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## DEFENDED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

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**The Musical Universe of  
Claude Debussy.  
In Search of the Immediacy of  
Correspondence between  
the Ear and the Eye<sup>1</sup>**

The selection of the theme for the doctoral dissertation – *The Musical Universe*

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<sup>1</sup> Doctoral dissertation, *The Musical Universe of Claude Debussy. In Search of the Immediacy of 'Correspondence' between the Ear and the Eye*, mentored by Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović, was defended June 5, 2018, at the Faculty of Music of the University of Arts in Belgrade. The committee consisted of five members: Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović, Full-time Professor of the Faculty of Music, Dr. Marija Masnikosa, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Music, Dr. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, Full-time Professor of the Faculty of Music (retired), Dr. Dragana Stojanović-Novičić, Full-time Professor of the Faculty of Music and Dr. Branka Radović, Full-time Professor of the FILUM in Kragujevac.

*of Claude Debussy. In Search of Immediacy of 'Correspondence' Between the Ear and the Eye* – is a result of the many years of my interest in Claude Debussy's opus, and in the specific cultural-historical moment in which the composer lived and created. In other words, the said theme is, on the one hand, the result of a process of continuous discovery of Debussy's *world of music*, that is, a *debussian universe*, and, metaphorically speaking, an exploratory *cruising* through one of the most complex musical-historical periods. The period of the *fin de siècle* was pervaded by the need for an integral, complex and, at the same time, critical observation of the world. Thus, there are two pulsating points, two *agents provocateurs* that stand at the beginning of the doctoral dissertation – Debussy's *musical universe* and the *fin de siècle* period with all of its, as Carl Dahlhaus pointed out, specificities and individual rights.

The main subject of the doctoral dissertation *The Musical Universe of Claude Debussy – In Search of the Immediacy of 'Correspondence' between the Ear and the Eye* is a question of the relationship between Claude Debussy's world of music and the cultural and historical context in which he appeared. The basic focus of the doctoral dissertation is orientated towards the problematization of the mutual relations/*correspondences* between the composer's opus and symbolist poetry, impressionist painting and philosophical

endeavours, characteristic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, that is, towards the problematization of the relationship between the ear and the eye, and the notions of *aesthetic experience* and *pluriperception*. In order to give scientifically relevant and argued explanations to the questions arising from the above-mentioned problem circles, my goal is to theoretically argue and confront the philosophical endeavours of the *fin-de-siècle* period, such as the efforts of Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Wilhelm Dilthey, Benedetto Croce, and William James, as well as the various cultural, artistic and scientific achievements of this period – from *gestalt* psychology to painting, poetry, music and drama-theater symbolism, that is, from cubic art to quantum physics and the theory of relativity. It is precisely the consideration of these theoretical and philosophical efforts that has become the focus of the second chapter of the doctoral dissertation entitled *THE SPIRIT OF THE FIN DE SIÈCLE – AGENT PROVOCATEUR?*, and its sub-chapters: *In the realm of philosophy ...*, *In the realm of the authentic plurality of the senses ...*, *In the realm of literature and art ...*

The main goal of the doctoral dissertation is to find all those (in)direct connections, *correspondences*, points of intersection and crossing between the cultural and artistic aspirations that marked the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries and Debussy's aesthetic and poetic attitudes embodied in his music. Thus, in the third chapter of the dissertation, titled *IN SEARCH OF THE IMMEDIACY OF 'CORRESPONDENCE'* ... the *mysterious connections* are interpreted: *...Between Symbolism in literature and Claude Debussy's work of art, ...Between Symbolism*

*in theatre and Claude Debussy's work of art, ...Between Impressionist painting and the work of Claude Debussy's work of art.* Of particular interest was the search for the immediacy of the *correspondence* between the ear and the eye that took place within the micro-universe of Debussy's *Préludes* for piano. The results of that search were presented in the sub-chapter entitled *...Between the Ear and the Eye – Claude Debussy's Préludes.*

However, the issue of *correspondence* in Debussy's *music universe* is not just a matter of *correspondence* between the ear and the eye. It seems to be much more than that. It concerns the relationship between the artist, his art and Nature, and, in a much wider arc, the relationship between Nature and the composer's Imagination. These areas were problematized in the fourth chapter of the doctoral dissertation titled *DEBUSSY'S 'CORRESPONDENCE' – IN SEARCH OF 'LA MUSIQUE PURE'*. Also, this chapter introduces the question of the musical *arabesque* as a poetic paradigm of autonomous (musical) formativeness, that is, the phenomenon 'purified' from the non-musical content and symbols. Emphasizing that the presence of the *arabesque principle* is in some part a sign of the power of the artist's imagination in the face of Nature itself, fourth chapter offers the analysis of some of Mallarmé and Debussy's works of arts that represent the nature of the *arabesque* itself, that is, the aforementioned *arabesque principle*. Debussy thus becomes a catalyst that translates the eternal mystery of Nature with its subtle quivering into the art form, while his music remains music "composed of colours and rhythmicized time". In other words, that is music whose time is as rhythmic as natural, but in a *new re-*

ality – in the reality of the work of music. The question of *new reality* was in the focus of the concluding, fifth chapter entitled *THE POSSIBLE RIGHTS OF THE 'EXPANSION' OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY'S MUSICAL UNIVERSE*.

The aim of the research was to determine the contextual and meaningful level of the entire work of Claude De-

bussy, both through the recognition of the composer's 'seductive' poetics, which counts on the active and intelligent consumer, and through the consideration of the composer's sociological discourse, viewed within his overall critical position in the social, cultural and artistic ambience of the French *fin-de-siècle*.

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### **The Effects of American Experimental Music in the Domain of Contemporary Art and Theory<sup>1</sup>**

The subject of this doctoral dissertation is the issue of experiment in music and

art, especially the experimental practice of John Cage as a sort of paradigm of American experimental art. The notion of *effect* is introduced as a key methodological concept for studying the many appropriations of Cage's concept of experiment in theory and art, understood in terms of creative recordings and interpretations. The example of Cage's conception of experiment as an act with an uncertain outcome thus served to show the polyvalence of the processes that gave rise to the *conventional experiment* and its modes of transmission within the institutional system of art.

In the first part of the dissertation, the experiment is discussed as a dynamic category spanning a wide range of meanings; it is interpreted as an immanent quality of artistic creation; the object of discussion then moves to the phenomenon of experiment and various terms derived from it (experimentalism, experimenting, experimental, experimentality, experimental music/art) as well as its positions in science and art, and, finally, to its concretizations in American and European music. The experiment is defined in two ways: as a meta-concept [надп-

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<sup>1</sup> The dissertation was supervised by Dr. Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, Professor at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, now retired. The defence took place on 30 September 2018; the defence committee comprised Dr. Dragana Stojanović Novičić, Professor at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade; Dr. Miško Šuvaković, Professor at the Faculty of Media and Communication of Singidunum University, Belgrade; Dr. Vesna Mikić, Professor at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade; and Dr. Tijana Popović Mladjenović, Professor at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade.