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***The Native Melody of Momčilo
Nastasijević: Interdisciplinary
Reflexions, Belgrade, Faculty of Music,
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To mark an important jubilee – 125 years since the birth of Momčilo Nastasijević (1894–1938), the Serbian poet, playwright, and author – the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Music at the University of Arts in Belgrade, in cooperation with the Regional Museum of Rudnik and Takovo in Gornji Milanovac, organized a national significance-level scholarly conference with international participation under the title of “The *Native Melody* of Momčilo Nastasijević: Interdisciplinary Reflexions” on 23–24 November 2019 in Belgrade and Gornji Milanovac. Adopting the concept of *native melody*¹ as the backbone of Momčilo

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¹ The phrase матерња мелодија / *maternja melodija* (“native melody” or “mother’s melody”, as in “native language” or “mother’s tongue”) was coined by Momčilo Nastasijević in the title of his essay “Za maternju melodiju” (“In Favour of Native Melody”), reflecting

Nastasijević’s creative work, the Department of Musicology placed before the scholarly community in the humanities an extremely inspiring challenge for possible interpretations, explorations, and surveys of the artistic discourses of Momčilo Nastasijević and his composer brother Svetomir. The aim, which the conference did attain, was to gain, through theoretical-analytical re-examinations, new insights into the idea of *native melody* from different aspects of the study of music, as well as to examine the possibility of pushing the boundaries of individual scholarly disciplines, and to combine various methodological procedures, from the academic fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory, theology, religious studies, literary theory, linguistics, accentology, philology, psychology, philosophy, and art history.

The conference opened with a keynote lecture by Dr. Robert Hodel, Professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies at the University of Hamburg; the title of his talk was “Uloga muzike u Nastasijevićevom pesništvu u evropskom kontekstu” (The Role of Music in the Poetic Oeuvre of Nastasijević in Its European Context). He set out from a philosophical

his affirmative stance on the phenomenon of the archetypal synthesis of speech and music, stemming right from the people. Момчило Настасијевић, Сабрана дела Момчила Настасијевића: Есеји, белешке, мисли, (редакција Новице Петковића), Горњи Милановац–Београд, Дечје новине–Српска књижевна задруга, 1991. [Momčilo Nastasijević, *Sabrana dela Momčila Nastasijevića. Eseji, beleške, misli*, ed. Novica Metković, Gornji Milanovac and Belgrade, Dečje novine and Srpska književna zadruga, 1991.]

interpretation of the correlation between language and thought, whereby these conceptual categories are not ontological givens, but the two sides of the same coin – the source of cognition. Hodel understands Nastasijević's poetic procedures as gestures whereby the poet extracts the primordial dimension of language, which results in a peculiar synesthetic causal operation of three categories – concept, image, and voice – and a synthesis of music and thought, which, in the wider context of contemporary European culture, Hodel classifies as an avant-garde-neo-primitivist creative stance.

The subjects presented on at the conference by musicologists from the Department of Musicology covered a wide range of topics that have been present in Serbian scholarship as well as those that were hitherto unexplored, concerning the role and function of the artistic concept of *native melody* in the oeuvres of Momčilo and Svetomir Nastasijević, surveyed from interdisciplinary perspectives in terms of theory and methodology. Thus in her talk, titled “Monolog Antigone u istoimenoj operi Svetomira Nastasijevića” (The Monologue of Antigone in the Eponymous Opera by Svetomir Nastasijević), Dr. Ana Stefanović directed her attention to this work of music theatre, unfairly neglected in Serbian scholarship, problematizing and re-examining the position of Serbian opera composers in the semantic gravitational field of the genre of music drama, including Greek tragedy as a music-functionalized literary genre. Treating the monologue as a point of intersection between musical and literary artistic speech, Stefanović offered a comprehensive interpretation of every phe-

nomenal form of Svetomir's creative experience of the poetic-aesthetic principle of *native melody*, and highlighted the place where his folk music idiom meets the ancient Greek literary and contemporary modes of expression.

