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THE PROJECTIONS OF MUSICAL SPACE-TIME IN *INSTRUMENTAL SONGS* BY PETAR OSGHIAN

Abstract: In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Petar Osghian's birth and the release of a three-volume CD set containing the majority of his oeuvre, musicologist Dragana Stojanović-Novičić highlighted *Instrumental Songs* for 26 female voices (1978) as the piece that most strikingly exemplifies Osghian's mature musical style. Among the many intriguing details, the author chose the piece's "fascinating sonority", particularly in relation to the selected medium. In this regard, it is highly pertinent to situate Osghian's *Instrumental Songs* within the broader discourse surrounding the phenomenon of musical space-time in the music of the 20th-century. In order to ascertain the genesis of the distinctive sound quality within the vocal media, along with the myriad other facets of this work, we will employ the musico-

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analytical procedure based on reading the musical text through the phenomenon of musical space-time.

Keywords: musical space-time, Petar Osghian, *Instrumental Songs*, projections of musical space-time, the musical flow

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of Petar Osghian's (1932–1979) birth and the release of a three-volume CD set containing the majority of his oeuvre, musicologist Dragana Stojanović-Novičić highlighted *Instrumental Songs* for 26 female voices (1978)² as a piece of music that most strikingly exemplifies Osghian's mature musical style, which, in addition to his other works written in the 1970s, represents a kind of closure of his abruptly ended life and creative output.³ The author refers to the “fascinating sonority” of this piece as a result of the composer's act of “turning the chosen vocal medium upside-down”. Manifesting the “immanent allusion” of the composer's mature works or “post-prologue” pieces, this piece emerged after a tumultuous, experimental period of “simulating the classical model”.⁴ In this regard,

² In several instances, it has been asserted that the year of the inception of *Instrumental Songs* is 1977. Upon the examination of the score of this piece – which is accessible at the Library of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade – the year of origin was determined to be 1978. The printed version of the score was published in 1988 and is currently housed in the library of the Faculty of Philology and Arts in Kragujevac and the archive of Composers's Association of Serbia in Belgrade. Cf. Petar Ozgijan [=Osghian], *Instrumentalne pesme – chants instrumentaux, za 26 ženskih glasova, s.l., 1978* [score, author's edition]; Petar Ozgijan, *Instrumentalne pesme, za ženski hor, Beograd, Udruženje kompozitora Srbije, 1988* [score]. For the purposes of this discussion, the year of origin of this particular piece will be taken to be 1978.

As indicated in the “List of Compositions by Petar Osghian”, accessible at the Library of the Faculty of Music archive, and in the notes accompanying the first volume of the three-volume CD set *The Music of Petar Osghian* [s.l.: Timecode], the premiere of the piece and the initial recording occurred in 1978. An additional recording of this piece was released on *CD New Sound 109/1997* [Belgrade: SOKOJ]. The work is performed by the academic female choir, Collegium Musicum, with Darinka Matić-Marović (1937–2020) as the conductor. According to the program booklet, this recording was made in 1984. There is yet another recording, available online: https://youtu.be/PB49TCZAJ00?si=TQKJFidm-Fez_Hh8, performed by the female choir of Radio-Television Belgrade. The precise year of this recording is uncertain.

³ Драгана Стојановић-Новичић, “Cool/Hot and Soft: Пролог, акција и каденца Петра Озгијана”, *Нови звук*, 20, II/2002, 70–75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 70–71. In the article, Dragana Stojanović-Novičić presents an intriguing peri-

the author draws an analogy with the composers of the Polish school (Witold Lutosławski [1912–1994], Kazimierz Serocki [1922–1981], Krzysztof Penderecki [1933–2020], and Henryk Górecki [1933–2010]), as well as with the style of the composer György Ligeti (1923–2006) from the 1960s. The points of stylistic intersection are particularly evident in the methods of sound production, the use of multiple layers of sound, and ability to create exceptional sonic effects through intricate calibrations of timbral and other musical elements.⁵

In addition to *Instrumental Songs*, Dragana Stojanović-Novičić identifies poetic, aesthetical, and stylistical traits in Osghian's orchestral works, that are also noticeable in the works of the aforementioned group of composers. The author interprets "achieving unusual tone colors" in the works *Meditations* for two pianos, percussions and strings (1962), *Silhouettes – Concerto for Orchestra* (1963), *Sigogis* for orchestra (1967), and *Symphony '75* (1975) as the result of the remarkably rich orchestration, which "deserves special consideration".⁶ As a particularly intriguing detail – that is not inherently linked to the composers of Polish school or Ligeti, but perhaps to another group of 20th-century composers⁷ – the author selects the "percussion-like

odization for Osghian's oeuvre, delineating metaphorical categories of "prologue", "action", and "closure". The category of prologue, encompasses compositions created in Osghian's student years or shortly after he graduated, primarily in the 1950s and early 1960s. The works classified as action are those written during the 1960s, a period of Osghian's career marked by his emergence as a prominent composer. This period saw a consolidation of musical elements that would later evolve into a mature musical language. Unfortunately, due to his untimely demise at the age of 47, we only have glimpses of this language in his final works, which Stojanović-Novičić categorizes as closure. According to this criterion, the remaining works in this category are *Simfonija '75* (*Symphony '75*) (1975), *Nocturno* for string orchestra (1977), and *Za Mimu* (*For Mima*) for clarinet solo (1978), which was dedicated to the clarinetist Milenko Stefanović (1930–2022).

⁵ Ibid., 72, footnote 13. In that context, Osghian's *Instrumental Songs* exhibit similarities with Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* for mixed choir (1966), primarily due to the use of a similar medium, compositional method applied to the voice that is leading and, to a lesser extent, in the way of achieving the outstanding sonority in both works. Cf. Драгана Стојановић-Новичић, "Оркестарска дела Петра Озгијана: координате аутономне зрелости", у: Мишко Шуваковић (ур.), *Изузетности и сајосијање*, Београд, ФМУ, 1997, 146–153.

⁶ Ibid., 152, footnote 28.

⁷ The group of composers in question is comprised of those whose oeuvres and/or autopoetical writings evince a particular interest related to timbre as an essential structural

tone quality”. In the case of Osghian’s orchestral works, this quality is “related to the color and meter”.⁸ Therefore, it can be concluded that Osghian achieves memorable effects in his orchestral pieces by focusing his attention on the tone color and the possibilities that different types of instruments, groups of instruments, and their mutual combinations provide. These effects are further developed, in a provocative way, in *Instrumental Songs*. In addition to the aforementioned elements, Stojanović-Novičić identified two further aspects of Osghian’s musical language: “clusters and chromatic totality” and “the relationship of measured and non-measured time”, that pertains to the incorporation of aleatoric elements in the organisation of the musical flow.

According to Tijana Popović Mladjenović, the elements of the musical language present in Osghian’s works from the 1960s and 1970s reflect the thread of novelty that appeared in the Serbian music of the time.⁹ The author

element of the musical flow. This group includes Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Maurice Ravel (1875–1943), Edgard Varèse (1883–1965), Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001), and Pierre Boulez (1925–2016). Additionally, the group should include Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), who introduced the concept of *Klangfarbenmelodie* in his orchestral piece “Farben” from *Fünf Orchesterstücke* op. 16 (1909; revised 1949). He presented one of the first and rarely innovative solutions regarding the structuring of the musical flow via timbre and harmony. Similarly, Alexander Scriabin (1875–1915) also demonstrated an interest in timbre and the potential of sound ‘painting’ through the use of harmony and pitch/sound groups of the most diverse types.

⁸ Ibid., 149–150. The author’s reference to “percussion-like tone quality linked to the meter” signifies a correlation between accents and playing techniques, in addition to timbre, which collectively contribute to the perception of a percussion-like sound quality (i.e., the distinctive and sharp chords in the piano part or the strings playing the rhythmic basis for the percussion in *Meditations*, as well as the skillfull use of *tutti* sections based on the uniform rhythmical thread in the first movement of *Silhouettes – Concerto for Orchestra*, and similarly the gradual building-up of the percussion-like sound throughout the entire work, etc.).

⁹ Cf. Тијана Поповић Млађеновић, “*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Prolegomena (1)”, *Музички талас*, 4–6, 1995, 28–40; the same author, “*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Genus Proximum. Intentio (2)”, *Музички талас*, 1–3, 1996, 36–52; the same author, “*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: *Differentia specifica* – Музички језик (3)”, *Музички талас*, 4, 1996, 18–49; the same author, “The Modernist Achievements of Belgrade’s Musical and Painting Environment of the mid-1960s”, *IMS – RASMB, Series Musicologica Balcanica*, 3, 2022, 93–111, <https://doi.org/10.26262/smb.v0i3.8123>; the same author, “The Modernist Identity of Compositional Practice in 1960s Belgrade: Petar Osghian’s *Meditations* (1962), *Silhouettes* (1963), and *Sigogis* (1967)”, *Contemporary*

conducted a detailed analysis of the musical language employed on a selection of works written between 1962 and 1967, including Osghian's trilogy *Meditations* (1962), *Silhouettes* (1963) and *Sigogis* (1967).¹⁰ She found several significant aspects of Osghian's compositional style that were influenced by this period of innovation. For example, a distinctive and highly individualistic compositional method is evident in the inconsistent use of dodecaphonic and/or serial techniques in the selected works;¹¹ the sophisticated 'interweaving' of musical elements, along both the horizontal and vertical axes, results in a unified presentation of these two dimensions of musical space-time;¹² the use of motivic cells or pitch rows in a narrow ambitus and frequently distinctive structure, primarily based on the intervals of minor and major seconds and perfect fourths; the use of clusters in an innovative manner that is comparatively unconventional within the prevailing European musical

Music Review, 41, 5–6: Serbian Musical Identity, 2022, 513–532, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2022.2162294>.

¹⁰ The list of compositions is as follows: *Koncertantna muzika* (*Musica Concertante*) studies for the large orchestra (1962) by Petar Bergamo (1930–2022); *Meditations* (1962) by Petar Osghian; *String Quartet* (1962) by Berislav Popović (1931–2002); *Silhouettes* (1963) by Petar Osghian; *Naslovi* (*Titles*) for choir and large orchestra (1963) by Zoran Hristić (1938–2019); *Sferoon* (*Spheroön*, 1964) by Vladan Radovanović (1932–2023); *Muzika postajanja* (*The Music of Becoming*) for large orchestra (1966) by Rajko Maksimović (1935–2024); *Diffractions*, concerto for orchestra (1966) by Berislav Popović; *Concerto abbreviato* for clarinet solo (1966) by Petar Bergamo; *Three Haiku* for female choir and 24 instruments (1966) by Rajko Maksimović, and *Sigogis* (1967) by Petar Osghian. Cf. Поповић Млађеновић, "Differentia specifica – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Prolegomena (1)", op. cit., 37.

¹¹ Поповић Млађеновић, "Differentia specifica – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Differentia specifica – Музички језик (3)", op. cit., 25. Dragana Stojanović-Novičić also analyzes the application of dodecaphony in Osghian's orchestral works. Стојановић-Новичић, "Оркестарска дела...", op. cit., 148–149.

¹² The compositional method and approach to the musical material and form, that the author identifies as characteristic of Osghian's works from the 1960s, include a notable prevalence of symmetry, at various levels of the musical structure. This is evident in the presence of symmetrical patterns accros the horizontal, vertical and diagonal axes (as exemplified in the composition *Sigogis*, in addition to which the title of this piece also exhibits a stiking symmetry). Cf. Поповић Млађеновић, "Differentia specifica – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Differentia specifica – Музички језик (3)", op. cit., 40. These insights are particularly illuminating, insofar as they potentially demonstrate the composer's understanding of the concept of musical space-time, that will be subjected to further analysis in the *Instrumental Songs*.

practices of the time, which “draws attention to the affinity towards the verticality of the sound as the projection of timbre, volume and density”;¹³ the methods that emanate “rich rhythmic spectrum” characterized by a “polyphonic way of thinking”, which plays a dominant role;¹⁴ aleatory procedures employed in an imaginative manner, establishing an interestingly authentic relation to the musical form.¹⁵

In light of the provocative aspects of Osgian’s musical style of the aforementioned pieces, as well as the peculiarity and uncommonality that are evident in his oeuvre, it is challenging to analyze the ways in which musical space-time manifests itself in *Instrumental Songs*.

* * *

Before embarking on an analysis of Osgian’s work, it is necessary to briefly elucidate the hitherto under-researched connections between the phenomenon of musical space-time and the musical text. This is of particular relevance to an understanding of the selected analytical method.

In her study on musical writing, Tijana Popović Mladjenović highlights the subtle yet significant distinctions between the terms “musical text”, “written text”, “musical notation”, “score”, and “musical writing”. She asserts that the notated text, being “the support of the memory, preserves the duration of the composer’s musical idea and its transposition through time and space”,¹⁶ represents a single layer in the interpretation and understanding of the musical text. Conversely, the author defines the term *musical text* as:

the written text – translated into notation, as well as the meaning of the things not encapsulated by musical notation. Those elements that are not notated, despite

¹³ Ibid., 24.

¹⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹⁵ Perhaps the most illustrative example in this regard is the musical form of *Sigogis*, since the composer achieved its distinctive result through an unconventional process. The musical flow begins from *ex nihilo*, gradually evolves, reaching a point of intricate complexity before returning to the initial state. The formal outline in question clearly resembles a precisely imagined arch form – known as the “pisces” form – which, in Tijana Popović Mladjenović’s opinion, can be compared to the sculpture *Bird in Space* (1923) by Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957). The author asserts that the “pisces” form is present in several other pieces written between 1962 and 1967: *Koncertantna muzika*, *Meditations*, *Sferoon*, and *Muzika postajanja*. Cf. *ibid.*, 44ff.

¹⁶ Tijana Popović Mladjenović, *Muzičko pismo*, drugo izdanje, Beograd, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2015, 58.

being preserved in the musical text, represent a specific, precise system of inner musical structural relations that emerge from the written text. These relations are, in a sense, liberated from the composer's direct intentions and the written text itself, due to not being written down/notated.¹⁷

In essence, it is about a distinct approach to interpreting the musical text, which involves identifying and analysing the underlying structures and patterns that are not immediately apparent in the written notation. This process of reading between the lines can offer valuable insights into the complex phenomena, one of which is musical space-time.

In addition to the conventional analysis of thematic, tonal, and structural levels of the musical flow, the analytical approach employed to identify the projections of musical space-time is particularly attentive to those aspects of the musical piece that, in the context of conventional musical analysis, are often taken for granted and, as a result, not sufficiently contextualized, if at all. These aspects include, but are not limited to the role of texture in understanding the spatial qualities of a musical piece; the role of registers or register disposition of the musical material in the context of the organization of the spatial components of musical space-time; the role of timbre as a structural carrier of the musical flow; the dynamics as an element of revealing or hiding certain projections of musical space-time; a variety of changes in the speed of the musical flow, both on the micro and macro levels, and in relation to the organization of the temporal dimension of musical space-time; character and articulation marks; agogics; articulation as the element of bringing musical objects to the foreground of the space-time continuum; instrumentation and orchestration; non-temporal relations and processes occurring at a distance; equivalence, and so forth.

With regard to this, distinctive quality of the musical-analytical approach and the musicological interpretation can be found in the fact that the phenomenon in question manifests and projects itself onto a singular piece of music, a collection of works, the oeuvre of a particular composer, or a larger group of works from a specific era. These manifestations and projections can be discerned in elements that are not written down or notated, yet which can be understood with precision through the written and notated material.

¹⁷ Ibid. (translation M.B.)

The Projections of Musical Space-Time in the *Instrumental Songs* by Petar Osghian

In light of the two rather inspiring analyses and interpretations of Petar Osghian's musical language, authored by Dragana Stojanović-Novičić and Tijana Popović Mladjenović, it appears that there is yet another opportunity to engage with Osghian's poetics, particularly the composition *Instrumental Songs*, through an interpretative and analytical lens that considers the phenomenon of musical space-time.¹⁸

Having the aforementioned considerations in mind, we inquire as to whether the projections of musical space-time in the selected piece manifest themselves as:

- “fascinating sonority”, “connected with timbre and meter”?
- “immanent allusion” regarding the work's title, the selected medium, and the manner in which the composer employs the selected medium?
- “relationship between measured and non-measured time”?
- skillfull interweaving of musical elements horizontally, vertically, and even diagonally, with a pronounced emphasis on symmetry across nearly all levels of the musical structure?
- “the affinity towards the verticality of the sound as the projection of timbre, volume and density”, often combined with the horizontal of the narrow ambitus and minimal movement therefore creating the impression of sound fields?
- an unconventional approach to musical form, evident not only at the macro level but also at the micro level?

Or, perhaps as a combination of all these traits?

The title of the piece initially appears to be an erroneous choice, as it combines disparate musical modes, both instrumental and vocal. Upon closer examination of the score, a performance, and a musical analysis of the piece, it becomes evident that the title was deliberately chosen by the composer. Setting the text of the piece temporarily aside,¹⁹ it is not possible to

¹⁸ Cf. Mina Božanić, “Being Fascinated with Musical Space-Time: The Piano Works by Branka Popović (*Solitude – Self-reflections, Within a Dense Molecular Cloud, and From Rayleigh to Mie*)”, *New Sound*, 61, I/2023, 97–122, <https://ojs.newsound.org.rs/index.php/NS/article/view/143/226>.

¹⁹ The textual layer of the work is comprised of the vocal sound “a” and the syllables “na” and “la”, which are devoid of semantic and poetic value. The composer employs the voices in a manner analogous to that of an instrument, which has an impact on the performative aspect of the piece (there are no virtuoso or technically demanding parts).

determine with certainty whether this piece is written for a vocal medium.²⁰ In this regard, one might consider *Instrumental Songs* to be a piano piece.

