representative at the International Society for Contemporary Music.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 16.

You were a vice-dean and then dean of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade and a vice-rector of the University of Arts in Belgrade. You served as our country's ambassador to South Africa.

Your truly great and special achievement is the establishment of the Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music and, with it, the many works that have been produced in it and the new subjects that have been taught at the Studio as part of the Department of Composition.

You won our most significant awards in the domain of music, including multiple Mokranjac awards and the Gold Medal of the University of Arts, among others.

And, most importantly, apart from your brilliant creative oeuvre – your work in pedagogy. Countless are your former students who qualify today among our most eminent artists and pedagogues. I do not know a single professor from your generation or generations close to yours who could boast of such an accomplished career in pedagogy and who is so well esteemed and loved by his or her students.

I am one of those who had the honour to witness your pedagogical skills. I know that without your advice it would have been impossible to navigate the sea of problems and dilemmas that await every young composer on his or her chosen path, which no one could negotiate unless they're guided by a secure hand such as yours. One couldn't think of a situation in which you failed to act when decisions needed to be made affecting the outcome and success of a work of music. I knew – as did all those who had the opportunity to work with your assistance – that as long as one had a good idea and a sound basis, an impeccable structure would arise. It was such a great feeling to have someone you could trust all the way, whose counsel could guide and lead you to the result you imagined and sought to achieve, but didn't know how to do it and what road to take to get to your destination.

It was the sort of advice that, from the perspective of the craft, led the musical work to a desirable outcome. However, it was also the sort of advice that meant a lot in the formation of the overall character of a young artist. How to treat your performers, how to deal with success, how to deal with failure, how to negotiate apparently hopeless situations. Srđan could do all of that, he always found the best words for every situation, and had your back whenever and wherever you needed it. Never have I encountered or seen such excellence in anyone. Such power could endow only the best among all of us. What I found fascinating is the fact that Srđan already had this knowledge, breadth, and power even as a very young professor, with whom I was

fortunate enough to work, and as an experienced pedagogue with recognized artistic and pedagogical accomplishments.

I know you as the most objective kind of person, but you were able to adapt to anyone's character and to draw the best out of everybody.

Your professional integrity was so significant and great that we could all rely on it and always trust you in every respect. Of course, that was immeasurably important in the development of each one of us, our self-confidence and the necessary belief in oneself that results from an objective and honest appreciation of one's accomplishments.

Our dearest Srđan,

Each one of your works – really, every single one of them – was conceived in a special and unique way to serve as a model in terms of art, craft, and conception, matchless in its authenticity and wondrous accomplishment. Just as one would expect from a man who always gave the right advice and, when it came to his own works, he would do the same with even more energy and skill.

I attended almost (or probably) all of your many premières. Those were exciting performances that brought new, previously not experienced thrills, thanks to your creative procedures that were original and completely new, typically unexpected, in the best sense of that word.

I was privileged enough to participate as a performer in the realization of two brilliant works of yours, *Znakovi (Signs)* and *Duel*. Those were unique experiences for me. It was an opportunity to participate in the realization of a sound that could be accomplished in a virtuosic fashion only by an author who had supremely mastered the technology of making music in any media whatsoever. Your electronics was alive in the true sense of the word and could and had to be performed with ease. In my view, our little backwater has failed to say even the bare minimum of what ought to be said about your work. A lot remains for the coming generations to discover and learn.

My dear Srđan,

I cannot end this address to my model and greatest lifelong friend in a way that would suggest that our life together is over.

I cannot believe that you won't, in your modest and yet most compelling way, create more works that we would love and admire.

Our dearest Srđan,

Thank you for everything you did for us.

You remain etched in our memory, impossible to erase.

You are now pursuing your own path, the rest of us, for a while yet, our own.

We'll meet again.

Zoran Erić, composer

2 October 2021

*Teaching is complex work and continually presents new challenges. This creates an obligation for me to be open to all new information and to constantly develop myself in my profession (which does not influence my creative work)... As a matter of fact, I have always felt that the development of our culture and creative surroundings for the unhampered highly professional activity of new generations of musical artists, composers, musicologists and ethnomusicologists, teachers and organizers, requires both the individual and joint efforts of us all, in all the vital points of musical life.<sup>3</sup>*

Dear Professor, esteemed Professor, the best and most exceptional Professor, my Professor,

Thanks to all your achievements, you secured your place in eternity long ago! With all the things that you selflessly pursued in every professional domain of your work. With your thinking, speaking, writing, and composing. Every time and in every situation, your endeavours were sharp, 100% precise, superbly intelligent, impeccable. You knew everything, you could do everything, you had a solution for everything. At the same time, you were always calm, measured, thoughtful, benevolent, farsighted, dignified, a real gentleman, eloquent, and all of that in the common interest.

Beginning on Saturday, 25 September 2021, the world as a whole completely changed. It must have done! The news of your departure itself found me in tears, shattered, in disbelief. Albeit irrationally, I sincerely believed that you couldn't possibly leave. After an initial burst of grief, I was overwhelmed by far more powerful emotions, those of gratitude, pride, and my vivid memories of the moments I spent with you over the past 27 years. Through those

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 18.

memories I also felt an endless sense of privilege. Almost three decades with you – I take that as a gift from God.

Professor, at this time I want to thank you for everything! Yes, really for everything! For the unforgettable tutorials in composition and orchestration we had in Room 33 at the Faculty of Music. Every Monday, every Wednesday, every Thursday were eagerly awaited, just to see you, in yet another dynamic and, above all, inspiring class. Thank you for standing up for the Faculty of Music and thank you for serving as our dean during some of the most difficult times that our country has had to endure, the 1990s. Thank you for your work at the Rectorate, where you served as a vice-rector, thank you for Sokoj, where you served for many years as president, thank you for your diplomatic service, representing your country as its ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. Professor, thank you for the Faculty's sound studio, which has kept us, all these decades, up to the present day, in touch with developments in contemporary music globally. Thank you for the Forum, thank you for the Association! Professor, thank you for everything!

You convinced me a long time what a brilliant composer you were! I remember, for instance, how elated I felt after the première of your *Musica concertante*, with Rita Kinka, at Bemus. And, equally, following a later performance of the same piece featuring your daughter Neda, at the International Composers' Forum. Thank you for the *Signs (Znakovi)*, *Samples (Uzorci)*, *Hadedas*, *Mirrors (Ogledala)*, *Boxes of Sound (Kutije zvuka)*, *Farce (Farsa)*, *Déjà vu*, and all the other masterpieces. The personal feeling of elation I mentioned before is a perennial state that is activated whenever I see a piece of yours on the concert repertoire.

For decades, you had demonstrated to your students what a unique pedagogue you were. I am certain that the same view is shared by Predrag Repanić, Nataša Bogojević, Milica Paranosić, Jasna Veličković, Dragana Jovanović, Svetlana Savić, Marko Nikodijević, and everybody else, several dozen of us who graduated from your class. Those of us who had the opportunity to absorb your every thought, which today we hand down to the generations that will come after us. That pedagogical uniqueness and singularity were crowned by your promotion as an eternal professor, professor emeritus at the University of Arts in Belgrade.

With a truly immense feeling of gratitude, I am positive that your work will live on through the gorgeous music you gave us!

Above all, my dear Professor, you always were and remained a wonderful man! I shall remember you like that forever!

On behalf of the Faculty of Music, on behalf of your students, and on behalf of all the institutions you served, I bid you farewell at this time. May you rest in eternal glory!

Ivan Brkljačić, composer  
2 October 2021

*I believe that in pedagogy, it is very important to establish relationships of mutual confidence between the teacher and the student, relationships in which both sides contribute their maximum of knowledge, time and invention so that the student is enabled to realize the full potential of his talent. For me it is very important that the student write each of his compositions to the best of his abilities, in accordance with his current technical and general musical knowledge, his natural creative intelligence, inventiveness and imagination. I wish to create a situation in which the student competes with himself, not with his colleagues from the same, or from other classes, or with classics.<sup>4</sup>*

We already sorely missed the Professor in our first Department meeting following his retirement. But he was always there for us, to speak, to offer advice and support. We all felt we had someone to talk to, because he was our voice of reason, someone who always had an idea, who could always see a solution, every detail, and, at the same time, a broader view of every problem. For all of us, the Department is like another family. He was its guardian, a man whose intelligence, knowledge, honesty, and poise we could always count on.

Now each one of us is standing here with her or his own hole in their heart. Mine is huge, devouring me completely. I'm sitting in it in darkness and still cannot accept that my father figure, who guided me through my life and profession, is gone. A man who believed in me more than I believed in myself. For more than 30 years he commanded my full confidence and admiration. I believed, like many others, that he was invincible. And truly he was: brave, just, tenacious, wise, benevolent, reliable... With his own example, he taught us how to work, how to fight for the truth, integrity, our profession, colleagues, and students.

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<sup>4</sup> Vesna Mikić, "A Look at the Mirror/Screen: Pop-up Interview with Srđan Hofman", *New Sound*, 44, II/2014, 19.

Here are some of the messages sent to the Professor by his students who could not be with us today, pursuing their careers across the world, in Holland, Germany, America:

“I was immensely lucky to study composition with Professor Srđan Hofman. Back in the day when I took my entrance exam and embarked on studying composition, as a ruffled teenager who wouldn’t listen to her parents’ advice, Professor Hofman taught me about the techniques of composition and the art of orchestration, but, equally, he became a very special member of my family. I wasn’t even aware of how significant his influence was on the formation of my musical being, as well as moral principles and fundamental values of life. As an extra parent, Professor Hofman shaped my way of thinking, my interests and view of the world. After moving to America, I realized what a rare thing it was to have such a professor as was our wonderful, esteemed, respected, and always modest Professor, and that the wealth of his knowledge, wisdom, and life experience had laid the foundations of my understanding of contemporary music and its role in the world.

With my respect for everything he did for me, as well as for all his students and young composers, to whom he imparted, with his selfless hard work, not only a supreme command of the craft, but also a comprehensive kind of education that is seldom acquired even at the world’s most famous universities, I want to express my endless gratitude to Professor Hofman.

Without him, my visits to Belgrade and the Faculty, concerts, forums, and festivals won’t be what they used to be. We shall all miss his figure, gentleness, and words of support and constructive criticism. Our gratitude for everything he did for us in his life will be woven into our works and the legacy he bequeaths to us.” (Nataša Bogojević)

“Dear Professor,

I’ve realized that I don’t know if I ever thanked you:

for accepting me as a ‘wild card’ refugee from musicology, for teaching me to look at the visual arts for ideas and future trends in music, for letting our composition tutorials go on for hours if necessary (which made my studies at Julliard, where everything is measured by the dollar and by the minute, seem like a walk in the park), for being a champ and leader in extracurricular activities such as dinners, parties, and travels, for your incredible sense of hu-

mour and satire, for always being authentic and true to yourself, for getting me hooked on electronics (but only after doing my homework), for introducing me to a composer's life, which blossomed with a sort of irresistible glow, although that often meant sleepless nights, tangled cables, and financial riddles with three variables.

I don't know if I ever thanked you for any of those many things and still many more, for which we are now sadly out of time.

But even if I didn't, I know that you understood.

So thank you for that, too.

Lots of love from Milica Paranosić.

P.S.: Even today, whenever I'm facing a dilemma, I ask myself: 'What would Hofman say?' You're always there, sitting in the 'jury', with your piercing glance."

"What a sad, devastating week! We're musical orphans now. I'm struggling to compose myself. I'm so sad and I'll miss him forever.

For me, meeting the Professor set the course of my entire life and its trajectory. I was only 15 when I walked into the famous Room 33 and those seven years of learning and studying are the most beautiful and significant seven years of my life. His advice was always fundamentally important to me, I learned everything from him, all I ever achieved in music I owe to him, and I'm really inconsolable that he left us.

Srdan Hofman was a unique measure of a professor, a pedagogue without rival or successor, a unique figure, after Petar Bergamo the last cosmopolitan and intellectual giant in Serbian music. A huge compositional and pedagogical oeuvre, an entire life devoted to the service of music. A supporting pillar of our musical culture, an irreplaceable loss, his absence will be painfully felt in the years before us. May he rest in eternal glory." (Marko Nikodijević)

“Dear Professor,

In our frequent conversations, although you weren’t there and could not hear them, I never told you how our first time in the electronic studio stirred up my reality and opened an entire world of imagination, passion, and love for sound.

For that reason, at this time, parting with you, I want to say: THANK YOU FOREVER, PROFESSOR.

Our conversations will never stop, as long as I can see the Moon and the Sun and hear the world we made together.” (Jasna Veličković)

As we stand here, each one of us with his or her own hole in their heart, with love, respect, and inexpressible sorrow, I believe we’ll meet you in our dreams. And at some point in the future...

Svetlana Savić, composer  
2 October 2021

*All my other professional, or if you wish “social” commitments, all I have done in my life is determined by my being a composer, and owing to that, a university professor. I wished, and somewhat naively believed I could influence the content of professional, even political decisions that produced direct consequences on the social position of music creators, the promotion of their works, the level of the protection of their rights, the quality of art studies, the material and social status of higher education in Serbia, particularly the status and activities of the University of Arts and the Faculty of Music.<sup>5</sup>*

## SRĐAN HOFMAN (1944–2021)

### Biographical Data

Srđan Hofman was born in 1944 in Glina, in what is now Croatia.

He graduated in 1968 at the Academy of Music (today the Faculty of Music) in Belgrade, in the composition class of Professor Stanojlo Rajičić, a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and a long-standing secretary of its Department of Arts. He earned his master’s degree in the same class in 1972.

On two relatively brief occasions, he pursued further training abroad: in Darmstadt in 1974 and in Stuttgart and Cologne in 1975, as a fellow of the DAAD.

From 1968 to 1974, Hofman worked as a professor of theoretical subjects at Josip Slavenski High School of Music in Belgrade.

He joined the Composition Department of the Academy/Faculty of Music in Belgrade in 1974, where he progressed through all the academic ranks, from teaching assistant to full professor and professor emeritus.

Many of our most renowned composers earned their undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees in Professor Srđan Hofman’s class. Among other works, he supervised eight doctoral artistic projects: seven in Composition at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade and one in Multimedia Art at the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Study Programme at the University of Arts in Belgrade. Many of his former students have pursued successful careers at institu-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 12.

tions of higher education in the country and the region. At the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, they include Dr. Anica Sabo, full professor, retired; Predrag Repanić, MA, full professor; Svetlana Savić, DMA, full professor and chair of the Department of Composition; Dragana Jovanović, DMA, full professor; Ivan Brkljačić, DMA, full professor and vice-dean for teaching; Marko Stojanović, DMA, assistant professor; and Vladimir Korać, DMA, assistant professor. Elsewhere, they include Ana Gnjatović, DMA, associate professor at the Faculty of Art of the University of Priština (Zvečan – Kosovska Mitrovica) and the doctoral study programme in Multimedia Art at the University of Arts in Belgrade; Aleksandar Perunović, DMA, assistant professor and Nina Perović, DMA, a prominent artist and academic fellow, both of whom teach at the Music Academy of the University of Montenegro in Cetinje; whereas Slavko Šuklar, MA, previously taught as an associate professor at the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad and now teaches at the Academy of Music in Velenje (part of the University of Maribor in Slovenia).

Among Professor Hofman's former students who are now living and working abroad, successful careers in composition have been pursued by Nataša Bogojević (USA), Milica Paranosić (USA), Jasna Veličković (Netherlands), and Marko Nikodijević (Germany).

In addition to his work as a composer and professor of composition at the Faculty of Music and multimedia art at the University of Arts, Srđan Hofman was the founder and director of the Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade.

He also pursued theoretical research relating to issues in contemporary music and authored a large number of articles published in academic journals, as well as a book-length study, *Osobenosti elektronske muzike* [The Characteristics of Electronic Music], Knjaževac: Nota, 1995.

As a keynote speaker, he participated in international academic conferences in the US (*Modern Music Conference*, Texas State University, San Marcos, 2011) and Serbia (*Music Identities on Paper and Screen*, Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade, 2012).

From 1983 to 1989 Srđan Hofman served as a vice-dean and from 1989 to 1998 as dean of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. From 2002 to 2006 he served as Serbia's ambassador to South Africa and from 2007 to 2009 as a vice-rector of the University of Arts in Belgrade.

In performing his duties, Hofman acted as a dedicated, resolved, and fervent agent in promoting the field of art music and culture in general, maintaining, as he emphasized himself, "that the development of our culture and

securing the conditions for unhampered and appropriately professional activities of new generations of musical artists, composers, musicologists ethnomusicologists, pedagogues and organizers, entail the individual and collective efforts of all of us, in every vital juncture of musical life”.

Hofman was a member of the jury at the International Jeunesses Musicales Competition as well as Serbia’s most prestigious prize in the field of music creativity, the *Stevan Mokranjac* Award.

He was one of the founders and the first programme selector of the International Composers’ Forum in Belgrade. He also served as secretary of Serbia’s national ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) chapter. He also served as president of the Composers’ Association of Serbia, as a member of the Presidency of Sokoj (Organisation of Music Authors of Serbia), and chairman of its Board.

The creative oeuvre of Srđan Hofman comprises a large number of works, most prominently the following:

- orchestral works (5 pieces: *Preludio* per orchestra da camera; *Movimento energico*; *Symphony in Two Movements*; *Concerto dinamico*; and *Episodi concertanti Concert Episodes* for violin and orchestra);
- vocal-instrumental works (5 pieces: *Cantus de morte* for mezzo-soprano, orator, mixed choir, and orchestra; *Hexagons – Ritual: musical scene* for six groups of girls, Orff instruments, and conductor; *Games* for mixed choir, orator, and piano; *Makamba – Ritual* for Female Choir and Chamber Ensemble; and *Mirror* for mezzo-soprano, violoncello, piano, and chamber orchestra);
- chamber works (11 pieces: *Variations* for flute, viola, and piano; *String Quartet*, *The Legal Code of Succession – four letters* for clarinet and two string sextets, *Hexagons – Farce* for violin, violoncello, and piano; *The Eyes of Sutjeska – melodrama* for an orator and string orchestra; *Moving Mirrors* for two pianos – four performers; *It’s Coming!* – *Sound Objects* for eleven strings; *Refrain* for wind quintet; *Replica* for violin and piano; *Hadedas – presentation and three developments* for violoncello and piano, *Music Toys* for amplified violoncello and double-bass; and *Through Boxes of Sound 1* for clarinet, violin, piano and tape);
- solo works (5 pieces: *Hexagons – Monodrama* for violoncello, *Hexagons – Pastorale* for solo violin; *A Comic* for solo double bass; *Time Machine* for piano; and *Recitative and Toccata* for organ);
- choral works (2 pieces: *Imprints of Sound* for mixed choir and *What Have I Said?* for mixed choir);

- electro-acoustic works (10 pieces: *Déjà vu* for saxophone/clarinet and magnetic tape; *Who Am I? – Fairytale* for mezzo-soprano, eight actresses, female choir, chamber orchestra and magnetic tape; *Rebuses I & II* (electronic music); *Samples* for flute, clarinet, AKAI 1000 HD sampler and Apple Macintosh computer (or audio file); *Musica concertante* for piano, 13 strings and electronics; *A Nocturne of Belgrade Spring AD 1999* for chamber ensemble, live electronics, and audio tape; *Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor* for two amplified harps and Logic Pro sound processors; *Through Boxes of Sound 2* for Piano and Electronics);
- incidental music for theatre plays (for two plays, in collaboration with Zoran Erić: *Calling the Birds* and *Rose of the Wind* by Haris Pašović).

Srđan Hofman has won numerous awards, including the following:

- the October Prize of the City of Belgrade for young artists (1968);
- First Prize at the Third International Composers’ Forum (1994) for *Musica concertante*;
- First Prize at the Fourth International Composers’ Forum (1995) for *Signs*;
- the most important award for musical creativity in Serbia – the *Stevan Mokranjac* Award for 2010 for *Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor*;
- the same award for a second time – the 2015 *Stevan Mokranjac* Award for *Through Boxes of Sound 1*;
- the Composer of the Year award of the *Музика класика (Muzika klasika)* journal for *Mirror* (2012);
- the Composers’ Association of Serbia award;
- the Great Plaque of the University of Arts in Belgrade.

Apart from regular concert seasons, Hofman’s works have been performed at major festivals in Serbia and abroad, where they were invariably selected from a large pool of pieces from across the world, attesting thereby to Hofman’s high esteem, the artistic value of his accomplishments, and the mark that his creative work and pursuits have left in Serbia and abroad alike. Among others, these events include the following:

- Music Biennale Zagreb, Croatia (*Ritual*);
- World (New) Music Days, Germany (*Rebuses*);
- World (New) Music Days, Sweden (*Samples*);
- Electronic Art Festival, Helsinki, Finland (*Samples*);
- World (New) Music Days, Romania (*Duel*);
- Electro-acoustic Music Festival in Bourges, France (*Déjà vu*);
- 18<sup>th</sup> International Accordion Festival in Vilnius, Lithuania (*Hadedas*);

- World Harp Congress in Sydney, Australia (*Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor*);
- Bemus (five times): *Moving Mirrors, Musica concertante, Makamba; Signs; Mirror*;
- Yugoslav Music Forum in Opatija;
- International Composers’ Forum in Belgrade;
- Ohrid Summer Music Festival, etc.

*Monodrama* and *Farce* were also performed as compulsory works at international competitions organized by Jeunesses Musicales Serbia.

The critical reception of a concert entirely dedicated to works by Srđan Hofman held on 13 November 2019 is a mighty and striking testament to the undisputed standing, value, and significance of his compositional activities in general, for Serbian art music and culture as a whole.

**An excerpt from a review of the concert by Zorica Premate published in *Politika* on 16 November 2019:**

“[...] the great hall of the Russia House, packed to capacity, hosted the first evening solely dedicated to one of the undisputed doyens of our musical creativity and most accomplished professors of composition at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, Srđan Hofman, a selection of whose works were performed by artists who had already established themselves as excellent interpreters of his music [...] Srđan Hofman celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday as a professor emeritus, together with his many colleagues, current and former students in the audience, whose master’s and doctoral degrees he supervised, as well as select musicians and ensembles [...] This procession of remarkable achievements of Serbian music [*Pastorale, Through Boxes of Sound 1, It’s Coming!, Signs, Makamba, Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor, and Mirror*] outlined his journey from late-avant-garde explorations of ways of reinventing the work of music in terms of compositional technique and setting up an algorithm for its unfolding in time, via the mid 1980s and the exuberant 1990s that saw the magic of Hofman’s postmodern turn in full bloom, all the way to the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which this *magister ludens* has continued to impress us with his freedom in addressing his old and new points of interest: ‘mirrors’, ‘boxes’... in fact, the secrets of the musical flow itself and its inherent semantic drama. His vast musical home is defined by his playful and restless imagination, rigorously selected and effective tools, a high degree of vital energy and the ease of a gentleman.”

## A List of Major Works

Among the many orchestral, vocal-instrumental, chamber, solo, choral, and electro-acoustic works in Srđan Hofman's compositional oeuvre, which have been performed by some of the most renowned artists in Serbia and abroad – soloists, conductors, chamber and symphony orchestras, choirs, chamber ensembles – the following works should be singled out:

- ***Episodi concertanti*** for violin and orchestra from 1972, premièred in 1974 by Jovan Kolundžija and the RTB (Radio Television Belgrade) Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maurice le Roux (sound recording by PGP – the music production branch of the Radio Television of Serbia – the Serbian Broadcasting Corporation);
- ***Concerto dinamico*** for orchestra from 1971, premièred in 1974 by the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra led by Volker Wangelheim;
- ***Cantus de morte*** for mezzo-soprano, orator, choir, and orchestra from 1978, premièred in 1980 by mezzo-soprano Aleksandra Ivanović, orator Jovan Miličević, and the RTB Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oskar Danon;
- ***Makamba – Ritual*** for female choir and instrumental ensemble from 1997, premièred the same year by the *Collegium musicum* female choir conducted by Darinka Matić Marović;
- ***Mirror*** for mezzo-soprano, violoncello, piano, and chamber orchestra from 2012, premièred the same year by Ana Radovanović, Srđan Sretenović, Neda Hofman Sretenović, and the *St. George Strings Chamber Orchestra* (Гудачи Светиої Ђорђа / *Gudači Svetog Đorđa*);
- ***It's Coming! Sound Objects*** for eleven strings, composed and premièred in 1981 by *Dušan Skovran* String Orchestra (Гудачки оркестар “Душан Скворан” / *Gudački orkestar “Dušan Skovran”*) conducted by Aleksandar Pavlović (sound recording by PGP);
- ***Refrain*** for wind quintet, composed in 1983 and premièred in 1984 by the Belgrade Wind Quintet (Београдски дувачки квинтет / *Beogradski gudački kvintet*);
- the cycle ***Hexagons: Hexagons – Monodrama*** for violoncello from 1975 performed by Ivan Poparić; ***Hexagons – Pastorale*** for solo violin from 1975 performed by Dragutin Bogosavljević; ***Hexagons – Farce*** for violin, violoncello, and piano from 1976 performed by *Akademski trio* (Academic Trio; CD recording released by *Novi Zvuk, SOKOJ*); ***Hexagons – Ritual: musical scene*** for six groups of girls, Orff instruments, and

- conductor from 1978 performed by the *Collegium musicum* female choir conducted by Darinka Matic Marović;
- ***Moving Mirrors*** for two pianos – four performers from 1979, performed by Belgrade Piano Studio (Београдски клавијски студио / Beogradski klavirski studio; CD: *Srđan Hofman – Electro-acoustic Music*, SOKOJ CD 203);
  - ***Hadedas – Presentation and Three Developments*** for violoncello and piano from 2004, premièred in 2005 by Srđan Sretenović and Neda Hofman Sretenović (CD recording released by *New Sound* no. 26);
  - ***Music Toys*** for amplified violoncello and double bass from 2008, performed by Srđan Sretenović and Slobodan Gerić;
  - ***Through Boxes of Sound I*** for clarinet, violin, and piano from 2015, performed by *Trio Pokret* [The Motion Trio];
  - ***Imprints of Sound*** for mixed choir from 1982, premièred in 1983 by the RTB Choir conducted by Mladen Jagušt;
  - ***What Have I Said?*** for mixed choir from 2007, premièred in 2011 by the *Liceum* Choir conducted by Miloje Nikolić;
  - ***Who am I – Fairytale*** for mezzo-soprano, eight actresses, female choir, chamber orchestra, and magnetic tape from 1986, premièred in 1987 by mezzo-soprano Aleksandra Ivanović, the *Collegium musicum* female choir, and *Dušan Skovran* Chamber Orchestra conducted by Aleksandar Pavlović;
  - ***Déjà vu*** for saxophone (clarinet) and magnetic tape from 1985, premièred in 1986 (CD SOKOJ 203);
  - ***Samples*** for flute, clarinet, *AKAI 1000 HD* sampler and *Apple Macintosh* computer (or Audio File) from 1991, premièred by Laura Levai Aksin, Nikola Srdić and Srđan Hofman (CD SOKOJ 203);
  - ***Signs*** for flute, violoncello, piano, and live electronics composed and premièred in 1994 by Ljubiša Jovanović, Sandra Belić, Nataša Veljković, and Zoran Erić;
  - ***Rebuses I & II***, electronic music composed in 1988–1989 (sound recording by PGP; CD SOKOJ 203);
  - ***Musica concertante*** for piano, 13 strings orchestra, and electronics from 1993, premièred in 1994 by Rita Kinka, Aleksandar Pavlović, and *Dušan Skovran* Chamber Orchestra (CD SOKOJ *New Sound*, 4-5);
  - ***Duel*** for piano and live electronics written and premièred in 1996 by Neda Hofman and Zoran Erić (CD SOKOJ *New Sound*, 8);

- **Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor** for two amplified harps and *Logic Pro* sound processors (2010), performed by Ljiljana Nestorovska and Milena Stanišić;
- **Through Boxes of Sound 2** for piano and electronics from 2016, performed by Neda Hofman.

All the works listed above have been recorded and broadcast by RTS (Radio Television of Serbia – Serbia’s public broadcaster) and many of them have been released on vinyl recordings and CDs.

#### **An excerpt from the jury’s ruling of the 2010 Stevan Mokranjac Award**

**Looking at “Mirrors” by Anish Kapoor** for two amplified harps and *Logic Pro* sound processors

“By virtue of his accomplishments in the domain of electro-acoustic music, Srđan Hofman has established himself in Serbian musical culture as one of its leading authors, with his captivating innovation and proficient ‘command’ of the expressive potentials of his chosen media. Hofman materialized the idea to re-signify Kapoor’s intriguing work from the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (*Mirrors*, 2010) in his own peculiar, complex way, using the full potential of two harps whose sound is ‘reflected’ and transformed in the computer sound generated during performance, by transferring the sound produced onstage into a computer programme prepared in advance. The impressive sonic result, the balanced dramaturgical arc of the work, its solid logic of musical organisation, and expert use of expressive abilities single out Hofman’s piece as a work of masterful and mature compositional writing, an exciting and inspiring sonic quest across the expanses of combining traditional instruments with computers.”

#### **An excerpt from the jury’s ruling of the 2015 Stevan Mokranjac Award**

**Through Boxes of Sound 1** for clarinet, violin, and piano

“*Through Boxes of Sound 1* was commissioned by *Trio Pokret* and premièred on 28 September 2015. Finding that Hofman’s inspired, witty, playful, intelligent, and expert response to last year’s Forum’s thematic challenge – *Sound Boxes* – is a work characterized by remarkable compositional mastery, the jury agreed that his piece from last year’s production stands out by its modernity and exploration of new sonorities. It is captivating by virtue of the inexorable logic of its musical flow, the clarity of its micro- and macro-formal planning, its combinations of instrumental timbres, which are masterful and

fascinating. Therefore, Hofman's boxes of sound may be heard as stories about the little things that actually make up our entire life, because they encompass a competent musical memory. They are nostalgic and attest to the timelessness of the skills Hofman used to accomplish the effect of ease of that which always was and remains deep and powerful."

**An excerpt from Tijana Popović Mladenović's article on *Through Boxes of Sound 1 and 2*** in Zorica Premate (Ed.): *Tribine: Novi zvučni prostori (Zbornik)* [Forums: New Spaces of Sound – Proceedings]. Belgrade: Centar za muzičku akciju, RTS izdavaštvo, 2019.

"The diptych *Trough Boxes of Sound 1 & 2* by Srđan Hofman encapsulates, it seems, some rather specific sonic memories. Peculiar sonic 'images', memories, or some acoustic *déjà vu* phenomena in the domain of sound and about the memory of sound. Sonic memories of a lived sonic experience, his own or someone else's/*other's*, at any rate, an experience etched, wilfully or not, right into the sonic wrapping of the self belonging to the 'owner' of the box. What stands out is [...] the impressive sophistication and mastery with which the composer constructs the main structures of the work and their causal relations, that is, establishes the structure of each chord, the logic of their mutual relations and voice leading, with which he forms fields of sound that are shorter in duration and especially those that are longer, with micro-changes in their structure, securing at the same time textural clarity and consistency in treating every element of that texture in every section, and executing a rather peculiar reduction of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic material down to a few basic representatives that are reiterated in a certain transformed, variant modality throughout the piece." (pp. 302, 308)

**An excerpt from *Fragmenti o muzičkoj postmoderni*** [Fragments about Musical Postmodernism], Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1997, by Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman

***Déjà vu*** for clarinet, harpsichord, chamber orchestra, and magnetic tape (1985)

(premiered as part of the *Musica viva* cycle at Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion, Belgrade, 1986, Radio Belgrade 3)

"***Déjà vu*** is a piece of music about music inasmuch as it constitutes a piece of music about a memory of music: unconscious rather than conscious, more often undisturbed than interrupted, clear rather than faint, more disturbing

than serene. I remember that I could (can) remember an experience I've never had, because it is nonetheless inscribed somewhere inside me, it simply *is* in me – this might be a free interpretation of the composer's idea in this work.” (p. 88)

### ***Rebus 1***

(premièred in 1988 at the Yugoslav Music Forum in Opatija)

“...his compositional technology in the electronic piece ***Rebus 1*** [...], avant-garde in the context of Serbian music, by virtue of its consistently set-up serialist thesis as the basis for shaping the work's musical parameters, generates in ***Rebus 1*** certain traditional musical patterns, thereby highlighting the author's postmodern 'praise' for tradition [...]" (pp. 112–113)

***Samples*** (1991) for flute, clarinet, AKAI 1000 HD sampler and Apple Macintosh computer

(premièred in Cetinje in 1991)

“[...] Hofman retains the integrity of his musical language [...] simultaneously setting up a relation of a specific sort of interdependence between his chosen elements of tradition. Thereby he appears to give shape, by musical means, to a sort of discussion of nature and the meaning of some of the possible mutual relations between individual musical, sonic contents or principles, borrowed from the musical past. Thus, for instance, in ***Samples*** (1991) for flute, clarinet, AKAI 1000 HD sampler and Apple Macintosh computer, Hofman takes a rather peculiar perspective on the relationship between two types of musical experience: musical folklore and art music. At the same time, he posits folklore precisely as the generative domain of his work.” (pp. 116–117)

“[...] It is precisely this power of his to break the acoustic 'atom' and enable the elements obtained thereby to fuse into a new acoustic particle, to accomplish, as he puts it himself, 'the complexity of timbre, variety, variability, and control in creating electronic sound from a degree when it ceases to be typical (electronic!) and turns into any imaginable (or unimaginable), new or *familiar* sound from the acoustic environment', i.e. a sample from whatever context, it is precisely that guarantee of boundless freedom in working with sound that binds Hofman to the electronic medium.” (p. 122)

***Musica concertante* for piano, 13 strings, and electronics (1993)  
First Prize at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Composers' Forum (1994)**

“The question is [...] whether by using the electronic medium, that is, the full span of its technological capabilities, while we are still struggling to follow, grasp, and explicate postmodernism in theoretical terms, we might actually be already coming out of it, through a spiral-shaped turn back to the logic of modernism? That problem, in a rather sharp and clearly pointed way, is actualized in Hofman’s *Musica concertante* for piano, 13 strings, and electronics (1993). The work is based on several facts from musical tradition, which are taken from the domain of genre, form, harmonic and sonic (timbral) construction.” (p. 123)

“[...] That balance [*the right measure* of the ratio between discovery and invention] is essentially established and consistently animated in Hofman’s *Musica concertante*, but, perhaps precisely due to that masterful degree of postmodern permeation affecting all of its inductive and deductive methods, it simultaneously emerges as a sort of turning point in the current condition of Serbian music: as a possible announcement of a renewed domination of the semiological nature and vision of modernism.” (pp. 131–132)

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Regarding the oeuvre of Srđan Hofman – his compositional poetics, aesthetics, and stylistic features, individual works, orientations in terms of genre and media, innovative creative breakthroughs, especially in the field of electro-acoustic music, which he helped inaugurate in our part of the world, as well as his authentic, unique “writing”, the mark left by his spirit, and the sound of his time – there is an impressive number of published texts: from reviews published in the daily and periodical press, essays, articles, and scholarly studies in Serbian and foreign academic journals and essay collections, musicological collective monographs, lexicographic and encyclopaedic units, and an incipient monograph entirely dedicated to him, all of which attest to the perennially intriguing and provocative effects that his accomplishments make on those who listen to and interpret his music.

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Compiled by Tijana Popović Mladjenović

## Data on the Works of Srđan Hofman

### orchestral:

*Preludio* per orchestra da camera

(1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 3, archi)

1967

Opatija, 18 Oct. 1967

Živojin Zdravković, Belgrade Philharmonic

duration: 8’

score in author’s possession, RB (Radio Belgrade) material

recording: RB

***Movimento energico***

(a 3)

1968

Opatija, 26 Oct. 1968

Živojin Zdravković, Belgrade Philharmonic

duration: 9'

score: in author's possession, RB material

recording: RB

**Симфонија у два става**

***Symphony in Two Movements***

(a 3)

1969

Belgrade, 3 Nov. 1969

Živojin Zdravković, Belgrade Philharmonic

duration: 13'

score: in author's possession, RB material

recording: RB

***Concerto dinamico***

(a 3)

1971

Belgrade, 26 Feb. 1974

Volker Wangelheim, Belgrade Philharmonic

duration: 16'

score: in author's possession; RB material

recording: RB

**Концертјанїне еїизоге за виолину и оркестар**

***Episodi concertanti* for violin and orchestra**

(a 2)

1972

Belgrade, 17 April 1974

Jovan Kolundžija, Maurice le Roux,

RTB Symphony Orchestra

duration: 18'

score: in author's possession, RB material

piano reduction, author's edition

sound recording: RB

LP: PGP

**chamber:**

**Варијације** за флауту, виолу и клавир

**Variations** for flute, viola, and piano

1966

Sarajevo, 22 Dec. 1966

Eleonora Džak, Franc Avsenek, Aleksandar Kolarević

duration: 7'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

**Гудачки кваријет**

**String Quartet**

1967

Belgrade, 26 March 1973

Serbian String Quartet

duration: 13'

sound recording: RB

**Законика наследовање** – четири слова за кларинет и два гудачка секстета

**The Legal Code of Succession** – four letters for clarinet and two string sextets

1974

Belgrade, March 1975

Vladimir Žikić, Mladen Jagušt,

Belgrade String Orchestra

duration: 16'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

**Хексајони** – **Фарса** за виолину, виолончело и клавир

**Hexagons** – **Farce** for violin, violoncello and piano

1976

Opatija, November 1976

Akademski trio (Academic Trio)

duration: 7'50"

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

CD: *Novi zvuk* SOKOJ

**Очи Суџјеске** – мелодрам за рецитатора и гудачки оркестар  
**The Eyes of the Sutjeska** – *melodrama* for an orator and string orchestra  
1976

Belgrade, 1977  
Jovan Miličević, Angel Šurev,  
Belgrade Chamber Orchestra  
duration: 9'  
Vasko Popa  
sound recording: RB

**Покрејина оїледала** за два клавира – четири извођача  
**Moving Mirrors** for two pianos – four performers  
1979

Belgrade, 9 Oct. 1979  
Belgrade Piano Studio  
duration: 8'15"  
in author's possession  
author's edition  
sound recording: RB  
LP: PGP  
CD: Srđan Hofman: *Electro-acoustic music*, SOKOJ CD 203

**Долази** – звучни објекти за једанаест гудача  
**It's Coming!** *Sound Objects* for eleven strings  
(3, 3, 2, 2, 1)  
1981

Belgrade 1981  
Aleksandar Pavlović,  
*Dušan Skovran* Belgrade String Orchestra  
duration: 14'  
in author's possession  
sound recording: RB  
LP: PGP  
CD: *Антилопија српске музике 20. века за њугаче* (Anthology of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Serbian Music for Strings)

**Рефрен** за дувачки квинтет

**Refrain** for wind quintet

1983

Belgrade, October 1984

Belgrade Wind Quintet

duration: 11'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

**Реплика** за виолину и клавир

**Replica** for violin and piano

1990

Novi Sad, April 1993

Maja Jokanović, Nevena Popović

duration: 8'

in author's possession

**Хагегас** – *Излајање и три развоја* за виолончело и клавир

**Hadedas** – *Presentation and Three Developments* for violoncello and piano

2004

Belgrade, 2005

Srđan Sretenović, Neda Hofman-Sretenović

duration: 17'30"

in author's possession

CD: *New Sound*, 26/2005

CD: Ансамбл за нову музику *Градилишће / Construction Site Contemporary*

Music Ensemble, 2024

**Музичке играчке** за озвучене виолончело и контрабас

**Music Toys** for amplified violoncello and double-bass

2008

Belgrade, November 2008

Srđan Sretenović, Slobodan Gerić

duration: 7'30"

in author's possession

CD: Срђан Сретеновић, *Виолончело + 1* (Srđan Sretenović, *Violoncello + 1*)

**solo:**

**Хексаіони – Монодрама** за виолончело

**Hexagons – Monodrama** for violoncello

1975

Belgrade, 29 April 1975

Ivan Poparić

duration: 6'30"

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

CD: Ансамбл за нову музику Градилишће / *Construction Site Contemporary*

Music Ensemble, 2015

**Хексаіони – Пасторала** за виолину соло

**Hexagons – Pastorale** for violin solo

1975

Opatija, November 1975

Dragutin Bogosavljević

duration: 6'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

**Времейлов** за клавир

**Time-machine** for piano

1994

Ohrid, 2 August 1994

Neda Hofman

duration: 7'

in author's possession:

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music, Belgrade

**Recitative and Toccata** for organ

2004

Pretoria, 2004

Wim Wiljoen

duration: 8'30"

in author's possession

**vocal-instrumental:**

**Cantus de morte** за мецо-сопран, рецитатора, мешовити хор и оркестар  
**Cantus de morte** for mezzo-soprano, orator, mixed choir, and orchestra  
texts: Meša Selimović, Omar Khayyam, Akhenaten, Federico García Lorca, Vasko  
Popa, Desanka Maksimović  
1978

Belgrade, 17 Dec 1980  
Aleksandra Ivanović, Jovan Miličević, Oskar Danon,  
RTB Choir and Orchestra  
duration: 40'  
in author's possession, RB material  
sound recording: RB

**Хексаіони – Рийуал:** музичка сцена за шест група девојака, Орфов  
инструментаријум и диригента  
**Hexagons – Ritual:** musical scene for six groups of girls, Orff instruments, and con-  
ductor  
1978

Zagreb, May 1978  
Darinka Matić Marović, *Collegium musicum*  
duration: 8'  
in author's possession

**Игре** за мешовити хор, рецитатора и клавир  
**Games** for mixed choir, orator, and piano  
poetry by Vasko Popa  
1984

Priština, 21 Nov. 1984  
Enver Petrovci, Teuta Pllana, Rafet Rudi,  
RT Priština Choir  
duration: 10'  
score: RP  
sound recording: RP

**Макамба** – Ритуал за женски хор и камерни ансамбл  
**Makamba** – *Ritual* for female Choir and Chamber Ensemble  
(flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, French horn, trombone, percussion, piano, double bass)

1997

Belgrade, May 1997

Darinka Matic Marović

*Collegium musicum*

duration: 8'30"

in author's possession

CD: *New Sound*, 10, Belgrade 1997 (CD 110/1997)

Second Prize at the 1997 Composers' Forum

**Оїлегалo** за мецосопран, виолончело, клавир и камерни оркестар

**Mirror** for mezzo-soprano, violoncello, piano, and chamber orchestra

2 Fl, 2 Cl, Strings (5, 4, 3, 2, 1)

David Taylor: *Reflections*, Sylvia Plath: *Mirror* (fragments)

2012

Belgrade, Oct. 2012

Ana Radovanović, Srđan Sretenović, Neda Hofman Sretenović, St. George Strings

Chamber Orchestra

duration: 17'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

"Composer of the Year" award of *Музика класика* journal

### choral:

**Оїписци звучања** за мешовити хор

**Imprints of Sound** for mixed choir

1982

Belgrade, October 1983

Mladen Jagušt

RTB Choir

duration: 10'

in author's possession

sound recording: RB

**Шта сам ја рекао?** за мешовити хор  
**What have I said?** for mixed choir  
poetry: Bai Hua, Ai Qīng, Zhou Can  
2007

Belgrade, October 2011  
Miloje Nikolić  
Liceum choir  
duration: 10'  
in author's possession  
sound recording: RB

### electro-acoustic:

**Déjà vu** за саксофон (кларинет) и магнетофонску траку  
(верзија за саксофон /кларинет/, чембало, камерни гудачки оркестар и магнетофонску траку)  
**Déjà vu** for saxophone (clarinet) and magnetic tape  
(version for saxophone /clarinet/, harpsichord, chamber string orchestra, and magnetic tape)  
1985

Belgrade, 1986 (*Musica viva* cycle, Cvijeta Zuzorić Art Pavilion, Radio Belgrade 3)  
duration: 13'50"  
in author's possession  
sound recording: RB  
sound recording: RT Novi Sad  
CD SOKOJ 203  
LP: PGP

**Ко сам ја?** – бајка за мецосопран, осам глумица, женски хор, камерни оркестар и магнетофонску траку  
**Who Am I?** – *Fairy tale* for mezzosoprano, eight actors, women's choir, chamber orchestra, and magnetic tape  
poetry: Mila Šuljagić  
1986

Opatija, 1987  
Aleksandra Ivanović, Aleksandar Pavlović,  
*Collegium musicum*, Dušan Skovran Chamber Orchestra  
duration: 42'  
in author's possession  
sound recording: RB

**Ребуси I & II** (електронска музика)

**Rebuses I&II** (electronic music)

1988/89

duration: 9'03"

Opatija 1988 (Rebus I), 1989 (Rebus II)

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

LP: PGP

CD: SOKOJ 203

**Узорци** за флауту, кларинет, *AKAI 1000 HD* и *Apple Macintosh* компјутер (или аудио фајл)

**Samples** for flute, clarinet, *AKAI 1000 HD* sampler and *Apple Macintosh* computer (or audio file)

1991

Cetinje, 14 June 1991

Laura Levai Askin, Nikola Srdić, Srđan Hofman

duration: 11'19"

in author's possession

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

CD SOKOJ 203

**Концертантнa музика** за клавир, 13 гудача и електронику

**Musica concertante** for piano, 13 strings, and electronics

1993

Belgrade, 17 May 1994

Rita Kinka, Aleksandar Pavlović

*Dušan Skovran* Chamber String Orchestra

duration: 15'30"

in author's possession

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

CD SOKOJ *New Sound*, 4-5, 1994/1995 (CD 104/105)

First Prize at the 1994 Composers' Forum

**Знакови** за флауту, виолончело, клавир и живу електронику

**Signs** for flute, violoncello, piano, and live electronics

1994

Belgrade, 15 October 1994

Ljubiša Jovanović, Sandra Belić, Nataša Veljković, Zoran Erić

duration: 13'31"

in author's possession

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade  
CD SOKOJ *New Sound*, 6 (CD 106 / 1995)  
CD SOKOJ 203  
First Prize at the 1995 Composers' Forum

*Дуел* за клавир и живу електронику  
***Duel*** for piano and live-electronic  
1996  
(version for two pianos and percussion – 2009)

Belgrade, May 1996  
Neda Hofman, Zoran Erić  
duration: 12'22"  
in author's possession  
sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade  
CD SOKOJ *New Sound*, 8 (CD 108 / 1996)  
Third Prize at the 1996 Composers' Forum

***Ноктюрно београдској пролећа јодине 1999.*** за камерни ансамбл, живу електронику и магнетофонску траку  
***A Nocturne of Belgrade Spring AD 1999*** for chamber ensemble, live electronics, and audio tape  
1999

Belgrade, 1999  
conductor: Biljana Radovanović  
duration: 12'  
in author's possession  
sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

***Гледајући у "Огледала" Аниша Кајпура*** за две озвучене харфе и процесоре програма *Logic Pro*  
***Looking at "Mirrors" by Anish Kapoor*** for two amplified harps and *Logic Pro* sound processors  
2010

Belgrade, November 2010  
Ljiljana Nestorovska, Milena Stanišić  
duration: 11'20"  
in author's possession  
sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade  
Stevan Mokranjac Award for 2010

**Кроз куџије звука 1** за кларинет, виолину, клавир и траку  
**Through Boxes of Sound 1** for clarinet, violin, piano, and tape  
2015

Belgrade, October 2015

Trio Pokret

duration: 8'45"

in author's possession

sound recording: RTS

CD: Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble, 2016,

ISBN 978-86-89621-04-4

Stevan Mokranjac Award for 2015

**Кроз куџије звука 2** за клавир и електронику  
**Through Boxes of Sound 2** for piano and electronics  
2015

Belgrade, October 2016

Neda Hofman

duration: 9'

in author's possession

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

CD: Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble, 2016,

ISBN 978-86-89621-04-4

**Без јаве – У њојрази за “Пјероом” Арнолда Шенберга**  
за флауту, кларинет, виолину, виолончело, мецо-сопран, клавир и  
електронику

**Without Waking – In Search of Arnold Schoenberg's “Pierrot”**

for flute, violin, violoncello, mezzo-soprano, piano, and electronics

setting of *Prestanak jave* (Awake No More), a poem by Vladislav Petković Dis  
2017

Belgrade, 6 Oct 2017

Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble

duration: 16'30"

in author's possession

sound recording: Electronic Studio at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade

### **miscellaneous:**

Incidental music for theatre plays *Dozivanje ptica* [Calling the Birds], 1989 and  
*Ruža vetrova* [Rose of the Wind], 1990 by Haris Pašović (in collaboration with  
Zoran Erić).

fragments on CD SOKOJ 203

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## CONVERSATIONS

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***Ivana Vuksanović\****

University of Arts in Belgrade  
Faculty of Music  
Department of Music Theory

### THE JOY OF DISCOVERY AN INTERVIEW WITH ANICA SABO

Anica Sabo is a composer, theorist, and formerly a full professor at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, retired since 2020. Although the immediate occasion for this interview is her recently published monograph, *Ispoljavanje simetrije u muzičkom toku – metodološka pitanja* (“Manifestations of Symmetry in Musical Flow: Issues of Methodology”, Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2020), the rich professional biography of Prof. Sabo, bringing together and overlapping three different areas in her work – music theory,



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\* The author's contact details: [vuksanovici@fmu.bg.ac.rs](mailto:vuksanovici@fmu.bg.ac.rs).

composing, and pedagogy – provide an additional incentive and inspiration for conducting this interview with her.

