
VIEWS

Article received on October 19th 2022
Article accepted on November 30th 2022
Original scientific paper

UDC 78.071:929 Жедељан И.
DOI 10.5937/newso2260177C

Borislav Čičovački*

University of Kragujevac
The Faculty of Philology and Arts
Department of Music

THE OEUVRE OF ISIDORA ŽEBELJAN SURVEY, CLASSIFICATION, SPECIFICITIES, AND SIGNIFICANCE (I)

Abstract: In line with the extraordinary international significance that the oeuvre of Isidora Žebeljan commands in Serbia and abroad, the article begins by discussing the essence of that significance, highlighting the most important artistic accomplishments of Isidora's music as well as its unique traits that have played a direct role in the assertive breakthrough that Serbian music has made on the international stage. Specifically, it analyses three creative periods in Isidora's oeuvre, discussing the most important works and unique characteristics of Isidora's music and its originality, along with relevant facts from her biography.

Keywords: Isidora Žebeljan, originality, commissions, operas, unpredictable flow of musical contents, musical surprise, elements of folk music tradition, popular music.

Regardless of where an artist happens to be living, whether in their native or adoptive country, the significance of this artist's oeuvre may be surveyed

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

from two points of view: that of its local impact and importance (in the framework of artistic tendencies prevailing in their native or adoptive country) and that of its international import (with regard to global artistic aspirations and accomplishments). Artists from the so-called great cultures, whose general and cultural policies are aimed at spreading their influence (including in the arts) to the rest of the world, have incomparably more (technological, moral, and historical) opportunities for presenting their art to a much wider, international audience than artists who create their works within smaller cultures that, like Serbia, lack in cultural awareness as a nation, courage, and international self-confidence for boldly presenting their art beyond their borders without prejudice. That is why it is much harder for an artist from a small country, without organized and thorough support from their country's cultural institutions, to find a way to present their work abroad and even harder still for that oeuvre to attain international artistic significance. The art of Isidora Žebeljan (Serbian Cyrillic: Исидора Жебељан) has accomplished just that, owing to the unique power of its originality.

Of course, as the oeuvre of a Serbian artist who spent her entire life in Serbia, Žebeljan's music above all commands a huge significance for Serbian music itself and Serbian art in general. Its importance may be viewed from two aspects: in terms of its creative uniqueness within Serbian art music and in terms of the presence of Serbian art on the international stage. And given that in the oeuvres of artists with an international reputation creative uniqueness entails uniqueness in every context – local and international alike – this text will begin by presenting some unavoidable facts concerning Žebeljan's unique international success, which enabled her works to make an indelible mark on Serbian music.

As the first and hitherto only Serbian composer who kept receiving commissions from some of the world's leading musical institutions for some 20 years, Žebeljan was the first and (currently) only Serbian composer who composed music for the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation, the Venice Biennale (*La Biennale di Venezia*), Bregenz Festival (*Bregenzer Festspiele*), the *Settimana musicale senese* festival in Siena, the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields chamber orchestra, the Brodsky Quartet, and other renowned international music ensembles and festivals at the beginning of the 21st century.¹ This dense network of influential musicians and producers who perform

¹ For the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation she composed *Needle Soup* (*Klin-čorba* – Кли́н-чорба), a surrealist fairytale for octet, written for the Philharmonic Octet Berlin in

Isidora's music has taken root on every continent, with frequent concerts and recordings, which is likewise unique in the context of Serbian music.

The premières and performances abroad of important works by Isidora likewise constitute important events and facts in Serbian music history. Thus *Zora D.* (*Зора Д.*) was the first Serbian opera to have its première abroad (Amsterdam, 2003)² and, moreover, the first to be commissioned by a foreign institution (Genesis Foundation London).³ *The Marathon* (*Maratonci* –

2015. For the 2004 Venice Biennale she wrote *The Horses of Saint Mark* (*Konji Svetog Marka* – Коњи Светог Марка), an illumination for orchestra, the most frequently performed work of Serbian orchestral music abroad. For Bregenz Festival she composed her opera *The Marathon* (*Maratonci* – Маратонци, 2008) and *Hum Away, Hum Away, Strings!* (*Zujte strune* – Зуйте струне, 2013), an orchestral piece. For Italy's oldest music festival, the *Settimana musicale senese*, she composed the opera *Two Heads and a Girl* (*Dve glave i devojka* – Две главе и девојка, 2012); for the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields chamber orchestra she wrote *The Minstrel's Dance* (*Skomraška igra* – Скомрашка игра, 2005), whereas for the Brodsky Quartet she wrote several pieces: *Polomka Quartet* (*Polomka kvartet* – Поломка квартет, 2009), *When God Created Dubrovnik* (*Kad je Bog stvaraо Dubrovnik* – Кад је Бог стварао Дубровник) for mezzo-soprano and string quartet (2012, for the City of London Festival), and *Intimate Letter from Judean Desert* (*Intimno pismo iz Judejske pustinje* – Интимно писмо из Јудејске пустиње, 2018) for Stift festival in Holland, and re-arranged several her works for the same ensemble.

² The book *Историја српске музике* ("History of Serbian Music", Belgrade, Завод за удбенике, 2007, 457) erroneously states that *Zora D.* was premièred in Vienna. While it is true that the opera's original production had 12 repeats in Vienna in 2003, with one of them inaugurating the Wiener Kammeroper's 50th season, the world première of *Zora D.* did not take place in Austria's capital city.

³ Namely, the statement above might be countered, at first sight, by the fact that a comic opera by Petar Stojanović (Петар Стојановић), *Tigar* (Тигар – "The Tiger"), had its world première in Budapest in 1905. However, the fact is that Petar Stojanović was born and educated in Budapest (moving to Belgrade only in 1925) and that his opera mentioned above was thus premièred in his native city and (then) home country. In addition, the operas *Ženidba Miloša Obilića* (*Vilin veo*) (Женидба Милоша Обилића (Вилин вео) – "The Marriage of Miloš Obilić (The Fairy's Veil)") and *Koštana* (Коштана) by Petar Konjović (Петар Коњовић) had their respective world premières on the stage of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb in 1917 and 1931. Of course, although it is now the capital of a separate country, in 1931 Zagreb was a city in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which means that Konjović's *Koštana* actually had its première in his home country. And the same goes for his first opera, too, which had its première in 1917. This is because in 1917 Petar Konjović, a native of Vojvodina, was still a subject of Austria-Hungary, which included the city of Zagreb, meaning that his first opera was likewise premièred in what was his home country at the time.

