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14:30 BY BRANKA POPOVIĆ: A GAME OF “MUSICAL CHRONOS”¹

Abstract: The paper discusses the composition *14:30* for two pianos by Branka Popović as a kind of postmodern game of “musical chronos” (Igor Stravinsky). Deliberation of aesthetic-poetic issues and attitudes of the composer concerning musical time and time in general, as well as an analytical-interpretative consideration of *14:30* are intended to point out the complexity of the problem to which this work essentially refers in its title: on the multiplicity of meanings of one ‘section’, ‘fragment’ of a time, which can be realized by different compositional-technical means and experienced in different ways. Given the predominant application of minimalist techniques, traditional ways of shaping, as well as procedures that resonate with expressionism, the possible narrower stylistic positioning of the work within postmodernism is also pointed out.

Keywords: Branka Popović, *14:30*, musical time, time, postmodernism, postminimalism.

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¹ Cited: Igor Stravinski, *Moje shvatanje muzike* [My understanding of music], Elenora Mićunović (izbor tekstova, prevod i pogovor [selection of texts, translation and afterword]), Beograd, Vuk Karadžić, 1966, 16.

The composition *14:30* for two pianos by Branka Popović was created in 2009 as a result of cooperation between the composer and the famous ensemble *LP Duo*,² consisting of pianists Solja Lončar and Andrija Pavlović. In the same year, the work was performed for the first time in the Student's City Cultural Center at the concert of the *LP duo*, and then a recording of a slightly reworked version was made within the album *Music of Composers from Serbia for two pianos*. This new version of *14:30* was performed by the *LP duo* at the 28th International Review of Composers in 2019 at the Student Cultural Center.³ The composition was created just at the suggestion of this duo to compose a work for their performance, whereby the Duo also initiated the shaping of both the musical and non-musical substance of *14:30*.

The composer herself explained the non-musical stimulus in the following way:

“since the ensemble often performs minimalist music, it has developed a special way of playing, in the physical sense, which brings to mind a kind of choreography, and is characterized by energetic movementness and mechanics, that reminds on of the working of some relentlessly precise mechanism. The impression of a stable pulse and constant tension is not only musical, but also visual, and influenced the formation of the musical idea, which are placed at the very beginning, and which will be the backbone of the entire composition.”⁴

It is not, however, a minimalist musical discourse (as might be inferred from the previous quote) that presupposes antinarrative, atemporality,⁵ and

² According to: Branka Popović and Milica Lazarević, “Razgovor sa Brankom Popović povodom kompozicije *14:30*” [Conversation with Branka Popović about the composition *14:30*], januar 2021, 1, rukopis. The mentioned source was created on the basis of a conversation between the composer and the author of this text. That conversation then had its textual form. We use this opportunity to thank Branka Popović for her exceptional openness, dedicated time and agreement to treat the mentioned text as an equal source among other literature. The recording of the composition is available at the YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyPgl1CVINk>

³ Data on the performance and the second version of the work were obtained from the composer in an electronic correspondence.

⁴ Cited according to: B. Popović i M. Lazarević, op. cit., 1.

⁵ As Marija Masnikosa pointed out, “[m]inimalist repetitiveness produces maximum redundancy which, by the nature of things, denies causal musical relations, i.e. the direction of the musical flow and thus demonstrates the antinarrative type of musical discourse”. Marija Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu. Postminimalizam u srpskoj muzici za gudački orkestar u poslednje dve decenije XX veka* [Orpheus in repetitive soci-

a listener “forced” (Marija Masnikosa) to explore one’s own perceptual powers.⁶ The composition 14:30 is not a minimalist achievement, but we would say a typical postmodern work or, better, a specific postmodern game with time that “invites the listener to creative action”,⁷ to a personal “creative interpretation” of musical time,⁸ i.e. one’s own perception of time.⁹

That the composition 14:30 is a kind of (postmodern) game with time is indicated by its very title, which, according to Branka Popović, refers to a specific part of the day, more precisely, to the time of the beginning of composing

ety. Postminimalism in Serbian music for string orchestra in the last two decades of the 20th century], Beograd, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2010, 55. And certain examples of minimalist practice, to add the author’s further explication by paraphrasing her words, are examples of the absence of discourse, a specific musical “white letter”, i.e. examples of a musical antidiscursivity. Ibid., 56.

As the author further explained, from the antinarrative of musical discourse arises antitemporality, which is also the result of the “linear relation of minimalist, ‘quantized’ musical time, to the givenness of physical time”. Ibid., 59. Minimalist processes actually constitute an undisturbed, almost objective, evenly filled musical time, which in the consciousness of the listener gives the impression of staticity, stopping time, and consequently the whole composition is experienced as an “endless extension of one moment”. Ibid., 60; Marija Masnikosa, *Muzički minimalizam. Američka paradigma i differentia specifica u ostvarenjima grupe beogradskih kompozitora* [Musical minimalism. The American paradigm and differentia specifica in achievements by a group of Belgrade composers], Beograd, Clio, 1998, 75.

⁶ Cf. M. Masnikosa, *Muzički minimalizam...* [Musical minimalism...], 75.

⁷ The words of Maria Masnikosa were cited by which the author pointed out the change in the status of the listener of postminimalist music in relation to the role of the listener of minimalist music. Cf. Marija Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 87.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹ Considering Stockhausen’s (Karlheinz Stockhausen) attitudes concerning time in music and its perception, Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman rightly differentiates perceptual time or time of perception – which is “equal to the duration of the sound appearance of the work”, i.e. duration of its sound, then “experiential time, i.e. experience of the flow of time” or “reception time”, and musical time, i.e. “time structured by sound”, which as such is “a product of autonomous logic and the application of the autonomous means of music, which is why it is determined by that structure”. Мирјана Веселиновић-Хофман, *Пред музичким делом. Опледи о међусобним пројекцијама естетике, поезије и стилстике музике 20. века: једна музиколошка визура* [Contemplating the Work of Music on Display – Essays on Mutual Projections of Aesthetics, Poetics and Stylistics of 20th Century Music: A Musicological Viewpoint], Београд, Завод за уџбенике, 2007, 149, 150, 151.

the work.¹⁰ It is decisive for the way of shaping the achievement only insofar as it refers to the category of time,¹¹ in fact to one 'section', 'fragment' of time, which can be experienced in consciousness in different ways (no matter how large, a real-time interval may, for example, be experienced as shorter or longer). Branka Popović herself testified about that, emphasizing that the experience of time - a "very complex phenomenon" - is conditioned by the state of the observer.¹² Thence, according to the composer, time in music, which she also considers a very complex phenomenon, "can flow differently depending on who is listening", but also "on how it is made [M. L.]".¹³ This indicates that music also has its time, that is, that the time in music, musical time, "musical chronos" (Igor Stravinsky) is actually a time of structured, musically shaped sound, which therefore presupposes, as Igor Stravinsky puts it, "a certain organization of time".¹⁴ Or more precisely, said in the Dalhulsenian way (Carl Dahlhaus), the organization of time *in time*. Because of the fact that a musical work "*carries time in itself*", it "*can be contained in time*".¹⁵

It is in this way that the composer's comment can be understood that 14:30 is "the moment when, through the confrontation of two pianos - mechanical repetitions, imitations and echoes, the musical curvature of time begins, initiated by non-musical influences [which were previously mentioned - M. L.]".¹⁶ Moreover, Branka Popović explained that the "curvature of time" at 14:30 refers to "manipulation of musical material, which affects the perception of listeners in terms of creating the impression of a faster/slower flow of time".¹⁷ This "curvature of time" (Branka Popović) not only at 14:30 but also in some other works of the composer¹⁸ on a poetic level partially resonates

¹⁰ Cited according to: B. Popović i M. Lazarević, op. cit., 1.

¹¹ According to: *ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cited according to: B. Popović i M. Lazarević, op. cit., 1.

¹⁴ I. Stravinski, op. cit., 15.

¹⁵ M. Веселиновић-Хофман, op. cit., 127.

¹⁶ Cited according to: http://composers.rs/?page_id=6772.

¹⁷ Cited according to: B. Popović i M. Lazarević, op. cit., 1.