Anica Sabo was born in Belgrade in 1954. At the Faculty of Music, she majored in two fields – composition (under the supervision of Stanojlo Rajičić and Srđan Hofman) and wind instruments (bassoon), with Ivan Turšič. She earned her undergraduate and master's degree at the department of composition (1986), and acquired a doctoral degree at the University of Arts in Belgrade, the Department of Art and Media Theory (2014). Sabo's compositional oeuvre comprises complex and extensive orchestral works, such as *Diasonans* for symphony orchestra (1980), *Igre kapi* ("Water Drop Dances") for soprano and symphony orchestra (1982), and *Svetlost* ("Light"), a study for string quartet and symphony orchestra (1986), but her main focus is on chamber music (String Quartet, 1987; *Impresije* / "Impressions" for two pianos, 1989; *Akvareli* / "Water Colours" for wind trio, 1992; *Kazivanja* / "Narrations" for string orchestra, 1993, revised in 2014; *Lutanja* / "Wanderings" for violin and orchestra, 1995, revised in 2011; *Senke* / "Shadows" for violoncello, 1997; *Diantus* for piano four-hands, 2000; *Sanjališće* / "Dream-realm" for narrator, flute, violin, and viola, 2010; *Nasmeh v slovarju* / "A Smile in the Dictionary", 2012). Her work in music theory focuses on issues in musical form, the processuality of musical flow, and transformations of models taken from folk music. Especially significant are her numerous studies of pieces by Serbian authors (Stevan Mokranjac, Josif Marinković, Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević, Josip Slavenski, Petar Bergamo, Stanojlo Rajičić, Vojislav Vučković, Aleksandar Obradović, Ljubica Marić, Berislav Popović, Mirjana Živković) as well as Slovenian composers who lived and worked in Serbia (Davorin Jenko, Mihovil Logar, Zlatan Vauda). Over the course of a teaching career spanning almost four decades, apart from the Faculty of Arts in Belgrade, she also taught at other institutions of higher education in Serbia and the region (Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Cetinje).

*In your professional biography, from very early on, one may trace a parallel or double trajectory: in high school you did a double major (in music theory and the bassoon), whereas at the faculty you studied composition and the bassoon. Composing is your primary vocation and that line has been a constant presence in your professional activities, but to the wider public, not only in Serbia, but also in the region, you are better known in terms of your work in music theory and analysis, as well as music pedagogy. How did this change of emphasis in your scholarly work come about? How did theory prevail, or what was it about theory that pulled you into its orbit?*

Personally, I don't feel as if theory prevailed. It may have been more visible in my work, but as for me personally, it never really prevailed, but grew equally important as composing. And indeed, it did pull me into its orbit. I spent all my working life at the Department [*Ogceκ*] of Music Theory and I felt that I should establish a relationship with music theory in a professional sense, that it was necessary to understand certain phenomena in music, to look for arguments to corroborate my views about them, in order to reinforce, adjust, or perhaps abandon them. That was my starting decision. And then something else emerged, something that was much more important and made a longer-term impact on my work in music theory, and that was – the joy of discovery. Music theory really offers so much joy! This almost archaeological kind of work, where you spend time (not a little time!) immersing yourself into somebody's piece of music, in this sort of compositional "kitchen", discovering what "spices" the composer used, what procedures she applied – that was very inspiring for me and, of course, brought a lot of joy. I have never perceived composition and theory as two separate fields of activity. One has always assisted the other – when, how, and to what degree, I could not possibly say right now.

While I was still studying with Rajičić and Hofman, we were required to explicate our pieces in verbal presentations. As a former Prague student who finished Josef Suk's Master School, Rajičić maintained that a piece of music should be well ordered, which was open to individual interpretations and everyone could shape it according to their own creative impulses. That is why I am always proud to say that I learned my craft from a master. Professor Hofman (later Emeritus) insisted that our explications of our pieces should be well grounded and thoroughly argued. Even today, when I read some of my writings from those days, I recognize a thread that gravitated toward music theory. Theory may have prevailed later, in that visible dimension, but it always existed alongside this sort of creative impulse, because I truly believe that writing in the field of music theory is as creative as composing itself.

I would also say that my relationship with the bassoon, ever since high school, was something special. I studied with Professor Božidar Tumpelj, who performed with brilliant orchestras, and I learned a lot from his experiences. At *Slavenski* School of Music there was this idea among the professors that those of us who were music theory majors should play an additional instrument and my first choice was the bassoon (in addition to the piano, which I had played since childhood). Everybody was surprised by this (there were not many women bassoonists at the time), but they also accepted it. I really

loved playing the bassoon and I often performed solo and with various ensembles. I consider it a great and important experience. Later I decided to study composition, I was focusing on theory and it wasn't feasible to pursue all of that at once. On the other hand, these were very useful experiences and I think that overall, they helped shape my identity, or at least found a fertile soil in me to grow and thrive.

*Musical form is the main focus of your work in theory and analysis. In this line of work you explore the basic principles of shaping a work's musical flow, while your analytical oeuvre encompasses pieces from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century – pieces espousing various stylistic orientations, different systems and procedures of composition. What is your view regarding the issue of musical form and the notion of a whole [целина] in contemporary music?*

The notion of a whole is really crucial in understanding any work of art. This issue is too complex to unpack in an interview, but here I can express some views that I haven't expressed in writing before and that one should really take as no more than the personal views of someone who has spent a long time addressing the issue of form in music and someone who maintains, as Professor Berislav Popović wrote in his book, that “musical form is the meaning of music”.<sup>1</sup> Without the notion of a whole and without the process of shaping musical contents in a way that might enable one to comprehend that whole, a piece of music, it seems to me, does not exist. Or, it exists in a very limited way, very briefly and inarticulately. I think that syntax is highly important for comprehending a piece as a whole. I can see that syntax takes shape on various levels; that would include extra-musical elements, the lyrics, choreography, a wealth of combinations involving various components of musical expression that have not been exhausted yet, and, last but certainly not least – there is electronics. Electronics offers an abundance of possibilities, but there may be a trap in there as well. It's like in that popular saying: “a good servant, but a bad master”; it is a lot of complex and demanding work for a composer, but it's also alluring in terms of obtaining quick results. In other words, electronics opened a wide range of possibilities, but, in a way, it has also enslaved composers. It is not just a technological turn, but a turn in one's awareness, emotions, in everything that makes a piece of music. I think there is not enough awareness of the importance of syntax, of how to orga-

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<sup>1</sup> Berislav Popović, *Muzička forma ili Smisao u muzici*, Belgrade, Clio, 1998.

nize all the elements, how to tame them, how to handle the material. You may like individual places in a piece, but you always remember the work as a whole. When I say syntax – I mean order, section divisions, contrasts, decelerations, accelerations, the way the material is distributed, because all of that is part of the process. In order to understand the whole, one must understand the musical syntax.

*Your many years of studying the phenomenon of symmetry in music has resulted in the monograph *Ispoljavanje simetrije u muzičkom toku – metodološka pitanja*, published in 2020. You emphasize in the book that it does not offer a new analytical method, but a new line in the development of the traditional method of formal music analysis. What were the theory sources that led you to symmetry as a regulator of the coherence of a musical work?*

The main precept of my conception of symmetry comes from two studies (there are others as well, but I couldn't list them all here), by Adolf Bernhard Marx and Berislav Popović. Marx considered form synonymous with wholeness, whereas Popović spoke of musical flow as a whole that has its directions (without directly relying on Marx), so to me, it seems that the notion of a whole is crucial in dealing with form. In my book, I wrote about 19<sup>th</sup>-century sources that are available to us, then about theorists from the Russian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and, in general, Slavic school who, like Marx, define musical form as the process of shaping music (Ger. *Formenlehre*). I could not find an adequate term in Serbian, so I used my knowledge of literature in other languages. If we were to speak about forms, it would be, Marx says, a "collection of dead models". That was a valuable insight and therefore I returned to the original principles of the discipline itself. That was the joy of discovery and the moment when theory pulled me inside its orbit. That is why I think it is important to learn about the history of music theory.

In my book, I also used Arnold Schoenberg's *Fundamentals of Musical Composition*, which is practically about form, as well as Rudolph Reti, with his views regarding motives, Boris Asafyev and many other authors, including William Caplin. It is important that we keep re-reading the traditional method and rethinking all those terms that we consider quite familiar. We've remained stuck in the domain of structure, instead of transferring the concept of structure to the phenomenon of musical flow. It seems so simple, but in analysis and interpretations one should be very careful and above all consistent. It is invaluable to confront your own misconceptions and I was fortu-

nate enough to grow through this type of learning. When I read in the preface to Dragutin Gostuški's book *Vreme umetnosti (Time of Art)* that, as he put it himself, the book is the final result of many years spent pondering questions "that will never be exhausted, because they keep coming up in different guises" – I felt relieved. That also applies to form and symmetry.

*The analytical samples in your book comprise works by Bartók from his early and middle creative periods (the First and Second Violin Concerto, the First and Second Piano Concerto). Symmetry in Bartók's works has often been written about. Where do you see the specific contribution of your study in relation to the existing literature? What kind of insights have resulted from establishing a correlation between geometric concepts and the musical flow in these works?*

In my introduction I emphasized that symmetry is something that is inborn to human beings and the world surrounding us, that it is present everywhere, and, therefore, in music as well. I view symmetry in music as the harmony, balance, beauty, and integrity of the musical flow and I broach a series of questions about establishing a methodology for analysing the musical flow that would be in a position to reveal those attributes of the analysed work. When we say that something is beautiful, we usually recognize that it is symmetric, whether explicitly or implicitly. These correlations between geometric concepts and musical flow are extremely complex; it is not so straightforward like we often think and symmetry does not boil down to repetition and quantitative equality. My starting position is that the musical properties of a piece, the way they are externalized in the musical flow, are the key factor in understanding its symmetry, not the other way around. A musical flow should not be reduced to geometry. Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, for example, asserts that the music of Béla Bartók is that of "a precise mechanic, a jeweller", that everything in it is crystal clear, but not at first hearing. When I first began studying the literature about symmetry in 1986, I was attracted to Bartók's string quartets, especially the fourth and fifth. This was a fascination! Then I encountered the same phenomenon of symmetry in the *Second Piano Concerto* and began looking at his other concertos from the middle period and tried to identify the main support of that type of formal organization. I realized it was the motives and motivic material. The literature kept talking about palindromes (including my first paper on the topic, published in 1991, titled "Palindromična simetrija u delima Bele Bartoka" / Palindromic Symmetry in Works by Béla Bartók). However, in my

conversations with Berislav Popović, I realized there was something rather static and inadequate about this, that there were different nuances and that there was an inconsistency: when palindromes are motivically brought together, then they become structurally disorganized, and vice versa. The sections and segments of the form are not always compatible in terms of motivic content. Ernő Lendvai, László Somfai, Vera Lampert, and other prominent authors had also written about this, but I saw a sort of insufficiency there. I was especially troubled by the First Violin Concerto, which demanded a careful analysis of its motivic material. It was all leading toward a realization that there was a single axis that would come out, otherwise completely invisible. In the study titled “Značaj motiva u ostvarenju koherentnosti ciklusa” (The Significance of Motives in Achieving the Coherence of a Cycle), which came out in 1997, for the first time I isolated the motives and tried to present the relationship between the motives and the sections in a coordinate system. I got good results, but something was still missing. It was only when Berislav Popović’s book came out that I found sufficient theoretical support. I made particular use of what the professor had isolated as character variation symmetries and permutation symmetries within dynamic symmetries. On that basis I arrived at a new understanding of that initial spark in Bartók’s concertos, that is, all of those potentials leading toward palindromic symmetry. It is interesting that in his later works – I didn’t write about this in my book – Bartók abandoned this ‘perfection’ of symmetry. It is missing from his other concertos, for instance the *Concerto for Orchestra*, which interested me the most, or his *Viola Concerto* (which was completed by Tibor Serly). Why did he abandon that principle? He achieved what every genius composer achieves – toppling his own monument. The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (which also exists in a concerto version) already follows a different structure; all that which is the first movement, the third movement is not. In his work Bartók set up an antithesis, in my view, only to synthesize the whole thing in his five-movement *Concerto for Orchestra*. He abandons the idea of thematic links and that kind of recognisability and performs a sort of *salto mortale*. The *Concerto for Orchestra* could be demonstrated as a synthesis of his conception of symmetry and that is what makes it such a work of genius.

*The monograph is furnished not only with notated examples, but also with remarkably precise diagrams, as well as coloured graphics and tables. It is a detailed and yet quite comprehensible analytical rendering of the thematic, structural, and tonal plan of the musical flow of individual movements and*

*entire pieces. How did you arrive at those graphic renderings and are they peculiar to the “Belgrade analytical school” when it comes to form?*

I do think that there is a “Belgrade school” of music analysis. A large number of scholars went through our Faculty and, in my opinion, their contribution is really immense. When it comes to form, one must begin from the textbook, in fact, the great study of Vlastimir Peričić and Dušan Skovran, *Nauka o muzičkim oblicima* (“The Science of Musical Forms”), which went through a number of editions and has taught generations of students. There are various studies of this type in the world, but, if I may say so, I have yet to read a better one. It is a study that talks about the typology of formal models, but also, at the same time, about what that typology is not. There is also the book by Berislav Popović, which is innovative and which, crucially, as I said above, offers a definition of musical flow. I would also mention Dragutin Gostuški, who spoke of artistic geometry, the scaffolding of a musical work, musical morphology (and morphology is indeed the study of form!).

Concerning the status of the examples used in my book, it is the result of many years of reflection. One type of diagram is found in the appendices of the study and this mode of presenting pieces was introduced by Professor Popović when Musical Forms became a three-year course at the Faculty. Later on, that principle of analysis progressed through various levels of work. These are diagrams that show all three levels of the piece and they are globally unique because they use symbols for different phenomena in the musical flow, especially in terms of structure, and this has been handed down for generations. Another type of diagram is provided in the appendix (in colour, although black-and-white can also be used) and shows different types of symmetry (static and dynamic), containing, occasionally, parts of those initial, elementary schemes. This chapter as a whole talks about the symbols that are in use, both the standard ones, which are used for teaching at the Faculty in general, as well as those that relate to symmetry or go beyond those standards (these comprise some specific solutions). Most of my examples are of a hybrid type (except, perhaps, those that relate to motives). For instance, there is an A3-format example that I developed in over a hundred different versions, but when I managed to present a concerto comprising several hundred or thousand bars’ worth of music on a single page, it revealed the crystallization of the axes of symmetry in Bartók’s form. Suddenly, my prose started condensing; what I had written in ten pages I could now express on two pages in better quality prose. This methodology and this ana-

lytical discourse count on diagrams, notated examples, tables, graphs. They are not there to adorn the book, but are an indispensable integral part of the text (Example 1).

*In your own compositional oeuvre, you are closer to chamber music, less expansive forms, more rarefied textures. One gets the impression that composing in your life serves as that necessary intimate oasis of pure pleasure and creativity unburdened by success, prizes, and external rewards. In your instrumental pieces, is there a strong presence of traces and influences of those professors with whom you studied composition and of those Serbian authors whose works you analysed in detail? How do your theoretical-analytical dealings with form shape your composing?*

What you just said about an intimate oasis is correct, I think, although I wasn't even aware of that myself until you formulated it like that. I have had discontinuities in my compositional work, but composing was always a need for me. And it was almost always initiated by dreams and dreaming. What kind of streams of consciousness those were, whether it was me trying to perfect myself – that I really don't know – but dreams invariably gave birth to pieces of music. My pieces have been, I must admit, well received by performers, which is of paramount importance for me. Performers have recognized a certain logic, sense, integrity in them and used that to leave their own mark on them. My studies with Rajičić and Hofman were unique experiences. With Rajičić, we improvised our initial ideas on the piano to find the path to the kind of musical expression we sought. Whereas Hofman taught us orchestration; these were one-on-one tutorials, one of the privileges that students used to enjoy. Thus working with two composers who basically followed different vocations, I learned a lot. Whether that shows in my pieces is not for me say. Although I was closer to Hofman (who supervised my master's) and attended his lectures on electronic music, I personally, for instance, have never felt a need to use electronics in my works. And that hasn't changed since. One has to be completely honest with oneself and one's work, doing what suits her, rather than follow trends. Of course, one should learn and be familiar with everything, but one should not adopt everything as part of one's own vocation.

It's difficult to say how my dealings with form have specifically influenced my work in composition. I think that everything I've done in the domain of theoretical studies has left a mark in me. I wish that as students we

had spent more time studying works by Serbian composers, who constitute the foundations of Serbian musical culture. Even today, I still remember my first encounter with Miloje Milojević's First String Quartet, which I edited in 1996. That was a big discovery for me. And there was Konjović as well, whom I began studying because of his relationship with Mokranjac, so then I also discovered Mokranjac. Of course, we did sing *Rukoveti* ("Garlands"), but studying the form of those pieces via their musical flow enabled me to understand them better. Theory and composition are not mutually exclusive and, in my case, they produce results. For instance, my favourite composer is Mozart; he was unique and I enjoy listening to his music, but he did not deal with theory. On the other hand, Schoenberg and Hindemith made brilliant theoretical observations, but I prefer listening to Prokofiev, who did not deal with theory. If one is a composer, that does not necessarily mean that one is a good theorist and vice versa. Theory recognizes certain phenomena, entails a given methodology, whereas a composer has the freedom and right to choose according to her own taste and beliefs. If, on top of that, she is "blessed" with an ability to present that... that's how great works and great names are made. Bartók was one of them.

*Poetry is a special source of inspiration for you. What is it about Slovene poetry that you find so attractive and how do you shape your sounds to match the verses? Do you focus on the melodic qualities of the Slovene language, the semantic meaning of the text, the rhythm of the words and lines, or the conceptual-reflective aspect of the poems?*

All of those aspects you mentioned – melodic qualities, meaning, inflections of the words and verses – all of those things are inseparable. Sometimes one thing prevails, sometimes another, that's precisely what I love about composing music with words. As for why I turned to the Slovene language, that was purely circumstantial. It wasn't intended. I came to the Slovene language via prose, not poetry. Maja Đukanović, a full professor at the Faculty of Philology, translated in 2005 the trilogy of Bojan Meserko; the titles of the three books are *Sanjalište* ("Dreamrealm"), *Sanjaonica* ("Dreamroom"), and *Sanjači* ("Dreamers"). I had Slovene in me as the spoken language of my childhood; I have never studied it, although I later began discovering some of its specificities that I found interesting. At a presentation of Meserko's books in Belgrade, a member of the Slovenian Society, Janko Brezovar, read out parts from the books in a phenomenal way. At that point I knew that, sooner

or later, those texts would find a place in a piece of mine, which finally happened five years later. The texts present convoluted streams of human consciousness, the main protagonist's existence in parallel worlds, which causes him to alternate between lucid and completely lost states, with frequent headaches... That seemed so close to me. There is no punctuation in the protagonist's speech, the word order is subject to change, syllables are permuted, and I found these language games, semantic games, and the protagonist's condition highly interesting. I didn't use the translation, but the original Slovene text.

Similarly peculiar was the way my piece *Nasmeh v slovarju* came to be. I was supposed to compose something for the book launch of the Serbian translation of the *Anthology of Contemporary Slovene Literature*, but for a long time I couldn't find a suitable text in that anthology. And then, on my way back from Cetinje, I was browsing through the book and suddenly identified two poems, which I combined right there and then. Both of them flirt with positive and negative emotions; one of them is called "Reč strah ne postoji više u rečniku" (The Word Fear is No Longer in the Dictionary) and the other is "Osmeh u tami" (A Smile in Darkness). The way I conceived the piece is that the violist should both play and recite, which brings it closer to instrumental theatre. Right there, at the airport, waiting for my flight, I already had in my mind both the lyrics and the sound; inspiration came out of the blue, at leisure, and leisure always lures you to go "somewhere else". Anyway, I am really happy about my excursions into composition and the Slovene language.

*You have often asserted that you see yourself primarily as a pedagogue. The accomplishments of your professional pedagogical work are impressive, in terms of the number of final dissertations you have supervised on all levels of study, in terms of articulating the Methodology of Teaching Music Theory as a course, offering seminars for high-school teachers, as well as working at other institutions of higher education in the region. How do you view the balance of theory, analysis, composition, and pedagogy in your career?*

For me personally, that term, "balance", is not entirely pertinent. Sometimes it's also an imbalance. Taking a long-term perspective, it is still a sort of partnership. It is difficult to achieve a balance in all the areas you mentioned by quantifying. Besides, what's wrong with a nice bit of imbalance? If we're aware of it, it can only help us to balance things out. Whatever I'm currently work-

ing on, I put all I have in it, as best I can. I do not feel obliged to add a “pinch” of this or a “pinch” of that merely to keep everything balanced.

In Novi Sad I worked a full 15 years, and then also in Kragujevac and Cetinje. It was a great pleasure for me, but I also considered myself obliged to take part in workshops for professors and high-school students. I was impressed and confounded by the level of enthusiasm shown by the students who, in the middle of January, battling snow, came all the way from remote places, even from neighbouring states. I would also single out the competition of high schools organized by the *Kornelije* society. Also, the Centre for Career Development at the University of Arts organized workshops on two occasions, on my initiative. I thought it was advisable to use their facilities, that this environment might act as a stimulus for investing in education. Sadly, this too was discontinued after the second workshop. With a lot of enthusiasm I took part in every initiative reaching out to high schools, because I am first and foremost a pedagogue and I’ve learnt the most by working with my students (paraphrasing that famous and true Schoenberg line!). But I did not wait for them to come to me, to the Faculty; I went wherever I was invited, because I wanted to meet professors and students. My support and model was Professor Mirjana Živković, who always advocated cooperation with high schools. When I retired, I retired from everything. I’m bothered by the absence of a systemic approach, because it would be good and useful for both sides, faculty professors and high-school teachers alike, if there were regular contacts.

*Alongside your devoted work in theoretical research and pedagogy, you were also a forceful advocate of and an active participant in the shaping of the Music Theory academic study programme, which was finally accredited at the Faculty in 2009. You witnessed and participated in many changes in the organization of teaching the theoretical subjects. How did this study programme, which is now unique in the region, come to be?*

When I joined the Faculty in 1982, I was confronted with a serious debate involving my professors and colleagues who sought to form a Department of Music Theory. The idea at the time was to put together a group of departments (the so-called seventh department), where 7a would cover musicology, 7b would cover ethnomusicology, and 7c would be the music theory department. At an earlier time, such a department already existed at the Academy of Music (today the Faculty of Music), but it was replaced with the Depart-

ment of General Music Pedagogy, which, in a way, covered the theoretical subjects as well. The subjects of Harmony, Counterpoint, and Musical Forms existed only at the departments of composition, musicology, conducting, ethnomusicology, and organ, whereas the Department of General Music Pedagogy offered integrated subjects: Analysing a Work of Music and Tonal Construction. Only later, in 1992, were Harmony, Counterpoint, and Musical Forms added as subjects to the B.A. curriculum at this department and made into final thesis subjects.

The next attempt came in 1997. The idea was to split the existing department of pedagogy into a and b (one for pedagogy, the other for theory), but that didn't take off either. Meanwhile, the Department of General Music Pedagogy developed a committed engagement with theoretical disciplines. We did not have an undergraduate study programme in music theory, but one could earn a master's or doctoral degree in music theory disciplines. We were building a house from the roof down, not from the foundations up. The introduction of the Bologna process in 2004 saw a rebirth of the idea to form a department of music theory, but once again this failed to materialize because efforts were only made to adjust the existing setup to the new principles. Only in 2009 did the Division [*каџеџа*] of Music Theory finally form this study programme, which is indeed unique throughout the region. So, a lot of time passed between 1982 and 2009 and the department was born in rather complex circumstances. At the time of the Bologna reform, the dean of the Faculty at the time, Milan Mihajlović, and the institution as a whole supported further education for the teaching staff and the enrolment of five professors from the Music Theory Division in the doctoral study programme at the University of Arts, investing thereby into an academic profile that was necessary to make the Department operational in all three levels of study.

Now is the time to introduce organizational, personnel, and technical provisions that would be more favourable to music theory. We have brilliant, excellent individuals, with top-notch references, and I admire them. But we need a broad and high-quality basis, and that is formed in undergraduate and master's study programmes. They would have to be seen as "worthwhile" for students, in terms of making them the first in line to be hired to teach subjects such as Harmony, Counterpoint, and Musical Forms.

*Finally, I would like us to talk about your social activities as well. You are active in the Slovenian Society and the National Council of the Slovenian National Minority in the Republic of Serbia, where you advocate the affirmation*

*and preservation of Slovenian culture and art in Serbia. How would you describe the interaction between the two cultures today and what are your activities in fostering intercultural communication?*

I have pursued those activities with much pleasure, especially promoting the composers Davorin Jenko, Mihovil Logar, and Zlatan Vauda, who had Slovene origins, but lived, worked, and created their works in Serbia. As a composer, theorist, and pedagogue, I considered it my duty to save that from oblivion. My first article was published in the Slovenian journal *Traditiones*, where I presented the work of these three composers to the wider public. Since there were various projects at the Sava Society and the National Council, I always tried to use those occasions to have some of their works performed in public. I took an active part in marking the centenary of Davorin Jenko's death, the author of numerous anthems (Serbia's national anthem, the anthem of the Slovenian army...), which was jointly organized by the National Council, the Musicology Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia. I've really written a lot of texts about Vauda and staged public performances of his and Logar's chamber works. A notable malady tormenting our country is the poor availability and general state of our archives, not only regarding Slovenian composers. It was difficult to explore Vauda's legacy, to make an inventory of his chamber pieces, to study Jenko's correspondence (interestingly, he used the Cyrillic script to write in the Slovene language), and these are people who belong to this culture, who felt as part of this culture. Nevertheless, a lot was done: a film was made about Vauda, Jenko's centenary was marked with a concert featuring music by Slovenian composers in Serbia, there is a festival of Slovenian cinema, several exhibitions have been mounted to present the work of Slovenian engineers, doctors, professors, and other figures working in Serbia's society and public life. The Society has also supported projects dedicated to celebrating Slovenian holidays with their corresponding customs, and the Society also has its choir, who perform here and in Slovenia. I must also mention the *Slovenika* magazine, founded as a magazine for scholarship, culture, and education, which is a unique periodical among the national minorities of Serbia.

Despite the wars that happened in this part of the world, there has always been a bond between the two cultures. I think that bond remains strong today, but could be stronger still. Like everything else, it depends on marketing; the better the marketing, the better the circulation of artists, works, per-





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***Valentina Radoman\****

University of Novi Sad, Academy of Arts

Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology

### A NEW SOUND AND ANTICIPATION OF UNIMAGINABLE REALITY – *SEQUENZA III* BY LUCIANO BERIO

**Abstract:** This paper examines how composer Luciano Berio with his composition *Sequenza III per voce femminile* (1965/66) succeeded in exploring something that is reality behind reality through the unique treatment of artistic material, in this case musical and verbal, much like certain avant-garde artists. It is a search for something that listeners cannot see because of the complex psychological mechanism of the human organism and which is deeply covered by ideologies, spoken language, ideas and similar elements. It is what the painter Piet Mondrian refers to as “the sublime reality”, for example. I employ naturalized components of psychoanalytic theory in this study, therefore the expressions “reality behind reality” or “sublime reality” are also related to the psychoanalytical term “Reality” according to Lacan. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate, using a specific musical example, how art, in this case musical art, can attain outcomes that have been attempted by researchers from other fields, artistic or scientific.

**Keywords:** Luciano Berio, singing, voice, body, signifier, soul, psychoanalytic theory

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\* The author's contact details: vradoman@yahoo.com

*Sequenza III* for female voice (1965/66) by Luciano Berio (Luciano Berio, 1925–2003) predominantly performed by Cathy Berberian (Catherine Anahid ‘Cathy’ Berberian, 1925–1983) is one of the most analysed works in the domain of the new vocal, avant-garde sound. Aside from this work, the same can be said of John Cage’s *Aria* (1955), which was performed by the same artist. Why is the performance of *Sequenza III* so intriguing, even more than Cage’s *Aria*, when it was created at the time when new sound potentials were already being explored intensively – immediately after the Second World War, in Darmstadt or in Paris? Apart from the development of sound as a medium, what was the objective of sound research at the time? In this paper, I shall discuss how Berio, like many visual artists during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, explored with his music the world revealed behind the imaginable world, the so-called reality.

In beginning this consideration of the intriguing character of *Sequenza III* from the aspect of the specifics of the singer’s voice, we can immediately say that Cathy Berberian’s voice can be an opera voice, but not necessarily, it can do *bel canto*, but not necessarily, it can be the voice of many other genres of music, but not necessarily. Cathy Berberian improvises everything that can be performed with her voice and her body at the same time. She does not dance in the manner, for example, of a flamenco singer, giving rhythm to her movements and enhancing the emotional intensity of the music being performed, she does not improvise a dance to the beat of the music, like pop and rock singers do. Her body does not dance. Her body sounds.

It was just a matter of time before many composers accepted Cathy Berberian’s improvisations and her style of vocal and body performances, first Cage and subsequently her husband Luciano Berio, and adapted it to their own opuses.

When Cathy Berberian or another artist sings, dances, or performs with movements in Berio’s *Sequenza III*, the question arises as to whether sound or movement is more important in the performance. The body motions performed by the singers of *Sequenza III*, for example, bear no resemblance to the coded gestures of classic opera singing, which are less essential than the singing itself – because the singing style is not the same. What is the difference? First of all, opera singers do not perform movements in harmony or cooperation, as a kind of counterpoint, with the sound of a voice like a pop or rock singer, but rather in accordance with the mannerisms of a particular epoch and the appropriate situation. Opera singers’ facial expressions will surely communicate, very roughly or quite clearly, the emotional state of the

opera role, unlike pop or rock singers' faces, but Berio's singer will not. She will express *something* with her voice and her body sounding simultaneously with her voice and body parts (if the voice is a part of the body).

Berio was acutely aware that he could not call his composition a traditional name (aria, Lied, song), even ironically or provocatively, because the kind of singing he devised, inspired by Cathy Berberian's voice, does not fall within the singing tradition that prevailed from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In opera arias, for example, the entire body is only important if it falls while the hero or heroine is dying, creating a visual spectacle that can be seen from the last row in the theatre. Unlike the body, the expression of the opera face – which may be difficult to recognize very well from the fifth row of the theater, is a kind of “reflection of the soul”. If the face cannot be recognized, a voice (accompanied by instruments) is always heard, which, according to its rules, conveys the codes of emotional expression/soul expression. *Sequenza III*, on the other hand, requires constant attention to body movements, facial expressions, and the sound of the voice. There is no support of any musical instrument.

How did it happen that in Berio's music, the entire body fused with the soul, although this was not the case in earlier music, or in a wider sense, when the body was separated from the psyche, from the 'soul'? Was it the moment in the Ancient world, in Plato's dialogues when Timaeus was talking that the body was only an external frame, carrier, mantle of the soul (Plátōn 360 π.X./1995)<sup>2</sup> or the turning-point was marked by René Descartes' statement “I think, therefore I am”, followed by the sentence “The soul, which makes us what we are, is completely separated from the body?” Despite the fact that Descartes' claim was misinterpreted from the very beginning and that Descartes made great efforts to unequivocally and constantly point out in his correspondence that for him the unity of the human being still consists of the interaction of soul and body, the dichotomy of body and soul was criticized, questioned, disputed, reinterpreted for centuries, but attributed to Cartesianism.<sup>3</sup> So, it can be said that the separation of body and soul received an impetus in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the above-mentioned conclusion reached by philosophers can be seen in Italian operas of the period. Although the same conclusion could have been reached for different, entirely artistic reasons, it was nevertheless in line with the philosophically dominant viewpoint.

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<sup>2</sup> Platon, *Timaj*, transl. by Marjanca Pakiž, Beograd, Mladost, 1981, from 72.

<sup>3</sup> Jasna, Šakota-Mimica, “Dodir duše i tela”, *Filozofija i društvo*, 1/XXVI, 2005, 126.

On the other hand, Descartes' statement, "I think, therefore I am" – that is, self-awareness in the act of thinking, including doubt – and those discourses in which the so-called soul, in the era of Enlightenment, was identified with the mind, which appeared to have a dominant position over the body – created a special relationship towards what is opposed to soul/spirit/mind – insanity. Consequently, during the Enlightenment, the *ratio*, mind, formed a new relationship with its opponent – madness.<sup>4</sup> Singing and opera both quickly drew attention to this.<sup>5</sup> It is mentioned here because some authors believe the voice from Berio's *Sequenza III* is that of a mad body.<sup>6</sup>

What, then, is the position of a mad body in art, or even earlier in Ancient *techne*, amongst all other mad bodies that did not aim to achieve proper artistic or craft results through their expressions? In Ancient Greece, insanity was condemned, but not in opposition to logos; in tribal communities, the insane, madmen, and lunatics were entrusted to sorcerers, shamans, or sent to them for treatment with their miraculous mixtures of plants and rituals; in

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<sup>4</sup> This paper employs the phrase madness/insane/lunatic etc., which is neither exact nor politically correct, but which Michel Foucault (in translation) employs throughout his work. Because Michel Foucault is an important interlocutor in this study, therefore his expressions are adopted.

<sup>5</sup> Operas abound in characters who are in a state of affect, temporary or permanent, or false lunacy, due to the possibility to display the performer's talent or to achieve a comic or tragic result. These include, for instance:

1. The character of Likori in Monteverdi's lost opera *La finta pazza Licori* (1627);
2. The character of Orlando from Handel's opera of the same name (1733);
3. The character of Ann Boleyn in Gaetano Donizetti's opera of the same name premiered in 1830;
4. The character of Lucia of Lammermoor in the opera of the same name by Gaetano Donizetti (1835).
5. The character of Maria Padilla in the opera of the same name by Gaetano Donizetti (1841);
6. The character of Boris Godunov in the opera of the same name by Modest Mussorgsky (1868–1873)
7. Many characters, such as Elsa from the opera *Lohengrin*, Jose from the opera *Carmen*, Herman from the opera *The Lady of Spades*, Prince from the opera *Rusalka*, Werther, Othello, Tosca, Madame Butterfly, Melisande, Vocek, Pauline from the opera *The Gambler*, murder or kill themselves in pain or die of pain etc. etc.

<sup>6</sup> John Potter, *Vocal Authority; Singing Style and Ideology*, Cambridge – New York etc., Cambridge University Press, 1998, 129; István Anhalt, "Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III*", Canada Music Book, 7, Autumn-Winter 1973.

the Middle Ages, lunatics were excluded, expelled to the margins of the community with convicts and the poor, while in the Renaissance they were expelled from the community and left to wander the land or sea on ships, possibly imprisoned in special buildings, but only if they were financially supported.<sup>7</sup> Psychiatry, a new scientific discipline of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, found lunatics in the confines of these general shelters, but left them there from the beginning.<sup>8</sup> The shelters and similar Church-established facilities were not venues for the medical treatment of souls. In the gap between the vanishing monarchy and the emerging republic with the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, shelters, at least in France, first became places of semi-judicial structure, a kind of administrative structure which, in addition to officially established court institutions, judged and passed judgements themselves,<sup>9</sup> and, in time, they became places where work and earning were obligatory.<sup>10</sup> In short, in the shelters was no healing for the soul of the lunatics but their bodies were forced to work, that is, they were turned into objects of earning. Foucault noticed that it was the technology of power, the power to exclude, to silence, the power to administratively regulate the phenomenon in the same way the same technology began to be applied to many other aspects of society and population such as health, hygiene, the birth rate, mortality, housing conditions, migrations, and so on. It was one of the technologies that defined the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new kind of regulation, control, surveillance, and classification of life in the conditions of the capitalist bourgeois state.

According to the impulse of Plato's philosophical discourse, the thesis of poets' divine lunacy survived all this time. Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) describes it as 'gentle madness'. Pliny the Younger (Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus) claims that poets are allowed to go insane, which was a valid attitude even during the Middle Ages, while at the end of the Middle Ages, the theme of madness in its ambiguity became widespread on the European scene "as a threat and mockery, the moody insanity of the world and the petty ridicule of people".<sup>11</sup> Then, as previously indicated, lunacy became a theme in scientific and intellectual discourse, as well as in painting, literature, and opera. According to Foucault, the face of lunacy began to occupy the imagi-

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<sup>7</sup> Mišel Fuko, *Istorija ludila u doba klasicizma*, trans. by Jelena Stakić, Beograd, Nolit, 1980. (Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1961.)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, 1980, 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

nation of Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> When it is argued that lunacy dominated the imagination of Europeans, in the context of art it usually refers, since the Enlightenment, to the artist's inspired soul, rather than his body, or it refers to the insane mind of a fictional character. As a result, the troubled mind was only exploited in art as a theme or an issue involving the soul, while corporeality as a relationship with the mind was suppressed and masked. Another aspect of corporeality – sexuality – was concealed until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whether in a healthy or perverted (or another adjective according to some other classification) mind.

Then, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *fin de siècle* brought the interweaving of two enormous technologies of power: “[...] the one that stressed sexuality and the other that separated lunacy” said in Foucault's logic and terminology.<sup>13</sup> In fact, on the threshold between these centuries, two significant echoes of the body mode emerged: one in Freud's psychoanalysis, a psychoanalytic theory that, in synergy with Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic conclusions, influenced a large number of thinkers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the other in Nietzsche's philosophy, whose elements were later developed, among others, by Deleuze and Guattari in an anti-Freudian, anti-Saussure, antipsychiatric manner. Despite Nietzsche's explicit rejection of Cartesianism and the statement from his book *Also sprach Zarathustra* that says, “[b]ody am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only a word for something about the body” by studying sexuality, Sigmund Freud uncovers the truth hidden by reason (mind, consciousness, and soul), and with the help of researched sexuality, he discovers the unconscious ‘below’, the soul, and deciphers lunacy. That is why thinkers after him, such as Lacan, intentionally used Cartesian language to state things like “I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think”.<sup>14</sup> For, there – in the mind, consciousness – is where the Cartesian subject is, according to Lacan, who followed Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic path while re-reading Freud's opus in a

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<sup>12</sup> Mišel Fuko, “Odnosi moći prelaze u unutrašnjost tela”, razgovor sa L. Finas, *Moć/Znanje, Odabrani spisi i razgovori 1972–1977*, transl. by Olja Petronić, Novi Sad, Mediterran Publishing, 2012, 165. (Michel Foucault, “Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l'intérieur du corps” (entretien avec L. Finas), *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 4, 1977, 4–6.

<sup>13</sup> Žak Lacan, *Spisi* (izbor), transl. by Danica Mijović, Filip Filipović, Radoman Kordić, Beograd, Prosveta, 1983, 106. (Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966; Jacques Lacan, *Écrits, The First Complete Edition in English*, transl. by Bruce Fink, in collab. with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg, London – New York, W. W. Norton)

<sup>14</sup> Žak Lacan, *Spisi* (izbor), op.cit., 106.

way that Freud himself could not – a subject captured in language, in the Symbolic Order that determines the boundaries of the mind, of what we are allowed to think, what can be thought, but within the framework of an already given language and its signifiers that point to each other, instead to reality.<sup>15</sup> I am where I do not think, therefore I am in language, the Symbolic Order. And that means now switching from the topic of madness, insanity, to the topic of desire. In Lacan's key, this means: I think where I am not, where I think through my own Desire, which is, however, the desire of the Other.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century one delicate equilibrium will remain fragile and under dispute, being the balance between giving preference to the study and interpretation of the conscious / subconscious / unconscious (Freud, Lacan, etc.) on the one hand and studying the materiality of the body, on the other hand, in which the most diverse discourses intersect and attribute power and through that power inscribed by gymnastics, nudity, pleasure with a nice body etc., acquires consciousness of the body,<sup>16</sup> or Deleuze and Gattari's understanding of the body as an area that precedes the subject because it is interpreted as a flux, a series of pure contractions, tiny 'consciousnesses' scattered "on the surface that remains Skin even when it is about metaphysics"<sup>17</sup> due to which the subject becomes a multitude of subjects. Because, when researching the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious, Freud concludes that the body is not the same as the organism, but a collection of erogenous zones, a corpus of pleasure. As a result, the subject is merely the subject of the body, as the one that is thin, fluid, and enjoyable by itself.<sup>18</sup> And, as Lacan later proved, since the subject's desire is always dependent on the desire of the Other, the body is always a social body in some sense. Encouraged by Lacan, Deleuze highlighted the relationship between body and language, because speech conceals in itself the function of pleasure, a pornographic gestuality.<sup>19</sup> As a consequence, Deleuze challenged Saussure's view of language as a separate entity from reality, as a collection of signifiers that, like words in a dic-

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<sup>15</sup> A rough draft of this text was done in 2009. In musicology at that time, it was necessary to explain at least the basics of Lacan's opinion, as well as Lacan's concepts, but this is hopefully no longer the case.

<sup>16</sup> Mišel Fuko, "Moć i telo", *Moć/Znanje, Odabrani spisi i razgovori 1972–1977*, op. cit., 62. (Michel Foucault, "Pouvoir et corps", *Quel corps?*, 1975, 2, 2–9)

<sup>17</sup> Nenad Mišćević, *Marksizam i post-strukturalistička kretanja: Althusser, Deleuze, Foucault*, Rijeka, Biblioteka "Prometej", 1975, 138.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

tionary, refer only to one another and not to anything beyond the closed structure of language. Since, in Deleuze's opinion, speech in which desire is embodied cannot be considered a closed system. In this, he partially agrees with Freud, because Freud also observes that repressed instincts always manifest themselves through language.<sup>20</sup> (Bart also mentions pleasure while embracing Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of 'empty' language.)