It is indicative of the composer's approach that, at the outset of the first song,²¹ they leave clues about the employed technique (or, at the very least, one aspect of it), which indirectly speaks to the relationship to the phenomenon of musical space-time. In that sense, a review of the initial page of the score reveals the presence of two distinct thematic materials, which are presented four times in total, with minimal variation. The sole alteration is the insertion of a new chord sequence in between the two presentations of the dominant musical materials.²² From the outset, the texture is clearly delineated: the first group of voices (16) introduces the choral sequence, maintaining a consistent structure (thirds and seconds) and a downward trajectory. In contrast, the second group of voices (10) features a more melodic thematic material, exhibiting an upward tendency.²³

The manipulation of the registral disposition of the musical materials has enabled the shaping of the spatial property of the musical flow. This is

²⁰ The ambiguity evident in the title of Osghian's piece is consistent with the postmodernist framework of references. The postmodernist interplay with the meaning and notion is evident in the level and layers of playfulness and complexity of the semantic play, which begins with reflection on the peculiar title of Osghian's work. The active participation of the listener and interpreter in identifying different semantic codes is a key aspect of this interplay. Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман, "Постмодерна – карактеристике и одабири 'игре'", *Историја српске музике*, ур. Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман, Београд, Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, 2007, 278–279; the same author, *Fragmenti o muzičkoj postmoderni*, Novi Sad, Matica srpska, 1997, 138–139.

²¹ From the rehearsal letter C in the first song, percussive instruments of undefined pitch are introduced. The first one is triangle, accompanied by tambourine and wooden sticks in the second song. The specific function of these instruments is to reinforce the musical flow during moments of intensification, while also contributing to the overall diversity of timbral quality.

²² With regard to the compositional gesture evident in Osghian's orchestral compositions from the 1960s, it seems probable that the composer employed the twelve-tone technique in *Instrumental Songs* as well. This maintains continuity not only with the aforementioned pieces, but also with those composed in the 1970s, namely *Symphony '75* and *Nocturno*. This aspect of the piece would benefit from further detailed research.

²³ These two thematic materials exhibit distinct musical characteristics. In terms of harmonic configuration, the initial material is an elliptical harmonic sequence, comprising dominant and diminished seventh chords. The second material is a set 023568, a subset of the octatonic collection.

achieved by the limited interaction of the musical materials, which appear in distinct registers and are rarely combined. Furthermore, the exposition of the musical materials at a distance, in a non-successive way, contributes to the shaping of the spatial property of the musical flow. Moreover, the configuration of the musical space is discernible in the distinctive organization of the texture. It is noteworthy that within the two musical idioms (tonal and atonal), the chromatic total is presented in a manner that is partially horizontal and partially vertical. This gesture contributes to the overall volume and sonoristic quality of this particular segment of the musical piece.

The peculiar integrity of the horizontal and vertical axes of musical space-time²⁴ is the result of using two distinctive materials: the row, which is, as in some of Osghian's orchestral works, used unconventionally, therefore the musical flow retains its elasticity and moveability²⁵ and the *sample* of tonality.²⁶ In other words, both materials are divested of their inherent semantics, which enables them to maintain their identity in the perception. They are experienced as distinct but related events and it is their movement and interaction that projects the spatial property of the musical flow.²⁷

Underneath the written parts of the score of this song there appears the gesture of repetition, or starting again,²⁸ which brings no essential changes because the chord sequence and row has been transposed to different pitches only. Surprisingly, this does not leave the impression of staticity. In other words, even if there are no or only few perceptually changeable elements, which from a psychological aspect are essential for the perception of the

²⁴ A similar approach to the thematic material is registered in Osghian's orchestral works. Cf. Поповић Млађеновић, "*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: *Differentia specifica* – Музички језик (3)", op. cit., 40.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 25; Стојановић-Новичић, "Оркестарска дела...", op. cit., 149.

²⁶ Veselinović-Hofman, *Fragmenti...*, op. cit., 22ff. The material in question bears a resemblance to the incomplete sample, as the composer employs the harmonic sequence of dominant and diminished seventh chords, yet without the contextual framework that would otherwise elucidate the specific tonal regions and their respective tonal centers.

²⁷ This gesture is reflective of the phenomenon of "time strata". In his analysis of this phenomenon, musicologist Thomas Clifton describes the presence of multiple temporal layers within a single segment of the musical flow, which coexist in a unified impression that is not readily distinguishable from a phenomenological perspective. Thomas Clifton, *Music As Heard*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1983, 125–127.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 83.

flow,²⁹ the listener still experiences the moveability of the musical flow of the first song.³⁰

The Repercussion of Musical Space on the Musical Time

The prevailing tendency of stasis, evidenced by the minimal alterations in texture, persists throughout the remainder of the musical composition (rehearsal letter A). Thematic elements are observed in the gradual progression of pitches, with each note maintained for the duration of a whole note. This gesture evinces a resemblance to the marking of traces in the musical space. The pattern of movement is supported by the dynamics, which, for the first time since the beginning, exhibits activity.³¹ The duration is the focal point of this segment. Consequently, the thematic material is introduced in a gradual manner, yet with a discernible rhythmic progression upwards (whole note – half note – quarter note).

The composer achieves the effects of sonority, volume, and depth in this segment of musical space-time by employing a subtle manipulation of duration through the use of several groups of voices (six groups of two voices, with the seventh group comprising 14 voices). One group of two voices remains on a given pitch for the duration of the whole note, while the other groups continue on the neighboring notes, albeit with a different duration (half note and quarter note). The objective of this movement is to reach the designated pitch within the duration of the whole note. The most notable aspect of this layout is the group of 14 voices, which, due to its predominantly melodic movement and shorter note values, conveys the impression of mobility in this otherwise static segment of the piece.