¹⁸ Srdjan Teparic, in essence, also talks about the specific musical "curvature of time", the game of musical chronos, considering the composition of *Toba*. Namely, the author says the following: "The temporal structure of the *Toba* composition is based on strategies for prolongation, accumulation and resolution, with a continuous game of opening and closing time, a game of time flow and its stagnation. In that sense, the music time in this composition was treated as an independent entity in relation to real time." Srđan Teparić,

with Webern’s (Anton Webern) approach to creating a work in terms of variational growth of the whole from the initial motive core, musical motif, i.e. in terms of projecting his logical-musical relations on the totality of the work,¹⁹ and thus the economy of musical-expressive means and concentration on what is important. Commenting on the approach to shaping the composition *Lines & circles*, Branka Popović pointed out that “[and] in this composition, as well as in some of my other works, the [...] principle of reduction, ascetic approach to the choice and amount of musical material used to create dramaturgy”.²⁰ This principle/approach comes from the composer’s point of view that the creation of a work, i.e. composing is a kind of “viewing the material from all possible angles” by which “the unity of the composition is achieved”, and at the same time the “necessary contrasts”.²¹

Thus, the mentioned “curvature of time” (Branka Popović) in the composition *14:30* is realized primarily by “viewing the material from all possible angles” (Branka Popović), in fact by projecting the logical-musical relations of the initial musical idea on the totality of the whole work, consequently its form. The composition consists of six parts, scheme A B C B1 D A1 with a short code, consistently fragmentary structure and without traditional themes, but mostly guided by the logic of alternating ‘faster’ and ‘slower’ segments, more precisely segments in which certain ways of “manipulating musical material” (Branka Popović) alternately creates the effect, i.e. the impression of acceleration and deceleration, occasionally stopping time (Table 1).

In fact, it can be said that – in principle – the procedures of accelerating/slowing down time in the composition *14:30* are already hinted in the initial motif which is exposed in the first piano (mm. 1–2) and by which the whole work begins. The motif is shaped by repetition of the tone of c2 and by exposing the first, third, fourth and fifth tones of one scale (with the repeated fourth tone; c2 - e flat 2 - e2 - f2 - e3)²² in the form of a quintole, mostly in the

“Temporality and movement in the composition of *Toba* by Branka Popović”, *New Sound*, 50, II/2017, 185, <https://www.newsound.org.rs/pdf/en/ns50/14.S.Teparic.pdf>.

¹⁹ According to: M. Веселиновић-Хофман, op. cit., 90.

²⁰ Cited according to: Ivana Miladinović Prica, “Razgovor sa povodom – Branka Popović” [Conversation with the occasion – Branka Popović], 2015, <http://composers.rs/?p=5042>.

²¹ Cited according to: B. Popović i M. Lazarević, op. cit., 2.

²² The scale that could be seen as the phonological basis of the first and last part of *14:30* (parts A and A1) consists of the following tones: c - d - e flat - e - f - g - a flat - b flat - b - c. The last five tones of the scale coincide with the part of the harmonic/overtone scale (from the 12th to the 16th partial/harmonic tones). When asked by the author of this text,

Table 1: Scheme of 14:30 by Branka Popović

A	B	C	B ₁	D	A ₁	Code
(1-21) <i>Molto energico</i> J = 72	(22-41) <i>Molto energico</i> J = 72	(42-72) <i>Molto energico</i> J = 72	(73-84) <i>Molto energico</i> J = 72	(85-102) <i>Molto energico</i> J = 72	(103-115) For the first time a change of tempo: J = 48	(116-123) Return to the original tempo: J = 72
a – imitative exposition of different variants of the initial motif and repetitive process a ₁ – augmented variant of the motif and repetitive process effect → alternating ‘acceleration’, ‘slowing’ and ‘stopping’ time	Complex repetitive process with periodic ‘cutting’ of repetitive ‘tone beats’ effect → ‘acceleration’ of time and penetration of real time	Mostly two-layer repetitive process with the effect of gradual ‘slowing down’ of time through three phases: 1. repetitive process on the background of the drone 2. a two-layered repetitive process that results in a ‘counterpoint’ of different times; 3. similar to the first phase, repetitive process on the background of the drone, with the gradual removal of layers, and slowing down the rhythm and tempo	A complex repetitive process with repetitive cluster ‘beats’ effect → ‘acceleration’ of time, which also has the effect of its instantly ‘freezing’ and abruptly ‘stopping’	Equivalent to part C in the dilution of sound and the effect of slowing down time more traditional thematic work, with concertante elements	Modified repetition, shortened part A a more traditional way of ‘manipulating the material’ – literal and sequential repetition of the three bars structure effect → gradually ‘slowing down’ time	Repetition of motives with augmentation of the last tone, pauses and slowing down of the tempo (rit.) effect → further ‘slowing down’ of time, ‘timelessness’
Fragmentary structure Tonal center – c	Fragmentary structure Without tone center	Fragmentary structure Tonal center – e, d, f	Fragmentary structure Without tone center	Fragmentary structure Tonal center – c	Fragmentary structure Tonal center – c, g	Fragmentary structure Tonal center – g