The desire (body) of speech and body language meet in writing. When interpreting Deleuze, writing, according to Mišćević, is like engraving a sign in the body. It is tattooing, torture that leaves scars, punishment, circumcision, anointing, the imprinting of facts or impressions in memory, and emotions (through the psyche) in the body. As matter is in motion, like language, which is a machine for making sentences, the body is a space for writing, registering, and production.<sup>21</sup> However, liberating that production is the common goal of Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud and their followers, as well as Deleuze's anti-psychiatric stream. Some artists had this goal, like, for example, Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio when writing *Sequenza III for female voice*.

If we move away from the issue and focus on one and the same problem being intriguing to the mentioned psychoanalysts and philosophers, from Freud to Deleuze and Gattari, from psychoanalysis to art, to Berberian and Berio, and that is desire, we can see that, according to the interpretation of psychoanalysts and philosophers, desire is located in unconsciousness, on the body, and in spoken language.

If it is true that desire, as Lacan defined it, is the desire of the Other from which an incomprehensible desire springs to us, when we do not know what the Other wants from us, when he asks us the question *Che vuoi?*<sup>22</sup> confronting us with the abyss of our own desire, that is, with the question of whether we know or do not know what we want, and that we must not, at the same time, betray our desire, step back before it; or if desire is the desire that the Other desires, if desire exists only if the Other is perceived as the one who desires; or if it is a desire – the desire for the lost object of original enjoyment

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 144–145.

<sup>22</sup> Jacques Lacan, "Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien", *Colloques philosophiques internationaux: La dialectique*, 19 au 23 septembre 1960. <http://www.michne-torah.com/medias/files/subversion-du-sujet-et-dialectique-du-desir.pdf>

in the field of the Imaginary, and then it appears as a desire that is with someone else who allegedly took the object of desire from us; or if desire is manifested in the social realm, then where does Lacan's famous word *jouissance* – which could be translated as *pleasure* with caution – fit in with all these and other manifestations of desire? As all scientists in the humanities agree, *pleasure*, *jouissance*, is not pleasure, the satisfaction of a need. While desire, according to Lacan, is also a relationship with the Other, *jouissance* is, a relationship with an *objet petit a*, as stated numerous times. As a result, *jouissance* refers to both language and the body. The speaking creature in the Symbolic Order is cut off from the pleasures of the body and from direct access to reality because it speaks. However, while speaking the individual enjoys the meaning because a part of that enjoyment is transferred to the words and the manner in which they are uttered. As a result, *jouissance* is split between “enjoying beyond the body” and “enjoying of the Other”.

For the story of Berio's *Sequenza III for Female Voice*, it is vital to mention Freud's conclusion that suppressed desire can sometimes become a cause of disease. It is also necessary to point out Lacan's observation that the effect of meaning in speech, and hence pleasure, is achieved by the effect of one signifier jumping into another, establishing a signifier chain that produces its own truth, but also excess of meaning.

On the example of *Sequenza III*, we should now consider the relevance for musicology of Freud's and, in particular, Lacan's insights into desire—desire in the unconscious as a part of the psyche that in some cases manifests itself on the surface of the body as a source of disease and desire as something that is split into what is lost forever and what is structured as language by entering Symbolic Order, but a language that moves from signifier to signifier, metaphor to metaphor, distortion to distortion, whose meaning is incomprehensible because it disappears and evaporates constantly.

In a way, *Sequenza III* for female voice, written for Cathy Berberian, among other numerous symptomatic examples of the postwar music of radical modernism, continues the line of voice treatment carried by Schoenberg's opera *Erwartung*. As a result, as already pointed out, many authors hear the voice of a mad body in the voice from Berio's *Sequenza III*,<sup>23</sup> while others notice gender issues and the technology of the power disciplining body, i. e. the ideology of the private (bourgeois division into female private. and male public space) in the intimate, chamber character of both Schoenberg and Be-

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<sup>23</sup> John Potter, op. cit., 129; István Anhalt, op. cit.

rio's work,<sup>24</sup> while many note Berio's attempt to disintegrate and reintegrate language syntax by turning it into sound necessary to achieve "objective physical reality".<sup>25</sup>

Many scientists and artists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries aspired to establish "objective reality" for various reasons, given the fact that such a reality was actually multi-blurred (by phantasms, language, ideologies, etc.). It is sufficient to mention Manet's advocacy of a painting reality, Mondrian's search for sublime reality, the metalexical mental language of Viktor (Velimir) Khlebnikov or Alexei Kruchonykh, Malevich's refusal to represent any ideology in the painting,<sup>26</sup> perhaps the need of Hanslick and Shklovski to close the world of art analysis within the framework of a work of art itself, protecting both the work and the discursive interpretation of the work from the influence of other discourses and ideologies that are transmitted by those discourses, etc. in the already limited world of the autonomy of art and l'art pour l'art.

When Berio wrote his piece in the 1960s, psychoanalysis was also dealing with the problem of reality behind reality—the Real, which, in Lacan's opinion, and as it is now mentioned in many scientific disciplines, is not reality, not imaginable reality, but something that cannot be symbolized or articulated in language, and will always remain incomprehensible and hidden as the artists themselves sensed. The reality we see in front of us, according to Lacan and as the artists of modernism noticed, is always structured. This reality is structured by what Lacan calls phantasm, which serves to protect us from a direct confrontation with the horrifying, traumatic Real that is encoded in the very core of human sexuality. Prior to Lacan, it appears that artists were unable to predict this protective role. However, sexuality itself is a lot deeper and difficult problem than varied sexual practices and habits. Because there is something constitutively unconscious in the sphere of sexuality that must be subsequently suppressed. So the question remains: what originally is in the sphere of sexuality and afterwards must be suppressed? This ontological constitutive lack /negativity leads to the conclusion that sexuality is struc-

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<sup>24</sup> James McCalla, "Music and Literature II: Vocal Chamber Music", in: *Twentieth-Century Chamber Music*, London – New York, Routledge, 2003, 77.

<sup>25</sup> Marinela Ramazzotti, "Luciano Berio's Sequenza III: From Electronic Modulation to Extended Vocal Technique", *Ex-Tempore. A Journal of Compositional and Theoretical Research in Music*, XV/1, 2010, 81–96.

<sup>26</sup> Slobodan Mijušković, *Od samodovoljnosti do smrti slikarstva; Umetničke teorije (i prakse) ruske avangarde*, Beograd, Geopoetika, 1998, from 171.

tured around a fundamental lack, just as it is the case with conscious knowledge that is structured in the same way. This is why Lacan claims that unconscious knowledge is not actually unconscious, but knowledge that does not know itself because it is originally missing, because it is missing in the Real.<sup>27</sup> But, aside from that flaw, there is also something that is excess which impacts the perception of external, imaginable reality. Namely, when Freud determined that the body is not an organism but a collection of erogenous zones and that unconscious desire manifests itself on the body's surface and in the language, Lacan noticed, supplementing Freud's observations with Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic insights, and vice versa – Saussure's observations with Freud's insights – that language as a set of signifiers does not direct only certain signifiers to others, thus creating a chain of signifiers independent of external reality. He noted that this supposedly autonomous signifier chain, which is independent of reality, is continually producing unanticipated purport, meaning, or excess of meaning, as Alenka Zupančič puts it (apart from the nothing/lack/negativity that it is constituted around). He did notice, however, that this excess of meaning carries certain amounts of affect or pleasure (as mentioned, pleasure is divided between enjoyment 'outside the body' – in words, and enjoyment of the Other as a source that, like a boomerang, restores desire), and that signifiers are related to external reality through this excess of meaning as pleasure, as Deleuze later reinterpreted.<sup>28</sup> The effects of the signifier can never be returned to the signifier itself, which is why the subject appears to be a creation of incomplete, inconsistent, imprecise language, omissions of words, and so on.<sup>29</sup>

Berio's *Sequence III* for female voice can be read from the field of musical analysis, as well as with the help of the indicated ideas derived from psychoanalytic theory, given the composer's intention to write, after a decade of experimenting with the electronic medium of sound and music production, a composition in which he will treat the human, female voice as a machine/instrument capable of producing new sound. From the standpoint of traditional musicological discourse, Berio's *Sequenza III* for female voice is not easy to categorize in terms of genre, given that it is a composition for voice

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<sup>27</sup> Alenka Zupančič, "Seksualno i ontologija", *Filozofija i društvo*, XXV (1), 2014, 187–188, 191.

<sup>28</sup> Alenka Zupančič, "ABC freudovske revolucije", *Problemi*, 43 (7/8), 2005, 67–89. (Alenka Zupančič, "ABC freudovske revolucije", trans. by Maja Solar and Ivan Radenković, *Stvar, časopis za teorijske prakse*, 2, 2011, 134)

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

without any instrumental accompaniment, with facial expressions and body movements, i.e. theatrical elements caused by the voice itself, that is, by the composer's demands. As a way of performing music, Luciano Berio wants the singer or actress to employ movement or mimicry spontaneously, but in a way that the movement is equivalent to the spoken language or singing without going beyond what is written in the composition. Therefore, it is a combination of movement (body language as unconscious speech), speech, and singing, a kind of greater step of vocal music towards performance, with the word "greater step" being used because vocal music performance (s) is always performative. The text of *Sequenza III*, written by Marcus Kutter at Berio's request to write him "a few words for a woman to sing", was unusual for a vocal music genre until that time. Kutter wrote the text in English, starting with Berio's words, which are uttered by a man:

give me	a few words	for a woman
to sing	a truth	allowing us
to build a house	without worrying	before night comes. <sup>30</sup>

These nine "phrases" were "decomposed" by Berio, who split words, parts of words, and syllables. As an example, the first line of the composition text actually reads:

to co us for be /  
sing to me /  
tome to /  
uth be few co /  
e e a /  
to co be words i [...]

Performing such fragmented pieces of words and shifted syllables, vowels, and consonants does not usually result in meaningful phrases, yet certain phrases from the original text appear in clues during the performance. As a consequence, the text cannot be performed in its original form, even though all of its elements are present, and the text "does not vanish". But still there is a question of how important the meaning of the text itself is, aside from serving as a framework, the "preceding" description of the background-idea of *Sequenza III*, as a general landmark for an artist who can create her own world of *Sequenza III*, based on her own desire, especially given Berio's suggestion that the voice should sing for the entire eight minutes, as long as the

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<sup>30</sup> Give me / a few words / for a woman / to sing / a truth / allowing us /to build a house / without worrying/ before night comes.

composition lasts, therefore, changing the expressions that are diametric in character in very short time intervals: *tense muttering, urgent, distant and dreamy, very tense, nervous laughter, impassive, giddy, nervous, wistful, bewildered, ecstatic, whimpering, faintly, tender, apprehensive, languorous, witty, noble, joyful, frantic, subsiding, whining, gasping, increasingly desperate, echoing, serene, extremely intense, calm, anxious, very excited and frantic, relieved, fading?* There are also instructions in the musical score, such as the signs *hm* (*hand/s on mouth*) for putting hands over the mouth to get the sound of silence, muffling, numbness, or the sound of a flickering voice using a hand as a resonance stimulus, and *hd* (*hand down*) for lowering the hands from the lips, coughing marks, hitting the palate with the tongue (*mouth clicks*), cracking of the fingers, and so on. So, it is a language that is not the language of a crazy body, as Potter, Anhalt and other authors or perhaps some listeners easily claim, but a wide range of sounds, singing, meaningless language, language of movement (body language), in fact, it can be claimed that it is the search for the language of the unconscious, the language of desire, using the sources that are not “false”, mediated by ideology, such as spoken language and its seemingly easy to understand meanings. Because the text is not articulated, the attention is directed, on the one hand, to the pleasure or respect for virtuosity provided by the voice itself, despite the fact that it is not the traditional enjoyment in beautiful singing (*bel canto, bell'arte del canto*) or the traditional virtuosity of a soprano or a counter-tenor, etc., but on the other hand, because the text is inarticulate, it testifies about the inconsistency of language (factual, as scientists have discovered), points to a kind of omission in speech i.e. everything that Freud described as the emergence of the unconscious, the desire from the unconscious field.

Desire, in the sense of Freud's understanding of the instinct for life, libido, *eros*, which is always interwoven with the instinct for death, *thanatos*, appears as a voice in *Sequenza III*. Freud believed that the unconscious communicates, manifests itself in language (whose transmitter, medium, is voice), and can be treated by talking to a psychoanalyst, although this was not entirely true. As Mladen Dolar points out, Freud established that despite their intertwining, *eros* and *thanatos* do not appear in the same way. *Thanatos* does not follow the logic of signification, although omnipresent, it is, nevertheless, unlike *eros*, invisible, mute, inaudible, *stumm*.<sup>31</sup> *Eros*, on the other

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<sup>31</sup> Mladen Dolar, *Glas i ništa više*, trans. by Iva Nenić, Beograd, Fedon, 2012, 177. (Mladen Dolar, *O glasu*, Ljubljana, Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo, 2003)

hand, is both audible and visual. In the study *Die Traumdeutung* (Dream Interpretation), written in 1900, Freud describes dream as *Wunscherfüllung*—the fulfillment of desire, and in a dream the satisfaction of desire is achieved through the pictorial language of symbols, metaphors, metonymy, which, as Dolar puts it, defies signification while achieving its goal.<sup>32</sup> The psychiatrist deciphers the meaning of a dream, yet its “meaninglessness”, which is most often expressed in pictures without sound, is precisely how the desire is presented or fulfilled in a dream.

If, on the other hand, eros is externalized through the retelling of a dream rather than through the language of the dream, or if it directly employs speech, voice, singing voice, or any other sound as a transmitter, the question is what that instinct conveys by sound and what language it speaks? This can be a consistent, spoken language, as much as possible, an inconsistent language, a language of omissions, a “prelanguage” of coughing, hiccups, beating, screaming or a “postlanguage” of singing,<sup>33</sup> or it can be just one sound, one click, as Mladen Dolar explains in his consideration of one of Freud’s patients.<sup>34</sup> Berio’s piece is about the full range of sounds created by the female body, particularly the voice—about prelanguage, speaking, singing, postlanguage, and body language. But what is voice, exactly? On the one hand it is a bearer of meaning, actually, a potential meaning of the text, but it is intentionally shredded in *Sequenza III*, broken, and so deprived of all narrative building techniques by which it might persuade the audience of whatever truth it can communicate or reality it can produce. It is a disruptive language that is more concerned with sound than with meaning. If *Sequenza III* is about the intentional, feminine language of a male composer (analogous to feminine, if it can be called that, the prose or poetry of avant-garde writers like Mallarmé, Joyce, Cummings, and many others, focused by this tactic on questioning, reassessing the established Symbolic Order) or a mimicry to cover up what cannot be said or a female sexuality articulated by corporeality and language, then, in the first case it is the reason to use precisely the female body, and the female voice in order to express what is impossible to utter. The female body is suitable because, among other things, masculine demands, male interpretations of the imaginary world, and male signifying practices have molded female sexuality and language for ages. As a result, feminism’s

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 40, 44.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 178.

major research issue is the history of the suppression of female language. For centuries, women's talk about their own bodies, even the use of their own bodies to communicate about bodies, had no place in the hierarchy of desirable social discourses. Language was not regarded immanent to the female body since, as previously said, the body was long seen to be subordinate to the mind, hence woman's right to speak was never privileged because she was seen as an object, above all as a body. In fact, as Lin Hejinian argues, women's speech was:

[...] considered trivial, second-rate, because it was placed in the original, not in the public world (of free men), but in the private and home domains (maintained by women and servants). Because the domestic sphere was the realm of the body—the domestic being where the body is fed, dressed, and cleansed, where it gives birth, defecates, and periodically escapes into the world of ultimate privacy and secret, the world of sleep and dreams, it was considered disgusting. Finally, our speech was regarded as threatening because women are knowledgeable in this field.<sup>35</sup>

That is why Julia Kristeva believes that writers like Joyce and Mallarmé, who focused on the materiality of language, especially on its sounds and rhythms, rather than its communicative function, utilized a language devoid of meaning, that is, a language that disrupts meaning, releases new meanings and enables new ways of understanding. As a psychoanalyst, Kristeva notices something very significant for the context of this section of the work: she discovers that writers, by employing literary language in the aforementioned manner, subconsciously relived the union with their mother. Because such language is “incestuous”—since it returns the writer to pleasure (desire and *jouissance*, as Lacan would put it) before knowing the words, and thus to identification with the mother as she exists, in Lacan's vocabulary, as a whole, as a phase of the Imaginary before the Symbolic – such language also refuses to identify with the father and the logic of the father's discourse, that is, the conventional symbolic order and thus the patriarchal world. According to Lacan, it is the language of the search for a lost *objet petit a* defines the entire human life. Instead of a lost *objet petit a*, life only offers fetishes such as God, Nation, Commodity, Ruler, and others which shifting from the Imaginary to the Symbolic language will never restore the original wholeness or compensate for what is lost. Kristeva also believes that “the rhythms of the body and

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<sup>35</sup> Lynn Heginien, “Who Speaks”, transl. by Maya Solar, *ProFemina*, 46/50, 2007–2008, 174.

the unconscious managed to break through the strict rational defenses of conventional social meaning” in the literary works of the mentioned writers, and that “the language of these artists is close to a child’s speech when learning the language and using shouting, singing, gestures, word games, or laughter, everything that, like a dream, defies signification but achieves its goal”.<sup>36</sup> The parallel between the cited artists’ literary actions and Berio’s treatment of the text in *Sequenza III* appears to be apparent.

On the other hand, when listening to the voice in *Sequenza III*, however, the meaning, i.e. its looming, can be fully ignored in order to enjoy the aesthetic dimension of the voice. In Berio’s *Sequenza III*, the voice carries something—a fragmented text that is potentially meaningful, but that meaning is suppressed in favor of the voice, contrary to the purpose of speech in the voice. In terms of the aesthetic dimension, that voice embodies virtuosity as the aesthetic norm, but also something more. It is not coloratura virtuosity, very high or very deep tones, big, excessive or decreased intervals, sound power, and so forth. It’s a virtuosity that could be described as virtuosity of a wide range of sounds for which the performance instructions are not always precisely given, despite the great number of them. This excess, which is ‘attached’ to the virtuosity of performing a wide range of sounds for which precise instructions are impossible to give, occupies a position that is partially analogous—or at least appears to be—to that of the voice in cases where it is an obvious medium, transmitter of signifiers which allows expression but is also drowned in the signifier, “disappears at the same moment when the meaning emerges”.<sup>37</sup> As a consequence, the voice is something that does not contribute to meaning, that is, its creation. It is a blind spot in the meaning-making process, a refuse of meaning,<sup>38</sup> and it is something that linguistics does not study. The signifier, on the other hand, has no materiality; it must utilize the voice or rather silence, suppress the voice in order to establish the reality we know as “imaginable” reality (as opposed to “sublime reality”, “objective reality”, the Real, etc.), by referring to another signifier, and this one to the next, the next to the next, and so on. In relation to the fact that voice is a refuse of meaning or significance, Dolar mentions three elements that oppose the meaning in the voice: accent, intonation and color. The accent of language (English) in Berio’s composition cannot exist and cannot offer resistance to

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<sup>36</sup> Mladen Dolar, op. cit., 2012, 99.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 26.

the text meaning, its signifiers, so that resistance to the text meaning, apart from the composer's intervention to decompose words and syllables, is based on individual "intonation", as Dollar defines it, of everyone's voice,<sup>39</sup> whereas in a speech about music one would write about the composer's articulation marks, the tempo or character of the performing music, and, of course, the color and individuality of the voice. Mladen Dolar reminds us that the voice is like a fingerprint: it can be instantly recognized and identified, and it is full of side effects,<sup>40</sup> which is why Luciano Berio composed *Sequenza III* first and foremost for Cathy Berberian, who has remained a symbol of this composition, despite the fact that it can be sung by other artists. Individuality, color/structure/density of voice is the surplus "attached" to the composition virtuosity, and that excess, like the excess produced by signifiers, provides enjoyment/(dis)like that points to the "reality of humanity" versus the effects of mechanically, electronically realized voice.

In this regard, Berio's attempt to achieve "objective reality", which is a significant tendency of the art of radical modernism, i.e., the aesthetic regime of art during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that immediately reveals its situation in a certain historical and political sequence, led Berio to discover the language of desire manifested by music, even though, if we keep in mind the artistic context of the time in which Berio worked, the composer's intention was most likely the one mentioned – reaching objective reality Berio would not have requested the text for his piece if this were not the case. The composer repeated the gesture of eliminating ideologies carried by signifiers known since Maljevic or the gesture of erasing the patriarchal Symbolic Order known since Mallarmé, by officially ordering the text and then destroying the text template. However, it turned out that the reality Berio sought behind words was the field of the unconscious that Freud and later Lacan and other psychoanalysts spoke about, which he attained in parts but found incomprehensible in its entirety – the field of the unconscious where desire lies. So, while the voice in Berio's composition suppresses and splits the signifiers, resisting imaginable reality with all its policies and ideologies, plunging (unconsciously) into the depths of the unconscious where desire is, that voice suppressing the meaning offers something of its own – virtuosity, which is not just virtuosity. It is not only a traditional virtuosity, the one already adopted by reality, which, if Berio had used it, would have lost its politicalness, in this case, the ability to

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 34.

sensorily represent the unconscious language, because it would be traditionally reduced to an expected aesthetic pleasure enclosed by the boundaries of traditional art. This surplus, however, the excess of new virtuosity, on the other hand, is a new pleasure that spills outside the voice, sending the performer or listener to an “imaginable reality”, sheltering them from the dreadful and traumatic Real.

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## Summary

Luciano Berio, as it is well known, composed *Sequenza III per voce femminile* in 1965, inspired by Catherine Anahid 'Cathy' Berberian's singing. The piece was written during a period of intense, avant-garde research into instrumental and vocal sounds across Europe and the search for the so-called reality behind reality. *Sequenza III* is a musical composition that the singer should perform unaccompanied by any instrument using singing, improvised facial expressions and hand movements, as well as a variety of previously unusual sounds that change quickly and suddenly (coughing, whispering, tongue clicks, laughter, sighs, shouts, etc.). The meaning of the composition text is difficult to deduce because it is fragmented into shifting syllables and phonemes. All the mentioned characteristics of this composition have led some musicologists to claim that this type of musical work resembles the singing and speech of a crazy woman. In reality, psychoanalytic and feminist research has helped to prove that this type of vocal virtuosity, which differs from conventional opera singing or singing of popular or folk music, is, in fact, a mode to explore the human unconscious in the way that painters, by exploring the medium of painting, studied the language of painting and developed visual thinking, while also re-examining the reality that was presented to them. So Luciano Berio tried to reach the reality that is not determined by the conventions of any traditional singing, i.e. the conventions of a patriarchal, ideologically represented world, by using the female voice as a medium that produces sounds typical, as feminist authors have noted, of the domain of the house, the home atmosphere, what is private, hidden from the public, intimate, obscene, intuitive. He used a feminine voice, which may be the right medium to introduce a newborn human being to the world, as well as an unarticulated text by which he annulled (similar to Malevich in the field of painting who avoided imitating any scene and thus any ideology with *Black Square*) the world of the already known singing and thus expressing the feeling of reality by centuries-old conventions of the (primarily patriarchal) society. Thus, by exploring the boundaries of the voice medium, Berio came close to reaching the sound of 'reality behind reality', the sound of the unconscious, where, among other things and according to psychoanalytic theories, human desire dwells, and which, according to Freud, can be heard and which speaks out, unlike the instinct

of death, which is inaudible. Is it, then, possible to say that any experimental singing that we are not familiar with, whose conventions we do not recognize is the sound of human desire? Of course not, because, according to the results of psychoanalytic research thus far, desire has its own means of expression. Berio's composition fits into feminist psychoanalytic opinions (for example, those of Julia Kristeva), Mladen Dolar's research into the relationship between the phenomenon of voice and desire, and research into the human unconscious Freud dealt with, among other things, or Lacan's research of *jouissance* – a transgressive kind of pleasure that turns people into never-completed subjects ('split' subjects, separated from the Imaginary, protected from the Real).

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**Marko Aleksić**

University of Arts, Belgrade  
Faculty of Music  
Department of Music Theory

## ASSOCIATIVE TONALITY AND TONAL-HARMONIC THIRD RELATIONS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF TEXTUAL AND DRAMATIC MEANINGS IN RICHARD STRAUSS'S *ELEKTRA*\*

**Abstract:** The subject of research in this paper is the specific manifestation of associative tonality and tonal-harmonic third relations in Strauss's opera *Elektra*. Originating from the analytical discourse of several authors, dedicated to opera and music drama, associative tonality is a dramatic-tonal concept within which a certain key is consistently associated with a specific dramatic element, such as character, collectivity, event, feeling and more. In addition to the strong presence of associative keys related to the dramatic characters, *Elektra* is distinctly characterized by a chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relation that occurs both between chords and between keys. It is important for the harmonic language of the opera that these two types of relations that are formed between keys, at certain moments become more important than the manifestation of one particular key. New achievements in the field of hermeneutic musical analysis represent the initial assumption in this paper, and within these achievements it is possible to talk about the interpretive analysis of harmony as an interpretation of an opera or music drama. The paper aims to examine the ways in which associative tonality, on the one hand, and two types of third relationships between keys and between chords, on the other hand, function as instances of interpre-

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\* The paper is based on a part of the research conducted in the PhD dissertation of the author. See: Marko Aleksić, MA, *The Role of Harmony in the Formation of a Network of Interpretative Relations in German Opera and the Symphonic Lied of the Second Half of the Nineteenth and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, Belgrade, 2021 (mentor: distinguished professor Ana Stefanović, PhD).

tation, which would provide a deep or completely new understanding of the elements of dramatic structure.

**Keywords:** harmony, associative tonality, interpretive analysis, Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, chromatic third relationship, doubly-chromatic relationship.

### Theoretical assumptions of associative tonality

The associative use of tonality, simply and more often in recent literature referred to as associative tonality, represents a specific type of semantic manifestation of tonality in opera and music drama, within which a certain key is consistently associated with a specific dramatic element, such as a character, collectivity, event, situation or feeling. The American musicologist Robert Bailey (1937–2012) dealt with this phenomenon most consistently in his work. In his analysis of Richard Wagner's (1813–1883) *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Bailey points to two ways of realizing tonal associativity, from which one can understand the power of its potential within the tonal system of music drama: "First of all, specific melodies or motives can be associated with a particular pitch level; and secondly, a particular tonality can be associated with particular characters or, in the earlier operas, with underlying dramatic themes."<sup>1</sup> Some authors emphasize associative tonality as a concept that is more important for an opera than the melodic representation of the dramatic element, in its usual leitmotif sense, taking into account the premise that "persons and ideas may be associated with keys as well as with tunes. But a focus on tonality rather than on theme draws attention to structure rather than to form."<sup>2</sup> Although this attitude obviously points to the superiority of tonal associativity over melodic associativity, it is necessary to point out at this moment an important aspect of the relationship between leitmotif and associative tonality. Namely, the leitmotif may or may not be related to associative tonality:<sup>3</sup> understood in its basic meaning, as a melodic-rhythmic con-

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the 'Ring' and Its Evolution", *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 1/1, 1977, 51.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. E. Harper-Scott, "Medieval Romance and Wagner's Musical Narrative in the 'Ring'", *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 32/3, 2009, 230.

<sup>3</sup> At this point, it seems important to point out that associative tonality signifies a phenomenon that is sometimes called *leittonalität* (leit-tonality) in the literature. In this paper, we opted for the use of the term associative tonality, due to the fact that in the contemporary literature dealing with the tonal system of Wagner's and Richard Strauss' (1864–1949) operas, the term associative tonality is mainly used, but also because in that

figuration, the leitmotif can be in a certain key, i.e. in its “own” key, and in that case both the leitmotif and that certain associative key are referentially connected with the same dramatic element; however, if the leitmotif, as, therefore, primarily a melodic-rhythmic configuration, is transposed into other tonality/tonalities, only the leitmotif will have a referential connection with that dramatic element, but not the key. Very often, the semantic field of associative tonality is extended to certain chords or to certain harmonic functions that can be related to a specific dramatic element. The same thing applies to such an “associative chord”: it can appear in the preferred key (usually it is the key that is either the first in which such a chord appeared, or the one that accompanies the largest number of occurrences of that chord, in the course of the opera), but will have the same associative meaning when it appears in a different key. In the latter case, in order to define the correct meaning of such an “associative chord”, and finally, for the undisturbed auditory perception of this chord, it is usually necessary that the chord itself has a very specific sonority (to mention but an example of the “Tristan chord”, with its characteristic juncture of the French sixth and chromatic suspension, or the “Elektra chord”, with its bitonal pairing of triads). Therefore, Bailey insists that we view associative tonality as a concept that extends its meaning to wider structural units and is often so strong in the overall tonal framework of the piece, that the tonal context of that piece is not only adapted to associative keys, but also formed by associative keys.<sup>4</sup> Bailey considers associative tonality to be one of the four specific tonal concepts that strongly characterize Wagner’s music (along with classical, expressive and directional tonality) and through which the ways in which the composer uses tonality for narrative purposes are presented.<sup>5</sup> However, Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, who significantly upgraded Bailey’s theory, emphasizes that of these four concepts, the last three occupy a central place precisely because they are not only tonal but also dramatic-tonal concepts.<sup>6</sup> In that sense, the dramatic component of as-

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literature, in comparison with the one that deals with *leittonalität*, the interpretive potential of such a manifestation of tonality is nevertheless more comprehensively elaborated.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Robert Bailey, op. cit., 53.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 48–61; Robert Bailey, “An Analytical Study of the Sketches and Drafts”, in: Robert Bailey (Ed.), *Wagner: Prelude and Transfiguration from ‘Tristan und Isolde’*, New York, Norton, 1985, 113–146.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, “The End of ‘Die Feen’ and Wagner’s Beginnings: Multiple Approaches to an Early Example of Double-Tonic Complex, Associative Theme and Wagnerian Form”, *Music Analysis*, III/25, 2006, 321–322.

sociative tonality will be the focus of this paper. Along with Bailey, his student Patrick McCreless and Bribitzer-Stull, many other scientists in the world of music theory and musicology deal with the issue of associative tonality.<sup>7</sup> Also important is the fact that key associations are largely pre-conceived by composers, which, in addition to studies dedicated to Wagner, is confirmed by those who deal with the operas of Richard Strauss.<sup>8</sup>

### **Associative Tonality and Tonal/Harmonic Third-Relations in *Elektra***

There is no doubt, therefore, that in Strauss's *Elektra*, which will be in the analytical focus of this paper, there is a manifestation of associative tonality. At the same time, one of the basic characteristics of the harmonic language of this opera is the third-relations, primarily those that are formed between keys, and then those that one can perceive in the relationship between individual chords within one key. There are three types of third-relations in *Elektra*, which are usually found in tonal music: the diatonic, chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationship.<sup>9</sup> Of particular importance are the sec-

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<sup>7</sup> Among the authors who wrote on associative tonality are Alfred Lorenz (1868–1939), Carl Dahlhaus (1928–1989), but also Warren J. Darcy, Nors Josephson, Reinhold Brinkmann (1934–2010), Tethys Carpenter, and many others.

<sup>8</sup> Derrick Puffett (1946–1996) writes on Strauss' *Salome*: "(...) we can see that Strauss was thinking in terms of 'associative tonality', the technique of dramatic key association he had inherited from Wagner. (...) his entire tonal scheme was implicit in his earliest, pre-sketch annotations to the play; it only remained for him to work it out in detail." (Derrick Puffett, *Richard Strauss: 'Salome'*. Cambridge–New York–Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 47). Also, cf. Bryan Gilliam, *Richard Strauss's 'Elektra'*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, 208, 215.

<sup>9</sup> The diatonic third relationship is a relationship between two triads whose roots are related by a major third or minor third, and contain two common tones. This relationship is shared by two chords of the opposite mode – one is major triad, and the other is minor triad (e. g. triads of C – E – G and A – C – E, respectively, are diatonic third-related; likewise, triads of C – E – G and E – G – B, respectively, are diatonic third-related, etc.). The Chromatic third relationship is a relationship between two triads whose roots are related by a major third or minor third, and contain one common tone. This relationship is shared by two chords of the same mode – both are major triads or minor triads (e. g. triads of C – E – G and A – C sharp – E, respectively, are chromatic third-related; likewise, the triads of C – E – G and A flat – C – E flat, respectively, are chromatic third-related, etc.). Finally, the doubly-chromatic third relationship is a relationship shared by two chords of the opposite mode, with roots a third apart and no common tones (e. g. triads of C – E – G and A flat – C flat – E flat, respectively, are doubly-chromatic third-related; similarly, triads of C – E – G and E flat – G flat – B flat, respectively, are doubly-

ond and third types of third relationship. Starting from the assumption that the harmonic language of an opera can generally be subjected to hermeneutic musical analysis, we will try to consider the interpretive possibilities of these two specific harmonic concepts – associative tonality, and third-relationships between chords and/or keys. These concepts, in addition to being manifested in the usual way – as dramatic-tonal, and tonal/harmonic concepts, respectively – intersect and permeate in a specific way and thus enable the interpretation of dramatic and textual meanings. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to show the full capacity of the associative tonality and third-relationships between chords and keys, both understood as instances of interpretation. In other words, the aim of the paper is to point out the ways in which these two concepts provide a deep or completely new understanding of the position of the dramatic characters and different states or feelings in the dramatic course of the opera.

#### ASSOCIATIVE TONALITY

At the beginning of this analysis, it is necessary to consider the basic aspects of the manifestation of associative tonality in Strauss' opera *Elektra*. The starting premise in this regard is the fact that most of the characters in the opera are related with their own associative key. Thus, among all the associative keys of the characters, E flat major is most strongly affirmed as the associative key of Elektra's sister Chrysothemis. E flat major accompanies most of her appearances in the opera, and the specific strength of that associative key is supported by the fact that in these situations its harmonic content is mostly diatonic, which, given the style and harmonic language of the opera as a whole, can be considered somewhat unexpected. C minor is the associative key of Agamemnon – the father of Elektra, Chrysothemis and Orestes and Klytämnestra's husband – and appears only when a reference is made to him in the dramatic discourse, since this character never appears on stage and since, more precisely, only the dead Agamemnon is relevant to this drama. For this very reason, as we shall see, Agamemnon's associative key will turn out to be the associative key of death.<sup>10</sup> Despite his modest appearance on the

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chromatic third-related). Also, these relationships could be shared by two keys, if one of three types of third relationships is shared by tonic triads of those two keys.

<sup>10</sup> While according to some, C minor, as the associative key of death, represents at the same time Agamemnon's key, Bryan Gilliam asserts that C major, which marks the final repentance for the assassination of the king, also can be taken as Agamemnon's proper associative key (cf. Bryan Gilliam, op. cit., 125).

stage, Orestes is an unequivocally important figure in the opera, and it is understandable that he was also “assigned” an associative key – D minor. In this case, too, Orestes’ key appears even when the character is not present on the stage, that is, when he is only referred to in the libretto.<sup>11</sup> F major is an associative key of Aegisthus, Elektra’s stepfather, but in that associative meaning F major very rarely appears as a properly affirmed key, established through certain chordal progressions. In fact, only one chord usually participates in appearances of F major, and that chord is a tonic sixth chord. Such a reduction of F major’s harmonic content paradoxically supports its associative capacity, so the occurrences of the tonic sixth chord of this key almost always have a reference to Aegisthus. Although a high degree of agreement can be observed in the theoretical literature on the issue of most associative keys in *Elektra*, in certain cases there have not always been consistent interpretations. Thus, the character of Klytämnestra, the wife of the murdered Agamemnon and Elektra’s mother, is associated with F sharp major,<sup>12</sup> but also with B flat minor.<sup>13</sup> The latter one can also signify Agamemnon,<sup>14</sup> although, as already pointed out, he is associated with C minor. However, a kind of paradox of the opera’s harmonic language is the fact that Elektra, being the main character, does not have her own associative key, especially if we bear in mind that almost all the

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<sup>11</sup> Because D minor appears as a key background, and very often as but a chordal background (thanks to the tonic chord of this key) for utterances about Orestes or dramatic situations in which false news of his death was announced (for example, at the moments when Klytämnestra announces that Orestes was killed in exile /rehearsal number 262/ or when Chrysothemis is horrified and shouts *Orestes is dead! /Orest ist tot!*, reh. nr. 5a/bars 3–6/), this key is also considered an associative key of death (cf. Kurt Overhoff, *Die Elektra-Partitur von Richard Strauss: Ein Lehrbuch für die Technik der dramatischen Komposition*. Salzburg: Pustet, 1978, 32; see: Carolyn Abbate, „Elektra’s Voice: Music and Language in Strauss’s Opera”, in: Derrick Puffett /Ed./, *Richard Strauss: ‘Elektra’*, Cambridge – New York – Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1989, 110). Therefore, it seems that it would be more precise to call this key, in the described situations, the associative key of the alleged death, since Orestes remains alive until the end of the opera.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Bryan Gilliam, op. cit., 72.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Derrick Puffett, “The Music of ‘Elektra’: Some Preliminary Thoughts”, in: Derrick Puffett (Ed.), op. cit., 39.

<sup>14</sup> Of the many harmonizations of the “Agamemnon motive”, for Arnold Whittall the proper harmonization is the one in B minor, which enables the interpretation of this key association proposed in this paper: “One important detail in the Fifth Maid’s defence of Elektra is the appearance of the Agamemnon motive in the ‘correct’ B flat minor area, at Fig. 20.” (Arnold Whittall, “Dramatic Structure and Tonal Organisation”, in: Derrick Puffett /Ed./, op. cit., 60).

other characters have either the proper associative key (Chrysothemis, Orestes, Klytämnestra), or some kind of key associativity (tonic sixth chord of F major, which signifies Aegisthus). Theorists and musicologists mainly see the explanation of this unusual situation in the appearance of a specific chord known as the 'Elektra chord', which in a way compensates for the absence of Elektra's associative key, but also in giving another associative meaning to B flat minor, signifying it as a key which could also refer to Elektra's loneliness.<sup>15</sup>

Another kind of manifestation of this dramatic-tonal concept in *Elektra* refers to the associative keys of events, states and feelings. Death is the state and/or the event on which the entire drama in the opera is centered: the dead Agamemnon is almost constantly part of the narrative, Klytämnestra and Aegisthus are punished for Agamemnon's death by their own death, and, finally, the main character, Elektra, also dies herself. In this respect, C minor and E flat minor are largely identified as keys which are associated with death. However, this kind of key associativity can only be spoken of in connection with the concrete death of an individual in the opera. On the one hand, the associative connection between C minor and death in *Elektra* is justified when this key, as it was said, represents (the murdered) Agamemnon, and this connection is very often realized through the appearance of Agamemnon's leitmotif within the arpeggiated tonic six-four chord of C minor. Since it is one of the most important keys in the final part of the opera, appearing almost exactly at the moment when Elektra dies, the C minor can gain the meaning of the associative key of her death. On the other hand, Bryan Gilliam considers E flat minor the associative key of death in *Elektra*, due to the fact that this key signifies not only Orestes' alleged death, announced in the middle of the opera (rehearsal number 262 / bars 5–7), but also Elektra's death.<sup>16</sup> However, Gilliam ignores the fact that at the moment of her death, together with this key, it is the C minor that appears.<sup>17</sup> Unlike these two minor keys, which are associatively connected with death, certain major keys are connected with states or feelings that refer to life, and to all the beauty, passions and emotions that life provides. Thus, for example, Strauss uses E major to express Dionysian, Bacchic, and even erotic feelings in music, which is best represented in the depiction of the menadic state of beings in Elektra's

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bryan Gilliam, *op. cit.*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 159, 212 (Gilliam refers here to Strauss's drafts).

<sup>17</sup> See Example 5.

Dance following Aegisthus' assassination (291a/1–221a/1). We can also say that A flat major is an associative key of nostalgia for the past, happy times, bearing in mind, above all, Elektra's soliloquy filled with the nostalgic memory of her father and addressing him as if he were alive,<sup>18</sup> as well as the tonal background of A flat major, filled with diatonic harmonic content, which characterizes that soliloquy.

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ASSOCIATIVE TONALITY AND TONAL-HARMONIC THIRD-RELATIONS

Two keys between which the third-relation is apparent – F sharp major, as Klytämnestra's, and D minor, as Orestes' associative key, respectively – appear as a tonal basis for Klytämnestra's utterance in the central part of the fourth scene<sup>19</sup> of *Elektra*, which is entirely formed as a dialogue between her and her problematic daughter (Example 1). The topic of this tense conversation between the two women is Orestes. After Klytämnestra expelled Orestes,

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<sup>18</sup> *Let me behold thee, leave me not this day Alone! / But as thy wont is, like a shadow, From / the walls' recesses come to greet thy child! (Ich will dich sehn, laß mich heute nicht allein! / Nur so wie gestern, wie ein Schatten, dort / im Mauerwinkel zeig dich deinem Kind!).* English translation by Alfred Kalisch. Quoted from the vocal score of *Elektra* (Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, op. 58, Klavierauszug von Carl Besl, London – Paris – Bonn – Johannesburg – Sydney – Toronto – New York, Boosey & Hawkes – Furstner, S. a.).

<sup>19</sup> Unlike his earlier musical drama *Salome*, Strauss did not give a division into scenes in the *Elektra* score. The division used in this paper is based on the works of Margery Enix (Margery Enix, "A Reassessment of *Elektra* by Strauss", *Indiana Theory Review*, 2/3, 1979, 33) and Michel Veilleux (Michel Veilleux, „La Structure Dramatique d'*Elektra* de Strauss", *La Scena Musicale*, 6/8, 2001, 5), due to easier navigation in the discourse on the analyzed segments of this musical drama. According to the structuring proposed in the mentioned works, *Elektra* is divided into eight scenes. Enix makes a division by indicating the precise beginning and end of each scene in the score (according to the score numbers and bars within them), at the same time grouping them into a scheme of sonata form. Veilleux, on the other hand, gives names to these scenes according to their dramatic crux, but without precisely positioning the beginning and end of these scenes in the score. Combining these two proposals resulted in the following structuring of Strauss's *Elektra*: first scene (beginning – score number 34/bar 11) – prologue of the maids; second scene (34/12–63/8) – Elektra alone; third scene (64/1–129/6) – Elektra and Chrysothemis; fourth scene (130/1–275/4) – Elektra and Klytämnestra; fifth scene (1a/1–119a/10) – Elektra and Chrysothemis; sixth scene (120a/1–186a/15) – Elektra and Orestes; seventh scene (187a/1–218a/5) – Elektra and Aegisthus; and, eighth scene (219a/1–end) – Elektra and Chrysothemis.

a potential avenger of Agamemnon's death, from the family house of the Atreids, Elektra accuses her mother of doing everything to kill her son, even when he was already in exile. Klytämnestra unconvincingly replies that the exile, in which Orestes still lives, actually saved him. The last in a long series of Klytämnestra's references to her son (*They that roam abroad, what can they harm me?*)<sup>20</sup> is given in his associative key, D minor, which is determined through the double appearance of its tonic chord. This key, in addition to representing Orestes himself, also refers to Klytämnestra's obsessive fear that he will return one day. The sudden turn of her discourse, which immediately follows, along with the sudden modulation to F sharp major, has the meaning of returning to her belief that she can be completely safe (*Here I abide and am the mistress.*)<sup>21</sup> This brief appearance of Klytämnestra's associative key operates not only as a mere affirmation of her utterance in which she confirms herself as someone who has all the power in her hands, but also, to some extent, as confirmation of her peace of mind, which she needs so much at this moment. Thus, the basic semantic level of this tonal relation refers to Klytämnestra's obsession with her son's possible revenge for Agamemnon's death (D minor), on the one hand, and her still quite strong conviction that nothing will happen to her in that regard (F sharp major), on the other. At the same time, but only at a first glance, the latter feeling prevails. However, the third-relation not only exists between the two keys, but is also incorporated into the relations between the chords within both keys, which is confirmed by the multiple appearance of a chromatic third relationship, affirmed by mediant chords and corresponding harmonic progressions. In other words, while the doubly-chromatic third relationship between the two keys symbolically underscores the great distance between Klytämnestra and Orestes, the chromatic third relationships between chords, which fulfil both keys, could be interpreted as confirming the twofold similarity between the two characters: they are not just a mother and a son, but both carry the stigma of a crime. Klytämnestra is the culprit of a crime in the past, and Orestes of one that is yet to come: he is going to kill both his mother Klytämnestra and her lover Aegisthus.

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<sup>20</sup> *Was kümmert mich, wer außer Haus ist.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ich lebe hier und bin die Herrin.*

Example 1: Richard Strauss, *Elektra*, reh. nr. 221 / bar 7 – 222/3

(Sehr schnell)  
Klytämnestra

wer au ßer Haus ist. Ich le - be hier und bin die Her - rin.  
далеко же од куће. Ја живим овде и господарица сам.