Маратонци) was the first (and so far the only) Serbian opera premièred at Bregenz Festival, one of the world's most prestigious opera festivals, which had, furthermore, commissioned the opera.⁴ *Two Heads and a Girl* (*Dve glave i devojka* – Две главе и девојка) was the first Serbian opera to have its world première abroad in Serbian (at the *Settimana musicale senese* festival in Siena, Italy), in 2012. Žebeljan's opera *Simon the Foundling* (*Nahod Simon* – Наход Симон) is the first (and thus far the only) Serbian opera performed in Serbian in Germany, where it was also premièred in 2015, as a commission from the Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen. Incidentally, all five operas by Žebeljan were commissioned by European opera houses, festivals, and foundations. In addition, her work titled *The Horses of Saint Mark* (*Konji Svetog Marka* – Коњи Светог Марка) is the first and (at the time of writing) the only piece by a Serbian artist performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. Her piece *Needle Soup* (*Klin-čorba* – Кли-чорба) is the first and so far the only piece by a Serbian artist written for the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation. Apart from these foreign commissions and premières of her works, in a typical year Isidora had more than 50 performances of her music abroad, in 37 countries across six continents, with as many as 70 of hers having been or still being performed abroad. Concerts featuring her music only have taken place in the Netherlands, Spain, Czech Republic (orchestral music), Slovenia, Montenegro, and Serbia (the Brodsky Quartet, for example). That makes Žebeljan the most frequently performed Serbian composer abroad, even taking into account our composers who are based outside of Serbia. Žebeljan was also the first woman who taught composition at a Serbian university and one of the first and still few Serbian composers whose complete works have been published by foreign publishers – Ricordi in Italy and Donemus in the Netherlands – which also makes Isidora the only Serbian composer whose works have been published by one of the most renowned and oldest music publishing houses in the world, the Casa Ricordi of Milan.

Between 1985, when she wrote her first pieces – *Chagrin du héros* (*Jadi junakovi* – Јади јунакови) for choir, *Frontiersman's Song* (*Graničarska pesma* – Граничарска песма) for baritone and piano, and *Suite for Piano* (*Svita za klavir* – Свита за клави́р)⁵ – and 2020, which saw her last finished piece –

⁴ Also the first Serbian opera and piece of Serbian music in general ever performed at that festival.

⁵ Nonetheless, her first pieces released to the public were those that Isidora presented at

Bačka Melancholy (*Bačka melanholija* – Бачка меланхолија) for cor anglais and harp (or piano) – Žebeljan composed around 110 works,⁶ as well as incidental music for 38 theatre productions and four films (in addition to numerous arrangements of film music by Goran Bregović).⁷ Classified by genre, Isidora composed five operas (*Zora D.*, *The Marathon*, *Simon the Chosen*, [*Simon izabranik* / СИМОН ИЗАБРАНИК], *Two Heads and a Girl*, *Simon the Foundling*), five concertante works (for oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, horn, and violin), three works for soprano and orchestra (two of which are cycles), five pieces for orchestra without soloists (string, chamber, and symphony), five choral pieces (one of which is a large suite), 17 chamber music pieces with vocal parts, 33 pieces for chamber instrumental ensembles (one of which is an octet), solo songs (including a cycle), a number of pieces for solo instruments (guitar, oboe, accordion, and a multi-instrumentalist), including around 20 for piano, mostly miniatures. Isidora's first piece composed on a commission from a foreign institution was her opera *Zora D.*, commissioned by the Genesis Foundation of London in 2002, while her last finished commission from abroad was *Bagpiper's Vitrage* (*Gajdaški vitraž* – Гајдашки витраж) for clarinet, violin, and piano, composed in 2019 for the German Music Council (*Deutscher Musikrat*).⁸

her entrance examination at the composition department of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade in 1984, which were not included in her list of works that Isidora made herself. Her entrance exam already bore some unusual and unique features: her solo song was sung, with Isidora at the piano, by Igor Pervić (Игор Первић, 1967–2019), a rock music singer (with the band Duh Nibor) and actor, while her choral piece was sung by a choir that she prepared and conducted herself.

⁶ The total number of pieces composed by Žebeljan has yet to be determined, because her papers are still yielding previously unknown pieces.

⁷ Isidora also composed several pop songs (for Vjera Mujović), as well as children's music for her son Petar's school shows.

⁸ However, Isidora kept receiving additional commissions, of which the following ones sadly could not be completed: a Concerto for Horn and Orchestra (for Stefan Dohr, a solo hornist of the Berlin Philharmonic, a commission from the Belgrade Philharmonic); a suite for violin and violoncello; a concerto for violin, violoncello, and chamber orchestra (both for Daniel Rowland and Maja Bogdanović, a commission from Stift Festival and the Eduard van Beinum Foundation from the Netherlands); and a semi-staged concertante work titled *Gea* for string quartet and large symphony orchestra (in collaboration with the BBC Symphony Orchestra). An especially interesting fact is that during the final few weeks of her life Isidora was negotiating with Pero Đurišić, a Montenegrin film director, about composing the music for his documentary film about the pomegranate fruit.

In terms of chronology and style, Žebeljan's oeuvre may be divided in three phases:

1. the first phase, 1985–1992;
2. the theatre- and incidental-music phase, 1993–2001;
3. the international compositional maturity phase, 2002–2020.

Her FIRST PHASE begins with her admission into the composition study programme at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, under the supervision of Prof. Vlastimir Trajković (Властимир Трајковић, 1947–2017), member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Isidora joined the programme at the age of 16 and a half and this phase ended with her final graduation piece, *Escenas picaras, sinfonia in tre movimenti (Pikarske scene, simfonija u tri stava – Пикарске сцене, симфонија у три става)* for symphony orchestra from 1992. During this period, Isidora wrote 12 pieces, including two piano works, two choral pieces, two solo songs, one piece for a multi-instrumentalist (*Song for Baron Münchhausen – Pesma za barona Minhauzena / Песма за барона Минхаузена* for a player of flute, bass-clarinet, piano and percussion, 1990), three chamber pieces, two of which call for larger chamber ensembles and a vocal soloist (*Pep It Up*, an octet, 1989; *A Yawl on the Danube (На Дунаву шajка – Na Dunavu šajka)*, a septet, 1991), a piece for string orchestra (*Deserted Village – Селиште / Selište*, 1987), and a symphony. During this period she also wrote incidental music for four theatre plays, produced by the Students' Cultural Centre in Belgrade as well as theatres in Šabac and Kragujevac.

