
CONVERSATIONS

Article received on June 19^h 2023

Article accepted on June 25^h 2023

UDC 78.071.1:929 Поповић Млађеновић Т.(047.53)

Ivana Petković Lozo*

University of Arts in Belgrade
Faculty of Music
Department of Musicology

MUSICOLOGY AS AN UNBOUNDED MUSICAL AND LIVED SPACE-TIME

A CONVERSATION WITH TIJANA POPOVIĆ MLADJENOVIĆ

In an original and authentic way, by virtue of the breadth and depth of her scholarly endeavours and their resulting scholarly accomplishments, Tijana Popović Mladjenović, a major Serbian musicologist and university professor, has made and is still making a significant contribution to contemporary musicological thought in Serbia and abroad.

She earned her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at the Musicology Department of the Faculty of Music at the University of Arts in Bel-



* Contact details: ivanarpetkovic@gmail.com

grade. She pursued further education in contemporary French music at Université Paris IV – Sorbonne, as well as during her study residencies in Boston and Cambridge – at Boston University, MIT and Harvard University – as well as in Oxford, at the University of Oxford (New College, Magdalen College, Music Faculty). Her entire academic career so far has taken place at the Musicology Department of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, where she was first hired in 1989, progressing through all academic ranks, from teaching assistant to full professor. Since 2019 she has served as Chair of the Department of Musicology. As a visiting professor, she has taught at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Lithuanian Academy for Music and Theatre in Vilnius, Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Ljubljana, Academy of Music at the University of Sarajevo, Music Academy at the University of Montenegro, as well as the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad and the Faculty of Philology and Arts in Kragujevac, Serbia.

Her fields of scholarly interest include music of the *fin de siècle* period, 20th- and 21st-century poetics of music, aesthetics and philosophy of music, issues pertaining to musical thinking and musical time, as well as music's relationship with other arts. In her scholarly work, which she has pursued with almost equal intensity in every domain of her musicological interests and activities, Tijana Popović Mladjenović has accomplished results that qualify her as one of the most authoritative representatives of contemporary musicology in Serbia and beyond. She has authored five book-length studies: *Muzičko pismo* ("Musical Writing"), Clio, 1996 [second edition: Faculty of Music (*Tempus project InMusWB*), 2015]; *E lucevan le stelle* (Milprom, 1997); *Клод Дебиси и његово доба* ("Claude Debussy and His Age", Музичка омладина Србије, 2008); *Procesi panstilističkog muzičkog mišljenja* ("The Processes of Pan-stylistic Musical Thinking", Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2009); *Interdisciplinary Approach to Music: Listening, Performing, Composing* (as the primary author; co-authored with Blanka Bogunović and Ivana Perković; Faculty of Music, *Tempus project InMusWB*, 2014); as well as a monograph study *The Musical Text and the Ontology of the Musical Work* (in: *Musical Identities and European Perspective: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. by Ivana Perković & Franco Fabbri, Peter Lang, 2017).

A large number of her scholarly studies, articles, and essays have been published by leading national and international scholarly journals (e.g. the *New Sound*; *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies*; *Acta Semiotica Fennica*; *Musicological Annual*; *Kakanien Revisited*; *Music*; *(Ethno)musicological Yearbook of Southern Croatia*; *Music in Society*; *Современные проблемы*

музыкознания/*Contemporary Musicology*; *Contemporary Music Review*; IMS-RASMB Series *Musicologica Balcanica*; Трета програма; Матица српска за сценске уметности и музику; Звук; Мокрањац; Музички талас; Теорија и пракса, etc.) and collective scholarly monographs (published by, for example, Taylor & Francis/Routledge; Springer; Peter Lang; Faculty of Music/University of Arts in Belgrade; Clio; Umweb Publications; Oxford University Press; Presses universitaires de Louvain; Bärenreiter; CESEM/Universidade Nova de Lisboa; University of Sheffield Press; Musica Iagelonica итд.) in Serbian, English, French, and German.

The high quality of her scholarship is also attested to by forewords to her books written by other scholars and their remarks at her book launches, numerous notices and reviews of her books in national and leading international scholarly journals (e.g. *Music & Letters*, *Musicae Scientiae*), daily and periodical press (penned by scholars such as Vlastimir Peričić, Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, Zoran Erić, Vladan Radovanović, Miloš Arsenijević, Zorica Premate, Melita Milin, Ana Kotevska, Marija Masnikosa, Tomislav Sedmak, Miško Šuvaković, Jesper Hohagen, Leon Stefanija, Ivana Perković and Franco Fabbri, Ksenija Radoš, Paulo F. de Castro, Violetta Kostka and William A. Everett, Marija Ćirić, Rūta Stanevičiūtė, Nick Zangwill and Rima Povilionienė, Ivana Petković, etc.), while numerous music editors and scholars (such as Donata Premeru, Milena Miloradović, Zorica Premate, Jasminka Dokmanović, Marija Kovač, Marina Stefanović, Snežana Nikolajević, Marija Ćirić, etc.) have devoted special radio and television broadcasts to the topics and lines of research pursued in her books as well as individual scholarly studies.