*p* *fpp* *pp*

d: t sm Fis: T f MD D

Let's now consider another possibility of interpreting major third-relations between chords and keys in *Elektra*. At the end of the seventh and at the beginning of the last, eighth scene of the opera, two segments can be noticed that contain progressions of three chords, i.e. three keys, which are arranged in descending major thirds (214a/1–221a/1). Since these progressions represent the harmonic basis of utterances which refer to death in one way or another, the meaning of the associative tonality of death is extended to the entire chord/tonal structure. The first segment is chordal and consists of the triads *F – A flat – C*, *D flat – F – A flat* and *A – C sharp – E*, and forms the succession of the diatonic and chromatic third-relation, respectively. The segment lasts only one bar (214a/1), but its chords appear as a harmonic grounding for a dramatic climax that coincides with the moment of Aegisthus' death, which comes immediately after his death cry *They murder me!*<sup>22</sup> (Example 2).<sup>23</sup> The second segment is tonal and is built by three keys – *C minor*, *A flat minor* and *E major* – with quite the opposite succession of chromatic, and diatonic third-relation, respectively. This segment, unlike the former, occupies a much longer section of the musical score (216a/1–221a/1). The chordal/tonal progression of that segment accompanies the utterances of Aegisthus, Elektra and Chrysothemis, which intersect in a dramatic moment:

<sup>22</sup> *Sie morden mich!*

<sup>23</sup> Since it is not possible to establish one consistent key in this segment, the three chords in the example are not marked with the usual harmonic figure, but with a letter mark. The lowercase letter denotes the minor triad (*f* = *F – A flat – C*), and the capital letter – the major triad (*Des* = *D flat – F – A flat*; *A* = *A – C sharp – E*).

when asked by the mortally wounded Aegisthus – *Do none hear me?*<sup>24</sup> – Elektra answers victoriously, but sarcastically – *Agamemnon hears thee!*;<sup>25</sup> Aegisthus immediately after that dies with the last cry to which no one will respond – *Woe is me!*;<sup>26</sup> finally, Chrysothemis, as if nothing had happened, is undisguisedly delighted after meeting her brother again, who, she thought, would never return from exile – *Elektra, Sister! Come with us! O come with us! To greet our brother: he is here!*<sup>27</sup>

Example 2: R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 213a/8–214a/1

(Schnell)  
Aegisth  
Sie mor - Uбише - me! den mich!  
VI.  
Alle Streicher  
ff col 8va  
ff  
fis: D<sup>9</sup> f Des A

In these two segments, there are a total of six different keys or potential keys, of which only one, C minor, is associated with death. At the same time, this associative meaning is expanded from the C minor to the intertwining of chord and tonal relations previously described, and this expansion is a result of the specific interaction between the musical and textual levels. Since the utterances about death prevail in the given discourse and since there is a kind of absolutization of death in this part of the opera – because, in a way, all actors are connected with death, even those who are loosely associated with it – C minor as an associative key of death and the tonal accompaniment of one

<sup>24</sup> *Hört mich niemand?*

<sup>25</sup> *Agamemnon hört dich!*

<sup>26</sup> *Weh mir!*

<sup>27</sup> *Elektra! Schwester! komm mit uns! O komm / mit uns! es ist der Bruder drin im Haus!*

part of this discourse of death, extends the meaning of death to the major third-relation which exists between these three keys and three chords, respectively, which accompany the moment of Aegisthus' murder. Let us remember, death is the basic meaning of Elektra's and Aegisthus's utterances, but not Chrysothemis', which is almost completely independent of the other two utterances and speaks of the happiness of Agamemnon's children who finally gathered. Chrysothemis, who is almost the only person involved in the family tragedy to be an opponent of violence and death, announces that Orestes is at home and invites Elektra to join them. Since Orestes came to his parents' house primarily with the task of killing his mother and stepfather, from this call to Elektra one concludes that all three of Agamemnon's children should be part of the same discourse, the "discourse of death". Elektra as the inspirer of revenge and Orestes as its executor are, of course, part of that "discourse", but that, until this moment, could not be said of Chrysothemis. The possibility of this "new" Chrysothemis being perceived was achieved, therefore, through the proposed harmonic interpretation of the textual meaning: Chrysothemis, in a way, admits to herself, without ever saying it, that she is also part of the general environment of death, which, at the same time, led to a different understanding of this character's position in the opera. Namely, the lack of her reaction to the death of her mother and stepfather is more than symptomatic and can be justified only by the fact that she shares the same urge for vengeance with her brother and sister. This interpretation is additionally supported by E major as the tonal basis of her utterance. E major fully assumes the role of her associative key, E flat major. This is confirmed by the almost completely diatonic harmony of E major, which is also quite consistent with the predominantly diatonic chords that characterize her associative key. However, if we add to this the associative meaning of E major, which refers to Dionysian feelings in the opera, as it was pointed out earlier, the ground for understanding a different Chrysothemis has been fully prepared.

The keys organized in the mediant circle<sup>28</sup> of minor thirds significantly contribute to the interpretation of Chrysothemis' appearance in the third scene of the opera. This circle begins and ends in her associative key, E flat major, and at its end a relative key appears once more, so the following sequence is formed: E flat major, G flat major, A major, C minor, E flat major,

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Dejan Despić, *Harmonija sa harmonskom analizom*, Beograd, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2002, 155, 212, 364.

and C minor (75/1–78/5). One can easily observe that this part of the dialogue between the two sisters, Chrysothemis and Elektra, is based on consistent third relations between keys. In contrast to some previously described situations, the progression of keys in this case has not been based on a specific type of third relationship, because all three types are observed: diatonic, chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationships. The simplest of these types of relationship, the diatonic third relationship, still has a certain advantage over the other two, given the fact that E flat major and C minor, which – as relative keys – form this type of third relationship, are the only ones to appear twice and the only ones are confirmed by cadences, almost traditional ones (complete cadence in E flat major, in 75/4-8; melodic close and also complete cadence in C minor, in 77/8-78/5). Such a concept of a given segment of the third scene, within which there is a division into a more stable part (relative keys confirmed by cadences) and a more unstable one (mediant circle of keys, which includes both chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationships), supports the dramatic and textual meaning, which is also articulated at two parallel semantic levels. On the one hand, the general dramatic profiling of Chrysothemis' character, as a counterpoise to Elektra's character, emphasizes the former as a mentally more stable, life-optimistic and, in general, cheerful person in relation to her sister. This is supported in the music by the predominantly diatonic harmonic content of all participating keys, and primarily by her associative key. On the other hand, in this situation, Chrysothemis does not refer, as she often does, to the happiness of life, but expresses doubt as to whether that happiness will ever really come into her life. This skepticism, deciphered from her figurative speech about her mental anguish,<sup>29</sup> is crowned by an allegory of the doubt that she will never actually become a mother, as indicated by the phrase about an empty room, empty probably because there is no baby and its cradle, about which she has been dreaming for so long.<sup>30</sup> The mediant circle of keys, empowered with the affirmation of all types of third relationships, is precisely the support for this kind of doubt she is talking about.

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<sup>29</sup> *Within me burneth all my Soul, / It drives me aye to roam the house distraught; / In hall nor chamber find I rest; I must / From one for corner to the other ah! / From roof to vault I seem to hear voices... (Ich hab's wie Feuer in der Brust, / es treibt mich immerfort herum im Haus, / in keiner Kammer leidet's mich, ich muß / von einer Schwelle auf die andre, ach! / treppauf, treppab, mir ist, als rief' es mich...).*

<sup>30</sup> *... and when I seek them, See I bare rooms staring / At me. (...und komm ich hin, so stiert ein leeres Zimmer / mich an.).*

C minor and E minor have significant interpretive potential, and they are marked as keys that are associatively connected with death and which, at the same time, are chromatic third-related. That associative role of the former key is affirmed mainly through the “Agamemnon motive”, which in most cases is based on its tonic triad; likewise, the latter key is associated with death, due to the fact that at the moment of Elektra’s death, in the final bars of the opera, its tonic triad appears. At the very end of the opera, there is a specific interaction of these two keys, so they, reduced to their tonic triads, form a dramaturgically tense final cadence, when Elektra, exhausted by dance, falls dead (Example 3). However, the moment of her death, marked by the tonic chord in E flat minor, is expressively overpowered in the music itself, because in the last bars of the opera there is a sudden change from the triad *E flat – G flat – B flat* to the major triad *C – E – G*. Tethys Carpenter called this quick shift of chords a “brutal juxtaposition”<sup>31</sup> of two keys, which can be taken as the true climax of the opera. Not only is the chromatic third relation transformed into a doubly-chromatic one, but this transformation is the result of a modal interchange, whose effect on both associative keys of death spreads throughout the opera, and is embodied only at its end. On the one hand, E flat minor at the end of the opera signifies the transformation, that is, the simultaneous harmonic and meaningful mutation of E flat major, the associative key of Elektra’s sister Chrysothemis. Various explanations for this modal interchange have been offered in the literature. Thus, Bryan Gilliam considers this procedure a natural consequence of the relationship in which two keys, E flat minor – a key that signifies an *alleged death*, i.e. Orestes’ “death” earlier in the opera – and E flat major – a key which, in addition to referring to Chrysothemis, also signifies a strong *desire for life* – must eventually be followed by the recurrence of E flat minor, but which will then signify the *actual death*, in this case, Elektra’s death.<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Kramer, however, interprets this “reversal” of E flat major into E flat minor at the moment of Elektra’s death as a sign of her “scourging”, less because of her incitement to the murder of her mother and stepfather, and more because of her desire to involve her sister in this vengeful endeavour, in which she herself and their brother already participate.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, C major in the Dance appears, as we

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<sup>31</sup> Tethys Carpenter, “The Musical Language of ‘Elektra’”, in: Derrick Puffett (Ed.), op. cit., 103–105.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Bryan Gilliam, op. cit., 231.

<sup>33</sup> Lawrence Kramer, *Opera and Modern Culture: Wagner and Strauss*, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, University of California Press, 2007, 198.

shall see, as the associative key of Elektra's triumph and, at the same time, as the associative key of the triumph of vengeance on Agamemnon's murderers and the restoration of the old order. Therefore, the triad C – E – G at the end of the opera is a sign of the transformation of C minor, the associative key of Agamemnon's death, into C major, the associative key of triumph, more than it is the chord whose significance is exhausted in the rapid, "brutal juxtaposition" of the two keys, which Carpenter speaks of.

**Example 3:** R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 261a/13–262a/10 (the end of the opera)

The musical score for Example 3 consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line for Chrysothemis and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "O - rest! Opećme!" and "O -". The piano part starts with a *pp* dynamic, then moves to *ff*. The tempo is marked "(Sehr schnell)" and "allmählich breiter". The key signature is C minor. Below the piano part, there are tonal annotations: "es: t" and "c: t". The second system shows the vocal line for Chrysothemis and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics "rest! Opećme!". The piano part starts with a *dim.* dynamic, then moves to *f*, *p*, *molto cresc.*, *ff*, and *fff*. The tempo is marked "ritard. molto" and "langsam". The key signature changes to C major. Below the piano part, there are tonal annotations: "c: t", "P<sup>7</sup>", "D<sup>7</sup>", "T", "es: t", and "C: T".

One can observe two levels of interpretation in this. Within the first of these, the chromatic third relationship between two minor keys, as associative keys (chords) of death, is also articulated as the relationship between Agamemnon and his daughter, who acts as the crucial person for taking revenge on Agamemnon's murderers.<sup>34</sup> This interpretation comes to the fore at the very

<sup>34</sup> It should also be noted that Tethys Carpenter believes that these two tonalities reflect "the dark side of Elektra's character" (Tethys Carpenter, op. cit., 105).

end of the opera, where the E flat minor is manifested as the associative key of Elektra's death, and the C minor becomes completely established as the associative key of Agamemnon's death, while the latter also achieves the meaning of ultimate vengeance for the king's murder. In the second, more complex level of interpretation, these keys are subjected to a modal interchange, which bears both harmonic and meaningful transformation, the latter being even the stronger one. Namely, the double modal interchange between the existing associative keys – E flat major into E flat minor, and C minor into C major, respectively – is intertwined with the establishment of a new semantic layer derived from the primary semantic configuration, according to which the modal interchange from the major key into the parallel minor key has the meaning of “darkening”, as well as the modal interchange from the minor key into the parallel major key has the meaning of “enlightenment”: through the modal interchange from E flat major into E flat minor, life was “undone” into death, and through the modal interchange from C minor into C major, death was “defeated” by life, symbolically in the last bar of the opera.<sup>35</sup> In this way, the chromatic third relation between the chords and between the keys is intersected with the modal interchange, which resulted in the specific interpretation of the relationship between life and death at the end of the drama. Life in happiness, which, after a series of tragedies, the surviving characters deserved in one way or another, triumphs over death. More precisely, it triumphs over all the deaths that fate assigned to the house of the Atreids – over Iphigenia's, Agamemnon's, Klytämnestra's, Aegisthus' and, finally, Elektra's death – and such a new, promised life, which we can only assume, but which the opera did not “reveal”, is confirmed by the final C major.

The last scene of *Elektra* (219a/1–262a/10) is defined by a specific tension between C major and E major, two keys between whose tonic triads a chromatic third relationship is formed. The specificity of this tension is justified by several factors. Namely, C major functions as the principal key of the scene, and E major as its secondary key, with the scene beginning in E major and ending in C major.<sup>36</sup> Then, these are the main keys of Elektra's Dance, the most significant part of this scene. Finally, the associative status of C major as

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<sup>35</sup> A similar associative meaning of C major is already formed in the sixth scene, which will be discussed later.

<sup>36</sup> In this sense, the factual existence of two tonic chords gives room for the interpretation of harmonic structure from the aspect of a specific theoretical-analytical phenomenon known as the *double-tonic complex* (cf. Robert Bailey, “An Analytical Study...”, op. cit., 121–122, 125–126, 134; Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, op. cit., 324).

the key of Elektra's triumph, which has gradually been formed during the course of the opera, gained its superstructure at the very end of the opera, by forming an interpretation according to which C major can become an associative key of restoration of the old patriarchal order,<sup>37</sup> and for this restoration the preconditions were the deaths of Klytämnestra and Aegisthus. However, the triumph of that order was ensured by the fact that, in the end, Elektra sacrificed herself in some way.

In his analysis of the harmonic structure of *Elektra*, Gilliam argues that the final scene of the opera was organized both as an "extended conflict" between these two tonal centers, and as their intimate binding together.<sup>38</sup> It is precisely from the contradiction that exists in the relationship between the "conflict" of these two keys and their "binding together" that our interpretation will emerge, as a kind of hermeneutic superstructure of this statement of Gilliam's. Thus, we will understand intimate binding together as a consequence of the existence of the almost identical harmonic content in these two keys, which is represented by tonic triads and dominant seventh chords in long durations, and especially by the specific harmonic progression of the diminished seventh chord of VI#,<sup>39</sup> and the dominant seventh chord (Examples 4 and 5). However, we will understand "conflict" as muted rather than extended, due to the described similarity between the harmonic contents of these keys. Based on that similarity, it is much easier to emphasize the contrast that results from the chromatic third relationship between the tonic triads of these keys, all the more because these two keys do not follow each other at any point in the score. The semantic spheres of the two keys reveal an even greater contrast if we take into account the passages in which here, as well as the previous parts of the opera, these keys represent the tonal ground of the utterances of certain characters. On the one hand, C major, represented by a tonic chord of unusually long duration, serves to justify Elektra as the passionate instigator of blood vengeance on Klytämnestra and Aegisthus.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Bryan Gilliam, op. cit., 125. The associative relation between C major and the order, that is, between this key and the establishment of balance after a certain tense state has been noticed in numerous other works by Strauss.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 101–102.

<sup>39</sup> This harmonic figure refers to the sharpened VI scale degree, also figured in theoretical literature as VI#.

<sup>40</sup> Arnold Whittall correctly interprets this new dramaturgical position of Elektra at the very end of the opera: "Elektra's principal quality is not that she is 'good' but that she is completely free of guilt." (Arnold Whittall, op. cit., 61).

Elektra sees such a legitimization of this crime in the perception that, with her sister and brother, she approached the gods (*We, we who accomplish, we are with the gods.*)<sup>41</sup> and, moreover, that they, Agamemnon's children, became equal to the gods (*Sie fahren dahin wie die Schärfe des Schwerts / durch uns, die Götter. [They go on their way, like a two-edged sword, / The gods through man's soul]*, Example 6), and consequently, a crime in the name of divine justice can be forgiven.<sup>42</sup>

Example 4: R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 239a/1–4

(Sehr bewegt und schwungvoll)  
Chrysothemis

Hörst du's nicht? Gut sind die Göt-ter, gut!  
Зар не чуеи? Добри су богови, добри!

Elektra

Fin-ster nis ge-sät und ern-te Lust ü-ber Lust. Ich war ein  
Таму сам посејала и жањем радост над радосту.

*p* *p* *cresc.* *espr.* *p*

C: D<sup>7</sup> -VI<<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> VII<sub>B</sub><sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>

<T>

Example 5: R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 247a/4–7

(Etwas breit und wuchtig)  
Pauken

*f* *cresc.* *ff*

E: T — <sup>6</sup>-VI<<sup>2</sup> D<sup>7</sup> -VI<<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> -VI<<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>

<T/D ostinato>

<sup>41</sup> *Wir sind bei den Göttern, wir Vollbringenden.*

<sup>42</sup> Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), whose prose text Strauss used as the libretto for his opera, refers here to the myth of Elektra, in which it is told that revenge on Agamemnon's murderers is in the hands of the god Apollo.

Example 6: R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 236a/1–237a/4

**Sehr bewegt und schwungvoll**  
**Elektra**

Wir sind bei den Göttern, wir Vollbringen.  
 Ми, који смо уз богове, ми одлучујемо.

VI. *cresc.*

*ff* *fp*

C: T  
 6 <D>

Elek. - gen-den. *8<sup>va</sup>* Sie  
 VI. *8<sup>va</sup>* *ff* *p*

*cresc.*

9 <D> <T>

**Chrysothemis**

Al-len sind die Ge-sich-ter ver-wan-delt.  
 Свима су лица преображена.

Elek. fah-ren da-hin wie die Schär-fe des Schwerts durch uns, die Göt-ter,  
 иду, као са оштрим мачевима, на нас, богове,

*mf* *pp*

T VII<sup>7</sup><sub>D</sub> K<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> -VI<<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup>  
 <T> <D>

As it was pointed out, the meaning of C major as the key that signifies the triumph of life over death is gradually formed during the opera, primarily through the relation of this key its parallel minor, i.e. C minor, as the key of death. One can recall, C minor appears in the seventh scene (187a/1–218a/5), at the moment of the murders of Klytämnestra and Aegisthus, but even before that, in the sixth scene (120a/1–186a/15), when Klytämnestra hears the whispered news about Orestes' death, which much later will turn out to be an alleged death. However, the appearance of C major later in the sixth scene, when Orestes, on returning to the family house, convinced the sisters that he was still alive, empowered the mentioned associative meaning of this key. On the other hand, E major is characterized by an internal conflict that also reflects the conflict between the sisters. In this key, there are two cadences at the ends of the utterances of Elektra and Chrysothemis, respectively, but those cadences end at different pitches and different chords, which further emphasizes the interpretive potential of the key itself. The world of the gods about which – each in her own way – Elektra and Chrysothemis sing, at this moment seems to be the only point of concord between the two. After the revenge she was intent on taking, practically with her whole being, following her father's death, Elektra becomes convinced that her life has achieved its goal and is – one can freely say – taken to the world of the gods. This was declared in her words that all three of them – Elektra, Chrysothemis and Orestes – are with the gods (*sind bei den Göttern*), and was then confirmed by her next utterance that *Love destroyeth, but no man can go the appointed way, / that love hath never known!* (246a/2–247a/1),<sup>43</sup> obviously referring to the “other” world which she will soon join. The end of Elektra's utterance is adequately accompanied by a harmonic cadence on the dominant chord of E major, i.e. by the melodic cadence on the dominant pitch of the same key (Example 7, bar 3). Chrysothemis, for her part, celebrates joy, but not because of the victory of justice, but because of the end of her and her sister's actual captivity, because of the forthcoming meeting with her brother in freedom and, above all, because of the promised life in happiness she believes is about to come. Her cadence coincides with the orchestral one, but in terms of harmony and melody it is opposed to Elektra's cadence and is on the tonic chord of E major, i.e. on the tonic pitch of the same key (Example 7, bar 5).

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<sup>43</sup> *Liebe tötet, aber keiner fährt dahin / und hat die Liebe nicht gekannt!*

Example 7: R. Strauss, *Elektra*, 246a/7–247a/1

**(Immer lebhafter)**  
Chrysothemis

Elektra

E - lek - tra, ich muß bei mei - nem  
Elektra, ja морам уз свој

Lie - be nicht ge - kannt!  
љубав није познао!

*f* *p*

E: D<sup>7</sup>

4 Chry.

**Etwas breit und wuchtig**

Bru - der stehn!  
брата да станем!

*rit.* *f*

D<sup>7</sup> <T> S T

E major and C major are also the main keys of Elektra's Dance, the dramatic segment positioned at the end of this opera. Before we look at the interpretive capacities of the third relationship between these two keys, we will look at the dramaturgical features of the Dance. Namely, Gilliam points out that Elektra's dance is a combination of two types of dance, a monadic, solo dance, and also an ecstatic Dionysian dance, on the one hand, and a round, group dance, on the other hand. Her menadic dance is the "dance of transcendence", the dance of her "personal ecstasy", which is the "primary vehicle for her catharsis",<sup>44</sup> while the group dance as "[T]he triumphant round dance symbolizes restored social harmony after the socially dissonant elements – Klytämnestra and Aegisthus – have been removed. After the murders, the

<sup>44</sup> Bryan Gilliam, op. cit., 226–227.

solitary Elektra wishes to join the group and the community at large. Her dissolution as an individual is achieved through the social gesture of the round dance”.<sup>45</sup> However, as Elektra never joins the group, she actually dances a solo menadic dance; she only talks about the round dance, but does not perform it in reality, so this ritual “only takes place in her mind”.<sup>46</sup> Whether they were realized in reality or in her imagination, Strauss gives a description of both types of dance, where in one sketch he determined E major for the menadic dance, and C major for the round dance.<sup>47</sup> In this way, Elektra’s Dance functions in a dichotomy between E major, which reflects the “bacchic impulse of cathartic celebration”, and C major, which symbolizes “victory and the restoration of order”.<sup>48</sup> From the perspective that one could establish in the sequence of events in the tragedy of Elektra’s family, this order is not really old, but a new order, established by her father Agamemnon.<sup>49</sup> This means that the conflict between Elektra and her mother is essentially based on a different value attitude towards different views of the family order: what is an old order for Elektra is a new order for Klytämnestra, and vice versa. E major and C major in this interpretive play represent keys that are very similar in their chord fund (mutedness of the conflict), while semantically they are quite distant from each other, which is partly due to the chromatic third relationship between them (the essence of the conflict). With the approach to the end of the opera, C major prevails and its status as the associative key of Elektra’s victory over Klytämnestra and Aegisthus is confirmed.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 227.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>49</sup> Agamemnon, with the halo of the winner of the Trojan War, brings Cassandra, the captured daughter of the Priam, the king of Troy, who becomes his legal mistress. In that way, he actually destroyed the previous order and, thus, established a new, significantly modified kind of patriarchy. For Klytämnestra, this meant that she was no longer the only one, but just one of the several legitimate wives of her husband. However, Agamemnon’s series of crimes – the sacrifice of Klytämnestra’s beloved daughter Iphigenia (cf. Наташа Глишић, *Електра као цивиљни*, Бања Лука, Академија умјетности у Бањој Луци, 2006, 104–105), as well as the murders of Klytämnestra’s first husband and children from that marriage (cf. Stephen A. Black, “‘Mourning Becomes Electra’ as a Greek Tragedy”, *The Eugene O’Neill Review*, 26, 2004, 174) – decisively shaped Klytämnestra’s decision to kill him out of revenge.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we have tried to point out the ways in which two specific harmonic concepts that characterize Strauss's opera *Elektra* – associative tonality and chromatic, i.e. doubly-chromatic third relationships between keys and chords – permeate and thus enable the interpretation of different dramatic and textual meanings. Essentially derived from a solid tonal milieu, these concepts indirectly confirm the tonal framework of the opera and show that the often mentioned ideas about “modernism” and the non-tonal conception of its harmonic language have no significant foundation. Observed even in the domain of purely musical meaning, chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationships between keys, show a significant interpretive potential, standing out as semantically more important than one particular key. This leads to the conclusion that the *relationship between keys* in certain parts of *Elektra* is more important than *one particular key*, and sometimes more important than the manifestation of associative tonality. However, in this opera, the reverse relation is at work, so the meaning of the associative tonality can be extended to the entire tonal, i.e. chordal layer, which is defined by chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relations. Comprehended in that way, these concepts enable a new kind of interpretation of the textual meaning in *Elektra*. Thanks to the harmony that interprets the drama, the antagonisms between the two characters are seen from a different, new perspective, revealing deeper layers of similarities between those characters. The chromatic third relationship between the chords and keys permeates with the modal interchange and results in a new understanding of the dialectic of life and death at the end of *Elektra*. In the end, we can say that the proposed interpretive model, which functions as a specific interweaving of ambiguous capacities of one dramatic-tonal concept and one special relationship between keys and chords, respectively, turns out to be very suitable for perceiving undiscovered meaning in opera.

Translated by the author

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## Summary

This paper starts from the assumption that within the hermeneutic musical analysis it is possible to talk about the interpretive harmonic analysis of a musical work and that the results of such an analysis are inevitable in reaching a comprehensive understanding of a work, especially if opera or musical drama are in question. In the paper the ways are analysed in which two specific harmonic concepts permeate in Strauss’s opera *Elektra*, thus enabling the interpretation of different dramatic and textual

meanings. The first of them is the associative tonality, which functions as an interpretive strategy, however, the expanded field of action of this concept is pointed out in the paper. Going beyond the mere key representation of the characters, the associative tonality made it possible to learn many new meanings and knowledge about those characters and their mutual relations. The second concept refers to the chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationships that occur between keys, but also those that arise in the relations between chords within one tonality, since these relationships represent one of the most distinctive features of the harmonic language of this opera. Through the multiplicity of manifestations of chromatic and doubly-chromatic third relationships between keys, we can conclude that such relationships between keys in certain parts of *Elektra* are more important than the manifestation of one particular key, and sometimes, more important than the manifestation of associative tonality. The extension of the meaning of associative tonality to the entire tonal, i.e. chord layer, which is defined by these third relationships, has also been noticed, and by means of this extension the chromatic third relationship, and not just a certain key, becomes semantically connected with death. The textual meaning has been interpreted, according to which Chrysothemis, despite the “external” position of her dramatic character in the opera, which indicates that she is an opponent of violence and revenge, becomes part of the same, “discourse of revenge” together with Elektra and Orestes,. Thanks to the harmony that interprets the drama, the antagonisms between the two characters are seen from a new perspective, revealing deeper layers of similarities between those characters. The chromatic third relationship between chords and between keys permeates the modal interchange and results in a new understanding of the dialectic of life and death at the end of *Elektra*. This is demonstrated by the modal interchange from E flat major into E flat minor, which reveals the meaning that life was annulled by death, but also by the modal interchange from C minor into C major, which has the opposite meaning of the victory of life over death. Both modal interchanges further explain the relationship between Agamemnon and his daughters, after his death. Another third relationship between keys, that between C major and E major, shed special light on the relationship between two such different, yet such close sisters, Elektra and Chrysothemis, and, at the same time, the relationship between Elektra and Klytämnestra, pointing out that precisely through this tonal dichotomy the opposition is reflected between the ways in which the mother and her daughter perceive family order.

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***Rastko Buljančević\****

Doctoral student of musicology  
Academy of Arts  
University of Novi Sad

## IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EROTIC CAPITAL AND PATRIARCHAL POWER RELATIONS IN THE VISUAL INTERPRETATIONS OF LOLA ASTANOVA

**Abstract:** Lola Astanova is a professional Uzbek-American pianist who resorts to controversial performance practices in line with neo-globalist trends. Thus, her extravagant musico-visual “spectacles” are recognisable by an excessive emphasis on female sexuality and the absence of a highly aestheticised, contemplative piano sound. This paper aims to explore how the ideological and interpretive strategies of this unconventional artist are imbued with the erotic capital and patriarchal power relations of the modern consumer society. A selection of publicly available performances by Astanova has been made, most of which are presented to the audience in the form of video clips. The focus is understandably on Astanova’s interpretations of classical music, whose prosaic elements of eroticism and overdramatising musical narration are primarily, but not exclusively, intended for the ear of a patriarchally interpellated listener.

**Keywords:** Lola Astanova, erotic capital, patriarchy, visual musical interpretation, pianistic video clip.

Based on the artistic biography of Lola Astanova, we can assume that the Uzbek-American artist received a high-quality musical education. She received her first piano lessons at the age of six at the elite music school for talents “Uspensky” in Tashkent,<sup>1</sup> while she was able to perfect her piano technique through pedagogical cooperation with the esteemed Russian pianist

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\* Author’s contact information: rastko.buljancevic@gmail.com.

<sup>1</sup> Astanova received her first piano lessons from her mother and later studied with Professor Tamara Popovich.

and pedagogue Lev Naumov. After 2003, when she settled permanently in the United States, her career as a pianist continued to soar. Notable awards include the Emmy Award for her interpretation of Gershwin's composition *Rhapsody in Blue*<sup>2</sup> and the *Premio Kinéo Award* at the *78th Venice International Film Festival*.<sup>3</sup>

Lola Astanova captured the attention of a large audience by performing prominent works by Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin, which were known not only in professional musical circles but also in a wider cultural environment. However, an analytical look at her music videos gives the impression that her interpretive poetics is not based on the Russian piano school. On the contrary, under the strong influence of contemporary socio-political and cultural trends, the pianist resorts to performance gestures that exude excessive visual aesthetics and theatrical body language, mostly imbued with a provocative erotic charge. In search of her own pianistic identity, the artist attempts to redefine the traditional norms of musical behaviour by breaking institutional, aesthetic, and artistic taboos. The expressive means of Astanova's pianism, which conceptually and characteristically lean more towards the model of musico-visual performance art rather than artistic interpretation,<sup>4</sup> condition the ideology of musical perception that differs drastically from conventional listening protocols.<sup>5</sup> The lack of interest in critical listening to the standard classical repertoire, which requires a refined musical perception and a holistic understanding of music, is confirmed by the provocative statement that serious music "has no future with its boring concerts where musicians only bang the keys".<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Astanova considers it

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<sup>2</sup> Astanova performed this composition by Gershwin in 2016 in collaboration with the All-Star Orchestra under the baton of conductor Gerard Schwarz.

See <https://youtu.be/Fpsku1TwQ7E>.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous, "Venezia 2021, a Lola Astanova il Premio Kinéo Arte per la Musica", *Sky TG24*, September 1, 2021. <https://tg24.sky.it/spettacolo/musica/2021/09/01/venezia-2021-lola-astanova-premio-kineo>.

<sup>4</sup> Although performance art is usually referred to an art performed through action that emerged in the 1960s, Astanova's interpretations undoubtedly contain performative and processual elements that resemble a musico-visual performance.

<sup>5</sup> One of the many common, if outdated, ideologies of musical perception of art music is based on an objectivist model of listening and an aesthetic ideal that respects autonomous musical logic and the acousmatic approach to listening.

<sup>6</sup> "[L]a música clásica académica con sus 'conciertos aburridos de músicos que solo pulsan las teclas, no tiene futuro'". Anonymous, "Instintos, pulso, aliento... Apasionada pianista comparte su experiencia con Sputnik (fotos, vídeo)", *Sputnik Mundo*, 25. 12. 2017.

“bizarre that classical music has come to mean something so restrictive, dark and sad that wearing a modern dress can be viewed by some as offensive”.<sup>7</sup> This partly explains her radical artistic move to significantly alter the primary ontological, phenomenological, and metaphysical values of the compositions that represent the crown of the piano repertoire, and to distance the mass audience from the experience of aesthetic listening.<sup>8</sup>

Considering that we live in an age of visual culture, mass media domination, hyperreality, and the recent wave of globalisation—where the laws of the market fluctuate according to private sector interests—one could argue that artistic individuals like Astanova are necessary to fashion companies, patrons, capitalist elites, and upper-middle-class art financiers who see in their interpretations the potential for capital gains. In this case, Lola Astanova captures the audience’s attention not through her highly average pianistic skills, so to speak, but through extra-musical performance attributes adapted to the patriarchal society of an imposed capitalist reality.<sup>9</sup> So it is the capitalist and patriarchal system of power administration that has enabled her to redistribute the sensual and aesthetic pleasure of recognised musical works to fit the demands of the consumer market, and to perform in some of the most prestigious concert halls, such as the Carnegie Hall, where only world-famous artists used to perform.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it was the lack of creative musical ability<sup>11</sup> that led the Uzbek-American artist to promote and shape her pianism with erotic capital—a specific kind of capital that draws its power from the physical attributes of a hedonistically oriented subject.

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<sup>7</sup> Hana Khemissi, “Lola Astanova: Classical Music Today”, *Dubai Fashion News* [Online Journal], <https://dubaifashionnews.com/lola-astanova-classical-music-today/>.

<sup>8</sup> The issue here is the redistribution of sensory and aesthetic auditory experience, noting the attempt to equate the values of elite and mass culture.

<sup>9</sup> As early as 1998, the British political theorist Carole Pateman considered it necessary to free the concept of patriarchy from patriarchal interpretations. Kerol Pejtmen, *Polni ugovor*, transl. by Ranko Mastilović, *Belgrade, Feminist* 94, 2001, 28.

This paper, then, does not refer to the old, outdated definition of patriarchy as the rule of fathers, but to the patriarchy of modern capitalist civil society, adapted to the age of new media and new male domination. It is precisely in such a socio-economic and political system that Astanova’s visual interpretations expose the layers of capitalist and patriarchal structures of social relations.

<sup>10</sup> We will discuss this concert in more detail later.

<sup>11</sup> Here, of course, it is not a prejudice that the eroticisation of performing-creative practice necessarily conditions the lack of creative musical ability. Nevertheless, Astanova’s visual interpretations have obviously neglected the philosophical depth and high artistic qualities of the contemplative piano sound.

Erotic capital is a special category of capital, whose concept was developed by the British sociologist Catherine Hakim. The author of the controversial book *Honey Money: The Power of Erotic Capital*<sup>12</sup> defined it as “a combination of aesthetic, visual, physical, social, and sexual attractiveness”<sup>13</sup> that includes various aspects such as “sex appeal, liveliness, a talent for dressing well, charm, social skills, and sexual competence”.<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact that Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological thought played an important role in elaborating this concept,<sup>15</sup> erotic capital, unlike other forms of capital, “can be completely independent of social origin”.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, this concept has provoked negative reactions from some theorists in the humanities, especially feminist-oriented thinkers.<sup>17</sup> Although the British sociologist sees the main enemies of erotic capital in patriarchal and feminist practices,<sup>18</sup> erotic

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<sup>12</sup> Catherine Hakim has published three successive monographs on erotic capital, although one might assume that these treatises are expanded or slightly altered versions of the same. Cf. Catherine Hakim, *Erotic Capital: The Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*, New York, Basic Books, 2011; *Honey Money: The Power of Erotic Capital*, London, Allen Lane, 2011; and *Honey Money: Why Attractiveness is the Key to Success*, London, Penguin, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine Hakim, “Erotic Capital”, *European Sociological Review*, 26(5), 2010, 501.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Hakim, *Erotic Capital: The Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*, op. cit., 10.

<sup>15</sup> One of the most widely accepted classifications of capital comes from Pierre Bourdieu and includes cultural, social and economic capital. However, modern theorists from the social sciences and humanities have noted other types of capital, among which health, sexual, and spiritual capital stand out. See Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, in: J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Westport, CT., Greenwood, 1986, 241–58; Peter L. Berger and Gordon Redding (Eds), *The Hidden Form of Capital: Spiritual Influences in Societal Progress*, London, Anthem Press, 2011; and Robert T. Michael, “Sexual Capital: An Extension of Grossman’s Concept of Health Capital”, *Journal of Health Economics*, 23(4), 2004, 643–52.

<sup>16</sup> Catherine Hakim, *Erotic Capital: The Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*, op. cit., 18.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Alicia Valdés Lucas, “Can Erotic Capital Subvert Masculine Economy? Aesthetic Work and the Post-feminist Approach to Economics”, *Recerca: Revista de Pensament i Anàlisi*, 24, 2019, 87–108; and Sheila Jeffreys, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful cultural practices in the West*, Second Edition, London and New York, Routledge, 2015, 12–3.

<sup>18</sup> Catherine Hakim criticises feminists because, instead of acknowledging and valorising erotic capital, they supposedly reinforce the patriarchal order by rejecting it. Catherine Hakim, *Erotic Capital*, op. cit., 511.

The British sociologist, however, studiously overlooks the fact that it is patriarchal power

capital is evidently an important resource of patriarchy—a resource that promotes the hegemony of masculinity and the objectification of the female body in modern hypersexualised society.<sup>19</sup> This is borne out to some extent by Will Atkinson’s consideration that women with an above-average amount of sexual capital pursue forms of recognition that are largely determined by the desires of men.<sup>20</sup> However, it seems that musicologists have not yet considered this cultural-aesthetic phenomenon in detail, as information about Astanova’s sensationalist performances tends to be found in journalistic articles. The apparent lack of musico-theoretical debates on the role and importance of erotic capital in the world of classical music would possibly explain the fact that erotic capital initially dominates the market of mass or popular culture. But even then, one must distinguish between singers with exceptional musical skills (such as Christina Aguilera or Amy Winehouse) and skilled “showmen” like Madonna, who overcome the shortcomings of their technical abilities thanks to erotic capital and fascinating stage effects. In addition to Lola Astanova, in professional pianist circles Khatia Buniatishvili, Yuja Wang, Anastasia Huppmann and, to a certain extent, Valentina Lisitsa also resort to similar strategies, although their visually coloured pianist discourse is more convincing than that of the Uzbek-American pianist.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Astanova has gained a large circle of fans on social networks such as *YouTube*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram*, which function at the be-

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relations that promote the hypersexualisation of women, and that feminists, unlike patriarchally interpellated subjects, do not (as a rule) evaluate women by their reputation for physical appearance and charisma. The passionate advocates of erotic capital, however, do just that, neglecting all other human qualities beyond the power of erotic capital. Not even erotic intelligence, as we know, manifests itself through an overemphasis on female sexuality and the components of femininity in general.

<sup>19</sup> In discussing the complex dynamics and various functions of erotic capital in the public music scene, Spanish anthropologist Josep Martí notes that modern society is “labelled as ‘sexually schizophrenic’”, emphasising that there is still a negative notion of overt sexuality. Therefore, Martí recognises in erotic capital the tool for sexual liberation and the struggle against the establishment. Josep Martí, “The Erotic Capital Onstage”, in: Ben Ambler, Ana Dosen & Kristina Kocan Salamon (Eds), *PanEroticism*, Oxford, Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015, 59.

<sup>20</sup> Will Atkinson, *Beyond Bourdieu: From Genetic Structuralism to Relational Phenomenology*, Cambridge/Malden, Polity Press, 2016, 117.

<sup>21</sup> Compare here, for example, Astanova’s and Huppmann’s interpretation of Chopin’s *Minute Waltz*. Although the power mechanisms of erotic capital explicitly capture both interpretations, Anastasia Huppmann gives the contemplative tone and musical imagination an obvious advantage over the visual exposition of the erotic. Cf.

<https://youtu.be/XqkaLWg5D1g>; and <https://youtu.be/xKNCnn9ZP8c>.

hest of surveillance capitalism in modern post-industrial society,<sup>22</sup> her unconventional piano practices are still not accepted in professional music circles, especially by those who recognise the immanent value of art.<sup>23</sup> Since the visual eroticisation of pianistic sound has not yet fully taken hold of works in the classical repertoire, at least not to the extent that it can be considered a new institutional paradigm, most trained musicians do not advocate similar hybrid performance practices.<sup>24</sup> This is borne out to some extent by the results of numerous contemporary music competitions and festivals, where professional juries generally look favourably on those artistic and craft inventions<sup>25</sup> by performers that are stripped of sensationalist sonic and visual gestures. This is not, of course, an attempt to undermine the importance of erotic capital on the public music scene. On the contrary, when the bodily performing gestures do not endanger high artistic qualities, they can serve as a strategic means to attract a larger audience without compromising the artistic and aesthetic integrity of the compositions and the authority of their creators. But in this case, the corporeal form of capital ownership should not be emphasised as the most important constitutive element of interpretive poetics, especially if the erotic otherness does not emerge from the very piece itself that is being performed.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Surveillance capitalism is the term used by the American philosopher and social psychologist Shoshana Zuboff, who attempts to explain the logic of modern capitalist accumulation. Thus, the author warns of the formative instrumental power that threatens human subjects and market democracy. For further information see Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> The immanent value of art, for example, could be Kant's claim on the beautiful as disinterested interest.

<sup>24</sup> This refers primarily to professional performances of the standard classical repertoire that do not contain explicit erotic elements, although, of course, the aestheticisation of erotic elements in all canonised works of art music is not disputed. However, even in the case of an admixture of eroticism, these are usually highly aestheticised and clearly profiled erotic attributes that go beyond the trivial display of femininity.

<sup>25</sup> Although it is ineffective to separate the "artistic" from the "craftsmanlike" in traditional pianism, since the craftsmanlike component also belongs to the realm of the artistic, we would like to draw attention here primarily to two equally important aspects of musical interpretation: the poetic, aesthetic, and stylistic imagination on the one hand, and the craftsmanship of the performer on the other.

<sup>26</sup> One should always keep in mind that the works of art music that Astanova brings to the audience were not originally based on deeply eroticised musical narratives, while her intriguing performances, on the other hand, are overloaded with explosive and prosaic erotic motifs.

Let us return to the aspect of eroticisation of the pianistic discourse, which operates in the form of the visual emphasis on one's "self". It is well known that Astanova's interpretations are striking for their visual performance gestures, provocative costumes, and expensive jewellery that reinforce the objectification of her biological body. The emancipatory female subject is thus only seemingly promoted, for although it may seem paradoxical, Astanova's deliberate emphasis on bodily-kinaesthetic and musical expression is consistent with the post-patriarchal attributes of femininity.<sup>27</sup> Even more intriguing is the fact that under the guise of engaging the audience in various aspects of interpretation,<sup>28</sup> the pianist actively promotes the hypersexualisation of women through her onstage behaviour, particularly in her music videos. One could even argue that her interpretations are politically and ideologically compromised by the culture industry<sup>29</sup> and a patriarchal consciousness that favours an attractive physical appearance over the pianistic qualities of all those female artists who cannot match Astanova's physique. Such a principle of the sensationalist de-aestheticisation of art music, which overemphasises female sexuality, finds its basis not in the emancipation of women but in the patriarchal order of power. At the same time, the subversive attitude towards the musical text understandably cannot be attributed simply to the preservation of the integrity of artistic freedoms, the rebellion against social, gender, and sexual taboos, or the popularisation of high art, which, for example, was promoted in salons during the Romantic period and

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<sup>27</sup> Here it refers to the conventions of modern patriarchy in a highly developed capitalist society whose hegemony of ideological and social totality is veiled by deceptive concessions to women. However, it is extremely problematic to speak of gender equality when the "space of women" is also administered by patriarchal subjects.

<sup>28</sup> This is also confirmed by the following thought of Astanova:

"La actuación de cualquier artista es una combinación de factores, y cada uno de los espectadores se concentra en lo que más le interesa. Alguien escucha más la música, alguien contempla más los vestidos, y para otros el concierto es solo salir y pasar el tiempo. Mi cuerpo es parte de mí, y si alguien está interesado solo en ello, no me molesta en absoluto." Anonymous, "Instintos, pulso, aliento..." op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Influenced by Adorno's aesthetic-musicological discourse, Robert Winston Witkin warns of how the cultural industries attempt to manage both high and low art, transforming the integrated consumer from a subject into a manipulated object. Robert Winston Witkin, *Adorno on Popular Culture*, London & New York, Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2003, 47; see also Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, transl. by Edmund Jephcott, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002.

now takes place (in addition to concert halls, museums, galleries, palaces, and theatres) in shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants, cafés, and other places suitable for mass gatherings. So what is the goal of Astanova's eroticised performances, in which the artist nonchalantly plays with the piano sound while taking full advantage of her formal musical training to impress listeners unfamiliar with the genre and style conventions of the classical repertoire?<sup>30</sup> One of the explanations lies in the propagation of capitalist values, which was particularly evident in her Carnegie Hall debut.

Lola Astanova made her Carnegie Hall debut in early 2012 in a glittering gown by Roberto Cavalli and Mark Bauer, high heels and gems by Tiffany & Co<sup>31</sup> worth 850 thousand dollars.<sup>32</sup> It was a charity concert for the American Cancer Society, which is a kind of tribute to Vladimir Horowitz. The concert was hosted by British actress Julie Andrews and Donald Trump,<sup>33</sup> an advocate of ultra-capitalist and patriarchal ethics. Based on the above information, one can see the pervasive neoliberal capitalist machinery behind the efforts of this unconventional artist, especially considering that the artistic photographs that capture Astanova's visual image sell for extremely high prices. The use of the copyright of one of many such photographs, for example, the commercial professional photographs of Matthew Peyton, can cost up to 475 euros,<sup>34</sup> which far exceeds the price of the original CD or a concert ticket for an outstanding contemporary pianist. On this occasion, Trump also took a photo with Astanova, which allowed Peyton to profit more easily through self-promotion and the sale of copyrights, and the Uzbek-American pianist to consolidate and accumulate the power of erotic capital.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> In a short music video showing Astanova practising, for example, the pianist's provocative posture is particularly intriguing, as it makes the attitude towards the instrument and the artistic repertoire extremely trivial. See <https://youtu.be/NeM842RG08g>.

<sup>31</sup> The *Tiffany & Co* company also sponsored this concert.

<sup>32</sup> Zachary Woolfe, "Air Kisses, Spike Heels and Ample Rubato," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2012; Berlin Iglesias Art, *Beauty and talent: American pianist Lola Astanova with concerts in Europe*, Official Communication, 2019, 2.

[https://berlin-iglesias.art/img/cms/pressrelease/pressrelease\\_LA\\_ENG.pdf](https://berlin-iglesias.art/img/cms/pressrelease/pressrelease_LA_ENG.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> It is worth mentioning that Donald Trump did not start his presidential term at that time.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew Peyton, "A Tribute to Horowitz' Hosted By Julie Andrews", *Getty Images North America*, January 19, 2012. <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/pianist-lola-astanova-performs-a-tribute-to-horowitz-news-photo/137416059?adppopup=true>.