In the 1980s, Serbian art experienced a remarkably fruitful period, its freest creative episode since World War II and at the same time the least dissident one, because changes in Yugoslav society – Tito's death and gradual democratisation – enabled an unimpeded spiritual and creative drive.⁹ This included Serbian art music as well, which experienced a new, bold sense of liberation from the formal, rigid, and inflexible sonic constructions of con-

⁹ At this time, Serbian art, within the larger Yugoslav art scene, enjoyed an extraordinary reception abroad. These were the years that saw the international literary accomplishments of Danilo Kiš (Данило Киш), for instance, reach their apex, while the clearest confirmation of this artistic flourishing, like in the 1960s, was once again supplied by film, primarily due to the sensational accolades won by Emir Kusturica's (Емир Кустурица) films at the Cannes Film Festival, as well as the favourably received works by Srđan Karanović (Срђан Карановић, Goran Paskaljević (Горан Паскаљевић), Goran Marković (Горан Марковић), and Slobodan Šijan (Слободан Шијан).

servative academicism and an exhausted 1960s avant-garde. This sense of liberation, manifested especially by the advent of musical minimalism, followed by a renewed interest in modality and diversified application of elements from pop music, had emerged already in the 1970s, mainly in the work of Trajković and Vuk Kulenović (Вук Куленовић). With pieces such as, first and foremost, *Five Nocturnes* (*Pet nokturna* – Пет ноктурна) and *Arion* (Арион) by Trajković and *Magical Herb* (*Raskovnik* – Расковник) by Kulenović,¹⁰ these two composers discovered new, different possibilities of expression, especially by way of an ingenious blend of repetitiveness and elements from folk music, which constituted an important base of creative authenticity in both composers. Approaching the high points of their respective oeuvres, which occurred in the 1980s, Trajković and Kulenović exerted a strong impact on their contemporaries (Mihajlović, Erić), but especially on younger fellow composers. In that regard, Trajković was more influential of the two, because he taught composition at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, making his students actually the first young creative force that took that direction – the direction of minimalism refreshed with melodic and harmonic contents borrowed from popular music. Among this class of student composers, the most striking expressive poetics were accomplished, in chronological order, by Katarina Miljković (Катарина Миљковић), Ognjen Bogdanović (Огњен Богдановић), and Isidora Žebeljan, with Miljković, as the eldest among them, making a strong direct impact on her younger colleagues' early works.¹¹

In addition, the 1980s saw a new flourishing in the remarkable creative oeuvre of Ljubica Marić (Љубица Марић), yielding the earliest works from her final compositional phase, in which the use of modality acquired an entirely new guise, works that, together with those from the 1990s, constitute the most original accomplishments of Serbian 20th-century music, making Marić's oeuvre one of the most original in post-WWII music.¹² Also, the

¹⁰ Пет ноктурна, оп. 3bis, for an instrumental septet (1971/77) and *Arion, le Nuove Musiche per Chitarra ed Archi* (1979) by Vlastimir Trajković; Расковник for string orchestra (1978) by Vuk Kulenović.

¹¹ "I seriously admire Katarina Miljković. Listen to the works of Katarina Miljković." Isidora Žebeljan, *Dok slušamo muziku, sadašnjost je večna*, Novi Sad, Akademska knjiga, 2021, 11.

¹² Ljubica Marić's pieces from the 1980s include *Invocation* (*Invokacija* – Инвокација) for double bass and piano (1983); *From the Darkness Chanting* (*Iz tmine pojanje* – Из тмине појање, 1984), a recitative cantata for mezzo-soprano and piano; *Monodia Oktoi-*

1980s still benefited from the presence of Vasilije Mokranjac's (Василије Мокрањац) powerful oeuvre and important innovations in terms of embracing the penetration of unconventional musical influences became notable in works by younger composers as well, first and foremost in those of Aleksandar Obradović (Александар Обрадовић), as well as those of some prominent avant-garde composers (e.g. Ludmila Frajt / Лудмила Фрајт). Amid this atmosphere of free perception and treatment of musical elements from different backgrounds, wrapped in the charming cloak of musical minimalism, Serbian music turned away from the avant-garde and began one of its most exciting periods, largely thanks to music by young composers, who were still students at the time.

As one of the greatest erudites in all of Serbian music, Vlastimir Trajković, a descendant of a remarkable Serbian musical family started by Miloje Milojević, was a superb, passionate expert on music and a great admirer of its creative essence. His basic pedagogical principle rested on the cultivation of a refined musical taste and artistic dignity in his students. In shaping their musical taste, which simultaneously informed the patterns of their underlying approach to musical materials in their own pieces, Trajković's main models were the oeuvres of Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, De Falla, Poulenc, and Messiaen, as well as the minimalist oeuvres of Philip Glass and Steve Reich.

The 1980s were also one of those few times in Serbian music history when contemporary music, especially by younger artists, had an audience of its own, who, owing to systematic education provided by radio and television, kept expanding the circle of interested listeners. Broadcasts devoted to so-called art music occupied popular slots in radio (for instance, a regular broadcast titled *Susretanja* / Сусретања – “Encounters”) and television programming and leading contemporary musicians performed works of contemporary music with ample curiosity and enthusiasm, including works by young authors. In that sense, outstanding contributions were made by the conductors Mladen Jagušt (Младен Јагушт), Darinka Matić Marović (Даринка Матић Маровић), and Aleksandar Pavlović (Александар Павловић), mezzosoprano Aleksandra Ivanović (Александра Ивановић), flutist Miodrag Azanjas (Миодраг Азањац), pianist and harpsichordist Olivera Đurđević (Оливера Ђурђевић), the Collegium musicum choir, Dušan

cha (Монодија Октоиха – *Monodoija Oktoiha*, 1984) for solo violoncello, and *Asymptote* (*Asimptota* – АСИМПТОТА) for violin and string orchestra (1986).