Her completely unique musicological *voice* has likewise resonated through her contributions to publications such as the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Grove Music Online*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Le Grand Larousse Illustré*, *Српска енциклопедија* (“Serbian Encyclopaedia”), and *Лексикон музичких институција у Србији* (“Lexicon of Musical Institutions in Serbia”); co/editing more than 30 collective and individual scholarly monographs; serving on the scientific and programme committees of numerous international and national scholarly conferences; serving on the editorial boards of musicological journals and the *Ars musica* book series (Clio); reviews written for scholarly journals in the fields of musicology, philosophy, literary theory, linguistics, and cultural studies; and her research contributions to a large number of national and international research projects.

The musicological approach pursued by Tijana Popović Mladjenović is, as Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman has asserted, “always innovative, provocative, interpretatively passionate, and accomplished to the highest degree of musicological insight and a broad humanist education. For many years, this readily recognizable principle guiding her personal musicological interpretation has authoritatively represented not only her own scholarly explorations and achievements, but also the musicological school and environment that spawned her, on the European and global stage alike”.

Pursuing the highest scholarly as well as pedagogical criteria, Tijana Popović Mladjenović has also become a leading professor of musicology in Serbia, with a notable international reputation as well. This is attested to by her mentoring work (ranging from seminar papers to doctoral dissertations, as well as co-supervising doctoral artistic projects), as well as the best master thesis prize awarded to a musicological study that she supervised at the Seventh International Musicological Student Conference/Contest held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2016.

The year 2021 was marked by numerous prizes and awards attesting to the significance of her scholarly activities and overall musicological, pedagogical, and socio-cultural contributions, in Serbia and abroad alike, including the following: the Pavle Stefanović Award; the Great Plaque of the University of Arts with Charter, in acknowledgement of her outstanding services and contribution to the growth of the Faculty of Music and the University of Arts in Belgrade; the publication of her study “The Musical Text as a Polyphonic Trace of Otherness” (co-authored with Leon Stefanija) in the collection of essays *Intertextuality in Music: Dialogic Composition* (Taylor & Francis – Routledge); her re-appointment to the Senate of the University of Arts for a second term; her appointment to the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia; and her admittance to the European Academy of Sciences – *Academia Europaea*, based in London. By invitation, Tijana Popović Mladjenović was made a member of its Musicology and Art History Section, as the first musicologist from Serbia and the second from the region to become a member of this prestigious institution.

I would be interested to hear how you perceive the awards mentioned above, which came in close succession in 2021 and serve here as the immediate occasion for this conversation with you. Do they constitute a high point in your ca-

reer, a stimulus for further professional growth, an opportunity to affirm all aspects of the profession of musicology, to improve the social standing of musicology and the overall profession of music, art, and culture in general, or all of those things combined?

The awards mentioned above, which during that brief period did occur in close succession like fugal statements in a stretta, certainly mean a great deal, but they also present an obligation in a fundamental sense. Not in terms of high points in my professional life and/or life in general, because for me, judged by other, internal criteria, those points are scattered in a different way in my perception of my own professional/lived space-time, but as a sort of condensed fabric from which the *fil rouge* of my underlying musicological/life interest will lead me, I believe – like the unfolding and shaping of a given musical flow in time – to new *pleasures* of discovering (viewed from the perspective of Joseph Addison, the *pleasures of the imagination, senses, and reason*), that is, to new processes of searching, finding, and understanding the sense and meaning of the phenomenon of music.

In fact, in my work so far, as well as in my professional engagements of various sorts, I have never considered prizes and awards of this kind as the reason, stimulus, or aim behind any of my efforts and endeavours. My main concern has always been my personal satisfaction with the results of my work – in line with my own system of values and an uncompromising sense of professional responsibility and rigour in assessing the process of my scholarly research, conclusions, and interpretation, as well as my pedagogical and professional socio-cultural work – followed, to the same extent, by the critical opinions of those colleagues and associates of mine, senior and junior alike, whose professional achievements I value and respect to a very high degree. Whenever these two insights correspond, they have been and remain the most significant recognitions for me.

Therefore, I view the prizes and awards that came in 2021 as a ray of light coming from without and illuminating the scholarly, pedagogical, and professional work of an individual, serving, however, to shed more light on and enhance the affirmation of musicology as a scholarly discipline within the scholarly field of the humanities and, given its subject, inevitably also shedding light on the totality of the art of music, musical creativity, performance and spoken and written word on music, and thereby also art and culture in general.

Taking into account your many commitments and serving on faculty and university bodies, as well as in representative associations and committees in Serbia and abroad, one could almost certainly say that you have witnessed various trends, that you participate in many events, discussions, and, increasingly, “struggles” for culture, art, and science. Given the burning crisis of humanism and the human ethos itself that has engulfed the whole world and, consequently, the humanities as well, how do you see the current hierarchy of values in society and, above all, its approach to education, knowledge, and science?

A complex answer to your question, which would rest on a holistic consideration and understanding of an entire compendium of multiple sources and consequences of a relatively long process that is, I would say, still accelerating today, cannot be comprehensively provided on this occasion. In that regard, I will attempt – at least partly, focusing on a specific current event – to shed light on a particular aspect of the convergence of what you called “a burning crisis of humanism and the human ethos itself that has engulfed the whole world”.

Above all, in general terms, my view is that technologies of all sorts are, metaphorically speaking, “moving away” from human beings as their inventors with incredible speed. On the one hand, I would say that in the *current present*, human consciousness – primarily in relation to its constant exposure to the high pace of constant technological change, therefore also its unpreparedness in relation to the predictions of the possible far-reaching consequences of their easy mass availability and a one-sided understanding of their utilitarian functions – cannot keep track with enough agility and understanding of these dominant processes and events amid our contemporary world’s idolatry of a technological virtual reality. On the other hand, we are witnessing that scientific breakthroughs and achievements obtained for the most humane reasons in the domain of technological development and/or, for instance, digital media and technologies, artificial intelligence, robotics, genetic engineering, etc., often turn, for some other, directly/pragmatically more “efficient” reasons, with the aid of their “natural” (ab)use and easy manipulation that may be taken for granted, into a tool for a more or less visible, fundamental transformation of human nature itself and/or *lifeworld* (Edmund Husserl).

It seems that over time, the insistence on the simultaneity of that *for*, “moving away” *from*, and *instead of* human and/or *lifeworld* in the context of today’s world, leaving no room for differentiating the meaning of an ethos or registering causal relations, has meant that the fundamental property of the human beings – their human nature – would be the first to come under fire, as a sur-plus.

In that regard, this is clearly manifested not only in the turmoil within the humanities themselves, but also in terms of society's overall treatment of the humanities. For a relatively long time, there have been predictions of several disciplines of the humanities – and, symptomatically, it's always the same ones – coming to an end, including the following:

- great critical philosophical systems for studying general and fundamental problems of existence, knowledge, moral judgements, the mind, and language have been replaced by numerous and, increasingly, one-off, conjunctural, and easily exchangeable critical theories, or have been reduced to direct ideological interpretations, none of which, despite their obscuring and obfuscating influence, have managed to extinguish humanity's authentic need for philosophical reflection concerning its own essence;
- history, understood as *the last refuge of searching for the meaning of existence* with regard to *finitude as human destiny* (Fernando Catroga), was predicted to reach an end point in our age, but, although the *systemic colonization of the lifeworld* (Jürgen Habermas) is forcing us to dwell in a continuous present, effecting the waning of the horizon of expectation and getting stuck in a *worshiped present* and *the euphoria of living in real time*, closed off to the past and future alike, we are nonetheless, contrary to expectations, not witnessing the end of history, but, rather, the end of conceptions that dictated the end of history;
- predictions, claims, or the myth of the end of art, its demise, disappearance, or a dramatic depletion of entire domains of artistic creativity are confused with the collapse of the cultural patterns that governed its representation and a given historical situation that tends to belittle the idea of the artistically *new* (both in the sense of “newer” and “something else”) as ephemeral and empty – however, it seems that a given historical situation cannot forever thwart humanity's desire to be what it should be and its dissatisfaction, compelling it to lend artistic shape to something that does not yet exist, because the appearance of *the new* is a *lightning strike that shoots out of the tension between memory/heritage and anticipation/expectation, an individual (and thereby also collective) stimulus that destabilizes eternal contemporaneities, proves prophecies and predictions wrong, even when it partly confirms them* (Catroga); therefore, art is not dying, just like our need to create it is not diminishing – what is subject to decay is its concrete representations, which are socially conditioned...

Recently, last spring, society's global "enthusiasm" for collectively witnessing "the end" of philosophy, history, and art announced the end of another discipline in the humanities – this time as a university subject. Namely, the government of Spain proposed to end public support for studying linguistics as a separate and critical discipline at the universities that make up the Spanish system of higher education, whilst keeping philology as a separate discipline. Regarding this Spanish "Proposal for a Royal Decree Establishing the Academic Fields for the Allocation of Jobs to University Teaching Staff" (*Proyecto de Real Decreto por el que se establecen los Ámbitos de Conocimiento a Efectos de la Adscripción de los Puestos de Trabajo del Profesorado Universitario*), Academia Europaea voiced its concern over this proposition by the Spanish government to eliminate linguistics as a fundamental university discipline and sent *A Plea to the Spanish Government to retain Linguistics alongside Philology within the Range of Critical Disciplines*. Academia Europaea's position (which was adopted on 3 May 2023 and had been drafted by its Linguistic Studies Committee, Class A1 – Humanities and Arts, which incorporates the Section of Musicology and Art History, where I'm a member) voiced its strong opposition (in six points) to the proposed move with the following arguments: "Linguistics [with its wide range of subfields: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics as the study of language and the mind] has made ground-breaking discoveries about language structure, language change, language acquisition, and language processing, and continues to push the boundaries of our understanding of language and its role in human cognition and behaviour".