flow of demisemiavers (which could be denoted together as the first cell), where the last tone is then syncopated with its multiple augmented variant (the second cell; Example 1).

Example 1: Branka Popović, 14:30, the beginning of part A, b. 1-11. (*Molto energico* ♩ = 72)

14:30

Molto energico ♩ = 72 Branka Popovic

in an electronic correspondence, whether the permutation variant of the mentioned scale (g - a flat - b flat - b - c - d - e flat - e - f - g) was obtained from the harmonic overtone spectrum, Branka Popović explained that these are two chords, c - e - g - b flat - e flat and b - d - f - a flat, which leads us to believe that the horizontal dimension is derived from the vertical aspect of the musical flow of the piece, and that there is a way of musical thinking according to which the vertical is 'older' than the horizontal, which therefore, it would be said, still originates from the harmonic overtone spectrum. In addition, the mentioned scale is related to the third mode of Messiaen's (Olivier Messiaen) in relation to which it differs according to the arrangement of the semitones and the steps between the fourth and fifth, and the fifth and sixth tones (Messiaen's third mode from the initial tone is c - d - e flat - e - f sharp - g - a flat - b flat - b - c). However, we do not want to say that the similarity between the mentioned scale at 14:30 and Messiaen's third mode is a deliberate gesture of the composer, because that gesture may be unconscious!

The repetitiveness procedure and the procedure of extending/prolonging the duration of the music content are exactly the basic procedures that achieve the effect of accelerating/slowing down the time at 14:30.²³ However, that does not mean their simplified types. On the contrary, the procedures of repetitiveness and prolongation have shaped complex processes that include their mutual combination, as well as the simultaneous application of other ways of “manipulating musical material” (Branka Popović), such as the already mentioned procedure of imitation, and the procedure of variation/variant, and even traditional ways of the thematic work (eg division, shortening).

Thus, in the first section (a) of the first part (A), after the initial motif presented in the *f* dynamics in the first piano, its multi-augmented variant, interrupted by rests, in the *p* dynamics is imitated in the second piano (mm. 2–4), in the function of creating an echo effect, but also the impression of a slower flow of time. The procedure is then repeated, but in a more complex way (mm. 5–6): the initial motif given again in the first piano is exposed in the *stretto* in *f* dynamics in the second piano, which gives the impression of an instantaneous acceleration of time, which then, in turn, is suddenly ‘slowed down’ by re-exposing the multi-augmented, interrupted by pauses, but now shortened variant in the *p* dynamics in the first piano (mm. 7–8), which also gives the impression of a kind of echo. The repetitive process in *f* dynamics begins, which, however, abruptly stops (mm. 9–11). This repetitive process is shaped by a quasi-imitation of a new variant of the initial motif in the first and second pianos, because different variants of its parts (cells) are constantly given,²⁴ which creates the impression of accelerating time in the overall sound result. After the instantly mentioned silence, a kind of suspension of time and then creating the impression of its slowness by exposing the already known multiple augmented variant of the initial motif in *p* dynamics (thus beginning the second section a1 of the first part A, m. 12), the repetitive process in *f* dynamics continues. It now implies a constant repetition of different rhythmic and tonal variants of the aforementioned new variant of the initial motif by which this process began and, of course, the creation of the impression of a faster flow of time.

²³ Let us mention here that the effect of the instantly sudden slowing down of time in the initial motif, beside the multiple augmentation of its last tone, is also achieved by using the piano pedal, which, in addition, releases harmonic tones.