Skovran Belgrade String Orchestra (Београдски гудачки оркестар “Душан Сковран”), among many other ensembles and musicians. In an atmosphere shaped by such a curious, focused, and visionary approach to contemporary music, Žebeljan’s earliest pieces found some outstanding performers. And the whole attitude to and need for music and art in Belgrade’s society at the time conditioned the emergence of a favourable environment for an idea developed by a group of composition students, seven of them, who founded a composers’ group and called it “The Magnificent Seven” (*Sedam veličanstvenih / Седам величанствених*),¹³ one of the few composers’ groups in Serbian music.¹⁴ In a truly different way, more modern and better suited to their generation, unconventionally, unburdened by political, formal, or didactic constraints, they offered their music to their generation, beyond the clichés of classical music. And it could and did seem at the time as though creativity and creating formed a natural and inspired path toward the discovery of a new art, one that would not adhere to the laws of stuffy formalism sporting ties and bowties.

¹³ The initial idea, devised by Nataša Bogojević (Наташа Богојевић), Isidora Žebeljan, and Vladimir Jovanović (Владимир Јовановић), was to start a journal for contemporary music. This idea then morphed into the desire to establish a group of young composers who would present their music in an unconventional way. “The Magnificent Seven” young composers’ group was founded in 1988. Originally, it included Isidora Žebeljan, Nataša Bogojević, Vladimir Jovanović, Ana Mihajlović (Ана Михајловић), Igor Gostuški (Игор Гостушки), and Srđan Jaćimović (Срђан Јаћимовић), but it soon coalesced down to six members. That same year the group won the Best Young Musician (Најбољи млади музичар / *Najbolji mladi muzičar*) award presented by Radio Belgrade’s show *Susretanja*. They organised unconventional concerts, made TV videos of their music, and constituted the most successful and popular composers’ group in Serbian music. The group remained active for a little longer than two years.

¹⁴ Since the so-called Prague Group did not really exist, the first known and, until the 1970s, the only composers’ group in Serbian music was the Atonal Composers’ Group (Група атоналних композитора / *Grupa atonalnih kompozitora*), founded in Belgrade in 1939 and comprising Milan Ristić (Милан Ристић), Petar Stajić (Петар Стајић), and Dimitrije Bivolarević (Димитрије Биволаревић). Little is known about its activities and it is assumed that it existed until 1941. Later on, there was also a group of Serbian minimalists called Opus 4 (Опус 4, 1976–82), comprising Milimir Drašković (Милимир Драшковић), Miodrag Lazarov Pashu (Миодраг Лазаров Пасху), Miroslav Savić (Мирослав Савић), and Vladimir Tošić (Владимир Тошић). Čičovački, Borislav: *Transformaties van volksmuziek van de Westelijke Balkan en de Servische Octoëchos (Byzantijnse kerkmuziek) in het oeuvre van Ljubica Marić*, doctoral dissertation. Amsterdam: Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Online Edition, 2017.

‘The Magnificent Seven’ came together in the 1980s, a time when it was wonderful to be living in Belgrade and Yugoslavia, because there was this new, special kind of energy bubbling up everywhere... We believed that our music was about to start a revolution against the unbearably boring and conservative legacy of postwar avant-garde music, which, unfortunately, still survives in this mummified form to this day... We were great friends, we led a bohemian way of life, we had a lot of fun, but we also shared enthusiasm for minimalism, the new wave, 20th-century classics, contemporary alternative music – for example, the Lounge Lizards, John Lurie, as well as the Cocteau Twins, Keith Jarrett, Pat Metheny, music composed by our professors Vlastimir Trajković, Zoran Erić, and Vuk Kulenović, and, of course, with lots of love and exhilaration we wrote and played to each other our own music.¹⁵

This type of atmosphere, bustling with creative energy, passion, and youthful resolve, also gave rise to Žebeljan’s first pieces. And already in her earliest vocal and piano works one may note several underlying stylistic and expressive precepts that would come to inform her entire oeuvre. That is, in these early works one may glimpse elements of those spiritual impulses and excitements that brought a 16-year-old girl to the domain of artistic creativity and exposed a lifelong addition to creating, a karmic predisposition for composing music. On the one hand, this included an awareness of the continual process of existence and tradition (social, artistic, musical), as a reflection of the smooth passage of relative time, in other words, an awareness of tradition as the most immediate basis for the existence of our thoughts and inspirations, that is, an awareness of the immense influence of the past (i.e. tradition) on our physical as well as mental life and, on the other hand, a sense of belonging to one’s own age, one’s own youth and its revelations. This approach to tradition manifested itself already in Isidora’s earliest pieces, in several ways. One of them concerns her choice of texts, or lyrics, for her solo songs and choral pieces. They include lyrics by Miloš Crnjanski (Милош Црњански) and Rastko Petrović (Растко Петровић), the first modernists in Serbian 20th-century poetry, in other words, two carriers of the progressive tendency of novels perceptions and manners of poetic utterance in the Serbian language, as well as lyrics by anonymous 18th-century poets, amateur poets from Vojvodina, whose writings, shaped by a naive but authentic kind of poetics and expressed with the modest verbal skills of people separated from their home country, members of an ethnic minority, were published in local Serbian-language periodicals in Austro-Hungarian Vojvodina, the land

¹⁵ Isidora Žebeljan, *Dok slušamo muziku...*, op. cit., 82.

of Isidora's ancestors.¹⁶ These pieces also revealed the kernel of Isidora's peculiar approach to her textual templates, which would likewise come to characterise her entire vocal-instrumental oeuvre, especially her operas – a clear perception of the power of music as the ultimate transcendental meaning of a poetic text shaped in sound, that is, its precedence in that environment. That is why Isidora, even in her early solo songs, never allowed her vocal music to come down to a melodic “recitation” of verses with musical accompaniment, instead subjecting the perception of the text to the effect of the music itself – in her vocal works the text is never treated as the main driver of emotional events and therefore does not have to be sung in a linear, chronological, or continual fashion, while the composer at the same time may intervene in the lyrics, adjusting them to her own musical experience of the poetry. A passion and love for tradition is likewise reflected in these early works by Isidora in her affection for melody and its tremendous capabilities of expression, which perhaps constitutes the most salient characteristic of her music and treatment of musical materials in general. With her remarkable melodic invention, certainly the most exuberant and authentic in Serbian music, Isidora enjoyed travelling with it along the expanses of sound that she created, demonstrating (which became especially evident after she had her artistic breakthrough in the West) that every composer's utmost authentic individuality is primarily embodied in the uniqueness of their melodic expressivity. She embraced musical tradition as a tonal and modal world of sound, capable of expressing all the emotional and experiential spectra of human conditions, but did not view tonality as a cliché or a given; rather, guided by modal freedom, with the mastery of a wizard, she adapted it to the complexities of various emotional charges.