Be that as it may, this brazen attack, only the last one in a series of attacks so far, is more than alarming and disturbing, because it constitutes a frontal strike at knowledge about language as a basic means of human communication – at the very possibility of having an awareness of language, where humanity's social, thinking, indeed, human being resides.

Therefore, all of the phenomena I just mentioned unequivocally point to a general trend involving a systematic bid to undermine that which we might call the basic prerequisites for and possibilities of acquiring knowledge about the fundamentally human nature of humanity and, in order to preserve it as such, its meaning and essential needs. In that regard, with perseverance and persistence, the aim is not only to stage an attack on humanity's consciousness of itself and its ethos, but also, in the same context, to attempt a change in the very structure of its consciousness, thereby including its self-awareness.

In that regard, what is the perspective of musicology and young aspiring musicologists in the contemporary Serbian and international “arena”?

Following up on my last answer, I would underscore the fact that human societies without language, as well as human societies without music, have never been discovered. In other words, music is above all a cultural phenomenon, because there is no culture without music and because every human being possesses this, I would say, subtle skill of understanding music, significantly although intuitively. It is likewise a fact that a significant property of music as a cultural phenomenon is its diversity – the sheer multitude, variety, and coexistence of musical identities. By the same token, music is subject to constant change. On account of these few simple facts, it appears that music, much more than language, demands to be seen as a unique human property (Roger Brown). Because, similarly to language, which only occasionally becomes literature, music likewise only occasionally becomes art. In that regard, it is hardly surprising that the first two hybrid disciplines, emerging in the 1950s and '60s, were none other than psycholinguistics and psychomusicology. However, while language is important and useful in every sense, we like music and have a need for it without a visible, obvious reason. As Boethius put it a long time ago, “music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free from it even if we so desired”. We like music (due to our *emotions*?) and we need it (due to its *meaning* and *sense*?), because it is apparently something quite closely related to the experience of life as a whole – because in music the human being finds (*invents*?) itself. Or, as Claude Lévi-Strauss put it, “when I hear music, I listen to myself through it”.

Bearing in mind all that I’ve just said, the perspectives of musicology as the science/thinking/words/knowledge of/on music, in any age, space, and *lifeworld* generation, are boundless, provocative, and exciting, because such is the subject of this science – the very phenomenon of music. Furthermore and above all, discussing *music as an art* forms the core of doing musicology. As its basic object of study, cognition, and, then, scholarly research, understanding, elucidation, and interpretation, artistic music, with its poetic diversity, stratification, compositional and technical complexity, and aesthetic worth, constitutes the essence of the phenomenon of music in general in the most comprehensive way.

Thus, if we considered, for example, the claim that the *law, under which one knows that he/she is alive, has been realized in music in its purest form*, that is, that *music portrays an inner life flow – it is the train of consciousness, or primarily the stream of consciousness* (Anthony Storr), a musicological insight fo-

cused on artistic music would certainly be an indispensable, crucial argument in the process of affirming or rejecting this claim. Namely, as one of many instances where musicological relevance is expected, sought, and demanded, the view that music as an art emblemizes the processes of consciousness brings the musicologist's profession to the epicentre of a complex interdisciplinary field, posited in the broadest way, a deeply focused field of researching and reflecting on as yet undiscovered or newly revealed phenomena.

Therefore, we should resolutely strive, look forward to, and responsibly keep going toward this musicological, as you put it, *arena*, viewed in those terms, whereas I would describe it as essential professional competence and a basic need. In any case, in terms of its subject and topics, it is large, diverse, demanding, serious, and, regardless of current social conditions and hierarchies of values, it is extremely important, even decisive, for understanding the human self.

What is your earliest memory of having a need and desire, and then deciding to pursue music, to think and write about it, that is, to live music? What does doing music mean to you?

As the living, jumping spot, that is, *punctum saliens* of my lived space-time, or, metaphorically speaking, the point around which everything else revolves, music has no beginning. Or, more accurately, I have no recollection of such a beginning. I haven't got a conscious memory of it, the earliest memory of a specific moment in time when I began to *live music*. And it just so happened that I've lived it intensely, since my earliest days. As my parents later told me, since we all shared one and the same living and working space, while still a baby I was already constantly exposed to various kinds of music without any immediately negative reactions to any of them, evidently because each one of them carried a certain value and quality. Apart from children's songs of all kinds and origins, French chansons, jazz, artistic music ranging from Baroque to 20th-century, the space I inhabited, during that time in the early 1960s, mostly resonated with music by the then avant-gardists: Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Tadeusz Baird, Kazimierz Serocki, György Ligeti..., because at the time my father was finishing his composition degree and working as a professor of music theory subjects at a secondary school of music.