After presenting the row in the parallel movement of fifths, the musical flow temporarily reaches its resting place, finding the focus in the fifth B-F sharp, doubled in octave. In the following segment (rehearsal letter C), we can notice the shrinking of the spatial component within the thematic layer:

²⁹ Cf. Michel Imberty, “The stylistic perception of a musical work: an experimental and anthropological approach”, *Contemporary Music Review*, 7, 1993, 33.

³⁰ Clifton, *Music as...*, op. cit., 102–105. Clifton identifies two distinct experiences of time in the music of the 20th century. The first of these is what Clifton refers to as “moving durations”, which is characterized by a consistent texture, unguided movement, and an undetermined duration. The second concept, “static succession”, manifests in instances of immobility, defined as moments lacking discernible changes in dynamics, sonority, and timbral components.

³¹ In the second song, the dynamics will progress to be a prominent feature.

the distance between the exposition of the musical materials keeps getting shorter, leading to their overlapping and simultaneous appearance.³²

In the section located beneath the rehearsal letter **D**, we encounter a novel concept: symmetry. It manifests between two outer groups of voices (the first and third, comprising eight voices each) unfolding the thematic material in inversion. The second group, comprising ten voices, progresses independently from the others in an upward trajectory (Example 1).

In this case, the symmetry is a consequence of the expansion of musical space-time, achieved through the addition of a thematic layer (row in transposition). In this regard, the aforementioned layer (comprising ten voices) can be conceptualized as an axis around which the other two layers (eight voices) revolve, thereby facilitating the unfolding of the chord sequence. The composer manipulates musical space-time within this segment of the piece through the repetition and subtle variations of the surrounding elements, including texture, registers, dynamics, the number and grouping pattern of the voices, and so forth.

The alteration in perceptual quality occurs at the outset of the second song, specifically within the thematic layer of the piece. The texture remains clearly delineated and predominantly contrapuntal, while the number of participating voices frequently fluctuates. The voices situated in the lower register present an ostinato layer, whereas those in the higher registers are primarily melodic (p. 8) or melodic and harmonic (p. 13). In the culminating moment, the texture assumes a leading role, transforming into homophony (pp. 10, 14), thereby introducing a percussive quality to the sound. The clear distinction between the lyrical character of the first song and the dance-like character of the second song allows us to conclude that we are presented with a piano piece, rather than a choral piece.³³

³² This is a crucial point to emphasize, since the two materials have been presented in a successive order from the outset of the song.

³³ The macroformal outline of *Instrumental Songs* is a dyptich (**AB**). The macroform of the first song most closely resembles the structure of the musical sentence, while the macroform of the second song can be interpreted as a ternary form, outlined as **A** (mm. 1–29), **b** (m. 30), **A₁** (mm. 31–53), and **Coda** (mm. 54–77). It is challenging to precisely delineate the formal structure of the first song, due to the fact that the entire composition is written in a non-measured time signature. A similar challenge is encountered when attempting to analyze the form of the second song. Section **b** (pp. 11–12 of the score) represents the musical material written (again) in an aleatoric manner. However, the remainder of the piece is written in a measured time, which provides a partial relief in determining the boundaries of the musical flow.

The generators of the events in the second song are two highly-profiled thematic materials. The first of these (mm. 3–8) bears the most resemblance to the structure of the theme in a classical-romantic sense and is observed on multiple occasions throughout the song (mm. 16–20 and 33–38). In each instance, the material alters the surrounding context, including the register, pitch, and metric structure. The second equally important material is the ostinato (mm. 1–9, 14–19, 31–36, and 54–57), which undergoes transformation in the mm. 31–36, appearing as the succession of notes and silences, diverging from the previous appearance where the ostinato and theme would emerge simultaneously. In the passage at mm. 14–19, the ostinato is presented in two voice groups, representing a further transformation from its initial appearance.

In conjunction with repetition, which is a dominant method of thematic organization employed in this song, there are additional elements that reinforce the objective of establishing a more linear and continuous musical flow. A transition occurs between the two instances of the theme (mm. 9–13), while a new thematic material emerges at the conclusion of the second theme appearance (mm. 19–24), culminating at mm. 25–29.³⁴ The introduction of this new material, situated between the theme and ostinato, demonstrates a proclivity towards continuity within the thematic fabric of the piece. In a broader sense, the return of continuity is tantamount to a return of linearity, which subsequently reveals the restoration of the temporal property of the musical flow.³⁵

Similarly as in the conclusion of the first piece (pp. 6–7), the composer once again introduces new musical elements into the second group of voices, with the objective of culminating in an expansion of musical space-time. However, this expansion is abruptly halted by the opposing tendency of contraction. This manifests as thematic lines reaching and settling at a singular pitch or point in pitch space, where they cease. This is reminiscent of the gesture observed at the outset of the piece, wherein a single sound underwent

³⁴ The material in question is designed as widespread chords in a registered manner, which are repeated on a single pitch or move within a narrow ambitus. Subsequently, it will be assigned a more prominent role in the segment preceding the coda (mm. 39–54).

³⁵ Cf. Michel Imberty, *La musique creuse le temps*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005, 99ff. In Imberty's view, the ongoing debate surrounding the manifestation of spatial and temporal properties in 20th-century music can be traced back to the projections of continuity and discontinuity within the musical flow.

a gradual addition of musical material. However, in this instance, the opposite tendency is observed.³⁶

The Repercussion of the Musical Time on Musical Space

From the perspective of the interpretative analysis of the phenomenon of musical space-time, it appears that the manner in which the temporal quality – through the metro-rhythmic component, tempo, agogics, and, in this particular piece, aleatorics – emanates in *Instrumental Songs* influences the formal outline of the work, both at a macro and microlevel. We can discern the mutual relations created in terms of succession and simultaneity based on how the composer balances out the segments of measured and non-measured time. Furthermore, we can perceive how a musical flow structured in such a manner forms a unique and complete sound experience, perceived as a coherent and well-formed musical structure. This allows for the discovery of the logic beneath the musical form of this composition.