<sup>35</sup> It should be remembered that Lola Astanova, apparently thanks to her political ac-

Therefore, one can get the impression that this jubilee event, instead of commemorating Vladimir Horowitz and people suffering from cancer, became political and sensational propaganda, promoting various fashion and art brands under the pretext of philanthropy.<sup>36</sup> Music critics were also less than enthusiastic about Astanova's performance, with Zachary Woolfe concluding that "Chopin[']s music] should gleam more brightly than Tiffany diamonds".<sup>37</sup> Again, this suggests that Astanova gained her place in this concert hall through political acquaintances rather than fascinating pianistic virtues, as she quite obviously favours the monetary values of music<sup>38</sup> over its artistic and aesthetic qualities. The most striking example of Astanova's performative interpretation, however, can be found in her promotional music recordings, i.e. video clips that should be considered from a musicological perspective.

### **Patriarchal and erotic models in the video clips of Lola Astanova**

Compared to piano recitals, piano videos allow for faster and more efficient marketing success. Thanks to social media, Lola Astanova has also attracted and fascinated audiences from different parts of the world by performing representative, though now largely commercialised, works such as Chopin's *Fantaisie-impromptu* in C-sharp minor and *Etude* Op. 25 No. 12 in C-minor, Debussy's *Clair de lune* from the *Suite Bergamasque*, Liszt's Paganini *Etude La campanella*, or Rachmaninoff's *Moment musical* in E-minor.<sup>39</sup> These are interpretations, however, that are not adorned with the kind of passionate, erotic, semiotic musical signifier that Roland Barthes called *le graine*, defining it as "the body in the singing voice, in the writing hand, in the performing

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quaintances, also performed at the White House. See, for example, Seth Hettena, "The President and the Soviet-Born Pianist", *Rolling Stone* [Online Journal], 15. 1. 2019. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/lola-astanova-trump-779405/>.

<sup>36</sup> Astanova's affinity for fashion is quite obvious. See, for example, Kimberly Cunningham, "Whatever Lola Wants", *San Diego Magazine* [Online Journal], August 24, 2012. [https://www.sandiegomagazine.com/guides/whatever-lola-wants/article\\_3db83a47-5a50-5c32-b7d3-8e361017db22.html](https://www.sandiegomagazine.com/guides/whatever-lola-wants/article_3db83a47-5a50-5c32-b7d3-8e361017db22.html)

<sup>37</sup> Zachary Woolfe, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> On the official website of Lola Astanova, there is a note that the pianist offers a personal video message and a short video clip (usually between 15 and 45 seconds long) for \$375. See Lola Astanova, *Get a Special Video Just for You* [Official Website], <https://lolaastanova.com/personalized-video>.

<sup>39</sup> Astanova has also performed complex piano works such as Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, as well as sentimental and commercial pieces such as Chopin's posthumous "Waltz in A-minor" or Beethoven's Bagatelle *Für Elise*.

limb”<sup>40</sup> that are intuited in a “genosong”.<sup>41</sup> Despite the obvious artistic liberties Astanova takes, her videos exude pianistic bodily gestures that are too calculated to be considered spontaneous, highly individual, or sincere, passionate musical enthusiasm recognised, for example, in the vocal apparatus of Charles Panzéra.<sup>42</sup> And if the listener perceives the eroticism in the voice (or instrumental sound) rather than in the composition itself, Derek Scott concludes that „the signified is ignored in favo[u]r of the sensually produced meaning [that] Barthes calls *signifiance*”.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, the only erotic element in the pianist’s body that Barthes points to is to be found in the fingertips, “whose ‘grain[iness]’ is so rarely heard”,<sup>44</sup> while the manifestation of eroticism in Astanova’s pianism is achieved through entirely different feminine attributes.

The emotional expressiveness and formative musical structure of Astanova’s interpretations depend on the extra-musical impressions and sensual likeability of the listeners, most of whom are interpellated by the ideology of patriarchy. Thus, the visually peculiar feminine sound has become the dominant constitutive principle that permeates the glamorous stage appearance of the Uzbek-American pianist. The video clip of Chopin’s *Fantaisie-impromptu* in C-sharp minor,<sup>45</sup> her official music video, begins with the sound and image of Astanova’s glittering high heels, their colours harmonising with the design of her dress. Arm swings and movements of the upper body, as well as the pianist’s posture behind the instrument, stand out in particular. To emphasise the sensuality of the lower extremities, Astanova even

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<sup>40</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, (transl. by Richard Howard), Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1991, 276.

<sup>41</sup> The terms “phenosong” and “genosong” were conceived by Barthes based on the “phenotext” and “genotext” from the critical semiotics of Julia Kristeva. Phenosong is characterised by artistic and formal features of sound that lack the abstract and orgasmic pleasure of music. The pleasure is indeed in the genosong, which builds on the sensuality of the sounds and their signifiers that do not interfere with the signified. Roland Barthes, op. cit., 270–73.

Astanova’s visual interpretations, however, interfere with the signified (the voice of the author whose works she performs).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>43</sup> Derek B. Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, 19; Cf. Roland Barthes, op. cit., 270.

<sup>44</sup> Roland Barthes, op. cit., 276.

<sup>45</sup> This video currently has over 11 million views on *YouTube* alone.

sits quite far from the keyboard while playing. In this case, the cult of hyper-sexualised femininity is promoted as a constitutive resource of erotic capital, but to the detriment of a disciplined playing apparatus and a tonally profiled musical expression. Nevertheless, it is commendable that the dynamic and affective amplification of visual kinetics did not lead to the collapse of the most basic norms of pianistic craft, except in certain episodes where Astanova resorted to excessive rubato and multiple temporal prolongations of the last note of the phrase.

On the other hand, the visual-aesthetic background of the video clip *Clair de lune* is more reminiscent of a video for a fashion advertising campaign than of a presentation of a particular piano style. That the whole idea of performative musical expression is subjugated to the visual plan is also confirmed by Astanova's fetishistic attitude towards music,<sup>46</sup> when the pianist subordinates the displaced aesthetic qualities of art music to the taste of a larger audience. The modified lush and profiled Debussian tone in its applied form mimics Astanova's facial expressions, her body in a camera close-up, and a provocative angelic costume as a kind of counterpart to the deification of female sexuality.<sup>47</sup> However, considering that Astanova's performances are intended for (listening) spectators of different ages, genders, and sexual identities, one should keep in mind Josep Martí's assertion that erotic capital goes beyond the primitive function of sexual arousal. What is more, Martí notes that women on stage display a specific model of femininity that is also presented to women and not exclusively to male audiences.<sup>48</sup> One of Astanova's narrative strategies that potentially interpellates a gender-neutral audience is reflected in her portrayal of romance.

The eroticised arrangements of Handel's *Passacaglia*,<sup>49</sup> the first movement of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata* in C-sharp minor,<sup>50</sup> and the *Bagatelle Für Elise*,<sup>51</sup> Chopin's *Prélude* in E-minor,<sup>52</sup> and *Nocturne* in E-flat major<sup>53</sup> highly prosaically mimic the Romantic sensibility, with Astanova's (and Hauser's)

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<sup>46</sup> Adorno's or a more modern interpretation of the concept of fetish may be considered here.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. <https://youtu.be/bN2LPy2zWzs>.

<sup>48</sup> Martí, op. cit., 60.

<sup>49</sup> <https://youtu.be/xXKx8Kbzi9A>.

<sup>50</sup> <https://youtu.be/AzWDs26YL9Y>

<sup>51</sup> <https://youtu.be/Nb9YqX4iid0>.

<sup>52</sup> <https://youtu.be/2frUjZgsXFI>.

<sup>53</sup> <https://youtu.be/PPhTVt4ZpLU>.

performance urge more akin to a parodic Romantic consciousness than reflecting the spirit of Romanticism. The main reason for this could perhaps lie in the hyperbolisation of pianistic expression as Astanova's tautological performative self-evidence, with which the artist strategically interpellates mass listeners through sensory-psychological processes. In a sense, this is confirmed by the sensationalist name of the video clip *Lola – Passacaglia (Beautiful romantic piano)*, while what is sonically labelled "romantic" is actually the affective-metaphorical potential of the descending seconds sequence, visually and discursively underlined by a stereotypical vision of femininity. Canadian radical feminist Shulamith Firestone was one of the first theorists to identify the cause of women's positioning and self-identification as "love objects" in romantic love and eroticism.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Firestone concluded that women can only be sexually fulfilled "by vicarious identification with the man who enjoys them".<sup>55</sup> It is in this context that one should consider Astanova's video clip of the etude *La campanella*, in which, following the capitalist and patriarchal norms of elegant masculinity, a male subject unexpectedly appears. Through the use of melodramatic kinaesthetic gestures and overdramatising musical narration, the pianist introduces provocative scenes of male-female erotic charge into the performance. Interestingly, however, the erotic and economic capital of the male "actor" recedes into the background, although Astanova's performative domination of the male subject is manifested through the gendered inversion of patriarchal conventions. By strategically highlighting those models of femininity that ideologically presuppose the female subject as the main vehicle of eroticism, the Uzbek-American pianist simultaneously attempts to interpellate both male and female recipients. It is fairly certain that "non-expert" patriarchal listeners<sup>56</sup> are part of the target audience. Those female individuals, however, who do not reject the ideological power of hegemonic masculinity<sup>57</sup> but live under the

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<sup>54</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, New York, Bantam Books, 1970, 148.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Here Adorno's typology of the listener is placed in the context of the power mechanisms of modern patriarchy, that is, post-patriarchy. An Adornian expert listener may be a patriarchal listener, but not an "Astanoian" consumerist mass listener. For further information about Adorno's typology of listeners, see Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, (transl. by E. B. Ashton), New York, The Seabury Press, 1976, 1–20.

<sup>57</sup> Hegemonic masculinity here means the theoretical concept problematised by the Australian sociologist Robert Connell, by which he means the ideological legitimization of

patriarchal imperatives of femininity will respond to the interpellation first. With this visually striking pianistic behaviour, Lola Astanova reinforces the patriarchal form of exercising power, ideologically coloured by the strategies of exploitative capitalism. Moreover, playing blindfolded explicitly underscores the acrobatic virtuosity<sup>58</sup> once resorted to primarily by great male composer-virtuosos and now increasingly employed by women.<sup>59</sup> By combining elements of exhibitionistic and theatrical pianistic virtuosity with an affectively stimulating eroticisation of the pianistic body, Astanova's recording of Liszt's Paganini Etude fulfils the function of a romanticised signifier of femininity.<sup>60</sup>

From the limited selection of Astanova's video clips available to the public, the interpretation of Rachmaninoff's *Moment musical* in E-minor stands out qualitatively, in which the artist gives priority to the piano sound over the visual décor. Thus, the colours of her clothing are not too garish, yet striking enough to distract from the acousmatic form of listening. Despite a certain illogic in the phrasing, especially during the descending melodic movement,<sup>61</sup> the pianist somehow manages to reach the aesthetic core of the work and not just to mechanically sound the musical text. In this way, something more subtle, but still obvious, channels the erotic capital to interpellate the larger audience. In the more recent version of Astanova's interpretation of this piano piece, however, the musical content was sensually overshadowed by the over-emphasised emotions expressed through the pianist's facial expressions and the striking colour scheme of the building's interior.<sup>62</sup> Although this hierarchical twist between auditory and visual factors of interpretation is intriguing, it becomes a mannerist performative expression of Astanova's pianism

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the global subordination of women to men. This category of masculinity is fundamentally different from the masculinity displayed by socially marginalised male subjects. Robert W. Connell & James W. Messerschmidt, "Masculinidade hegemônica: repensando o conceito", *Estudos Feministas*, 21(1), 2013, 245.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. [https://youtu.be/wsl2YN7FN\\_4](https://youtu.be/wsl2YN7FN_4) and <https://youtu.be/TRZ5X5pPNis> [from 2:50].

<sup>59</sup> On this occasion, it should suffice to mention the contemporary piano discourse of Yuja Wang, in which the artist combines elements of visual eroticism, i.e. erotic capital, and exhibitionist virtuosity.

<sup>60</sup> The emancipation of the female subject cannot be complete, but only apparent, since it is based on patriarchal gender stereotypes of femininity.

<sup>61</sup> Lola Astanova, "Lola Astanova plays Rachmaninoff Moment Musicaux Op. 16, No. 4", LOLA ASTANOVA, October 30, 2011, YouTube video, 3:10. [0:55-1:02], <https://youtu.be/FhcidIUkCbk>.

<sup>62</sup> <https://youtu.be/urbyn0vaxJ0>.

when the pianist plays with the visual interior by choosing pianos in white,<sup>63</sup> blue,<sup>64</sup> or purple.<sup>65</sup>

Interestingly, Lola Astanova also resorts to those performative strategies that involve a simulation of performance in nature. In this context, it is worth mentioning the video clip in which she simulates the performance of Chopin's *Etude* Op. 25 No. 12 by the ocean. This kind of choice of a natural setting underlines the mimetic function of music, especially as far as the choice of the composition is concerned, whose misnomer—*Ocean Etude*—has become accepted even in pianist circles.<sup>66</sup> The repetitive body movements and the deliberate swaying of dishevelled hair are accompanied by a massive, somewhat more discrete tabooed piano sound that complements the onomatopoeic, musicalised sound effects of the rushing waves. Such artistic practice could possibly be attributed to the applied sonic-visual description of the musical flow when the musical meaning of the etude is represented by visual and other non-musical artistic components. Even the dynamic and dramatic climax of the etude is in harmony with the affectively stimulating naturalistic sounds of the ocean. Moreover, in this promotional music video, Astanova advocates for the protection of natural resources by expressing the ideological thought: "Our oceans need our care... It's the one thing WE ALL can agree on..."<sup>67</sup> Notwithstanding the marketing ploy to impress the audience with environmental activism, the inclusion of a clear moral message raises awareness of the problem of water pollution, which mitigates the effects of the clichéd underlining of sexuality and other socially imposed patriarchal patterns.

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The pianistic video clips of Lola Astanova are the product of a new era: the age of visual culture, the dominance of social networks and virtual reality, consumerist attitude towards art, and the neoliberal capitalist model of production operating within patriarchal power structures. Completely overshadow-

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<sup>63</sup> <https://youtu.be/6f4BUnt3i1I>.

<sup>64</sup> <https://youtu.be/lnkKPqGXmR0>; <https://youtu.be/urbyn0vaxJ0>.

<sup>65</sup> <https://youtu.be/XqkaLWg5D1g>.

<sup>66</sup> As is generally known, Chopin did not name his piano studies.

<sup>67</sup> Lola Astanova, "Lola Astanova – Ocean Etude". LOLA ASTANOVA, October 4, 2020, YouTube video, 3:12. [2:58-3:12], <https://youtu.be/iYlyqvmzv30>.

owed by the visual elements of a performance, Astanova's unconventional piano sound takes on a decorative and mimetic function, without any hint of an autonomous musical logic. Her musical interpretations, viewed from the neo-globalist standpoint of new media, are in fact the contemporary form of musico-visual performance art. The erotic capital and the patriarchal power order enabled the pianist to prosaically display the female sexuality in her performances and to significantly alter the poetic, stylistic and expressive features of the pianistic sound. Then the holistic approach to musical understanding gives way to new(er) fetishistic practices of visual listening. Although the physical form of capital ownership cannot in itself be the cause of the rejection of the aesthetic experience of listening, the trivial eroticisation of pianistic discourse necessarily conditions the ideology of musical perception to which patriarchal listeners, indoctrinated by the new consumer-capitalist system, are the first to respond. Given Astanova's popularity on social media, and probably the generous capital gains she makes thanks to the visual peculiarity of pianistic sound, it is safe to assume that she will continue to endow her pianistic identity with erotic capital as long as her physical attributes allow. But when a new generation of female performers emerges whose attractive combination of erotic intelligence and contemplative artistic imagination far exceeds the resources of Lola Astanova's physical and cultural capital, the capitalist order will force her to adapt to the new laws of the music market or retire permanently from the concert stage.

Translated by the author

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## Summary

Controversial Uzbek-American pianist Lola Astanova has built her career performing the revered works of various musical ensembles and genres. She has collaborated with many renowned artists such as Lev Naumov, Valery Abisalovich Gergiev, Jahja Ling, Eduardo Marturet, Gerard Schwarz and Andrea Bocelli, which has allowed her to promote her extravagant piano skills on the international concert stage. Her interpretations are thus in line with contemporary neo-globalist trends, which to some extent neglect the intellectual, functional and stylistico-aesthetic qualities of musical works of high artistic value. The main hypothesis of this paper is that erotic capital is a constitutive factor of Astanova’s artistic imprint, the commercial potential of which has been recognised by certain capitalist elites and dominant institutions of power. The musico-rhetorical, poetic, and aesthetic interpretive strategies on which Astanova’s piano sound is based are thus derived from the normative practices and achievements of patriarchy. However, it is the modern patriarchy of a highly developed capitalist society that promotes consumer individualism and the skillfully managed emancipation of women within the neoliberal market economy. A selection of Astanova’s pub-

licly available performances was made, mostly presented to the audience in the form of video clips, characterised by unconventional visual aesthetics and prosaic performative sound. Piano performances conceived in this way often exclude the possibility of acousmatic listening—the so-called non-representational form of listening that may prevent the effective cashing of erotic capital.

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## NEW WORKS

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***Biljana Leković\****

University of Art in Belgrade

Faculty of Music Art, Department of Musicology

### POSTHUMAN 'TRANSFORMATION' INSIDE/ON THE WEB ANA GNJATOVIĆ: *ARACHNE'S DREAM* FOR PIANO AND LIVE ELECTRONICS\*\*

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to analyse Ana Gnjatović's work, *Arachne's Dream*, written for piano and live electronics. The work premiered in 2019 on the initiative of Nataša Penezić, a pianist to whom this work has been dedicated. Based on the idea of the sound realization of a spider web phenomenon (within an electronic medium), I will try to analyse the development path and the creation process this piece undergoes, by taking into account the extra-musical impulses as a source of inspiration. Apart from the web motif itself, taken as the basic motif which is further developed throughout the piece, the author's inspiration also stems from other models (which remain in close connection with the web phenomenon), from the ancient Greek myth of a weaver called Arachne, and Kafka's work "The Metamorphosis", to Roland Barthes' "The Pleasure of the Text". All of these 'threads' create a foundation for further music/sound representation, based upon the interaction between an electronic part, and the pianist's actions.

**Keywords:** a spider web, a piano, electronics, *The Myth of Arachne*, Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, posthuman

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\* Contact details: biljana\_sreckovic@yahoo.com.

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*Once upon a time, I, Zhuangzi, dreamed I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Zhuangzi. Soon I awakened, and there I was, veritably myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a distinction. The transition is called the transformation of material things.<sup>1</sup>*

*Arachne's Dream* for piano and live electronics was composed by Ana Gnjatović<sup>2</sup> in 2019. Her inspiration stems from the project, realized on the initiative of the pianist, Nataša Penezić, whose idea was to perform the pieces of music inspired by insects and birds.<sup>3</sup> Taking this idea as a starting point,

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<sup>1</sup> According to: Hans-Georg Möller, "Zhuangzi's 'Dream of the Butterfly': A Taoist Interpretation," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 49, No. 4, October 1996, 439–450.

<sup>2</sup> Ana Gnjatović (1984) graduated from the Department of Composition at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, in 2008 in the class of full professor Milan Mihajlović. She finished her PhD studies in composition at the same institution. She has attended various composition master classes and workshops, working with composers Georges Aperghis, Chaya Czernowin, Brian Ferneyhough, Beat Furrer, Louis Andriessen, G.F. Haas, and Ivan Fedele, among others. She was a prize winner of the Summer Academy ISA05 (2005) and of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pre-art Composition Competition (2013), winner of the FoM Belgrade 'Josip Slavenski' Award (2010), finalist of the 4th International Biennial of Contemporary Music in Koper (2014).

Her pieces have been performed throughout Europe, in Israel, Mexico, USA and Japan, and have been programmed at festivals such as the International Review of Composers, KoMA, 'Harpichord – Living Art', Wratislavia cantans (PL), Espresso (ME), Ankara Music Festival (TR), MusMA Festival, Culturescapes (CH), International Harp Festival 'Harp Connection', Festival de Wallonie (BE), MUSLAB (MX), MA/IN MAtEra INtermedia festival (IT), Belgrade Saxperience. She collaborated with the ensembles Sentieri selvaggi, Garth Knox and Rohan de Saram, soloists of the OENM, the Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, pre-art, the RTS Symphony Orchestra, among others. She is currently employed as an associate professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Kosovska Mitrovica, where she teaches music analysis. At the doctoral program Multimedia Arts of the University of Arts in Belgrade she teaches courses in techniques and technologies of music and creation of multimedia artwork. In her recent artistic research, she explores the extension of instrumental performance through the use of electronics, speech, movement and video.

<sup>3</sup> The concert was held on 23 November 2019 at the BUNT 7.0 Festival, under the title "Insects and Birds". Apart from the piece, *Arachne's Dream*, dedicated to the pianist, different authors were also presented: Jasmina Mitrušić (cycle *Insectarium*), Olivier Messiaen (*The Catalogue of Birds*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Book), Jonathan Harvey (*Tombeau de Messiaen*), Joanna Bailie (*Artificial Environment*). The programme was performed in Novi Sad at the end of

the composer decides to assign a sound quality to a soundless, yet visually (tangibly) striking and quite peculiar phenomenon, a spider web.<sup>4</sup> So fragile, but powerful, the web is simulated within an auditive context. As a result, the phenomenon is transformed (or *metamorfosed*) into a 'new aggregate state'. In other words, she strives to analyse the *possibilities of the impossible*<sup>5</sup> within the world of sounds/listening, by using the web as a paradigm of reference. Although the idea for this music piece came as the result of a concert performance and collaboration, and was finally realized through mutual interaction (which is mentioned later in the text), the work itself brings continuity in the sphere of the author's sound 'experiments', and microsounds, in particular, which re-examine the limits of human perception.

*Arachne's Dream* is a continuation of my research on the sounds that exist somewhere behind (behind music, behind the expected, behind the conscious), on smaller and hidden sounds, which, inconspicuously coexist with humans, thus naturally contributing to the totality of the acoustic ecology of our surroundings, performance or some music piece. I attempt to shake the listener's perception, by augmenting and positioning sounds at the forefront. Insects and spiders are tiny creatures which produce micro sounds, heard from a human perspective. However, I have been interested in the sounds produced by spiders, heard from the auditory perspective of a creature encapsulated in its web.<sup>6</sup>

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2019. The video of the concert can be accessed via the link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpGSYG\\_C-Yg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpGSYG_C-Yg) (accessed on 26 August 2021). I will use this performance as a relevant material for further analysis, since the actual score has still not been realized.

<sup>4</sup> I refer to the conversation I had with Ana Gnjatović on 15 March 2021. On this occasion, I thank the composer for her time and patience, and particularly for the valuable information and explanations she provided regarding this piece and its creation. I am also immensely grateful for the comments she made once she read the draft of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> I refer to the syntagm of Salomé Voegelin which, based on the idea of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, expands on the opinion regarding the potential perception of unfamiliar phenomena. She includes inaudible sounds (or the sounds people can't hear on their own, or without a 'medium'), so as to emphasize that these and similar sounds should be the subject of perceptive analysis since they hold an important place in the world of listeners. Salome Voegelin, *Sonic Possible Worlds* (revised edition), New York/London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2021, 158.

<sup>6</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Review of the work 1*, a manuscript. 'Tiny', 'micro' sounds, barely audible to the human ear, are a subject of the composer's research. Her project "My garden without me" is a representation of her fascination with insects and spiders, and their world of sounds. It is an archive of works, or different artistic views on a biophonic world of small, tiny species which inhabit a small-leaved lime, or species which are endangered or extinct. This kind of post-antropocentric, or posthuman motif can be recog-

Considering the (electronic) sounds to be the ‘threads’ weaving *the web*, meant not only the sound research was guided by the idea of a spider web formation, but it also involved a search into the narrative, mythological, literary and theoretical sources which would ‘wrap’ the sound output into additional layers of meaning. That being said, it seems like the author also regards the work as interdisciplinary research,<sup>7</sup> which is not solely based on the examination of the material aspects of a sound itself, even though the piece, *Arachne’s Dream*, focuses on this principle. Therefore, (my) ‘story’ about this piece starts somewhere ‘above’ the sound, within the spheres where the sound primarily does not belong, yet which will reach ‘the inner space’, and *transform* into the sound itself. I perceive those spheres as lines which merge, intersect, *intertwine*, and touch each other in Ana Gnjatović’s delicate world of sounds.

*You drowning in it, yet you can’t resist ...*<sup>8</sup>

The bizarreness and obscenity of the web phenomenon, along with its “nice and silky texture”<sup>9</sup> fascinated the composer and inspired her to create a peculiar sound equivalent. Apart from its various peculiarities, it’s quite interesting to delve deeper into the invertebrates’ sensory perception of the world: they feature eight legs, covered in tactile organs in a form of tiny spikes, or hair – the spikes are the receptors of chemically-induced sensations and air vibra-

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nized in the work *Arachne’s Dream*. You can find out more about the project via the link: <http://www.treebarkrecipes.com/about.html> (accessed on 19 August 2021). Also, you can listen to a part of the show where the composer discussed the project on “the sounds we don’t perceive, or dedicate our attention to”: <http://87.237.203.129/page/radio/sr/story/24/radio-beograd-2/4390098/.html> (accessed on 10 August 2021).

<sup>7</sup> In the description of the work the author said that she discovered the model of a spider web “after brief research... (with the hope that the concept of the concert won’t be destroyed by the fact that spiders are not insects)”. Ana Gnjatović, *A Review of the Work I*, a manuscript.

<sup>8</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Conversation*, (15 March 2021).

<sup>9</sup> *A Conversation* (15 March 2021). The threads of a spider web consist of a “biomaterial of extraordinary mechanical characteristics, obtained through a combination of firmness, toughness, strength and elasticity...” According to: Svetlana V. Dmitrović, “New Nanostructured Composite Spider Silk Based Materials: Preparation, Structural, Morphological, Luminescent and Magnetic Properties of the Materials”

Retrieved from: [https://www.pmf.ni.ac.rs/download/doktorati/dokumenta/disertacije/2019/Dis\\_UNI\\_Svetlana\\_V\\_Dmitrovic\\_2019.pdf](https://www.pmf.ni.ac.rs/download/doktorati/dokumenta/disertacije/2019/Dis_UNI_Svetlana_V_Dmitrovic_2019.pdf) (accessed on 19 August 2021).

tions. Moreover, spiders possess lyriform organs which are also assumed to be a part of the auditory system of organs.<sup>10</sup> Even though they do not have ears, or any hearing organs, whatsoever, spiders can still recognize different auditory sensations.<sup>11</sup> Truly inspired, the composer's intention was to comprehend more thoroughly the imperceptible, yet not entirely soundproof world of spiders.<sup>12</sup>

However, the intriguing part about spiders (and what in this case leads to further research and analysis) lies in the fact that some species have got organs (glands) which create silky threads.<sup>13</sup> The threads form a multifunctional, elastic web which has various forms and purposes, the most important of which is to create a perfect prey-catching mechanism. Despite the fact that their web represents a perfect system for survival, it is still always at risk of destruction, and apart from other spiders, humans pose the biggest threat.<sup>14</sup> Even though the author doesn't emphasise it, using sound to depict the web could also be analysed from a post-anthropocentric world view, the focus of which is not on the human world as we know it, but one where humans are

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<sup>10</sup> J. W. S. Pringle, "The Function of the Lyriform Organs of Arachnids", *Journal of Experimental Biology*, 32/2, 1955, 270–278. <https://doi.org/10.1242/jeb.32.2.270>.

<sup>11</sup> The latest studies have shown that some spider species react to sounds, or the sound waves of certain, lower frequencies, as well as to vibrations. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/10/video-even-without-ears-jumping-spiders-can-hear-you> (accessed on 19 August 2021). Also, analyses in the field of bioacoustics indicate that "every living organism produces an acoustic footprint", even a microscopic one, such as a virus. See more: Bernie Krause, *Wild Soundscapes: Discovering the Voice of the Natural World*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press, 2016, 54.

<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, most spiders have still got eight eyes (though some species don't have eyes at all), in spite of bad eye-sight. Rudy Jocqué, Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman, *Spider Families of the World, Tervuren*, The Royal Museum for Central Africa, 2006, 14.

<sup>13</sup> The threads are an actual protein which becomes firmer when in contact with air. They could also be thinner, thicker, drier or stickier. Marjan Komnenov, „Taksonomija i zoogeografija paukova (Arachnida, Araneae) Republike Makedonije”, PhD thesis, Univerzitet u Novom Sadu, PMF, Departman za biologiju i ekologiju, 17 <https://nardus.mpn.gov.rs/bitstream/id/37495/Disertacija.pdf> (accessed on 19 August 2021).

<sup>14</sup> It is well-known that the threads spiders produce have been used for various purposes throughout history. Ancient Romans used the cobweb to heal wounds, while people, such as the Aborigines, used them for fishing or food procurement. With the advance of technology and industry, the threads of a spider web are used as a model for the production of new materials. According to: Christina Allmeling, Christine Radtke, and Peter M. Vogt, "Technical and Biomedical Uses of Nature's Strongest Fiber: Spider Silk", Wolfgang Nentwig (Ed.), *Spider Ecophysiology*, Heidelberg, Springer, 475.

aware of the life “we share with many different others, here and now”.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, a contemporary man, partially focused on the aforementioned fact, finds himself caught in *the web* which warns and ‘strangles’, and yet it seems that finding ‘a way out’ is one of the crucial questions we tend to ask nowadays. Even though it may seem quite challenging to sense who has been caught in the web built by Ana Gnjatović, *Arachne’s Dream* represents a place where we focus on the sound itself, as well as on its position in the biosphere. In other words, it leaves us contemplating the relationship between sound, nature, animals, and humans in the age of Posthumanism.

Timidly ‘invading’ the sphere of zoology (aware of my lack of knowledge in this field), my intention was not only to show how fascinated we are by spiders and their peculiar characteristics, but also to emphasize the potential for an artistic analysis and transposition of their unique characteristics in the field of sound, which is a topic I will expand on later in this paper. Firstly, I will point to some extra-musical ‘threads’ which create a sound inside *the web* of *Arachne’s Dream*, thus shaping it through a mutual interaction.

*O guilty and shameless one! For evermore shalt thou live and hang as now, thou and thy descendants*<sup>16</sup>

The work got its title from the myth of Arachne, a mythological character whose name is directly connected with the etymology of the Greek word „ἀράχνη” (“arachne”) which stands for a spider or a spider web.<sup>17</sup> The ability of some spiders to weave a web has undergone a mythological transposition and transformation, whereas the ancient myth of Arachne,<sup>18</sup> a well-known weaver of extraordinary skill who “weaved fabrics, translucent as air, made from threads, light and silky as clouds”<sup>19</sup> has been a reference model for the

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<sup>15</sup> Rozi Brajdoti, *Posthumano*, Beograd, Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, Univerzitet Singidunum, 229.

<sup>16</sup> Myth of Arachne, according to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Nikolaj A. Kun, *Legende i mitovi Stare Grčke*, Beograd, Admiral Books, 2011, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Steven, Paul Beekes, Lucien van Beek, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Vol. 1, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010, 123. The term *arachnids* is used to denote creatures which resemble spiders, or some similar groups of arthropods where spiders belong (including scorpions, ticks and mites).

<sup>18</sup> The author refers to the myth, represented in the Sixth Book of Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*.

<sup>19</sup> Nikolaj A. Kun, *Ibid.*, 33. This myth has had an influence on the creative ideas of other artists. Some examples are the painting by Diego Velasquez and Peter Paul Rubens,

composer's inspiration.<sup>20</sup> According to the mythological narrative, Arachne, convinced of her extraordinary weaving skills, challenges the goddess Athena to a weaving contest.<sup>21</sup> Although her work would prove to be "the pinnacle of perfection", which "in terms of beauty certainly didn't fall behind Athena's work", Arachne ended up being punished for her audacity to emphasize the weaknesses and misdeeds of the mighty gods.<sup>22</sup> Athena destroys her work, while poor Arachne decides to hang herself, in return. However, a different scenario ensues when the goddess decides to spare her life and work (seeks revenge and imposes a different kind of fate on her): Athena will take the noose off her neck, but in order to prevent her from opposing her any longer, she will have her dangling and weaving for all eternity: "Sprinkled with a potion, made from magical herbs, Arachne's body immediately shrank in size, her voluminous hair fell off and she was transformed into a spider".<sup>23</sup> Having lost her human form, Arachne went through a physical change in order to reach her moral transformation, and her (indecent) behaviour which did not conform to any norms, thus leading to "dehumanization" became a metaphor, symbol, message, but also a paradigm and a model for future narrative forms (just like the myth itself, based on the idea of transformation, variation, or actualization of the established, archetypal narrative).<sup>24</sup> The motif of transformation and transmutation of the existing state stands in contrast to the *ex nihilo* concept of creation. It's important to note that transformation in

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or the poem *Arachne* by William Empson. The children's poem, *The Spider and the Fly* by Mary Howitt is another example which the author initially used as a segment of the electronic part, only to remove it afterwards, because of its naive connotation and the result itself. *A Conversation* (15 March 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Apart from the myth itself, Ana Gnjatović has also been inspired by the text "Tracing Arachne's Web: Mythic Methods and Femin(ine)ist Fictions" by Kristin M. Mapel Bloomberg, published in the book with the same title by the University Press of Florida, 2001, 1–15. She has also been inspired by the text: "Weaving and Writing: Censorship in Arachne", <https://web.colby.edu/ovid-censorship/censorship-in-ovids-myths/weaving-and-writing-censorship-in-arachne/> (accessed on 20 August 2021).

<sup>21</sup> Ovid refers to Minerva.

<sup>22</sup> A notable example is Zeus' (Jupiter's) abduction of Europa and Persephone. According to: "Weaving and Writing: Censorship in Arachne", <https://web.colby.edu/ovid-censorship/censorship-in-ovids-myths/weaving-and-writing-censorship-in-arachne/> (accessed on 20 August 2021).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> See more: Laurence Coupe, *Myth*, London/New York: Routledge, 2009. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, London/New York: Routledge, 2005, 17.

this sense does not only refer to the subversion of a primary model, but it also aims at establishing some similarities between the initial form and the results of metamorphosis, thus creating a form of continuity, without a complete interruption.<sup>25</sup> New connections arise at this point, while the author establishes a continuity by further ‘weaving new threads’: the natural phenomenon and the myth acquire their literary upgrade in the form of a new narrative regarding multifaceted transformation, which, again, makes us reconsider the anthropocentric boundaries.

*Was he a beast, that music should move him like this?*<sup>26</sup>

According to Ana Gnjatović, Kafka’s story, “The Metamorphosis” (*Die Verwandlung*, 1915) starts where the myth ends. The story is about a merchant traveller, Gregor Samsa who, resembling enormous vermin “awoke one morning from his troubled dreams”, while his “many legs, miserably thin in comparison with his size otherwise, flickered helplessly before his eyes”.<sup>27</sup> This physical characteristic which Kafka’s protagonist shares with spiders (even though, unlike spiders, he turns into an insect), the composer perceives as a model for establishing a sound metaphor, so, in collaboration with the pianist, Nataša Penezić, she chooses certain segments of Kafka’s text, and uses them as a sound-narrative layer of her work. The segments (which could be used as ‘borderlines’ to define a three-part music form) are as follows:

“He would have needed arms and hands to raise himself; but instead of those, he had only these many little legs”;<sup>28</sup>

“His little legs went whirring away as they bore him to his meal”;<sup>29</sup>

“He soon discovered that he was no longer able to move at all. He wasn’t

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<sup>25</sup> The idea was presented by a writer, Olga Tokarczuk. She refers to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Olga Tokarčuk, “Transfugijum”, *Bizarne priče*, Transl. by Milica Markić, Beograd, Službeni glasnik, 2020, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Franz, Kafka, *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Transl. by Joyce Crick, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, 66.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 32. Ana Gnjatović and Nataša Penezić use their own, somewhat different translation (“Биле су му потребне руке да се на њих ослони, а имао је само мноштво ножица”). Source: correspondence with the author.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 46. “Ножице су му трепериле док је ишао према храни”. Source: correspondence with the composer.

at all surprised; rather it seemed to him to be unnatural that up till now he had actually been able to move about on these thin little legs.”<sup>30</sup>

The selection of the text was led by thinking about the sound itself, sound representation, or musical contextualization of the chosen text, inspired by a bizarre motif of spindly legs (which in Kafka's ghastly perception belong to an insect whose identity and awareness correspond to a human being, to the extent that it even has its own reaction to music/sound).<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the selected parts of the text open up topics which lie 'behind' the sound 'surface', and follow the previously mentioned 'threads' of a creatively-poetic inspiration. Having in mind all of the above-mentioned aspects of Kafka's text, and the layers of meaning of the entire story, the author's choice of this story is quite an ingenious one, since Kafka's narrative can be observed through the actualization process of archetypal ideas (myth), and furthermore, through the lens of a modernist/contemporary reading. Based on the modernist questions on the role of human beings and their status within the world/society, (re)territorialisation that befell Arachne,<sup>32</sup> in this context, could also influence Kafka's protagonist. Concerned about the state of the human being at the moment, followed by a symbolic story about transformation into a non-human form,<sup>33</sup> acquires a new kind of 'solution' within (the piece) *Arachne's Dream*: "The worst part about being transformed into an invertebrate creature (arachnids, insects, bugs) appears to be the fact that we clearly remember that we used to be humans, yet, we are only vaguely aware that we no longer are".<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 70. "Брзо је схватио да се уопште не може померати. Није га то чудило, било му је чудније и необичније што се тим танким ножицама икада могао кретати". The translation used in the piece is by the author. Source: correspondence with the composer.

<sup>31</sup> Taken from the Preface by Ranko Sladojević. In: Franc Kafka, *Preobražaj. Osuda. Pismo oци*, transl. by Zlatko Gorjan i Zlatko Matetić, Sarajevo, Svejtllost, 1992, 12.

<sup>32</sup> I refer to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari for whom the transformation into an animal in Kafka's work *The Metamorphosis* represents an example of human deterritorialization. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka*, Sremski Karlovci/Novi Sad, Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 1998, 25, 44, 63. In the broadest sense, deterritorialization represents movements which bring about changes. It also means breaking free from fixed relationships, thus opening up for new forms of organization. See: Јелена М. Степанов, "Делезов и Гатаријев концепт ризома кроз архитектуру, уметност и дизајн", *Култура*, 150, 2016, 303–318, <https://scindeks-clanci.ceon.rs/data/pdf/0023-5164/2016/0023-51641650303S.pdf> (accessed on 5 September 2021).

<sup>33</sup> Жил Делез, Феликс Гатари, op. cit., 13.

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.anagnjatovic.com/arachnes-dream.html?fbclid= IwA->

While Kafka's transformation into an animal may represent a way out, or "a line of escape",<sup>35</sup> the author's self-reflective criticism, with a touch of nostalgia, points to a different, rather pessimistic outcome: "As the number of threads grows, so does the feeling of discomfort, to the point when the web starts to unwrap around, and strangle us, as if we were in a nightmare."<sup>36</sup> Just like the dream itself, we are left in a dilemma on the borderline with reality, since there is no balance between the here and there.<sup>37</sup> *Arachne's Dream* prompts us to ask who is standing on the edge of danger, who will be lured into the web, who overstepped the (moral) boundaries by transforming into an 'invertebrate':<sup>38</sup> it seems the answer could be a human being? Intertwined in music, these threads will certainly offer possible answers, which will also open up some new questions, in return. Be that as it may, it is important to mention one more source of the composer's inspiration.

It's about the segment, taken from the text by Roland Barthes "The pleasure of the text" ("Le Plaisir du Texte"). The following excerpt brings us back to the beginning: to a spider web the metaphorical influence of which carries the 'key' to the process of creation, analysis and interpretation of the text/musical text, a process which still leads to liberation (of the one who is writing, reading, composing, or listening):

Text means *Tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue – this texture – the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secre-

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R1UHvZQIe\_15njoOZCXN9-HdPm0EbDxqrAdMZUwyiYqO2R-qG8ltw52\_3M (accessed on 26 August 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Жил Делез, Феликс Гатари, op. cit., 65.

<sup>36</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.anagnjatovic.com/arachnes-dream.html?fbclid=IwAR1UHvZQIe\\_15njoOZCXN9-HdPm0EbDxqrAdMZUwyiYqO2R-qG8ltw52\\_3M](https://www.anagnjatovic.com/arachnes-dream.html?fbclid=IwAR1UHvZQIe_15njoOZCXN9-HdPm0EbDxqrAdMZUwyiYqO2R-qG8ltw52_3M) (accessed on 26 August 2021).

<sup>37</sup> I was inspired by a short story by Jorge Luis Borges, "Dreamtigers". The writer describes his own passion for tigers which manifests in his dreams. He dreams of tigers, yet, not the ones he always longs to see in real life. Dreams are not a place where we can reach indefinite power, or perfection. Instead, Borges' story leads us to believe they represent a place of weakness. Horhe Luis Borhes, *Kratke priče*, transl. by Krinka Vidaković Petrov, Beograd, Izdavačka radna organizacija, 1979, 105.

<sup>38</sup> I use the term metaphorically here so that it refers to gullible people, poltroons, and people without character (According to: *Речник српској језика*, Нови Сад, Матица српска, 2007, 79).

tions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an *hyphology* (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider's web).<sup>39</sup>

As I have mentioned, Ana Gnjatović does not choose extra-musical centres for random contemplation, yet, she rather prudently and skilfully uses them to find a common thread for all models. She creates an immutable poetic frame in this way, which acquires its final form through its own sound realization. Even though Kafka's text assumes a hegemonic position, since it is used both as a sound, and a dramatic material, all of its elements, the ones which seemingly remain behind the sound, as well as the sound itself, play a crucial role, and act in an undeniable synergy.

*My idea was to use the electronic sound/part to gradually weave a spider web which feels both gentle and silky, yet, at the same time, a little bit uncomfortable.*<sup>40</sup>

I have already pointed out that creating and materializing a spider web as a model, or depicting the effects of this natural phenomenon in sound has been the starting point for the realization of this work. The composer does not perceive the web from a distant point of view in order to represent this phenomenon, on the contrary: Ana Gnjatović is curious to find out how the web sounds from the inside, "from the perspective of someone who has been caught in the web",<sup>41</sup> someone who is painstakingly trying to escape and survive. Listeners are presented with the process of creation and the existence of the web itself; *the web* produces its sound before us, it acts, its threads, "trembling silently in a high pitch for a long time", 'wrap around us', while making us contemplate the symbolism of the author's words and sound solutions.<sup>42</sup> Even though the web and "the everlasting persistence of weaving something gentle and intricate, yet predictable (and predictably predatory)",<sup>43</sup> represents the prominent motif the composer develops, she also singles out two additional elements as equally important: "not only the tiny legs (the limbs, as

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<sup>39</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Pleasures of the Text*, Transl. by Richard Miller, New York, Hill and Wang, 1975, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Retrieved from: [https://www.anagnjatovic.com/arachnes-dream.html?fbclid=IwAR1UHvZQIe\\_l5njoOZCXN9-HdPm0EbDxqrAdMZUwyiYqO2R-qG8ltw52\\_3M](https://www.anagnjatovic.com/arachnes-dream.html?fbclid=IwAR1UHvZQIe_l5njoOZCXN9-HdPm0EbDxqrAdMZUwyiYqO2R-qG8ltw52_3M) (accessed on 26 August 2021).