After that, everything somehow came naturally and spontaneously, like taken for granted. Music was always there – I loved singing, I started playing

the piano, enrolled at a primary school of music; I could hardly wait to play Frederic Chopin and Robert Schumann, with my friends I enjoyed “our music” – The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Queen... – like few other things at the time; I got out of secondary music school already in my first year because I wanted to go to a proper gymnasium (general secondary school), but I continued playing “for myself”, I often went to concerts at the “Kolarac Hall” ... and in my fourth year of secondary school, unexpectedly and unfathomably for everybody around me, I decided to study musicology. As it turned out, in secondary school, apart from the inner intensity of my (un)conscious *musical being* and its originally all-encompassing needs that were not letting up, my special interests expanded to cover a whole range of subjects, such as art history, philosophy, logics, literature, the classical languages and mythology, psychology, the history of the French civilization and French language (in line with our family’s Francophilia, especially that of my mother and my paternal grandfather), confronting me in my fourth year with the by no means easy question of where all those interests and needs of mine might converge, entwine, and permeate each other, so that I could really study something that I would later want to do in my life. One of those days, looking in our family library for something else completely, by accident – if such accidents really do exist – I took from the shelf Dragutin Gostuški’s *Time of Art: A Contribution to the Foundation of a General Science of Form*, and when I started reading it, I was plunged into its world, which exposed itself to me as precisely that desired world of possibilities for my potential future professional being. I will never forget that moment when I had this feeling of internal enlightenment triggered by Gostuški’s book. Then, in a youthful frenzy, I frantically started looking for other works by the same author and found his study on “Music Scholarship as a Model of the Interdisciplinary Method of Research”. That was also the moment when I realized that apparently, musicology was “my destiny”. As an already enrolled student of art history, I began studying all the music secondary school subjects that I didn’t have at my gymnasium, passed all the exams, and then also the entrance exam at the department of musicology, joined the B.A. programme, and found myself... where I still am today.

Your question was an invitation, so I allowed myself to take this excursus just now into my own past and, to an extent, into the private domain, in order to use this opportunity, perhaps, to gain a clearer picture myself of my own long-term resonance with certain, above all, individual styles, creative directions, and achievements of artistic music, which, apparently, also relates to my unconscious experience of music from the earliest periods of my life. At

the same time, I will allow myself to mark those places where the trajectories of my interests that I just outlined entangled and intertwined, as early as my secondary-school days, in my musicological dealings with art music and, by extension, with certain specific musical phenomena.

Thus, my predilection for 20th and 21st-century art music – itself possibly conditioned by my spontaneous resonating with it already in the earliest part of my childhood, that is, unconditioned by any sort of habit, learning, prejudice, or resistance based on exposure to only a single, say, tonal way of musical thinking – gave rise to a scholarly monograph based on exploring the phenomenon of musical writing and the awareness of musical language with a special consideration of avant-garde music in the second half of the 20th century, as well as a large number of scholarly studies on the creativity and/or specific works of contemporary Serbian and international composers. Reflecting on their poetics and aesthetics was almost always linked to what is for me one of the most provocative issues in music in general – the phenomenon of musical time, that is, the way a musical flow takes shape in time. Based on everything I just said, about a decade ago, a compulsory subject – under the heading of *Music Interpretation and Elements of a Creative Approach to Musical Text* – was added to the doctoral study programme in music performance. My further dealing with these problems resulted in my monograph study titled *The Musical Text and the Ontology of the Musical Work*, which is primarily a discussion of key issues in the philosophy of music. In this context, an especially rewarding moment came for me when Prof. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, on her retirement, entrusted her course on the *Aesthetics, Poetics, and Stylistics of Contemporary Music*, which she taught in the master's and doctoral programmes in musicology and composition, to me.

On the other hand, the different trajectories (concerning music and its history, the history of art, literature, French civilization, antiquity...) of my youthfully colourful interests that I mentioned above came together already in the music history essay I wrote in my entrance exam at the department of musicology, in which I wrote about impressionism in music and painting, as well as symbolism in poetry. These multipronged interests in late 19th- and 20th-century art centring on music, which manifested themselves relatively early, have remained a permanent preoccupation in my musicological work. On a quite specific occasion, they also gave rise to my monograph titled *Claude Debussy and His Age*, numerous scholarly studies on Debussy's music, his poetics, aesthetics, and the phenomenon of *Debussysme* in the context of and/or parallel with French painting, literature, philosophical thought, the

scientific, cultural, and social developments and turmoil of that historically unique *time of art...* as well as to my discussions of works by Gustav Mahler, Max Reger, Richard Strauss, Maurice Ravel, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, etc. Among other things, those studies also resulted in the establishment of *Fin-de-siècle Music* as a mandatory course in the B.A. curriculum in musicology. This basically interdisciplinary approach to music, as well as its unique research methodology, then led toward an entirely new challenge and experience, that is, the multi-authorial scholarly monograph titled *Interdisciplinary Approach to Music: Listening, Performing, Composing*, a joint study co-authored by two musicologists and a psychologist of music, focusing on the question of how, in what ways all three of those basic musical activities, each one of them by itself, but above all, all three of them together, as an inseparable whole, follow the complex processes of musical thinking. Owing precisely to this line of “multidirectional” moving in the interdisciplinary field of my research and reflections, not only on music, but also on music in the context of other arts, I also inherited from Prof. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman her course on the *Modalities of the Interdisciplinary Approach to Art*, which she taught in the doctoral study programme in art and media theory.

And thus I have lived, thought, and dealt with music, in an unbreakable tangle of a lived, scholarly, and professorial time-space.