The temporal flow of the first song can be interpreted as an event occurring in a well-balanced, slow-paced, almost static musical time, that demonstrates a proclivity towards expansion, which ultimately culminates in the objective of conquering the sound space. In this instance, Oshgian's manipulation of temporal properties evinces a resemblance to the phenomenon of vertical time. This is characterized by the elimination of all contrasts, the delineation of thematic or tonal layers, and the dynamism of the musical flow. Consequently, the listener's experience is confined to the present moment, with no projection of future or past events. This results in a highly unordered perception of the temporal dimension of the piece.³⁷ The impression is effectively achieved through a number of musical elements, including a steady tempo (48 beats), long rhythmical notes (half notes, quarter notes, and whole notes), predictable voice movement, narrow ambitus, legato, fermatas, and so forth. The most active dimension in this segment of the musical flow is timbre, as evidenced by the changes in the number of active

³⁶ In this regard, the formal outline of *Instrumental Songs* bears a resemblance to the "pisces" form, which the composer already achieved in his orchestral piece *Sigogis*.

³⁷ Jonathan D. Kramer, *The Time of Music*, New York, Schirmer Books, 1988, 55–56. The author emphasizes that the vertical time does not imply a complete lack of structure; rather, it signifies the absence of a structurally ordered temporal component of the musical flow. This is a consequence of the absence of linearity, causality, and hierarchy in the presentation of events.

voices,³⁸ the gradual voice leading, and the texture. These elements contribute to the remarkable sonoristic effects. The density of the sound, the fact that it sometimes extends through the entire listening space, and the voluminosity achieved in this particular way are bestowed on the listener, given that the work is written for a choir.

Despite the impression that the musical flow in the first song reached its conclusion (evident in the score as well), the entrance of the section under rehearsal letter **B** in the second song reveals a somewhat unexpected outcome. Thus, an analysis of the logic of the movement up to the section marked under **B** and then after it reveals that the two temporal flows occurred simultaneously on both the horizontal and vertical axes. Assuming that the temporal flow of the first song progresses in a linear fashion along the horizontal axis, it becomes evident that the endpoint, as indicated in the score on page 7, does not represent the ultimate goal of this musical movement. Instead, it serves as a mere stopping point, as will be subsequently demonstrated in the second song. In a metaphorical sense, the temporal flow of the second song is bending the flow of the first song, which affects the overall curving of the musical space-time of the piece. That indicates that the musical flow of the second song commences at the moment when the temporal flow of the first song is still present (although unheard), indicating a folding on the vertical axis. The temporal flow of the second song is re-established at m. 31, where it will continue its movement uninterrupted, until the end of the entire piece.

From this perspective, the section marked as **B** can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it represents a delayed closure and ending to the temporal flow of the first song. On the other, it functions as the contrasting, middle section within the musical flow of the second song.³⁹ In this regard, it is evident that both songs adhere to a ternary form, exhibiting a schema of

³⁸ In the first song, the voices are grouped in the following manner: 16-10; 14-2-2-2-2-2-2; 14-12; 4-4-4-2-2-2-2-4; 14-12; 8-10-8. The grouping of the voices in the second song is as follows: 14-12; 8-8-10; 12-14; 5-4-2-2-2-2-4-5; 14-8-4; 18-8; 14-12; 12-8-6; 10-6-10. Each alteration in the grouping of the voices adheres to the logic of the presentation of the thematic material, indicating the changes in the material with a new rehearsal letter.

³⁹ It is challenging to analyze and interpret the function and meaning of this segment, both in terms of the formal outline of the second song and the piece as a whole, due to the absence of symmetry. This lack of symmetry aligns with the character and the type of thematic work present.

aba₁. However, an analysis of the macroform of the entire piece reveals a tendency towards a binary form, which manifests itself in the formal outline of the diptych and in the structuring of the temporal dimension of the musical space-time, incorporating both measured and non-measured time, the profiling of the thematic material (tonal and atonal), as well as texture (polyphony and homophony, instrumental and vocal). Although these two tendencies appear to operate on opposite planes, it is evident that an understanding of their coexistence in the musical flow of *Instrumental Songs* is essential for a comprehensive interpretation of the piece, given that their intriguing interaction manifests musical space-time.⁴⁰

The second song introduces a new element, namely the presence of measured time. This is followed by a change in both the presentation of the musical material and the relationship between the voices. In comparison to the first song, there is an acceleration of the tempo (116 beats) and the introduction of a new rhythmic structure, comprising mainly eighth notes and quarter notes. Secondly, the metro-rhythmic component undergoes significant changes in this song, which are evident in the numerous accents, frequent changes in meter, as well as agogical dilatations and expansions. These elements serve to manipulate the temporal component at the microlevel. In contrast to the preceding song, the manner in which this song reaches its culmination is based on the sections of the unison lead voice parts, which employ similar metric and pitch organization, with intensified dynamics and a greater activity of percussion. Such occurrences frequently obscure the timbral aspect of the musical flow, yet contribute to the impression of a voluminous medium (Example 2).

The broadest outline of the voices is discernible in the aforementioned section **b**, in the symmetrical grouping (5-4-2-2-2-2-4-5), which is manifested through the voice leading and thematic layer of the piece. The voices

⁴⁰ In order to comprehend the manner in which the phenomenon of musical space-time is manifested in Oshgian's composition, we need to acknowledge the ostensibly pivotal role of the relationship between linearity and non-linearity. In the interpretation of these terms by the composer Jonathan Kramer, linearity is understood as the movement that is orientated towards a goal, with one or multiple goals at a given time. In contrast, non-linearity is experienced as the absence of change at the microstructural level, which gives rise to the impression of stasis. Consequently, linearity is analogous to the "time of becoming", whereas non-linearity is akin to the "time of being". Ibid., 19–21. However, both tendencies exhibit a distinction from continuity and discontinuity, despite their typical coexistence and intertwined presentation.

present the thematic material in inversion, while the symmetry is evident in both neighboring and distant voices. In the groups of two, the dominant material is row F-E flat-D flat-B. Each voice contributes a single tone from the row, maintaining a consistent duration (whole note) and direction (downward). In this manner, the groups of two voices serve as the axis of rotation for the remaining groups, exhibiting a gesture analogous to that observed at the conclusion of the first song (rehearsal letter **D**). The most memorable instances bringing the tone quality of the musical flow to the foreground occur between measures 19 and 29. This is the first culmination of this song, therefore the percussion are joining the choir. The glissando at mm. 19–23 anticipate the culmination (mm. 24–29). Another example is the section m. 39 to m. 53, where the intensification of the musical flow ultimately results in the accumulation of energy that is finally released in m. 59, in the second group of voices.