<sup>41</sup> From the correspondence with the composer.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Review of the Work 1*, a manuscript.

creators of small sounds) which are scurrying away, but also the legs which listen”; “the vibration which gradually spreads and transfers itself through the web, slowly swallowing all other sounds on which she feeds and grows”.<sup>44</sup>

Having this in mind, we can distinguish between the three lines which simultaneously create a path of development. The first one is made of the electronic part, whereas the duration of the entire piece equals the duration of one electronic part (around 10 min.) First of all, the electronic segment which has partially been recorded in advance (and the composer presented it live) represents a sound loop other elements are ‘glued’ onto, thus symbolising the web and all that happens inside of it. What’s more, according to the author, the *main* excerpt which stands as a separate layer at ‘the foundation’ of the work, predicts the dramaturgy of the entire work with its peculiar sound narration.<sup>45</sup> This vibrating, electronic ‘weaving’ has been realized in accordance with a contrasting principle: on the one hand, the composer uses a material based on long-sounding aliquots (shaped by various effects), presented in continuity with the intention to establish an analogy with the threads inside the web. The author explains this procedure: “The spider web starts forming from one tone and its aliquot content, so as to be succeeded each minute by the following, lower tone of the chromatic scale, with its aliquot content creating layers over the already existing sounds”.<sup>46</sup> The author has created an almost ghastly atmosphere of secrecy by using a different combination of aliquots within a ‘systematic’ sequence, ranging from high frequencies which have an almost negative effect, such as the sound of creaking, to the lower ones which lead us into the ‘depth’ by gradually intensifying and lowering dynamic tension.<sup>47</sup>

On the one hand, the sounds, glued onto the long-sounding ‘threads’, represent repetitive, ‘micro’ sound signals, such as the sound of scratching, constant tapping, knocking, or ‘smaller’ and shorter sound models representing legs which ‘fall into’ the web and wiggle inside of it. On the other hand, there are also sounds of a shorter duration, yet more massive and dynamically accentuated, circulating in a chromatic scale, since there is no way out of the web. The sound effects, which account for the second layer of the elec-

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Some interesting lighting effects contributed to the atmosphere during the debut performance of the work on the stage of the “Ivo Lola Ribar” cultural centre. Colourful beams of light penetrated the darkness of the hall, reaching the performers on stage.

tronic part, are made of the sound samples, marked inside the piano, since “the intertwined piano strings resemble a spider web in some way, while the act of striking the strings resembles weaving”.<sup>48</sup> Nataša Penezić’s improvisations were recorded on an amplified piano. She used various techniques of playing (fingertips, nails, open hand, finger-drumming), while using wood, chords, or pegs as a source of sound. With such techniques, the sound/piano itself becomes a place where a double metamorphosis happens: the standards of the piano sound, produced so far by using the keyboard, have been upgraded by playing within/on the instrument itself. They have also become ‘disguised’ and acoustically treated through electronic modification. During the recording of these actual sounds which have become a subject for further processing and distribution through the MIDI instruments (which Gnjatović herself does for this occasion), the composer has applied a specific recording technique of close proximity,<sup>49</sup> by making direct contact between a microphone and the inside of a piano.<sup>50</sup> The use of microphones will make the inside transform into the outside, ‘the other’ into ‘familiar’, small into augmented, while the *possibility of the impossible* becomes imaginable – the “porous surface of a microphone leads us into another world where directions take different turns, while normative positions and relations are called into question”.<sup>51</sup>

The result of the engagement and interaction between the author and the pianist, Nataša Penezić, represents the other thread of the piece. The creative ‘partnership’ came as a result once they arranged to prepare and perform the piece together, by using live electronics,<sup>52</sup> which furthermore implied they would actively listen to, select and translate the text. They would also test and

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<sup>48</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Review of the Work 1*, a manuscript.

<sup>49</sup> Ana Gnjatović (15 March 2021). She does that by having in mind the technique such as “augmented sound/audio reality”. Augmented reality (AR) aims at augmenting the sensuous perception of the real world, aided by a computer-generated, virtual stimuli and information. Based on hyperactivity in real-life surroundings and in real time, it is actually another form of virtual reality (VR), which combines both realistic and virtual objects. *Augmented sound/audio reality* is, by analogy, a combination of real-life and virtual auditory objects put in a real life environment. In both cases, the idea is to upgrade reality (a perception of reality), without doing a complete swap. Hannes Gamper, “Enabling Technologies for Audio Reality Systems, Aalto University”, Doctoral dissertation, 2014, 27. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/80711759.pdf> (accessed on 20 August 2021).

<sup>50</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Conversation* (15 March 2021)

<sup>51</sup> Salomé Voegelin, *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>52</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Review of the Work 1*, a manuscript.

put the piano sound on trial.<sup>53</sup> Both the composer and the pianist have managed to make use of their skill-set in this way, since Ana Gnjatović also performs/improvises on stage. So, the creative and performative ‘imprint’ within the music piece itself is the result of a mutual collaboration and dialogue. Simultaneously, the role of the interpreter has been considerably extended, considering the standards – her work is the outcome of the experiments inside the piano, on the keyboard, ‘around’ the keyboard – she talks (that is, she delivers some excerpts from Kafka’s text), so her voice becomes an additional sound layer of the music piece. Performing the work on the piano in a conventional way, which means the performer’s body remains static in relation to the instrument, undergoes a process of ‘metamorphosis’ – the pianist is quite active, her body is actively moving during the major part of the performance (from sitting to standing up and leaning over the inside of the piano).

According to the author, the kinetic and performing aspects are some of the impressive elements of the music piece, *Arachne’s Dream*:

I have decided that the pianist should not start her performance in the way she’s expected to (on the left, or on the right side from the centre of the keyboard), over the surface of the instrument. Instead, she follows the movement line into the inside of the instrument, that is, towards the inside, or the outside (into the piano, and out of it), while her body takes up the space before the fourth octave. Nataša has outlined 8 piano parts on that movement line which produce different sounds (they are: the keys, lid, top of the lid, wooden frame, pegs, capo d’astro). In order to connect all of these points, it’s necessary to stand up and lean over the piano many times. As both tempo and tension grow, the pianist’s gestures also grow simultaneously, becoming bigger and more emphasized. The theatrical aspect of the piece certainly is no coincidence. What’s more, it should come out naturally, as the result of the correct interpretation of the score, and not as an additional element.

We do not refer to the assimilation of any theatrical elements, since they do not come as a result of the influences of the world outside music/sound, in this case. On the contrary, the theatrical and performing parameter as a physical act is immanent in the music text itself, it ‘grows’ out of it, and it is equal to the other structural materials of the piece. Apart from its dramaturgical effect, such potential of a music text has contributed to a specific visualization of the interpreter. Leaning over the keyboard/piano in a continuous, circular motion, gradually speeding up to the culminating point, she depicts/

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<sup>53</sup> Ana Gnjatović, *A Conversation* (15 March 2021).

simulates weaving movements, while simultaneously falling into her own *web*. Her dematerialized and transformed 'body' of a pianist (along with its voice), becomes 'an extension' of the instrument, just like the electronics (we can also talk about the acoustic extension of the electronic medium). The body, piano, and electronics constitute a section where timeless conventions are questioned and transformed, while the traditional positions of the composer and performer become decentralized. In that context, performance and work, *process and product* (as Nicholas Cook would point out)<sup>54</sup> represent an amalgam, the elements of which are in complementary relations. Listeners, therefore, have an opportunity to appreciate the piece by simultaneously employing both their senses, and cognition. They can experience the process of creation itself as a performative act, while its performance can be considered a work of art in itself, which is in line with the transformation of the contemporary idea of listening: listening does not only involve following the reproduction of the piece, but it also refers to a more "indirect and temporary touch with the event".<sup>55</sup>

Just like Kafka's protagonist, who becomes a hybrid by combining the characteristics of an insect and a human being, *Arachne's Dream* connects the acoustic sound, tones and noises produced by a man/woman (on/inside the piano) with the electronic sound, created by a machine, operated by a man/woman (based on the actual sound). However, the mutual activity and symbiosis of these two sound lines, their interaction, convergence, supplementation, layering, cancel out the initial limits, thus making it hard to decipher between a sound and a sample which is the result of the actions on, and around the instrument. This kind of auditory 'illusion' can be heard right after the electronic introduction: as I have already explained, at the very

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<sup>54</sup> I refer to Cook's review of a musicological discourse (primarily the one which was produced in the period before the new musicological revisions appeared) which positions a work as a primary category, used to contemplate music. A performance is considered "a reproduction", or an "addition". On the other hand, he claims that music is simultaneously a process (a performance, or practice) and a product (something 'fixed'). What's more, it clearly involves a different view of a score: a score is not a completed text, but a scenario for a performance, prone to interpretation. With that in mind, it is important to emphasise that Ana Gnjatović's collaboration with Nataša Penezić was based on a draft, and not on a completed score, which served as a starting point. See more: <https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html> (accessed on 1 September 2021).

<sup>55</sup> Mišel Šion, *Audovizija: Zvuk i slika na filmu*, transl. by Aleksandar Luj Todorović, Beograd, Klio, 2007, 94.

beginning, microelectronic sounds, or *the motif of tiny legs* which quiver inside the web are heard against a long-sounding aliquot row background, symbolising the web. The same motif is produced on the piano, by tapping inside the instrument (around 1.07 min.). The pianist then delivers the first sentence of the chosen text (around 1.13): “He needed arms and hands [to lean on]<sup>56</sup> to push himself upright. Instead of these, however, he only had a multitude of tiny legs” (“биле су му потребне руке [да се на њих ослони], а имао је само мноштво ножица”). Even though the absolute coherence of the text is not the crucial parameter the author is guided by (perhaps even an unattainable one, due to technical reasons, or the use of a microphone), we can still quite clearly comprehend its meaning. Nevertheless, the text itself is not treated as a musical form of narration, but as an effect which shapes both the atmosphere and the dramaturgy of the piece.

The following part is based on the model of the previous one, by a minor and gradual rise in tension (from around 1.20): while the electronic threads ‘vibrate’ continuously, following the downward model of the aliquot row, ‘the tiny legs’ now begin to appear, firstly scratching and tapping inside the piano (1.40). The ‘echoes’ of these effects can be heard in the electronic part (even though the ‘auditory’ illusion is still in effect, so, at first, it is not evident where the sound comes from). ‘The battle’ inside the web becomes more intense, so the pianist’s movements become more engaged: she delves deeper into the inside of the piano, leans over it by using an even greater capacity of her own body (around 3.00). What’s more, the number of effects, or the ways in which the sound is created with the piano, becomes gradually more complex. What follows is an increase in tension while the pianist is delivering the second segment of the text: “Gregor’s small limbs buzzed now that the time for eating had come” (“ножице су му трепериле док је ишао према храни”) (around 4.08). As the text is repeated against a background of an increasingly louder electronic sound, its meaning takes the background position, while the *sound* of the text itself becomes noticeable and crucial.

Finally, almost half-way through the piece, upon conquering ‘the inside’ of the piano, the pianist conquers the outer body of the instrument, thus (temporarily) taking over the keyboard (around 4.20). Nevertheless, the treatment of the piano remains an unconventional one, reduced to the shades of ambient sounds with a tremolo effect (which follows the pitch of the electronic part), as well as to other treatments, arising from the interaction be-

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<sup>56</sup> The segment has been left out in translation.

tween *the body which speaks* in a circular motion, and the acoustic (amplified) instrument. It seems that the MIDI device simultaneously takes over the competencies of the piano, by introducing a melodic movement as a part of the pre-culmination section, against the background 'accompaniment' (culmination starts around the 7th minute). Both metaphorically and dramaturgically speaking, this would represent the moment of the final attack, while the prey is trying to escape. The sound simulation of the final 'battle' within the web can be explained as a 'simulation' of the standard music image which includes 'a melody and accompaniment'. A circular chromatic motif, made of three sounds in a downward motion (around 4.50), or "a micro phrase"<sup>57</sup> which repeats, then 'disassembles' just to 'reassemble' once again (and I interpret it as a method of depicting the movement of the prey, its rushing towards the 'bottom'), furthermore followed by a string of dull electronic 'thuds; such as the chords which predict the ruthless attacks on the prey (around 5.10).

Heading towards the culmination of the piece, up to this point, the path becomes even shorter, followed by a more perturbed, faster and louder repetition of the second textual excerpt. The circular motion of the pianist and the dynamics of all sound layers become more intensified. What's more, while the 'thuds' become more intense (since the web is strangling), a new sample appears – a downward chromatic *micro phrase* consisting of four tones in circular strings (around 7.04) (another attempt of the prey to find a way out of an even stickier web). 'A triumph' of the web ensues, signalled by a deep and shaking sound which resonates like a gong (around 8.17). The pianist, whose body remains leaning over the piano, confirms that the 'prey' has finally been defeated. While the sound is echoing, and the *web* vibrating, the situation with the sound changes drastically – suddenly, the electronic material appears subtle, while the third segment of the text, in a significantly clearer form now, becomes yet another layer (around 8.48): "he soon made the discovery that he could no longer move at all. This was no surprise to him, it seemed stranger and more unusual to him that he had ever been able to move on those spindly little legs" ("брзо је схватио да се уопште не може померати. Није га то чудило, било му је чудније и необичније што се тим танким ножицама икада могао кретати"). Although the sounds become quieter and more reduced now, steadily fading away, the pianist still remains in a state of physical tension, leaning over the inside of the instrument. The 'battle' is over...

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<sup>57</sup> The author uses this term when referring to this segment.

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If we consider the electronic part to be a signifier of the web (as the author herself points out), then we could say that the analogue sound, created by the pianist, that is, the sound which is produced on/within/around the piano, represents the idea of a victim lured, into the web. Furthermore, that could mean that the piano, as an old 'medium', yet technologically improved, represents a contemporary human being who stands against a powerful creation of the web/natural world, in this case mediated by technology. The question we need to ask is whether *Arachne's Dream* represents an allegory of the battle of humans versus nature, or humans versus technology (or maybe both)? Or, is it perhaps the battle of humans versus themselves? Could this dream be interpreted as an augmented representation of the reality we live in, created out of an insatiable desire to establish a balance between the three centres, or a reconsideration of the idea that humans are in any way a superior species? Or could it be about a warning, or about a critical review of everything human? Have people eventually become an endangered species? Affirmative answers to these questions, should be of no concern, whatsoever. On the contrary, they are both a reminder and a warning that a *metamorphosis* may always happen.

Translated by Marija Čuposka

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## Summary

In this paper, the composition *Arachne's Dream* (2019) for piano and live electronics by Ana Gnjatović is analyzed. The author represents the genesis of the work, from its initial idea – the electronic simulation of a spider's web, to the final realization and interaction with the pianist Nataša Penezić (to whom this work has been dedicated). The work is the result of the author's research of sound and other spheres of ideas, including the ancient Greek myth of the weaver Arachne, the short story "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka and the paper "The Pleasure of the Text" by Roland Barthes. The author uses all these stimuli as threads from which she 'spins' a web of sound/with sound. The author sees Gnjatović's work as the example of a posthuman allegory of the 'battle' of humans versus nature, or versus technology (or maybe both).

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## ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES

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*Nemanja Sovtić\**

University of Novi Sad, Academy of Arts  
Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology

### CHAMBER MUSIC OF SZILÁRD MEZEI AND DIFERENTIATED CONGRUENCE IN ITS COMPOSING LAYERS (I)

**Abstract:** The composer and violist Szilárd Mezei has made a significant, decades-long contribution to contemporary music in the national and international contexts. Although his artistic approach can be linked to the musical universe of György Szabados, an author who became one of the most influential creative figures in the Central European cultural space during the 1970s and 1980s, Mezei is a special phenomenon on the local music scene. With his ensemble mostly comprising prominent Novi Sad musicians, Mezei has a large number of discographic achievements to his credit in the space between composition and improvisation. Mezei divided his compositional opus into genre corpora of chamber and orchestral music, of which the review of chamber music is the subject of research in this paper.

**Keywords:** Szilárd Mezei, folklore, aleatorics, texture, compositional structure

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\* Author's contact information: [nemanja.sovtic@gmail.com](mailto:nemanja.sovtic@gmail.com).

Szilárd Mezei (1974) is not a new name on the Serbian, Hungarian and European contemporary music scene. However, his artistic achievement has not been given adequate attention so far. Apart from the liner notes to sound releases, there are no other professional articles on Mezei's music. Even media reviews are rare in relation to the importance of this author's work for composers and performers in the national and international contexts. To make up for lost time and introduce Szilárd Mezei to the field of musicological research is the task of this paper, not at all easy if we take into account the responsibility with which a topic as such is opened for the first time.

No definitive conclusions ought to be drawn about the life and work of an author who is currently at the zenith of his artistic maturity. However, given the introductory character of this presentation, it is important to offer some biographical data. Szilárd Mezei was born in Senta, where he began his musical education with a violin in his hands. He continues to live in Senta, without changing his residence, despite the advantages of living and working in other places. The devotion to this small town in Vojvodina, mostly inhabited by the Hungarian population, is more than just one thread in the set of biographical data. It is a trace that leads to the core of the composer's ideological and artistic orientations aimed at permeating the native ethos with the spirit of the metropolis. Even before completing Violin studies at the Secondary Music School in Subotica and studying Composition from the Faculty of Music in Belgrade under Professor Zoran Erić, Mezei launched his rich artistic career. As a violinist, violist, double bass player and composer, he has given hundreds of concerts in European cities and in Japan. He generally performs with ensembles of which he is the artistic director. In ensembles such as the Mezei Szilárd Trio, the Mezei Szilárd Septet and the Mezei Szilárd Ensemble, this artist exclusively performs his own compositions or arrangements of folk tunes.

In the identification block of some future encyclopedic unit, Mezei will be presented as a composer and violist. Some brief, relevant biographies from the Internet also include under his 'occupations' determinants such as orchestra leader<sup>1</sup> and improviser<sup>2</sup>. Insofar as the interplay of Mezei's performing-improvisational and compositional work is inseparable, these are the key aspects of his musical being.

Mezei's creative personality, whose prolificacy is demonstrated by more than six hundred scores and fifty-five discographic releases, is a challenge for

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.novisad.rs/lat/kcns-mezei-szilard-trio>

<sup>2</sup> Liner notes to the album *CET*, Szilárd Mezei Septet, Lawrence, Odradek, 2015.

(self)reflection.<sup>3</sup> This composer, who has lived and worked as a freelance artist for more than two decades, refutes the conclusion that the survival of contemporary art music is only possible within academic institutions. The question is, however, to what extent is what we generally mean by contemporary music actually Mezei's field of action. This author performs at jazz festivals as much as at forums for new music, without relying on analogue synthesizers, amplifiers and sound modulators, which have become an almost unavoidable new sound<sup>4</sup> tool for contemporary composers. If we do not adopt the radical view that contemporary music is impossible in a traditional

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<sup>3</sup> Both music critics and the composer himself face difficulties in writing about Mezei's work. Although Mezei's opus as a cultural text is not and cannot be a self-referential result, the composer and music writers with whom he collaborates often underline his non-belonging to standard genres and concepts. Regarding Mezei's music, Glenn Astarita asks the question: "Is it jazz? Or perhaps avant-garde, European folk-jazz with elements of Chamber embedded within free-jazz style improvisation? Hence, the challenge of attempting to classify music that generally defies rigid borders. (...) Szilárd Mezei stands mightily as a supreme genre-buster, (...) He's straddled the boundaries of contemporary classical, progressive-jazz and improvisation when performing with International jazz icons and other artists too numerous in scope to mention here." See: Glenn Astarita, liner notes to the album *We Were Watching the Rain*, Szilárd Mezei Wind Quartet, Newton Abbot, Alissa Publishing & Leo Records, 2009.

The limited ability to verbalize on his own creative practice, Mezei articulates as follows: "My very good friend, the dancer Péter Gemza, told me that somebody once asked a famous painter why he did not write about his paintings, and he answered that if he could have explained his paintings, he would not have painted them. It is the same with music. You can circumnavigate it with words, but you cannot describe its essence. I can, however, explain the musical background to this album. In this music, I seek to reconcile the two poles of improvisatory and composed music. I feel I am a jazz musician, but the music we play on this disc is not jazz in the traditional sense of the word. Some of these pieces cannot be called 'contemporary' for the reason that they are not entirely written down. Yet, they are too contemporary for jazz music, and too jazzy to be called folk music. My inspiration stems from a similarly broad spectrum: philosophy, sociology, politics, poetry, nature, humor and literature; Shakespeare, Beckett, Kierkegaard, Hamvas... Of particular significance to me are Hungarian folk music, contemporary classical music and jazz, and the music of Béla Bartók." See: Lawrence (USA), Odradek, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The category of *new sound* in this context includes all the components of the musical flow that have a modernist and avant-garde 'aura' in relation to the compositional-technical norms of national (neo)classicism. Such elements occur in the use of atonal harmonic language, structural musical thinking (dodecaphony and serialism), cluster sonoristics, controlled aleatorics, micropolyphony, and concrete and electroacoustic music.

sound medium, Mezei's commitment to the standard instruments of the Western European artistic tradition (along with folk instruments) is nothing but a variant of the new music phenomenon, whose paradigmatic position was unquestionable until the rise of electronic music in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the poetic strongholds of Mezei's musical language should not be mystified. They are noticed on first listening. In addition to jazz, there is Hungarian folk music material<sup>5</sup> and its improvisational-aleatoric elaboration in a new sound context. Mezei understands improvisation as a bridge between the archaic and the modern, between musical folklore and its contemporary artistic transposition. In the liner notes to the album *Nád / Reed* Mezei formulated his position as follows:

I don't think that contemporary improvised music and Hungarian folk music are far from each other at all. The essence of Hungarian folk music, like that of just any other folk music, is improvisatory. During improvisation, musicians improvise in their mother tongue; so do I. This is why this musical crosstalk is often captured in my solos. (...) For me, the question is neither theoretical nor analytical; it is elementary.<sup>6</sup>

Speaking of Mezei's release *CET*, music critic Bert Noglik touched on another relation important for understanding Mezei's creative approach – the relationship between composition and improvisation. Noglik points out that in Mezei's music "(...) the borders between composition and improvisation are porous".<sup>7</sup> In his music "improvisation remains a moving and reviving force", while "even if the process occasionally culminates in calculated chaos, the overall conception is a series of consciously built-up compositional

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<sup>5</sup> One of the best descriptions of Mezei's position towards Hungarian folk music comes from the pen of music critic Andrew Choate, who wrote the liner notes to the 2017 album *Nem Füstöl a Zentaji Gyár Kéménye*, released by Slam Productions in Abington, UK: "Evan Parker said his roots were 'in his record player', and all lovers of music and art know exactly what he meant: we are (...) defined by what we choose to love, not (...) by where we are born or who our immediate family is. Fortunately for Szilárd Mezei, he was born in Vojvodina, a place with musical roots he wanted to connect to. In his music, the accident of where he was born becomes no accident at all: the Hungarian folk music of this region hold an attraction for him that he is pre-conscious and instinctual, but, equally, also rational and learned. Desired and chosen. Loving this music and being born inside it it doubles his passion and understanding for it."

<sup>6</sup> Szilárd Mezei, liner notes to the album *Nád / Reed*, Szilárd Mezei Ensemble, Montreal, Red Tucan Records, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Bert Noglik, liner notes to the album *CET*, op. cit.

ideas”.<sup>8</sup> As for the stylistic features of Mezei’s music, Noglik singles out swing, ceremonial unisons, sharp riffs, wild improvisational lines and majestic melodies. Listening to Mezei’s music “you are invited to dive into moods of self reflection”, until “odd meters” appear all of a sudden “inspiring (...) to dance (...). Although the ensemble has no vocalists (Noglik means the septet, but this also applies to all the other ensembles of Mezei, author’s comment), it possesses the quality of a choir. Thus Mezei’s music returns to the fundamentals of dancing and singing in a very subtle way”.<sup>9</sup> It should be said that Mezei received the impetus for the artistic research of these “fundamentals of dancing and singing” from the pianist, composer, improviser and founder of Hungarian ethno-jazz, György Szabados, who was a kind of mentoring figure in Mezei’s artistic development. Bert Noglik points to the relationship between Mezei and Szabados in the following words:

Szilárd Mezei follows the late pianist and composer György Szabados, who created new music in the Béla Bartók tradition assimilating – not imitating – Hungarian folk music. Using this vocabulary as a kind of musical mother tongue, Szabados developed it further in his own works, combining compositions with the revitalizing forces of improvisation. Szilárd Mezei had the good fortune to enjoy working with György Szabados, first as a student and later as a musical partner. He continues this process, but he also stands on his own. Like Szabados, Mezei is first and foremost an individual. Szilárd Mezei’s music does not seek trends and fashions. It is less about stylistic categories than about integrity and authenticity.<sup>10</sup>

Szabados – and through him Bartók – are the most important, but not the only intertextual strongholds of Mezei’s creative practice. Other references cannot be determined without pointing out the social circumstances, the aesthetic codes of the musico-historical period and the overall climate of thought in the environment of the composer’s creative endeavours. In this paper, however, the intertwined semantic layers of Mezei’s opus will not be the subject of detailed consideration.<sup>11</sup> The lack of empirical support for musico-

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Liner notes by Neven Ušumović to the Mezei’s release *Sivatag* could be the first stop on the way to determining the cultural coordinates of Mezei’s artistic activity: “From the very beginnings of his musical activity Szilárd Mezei appears both as an instrumentalist and composer (and a conductor of ensemble). He has searched for his creative landmarks in the avant-garde tendencies of classical music, as well as, primarily, in free jazz (in the

logical interpretation puts before this research the imperative of analytical focus, so the view on the morphology of Mezei's musical language will be oriented towards the assessment of basing the compositional structure relations on special modalities of equivalence as, on the one hand, the universal foundation of music, and on the other, the expression of Mezei's conscious and unconscious driving forces directed towards the field of the archetypal. These modalities are a set of differentiated congruences of the *identical, ho-*

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direction given to the latter by Anthony Braxton), that is, in a broader sense, in improvisation. His creative development has been influenced by the fact that these beginnings took place in the environment of the theatre (in the early nineties, Mezei was writing and performing music for the performances of the theatrical ensemble AIOWA, then for the Jel Színház and other formations of the already famous Hungarian-French stage-manager and dancer József Nagy (...), which brought Mezei into a direct relationship with the performance side of music and the possibility of its staging. The substantial and ideological tendencies of Mezei's rich creativity are hardly comprehensible without a certain acquaintance with his extraordinary erudition, the spirit of research based on the spiritual world of the primordial Tradition, but also on modern art and its revolt against the 'measuring of the world' carried out by the rationalistic mind of the West. This spiritual background already reveals itself in the symbolic titles of Mezei's albums and compositions, but, of course, in his texts and interviews as well. The ideological soundness of the work of the Hungarian thinker Béla Hamvas (1892–1968) and Béla Bartók (1888–1946), and among living composers the musical *dignity* (which unites the endeavours of these two Hungarian geniuses) of György Szabados, offer Mezei an interior basis which gives direction and force to his own musical efforts. Orientation towards the Tradition leads Mezei, in his primary role as jazz musician, to a reinterpretation of the jazz tradition, replacing that which in the history of jazz represents the African heritage and the tradition of 'black America' by the – in the European context – extremely lively and peculiar tradition of Hungarian folk music, as well as by the music of the great Oriental sacral traditions. So, no wonder that it is, notwithstanding all this, very difficult to foresee what Mezei will do next (...) One thing is however sure: for now, we won't find in Mezei any trace of the nowadays very popular post-fusion' jazz tunes, no experimentation with electronic pop-music, hip-hop or noise-rock! All that we have said up to now makes us realise the specific programmatic character of this music. This character derives not only from the ideological richness of Mezei's creativity, but often from its (the music's) predestination for the stage as well. Mezei's scenic imagination had the luck to be continually developing due to the stimulating creative cooperation with artists like his sister (...) Kinga Mezei, then with András Urbán, Tibor Várszegi, as well as with József Nagy. As if this continual contact reflected itself on the orchestration and the musical dramaturgy of his compositions, in which we sometimes find a real 'distribution of the parts', and the musical dialogue and monologue (...)." See: Neven Ušumović, liner notes to the album *Sivatag*, Szilárd Mezei Ensemble, Lisabon, Creative Sources Recordings, 2006.

*mogeneous, heterogeneous and opposite* in which the extremes of ontological-logical perspectives such as existence-accident and identity-difference are dissolved (and overcome) under the motto of the composer's "revolt against the 'measuring of the world' carried out by the rationalistic mind of the West".<sup>12</sup>

### Opus Mezei: "chamber music" & "orchestral music"

With all the diversity of Szilárd Mezei's opus, there seems to be no basis for its strict genre division. The division made by the composer himself, probably without the intention of being decisively autopoetic, distinguishes between chamber and orchestral music, while the group of chamber works includes solo compositions for piano and even choral works, while the corpus of orchestral music includes mostly compositions for chamber orchestra or large chamber ensemble. The explanation for the genre homogeneity of that part of Mezei's opus in which this musicologist, at the will of the composer, gained insight, appears when examining the audio releases of compositions in whose recording the composer himself participates with a number of his regular collaborators. The impression is that Szilárd Mezei perceives his music in a 'singer-songwriter' or 'band-like' way. Although he does not consider himself and his collaborators to be the only authentic interpreters of his compositions, it is always the concrete performance approach, rather than the abstract genre type, that is the source of Mezei's artistic imagination.<sup>13</sup>

Respecting the composer's choice of representative musical works, I list them on this occasion as they were originally grouped, with a division into chamber and orchestral music:

#### Chamber music:

- *Arról hogy víz nap ég föld* (1995): ch
- *Trio* (1996): ob, ca, bn
- *Gudački trio* (1996); vn, vla, vc [String Trio]
- *Trio* (1997): fl, pf, perc
- *Tibeti gyors* (2000): cl, vn, vc, pf
- *Örizgető* (2000): fl, ca, cl, hn, bn
- *Leveg leveg két ének* (2000): sop1, sop2, alt

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<sup>12</sup> Ušumović, *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> "I am almost always writing music for known, not imagined, musicians." See: Szilárd Mezei, liner notes to the album *CET*, op. cit.

- *Csip csip* (2003): fl, vn1, vn2, vla, vc, pf
- *Hep 7 B* (2008): bcl, cb, pf
- *Bop Bap* (2014): fl solo
- *Hep 13 A. T.* (2014): vn, vc, pf
- *Hep 30 B* (2015) bn, mar
- *Stuffed Hippos* (2015): vn1, vn2
- *Al Folia* (2015): pf
- *A jövő könyve / The Book of the Future* (2016): cl, vib
- *Orlando Application* (2016): vn1, vn2, vla, vc, cb, vib
- *O. J.* (2016) sop1, sop2, alt
- *Hep 21 E / 22 L* (2017) picc, fl, afl, bfl
- *Hippo Hippopotamus* (2017) vla, vc, cb, pf
- *Resistor* (2017) 4picc

Orchestral music:

- *C-major Choral Op. 1 Winter* (2012): fl, bcl, bn, cbn, tpt, tbn, tba, vla, vc, gtr, pf, cb
- *Hep 28* (2014): 2fl, afl, 2ob, 2cl, bcl, 2asax, tsax, bn, hn, tpt, tbn, pf, acc, gtr, perc, vn1, vn2, vla, vc, cb
- *Hep 29* (2014): fl, bcl, bn, cbn, tpt, tbn, tba, vla, vc, grt, pf, cb, dms
- *Mozdulat nem számít* (2014): afl, cl, bn, tpt, tbn, tba, vla, vc, vib, pf, cb, dms
- *Extinction 1* (2015): picc, 2fl, 2ob, ca, cl (es), 3cl (b), bcl, cacl (es), cbcl (b), ssax, 2asax, tsax, bsax, 2bn, 4hn, 3tbn, euph, tba, tpn, xyl, cimb, sdm, bdm, mar, vib, tam-t, sdm, tpl.bl, glsp, tom-t, pf, cb
- *Gyémántrét / Diamond-Meadow* (2015): vn1, vn2, vla, vc, cb (string orchestra)
- *Reports for Soprano/Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble* (2015): solo ssax, solo asax, picc, 2fl, cl (Es), 3cl (B), bcl, 2asax, tsax, bsax, bn, 4hn, 3tpt, 2tbn, btbn, euph, tba, timp, perc1 (sdm, tdm, bdm, sn.dm, bon, cimb, tgl), perc2 (t-tom, tpl.bl, a-cimb, bdm, mcs, guiro, sn.dm, clav, bon, t-tam), perc3 (xyl), perc4 (mar), perc5 (vib)
- *Concerto for Flutes* (2016): solo picc, solo fl, solo afl, solo bfl; fl, afl, ob, ca, cl, bcl, bn, cbn, 2hn, 2tpt, tbn, vib
- *Concerto for Clarinet in Bb* (2017): solo cl, 2fl, afl, 2ob, ca, bcl, tsax, 2bn, cbn, 2hn, tba, perc1 (sdm, tdm, bdm, trg), perc2 (cimb, sn.dm, tdm, t-tam, tpl.bl), perc3 (vib), hrp, vn1, vn2, vla1, vla2, vc1, vc2, cb
- *Hep 32* (2017): 6vn, 2vla, 2vc, cb
- *Bartok Amerikaban* (2017): 2fl, afl, 2ob, ca, 2cl, bcl, 2bn, cbn, 3hn, 2tpt, 2tbn, tba, timp, tpl.bl, cimb, glsp, bdm, vib, hrp, pf, vn, vla, vc, cb

- *Tű, tő, tó. / Needle, root, lake.* (2018): fl, afl, ob, ca, cl, bcl, bn, cbn, 2hn, 2tpt, 2tbn, timp, perc1, perc2, vn1, vn2, vla1, vla2, vc1, vc2, cb
- *(a tél evangéliuma)* (2018): 2fl, afl, 2ob, ca, 2cl, bcl, 2bn, 2hn, 2tpt, vib, glsp, hrp, solo sop, vn1, vn2, vla, vc, cb
- *Kukurikú* (2018): solo vla, solo cb, 4vn1, 4vn2, 3vla, 3vc, cb
- *A szabadság órvárosa* (2019): fl, ob, cl, bcl, bn, hn, tbn, dms, vib, hrp, pf, vn2, vla2, cimb, cb2, vn1, vla1, vc, cb1

Further on, my focus will be on the presentation of Mezei's chamber music, leaving the more complex and more recent orchestral music for some future research. Szilárd Mezei's chamber music can be classified chronologically, divided into groups of works from the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. An alternative classification would take into account the relationship between musical material and compositional-technical procedures, so on the one hand there would be (mostly early) works dominated by aleatorico-cluster expressionism that follows the Polish School model, and on the other hand, those compositions based on folklore-expressionist melodies greatly related to new-music and new-sound composing techniques. Starting with the composition *Örizigető* for wind quintet from 2000, all the latter works are based on musical folklore extracts, texture-based (not necessarily aleatoric) new sound and special equivalence relations in compositional structure. The composer himself often mentions the first two poetic strongholds in his comments, but the third has so far remained insufficiently reflected.

The earliest work from the group of those that Mezei submitted for this research is the *Trio* for oboe, English horn and bassoon from 1996. It is an aleatoric composition in which limited uncertainty characterizes the parameters of rhythm and pitch in certain segments of the form. The characteristic of the sound medium – the nasal one-timbre sound – is the centre of Mezei's attention in this composition. (Audio Example No. 1, *Trio* for oboe, English horn and bassoon, 00:00–00:20).<sup>14</sup> Finding creative solutions for the (pre)set range of compositional-technical problems is a sign of the modernist tendency towards self-limitation, whose musico-aesthetic result in *Trio* only indirectly announces the future discourse of modernized poetic archaization. The same is the case with the *Trio* for violin, viola and cello (1996), which brings an expressionistically agitato quasi-improvisational ductus. The pitch and duration in this piece are precisely determined, but the absence of bar

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<sup>14</sup> Audio example 1 is available at the official New Sound YouTube channel: [https://youtu.be/\\_bUF9b7i9Ro](https://youtu.be/_bUF9b7i9Ro).

lines and the instruction “All rhythmic values are approximate”<sup>15</sup> speak of the aleatoric way of thinking as a way of nuancing and enrichment of musical relations. Another *Trio*, this time a mixed one, for flute, piano and percussion (1997), completes the corpus of representative Mezei’s chamber music from the 1990s. This early work by Mezei brings an improvisational type of musical presentation, a change of pulsating and ametric segments, aleatoric blocks with approximate rhythmic values and jazz-swing associations in triplets as we find in later works, such as *Hep 7 B* and *Hep 21 E / 22 L*. In the 1997 *Trio* the piano is treated as percussion, and special attention is paid to shaping the melody in the flute part, where the composer is flirting with the musico-stylistic conventions on the pastoral mood.

**Example 1:** Szilárd Mezei, *Trio* (flute, piano, percussions), bars 1–6.



Already two works from 2000 speak of a departure of Mezei’s musical language from academic modernism and a more decisive turn towards Bartókian

<sup>15</sup> The complete instructions for the performance of this piece read: “PLAY FREELY. All rhythmic values are approximate. There is no common pulsation, musicians perform their parts independently of each other, and they need to play together only when indicated with a sign. (Thus, tones that are one above the other do not necessarily have to be played at the same time). In the longer *ad libitum* (improvisational), musicians give each other signs so that the vertical balance would not be disturbed more than necessary. The musician realizes agogics independently of the neighbouring sections. The wavy line after the repeat signs means that the music material within the repeat signs needs to be repeated until an interruption sign is met, but the phrase itself is not interrupted, that is, it does not stop immediately, but it (material inside the repeat signs) needs to be completed. When there is a straight line behind the repeat signs, the phrase is interrupted immediately at the interruption sign. If there is a certain time above the phrase inside the repeat sign, within which it is necessary to repeat the phrase, the musician himself determines when to stop repeating the phrase after the given time expires. When all three musicians start with new musical material at the same time, the sign for the beginning is given by the violinist.”

folklorism and Szabados's anti-Western instrumentation:<sup>16</sup> *Tibeti gyors* for clarinet, violin, cello and piano and *Őrizigető* for flute, English horn, clarinet, French horn and bassoon. Both compositions bring a transfiguration of archaic heterophonic sound. In both compositions, a tone cluster is a basic new sound element, but not in sonoristic use. Although it exists as a vertical harmony of second intervals, the Mezei tone cluster was revoked in the new musical sense by being placed in the function of a heterophonic sound enrichment of the melody, as one of the first to be applied by Igor Stravinsky in *The Rite of Spring*. In *Tibeti gyors* the composition of intervals point to a model of a generic expressionist melody,<sup>17</sup> rather than the close relation of the singing and dancing principle in music. The profiling of the cluster-heterophonic melody is achieved by the isorhythmic structure of the phrase within the block form, the dynamics of which are determined by differently articulated textures, independent melodic lines and improvisational episodes (Audio Example No. 2, *Tibeti gyors*, 00:00–00:56).<sup>18</sup> It is the precise *senza misura* vertical synchronization of isorhythmic melodies, as a kind of reduc-

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<sup>16</sup> For György Szabados, great (meta)traditions and (meta)cultures of East and West lay in the foundations of individual national cultures and traditions. Szabados finds a creative dialogue between them in the music of Béla Bartók. The meeting point of East and West, captured by Hungarian culture through Bartók, Szabados considers a source of a sense of uniqueness. According to Szabados, the definitive split between the Western European and Eastern states of consciousness occurred at the end of the Middle Ages. Despite the fact that one music genre from the West – jazz – was his path to personal artistic individuation, Szabados drew his conclusions in the spirit of values-inverted orientalism. His concept of the East does not represent the inferior Other, necessary for the self-identification of the dominant Eurocentric Self, but points to aspects of Western European decadence. Szabados considered himself an anti-materialist according to the Eastern model, defining himself as the opposite of Western consumerism, rationalism and atheism. However, this Hungarian artist did not believe in the division into *this* and *other* world. He thought that God was not somewhere else, far from us. In his texts and interviews, he pointed to the relationship between the One and the Many as fundamental ontological categories. He believed that the One shifts into the Many and returns to itself, as well as that the musical parallel of these processes is inspired in the Gregorian chant. Hence the numerous monophonic, “choral” treated melodies in his music. We find a similar treatment of monophony in the music of Szilárd Mezei. See: Sovtić, Nemanja: “Szabados György gondolatrendszer – jazz, hagyomány, rögtönzés a dacoló számkivettség és lüktető szellemiség világ (lás) ában”: *Szabados*, Budapest: MMA Kiado, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> There is not a carefully constructed twelve-tone melody, but there is an avoidance of repeating the tones that would lead to tonicization.

<sup>18</sup> Audio example 2 is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/GNJH-7Pin5A>.

tion of texture to a cluster heterophony of a recognizable compositional structure and archaic overtone, that is the most important stylistic feature of the *Tibet gyors* quartet. In the composition *Őrizigető* a homophone melody-accompaniment structure occurs more often than in *Tibet gyors*, with empty harmonies and chords based on the pentatonic scale, which in combination with the nasal timbre of a low-pitched flute, English horn and clarinet (an evocation of the sound of ancient wind instruments) already quite clearly announces the discourse of poetic archaization, somewhat comparable to the creative approaches of Igor Stravinsky or Béla Bartók as a pioneer of folkloristic modernism, although, in fact, it is closest to György Szabados's way of musical thought.

**Example 2:** Szilárd Mezei, *Őrizigető*, rehearsal number [3]; Audio Example No. 3 (01:50 – 02:12)<sup>19</sup>

In the compositions *Csip csip* for flute, two violins, cello and piano from 2003 and *Hep 7 B* for bass clarinet, contrabassoon and piano from 2008, controlled aleatorics remains the compositional-technical principle, and isorhythmic heterophonic polyphony the most impressive segment of the material. Aleatorics is reduced to the approximate rhythm or pitch. It is included in various textures as situations in which the indistinguishability of the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic element forms a specific timbre, depending on the density of the 'flow of information', the register and other parameters of the sound (Audio Example No. 4, *Csip csip*, 00:00–00:48).<sup>20</sup> In both compositions the form is block-wise. The shifting of contrasting sections dominates, although there are also chaining, layering and gradual transitions. In the sextet *Csip, csip* heterophony still occasionally turns into a modernist-artificial 'broken' expressionist melody, but even more often it remains within the framework of recognizable folkloristic incantations. Expressionist melody appears somewhat less frequently in later works, retreating before stylized

<sup>19</sup> Audio example 3 is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/jxzsAePDSQE>

<sup>20</sup> Audio example 4 is available at the following link: [https://youtu.be/k8\\_bedzuMfl](https://youtu.be/k8_bedzuMfl).

folklore melody and improvisational lines. *Csip csip* is also characterized by a (quasi) jazz section with an up beat ostinato pattern in the piano, just like the solo treatment of the flute, which is entrusted with the most diverse musical material, starting from a virtuoso, rhythmically differentiated solo, through a leading voice in cluster heterophony to a subtle melody in (micro)polyphonic textures.

**Example 3:** Szilárd Mezei, *Csip csip*, bars 27–30 rehearsal number [3]. Tempo *presto possibile*

A folklore-like connotation is also evoked by a complex, non-distributive rhythm, characteristic of the folklore idiom common to different folk music traditions from the Balkans (aksak rhythm). The characteristic of *Hep 7 B* is the conflict and reconciliation of the archaic principles of song and dance, represented by motoric rhythmic movement and melodies / textures of suspended pulse. The stylistic features of this work should include the homophonic-homorhythmic interpolation based on the second-fourth vertical, which is characterized by ‘divergence’ in the form of an unexpected shortening of the rhythmic base (in this case a crotchet with a dot) by a third of its value (to a crotchet) through a change of 3/4 time to 5/8 (Audio Example No. 5, *Hep 7 B*, 01:17–01:52).<sup>21</sup>

The number of Mezei’s (selected) chamber works grows significantly with the transition from the first to the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If we take into account that the entire orchestral corpus in which the author of these lines gained an insight belongs to the time period between 2010 and 2020, it can be concluded that only the last decade is the most fruitful in the creative work of the considered author. His selected works from the

<sup>21</sup> Audio example 5 is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/2NPqq8eHf7w>.

second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are connected, with the exception of the composition *Orlando Application*, by a partial turning away from aleatoric music. The choice of a traditional musical notation without approximate values does not mean that Mezei has given up on new sound elements in these compositions. Blocks of tone clusters and (micro)polyphonic textures are still strongly represented, but no longer within the models of approximate values marked by the graphic notation. Another feature of Mezei's chamber music corpus from the 2010s is the possibility of pair grouping. The first two pairs are compositions connected by the choice of instrumentation. *Resistor* (2016) and *Hep 21 E / 22 L* (2017) are written for flute quartet, while *Hep 30 B* for bassoon and marimba (2015) and *A jövő könyve* for clarinet and vibraphone (2016) belong to the duet genre in a combination of wind instrument and percussion. The third pair is connected by an unusual non-musical inspiration – a hippopotamus – whose twisted comic appearance, most probably a result of children's imagination, culminated in a humorous scherzo-like touch of whimsy in Mezei's musical opus. These are the compositions *Stuffed Hippos* for two violins (2015) and *Hippo Hippopotamus* for violin, cello, double bass and piano (2017). Although the last group of works from the 2010s is also dominated by string instruments, Mezei does not wander far from the main road of his serious musical thought. These are *Hep 13 A. T.* for violin, cello and piano (2014) and *Orlando Application* for string quartet and vibraphone (2016) as certainly the most complex score for chamber ensemble in the entire opus of Mezei.

In the quartet *Resistor* for four piccolo flutes, Mezei is searching for as much expressive space as possible within the seemingly limited possibilities of the sound medium. The piece consists of four contrasting macro-sections divided by rehearsal numbers. The most important stylistic feature of the composition is the vertically synchronized, motoric semiquaver figuration which makes the individual sections lose their recognizability while they introduce their melodico-rhythmic flow into the system of monochrome micropolyphonic texture that almost borders on noise. The musical flow of most of this composition is mechanized and reminiscent of an out-of-tune music box. Strong dynamic contrasts (ff – pp) are noticeable, as well as a brief thinning of the texture. Although written for four flutes as well, the composition *Hep 21 E / 22 L* represents a somewhat different approach to the timbre aspect of the sound medium. The monohomicity of the sound this time is not emphasized, as in the *Resistor*, but is transcended by the ensemble's quasi-choir setting, ranging from bass to piccolo flute. The rhythmic curve in this composition also leaves the impression of mechanization, but rather reminds one of the uniformity of children's

rhymes with occasional ‘skips’ and ‘mistakes’. Children’s folklore and other archaic strongholds of the composer’s musical imagination in *Hep 21 E / 22 L* are extracted from ‘iconic’ representations. The heterophonic polyphony is realized by an isorhythmic compositional structure whose vertical component is based on empty harmonies (fifths and fourths) or on a tone cluster superposition of melodies. As in previous works, in both cases it achieved the effect of colouristic articulation of the melody, rather than its harmonic contextualization. The musical flow of the composition *Hep 21 E / 22 L* is characterized by stylized (and also extracted from clearly recognizable) jazz interpolations. In section [10], the bass flute in the style of a bass guitar brings a harmonico-rhythmic ostinato, then the accompaniment à la rhythm guitar is included, in order for a swing melody to perform in the treble. Sections [19] and [21] and the final section contain *open for solo* associations, with a quasi-improvisational melody over the *bass walking* movement, thus concluding the musical flow with a final departure from the initial heterophonic isorhythm.