I would say that this need on the part of your being to live and think music is quite directly linked to the way you write about it. Namely, in almost every scholarly study and monograph you have written, one can detect the moment when the object of your scholarly attention, the way it is elaborated, and the genre that both of them belong to become a unified whole in which the musicological accomplishment becomes part of the object, just as that object becomes part of that accomplishment. In that sense, I would single out your book The Processes of Pan-stylistic Musical Thinking, which, as Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman asserts in her foreword, constitutes “a lavish and exhaustive piece of research”, which, “from an essential musical aspect – the aspect of the pan-dimension of thinking by means of sound – illuminates the phenomenon of musical fantasy as a sort of musical laboratory, whose functional and existential purpose rests on the freedom of creative eruption and transgression”, and that the “author’s great familiarity with the problems under consideration, meticulousness, analytical reliability, and even the fantasy potentials of her discourse on the fantastic qualify this study as one of those musicological accomplishments in our scholarship that, concerning that which we think we know well,

re-adjust those centres of projection and perspectives of interpretation that are always 'the same' and seek to establish some new and different ones".

Bearing in mind, among other things, the lines I just cited concerning the fantastic potential of your scholarly discourse on the fantastic in music, is thinking/speaking/writing about music a creative act that one might liken, for instance, to creating a work of music?

In its role of “kindling the spark” of creativity, in art and scholarship alike, fantasy is the ability to “think sideways”, the ability to create different methods, the invaluable ability of “swerving”, “turning”, “jumping to the side”, which means venturing beyond the framework of formalised, schematic, stereotypical, and automated processes. The quality of fantasy, as one of the most universal creative potencies, its ability to exist in every shape, whether possible or not, make it a sort of, as Miloš Ilić asserts, universal “spiritual protoplasm” that arbitrarily changes shapes in order to operate with success. Therefore, fantasy has the ability to hide, change, mask, and disguise as need be, so much so that, if necessary, it can even turn into its own opposite – logical thinking (which certainly is a sort of simulacrum). It cannot be strict, logical, or methodologically systematised thinking, but what makes it superior, incomparable, and unique is its operation. What fantasy can do, no other faculty can.

In that regard, if we are talking about fantasy in artistic creativity, for instance, the fantasy principle in music or, more specifically still, the “field”, “type”, or “form” of musical fantasy, we might say that it implies diverse and hypothetical forms, that it counts on the presence of multiple forms and styles, that it opens the possibility of producing stylistic and formal “experiments” and “new syntheses”. Therefore, as a possible domain of novelty, venturing into the future, in many cases a musical fantasy is unburdened by the stereotypes of ruling expressive devices in music, the automatism of norms, in fact, it is not subject to the schemata of standardised formal patterns and the stylistic determinants of a given epoch in which it *de facto* emerged as a work of music.

On the other hand, when, as is the case in the book you mentioned, we are dealing with a scholarly discourse on the phenomenon of the fantasy principle in music and/or musical fantasy, wherein the possibility of searching for the pan-dimension of musical thinking emerged as the most open and direct and, in that regard, when we're dealing with those moments in the research process when strict, verbalized, and conscious thinking faces “ob-

stacles”, as it were – then one may notice that, in line with the object of study, the established interdisciplinary musicological method and analytical interpretative model in a specific way *appears to offer some poetic licence* regarding the musicological approach itself. In other words, at those and similar moments, the “*as if*” method and model I just mentioned enable a breakthrough of that most universal creative potency, raised to a high level and moving freely in every direction, in its altered and transformed shape depending on the need and context of its operation.

Therefore, examining *post festum* the process of my own musicological approach and work, I would say that the phenomenon and activity of “unconscious intuition” (as opposed to “unconscious automatism”) – which Arthur Koestler, in his book *The Act of Creation: A Study of the Conscious and Unconscious in Science and Art*, asserts that it features an “upward surge”, that is, mental rise – sometimes, often suddenly, spontaneously, in form of a fantasy potential, informs the discourse of scholarly explorations.

In this sense, the answer to your question is – yes. Scholarly discourse, especially concerning artistic creativity, is undoubtedly a creative act as well, “*as if*”, sometimes, acquiring some of the essential, characteristic traits of its own object of reflection. I first encountered this phenomenon when, a long time ago, I had the opportunity to meet one of the doyens of Serbian music and culture, Prof. Petar Bingulac, and study his writings on music. The title of my paper was “Petar Bingulac’s Writings on Music as a Fact and an Artistic Experience”. Namely, his writings were factually, analytically, and historically well-argued and easily verifiable, but at the same time, they were also poetically shaped in an artistic way. Having read my text about his writings, Bingulac said something that I later heard several times from the mouths of musicologists, composers, performers, philosophers, concerning my own musicological studies of various kinds – which was that I think and write about music “*as if*” creating a work of music. Eventually, thinking about it retroactively, I realized that some of my texts, scattered over time, are titled *an etude, variations, prelude, improvisation...* Be that as it may, that opinion is precisely the kind of tribute that commands a special kind of value for me...