Regarding Žebeljan's first creative period, in terms of originality and uniqueness of expression, the following pieces are especially noteworthy: *Deserted Village* (*Selište* – Селиште), *Pep It Up*, *A Yawl on the Danube*, and *Escenas picaras, sinfonia in tre movimenti*.

Isidora composed *Deserted Village* (*Selište*), an elegy for string orchestra as a third-year student of composition in 1987, before turning 20. This was the first time in Isidora's oeuvre that the issue of origins and relating to the

¹⁶ Later on, a collection of poetry titled Српска грађанска поезија 18. и с почетка 19. века (*Srpska građanska poezija 18. i s početka 19. veka* – “Serbian Bourgeois Poetry from the 18th and Early 19th Century”) became the main source of lyrics for Isidora's vocal-instrumental works.

past came up: *selište* denotes a place where there used to be a village, a long time ago. Such a site features no material remains of an abandoned village, but the memory of it lives on in folk tales. And yet, people continue to move around this former settlement, making the past under their feet a part of their present. In this way, Žebeljan captured the essential unity of past and present: every present “walks” across the entire past of civilization, making the sum total of that past an integral and multiply impactful part of every present. In this piece, again for the first time in her oeuvre, there is a musical subject resembling a folk melody from Vojvodina, albeit without any direct associations. The central, fast section rests on the principle of repetition, a device that Isidora used as part of her musical expression, but never too rigidly or dogmatically. ***Deserted Village (Selište)*** is Isidora’s earliest piece published by Ricordi. It has been performed in numerous concerts in Serbia, Sweden, Italy, the Czech Republic, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while a recording of the piece by the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra has appeared on a CD released by the German label CPO. In his gala performance at the opening of the renovated National Museum in Belgrade on 28 June 2018 the famous dancer Sergei Polunin (Сергей Владимирович Полунин) danced to the music of ***Deserted Village (Selište)***.

Pep It Up, a fantasia for soprano, piano, string quintet, and percussion from 1988 was the first piece that fully manifested Isidora’s extraordinary rhythmic imagination. Apart from an almost impressionistically shaped vocal melody (textless and with no hints of traditional music) and with a string sound replete with harmonics, the uniqueness of this piece lies in its extremely well-balanced and mutually complementary complex of rhythmic patterns in the piano and percussion parts. Within Serbia’s overall music scene at the time, this piece already made Isidora’s sonic style stand out from the uniformity of certain trends, by virtue of combining several elements: a prominent and unique rhythmic component, a transparent lyric melody, and the presence of elements from popular music (samba). “***Pep It Up*** is music which represents the state of limited consciousness belonging to a functional humanoid being, an android. It is overwhelmed by chaotic experiences, without a human rhythm”, Isidora wrote concerning the piece.¹⁷

Concerning the subsequent developments and discoveries that marked later phases in Žebeljan’s oeuvre, especially significant is ***A Yawl on the Dan-***

¹⁷ Borislav Čičovački, “Brotsky Quartet plays Isidora Žebeljan”, CD booklet (777994-2), Osnabrück, CPO, 2015.

ube, a scene for soprano, piano, string quartet, and percussion from 1991. In this piece, Isidora used lyrics from the anthology of Serbian 18th- and early-19th-century poetry mentioned above (Српска грађанска поезија 18. и с почетка 19. века) and for the first time in her music clearly applied some melodic characteristics typical of the music of Serbs living in Vojvodina. Especially characteristic is the work's form, the central section of which, flanked by the vocal part's introductory and concluding segments (with elements of gentle and naïve humour), features a solo piano section, which, conjuring popular music and stemming from it, simulates the course of a certain kind of emotional discontinuity and surprise, posing a musical question about the spiritual coming together and unity of the totality of time past, the relation of the entire past's impact on the present.

A narrative form that obeys only the laws of imaginary narration and that teems, like in Márquez, with fantastic events and adventures, which constitutes one of the main characteristics of Žebeljan's music, emerged in high relief for the first time in her *Escenas pıcaras*, *sinfonia in tre movimenti*, composed in 1991/1992 as her final BA project. Concerning the piece, Žebeljan wrote:

Escenas pıcaras was inspired by Spanish adventure novels from the 16th and 17th centuries – picaresque novels. These novels were conceived as series of scenes – events, adventures, which can act as isolated wholes, but which nevertheless serve one storyline, the life of a pıcaro. In this sense, the performance of *Escenas pıcaras* should create the impression that events flow into one another, to make it possible to 'read the life' of one and same adventurer.¹⁸

Given that this symphony, like other works by Žebeljan, includes no written literary or philosophical contents, the work's real content should be sought in the music of its three movements themselves: I *Circus... and Other Stories* (*Cirkus... i druge priče*), II *The Blues, etc...* (*Bluz, itd...*), and III *Funeral March and Final Durchführung* (*Posmrtni marš i završni Durchführung*). Then it becomes clear that these adventures of an unnamed pıcaro are purely musical adventures, that the essence of his adventures is music itself. Thus a musical adventure becomes the sole content that fully conditions the form of the work, with its many surprises and unexpected twists. The titles of the movements determine the composer's choice of scenes from the "pıcaro's biography" and are musically related to most diverse imaginary geographical

¹⁸ Borislav Čičovački, "Music of Isidora Žebeljan, 'The Horses of Saint Mark', orchestral music by Isidora Žebeljan", CD booklet (7776702), Osnabrück, CPO, 2011.

locales. As a whole, the work achieves coherence owing to the presence of a characteristic thematic section, which we might label *the picaro's chivalric conduct*, in between and during individual "adventures". This furious, uncompromising thematic section, predicated on relentless rhythmic motion in the entire orchestra amidst continual asymmetric volatility in the metre, replete with abrupt spasms and violent swings, is a portrait of the *picaro* himself, his unrestrained adventurer nature. Just like in Isidora's earlier works, here, too, the presence of elements from different musical genres does not tend to reconstruct a specific genre, not even in the smallest bit, but only acts as a sonic environment, hosting a powerful and exciting musical narrative.