Example 4: Szilárd Mezei, *Resistor*, bars 1–4.

Example 5: Szilárd Mezei, *Hep 21 E / 22 L*, bars 1–7.

Unlike most of Mezei’s other compositions, the melody in *Hep 21 E / 22 L* figures as a theme. There is no thematic work in the traditional sense, but a rehearsal number [2] brings multi-layered interactions of the melody with

the musical material of less expressiveness, where each of these interactions brings the melody to light in a different way, making it the thematic structural focus of the form. It should be noted that in Mezei's music, the role of structural centres of form, as a rule, have tegral sections such as blocks, textures and independent linearity. Mezei's melody-theme is also found in two somewhat earlier compositions, *Hep 30 B* for bassoon and marimba and *A jövő könyve* for clarinet and vibraphone. As for the form, these two compositions are closer to the composition *Resistor* than *Hep 21 E / 22 L*, because instead of the development-evolutionary flow, they have a reprise-architectural form made according to the model of incomplete equivalence. *Hep 30 B* initially brings an isorhythmic *staccato* 'hoketus', while the rhythm then becomes more complex and differentiated. Instead of an aleatoric textural abundance, the neoclassical ideal of the economical use of musical material prevails in this work, revoked only by the occasional destructive release of energy in quasi-improvisational spontaneity. In the rehearsal number [6], we find an unambiguous signifier of academic musical discourse – canonic imitation. The polyphony of the structure, however, has no neo-baroque meaning, because the distinct rhythmic disunity of the canonically led voices achieves an almost textural sound-aesthetic effect (Audio Example No. 6, *Hep 30 B*, 05:50–06:25).<sup>22</sup> Contrary to this 'meaningful counterpoint' of the written score and sound, the folkloristic episode in number [8] in which the bassoon exposes the melody of the archaic overtone in the marimba is less distant from the 'iconic' connections with the folklore reference source.

**Example 6:** Szilárd Mezei, *Hep 30 B*, bars 1–5.

The folkloristic dimension of the material in the composition *A jövő könyve* is given through the initial melodic particle in the ambitus of the diminished tetrachord as a constitutive element of the octatonic scale. Along with the expansion of the ambitus, the melody-theme in this piece is characterized by *acciaccaturas* that evoke archaic ornaments during the performance. The

<sup>22</sup> Audio example 6 is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/PJQerqrwk68>

rhythm in this composition is typical of Mezei: at the level of the entire musical flow, it consists of a combination of mechanized movement with occasional ‘slips’ and richly differentiated rhythms in sections without bar lines.

**Example 7:** Szilárd Mezei, *A jövő könyve*, rehearsal numbers [1]–[2]

Mezei’s two compositions whose titles indicate the image and behaviour of hippos as a source of programme inspiration, have more contained compositional-technical plans. *Stuffed Hippos* for two violins (2015) begins *Ad libitum* with long dissonant harmonies; first, it shifts into a two-voice heterophony, and then into a texture based on an oscillatory figure of second-third structure, exposed through all rhythmic divisions of the time-signature from triplet to septuplet. In bar 46, a melody that evokes a folk sound was introduced, first based on a diminished tetrachord, and then according to an *ad hoc* interval model without modal associations. In section [7], a recognizable Hungarian folk melody was entrusted to the first violin, while the second violin has an ostinato-based accompaniment. The affirmation of the melody is established in the final section by an even distribution in both parts. Seen from the perspective of the musical material, the form of this composition is evolutionary, but the incomplete equivalence is still established through non-pulsating, *senza misura* encompassing sections, which are contrasted by the distinctly pulsating inner space of the form. Instead of the contrasting musical dramaturgy of “stuffed hippos”, the ordinary ones, in *Hippo Hippopotamus* (2017), are presented with a metrorhythmically homogeneous musical flow in which there is no aleatorics or archaic homorhythm, but rather an ostinato repetition of accompaniment over which melodic particles occasionally appear.

Example 8: Szilárd Mezei, *Stuffed Hippos*, rehearsal number [1]

**Ad libitum**  
♩ = cca 80

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Vln.  
Vln.

Aleatoric musical thought has a significant musico-dramaturgical and formal-constitutive role in Mezei's works from the last decade only in *Hep 13 A. T.* for violin, violoncello and piano and *Orlando Application* for string quartet and vibraphone (2016). The instructions for performing the above-mentioned piano trio from 2014 indicate aleatoric musical thinking incorporated into the traditional musical notation.

In **ad libitum** (**Improvitando** with dashed bar lines) parts of the piece must be played freely. In those parts all the rhythmical values are approximate. There is no common pulse. All the three musicians perform their parts independently of the others, with *rubato*, and must be together only where it is defined so. The wavy line after the repeat signs means that the phrase within the repeat signs needs to be played until the sign that indicates the end of it (or one must wait for everyone else to finish the previous section), and immediately after, the phrase must be finished. The **a battuta** sections of the piece must be played accurately.

It is important to point out that individual sections are meticulously composed in all parameters, and that *improvitando* refers exclusively to the absence of their metric synchronization. Here, too, it is not a question of linear thinking that results in the polyphony of the compositional structure, but of a nuanced texture derived from the inconsistency of lines based on the semi-quaver movement interrupted with rests (Audio Example No. 7, *Hep 13 A. T.*, 00:00–01:20).<sup>23</sup> The revocation of motoric motion in the name of melodic

<sup>23</sup> Audio example 7 is available at the following link: <https://youtu.be/KIZXirV36kY>.

profiling of the musical flow is one dramaturgical plane of the piece, while the other is aimed at challenging the effect of aleatoric freedom in confronting the metric and ametric variants of similar musical material. From the rehearsal number [10], full bar lines appear, which stabilize the vertical ratio of horizontal lines. It is particularly striking the isorhythmic unison in the section [12], whose structure approaches the model of expressionist melody in terms of interval structure and register range, but whose length and steady marching motion oppose the ideas of expressionist ‘scattered’ musical discourse.

**Example 9:** Szilárd Mezei, *Hep 13 A. T.*, rehearsal number [1]



The complexity and extensiveness of the musical flow in *Orlando Application* surpasses all other compositions of chamber music by Mezei. The title indicates the treatment of a theme from music history both through modernist stylistic leveling and through the postmodernist collage-eclectic shaping of the musical material. Assuming that the “application of Orlando” refers to Orlando di Lasso, one of the most important Renaissance composers, the motet quasi-choral approach at the beginning is a very clear reference. Changes in vertical harmonies without the harmonic rhythm – tonal, modal or atonal (through the so-called “complementary harmony”<sup>24</sup>) – result in the establishment of a static block with elements of the third, second-fourth or fourth-fifth chords. The textural design of the material persists. In sections [4], [5] and [6], the development is introduced by the elements of contrast. The aleatoric texture goes through a phase of approximate homorhythm based on quasi-determined note values, written in stemless crotchet note heads. The bar lines synchronize this smooth flow in the strings before the vibraphone brings a pulsating figure in quavers and thus further dynamizes this complex sound situation. Various textural formations further alternate

<sup>24</sup> See: Hermann Danuser, “Ekspresionizam i rani atonalitet”, *Glazba 20. stoljeća*, Zagreb, Croatian Musicological Society, 2009, 40–54 [Expressionism and Early Atonality; Music of the Twentieth Century].

in blocks, until the appearance of an ‘intimistic’ interpolation in sections [16] – [18] (Audio Example No. 8, *Orlando Application*, 11:05–14:09).<sup>25</sup> Since this episode individualizes the musical flow of the composition more than any new sound texture, it is better to put into focus the theme, particularly the first theme, because the second one of a similar stylistic approach will appear later.

**Example 10:** Szilárd Mezei, *Orlando Application*, bars 205–223.

$\text{♩} = 180$

205

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Vib.

210

24 cca 1' - 2'

attacca

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Vib.

213

25  $\text{♩} = 100$

26 *dolce*

26 *dolce*

<sup>25</sup> [https://youtu.be/ckinxw\\_T73w](https://youtu.be/ckinxw_T73w)

The suspense effect is in an unexpected transition to an independent archaico-dance rhythm in sections [21] – [24], which was used very successfully by Bartók and Stravinsky. As in the previous situations, Mezei's formal procedure in this piece implies exposition and varied repetition of the material as a whole, so that subtle transitions and developmental processes often occur within clear sections. The polystylistic nature of the work is confirmed by another intimistic episode/theme [25] – [32], with a melody based on complementary two-bar phrases (syntactically linked by the neoclassical phraseological logic of 'questions' and 'answers', but without cadence), and a texture in which the violoncello imitates *cantus firmus*, and two violins syn-copated florid counterpoint. The isorhythmical unison, as found in the section [12] of *Hep 13 A. T.* and which is a recognizable feature of Mezei's musical style, this time appears in section [33]. Its line is already changed in the next section into a melody-accompaniment form and thus introduced into a form of developmental variation, the starting point of which would be a real polyphonization of the compositional structure, with equal lines in counterpoint, if *pizzicato* articulation had not instead formed a chaotic punctualist texture that at some points associated – especially in the independent sections of violoncello and vibraphone – with the improvisational jazz solo rhythm section. The return of the now altered second intimistic theme, new textural blocks and, finally, the reactivation of the static motet-form block, complete this musical flow filled with dialogue of the most distant stylistic spheres of the musical universe in the melancholic emotional register.

The analyzed compositions of Szilárd Mezei are characterized by the consistent and thoughtful implementation of folklore elements in contemporary musical expression. Caring for one's own heritage, materialized in a sweeping discography, with Mezei goes 'hand in hand' with nurturing the cultural heritage of the community to which he belongs and with which he strongly identifies. Finding inspiration in Hungarian folk tunes, free improvisation and aleatorico-expressionist contemporary art music, as well as other, more personal and more mysterious strongholds of the creative process, Mezei remains recognizable in the domains of composition and performance on the local and regional music scene.

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## Summary

Szilárd Mezei is a prominent author on the Serbian, Hungarian and European contemporary music scene, but his oeuvre has not been the subject of musicological research so far. Born in Senta, where he acquired his first musical education, Mezei remains permanently committed to life in this Vojvodina town, as well as to the musical folklore of the Vojvodina Hungarians as the basis of his artistic expression. He performs as a violist, composer, improviser and leader of several ensembles that bear his name. He has hundreds of concerts behind him, over 600 compositions and 55 sound releases. The poetic strongholds of Mezei's musical language are Hungarian folk music, improvisation and new sound practices of contemporary music. Contrary to the usual “distribution of the parts” in music into compositional and performing creativity, Mezei, with a number of his constant collaborators, is the most active performer of his own music. Its genre classification is conditional and implies the grouping of compositions into chamber and orchestral music. Given that the chamber music opus is chronologically more extensive and follows the development of the

composer's creative personality over the past three decades, a selection of fifteen compositions for mixed chamber ensembles was made for this occasion in order to provide an analytical view of the stylistic and compositional features of Mezei's musical language. The last decade of the last century is represented by the *Trio* for violin, viola and violoncello, the *Trio* for oboe, English horn and bassoon and the *Trio* for flute, piano and percussion. Since 2000, he has composed *Tibet gyros*, *Örizigető*, *Csip csip* and *Hep 7 B*, and since 2010, *Hep 13 A.T.*, *Stuffed Hippos*, *A jövő könyve*, *Orlando Application*, *Hep 21 E / 22 L* and *Resistor*. An alternative classification of Mezei's chamber music would consider the relationship between the musical material and compositional-technical procedures. If so, one would find that the early works were dominated by aleatoric expressionism according to the model of the Polish School, and that the later works are based on folk melodies in relation to new music and new sound composing techniques. Based on the insights into Mezei's compositional-technical treatment of musical material, it can be concluded that almost all of his works are based on musical folklore, new sound textures and special congruence modalities in the composing style.



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## VIEWS

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**Guilherme Feitosa de Almeida\***

Baylor University

### THE ANTI-WAR VOICE OF BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE

**Abstract:** *Universal soldier* (1964), *Soldier Blue* (1970), and *The War Racket* (2017) represent some of Buffy Sainte-Marie's most prominent anti-war songwriting, where she demonstrates her poietic process as an artist and activist. Considering her anti-war utterance, I will analyze these selected songs and place them in Buffy Sainte-Marie's work as an activist and performer. Additionally, I intend to interpret her musical production through semiotics and hermeneutics that center her contemporary voice as an artist of First Nations descent. By charting the contemporary landscape of her work in both the 1960s to 1970s and the 2000s, I will seek relationships between the process of representation (of the feminine and indigenous identities) and assimilation (mainstream music and the media) within her anti-war utterance.

**Keywords:** Buffy Sainte-Marie, Anti-War Art and Performance, Protest Song, Transindigenous, Native American Representation, Feminine Representation, Native American Assimilation, Aesthetics and Poiesis.

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\* The author's contact details: [Guilherme\\_Almeida@baylor.edu](mailto:Guilherme_Almeida@baylor.edu).

*she stomps in this country  
and everyone goes native now  
out to the streets  
with the smell of our fear on the wind  
perhaps we will all get killed soon*  
(Nathaniel Tarn, "For Buffy Sainte-Marie")

## Introduction

Canadian Cree singer/songwriter/activist/artist Buffy Sainte-Marie and her artistic corpus exist within the complex landscape of North American cultural economy. Sainte-Marie's variety of musical styles, modes of performance and musical production reveal an ingenuity that affords her a place of significance in the arts. At a time when this cultural economy privileged the homogeneity of male Anglo-European descendants, Buffy Sainte-Marie rose as an expressive and committed artist with an utterance that challenges the corporate priorities of said cultural economy, including its alignment with the military industrial complex.

Among the various expressions of musical performance emerging during the Second World War throughout the decade of the 1970s, folk revival and rock 'n' roll remain the most prominent styles of popular music of this period. Considering the phenomena of *synchronizing* and *publicizing* American cultural policies, the music historian David James positions these two complex musical performance expressions as chief among the cultural devices aligning with the project of American Imperial Capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1960s (and aligned with the cultural production of the Vietnam War era,) mass media often assigned political meaning to work that was only marginally committed to political transgression. The phenomena of cultural reception and ideological assignment is exemplified by the Vietnam American GI movement that

endowed such songs as The Rolling Stones' *2000 Light Years from Home*, the Animals' *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, Porter Wagoner's *Green, Green Grass of Home*, The Box Tops' *The Letter*, and Peter, Paul and Mary's *Leaving on a Jet Plane* with meanings they could not have had elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David James, "The Vietnam War and American Music", *Social Text*, 23, Autumn–Winter 1989, 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 126–127.

It's important to nuance this historical synchronization between the two artistic projects of folk revival and rock 'n' roll. While folk revival artists explored sonic expressions of authenticity and simplicity which often tied these expressions to the artist's identities and political alliance, their rock 'n' roll counterparts were developing a more homogenous project where the domain of the technologies of digital production and market branding were essential devices.<sup>3</sup>

Within this scenario of musical production and political association, Sainte-Marie creates her work with a strong sense of synthesis. Women artists who produced protest performances emerged globally throughout the 1950s – 1970s and crystalized the influence of feminism as an aesthetic experience, especially on the American continent. Particularly, Sainte-Marie understands and synthesizes the different expectations of Native American cultural expressions existing in the mainstream media.

Lastly, Sainte-Marie's various transits between the United States and Canada, between her Cree and Mi'kmaq identities, and her free flow between folk revival and rock 'n' roll critically embody her artistic synthesis. In fact, Sainte-Marie resists the complex and sometimes exclusionary relationship between folk revival and rock 'n' roll during the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, her musical production exists in a uniquely synthesized space.

I recognize the limitations of choosing the terminology Native American throughout this paper considering Buffy Sainte-Marie's diverse identities – both indigenous and feminine. In no way do I wish to limit her historiography or draw a narrower circle around her influence. However, purposefully using the Native American terminology implies commitment to a project wherein Sainte-Marie herself has become a sponsor and contributor to the Pan-Indianism Movement. Additionally, this research paper cannot address Sainte-Marie's essential work of advocacy and activism for arts and education, for Native American rights, for Women Rights, among other invaluable traits within her work.<sup>4</sup> The scope of these initiatives deserves a dedicated space and exploration that this manuscript cannot address.

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<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, James critiques the capitalist motivations to rock 'n' roll and situates the style historically between counter-culture rhetoric and corporate market priorities. David James, *op. cit.*, 124.

<sup>4</sup> Beverly Diamond's ethnographic work situates Buffy Sainte-Marie as an influential mentor to many younger Native American women musicians (consider interviews and narratives found in Diamond's article). Beverly Diamond, "Native American Contemporary Music: The Women", *The World of Music: Readings in Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2002.

## Poiesis

Buffy Sainte-Marie belongs to a broader community of protest singer-songwriters throughout the latitude of the American continent. This community of protest singer-songwriters include – but is not limited to: Violeta Parra in Chile, Zélia Barbosa in Brazil, and Victoria Santa Cruz in Peru. Performance and songwriting provide the signposts to this landscape of cultural expressions across the continent.

The emergence of women songwriters and especially those who create protest pieces indicate a greater manifestation of women as proprietors and articulators of political voice. Sainte-Marie produces her work in the complex intersection of individual expression and identity assertion, especially within the corporate expectations that developed during the American cultural economy in the 1970s.

Predominantly, beyond the temporal-geographical-feminine dimensions of this community of protest singer-songwriters, Buffy Sainte-Marie belongs to a long line of Native American artists who aspired to produce social transformation through their artistic work. This community of Native American artists include Chief Kiutus Tecumseh (1896–1966), a notable example of a singer who

often chastise the federal government, for example, in its pessimism toward Native intellectual ability, which largely prohibited opportunities for Native people to seek higher education.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the concept of poiesis will be deployed to argue the meaning-making of Sainte-Marie's anti-war utterance. Metaphysics, politics, and intersectionality find great resonance within the motivation of Sainte-Marie's compositional and poetic processes.

In his 1953 piece *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger begins with the everyday account of technology according to which technology is the vast array of instruments, machines, artefacts and devices that we human beings invent, build, and then exploit. (...) In this context poiesis is to be understood as a process of gathering together and fashioning natural materials in such a way that the human project in which they figure is in a deep harmony with, indeed *reveals*—or as Heidegger sometimes says when discussing poiesis, *brings forth*—the essence of those materials and any natural environment in which they are set. (...) Poiesis,

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<sup>5</sup> John W. Troutman, "Indian Blues: The Indigenization of American Popular Music", *World Literature Today*, Vol. 83, No. 3, May–June 2009, 46.

then, is a process of revealing. Poietic events are acts of unconcealment—one is tempted to coin the ugly neologism *truth-ing*—in which entities are allowed to show themselves. (...) Heidegger holds that the self-organized unfolding of the natural world, the unaided blossoming of nature, is *itself* a process of poiesis.<sup>6</sup>

All Sainte-Marie's songs comprise the material – acoustic, literary – and im-material artifacts of the bringing forth of her utterance. Her anti-war utterance exists within a material reality that inhabits stylistic forms – albeit commercial – that reveal the truth about their historical time and probe the critique of the politics of war and peace.

Chadwick Allen provides scholastic leadership when he uses the term “trans-indigenous” to understand identities and expressions of indigenous origin.<sup>7</sup>

The point is not to displace the necessary, invigorating study of specific traditions and contexts but rather to complement these by augmenting and expanding broader, globally Indigenous fields of inquiry. The point is to invite specific studies into different kinds of conversations, and to acknowledge the mobility and multiple interactions of Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and texts.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout his work in “Trans-Indigenous,” Allen establishes methodologies of semiotic literary criticism that inhabits the multi-lingual expressions of global Indigenous arts practices. More notably, Allen provides an intersectional analysis between the acoustic elements and linguistic components of contemporary Indigenous artistic production, the evocative potential of ancestral connections, and the potency of meaning-making while inhabiting trans-identities<sup>9/10</sup>

Buffy Sainte-Marie's music and performance cannot be delineated exclusively through methodologies of Indigenous literary analysis. Neither can her music be solely understood through lenses of popular music analysis. Her music and performance are syncretic in the most potent sense of the process. My methodological argument of creative synthesis as potency in Sainte-Ma-

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Wheeler, “Martin Heidegger,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, November 2, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/#Rel>.

<sup>7</sup> Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 153–179.

<sup>10</sup> In his “Visual and Aural Empathy” section, Allen contextualizes the rap track “Tangata Whenua” by the Māori hip-hop group Upper Hutt Posse within the broader context of contemporary Māori arts practices. (*Ibid.*, 153–157).

rie's work is supported by Christopher A. Scales in his analysis of indigenous music in the mainstream, relating the historical political struggles of Native Americans to their place in the markets of musical production.<sup>11</sup>

### Death and War as Discourse

Throughout the late 60s and early 70s, folk revival and rock 'n' roll embraced the endemic war theme of death. This thematic emphasis is present in Buffy Sainte-Marie's work and belongs in a community of songs from this period that critiqued war violence through lyrical narratives of violence and oppression. For example, *Universal Soldier* (1964)<sup>12</sup> introduces collective responsibility in the enterprise of war, from elected officials and propaganda consumption to blind obedience and the unanswerable results:

And he knows he shouldn't kill  
And he knows he always will  
Kill you for me, my friend, and me for you  
(...)  
His orders come from far away no more  
They come from here and there and you and me  
And brothers, can't you see?  
This is not the way we put the end to war

Sainte-Marie's guitar strumming functions both as accompaniment and interjection within the performance texture. Sometimes the strumming underlines the vocal rhythm in an almost homophonic rendering, at other times it simply stops the lyrics by overwhelming the texture with large barre chords.

Lastly, this piece of melodic writing is more closely related to the traditional Native music across North America, privileging the descending contour of the texture.<sup>13</sup> This descending contour is also found in the harmonic

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<sup>11</sup> Christopher A. Scales, "The North American Aboriginal Recording Industry", *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 126, No. 499, [University of Illinois Press, American Folklore Society], 2013, 82–83.

<sup>12</sup> Considering this performance on YouTube, we notice her deployment of phrasing that probe and accuse the listener, especially the direct address to the public: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zNUnwUSZmQ> (date and context for performance unknown).

<sup>13</sup> Elaine Keillor, "Indigenous Music as a Compositional Source: Parallels and Contrasts in Canadian and American Music", in: Timothy J. McGee (Ed.), *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith*, University of Toronto Press, 1995, 194; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/j.ctvc5cc4.15>.

ostinato (E F#/C# B G#m) of the piece, with parallel motion between the melody and the bassline.<sup>14</sup> The tense vocal timbre ascertains the confrontational nature of this piece, directly addressing the audience who are responsible for the support and validation of this universal soldier, who kills on our behalf (Example 1).

**Example 1:** Excerpt from the beginning of *Universal Soldier*, transcribed by author.

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the song "Universal Soldier". The score is written on a single staff in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is circled in pink. The lyrics are: "He's five foot two — and he's six feet four, (...)". Above the staff, four chords are indicated: E, F#/C#, B, and G#m. The first four notes of the melody (G4, A4, B4, C5) correspond to these chords.

The *Universal Soldier* exists alongside other contemporary expressions of military mythology, revealing a spectrum of perspectives, from covert nihilism to overt patriotism. The Doors' *The Unknown Soldier* (1968) narrates the death of a symbolic patriotic martyr, faceless though not timeless since it is historically placed within the Vietnam War years. The Doors distill this soldier's memory and make the society that watches his violent news an accomplice. Another expression of military mythology much more conservative is Barry Saddler and Robin Moore's *The Ballad of the Green Berets* (1965) which expresses the cultural expectation of the familial bond in patriotism, fearfully bearing out Sainte-Marie's *Universal Soldier*, reinforcing the expectation of the continuity of patriotic service within families and the ultimately sacrificial giving for country.

### Ecopoetics and War as Discourse

*Soldier Blue* (1970)<sup>15</sup> is the title song of Ralph Nelson's American Revisionist Western Film of the same title. In *Soldier Blue*, Sainte-Marie offers socio-ecological imagery that celebrates the connection between humans and land, personifying North America as the 'Her' who is living and giving for all. The soldier blue persona is confronted with this reality of generosity and abundance, opposed to his desire to kill and guard and conquer.

<sup>14</sup> See graphic on Example 1.

<sup>15</sup> For this portion of my analysis, I consider the film soundtrack presented here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJIr5y429BY>.

Soldier Blue, Soldier Blue, Soldier Blue,  
Can't you see that there's another way to love her?

The associations between country, land, and pan-nationality are present in these lyrics, making a long historical arc that positions Native Americans of the past side-by-side with the contemporary warrior who defends national interests. Country is redefined from the modern concept of the nation state (political unit) to a more ancestral concept of land (ecological unit).

Further connections are made between the soldier who works for country and the native who nurtures and cares for country. Service to country is an ecological experience of connection and stewardship, sharply opposed to the images of military service to country hailed during war years. These juxtapositions of the soldier blue and the 'we' Native personas in the lyrics support the broader critique of the Vietnam War.

*Soldier Blue* is unapologetically a rock 'n' roll song, with rising modulations (including many internal modulations) and the use of strong, developing rhythmical patterns that frame the various sections of the composition. Sainte-Marie's vocal style of deep and rapid vibrato permeates the performance, with intense crescendos and choral interventions throughout the musical texture.

Later in the composition there is the use of vocables between Sainte-Marie's solo and the layered choral texture. Vocables as a performance resource, though present in many Native American songs,<sup>16</sup> is closely associated here with the soulful stylizations of the vocal line in its melodic and timber qualities.

This song is not alone in Sainte-Marie's expressions of poetic politics present throughout her work in the 1960s and 1970s, reinforcing her character of a Native American Revisionist. Some examples include: *Now That the Buffalo's Gone* (1964), *My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying* (1966), *Native North American Child* (1972), *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain* (1973).

### **Technology and War as Discourse**

*The War Racket* (2017)<sup>17</sup> appears in Sainte-Marie's latest album *Medicine Songs* and contribute to a collection of new recordings of several of her pro-

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<sup>16</sup> David P. McAllester, "New Perspectives in Native American Music", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 20, No. 1-2, 1982, 434; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/942422>

<sup>17</sup> The official video production for *The War Racket* incorporates rich visual elements: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzG\\_4e8yGew](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzG_4e8yGew).

test songs across her 60-year-old career. New renditions of *My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying*, *America the Beautiful*, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *Now that the Buffalo's Gone*, *Working for the Government*, *Soldier Blue*, and *Universal Soldier* make this album an important revue of her corpus of political utterance.

Technology is a matter of personal expression and public advocacy for Sainte-Marie. She has been a strong advocate for technological development in First Nations communities.<sup>18</sup> She has incorporated digital synthesis and electric instruments from the very inception of her music production career. This use of technology has, in fact, drawn criticism from her folk revival contemporaries, while approximating her work to an aesthetic that was more in line with the rock 'n' roll of the 1970s.

*The War Racket* is a poignant piece of accompanied spoken word containing Sainte-Marie's most harsh and direct critique of the military industrial complex. In the lyrics she names all major actors – political and financial – of the latest war enterprise in the Middle East: Saddam, Bush, bin Laden. Her direct address deploys the use of pejoratives such as slick, snakes, bullies, creeps, worms, thugs, and thieves. The urgency and abandon with which she calls out the war enterprise in its historical inception, political motivation, and monetary gain, reveals the utterance of an artist who is sincerely tired of the same apparatus of violence.

The use of technology as aesthetic discourse is not a novelty in Sainte-Marie's work: she was the first artist to use vocals processed through a Buchla 100 synthesizer and the first to make an album using pre-surround-sound quadraphonic technology.<sup>19</sup> These technological innovations appeared in her 1969 electro-folk-rock epic *Illuminations*. The intersection of spirituality and political critique of spiritual symbology were also present in her technological inception.

There are various timbers of digital synthesizers as well as wide distortions from the guitars in *The War Racket*. The impatient and repetitive rhythms of the loops reveal an underlying of linear persistence, resonating throughout the history of wars, regardless of the alignment with capitalist, imperial, or religious motives. Sainte-Marie again deploys rhythmic breaks to underline the spoken word, adding emphasis and urgency to her message.

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<sup>18</sup> Beverley Diamond, op. cit., 394.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Raine, "Power in the Songs BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE", *Canadian Musician*, 43.1, 2021, 36.

## Conclusion

Buffy Sainte-Marie offers an utterance of anti-war songs that is rich in bilingual and bicultural meanings. Her artistic experience reveals great ingenuity in navigating the expectations of mainstream media and the cultural economy of her early career. There were moments of division and development that reveal an artist who is interested in conversing between musical styles and sometimes disregards stylistic continuity altogether.<sup>20</sup>

Her bilingual meanings advance her position as an artist of commercial and political strength expressing a variety of stylistic languages and deploying devices from all her identities.

Indigenous bilanguaging – thinking and writing between languages, engaging the politics of their asymmetry within (post)colonial relations – can be more overt than either (...) single heteronym or (...) repetition.<sup>21</sup>

Also, Sainte-Marie's bicultural meanings contribute to a connection between the Pan-Indigenous movement of peace and unity while critiquing the historical violence against all human kinship. Acknowledging and decrying the violence of war is a project of all humans, regardless of cultural identities. Buffy Sainte-Marie understands her role in this project and uses her artistic utterance in a courageous and innovative way.

Starting in the late 1960s, the FBI blacklisted Sainte-Marie, including prohibiting several of her protest songs from being broadcast over US radio, yet Sainte-Marie would not discover this insidious intervention until the 1980s. For almost twenty years, her pacifist, anti-war messages, as well as her songs and work that raised awareness of the genocide and continued exploration of North America's Indigenous peoples, were hindered by the US government.<sup>22</sup>

While stylistic continuity may not be a constant in Buffy Sainte-Marie's creative output, her critique of oppression and violence are certainly tenants in her work.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>21</sup> Chadwick Allen, *op. cit.*, 163.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Raine, *op. cit.*, 35–36.

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### Land Acknowledgement

I write to you from the unceded land of the Comanche, Hueco, Tawakoni, and Wichita peoples. I acknowledge that the institution for which I work, the institution where I am currently pursuing doctoral studies, and the community of faith with which I worship were collectively founded on the exclusion and eradication of many peoples, including those on whose land these institutions are located. This acknowledgement demonstrates my commitment to begin the process of dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism and work towards God's justice for all people. Considering the digital format of this article, I encourage my public to consider their own relationship to the land and land ancestors where they are.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Buffy Sainte-Marie exemplifies a variety of Land Acknowledgements in her performances and award recognitions, including during the JUNO 2021 awards when she weaved a lamentation for the more than 1,300 students discovered at former sites of Canada's residential schools earlier in 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVtmdki4Pf4>. Additionally, Sainte-Marie provides a humorous critique to formal land acknowledgements ridden with legal language in her commentary to the JUNO 2017 awards first televised land acknowledgement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyRubg5Tfko>.

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## RESEARCH AND TRADITION

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*Amra Latifić\**

Singidunum University in Belgrade  
Faculty of Media and Communications

### ***THE LEGEND OF OHRID – RECEPTION OF BALLETTIZATION OF THE DANCE TRADITION***

**Abstract:** The paper discusses the interpretations of the choreographic aspects of different versions of the performance of the ballet *The Ohrid Legend* by Stevan Hristić. In the choreographies of this ballet, ballet vocabulary is combined with folklore motifs, using the principle of balletization of folklore. This choreographic approach has produced a pluralism of opinions on the ballet critical scene – from the modernization of folklore elements to views that the work still belongs to the traditional ballet choreographic structure. Pluralism of opinion provides an opportunity to open new approaches in the interpretation of the choreography itself. In this paper, an anthropological approach is treated, based on the intersection of different styles of play.

**Keywords:** ballet, balletization, folklore, folk dance, modernistic, postmodernistic, anthropological, syncretism

The four-part ballet by composer Stevan Hristić, *The Legend of Ohrid*, is one of the most frequently performed and popular performances in the history of

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\* Author's contact information: amra.latific@gmail.com

the national ballet. It achieved great success, both in the country and at numerous guest appearances abroad. According to Sonja Marinković: “Impressive statistics confirm this: more than 1,300 performances, 24 stage presentations (premieres and renewals) involving four foreign and ten Yugoslav choreographers (some have addressed this work several times)”<sup>1</sup> Today, this ballet performance is not on the repertoire and has not been the subject of choreographers for several decades.<sup>2</sup> Our efforts to find recordings of all-night ballet performances of *The Legend of Ohrid* were unsuccessful. We also contacted the relevant institutions.<sup>3</sup> The paper analyzes the reception of the choreographic aspect of the ballet. Since recordings of the aforesaid all-night performance do not exist, the only thing left as a trace that can shed light on the choreographic aspects of this ballet are written texts, reviews and essays. The aim of the paper is to remind us again of the exceptional importance of *The Legend of Ohrid* and to point out that following its example, new ballets can be composed and new choreographies inspired by folklore and modern ballet can be created. The paper does not include the musicological aspect of this ballet.<sup>4</sup>

### **Balletization of the dance tradition**

Numerous performances, with *The Legend* performed in different ways, led to a pluralism of opinions on the ballet critical scene. The balletization of the dance tradition changed and adapted, primarily by approaching or moving away from folklore. Throughout the entire history of this ballet's performances, from 1947 to 1985, choreographers faced difficulties – how to incor-

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<sup>1</sup> Sonja Marinković, *Stevan Hristić. The Legend of Ohrid. Ballet – integral version*, Belgrade, RTS Music Production, RTS Symphony Orchestra and Choir, 2015, 4.

<sup>2</sup> After more than three decades, we are looking forward to this play choreographed by Vladimir Logunov. The premiere was postponed. The only premiere performance of *The Legend of Ohrid* in the past thirty-six years was choreographed by Lidija Pilipenko (premiered on the 21<sup>st</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2000, National Theater in Belgrade). After only a few performances, this version of *The Legend* was removed from the repertoire.

<sup>3</sup> Radio Television of Serbia, the National Theater in Belgrade and the Museum of Theatrical Arts of Serbia.

<sup>4</sup> For the needs of musicology, the following significant literature is referred to: Dimitrije Stefanović (Ed.), *The life and work of Stevan Hristić*, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1991 and Sonja Marinković, *Stevan Hristić. The Legend of Ohrid. Ballet – integral version*, Belgrade, RTS Music Production, RTS Symphony Orchestra and Choir, 2015.

porate folklore motifs into the performance without it being folklore, that is, how to find the right combination of folklore motifs and ballet. In the interpretations of leading ballet historians, the most dominant are disagreements over the concept of the “modernization” of ballet. Ana Radošević attributes the subsequent changes, when the whole play was performed on toes, to the preference of the moment and a different approach to the work, and not to the categories of “modern” and “modernization”; Jelena Šantić believes that tradition can be interpreted in a different way, and not only with folklore elements; Nadežda Mosusova emphasizes the possibility that the folk tradition can be preserved through ballet. The pluralism of opinions about the performance of *The Legend of Ohrid*, as well as several different versions of the play, with opposing starting points in relation to the method of balletization of the dance tradition, open new approaches in interpreting the play itself such as: modernist, postmodernist and anthropological.

The balletization of the dance tradition is recognizable in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The term itself implies the procedure of using elements of folklore and their inclusion in the structure of a ballet performance. Jelena Šantić explains: “As early as in the ballets of academic classics, [...] there is a balletization of folklore, which means that it was a process of using folklore elements by introducing them into another structure, which recognizes the details of the chosen motif, but with more elements of ballet code”.<sup>5</sup> In relation to the procedures of using folklore elements, she also points out two methods of incorporating motifs from folklore sources into ballet works.

The first is the case when the choreographer takes a larger original set, a folk dance and when he performs it in its entirety on the theater stage. The new theatrical context within the content and form of the ballet work erases the original motif meaning of this play. [...] The second is the way of applying parts, elements or motifs, and not the play as a whole. [...] A step in the choreography can be stylized in many ways, it can keep the integrity, character and structure, but also

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<sup>5</sup> Jelena Šantić, “Incorporation of Folk Elements in the Choreography of Domestic Ballet Composers”, in: Nadežda Mosusova (Ed.), *Serbian music stage*, Belgrade, Institute of Musicology SASA, 1995, 501–510. Paper read at the scientific conference of the same name on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Theatre in Belgrade, held at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December 1993, in: Amra Latifić (Ed.), *Life without compromise for art and peace. Jelena Šantić: essays, notes, comments*, Belgrade, Jelena Šantić Foundation, Group 484, Historical Archives of Belgrade, 2021, 137.

change in the fragment. [...] Balletization occurs when basic or stylized elements of folklore are associated with ballet lexicon, with the ballet canon predominating.<sup>6</sup>

Today, in Serbia, the balletization procedure is almost never applied. Writing about the importance thereof, Nadežda Mosusova concludes: “The balletization of the living dance tradition deserves not only to be reconstructed, but also to live on. Perhaps the lost and forgotten folk tradition will be preserved thanks to ballets based on folklore models”.<sup>7</sup> Jelena Šantić explains the reason why Russian emigrants, choreographers and dancers, studied our folklore with great inspiration and interest and transferred it in different stylizations to the stage of the National Theater, citing the statement of the sisters, Ljubica and Danica Janković:

The form of the dance, as something that is only its external framework, does not seem to attract a Serbian man, who does not lean towards formalism and is less interested in its spirit than what that framework should fulfill. This may explain the relatively small number of Serbian oro forms, on the one hand, and the very large variety of steps and their combinations, on the other. We believe it is not an exaggeration to say that the Serbian dances are extremely elaborate in this regard.<sup>8</sup>

It is due to the variety of steps and their combinations that our folklore was not only an inspiration to local artists and Russian emigrants in Belgrade. Jelena Šantić points out this fact as well: “Little is known about the fact that Maurice Bejart subtly incorporated our folklore elements of the kolo into the ballets *The Rite of Spring* and *Bolero*. He created his style in the synthesis of ballet, dance and ideology”.<sup>9</sup>

### **Choreographic modernist experiment: the search for tradition and eclecticism**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the search for tradition as a concept and eclectic experiment, with its various goals and manifestations, as various

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 137, 138.

<sup>7</sup> Nadežda Mosusova, “Are the folkloric ballets an anachronism today?”, in: Nadežda Mosusova, *Serbian Musical Theater: Historical Fragments*, Belgrade, Institute of Musicology SASA, 2013, 117.

<sup>8</sup> Ljubica and Danica Janković, Some characteristics of oro patterns in Serbia, *Bulletin of the Ethnographic Museum*, Belgrade, 1953, 113. Cited in: J. Šantić, op. cit., 138.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 137.

styles of dance, were an integral part of modernism. American modernist choreographers were looking for inspiration in folk dances of various nations and primitive cultures. Julia L. Foulkes writes: “In search of the primordial experience of the world and aesthetics, many European artists of modernism turned to African art and culture in general. Following the exact impulse, Martha Graham found the same primitive inspiration on the American land”.<sup>10</sup> Further on, interpreting the connection between modernism, tradition and culture, Foulkes refers to sources in the field of anthropology. It is a well-known fact that Helen Tamiris got a job at the Metropolitan Opera at the beginning of the 20th century, where she first performed folk dances, and only then ballet.<sup>11</sup> Tamiris concludes in her manifesto from the late 1920s: “There are no general rules”.<sup>12</sup> Educated in a diverse repertoire, she learned that she should “allow the movement to flow out from the chest thru the arms and legs [...]to start each movement from the center—the seat of the heart and lungs—and from the soul”.<sup>13</sup> She soon notices that the ballet is artificial and writes: “Dancing on our toes [...]. Why don’t we dance on our hands too?”<sup>14</sup> The bare feet of modern dance, as well as the movement that is not strictly fixed in advance, gave the poor dancers the opportunity to accept the complete freedom of the new movement: “Poverty influenced the political ideology of the pioneers of modern dance who wanted to move carried by ‘that proletarian sense of joint movement, movement in a group, and they could all raise a little money for one leotard.”<sup>15</sup> Escaping from the sentimental image of a woman offered by ballet, choreographers incorporate a mix of different dance styles. Ruth St. Denis performs a mix of ballet, Isadora Duncan also dances Asian dances.<sup>16</sup>

In the fall of 1932, the renowned African-American musician and choral conductor, Hall Johnson, invited Doris Humphrey to do the choreography for *Run, Li'l Chillun*, a play with elements of folklore based on the works of anthropologist and writer Zora Neale Hurston. Johnson wanted to use the ‘primitive and almost [...]

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<sup>10</sup> Julia L. Foulkes, *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*. Belgrade, Clio, 2008, 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Helen Tamiris, “Tamiris in Her Own Voice”, 12, in: Julia L. Foulkes, *op. cit.*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Helen Tamiris, “Manifest” (1927), in: Julia L. Foulkes, *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>15</sup> Faith Reyher Jackson, reminiscences, 21 April 1979, CUOHROC, 93, in: Julia L. Foulkes, *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Julia L. Foulkes, *op. cit.*, 27.

unchanged' movement of Bahamian dancers in the play and felt that Doris Humphrey only needed to adapt the rituals and 'fit their dance into the play'.<sup>17</sup>

Stylistic eclecticism developed in response to key questions related to the ideals of American society.

The search for tradition at the beginning of the 20th century was not accidental. We will take into account that romanticism and national revivals in general in the 19th century found inspiration in folk art. Jelena Šantić cites examples of this:

In the ballets of romanticism, one can find characters of black, oriental, Spanish, Hungarian, German and other people. The great choreographers, Jules Perrot, Joseph Mazilier, Arthur Saint Leon, Filippo Taglioni and August Bournonville use elements and motifs of various nations' dances within their ballet lexicon. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia, Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa, as part of the ballets of classical academicism, such as *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Raymonda*, *Paquita* and others, created entire divertissements with various dances.<sup>18</sup>

Mikhail Fokin abandons academicism and changes dramaturgy – by characterizing the characters in a ballet performance, the movement becomes freer. In such innovations, Fokin is more at liberty to turn to folk dances while modifying the ballet canon. Examples of this include the ballets: *Petrushka*, *Polovtsian Dances*, *The Firebird*, *Scheherazade*.

### **The choreographic search for folklore: a ballet experiment in our region**

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in our region, the very concept of interest, research, introduction and citation of elements of folk dance, is realized for the very first time as an all-night ballet performance in *The Legend of Ohrid* by Stevan Hristić. Incorporating elements of folk dance into the structure of a ballet performance was an aesthetic experiment in our region, while in America this act was mostly related to social and political struggle. The first attempts to develop and promote folk dances in the former Yugoslavia are attributed to Maga Magazinović and her work in the first private School of Rhythmics and Plastics, which she opened in Belgrade in 1910. At the beginning of 1926, Maga presented the "dance elegy" *Jelisavka, mother of Obilić*, as well as the "plastic ballad" *The Death of Mother Jugović* the following year.

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<sup>17</sup> Doris Humphrey, "Dance, Little Chillun", *American Dancer*, 6<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> July 1933, 8, in: Julia L. Foulkes, op. cit., 69.

<sup>18</sup> Jelena Šantić, op. cit., 137.

Nadežda Mosusova points out that Maga Magazinović, unlike the dancers hired by the National Theater, did not have any special support in Belgrade. “Best wishes and declarations are one thing, and direct support is another, and Maga Magazinović (who was obviously never given material support or introduced to the stage of the National Theater) continued her dedicated work until the closure of her school of rhythmic in 1935.”<sup>19</sup>

Projects involving interest in folklore and folk dances, supported by the National Theater in Belgrade, went to ballet dancers from the Russian emigration.<sup>20</sup> Margarita Petrovna Froman staged ballets in the operas of Petar Konjović *The Prince of Zeta* and *Koštana* (1929 and 1931), while Nina Vasilievna Kirsanova in 1933 staged čoček dances in the play *Impure Blood*. The dramatization of Stanković’s novel was done by Arton Mihailović, and the music was composed by Jovan Bandur. Ksenija Šukuljević-Marković explains that the greatest results in transposing our folklore into an artistic dance were given by Anatolij Žukovski:

The choreographic stagings of the performed ballets were original choreographic achievements, which greatly contributed to the development of our choreographic art. Among them, in our opinion, the most prominent place belongs to Anatolij Žukovski who, by having the largest number of choreographic stagings, based on study and many years of persistent research and commitment to our national folklore (which he transposed for the stage art dance), achieved the greatest results. This was, in fact, confirmed by the professional critics, who evaluated his performances and his choreographic-directing work.<sup>21</sup>

The first attempt to make an all-night ballet performance, to the music of a local composer, in which the transposition of folk dances into ballet would be performed, was made by Nina Kirsanova in the ballet *The Legend of Ohrid* by Stevan Hristić. According to Sonja Marinković:

*The Legend* was a typical expression of late romantic national aspirations: conquering the genre of all-night ballet in a tradition close to *The Firebird*, *Polovtsian*

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<sup>19</sup> Nadežda Mosusova, op. cit., 100.

<sup>20</sup> In 1927, Ana Pavlova was a guest at the National Theater in Belgrade. The next year, Tamara Karsavina was also a guest.

<sup>21</sup> Ksenija Šukuljević-Marković, “Yugoslav ballets on the stage of the National Theater in Belgrade between the two world wars”, in: Nadežda Mosusova (Ed.), *Serbian music stage: proceedings of the Scientific Conference held from 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December 1993, on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Theatre*, Belgrade, Institute of Musicology SASA, 1995, 480.

*Dances* and *Scheherazade*, with a typical dualistic dramaturgy of confronting real and fantastic events, where the authenticity of the musical substance was ensured by the use of songs from Mokranjac's *Tenth Garland* (*Biljana Whitened Her Linen* and *Leave Me*), as well as the motifs of the popular folk song *Biljana* as the basic leitmotifs of the ballet.<sup>22</sup>

Kirsanova played the main role in this ballet – *Biljana*, “on her toes”. According to Nadežda Mosusova, “This is the first appearance of stylized Serbian and Macedonian folk dances on the stage of the National Theater, if we do not count Margarita Froman's stagings of ballet in the operas of Petar Konjović”.<sup>23</sup> For this play, Anatolij Žukovski also studied the folklore of South Serbia and Macedonia, but his name does not appear on the posters.<sup>24</sup> At the premiere of *The Legend of Ohrid*<sup>25</sup> – which was a Yugoslav premiere – only one act was performed. The one-part version of the ballet essentially included the core of the whole idea, which will be elaborated in its four-part form. The complete work would be on the repertoire again only after the war, in 1947, choreographed by Margarita Froman. She incorporated elements of Macedonian folklore and retained the original kolo. Froman stylized the steps by adding an intermediate step. She rhythmicized the whole body of the dancer and thus also contributed to the closeness with the authentic folk dance expression. Two years after the premiere staged by Margarita Froman, Pia and Pino Mlakar staged *The Legend* in Ljubljana. Their view of the relationship between folklore and ballet differed significantly from all other choreographers who had worked on this play until then. Pino Mlakar says:

Of course, kolo is a dance factor, but we have to ask ourselves whether folk dance is what can satisfy and justify the choreographic realization of this beautiful legend? It is not that I would not appreciate dance folklore, on the contrary, it is a treasury for many things in our ballet language, but not like this, on such a scale as it was done in the *The Legend of Ohrid*. During the realization of this *Legend*,

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<sup>22</sup> Sonja Marinković, op. cit., 6.

<sup>23</sup> Nadežda Mosusova, op. cit., 100.

<sup>24</sup> According to the statement of Ksenija Marković, in: Jelena Šantić, op. cit., 138. During the Second World War, in the building of the National Theater, damaged during the bombing, the program included, in addition to short ballets and divertissements, one domestic work staged by Žukovski – *In the Morava Valley*.

<sup>25</sup> In the same year (1933), Nina Kirsanova led the first guest appearance of the Ballet of the National Theater abroad, in Athens, at the Olympia Theater; the Russian House in Belgrade was opened, called the Russian House of Emperor Nicholas II; Byzantine historian George Ostrogorsky comes to Belgrade.

there was a shift and the folklore choreographic element prevailed. But, the art of ballet remained only as a beautiful but primitive girl. The poetry and ethical drama of this *Legend* were all too equated with the decorativeness, temperament and theatricality of the patterned origin. But it is fortunate that the music and the script, the work printed before us, leave open opportunities for poetry and lyricism and drama to be told in ballet language.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, reviews after the performance of the version of *The Legend* of this artistic couple, in Ljubljana, have not been preserved.

Dimitrije Parlić made new changes to this work on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1966. He preserved the ambience of Macedonia and raised the whole *Legend* “on the toes” – he used the classic dance technique in stylizing the steps of folk dances, and the kolo was performed in ballet shoes. Milica Jovanović believes that these changes “in a way impoverished the ballet”<sup>27</sup> and adds: “This version of *The Legend of Ohrid* may have been more ballet, but it ceased to be an ‘Ohrid’ legend by needless generalization.”<sup>28</sup> Stana Đurić-Klajn, on the contrary, interprets Parlić’s changes as a top artistic quality. By simplifying the libretto and excluding the pantomime, the play became more modern, according to S. Đurić-Klajn. “However, the folklore character was not lost because Parlić, combining classical ballet technique with original folk choreography, found an extraordinarily harmonious balance of stylization.”<sup>29</sup> Parlić approached this play with the intention of gaining a continuous flow, and thus a unique language that would unite different dance styles. Interpreting the conversion of the traditional national folklore repertoire into ballet, Branka Rakić singles out the term “anti-ballet” and connects it with our national style, which as such includes us in contemporary trends on the international scene.<sup>30</sup> When it comes to the combination of folklore and ballet, Jelena Šantić emphasizes the validity of the quote:

In solo sections, he uses more ballet vocabulary with which he combines a folklore motif or sign, so that the principle of folklore balletization is applied. Even

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<sup>26</sup> Cited in: Ana Radošević, *On Stevan Hristić’s Ballet “The Legend of Ohrid” on Yugoslav Stages: A Contribution to the Historiography of the Serbian Ballet Scene*, Belgrade, Institute of Musicology SASA, 2017, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Milica Jovanović, *Ballet of the National Theater in Belgrade. The first seventy years*. Belgrade, National Theater in Belgrade, 1994, 252.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Stana Đurić-Klajn, *Modern version of The Legend of Ohrid*, *Politika*, Belgrade, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1967.

<sup>30</sup> Branka Rakić, *In Search of National Style*, *Telegram*, Zagreb, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1967.

then, the quote represented a legitimate relationship of recent works. Thus, at the beginning of the first act, Parlić decomposes, completes the elements, and later collects and quotes them and creates a new work. By modernizing the stage and costumes, the famous painter Milo Milunović contributed to a new visual expression.<sup>31</sup>

Milica Zajcev interprets Parlić's version as an aesthetic intervention:

In a purely craft sense, Dimitrije Parlić put *The Legend of Ohrid* on its toes, that is, he used the classic dance technique in stylizing the steps of folk dances. But it would be completely wrong to see Parlić's efforts only as a brilliant attempt to combine folk and classical dance. He did much more with his staging. With his characteristic invention, he searched for new movements, for a whole scale of dance expression which, especially in the first and fourth acts, captivated with refinement, exuberance and imagination, as only a gifted choreographer can do.<sup>32</sup>

National ballets were extremely popular: "The audience responded to the premieres and plays and influenced their stage and repertoire life".<sup>33</sup> Jelena Šantić explains the popularity as follows:

The long life of this ballet and the exaltation of the audience can be explained in many ways. National-romantic music easily reached the audience. The author himself, on the tenth anniversary of the ballet, says: 'Macedonian motifs attracted me as the most expressive and most suitable for modeling'. The ballet is inspired by a story based on the heroic liberation from the Turks. In those times, that heroism was a parallel to the liberation from the Germans. Then there is the omni-Balkan idea. *The Legend of Ohrid* had freshness, originality, vitality of stylization and immediacy in its expression.<sup>34</sup>

According to Mirka Pavlović<sup>35</sup> Hristić saw the special quality of his music in the fact that it provided different possibilities to the dancers and the choreographer. As a conductor of his *Legend*, he had a specific relationship with the dancers: "At the beginning, Hristić conducted *The Legend of Ohrid* by heart, but later he started conducting only from the score, leaving the dancers to

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<sup>31</sup> Jelena Šantić, *Incorporation of Folk Elements*[...], op. cit., 140.

<sup>32</sup> Cited in: A. Radošević, op. cit., 57.

<sup>33</sup> Ksenija Šukuljević-Marković, *Yugoslav ballets ...*, op. cit., 481.

<sup>34</sup> Jelena Šantić, op. cit., 139.

<sup>35</sup> Mirka Pavlović, "Composer of 'The Legend of Ohrid' Stevan Hristić – as an individual and a theater man", in: Dimitrije Stefanović (Ed.), *The life and work of Stevan Hristić*, op. cit., 126.

find their way and to follow him, and not vice versa. His constant looking at the score inspired the joke that he was the only man who had never seen *The Legend of Ohrid*.<sup>36</sup> From the time when Hristić became the director of the Opera until the premiere of the one-act *Legend* in 1933, he conducted eight ballet premieres, out of a total of twenty-two premieres at the National Theater. According to Mirka Pavlović, Hristić had luck in composing *The Legend* because he was accompanied by excellent ballet experts who helped him “capture” the traditional aspects of folk dance in an appropriate way and translate it into a cultivated form needed for the ballet stage.<sup>37</sup> At that time, most of the male part of the ensemble was taken over from folklore groups, and women, according to Ana Radošević, studied classical ballet and were more professional as ballerinas.<sup>38</sup> The influence of folklore and its stylization in the post-war period is explained in more detail by Ana Radošević:

As for the first post-war choreographies, they were stylized folklore in Act I and IV. For the most part, the choreographers also wanted to stay true to the spirit of the score, to avoid pure folklore and to raise the dance to an artistic level through stylization. Of course, the degree of stylization was different from one play to another – more or less successful. The approach to the work itself certainly depended on the creator himself, his artistic *credo*, the result of his education and approach to ballet as an art. It was not only about the Act I and IV, that is, about folklore acts. There was a completely different Act II – pure classics, and Act III – *divertissement*.<sup>39</sup>

The first act takes place in Macedonia, in a village near Ohrid. The second one takes place on Lake Ohrid. The third – *divertissement*, takes place in Constantinople, at the Sultan’s court. The fourth (finale) takes place again in a village in Macedonia. For the third act, Nadežda Mosusova points out that it can be visually and musically connected with *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov or *Raymonda* by Glazunov, that is, with the orient of the Russian style.<sup>40</sup> According to Ana Radošević, *The Legend* is based on the dramaturgy of classical Russian ballet – it is a simple folk story, with elements of a fairy tale and a happy ending for the couple in love.

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<sup>36</sup> Mirka Pavlović, op. cit., 134.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>38</sup> Ana Radošević, op. cit., 18.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>40</sup> See N. Mosusova, Sources of Inspiration of *The Legend of Ohrid* by Stevan Hristić, *Musicological Annual*, XXV, Ljubljana, 1989, 67–79.

From all the above, it can be concluded that the most common disagreements in the reception of this ballet stemmed from a different understanding of the choreographic process of the transposition of folklore elements into ballet. On this note, the concept of “modernity” of the ballet itself is also problematized. Commenting on the response and criticism of *The Legend of Ohrid*, Ana Radošević singles out three stages that this ballet has gone through since 1947:

The first stage performance by M. Froman, stylized folklore in acts I and IV, some pantomime scenes between dances, some pro-choreographed continuous action. The second act – classic, the third – divertissement, except for the Mlakars and Horvat, where everything merged through the deepened content into one whole. The second stage, a completely balletized performance. All four acts on toes, with great dramaturgical moves (Parlić, 1966). The third stage, in which *The Legend* descends again to demi-pointe and the whole foot (with the exception of the choreography by Vera Kostić in Novi Sad, 1981).<sup>41</sup>

Radošević connects the central problem with the concept of “modernization” of the ballet in its second stage: “When the whole *Legend* was done on toes, it was said to be a ‘modernization’ of the play. It is not clear why the show would be more modern if everyone danced in classic shoes, which are 19<sup>th</sup>-century props. It is just a different approach to the work, a different preference at that moment”.<sup>42</sup> According to A. Radošević, the biggest disagreements between ballet critics happened in the second stage – due to the use of folklore elements: “Some critics of *The Legend* from the second stage, that is, that balletized *Legend*, considered, as we could see, a great step forward in the history of our ballet, while others did not accept the same choreography”.<sup>43</sup>

### **Disagreements over the interpretation of choreography and the connection of dance styles**

Based on everything we have mentioned in connection with the reception of the balletization of the dance tradition, we can make the following conclusion. The central problem that defines each of these three historical stages is the methodology of connecting folklore dance elements with the ballet structure. The first approach implies that in acts I and IV, **folklore becomes an integral part of the ballet** (classical ballet and folklore, the clearest example:

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<sup>41</sup> Ana Radošević, op. cit., 93.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 94.

Margarita Froman's staging at the National Theater in Belgrade in 1947). In this approach, the part with folklore seeks a special show, since both the music and the style of its existence are related to the aesthetic norms from the time of its creation. Disagreements over the interpretation of this version of the performance stem from a vaguely defined connection of styles. The aim of this approach is to present and preserve cultural heritage. The second one implies that in Act I and IV **ballet becomes an integral part of folklore** (neoclassical dance vocabulary and elements of folklore, e.g.: Parlić's staging at the National Theater in Belgrade 1966 and especially his later stagings in Skopje in 1979 and in Zagreb in 1980). The aim of this approach is to overcome the stylistic isolation of classical ballet. The third one involves a new, **hybrid form** that transforms both folklore and classical ballet. In line with this thinking, Jelena Šantić's proposal stands out, according to which tradition can be interpreted in a different way, and not only by folklore elements. She is one of the few who gave a specific proposal on how this work can be further developed artistically:

The idea of the project 'New choreographic approaches to *The Legend of Ohrid*' is to completely displace the traditional opinion about this ballet. First of all, the musical pattern would be the original suite of *The Legend of Ohrid*. A new, modern choreographic key, completely aesthetically suits this project. Artistic experiences in America and Europe with similar material achieve excellent results. It is especially important to show in Belgrade that tradition can be interpreted in a completely different way, and not only by folklore elements.<sup>44</sup>

Until today, we have not been able to see the new, choreographic key of this ballet. It has not been on the repertoire for more than three decades. As Sonja Marinković states: "The story of fame remains in the memory of those who had the privilege to see the play on stage. New generations and young audiences could only get confused thinking about the contradictions of that former great fame and complete negligence towards Hristić's masterpiece in contemporary musical life."<sup>45</sup>

Based on all the above, today we can connect this ballet with the artistic methods and strategies of modernism (the search for tradition), postmod-

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<sup>44</sup> Jelena Šantić, "New Choreographic Approaches to *The Legend of Ohrid*". Project in family documentation, in: Amra Latifić (Ed.): *Life without compromise for art and peace. Jelena Šantić: essays, notes, comments*, Belgrade, Jelena Šantić Foundation, Group 484, Historical Archives of Belgrade, 2021, 407.

<sup>45</sup> Sonja Marinković, op. cit., 11, 12.

ernism (citation) and theatrical anthropology (syncretism). In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the modernist search for tradition and the incorporation of elements of folk dance into the structure of a ballet performance was an aesthetic experiment in our region. Modernist eclecticism, with the dominant process of taking over a folklore citation, represents a step towards a post-modernist experiment. Crossing styles as an anthropological procedure is a syncretic aspect in which ballet and dances from Ohrid are united, as different stylistic and cultural patterns. The greatest chance for further development of this ballet lies in its anthropological potential.

### **Crossing different dance styles as an anthropological procedure**

The syncretism process was developed by Eugenio Barba in the methods of theatrical anthropology. He points out that the Balinese dancer, Japanese *kabuki* actor, Indian *Odissi* dancer, European jester in the Middle Ages, as well as the classical ballerina, have the same principles that control the stage behavior of performers, with only the performances being different. The syncretic aspect in which ballet combines with its “strict rules”, which originates from France, and traditional dances from Ohrid, also precisely stylistically based, can be said to jointly represent *a kind of step towards an anthropological experiment*. “Different performers, in different places and at different times, despite the stylistic forms characteristic of their traditions, start from principles that are repeated. The main task of theatrical anthropology is to search for these common principles.”<sup>46</sup> Strict rules in performing artistic disciplines that make the style closed can put the performance at risk of isolation. In this case, Barba recognizes stylistic isolation, and therefore raises the question of the future of such disciplines. “The risk of isolation is that pureness is often paid for with sterility. Those teachers who imprison their students in a fortress of rules – which, in order to be sustained, must not be relative – and deprive them of the benefit of comparison, certainly preserve the quality of their own art, but endanger its future.”<sup>47</sup> Further on, he argues, syncretism should, above all, be a deliberate act. “Openness to diversity does not necessarily mean falling into syncretism or linguistic confusion. On the one hand, the risk of sterile isolation and, on the other hand, opening at any

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<sup>46</sup> Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*, Belgrade, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Institute of Theater, Film, Radio and Television, 1996, 8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

cost is avoided, which can turn into confusion.”<sup>48</sup> Syncretism also does not mean creating a common theater, but above all the possibility of creating a common pedagogical basis. “Arts’ wrote Decroux, ‘are reminiscent of each other because of their principles, not because of their works.’ I could add: it is the same with theaters: they are reminiscent of each other because of their principles, not because of their performances.”<sup>49</sup>

For the future generation of choreographers of the ballet *The Legend of Ohrid*, the pedagogical basis would include an empirical approach to the problems of dancers. This specifically means overcoming specialization in a particular dance technique, discipline, or aesthetic. This is not about knowing and presenting the mastered technique, as it has been done so far in various versions of *The Legend of Ohrid*, but about the *empirical experience* that will be gained by crossing the two mentioned styles, classical ballet and dances from Ohrid. In line with this, Eugenio Barba introduces the term “empirical theory.”<sup>50</sup> It is clear that this approach focuses on the ballet dancer, his stage experience and collaboration with the choreographer. On the other hand, the result of an anthropological approach to this ballet can contribute to creating a vision of the authentic language from our region. The new generation of choreographers is certainly faced with a challenging task in the key of eclecticism. Given that eclecticists choose from existing traditions what they like and put it into their own learning,<sup>51</sup> eclecticism becomes a potential for creating new pedagogical foundations. “Today, the question arises as how to dance to *The Legend of Ohrid* after the experience of the postmodern, which allows eclecticism and which – respecting the classics – brings a new form. That key awaits the choreographer of modern sensibility.”<sup>52</sup> In the new choreographic approach, from an aesthetic standpoint, the highly “artificial” form of both dance styles needs to be replaced by a sphere of experience, which will surpass the previously acquired knowledge of strict technique. By releasing the external effects that the technique brings with it, a new hybrid form will be created along the line of the empirical.

We can conclude that the biggest disagreements between the 20<sup>th</sup> century ballet critics over the interpretation of the choreography of *The Legend*

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., IX.

<sup>51</sup> *Dictionary of Philosophical Concepts*, Founded by Friedrich Kirchner and Carl Michaelis, Belgrade, BIGZ, 2004, 157.

<sup>52</sup> Jelena Šantić, “Fifty years since the premiere of *The Legend of Ohrid* in Belgrade. An all-time ballet legend”, in: *Orchestra*, 9-10, Spring 1998, 22.

arose because they wanted to preserve the canon of both dance disciplines. Additional disagreements arose when assessing which dance technique was more dominant and why. On the contrary, it is necessary to create a new authentic dance language in the interaction and integration of these two techniques through direct stage experience. That is exactly the task of the *new choreographer*.

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## Summary

Different versions of the performance of Stevan Hristić's *The Legend of Ohrid* ballet in which the balletization of the dancing tradition changed and adapted, primarily through approaching or departing from folk dance, produced a pluralism of opinions on a ballet critical scene. The most dominant was the dispute over the term "modernization" of ballet. Ana Radosevic, in a performance that was entirely done in pointe, those discrepancies attribute to a different approach to the act, and not to the category of "modernization"; Jelena Santic believes that tradition does not need to be interpreted solely by elements of folk dance; Nadezda Mosusova emphasizes the possibility that folklore may be preserved by ballet itself.

The pluralism of opinions, as well as several different versions of the performance, with opposing approaches regarding the method of the balletization of the folk dance tradition, opens up some new approaches in interpreting the performance itself, such as modernistic, postmodernistic, and anthropological. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, marked by the concept of the search for tradition as well as an eclectic experiment was a constituent part of the search for more contemporary expression. For example, modernistic choreographers on the American continent largely seek their inspiration in folk dances and so-called primitive cultures. The very concept of interest, exploration and incorporating elements of folk dance were first realized within the frameworks of the art of ballet in our country in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in *The Legend of Ohrid*. The modernistic eclectics of the *Legend* may represent a step farther toward a postmodernistic experiment. The overlapping of styles as an anthropological deed represents a syncretistic aspect which combines ballet and dances from Ohrid, as well as a different stylistic and cultural form. Today, this ballet provides the opportunity for new interpretations thanks to the said syncretism: a new hybrid form has been created and it has surpassed the stylistic isolation of the classical ballet, thus becoming open for both new theoretical, as well as performing interpretations.



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## REVIEWS

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**RADOŠ MITROVIĆ\***

University of Arts in Belgrade  
Faculty of Music  
Department of Musicology

**Zorica Premate (Ed.), *Tribine Novi  
zvučni prostori, Zbornik, Beograd,  
Centar za muzičku akciju, RTS  
izdavaštvo, 2019; 470 pp.  
ISBN 978-86-6195-174-9***

Bearing in mind the shortage of space planned for music criticism of recent musical achievements, and contemporary music in general, the Center for Music Action launched a series of conferences in 2014 under the heading *New Sound Spaces*. With cooperation from the Association of Composers of Serbia and Radio Belgrade's Third Program, these conferences were aimed at maintaining the continuity of contributing to the promotion

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\* The author's contact details:  
radosh.mitrovic@gmail.com.

of contemporary art music. The conferences were conceptualized in the form of analytical expositions and expositions by the performers and the composers themselves... In that sense, a single musical piece was approached in different ways, from a variety of angles, illuminating the multi-layered nature of each score. With the dedicated moderator, musicologist Zorica Premate, the audience had the opportunity to become acquainted with numerous works of varied poetic frameworks. Some of the audience had the opportunity to watch the presentations live, while others could access them through recordings broadcast on Radio Belgrade. In this way, the contents of the conversations were offered to a potentially wider group of music connoisseurs, to inform them about new compositions, enabling them to enrich their understanding of music and their listening approach.

The organizers decided in 2019 to publish the presentations from the conferences in the form of a special monograph. Richly equipped, on 470 pages with photos, this collection contains texts on 34 works by 25 composers. They represent some of the most important names on the Serbian music composition scene, distant generations and divergent aes-

thetics. This wide range of creative expression is another significant conceptual element of the conference program, which included domestic authors who do not currently live in Serbia, and it is important to mention that it was a place where the work of academician Vlastimir Trajković was discussed posthumously. In this sense, the topicality of a single work or an entire *oeuvre* was always taken into account, and New Sound Spaces have so far been a platform for discussing recent and important achievements for our milieu.

The collection in question contains texts on the following works: *Beyond Zero*, for string quartet and tape, by Aleksandra Vrebalov; *Ascetic Sermon*, for mezzo-soprano and chamber ensemble, by Đuro Živković; *Medial 623, Rondo*, for symphony orchestra, by Vladimir Tošić; the chamber opera *Petrograd* and *Music of the South*, for the Branka Popović Chamber Ensemble; *Two Romantic Songs*, for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra, and *Ballad of the Field*, for Mirjana Živković's violin and chamber orchestra; *Looking at the Anish Kapoor's "Mirrors"* for two amplified Harps and Logic Pro software Plug-ins, *Through Sound Boxes 1*, for violin, clarinet, piano and electronics, and *Through Sound Boxes 2*, for piano and electronics, by Srđan Hofman; *Melancholy*, for oboe/flute, string trio and piano and *Revolt (Rebellion)*, for horn, string trio and piano, by Milan Mihajlović; *Captured*, for female choir and electronics, by Svetlana Savić; the symphonic fantasy *The Universe*, by Jugoslav Bošnjak; *She Might Be Sleeping*, for soprano and chamber orchestra, by Rajko Maksimović; *Sideral*,

for four-part mixed choir, string orchestra and piano, by Vladan Radovanović; the surrealist fairy tale for an octet *Nail Soup*, by Isidora Žebeljan; *A Cinque*, for wind quintet, and the comic opera in two acts *Pop Ćira and Pop Spira*, by Dejan Despić; *Spanish Suite/Memories from Childhood*, for flute and 15 strings, by Vlastimir Trajković; *Dirty Thoughts*, for instrumental ensemble and electronics, by Svetlana Maraš; *List No. 1*, for viola solo, and *List No. 2*, for symphony orchestra, by Zoran Erić; *A Drop*, for bassoon and electronics, by Katarina Miljković; *Rust*, for chamber ensemble, by Milica Đorđević; *Grand Stone*, a radio poem by Ivana Stefanović; *Noise in Inner Silence*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, percussion and piano, by Miloš Zatkalik; compositions for the instrument *Velikon* by Jasna Veličković; *Train Remix*, for audio installation, and *For Nada*, for piano, by Miša Savić; *Absolutio*, postlude for symphony orchestra, by Marko Nikodijević; concert for saxophone and orchestra *Love!* by Ivan Brkljačić; and *Lonesome Skyscraper*, for symphony orchestra and electronics, by Ivana Ognjanović.

Almost 70 speakers took part in talking about these works (we will not list all of them due to limited space). As stated in the preface: "musicologists, music writers, culturologists, theorists, literary historians, producers, sound designers and performers, conductors, pianists, singers..."<sup>2</sup>

What really makes up this extensive and informative collection are the many

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2 Zorica Premate (Ed.), *Tribine Novi zvučni prostori, Zbornik*, Belgrade, Centar za muzičku akciju, RTS izdavaštvo, 2019, 10.

different readings of the works and their analysis, which represents a useful source and a starting point for further studies.

Also, autopoetic expressions, which are always valuable, further contribute to understanding the creative core of these compositions, the initial composers' impulses, and the primary authorial thoughts on the origin and creation of the work. They reveal the stream of the artist's thoughts and the ramifications of inspiration, which often disperse in unexpected ways.

Also, the collection contains various 'indicative' 'little' stories which inform us of seemingly secondary factors in the creation of compositions, or during preparations for premiere performances: all of which illuminates in a specific way the whole world of events, perhaps crucial for the existence of a particular work.

Another special value of this project lies in the participation of performers, who from their own interpretive perspective often reveal a personal and artistic relationship with the work and the composer, i.e. the technical and artistic difficulties they may have faced during the preparation of the repertoire or even their intimate impressions of the premier performance. This point-of-view of the performer, which reaches some levels that often remain obscured, is important for drawing the most precise and comprehensive picture of a certain work, and the interpretative feat.

The collection reveals specific interrelations between musicians and composers, which are often extremely prolific and artistically rich, sometimes being a basic driving force for authorial creation. The participation of musicologists on the

other hand, each with their own approach and discourse, provides us with a deeper analytical insight into individual achievements. Diverse discourses, ways of presentation and the structuring of analytical insights, as well as the methodological diversity, presents a wide range of interpretations and musicological interpretations, which gives this book a certain scientific seriousness and relevance.

In that sense this collection can be considered an imprint of time, a historical document about the development of Serbian music, and a source of diverse, valuable information. It contains a cross-section of the most significant works, and it testifies to the creative presence of different generations and languages which find their way to their own audiences. As mentioned before, given the limited space for the promotion and presentation of contemporary music in the domestic context, the *New Sound Spaces* conferences have provided an important niche for conversation over the years, as well as a gathering place for people involved professionally in different ways in the existence of contemporary Serbian music. This collection summarizes in one place the years of work on maintaining the quality of the conferences, and shows the great effort by the organizers, who in these uncertain times have still managed to maintain the tradition of speaking about music, as an important segment of music's existence.

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**MARIJA SIMONOVIĆ\***

PhD Candidate and Research Assistant  
University of Arts in Belgrade  
Faculty of Music  
Department of Musicology

**Music and Art in the Shaping of the  
European Cultural Identity**

The national scholarly conference with international participation titled *Music and Art in the Shaping of the European Cultural Identity* was conceived as an important segment and the central event of the Jean Monnet module *Music and Art in the Shaping of the European Cultural Identity*, led by a team of the teaching staff at the Musicology Department of the Faculty of Music in collaboration with colleagues from other faculties of the University of Arts in Belgrade. Note that the Department of Musicology, aware of the global medical crisis caused by the *coronavirus* pandemic and the uncertainty of foreign participants' attendance, organized and conducted the conference on April 8 and 9, 2021, in a virtual space.

Also, we should point out the idea of the Department, significant on several levels and in several directions in the scientific and cultural sense, to link this important European project, pursued under

the auspices of the Erasmus+ programme, with a national project to publish a comprehensive monograph on the history of Serbian music in English. In other words, nurturing the aspiration to constantly expand, and (re)examine perspectives, knowledge and education, the Department of Musicology took the stand that apart from texts by domestic authors, the monograph would include contributions of foreign musicologists on selected phenomena from the history of Serbian music and its reception abroad. In that regard, it should be emphasized that research papers were presented, in an abridged form, at this conference by foreign authors that are planned as contributions to the monograph on the history of Serbian music.

Thanks to the domestic and foreign participants/professors – musicologists, theorists, researchers of Serbian and European music, literature and the visual arts, who observed the specifics of the relationship between the European cultural identity and Serbian artistic practices from different (disciplinary, scientific, historical, geographical and methodological) perspectives, the conference was not only interdisciplinary, but also took on the role of an intercultural dialogue. Namely, what is the common core that unites and from which these different (methodological, theoretical and disciplinary) approaches branch is the elucidation of the 'European coordinates' in relation to selected pieces or phenomena from the history of Serbian music, as well as recognizing the *points of correspondences* between European compositional practices and the 'autochthonous' practices of Serbian composers.

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\* The author's contact details:  
radovanovicmarija91@gmail.com.

In that regard, the presentations of musicologists Dr. Marija Masnikosa, and Dr. Sonja Marinković, were directed to the research of the individual composer's poetics and aesthetics (placed in a corresponding European context). Marija Masnikosa presented the research paper titled *Constructivism in the Service of Expression: "Chaos" by Josip Slavenski as a Case Study*. She considered the composition by the Yugoslav composer Josip Slavenski *Chaos*, where the experience of European interwar expressionism is condensed. In analysing this composition, Masnikosa showed how Slavenski, using the means of the 'cold combinatorics of numbers', achieved the sheer eruptive expressive force of the piece. She also marked the *points of correspondences* between the achievements of European musical expressionism and the composer's authentically modern and exploratory creative stance. In the discussion titled *Some Aspects of the Analytical Approach to Stevan Mokranjac's Rukoveti (Garlands)*, Sonja Marinković considered *rukoveti / garlands* as an identity genre in Serbian music. More precisely, after a critical consideration of heterogeneous analytical reviews of the given pieces of Stevan Mokranjac, on the example of the Fifth Garland, she offered a specific analytical method focusing on the principle of *rukovedanje*, i.e., "the key compositional principle underlying *rukoveti/garlands* as a genre".

Topics related to Serbian and other European church practices, as well as the Orthodox Christian identity in Serbia, were discussed from different angles by domestic and foreign authors. Dr. Svetlana Kujumdžijeva, from the Sofia State

University, in her exposition titled *At the Crossroads of Traditions: Manuscripts with Bulgarian and Serbian Chants (Based on Sources from the 14th to the 16th Centuries)*, relying on an analytical approach to the manuscripts originating from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and concerning Serbian and Bulgarian chants, dealt with the origins of the chants, the context of their appearance, distribution, and, in general, the contextualization of Bulgarian and Serbian chants as a cultural phenomenon in the history of Byzantine-Slavic music at the time. On the other hand, musicologists Dr. Ivana Perković, Dr. Marina Marković and MA Milica Petrović presented their innovative research, which in domestic musicology is not so widespread, on digital musicology and visualization techniques, titled *Music and the Orthodox Christian Religious Identity in Serbia between 1989 and 2021 Seen Through the "Believing/Belonging" Paradigm. Visualization Techniques and Underlying Musicological Data*. Relying on the religious paradigm 'believing and belonging' proposed by sociologist Grace Davie and using visualization techniques (like Voyant, Tableau) for underlying musicological data, the authors in this study examined and offered new knowledge about renewed connections between Orthodox Christianity and identity in Serbian music at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Contemporary and current Serbian vocal, vocal and instrumental and operatic music by composers who work in Serbia and abroad, was studied by musicologists Dr. Ana Stefanović and Dr. Jelena Novak. In an exposition titled *Ser-*

*bian Solo Song as an Affective Monody* Ana Stefanović directed her attention to the peculiar, monodic type of Serbian solo songs in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Pointing out that these songs establish “generic relationships, on the one hand, with deep layers of vocal music tradition, therefore, with its ‘sacred’, mythical phase – with ritual and, on the other hand, with its historical re-evaluation in the *affetto* of 17<sup>th</sup>-century monody”, Stefanović explores the articulation of this generic archetype of vocal music in the latest achievements of Serbian composers. Jelena Novak – musicologist and music theorist from the University of Lisbon, in the conference paper *The Cultural History of Contemporary Opera: Serbia as a Case Study* examined different approaches to Serbian opera in order to find the (network) trajectories that can link Serbian opera compositions with opera enterprise elsewhere in Europe and beyond Europe.

Foreign musicologists like Dr. Leon Stefanija (the University of Ljubljana) and Dr. Laura Emmery (the Emory College of Arts and Sciences, USA) touched on issues relating to the reception of Serbian music in Europe. In the exposition titled *What is Serbian Music in Slovenia?* Leon Stefanija reviewed the threads of Serbian music in Slovenia since 1991, their peculiarities, and explored the relationship between the musical ‘landscape’ of Slovenia and Serbian artistic/musical practices. Speaking about the reception of music by Serbian composers in the USA, in the essay *Reception of Serbian Émigré Composers in the United States*, Laura Emmery highlighted the methods whereby Serbian composers, like Alek-

sandra Vrebalov, Milica Paranosić, Nataša Bogojević, Miloš Raičković and others, contributed to the (positive) reception of Serbian music in America, their unique ways of integration within the American multicultural society, and the overall impact they made on the American music and arts scene.

The modernist identity of the 1960s and 1980s Belgrade compositional practice was viewed from the perspectives of Serbian and Polish musicologists, that is, Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović and Dr. Iwona Lindstedt (the University of Warsaw). Tijana Popović Mladjenović in her conference paper titled *The Modernist Identity of Belgrade’s Musical Environment of the 1960s. Petar Osgihan’s “Meditations”, “Silhouettes” and “Sygogis”*, pointed to the simultaneity of the composer’s practice in 1960s Belgrade, and the latest modernist trends in European music, underlining the originality and autonomy of the artistic Serbian modernistic identity. In that sense, she mentioned composers like Vladan Radovanović, Petar Ozgijan, Berislav Popović and others, as authors who created their works using avant-garde means of expression, while at the same time insisting on the expressive as well as communicative functions of musical language as the *raison d’être* of their creative poetics and immanent characteristics of their artistic language. Hence, T. Popović Mladjenović talked about these aspects in the example of the above-mentioned works by Petar Ozgijan. On the other hand, in the discussion *Rajko Maksimović and the ‘Polish School’: A Case-Study of Three Haiku*, Iwona Lindstedt assessed how the influences of the ‘Polish School’ contributed

to the overall and detailed shape of Maksimović's piece from 1967, and how their creative reception provoked the emergence of a highly individual character in the *Three Haiku*.

On the same scientific-research plane, there were conference papers by musicologists Dr. Ivana Petković Lozo and Dr. Ivana Miladinović Prica, which were dedicated to researching the Serbian musical identity of the very last decades of the twentieth century. The presentation of musicologist Dr. Ivana Petković Lozo, under the title of *A Diptych of Eidetic Imagery and an Acoustic Essay on Time "The Road to Damascus" and "The First Eastern Dream" by Ivana Stefanović*, was focused on two works by Ivana Stefanović – *The Road to Damascus* travel prose and *The First Eastern Dream* 'landscape for tape'. She considers these compositions as complementary 'documents' of preserved reality: as (sounding and written) testimonies of the coexistence of external noise and inner silence, spiritual life and eternal space. Ivana Miladinović Prica, in her presentation *Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986)*, interpreted the festival (*The Different New Music*) of the young generation of Belgrade composers, its peculiarities, programme conception, as well as the cultural and social environment that gave rise to the creation of the festival.

Musicologists Dr. Dragana Stojanović-Novičić and Dr. Biljana Leković dealt with the professional creative opuses of Serbian authors, that is, their poetics and aesthetics, placed in an appropriate European context. The topic of Dragana Stojanović-Novičić's discussion,

*Vlastimir Peričić, Serbian Composer and Music Theorist: The World of Tonality as a Frame*, refers to locating the European coordinates in the compositional oeuvre of Vlastimir Peričić. Considering his compositional and theoretical opus Stojanović-Novičić stresses that: "Peričić was a rightful member of the European musical elite, but he was not visible enough beyond the borders of what was then Yugoslavia". In that regard, by re-examining Peričić's professional work, Stojanović-Novičić also re-actualizes his activity. Biljana Leković presented her research under the title of *Serbian Musicological Discourse on Musical Neoclassicism and the European Perspective*. Since the work of musicologist Dr. Vesna Mikić is crucial in the frame of the local musicological discourse relating to musical neoclassicism, to pay homage to her entire work, but also to highlight the importance of her progressive and pioneering thinking about musical neoclassicism, Leković analysed, interpreted, and systematized Mikić's discourse and approach to this topic.

At the very end, one should mention that interesting and so far unexplored topics from these angles gave rise to productive conversations, the exchange of knowledge and, it seems stimulated further interests. Also, in addition to gaining new insights, after all the presented works, it can be said that what was sensed as the aim of the conference – locating, promoting and affirming the *intersection points* between European and Serbian values in music, art and culture – was fully achieved.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ISSUE

**Marko Aleksić** has graduated and obtained his master's degree at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, where he was employed as a teaching assistant, and as a teacher. In 2021, he obtained his PhD diploma with dissertation *The Role of Harmony in the Formation of a Network of Interpretive Relations in German Opera and the Symphonic Lied of the Second Half of the Nineteenth and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*. The area of his professional interest is music theory, especially the area of harmony and harmonic analysis. He has published scholar papers and participated in professional conferences in Serbia and abroad. He is the holder of several recognitions, awards and student scholarships.

**Guilherme Almeida** is a Rio de Janeiro-born and Waco-based creator, performer, and teaching artist. From pop rock and folk music for Shakespearean productions to flamenco-inspired scores for Lorca, Guilherme's compositions instill the dramaturgy with rich vernacular and ethnomusicological energy. Guilherme works as Senior Lecturer in the Musical Theatre at Baylor University. Recent composition projects: *Camelia* (Documentary Theatre crafted from interviews from the Communist period in Romania – Rogue Media) Goethe's *Faust* (co-creation with director Raphael Parry at UT Dallas, new translation by Zsuzsanna Ozváth and Fred Turner,) *Oscillating Realities* (inter-media performance piece, ZHdK – Switzerland,) *durezieh und...* (winner of the Créatrices composition competition – Switzerland.) Research interest includes Interdisciplinarity in the Arts and Humanities – connections between justice, spirituality, and performance theory.

**Ivan Brkljačić**, Professor in the artistic field of Composition – compositional-technical disciplines, Vice-dean for teaching at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. He obtained a BA (2001) and MA (2005) degrees in the composition classes of Srđan Hofman and Zoran Erić at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. In 2012, he successfully defended his doctoral art project, *Istar: A Cycle of Nascent Musical Cartoons for Performance in a Theatrical Stage Set*, under the supervision of Srđan Hofman. Works by Brkljačić have been performed many times in Belgrade and other cities in Serbia. Also, his works have been performed in Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Germany, Croatia, Macedonia, France, Romania, Hungary, England, Australia, and Hong Kong.

**Rastko Buljančević** is a doctoral student of musicology at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. He received two exceptional awards from the University of Novi Sad for his scientific and professional work. For one semester, he was an exchange student at the Complutense University of Madrid. His main research work focuses on the study of

film music, audio-visual culture, performance studies and music criticism, with an emphasis on the sonic aspect of contemporary Spanish and Italian neorealist cinema. He recently participated in the XIII International Symposium *Musical Creation on the Soundtrack*. He is a member of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM).

**Zoran Erić**, composer, Professor emeritus at the Department of Composition of the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. In addition, he has taught master-classes and seminars at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and at Iressia in Athens. His works have been performed in almost every country in Europe, in the US, China, and Australia, by renowned Serbian and foreign ensembles. Erić has won a number of prizes and awards. He is a four-time laureate of Serbia's most prestigious award in the domain of music – the *Mokranjac* Award.

**Ana Kotevska**, MA, until 1993, worked as an editor and music critic at Radio Belgrade 3 and Radio Belgrade 2 and then, until her retirement, as the director of the Sokoj Music Information Centre. In 2013, she was elected President of the Serbian Musicological Society. In addition to her continuous work in writing critical reviews and essays for various printed and audiovisual media, she also publishes her research in musicology, primarily on French *fin-de-siecle* music, contemporary music, radiophony, and the music of West Africa. She is founding member of the editorial board of the *New Sound International Journal of Music*.

**Amra Latifić**, Ph.D., Associate Professor on the Faculty of Media and Communications of the Singidunum University in Belgrade. She graduated from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, department for Russian language and literature, as well as from The Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, department for Acting. She got her PhD in 2006 in the field of interdisciplinary studies from the Rector of the University of Arts in Belgrade, with a topic taken from Russian avant-garde art. She published the following books: *Paradigms of Russian avant-garde and postmodern art* (2008); *The idea of acting: performative artecosmism* (2011), *Cosmopolitan shine of the Belgrade white ballet* (Čigoja štampa, 2018); *A life without compromise for art and peace. Jelena Santic: essays, records, comments* (2021). She translated from Russian a book by Mikhail Epstein *Sola Amore* (2010).

**Biljana Leković**, Ph.D., musicologist, Assistant Professor at the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She is also a Lecturer at the Interdisciplinary master studies of the Department of Theory of Arts and Media, University of Arts in Belgrade. She is a Vice President of the Centre for Popular Music Research. Her fields of interest include: contemporary music, new media practices, sound art, sound studies, and acoustic ecology. She is the author of two books: *Modernist Project of Pierre Schaeffer – From Radiophony Analysis to Musical Research* (2011) and *Sound Art/ Zvukovna umetnost: Musicological Perspective – Theories* (2019).

**Radoš Mitrović**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. He published articles in *New Sound*, *Zbornik Matice srpske za scenske umetnosti i muziku*, *Art and Media*, *Muzika*, and is an author of the e-book on Mauricio Kagel. He is a member of Serbian Musicological Society and his work includes music critiques and reviews for the Radio Belgrade 2.

**Tijana Popović Mladjenović**, Ph.D, is Professor of Musicology at the University of Arts in Belgrade, Faculty of Music, and Head of the Musicology Department. Her main research interests include the European music of the *fin de siècle*, contemporary music (she specialized in contemporary French music at the University of Paris IV – Sorbonne), aesthetics and philosophy of music, and issues concerning thinking in music. She is author of six books: *Musical Writing* (1996 [2015]), reviewed in *Music and Letters*; *E lucevan le stelle* (1997); *Claude Debussy and His Time* (2008); *Processes of Panstylistic Musical Thinking* (2009); *Interdisciplinary Approach to Music: Listening, Performing, Composing* (first author; co-authors B. Bogunović & I. Perković; 2014), reviewed in *Musicae Scientiae*; and *The Musical Text and the Ontology of the Musical Work* (2017).

**Valentina Radoman**, Ph.D., graduated from the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. At the same institution she obtained her M. A. degree. As a scholarship holder of the Republic Fund for Young Talents-Researchers of the Serbian Ministry of Science, she was engaged in teaching at the same department in the period from 1995 to 2000, and then she became an assistant to Professor Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman at the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology of the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. At the Academy of Arts of the University of Novi Sad, where she is employed as an Assistant Professor, in 2016 she obtained the title of Ph.D. Valentina Radoman is the author of two books (*Muzički impresionizam / Musical Impressionism*, 2018; *Muzika Politika Užitek / Music Politics Pleasure*, 2018).

**Svetlana Savić** is a Full Professor of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. From 2011 she is a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary studies at University of Art in Belgrade. She won the *Stevan Mokranjac* prize for 2014 (for her piece *Zarobljena / Trapped* for female choir and electronics) and review *Musica Clasica's* Composer of the Year 2016. Svetlana Savić has collaborated with renowned Serbian and foreign performers, ensembles, and orchestras. Her compositions were commissioned for Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS), International Review of Composers, Cello Fest and other festivals in Serbia, USA, Austria, Italy, Germany, France, Israel, Lithuania, Russia, Greece, Japan, South Africa...

**Marija Simonović** is a Ph.D. Candidate, Research Assistant and Teaching Associate at the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. Her areas of interests are fin de siècle music, philosophy of music, the relationship between

music and other arts (literature and painting). Her graduate thesis, which was published as part of the (collective) volume (*Wunderkammer/Their Masters' Voice*) of student master's theses, is titled *Cabin with mirrors – 'images' of water in the piano music of Claude Debussy – between Bachelard's essay on water and dreams and 'reflections' of water in the artistic expression of the 19th century*, and it is written under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović. The title of her doctoral dissertation, approved under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović, is *Imagination of fire, water, air and earth in the poetics of music at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries*.

**Nemanja Sovtić**, Ph.D., is a musicologist and trombonist from Novi Sad. He received his Ph.D. in Musicology from the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. He is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology of the Academy of Arts, University of Novi Sad. Nemanja Sovtić is a member of the Board of the Department of Stage Arts and Music of Matica Srpska and the Board of the Serbian Musicological Society. He is the author of monographs *Miroslav Čangalović: Singer-Actor* (Serbian National Theatre and Matica Srpska, 2021) and *The Non-Aligned Humanism of Rudolf Bruči – the Composer and the Society of Self-Management Socialism* (Matica Srpska, 2017), as well as collections of studies, articles and essays titled *Musicology as a Reading Reflex* (Academy of Arts Novi Sad, 2014).

**Ivana Vuksanović** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Music Theory at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She obtained her bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from the Department of Musicology at the same faculty. She has published two books: *Aspects and Designations of Elements of Trivial Genres in 20th-century Serbian Music* (Belgrade, FMU, 2006) and *Humor in 20th-century Serbian Music* (Belgrade, FMU, 2016). Her research fields include history of music theory, issues in musical form and the analyses of Serbian contemporary music. She is the author of numerous articles in journals and thematic collections and co-editor of several publications. She has been a member of the Musicological Society of Serbia and the Serbian Society for Music Theory.

## Конкурс за доделу *Годишње награде „Стана Ђурић-Клајн“ за изузетан допринос музикологији за 2021. годину*

Музиколошко друштво Србије позива своје чланове, академске институције и музичка удружења с територије Србије да од 01. јануара до 30. јуна 2022. године доставе образложене предлоге за *Годишњу награду „Стана Ђурић-Клајн“ за изузетан допринос музикологији*. Награда се додељује за сваку од три категорије:

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