The freedom of creative eruption and transgression is quite naturally inscribed in your pedagogical work as well. Thanks to your immense learning and extraordinary pedagogical gift, you have influenced and you still influence the professional formation of the many students who reach maturity on the foun-

dations of your musicological methodology. Given that your pedagogical practice rests on a special kind of mutuality between the student and professor, you actually encourage your students to find their own way in musicology, which is borne out by the fact that many of them today, with their authentic musicological voices, keep uncovering the phenomenon of music in the most diverse ways.

What does imparting knowledge mean to you, what does it mean to keep discovering the phenomenon of music together with your students and to grow professionally along with generations of young colleagues and future experts?

It means a lot, in a fundamental way, as in, I couldn't even imagine my professional work without that dimension. For, this continual, always open, alive, immediate, intense, multidirectional, never entirely predictable, always excitingly serious in the most beautiful sense of that word, challengingly responsible and never the same *exchange* along the trajectories of professor–student and student–professor harbours in its midst, for all those who participate in that unique process of exchanging knowledge (of providing, relaying, teaching, adopting, discovering, and further disseminating and deepening knowledge), a permanent, originary wonderment before the world of music and the endless expanses of the ways in which it comes to be, exists, is understood and interpreted. At the same time, professional curiosity, openness, and willingness to re-examine, check, and possibly re-posit certain problems on the spot, together with students, form an indispensable part of the process of relaying and acquiring knowledge, which thereby gains in strength and fullness, possibly leading toward new insights.

In that regard, in pedagogy and in my scholarly work alike, I've often had those as yet unmarked or unbeaten paths emerge as potentially valid directions that one should follow. I found that rigidly and exclusively pursuing only a single direction, theory, or specialist "preserve" (however perfect, *à la mode*, or utilitarian) and closing off to all others cannot secure a valid approach to all the fundamental issues that music emanates, nor can it, by extension, provide those necessary, relevant answers. I found out that compartments and pigeon boxes with neat labels on them, in which one often strives to stick, no matter the cost, even those things that do not belong there – and, by the way, most of them are like that – may often fool us, divert us from the right path, and ruin the reliability of our research and conclusions. Regarding student research projects (pursued with various degrees of independence), ranging from their undergraduate seminar papers all the way to doctoral

exam papers and doctoral dissertations themselves, my guiding principle was that shaping their projects “by force”, to suit solutions prepared in advance or readymade “models” for “mass distribution”, was neither the purpose nor aim of my job as an academic supervisor.

I maintained that, essentially, depending on the specific body of music, specific work of music, specific musical “matter” that one is researching and reflecting on, one must always take a different and unique road. For, it appears that the processes of the pan-dimension of musical thinking rest on those laws that are hidden by definition and hidden from a definition. Namely, the nature of these laws is recognized only *post rem*, only when the process of composition and/or interpretation-perception is complete and when a work of music and/or its existence are posited and realised in sound. This means that these laws that govern the processes whereby a musical flow comes into being are hidden in those processes themselves. That is, while a musical flow is still emerging, these laws do not exist, that is, *do not yet exist*. In that context, the processes of the pan-dimension of musical thinking are those of searching for the laws that regulate them, the laws that act through the final musical pattern as the hidden meaning that governs a unique, individual creative process applied only once, in a concrete, individual musical flow. Therefore, every individual musical flow entails a special, that is, unique approach.

Precisely for those reasons, I have conceived of the world of music and the world of musicology in the *lifeworld* as a boundless space-time, in which I’ve been moving wherever I thought I would find the freedom of artistic and scholarly thought, creativity, exploration, experience, and interpretation, undoubtedly serving the functions of the essence, meaning, and value of music itself. I have taken my undergraduate and master’s students into those regions only gradually and very carefully, only once I’ve made sure that their knowledge acquired thus far, their musicological “craft” and “tools” would allow them to follow me properly and with confidence, that is, whenever I judged that this kind of approach could further help them reach their own immediate and well-argued conclusions and authentic interpretations.

On the other hand, my pedagogical approach in teaching courses such as *Fantasy and Ballade Principles in Music* and *The Phenomenon of Fantasy in Art* – which I originally devised and have been teaching for many years in the doctoral study programmes at the Faculty of Music and the University of Arts – is somewhat different. Bearing in mind the contents and specificity of the courses themselves, as well as the fact that they’re intended for doctoral

students, I would say that my approach, in the context of exchange between a professor and doctoral student, is largely adjusted and/or adapted to the matter at hand. If one were to follow, for example, my lecture on the musical fantasy, *mutatis mutandis*, as a meta-speech about my pedagogical approach to the matter under consideration, then the following fragment of that lecture might serve to illustrate it: "...thus a musical fantasy essentially offers the possibility of transgressing, violating, exceeding the *laws* that govern the musical language of an age and its characteristic tonal systems, techniques, the properties of its elements on the 'phonetic' level, 'grammatical' rules, formalized ways of structuring musical patterns and standardized formal types. Insisting on the experience of *jouissance* in violating these laws and rules that are primarily a matter of style, certain systems, and musical conventions, is based on intensifying the activity of the processes of the pan-dimension of musical thinking that is governed by those other, *hidden laws* that one cannot generalize, that one cannot formulate like general rules..." Having followed, for many years, the achievements of doctoral students in both of those courses, which have also stemmed from adjusting my pedagogical approach to the contents of each course, I was always fascinated anew with the originality and power of their insights, non-stereotypical ways of thinking, arguing, and making conclusions, exceeding the boundaries of existing interpretations, as well as their freedom and authenticity of reflection, all of which came to the fore in provocative discussions and the high quality of their seminar papers and then also, and not infrequently, in their doctoral dissertations and doctoral artistic projects.