In her first creative phase, Žebeljan developed her mode of musical expression on those elements that she, as an instrumentalist and composer, found most exciting: a refined and striking melodic component (with or without influence from traditional music), a tonal-modal harmonic environment, a powerful, uncommon, unconventional rhythmic component (with frequent changes of metre), integrating elements from popular music, and the presence of musical surprises in the formal course of the piece.¹⁹ That is how she laid the foundations of her original type of expression, which quite clearly came to the fore already in her earliest pieces, works that some 30 years later would be performed in concert and recorded by some of the leading foreign orchestras and ensembles, when Isidora's international career was at its high point.²⁰

Žebeljan's THEATRE AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC PHASE began immediately upon her graduation and coincided with the onset of the Yugoslav wars. Although Isidora had been employed since 1993 at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade as a teaching assistant to Prof. Vlastimir Trajković at the Department of Composition and Orchestration, whilst pursuing a master's degree at the same faculty, Serbia's skyrocketing inflation, economic and personal instability caused by the wars, overall insecurity and uncertainty in the country

¹⁹ "...musical surprise, as an unexpected sonic change achieved by means of one or more musical aspects within the course and structure of a compositionally compact whole, that is, or a single movement, which changes, complicates, and enriches the dramaturgical structure of that whole." Борислав Чичовачки [Borislav Čičovački], "Елементи оригиналног стваралачког израза у раним делима Душана Радића" ["Elements of Original Creative Expression in the Early Works of Dušan Radić"], presented at the Musicological Symposium dedicated to the life and works of the composer Dušan Radić. Novi Sad, Културни центар Војводине "Милош Црњански", 2021.

²⁰ Among others, the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra and Brodsky Quartet.

were the main driving forces behind Isidora's decision to accept the job of orchestrating film music by Goran Bregović (Горан Бреговић). On the one hand, this made life easier for her and her family during the 1990s while, on the other hand, as Isidora often remarked, she was able to use this period of collaboration with Bregović for developing a practical command of the laws and secrets of orchestration.²¹ "It was a beautiful and very important time for me, helping me to stay sane. On the one hand, it was a source of financial support and, on the other hand, it enabled me to learn a lot of practical stuff to do with music. I had a chance to experiment with orchestral sound."²²

However, Žebeljan's main field of work during that time was incidental music for theatre. Between 1995, when she first composed music for a professional theatre in Belgrade (Belgrade Drama Theatre),²³ and 2001, Isidora composed music for 23 theatre plays, mostly produced by theatre houses in Belgrade (Atelje 212, Yugoslav Drama Theatre, National Theatre, Belgrade Drama Theatre, and Boško Buha Theatre), as well as the Montenegrin National Theatre in Podgorica and especially the Theatre City festival in Budva,²⁴ therefore, for theatres in her own country.²⁵ She wrote music for plays by classics, such as Shakespeare, Sheridan, Molière, Chekhov, some of the 20th century's most significant authors such as Brecht, Sartre, Arthur Miller, some of Yugoslavia's most prominent writers such as Andrić and Krleža, as well as Serbian contemporary writers, Ljubomir Simović (Љубомир Симовић), Vida Ognjenović (Вида Огњеновић), Ljubivoje Ršumović (Љубивоје

²¹ During the several years she worked with Bregović, Isidora orchestrated his entire music track for *Underground*, a film by Emir Kusturica that won the 1995 *Palme d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival. She also orchestrated Bregović's music for another two films, *La Reine Margot* (dir. Patrice Chéreau) and *The Serpent's Kiss* (dir. Philippe Rousselot). In addition, for the purposes of Bregović and his ensemble's concerts she also orchestrated his music from another two films by Kusturica, *Time of the Gypsies* (*Dom za vešanje*) and *Arizona Dream*.

²² Isidora Žebeljan, *Dok slušamo muziku...*, op. cit., 137.

²³ Agatha Christie's *Mousetrap* (Мишоловка/*Mišolovka*), directed by Irena Ristić (Ирена Ристић).

²⁴ For this festival, she composed music for the following productions: *Leonce und Lena* (Леонс и Лена – *Leons i Lena*) by Georg Büchner, dir. Dejan Mijač / Дејан Мијач, 1998); *Yegor's Road* (Јегоров пут – *Jegorov put*), written and directed by Vida Ognjenović (2000); *Злочин на козјем острву / Zločin na kozjem ostrvu* (*Delitto all'Isola delle capre* by Ugo Betti, directed by Nebojša Bradić / Небојша Брадић), and Shakespeare's *Tempest* (Бура/*Bura*) directed by Slobodan Unkovski (Слободан Унковски), both in 2001.

²⁵ The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which comprised Serbia and Montenegro.

Ршумовић), Goran Marković (Горан Марковић), Mirjana Bobić Mojsilović (Мирјана Бобић Мојсиловић), etc. In the making of these theatre productions she worked with some of the most prominent theatre directors from former Yugoslavia, such as Dejan Mijač (Дејан Мијач), Slobodan Unkovski, and Vida Ognjenović, and during this phase in her career, the music she wrote for two theatre plays, Goran Marković's *Govorna mana* (Говорна мана – "Speech Impediment") and Vida Ognjenović's *Yegor's Road* (*Jegorov put*), won two Sterija Awards – in 1997 and 2001 – at Yugoslavia and Serbia's most prestigious theatre festival, *Sterijino pozorje* (Стеријино позорје) in Novi Sad, as well as four awards at the YUSTAT biennial of theatre design.