At the conclusion of the second piece, the outer voices begin to regroup into intervals of two, three, and four tones, thereby preparing the listener for the final goal of the piece, the diatonic chord D-F sharp-A. The chord appears simultaneously with the basic outline and first rotation. In this manner, the composer regulates the voluminosity and intensity of the musical space-time by varying the number of participating voices, exploiting the thematic layer of the work, calibrating the metrical-rhythmic dimension, and adjusting the dynamics. This process represents a method of establishing the overall dynamics of the musical flow.

Reflections on the Relationship Between the Composer and the Musical Space-Time: Petar Osghian's Legacy

Osghian's formative years, during which he will gradually achieve the status of one of the leading composers of the youngest generation of artists active in the Belgrade environment, were the part of the vibrant field of musical practice of the 1960s and 1970s, as Tijana Popović Mladjenović shows.⁴¹ Investigating the significance of the 1960s from the perspective of the reception of avant-garde tendencies by composers active in the Belgrade musical envi-

⁴¹ Cf. Тијана Поповић Млађеновић, "Музичка модерна друге половине XX века", *Историја српске музике...*, op. cit., 215ff. On the significance of international festivals of contemporary music for the composers of the Belgrade music scene, cf.: Поповић Млађеновић, "*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Prolegomena (1)", op. cit., 32–33.

roment, the author refers to the interpretation of musicologist Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, who marks this period as “the second impact of the avant-garde”. More specifically, she emphasizes the moment of convergence of local and dominant musical environments, with the former represented by the Belgrade scene within the context of ex-Yugoslavia and the latter encompassing European musical centres such as Paris, Prague, Donaueschingen, Darmstadt, and Warsaw.⁴²

Concurrently, the musical and artistic communities of Belgrade during the 1960s and 1970s⁴³ were shaped by the influx of ideas and trends from leading European centers of artistic and musical excellence. Popović Mladjenović proposes that the avant-garde nature of the era reflected the genuine desire of emerging composers to connect with the most recent developments of the European neo-avant-garde.⁴⁴

The same remarks appear to have inspired the musicological interpretation of Osgian’s orchestral works authored by Dragana Stojanović-Novičić. Consequently, the author concludes that Osgian’s works written in the period 1960–1975 reflect “the individual poetics, by virtue of encountering the prevailing influences of the era exhibits a certain degree of autonomy within the context of the domestic music production of the period”.⁴⁵ In accordance with Umberto Eco’s definition of the term “experimentalism”, the author emphasizes that it is possible to extract the poetics of an author, based on their entire oeuvre (in this case, Osgian’s), without compromising the value of the

⁴² Mirjana Veselinović, *Stvaralačka prisutnost evropske avangarde u nas*, Beograd, Univerzitet umetnosti, 1983, 277ff.

⁴³ Ibid., 34–37; Tijana Popović Mladjenović, “The Cultural Context and Modernist Identity of Belgrade’s Musical Environment of the Mid-1960s”, *Identities: The World of Music in Relation to Itself*, Tilman Seebass, Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, and Tijana Popović Mladjenović (Eds), Belgrade, Faculty of Music, 2012, 111–131.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 123ff. In this context, the author draws an analogy between the two distinctive moments in the history of Serbian music, the 1930s and the 1960s. During these periods, the influence of avant-garde currents was particularly pronounced, resulting in a convergence of these moments under the umbrella of avant-garde ideas. This convergence was driven by a shared need for meaning in music and the subsequent development of a unique poetics.

⁴⁵ Стојановић-Новичић, “Оркестарска дела...”, op. cit., 146. The aforementioned periodization is contingent upon the selected works, yet it can reasonably be extended to encompass Osgian’s oeuvre written subsequently to 1975, of which *Instrumental Songs* is a notable example.

singular work as an autonomous, finished entity.⁴⁶ This appears to be the defining characteristic of Osghian's creative output, particularly in relation to the profile of music production in the Belgrade environment of the time. This environment undoubtedly fostered a distinctive approach to music production within ex-Yugoslavia and Europe more broadly. It also exemplifies Osghian's unique compositional style.⁴⁷

One might consider the singularity of Osghian's oeuvre in the context of Serbian/ex-Yugoslavian and European music of the seventh and eighth decades of the 20th century. This can be achieved by examining the relationship between the composer and the phenomenon of musical space-time. In this regard, it is pertinent to inquire whether the creative impetus, as identified by Tijana Popović Mladjenović as a common denominator for the creative output in the 1960s,⁴⁸ namely sensitivity to the new, to change, and to meaning, correlates with the level of the composer's awareness of the phenomenon of musical space-time.

In the case of *Instrumental Songs*, there are several intriguing gestures that fundamentally speak to Osghian's understanding of the phenomenon of musical space-time. These gestures are related to the specific exposition of the musical material, both along the horizontal and vertical axes of the musical space-time, resulting in the establishment of symmetrical relations at the thematic level of the piece. On the other hand, the utilization of texture to enhance and direct the experience of the spatial quality of the musical flow effectively adds to the employed gestures. The number of participating voices is varied, affecting the volume and density of the space-time of the piece along with timbre, metro-rhythmic component, and dynamics. The aspiration is towards the complete exploitation of the thematic, metro-rhythmic, and timbral potential in sculpting the inner and outer dynamism of the piece.