The object of Dr. Tijana Popović Mladenović's discussion was to survey Nastasijević's concept of *native melody* in the poetic context of the French composer Claude Debussy. In her talk titled “Moguća značenja i tumačenja fenomena *maternje melodije* u poetici Kloda Debisija” (Possible Meanings and Interpretations of the Phenomenon of *Native Melody* in the Poetics of Claude Debussy), referring primarily to the peculiarities of the vocal part (more precisely, melodic writing mirroring the inflections of spoken French) in Debussy's lyrical drama *Pelléas et Mélisande*, as well as the musical source (through Debussy's poetic lens of “broken” melodies) of the melodies of the two thematic building blocks of his orchestral work *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Dr. Popović Mladenović highlighted the relevance and far reach of Nastasijević's creative creed, which, if interpreted beyond the categories of spatio-temporal causality, reveals the principle of “coalescence” between native language and melody, which is archetypal, originary, cognitively not entirely defined, but easily discernible in its implementation in music.

Speaking of “Direct Correspondences between the *Native Melody* of Momčilo Nastasijević and the *Native Melody* of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac” (“O neposrednim saglasjima između *maternje melodije* Momčila Nastasijevića i *maternje melodije* Stevana Stojanovića

Mokranjca”), Dr. Ivana Petković Lozo, Neda Kolić, and Marija Simonović, pursuing a sort of methodological transposition of Nastasijević’s poetic axiom, posited as the central problem of their discussion the mapping out of points of contact between the distinctive lines of Mokranjac’s own *garlanding* [руководње] style with the aesthetic-philosophical postulates of Nastasijević’s creative strategy. In his presentation, titled “Muzika kao oživotvoravajuće duhovno načelo nastasijevićevske misli” (Music as the Animating Spiritual Principle of Nastasijević’s Thought), paying special attention to the syntax, vocabulary [лексика], and sonority of Nastasijević’s writing, Dr. Igor Radeta offered new interpretations referring to, among other things, Nastasijević’s modes of conceptualising music, as well as their causal reflexions on the morphological and semantic dimension of the written word.

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, considerations of the phenomenon of *native melody* were presented in two contributions. In her talk, titled “Semantika *intoneme* u obrednom muzičkom stvaralaštvu” (The Semantics of the *Intoneme* in Ritual Music Creativity), staking out her theoretical-methodological grounding, Dr. Mirjana Zakić resorted to the prosodic definition of the *intoneme* as a typical pattern of verbal inflection, deriving her interpretation of musical intonation in the context of the sonic representation of Serbian folk ritual songs, using *tužbalice* (mourning songs), *dodole* (rain dance songs), and *koleda* (Christmas songs) as examples. Dr. Jelena Jovanović focused on a comparative survey of the structural-semantic character-

istics of *Zora* (“Dawn”), a poem by Nastasijević, and several traditional songs. In her presentation titled “Odzvuk jednog karakterističnog segmenta melodijskih modela juga Srbije i susednih oblasti u Nastasijevićevoj pesmi *Zora*” (An Echo of a Characteristic Segment of Melodic Models from Southern Serbia and Neighbouring Regions in Nastasijević’s Poem *Zora*) Jovanović highlighted the presence of a tight formal-melodic-intonative bond between the tradition-bound melodic motion of folk vocal practice and the intonative form of the repetitive final line of every verse in *Zora*: “Stani ne mini” (Stop, don’t go).

The two presentations from the domain of music theory were thematically and methodologically related, since their authors discussed the characteristics of the harmonic language of Svetomir Nastasijević’s choral suites, treating the phrase *native melody* primarily as *native melodies*, as concrete musical materializations of vocal folk practice. Music theorist and conductor Dr. Miloje Nikolić focused on the idea of *native harmony*, supported by Nastasijević’s compositional-technical and choral-orchestral treatment of traditional folk songs, consequently stemming from a direct application of *native melodies* in the construction of his choral textures. Likewise a theorist of music, Dr. Saša Božidarević, pointing to the closeness of Nastasijević’s and Mokranjac’s artistic languages in the thematic-formal shaping of their choral works, argued that both composers resorted to the compositional procedure of arranging folk songs, but that Nastasijević was oriented to the native melody of older folk layers.