For the most part, Isidora envisaged her music and accomplished her conceptions in the form of multi-movement suites for acoustic chamber ensembles (ranging from quartets to octets) with or without vocal parts, almost invariably involving a piano and percussion (comprising a wide variety of un-pitched instruments), sometimes employing a chamber choir as well. For three plays, she composed electronic music. In terms of applying and performing music in the context of theatre directing, especially outstanding is Isidora's music for Georg Büchner's *Leonce und Lena*, directed by Dejan Mijač and jointly produced by the Theatre City festival in Budva and Belgrade's Yugoslav Drama Theatre. The director's concept was to have the music performed onstage, live, as an integral part of the play's fairytale-like dramatic action, dramaturgically integrated with it, not merely serving as a sonic backdrop in between the scenes.

Several underlying traits in Žebeljan's theatre music have enabled viewers to develop additional layers of emotion and perception in anticipating the play's dramatic contents and the director's procedures, as well as the performers themselves, the actors, and other participants. These traits include the following:

1. An extremely precise but multilayered essence in the required emotional cumulus, achieved by means of a rather striking, original melodic and rhythmic component that, upon seeing the play, remained etched in one's memory as an emotional hallmark of the entire artistic event.

2. Minute precision in terms of perceiving the stylistic setting of a given play as well as that of its present staging, geared, like a time machine, for teleporting Isidora the composer into an extremely remote time period, conditioned by the play, wherein she would situate herself not as a composer from that age but as Isidora Žebeljan from the late 20th century and compose

a kind of music that would link the stylistic origins of a given play and its possible emotive receptions in the present age, thus applying a procedure that was at loggerheads with the postmodern principles of freely using aesthetics and experiences from earlier epochs for the sake of a partial (or complete) reconstruction of a contemporary work of art. In that sense, Isidora was an artist who could inhabit, in order to further the theatrical illusion, any stylistic epoch and compose her music from such an environment, thus possibly infusing it with the formal and stylistic traits of another age, but her music always remained readily recognisable as music by Isidora Žebeljan. This procedure resembles that of major film directors such as, for instance, Kubrick and Kurosawa, who invariably speak in their authentic artistic language regardless of their films' historical and geographical setting.

3. The application of specific geo-historical musical colours depending on the director's dramatic conception of the play, by way of Isidora's refined sense of instrumentation and its application. In that way, for instance, employing a piano quartet achieved an irresistibly Russian feeling in Isidora's music for Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (without using quotations or pseudo-quotations); by using the voice of a countertenor (singing in a non-existent and, uniquely for this occasion, invented pseudo-Romance language), combined with a clarinet, violin, and piano, Molière's *The School for Wives* (*L'école des femmes*) acquired a dose of Mediterranean lasciviousness and seductiveness (in line with the director's demands), while her music for a children's play by Ljubivoje Ršumović, *U cara Trojana kozje uši* (*У цара Тројана козје уши* – "The Goat's Ears of King Trojan"), shimmers with the sounds of unusual folk instruments (mostly winds) emanating from folk celebrations and constructed on elements from traditional Balkan music.

This type of incidental music for theatre elicited, first and foremost, a lot of attention from directors, actors, and other participants in productions. Dejan Mijač often remarked how surprised he was that Isidora attended every rehearsal (although not obliged to do so, as the composer), whereupon she would bring a finished score quite quickly, whose sonic and emotive potential would transcend the director's conception itself, raising the artistic responsibility of the entire crew to a much higher level.²⁶ Also, a number of theatre directors used to say that they would develop a clear emotive picture of a specific scene or act only upon hearing Isidora's music, thereupon using

²⁶ From a conversation with Dejan Mijač, 7 January 2022.

it to direct their own work.²⁷ That is why they sought to keep working with Isidora, asking her to join them in multiple productions.

But, entirely apart from the artistic and production crew, the greatest amount of pleasure in Isidora's theatre music went to the spectators, who openly expressed their admiration, while children remembered Isidora's melodies from the plays they saw and kept singing them for a long time afterward.²⁸

In addition to her intense work in theatre music, during her second creative phase Isidora composed concert music as well. She wrote eight pieces, including a cycle of solo songs with two versions, one with piano and the other with orchestral accompaniment, a solo piano and solo guitar piece each, and four pieces of chamber music. Especially important are her vocal cycle *Rukoveti* (Руковети); the chamber piece *Girotondo*; *Il Circo* for solo piano; and *Sarabande* (*Sarabanda* – Сарабанда), a trio. In this period, her concert music oeuvre pursued an artistic exploration of several different sources of musical influences, above all traditional and (contemporary) popular music, whose unique integration and amalgamation in Isidora's music would come to constitute one of the main peculiarities of her mature style.

Il Circo (1993) revolves around a player (i.e. mechanic) piano in an imaginary circus. The unexpected twists in the rhythm, sudden breaks, and painstakingly shaped accentuation, which make the musical flow of this imaginary piano's melody unusual and exciting, turning it into a type of musical surprise, attain in this piano miniature a degree of unique mastery.

Girotondo, a piece for saxophone (or two saxophones),²⁹ piano, double bass, and percussion (1994) was the first work by Isidora that produced an authentic and uncompromising amalgam of two essentially remote sources of inspiration for her: folk and popular music, primarily jazz. At the same time, she successfully avoided making allusions to any clichés whatsoever: the piece is not ethno-jazz nor does it evoke ethno-jazz, because it combines elements from traditional music not in an ornamental or sentimental fashion; rather, the two sources of influence are integrated in a way that makes their unity integral in its inseparability – as though the source of elements from both origins was precisely their musical opposition. A highly expres-

²⁷ Dejan Mijač, Slobodan Unkovski, Radoslav Milenković, and, later, Tomi Janežič.

²⁸ Information gathered from theatres and spectators, who sent Isidora cards with expressions of delight.

²⁹ An oboe version was produced in 2003.

sive, succulent, bold, and provocative melody is united in sound with abrupt rhythmic changes, unexpected accents, surging in tempo, with moments of abrupt braking, toward a breathless, brilliant coda, forming a characteristic model of Isidora's original expression, which attained its high points in her later works, especially those from her third phase.