Nevertheless, Osghian's profound comprehension of the concept of musical space-time is exemplified by his approach to musical form. The composer brings together and intertwines two temporal flows, juxtaposing linearity and non-linearity, as well as continuity and discontinuity in a manner

⁴⁶ Ibid., 151, footnote 2.

⁴⁷ Petar Osghian was born in Dubrovnik, Croatia, into a family of Armenian descent. Dragana Stojanović-Novičić posits that this peculiar fact constitutes the composer's "existential 'oddness'", which "additionally amplified his artistic identity". Cf. Стојановић-Новичић, "Cool/Hot and...", op. cit., 70.

⁴⁸ Поповић Млађеновић, "*Differentia specifica* – из композиторске праксе у Београду: Genus Proximum. Intentio (2)", op. cit., 38ff.

that is both distinctive and intriguing. This approach curves the musical space-time and, overall, illuminates the significance of the thematic material, demonstrating a high level of the composer's awareness of the phenomenon of musical space-time. Although it is embedded in his style of the 1960s, it is evident that Osgian's manipulation of musical space-time in *Instrumental Songs* represents a remarkably creative approach that reflects a connection to the more current tendencies of the 1970s.⁴⁹ It is therefore intriguing to speculate how the composer would have responded to the concept of musical space-time in his other works had he lived longer, and what insights this may have offered regarding Osgian, a composer known for his unique and authentic style.

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⁴⁹ In this context, Osgian's poetics can be situated within the "soft plurality" framework. Cf. Веселиновић-Хофман, "Постмодерна...", op. cit., 279.

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⁵⁰ The title page of this score bears the stamp MUS88, which suggests that it was printed during or for the festival “Music in Serbia”. This festival was held from 1977 to 1991 in Belgrade and was organized by Composers’ Association of Serbia. More information about the history of the festival: https://composers.rs/?page_id=340.

⁵¹ As indicated by Dragana Stojanović-Novičić, the Canadian production company Timecode released the publication of the three-volume CD set *The Music of Petar Osghian*. Cf. Стојановић-Новичић, “Cool/Hot and...”, op. cit., 70, footnote 1. The released booklet is devoid of any information pertaining to the location, publisher, or year of release.

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Summary

The objective of this article is to elucidate the interpretation of the projections of musical space-time in *Instrumental Songs* (1978) by Petar Osgghian (1932–1979). In light of the insights presented in the two highly illuminating analyses and interpretations of Petar Osgghian's musical language, authored by Dragana Stojanović-Novičić and Tijana Popović Mladjenović, we present a further reading of Osgghian's oeuvre. The analysis of the composition *Instrumental Songs* is based on the interpretative approach focusing on the phenomenon of musical space-time. In this context, we are referring to a kind of reading between the lines, which represents searching for 'the empty spaces' of what is the written down/notated 'within' a musical text. The distinctive feature of the musico-analytical approach and musicological interpretation through the lens of the musical space-time phenomenon is that the manifestations and projections of this phenomenon can be discerned in a singular piece of music, a group of works, a composer's oeuvre, or a larger collection of works from a particular era alike. These projections are evidenced in elements that are not explicitly written down or notated, but are understood more profoundly through the written or notated material.

The implementation of this approach to the selected piece demonstrates that the temporal quality, as manifested through the metro-rhythmic component, tempo, agogics, and aleatorics in this piece, influences the spatial component, which manifests through the thematic layer, texture and voice-leading. Furthermore, both properties influence the formal outline of the piece, both in terms of the larger structure and the smaller details. It can thus be concluded that the composer displays a high level of awareness regarding the phenomenon of musical space-time, as evidenced by the integration of two temporal flows, the interrelation of linearity and non-linearity, as well as continuity and discontinuity, which interact in peculiar and intriguing ways, the curving of the musical space-time continuum, and the overall relation to the thematic material. The listening experience of *Instrumental Songs* for 26 female voices is characterized by a voluminous, vibrant, and authentic sonority that is projected throughout the score. This sonority is evident in the gentle voice modelling, thematic

work, and masterful organization of texture and division of voices between registers. In light of the broader social, cultural, and artistic context, the oeuvre of Petar Osghian serves as a testament to his status as one of the leading composers of the “second wave” of the avant-garde music movement in the 1960s in Belgrade. His rather authentic role appears to be the crucial, characteristic, and peculiar trait underlying Osghian’s creative output in regard to the profile of the music production of the Belgrade environment of the time, which undoubtedly nurtured its own peculiarity in regard to the music production in ex-Yugoslavia and Europe in general.

Examples

Example 1. Petar Ozgijan, *Instrumentalne pesme*, I, Beograd, UKS, 1988, pp. 6–7.⁵²

The musical score for Example 1 is presented in two systems. The first system includes a tempo marking of quarter note = 48 and a dynamic marking of *p*. The second system includes dynamic markings of *p*, *a-*, and *pp*. The score is written for piano and triangle.

⁵² Used with the kind permission of Edi Osghian, to whom the author extends her gratitude.

Example 2. Petar Ozgijan, *Instrumentalne pesme*, II, Beograd, UKS, 1988, mm. 1–29.

II

$\text{♩} = 116$

14 *f marc.*
na na na

12 *f marc.*
na na na na

mf *stacc.*

Wood Blocks

14 *div.*
mf la la la

12 *div.*
mf la la la

Triangl

A

8 *div.*
f na na na na

8 *f* na na

12 *marc.*
f na na na na na

Tambourine

8 *cresc.*

8 *div.*
p na

12 *p* na

Tamb.

♩ = 56

12 *f*

14 *f*

Tambourine *f*

Wood Blocks *f*

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff (labeled 12) is a piano part in treble clef, 3/4 time, featuring a series of chords with accents and a dynamic marking of *f*. The second staff (labeled 14) is also a piano part in treble clef, 3/4 time, featuring a series of chords with accents and a dynamic marking of *f*. The third staff is for the Tambourine, in 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked *f*. The fourth staff is for Wood Blocks, in 3/4 time, with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, marked *f*. The tempo is indicated as ♩ = 56.