In any case, in the process of pedagogical exchange regardless of the degree, the crowning glory, the greatest pleasure, the most sincere joy and source of pride for a professor is the accomplishment of the student. I am very fortunate that in my pedagogical work so far I've really experienced many such moments, which constitute an inalienable part of the fullness of my work in musicology and life in general.

Would you say that speaking from the gravitational field of music is the only true point of departure as well as support for a musicologist? That is, would you agree that de la musique avant toute chose is the true musicological creed?

Unequivocally, in every sense, my answer is – yes. That much, I suppose, could be gleaned from my answers to your previous questions as well. At this point, in most general terms, I would add the following:

- music is the object of study of musicology (historical and systematic) as the science of music; if music is not the object of study, but only serves as an incidental occasion for study, then it is a different kind of study;
- in order to address music scientifically, a musicologist must have, given the specificity and degree of abstraction in the medium of music itself, a complex and complete education in music (whose basic precondition is musical literacy and practising music); if music is only an incidental occasion for research, then the researcher does not have to be musically educated;
- in order to support the facts resulting from her study of music with scholarly arguments and then articulate her conclusions and interpretation, whether the context of her research is *mono-*, *multi-*, *inter-*, or *trans-disciplinary*, a musicologist must, metaphorically speaking, insert her hands deep into the “musical dough” of the score and/or performance, in line with that saying, *il faut mettre les mains dans le pain*; if music is only an incidental occasion for doing research, then there is no reason, and possibly no knowledge either, for implementing the factual-analytical-synthetic process of cognizing a concrete body of music;
- in order to attain fresh scholarly insights and knowledge about the object of her research, a musicologist must, due to the very nature of the researched phenomenon, relate, adapt, and sculpt her analytical-synthetic interpretative rigour with the concrete body of music under consideration, whether or not she also seeks to problematize the complex relations between the musical and the extra-musical; if music is only an incidental occasion for conducting research, no new scholarly insights or knowledge will be attained about the music itself, which does not mean that these other kinds of research, where music is only a pretext for research, cannot yield new insights about their real object of study.

Any confusion as to what is and what isn't a musicological scholarly accomplishment may unlock the door to dilettantism on either side of the debate, with potentially dangerous consequences.

In that regard, when I was studying musicology, there was no hesitation about what basically constitutes a musicological piece of work. A music-historical approach coupled with a music-analytical approach formed the backbone of every musicological consideration. Without that, the consensus ran, everything else would be just so much “idle talk”, “watering a stake”, “building on a void”, retelling and applying narratives second-hand, third-hand,

*n*th-hand, copying, confabulating, and along the way, if needed, whether consciously or not, a facile but inadmissible and tendentious distortion and manipulation of facts... In a few words, there would be no science of music, or there would be a pseudo-science of music that no one would ever need. Prof. Vlastimir Peričić, a composer, an outstanding music theorist, a polyglot with an encyclopaedic kind of knowledge, also a doyen of Serbian music and culture, who lectured us on the history of Yugoslav music for three years (and who supervised my B.A. and M.A. final theses, before I became his teaching assistant), was the central, main pillar of the analytical approach to music in basic musicological research, which we were expected to master at university. This music-analytical knowledge that we received wasn't presented and practised for its own sake; rather, coupled with music-historical knowledge, it constituted a *conditio sine qua non* for any kind of musicological work. That is how we were taught by, I'll venture to call them, the professorial *magnum quartet* who taught the main subjects in the musicology curriculum at the time, comprising, in addition to Peričić, Profs. Roksanda Pejović, Nadežda Mosusova, and Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman (whose overall approach to music was the most intriguing to me back then, too, and who later supervised my doctoral thesis), showing us in their own scholarship that only if all of those basic preconditions of doing musicology, which I just outlined, have been met, one may produce a musicological achievement that may in turn, only in that case, yield new scholarly insights and knowledge. Namely, if, or, rather, when those foundations have been properly laid down, they would show us how and in what directions, ways, approaches (historiographical, music-theoretical, stylistic, comparative, poetical, aesthetical, philosophical, contextual, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary...) we could go on and arrive at the final musicological result of a specific line of research.

I've had the opportunity to verify the pertinence of this position and approach countless times, which is likewise borne out by the respected and valued position that Serbian musicology enjoys in the wider world, recognized for the perspicacity of its insights and interpretations.

And thus, paraphrasing Verlaine, *music above all* truly is my inviolable musicological *credo*.