Sarabande for soprano, flute, and piano, written for Rome's Controcanto festival in 2001, marked the beginning of an independent segment in Isidora's oeuvre. Namely, it was the first time that Isidora used a theme from a piece of her own theatre music (in this case, the score she wrote for a production of Sartre's *Dirty Hands / Les Mains sales*) in a piece of concert chamber music. It comprises a serene, ethereal, translucent melody, with hints of the ancient Spanish dance, supported by a steady, slow-moving pulsating rhythm, in a minimalistic harmonic framework, which all together produces a sonic impression of levitation and transcendence. Over the following two decades, this chamber piece became Isidora's most frequently performed work, acquiring, at the behest of numerous musicians from across the world, another 14 versions, among which the most frequently performed ones are those for solo piano; piano trio; piano, flute, and violoncello; and cor anglais, violin, and piano. Later on, in her third phase, Isidora composed another ten or so pieces, mostly chamber, by using the richest musical bits from her theatre music scores.

Rukoveti, a cycle of solo songs for soprano and orchestra (or piano, 1999/2000), is Isidora's most significant work from her second creative phase. The title was chosen not as a reference to the structure of the work, but as a nod to this unique form of choral suite in Serbian vocal music, as well as to the composers who cultivated this peculiarity of Serbian traditional art music throughout the 20th century and an homage to traditional music in general, especially that which informed the musical backdrop of Isidora's childhood. The cycle comprises five songs and three interludes, setting verses by anonymous Vojvodina poets taken from the anthology of Serbian 18th and early 19th-century bourgeois poetry mentioned above, as well as fragments from Serbian folk lyric songs, which Isidora rearranged and reordered or used existing words to form entirely new lyrical entities. In many respects, *Rukoveti* are one of Isidora's most important compositions, as well as one of the most significant works in all of Serbian music. That status stems from the work's musical and emotive-perceptual specificities, which present here, perhaps for the first time in her oeuvre, the peculiarities of her authentic mode of compositional expression. Above all, they include bold manifestations of a rich

melodic invention, which (in this cycle) sometimes approximates Serbian folk music from Vojvodina, at other times evoking Slavic folk songs and even Turkish *sevdah* songs, but always retaining its originality and refusing to resort concretely to explicit elements from a clearly defined folk music tradition. The next peculiarity of Isidora's compositional expression that stands out in this cycle is its rhythmic unconventionality and complexity, especially when combined with irregular and shifting metres, downplaying its links with a precisely defined folk music tradition and outlining the rhythmic patterns of the traditional music of an unknown desert race. This complexity of rhythm and metre is especially characteristic of the final, fifth song, *Oh, Die, My Love* (*Ej, dušo – Ej, душо*), where irregular metric shifts, combined with a gradually accelerating tempo, produces an ecstatic sound, giving rise to a powerful melody towering above a pulsating *ostinato* orchestral *tutti*, which forms one of the most moving episodes in more recent music. In Isidora's oeuvre, the song cycle *Rukoveti* constitutes the endpoint of a unique process of forming an authentic type of musical expression, enabling, in the ensuing third phase, the growth and efflorescence of one of the most striking creative episodes in early 21st-century art music.

Works Cited

- Историја српске музике [History of Serbian Music]. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman (Ed.). Belgrade: Завод за уџбенике, 2007.
- Čičovački, Borislav: "Music of Isidora Žebeljan, 'The Horses of Saint Mark', orchestral music by Isidora Žebeljan", CD booklet (7776702). Osnabrück: CPO, 2011.
- Čičovački, Borislav: "Brotsky Quartet plays Isidora Žebeljan", CD booklet (777994-2). Osnabrück: CPO, 2015.
- Čičovački, Borislav: *Transformaties van volksmuziek van de Westelijke Balkan en de Servische Octoëchos (Byzantijnse kerkmuziek) in het oeuvre van Ljubica Marić*. Doctoral dissertation. Amsterdam: Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Online Edition, 2017.
- Чичовачки, Борислав: "Елементи оригиналног стваралачког израза у раним делима Душана Радића" ["Elements of Original Creative Expression in the Early Works of Dušan Radić"], presented at the Musicological Symposium dedicated to the life and works of the composer Dušan Radić. Novi Sad: Културни центар Војводине "Милош Црњански", 2021.
- Čičovački, Borislav: A conversation with Dejan Mijač, 7 January 2022.
- Žebeljan, Isidora: *Dok slušamo muziku, sadašnjost je večna*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2021.

Summary

Isidora Žebeljan (Serbian Cyrillic: Исидора Жебељан, b. Belgrade, 1967–2020) was one of the most original classical music composers of the early 21st century. That is why she is the most frequently and diversely performed Serbian composer abroad, commanding the most prominent presence beyond Serbia. She first came under the attention of the international public with her opera *Zora D.* (Зора Д.), which was commissioned by the Genesis Foundation of London and premièred in Amsterdam in 2003. From that point on, Žebeljan enjoyed a steady stream of commissions from major institutions and music festivals, such as the Berliner Philharmoniker Foundation, Venice Biennale (*La Biennale di Venezia*), Bregenz Festival (*Bregenzer Festspiele*), Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen, the Netherlands Chamber Choir (*Nederlands kamerkoor*), Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, the City of London Festival, etc. Žebeljan has composed music for major ensembles such as the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (*Wiener Symphoniker*), the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Brodsky Quartet, and London Brass. Her oeuvre, divided in three creative phases, comprises around a hundred pieces, including five operas (written for opera houses in the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, and Italy) and incidental music for 38 theatre plays. *Zora D.* was the first Serbian opera premièred abroad (in the Netherlands), while *Two Heads and a Girl* (*Dve glave i devojka – Две главе и девојка*) was the first Serbian opera that was sung in the Serbian language at its world première (in Italy). Some of the most renowned contemporary musicians and ensembles have performed around 70 of Isidora's pieces on concert and opera stages in 37 countries on every continent. The originality of her language arose from her authentic ability to forge organic links between musical elements originating from different spheres of influence (ranging from old Balkan folk music traditions to rock and pop music), which she achieved by blending, amalgamating, and combining these originally divergent musical elements into new and previously unknown contexts of sound. In her pieces, form is entirely subordinated to the unpredictable flow of their musical contents, leading to unexpected, sudden shifts between individual segments in the work's sonic content, approximating the shape of a short story or film – a series of divergent (musical) events giving sound to a single perceptual whole, similarly to the way magic realism does in literature. A unique specificity of her music's originality stems from her unusual and quite peculiar melodic and rhythmic invention.