Tanja Gačić, a historian of art, touched on issues relating to the overall traits of the Nastasijević brothers' collaborative artistic procedures (their operas *Međuluško blago* / "The Treasure of Međulužje" and *Đurađ Branković*), while Đorđe Đurđević discussed the use of theological discourse in Momčilo Nastasijević's poetic oeuvre.

Dr. Mina Đurić, a literary theorist, approached the issue of *native melody* in methodological-analytical terms from the aspect of accentology, focusing on "Intervals in the *Native Melody* of Momčilo Nastasijević" ("Intervali *maternje melodije* Momčila Nastasijevića"). Another literary theorist, Dr. Svetlana M. Rajčić Perić, discussed the metaphysical aspects of Nastasijević's poetry, while Dr. Petar Jevremović, a clinical psychologist, in his discussion titled "Duh, melodija, luk" (Spirit, Melody, Character), interpreted Nastasijević's views about cultural degradation as a result of neglecting collective identity, as a "measuring instrument" for our present social self-reconsiderations.

Assessing the scholarly contribution of this conference, we may conclude that its interdisciplinary programme conception allowed for encounters and re-examinations of academic discourse concerning Nastasijević's phenomenon of *native melody*, interpreted equally as an abstract, imaginary meta-category, pregnant with ambivalence, as an ambiguous, partly rationally discernible category, as well as a concretely revealed and semantically decisively determined concept that encourages considerations in terms of theory and methodology, compositional technique, and style. It shed important light on the creative oeuvre of Svetomir

Nastasijević, as well as problematized his compositional practice, not only in the context of realizing the concept of *native melody*, but also in terms of the characteristics of the compositional-technical procedures he used. We might say that Svetomir Nastasijević was positioned in a "musical space-time" in between the accomplishments of the romantically and nationally leaning composers of the *Belgrade school* and the achievements of the representatives of the *Prague school*, bearing in mind the modality in his musical thinking, resorting to the archaic, as well as the presence of modernist elements in his oeuvre.

Let us turn to the remaining segments of the conference. They included, on the first day of the conference, the opening of "Četiri maternja kruga" (Four Native Circles), an exhibition focused on the oeuvres of the Nastasijević brothers, with remarks by its author, Dr. Igor Radeta,² and a concert, titled "Maternja sazvučja braće Nastasijević" (The Native Sonorities of the Nastasijević Brothers), featuring works by Svetomir Nastasijević (Kolarac Foundation Gallery),³ which

² Most of the exhibits – musical instruments, paintings, drawings, photographs, scores, the written legacy of the Nastasijević brothers – are part of the collection of the Regional Museum of Rudnik and Takovo, whose management generously loaned this valuable material to the Department of Musicology, to lend a visual dimension to the narrative of the social significance of the Nastasijević family.

³ Excerpts from the opera *Antigona*, soprano, piano; Second Lyric Suite – *U prirodi* (In the Wild), piano; *Jesenja pesma* (Autumn Poem) and *Večernja pesma* (Evening Poem) form *Deset pesama moga brata* (Ten Poems by

provided another opportunity to familiarise the general public with works by this composer and shed additional light on his oeuvre.

The second day of the conference was hosted in the foyer of the Regional Museum of Rudnik and Takovo in Gornji Milanovac. On the second day, the work of the hosts – historian and senior curator Aleksandar Marušić and art historian and senior curator Tanja Gačić – was reflected in their Museum's permanent exhibition as well as in their creative investment in designing the concept of the

programme, whose realization also included some of the youngest members of the local community as well as students of the Department of Ethnomusicology and Ethno-choreology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade.

On this occasion, too, with this scholarly conference, a continuation of its longstanding interdisciplinary explorations and study of historiography, the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade once again affirmed its leading position as the carrier of current, contemporary trends in the development of Serbian musicological thought.

My Brother), soprano, piano; première performance of *Žal za odbeglom tajnom...* ("Mourning an Escaped Secret...") for flute, voice, and piano, a setting of the poem *Frula* ("Flute") by Momčilo Nastasijević, specially composed for this conference by Vladica Mikićević, a student at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, whereby the interdisciplinary contribution of this conference was extended to cover the composition of a new piece of music.