²⁴ The new variant of the motif, exposed in the first piano, is composed of the first cell and a new rhythmic variant of the repeated tone (now the tone e2 flat).

While the entire first part of the composition takes place in a constant game with musical-expressive means which create the impression of alternating 'acceleration', 'slowing down' and 'stagnation' of time, in the second part the effect of its acceleration is consistently created. There is a complex repetitive process in which the 'acceleration' of time is achieved primarily by increasing the sound mass, and thus by constantly accumulating energy. The repetitive model itself is more complexly shaped. It consists of two two-layer parts. In the first part, the first layer in the first piano (m. 23, Example 2) is mostly articulated by the alternating exposure of different forms of a diminished triad and dominant seventh chord (f sharp - a - c and c - e - g - b flat) in different, but higher registers in the flow of demisemiquavers and semiquavers triplet, and by repeating the tone (e3) in the form of four demisemiquavers and quaver; and then, in the second part (m. 24), by layering the seventh-chord built up in thirds and seconds (c3 - e3 flat - e3 - ef3),²⁵ in the rhythmic value of the crotchet, and the two clusters (d2 - e2 flat - e2 and a2 - b2 flat - b2) and repeating the tone (b2) in the form of a dotted semiquaver and four demisemiquavers, which are then literally repeated and followed by different rhythmic variants of the mentioned clusters, with the addition of two new clusters (d2 - e2 flat - f2 and a2 - b2 - c3).

The second layer in the second piano, in the first part of the model (m. 23), is shaped, similarly, by alternately exposing different forms of two dominant seventh chords (d - f sharp - a - c and c - e - g - b flat)²⁶ in different but

²⁵ These are, in fact, the first four tones of the initial motif, that is, the first, third, fourth and fifth tones of the previously mentioned scale reminiscent of Messiaen's third mode, only now "compressed" in the vertical as a cluster.

²⁶ We must warn here of the harmonic ambiguity because various incomplete forms of the above chords are exposed, and this place can be interpreted in a different way. For example, the first chord in the bass of the second piano, can be interpreted as a chord built up in fifth with a double fundamental tone (1C-1G-C-D). Such harmonically ambiguous places are not uncommon at 14:30, especially in this complex repetitive process. Harmonic language of 14:30 could otherwise be understood as a kind of combination of "12-tone tonality" with intonation bases (in parts A, C, D, A1 and code) and "soft atonality" without intonation bases (in parts B and B1). Explaining the musical language of postminimalism, Maria Masnikosa pointed out that it "as a rule affirms the modern 12-tone tonality from which tonal functionality has disappeared, and which counts on the strength of its temporary intonation bases or pivotal harmonies", and that "this kind of tonality Ludmila Ulehla calls a **contemporary modernist tonality**". Marija Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 334, 335. According to M. Masnikosa, the musical language of some postminimalist works of Serbian compos-

Example 2: Branka Popović, *14:30*, the beginning of part B, b. 22–24.
(*Molto energico* ♩ = 72)

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The image displays a musical score for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II, covering measures 22 to 24. The score is written in 2/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *ff*. The notation is complex, featuring numerous accidentals, articulation marks, and rhythmic patterns like triplets and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 22-23 in the first system and measures 24-24 in the second system.

lower registers and in different rhythmic variants, which are metrically 'un-articulated' in relation to the first layer, as well as by repeating the tone (e1), while the second part represents a slightly modified repetition of the first part of this layer of the repetitive model. The entire second part is shaped by the

ers, on the other hand, is close to the "neutrality" of the high-modernist 'soft' atonality" (ibid, 335). At 14:30 Branka Popović uses traditional tertian, although often dissonant harmonies, some of which are mentioned, but she completely non-functionally treats these harmonies in terms of traditional tonal-functional logic. In addition, the composition often uses non-tertian harmonies, such as clusters, chords built up in third and second and fourth chords, which could also already be partially noticed, and will be seen from further analysis.

constant repetition of this complex model, but with frequent variations of its layers, i.e. regrouping its original elements and their variants. At the same time, in this 'temporal vortex' the repetitive 'tone beats' in demisemiquavers are periodically 'cutted in' alternately in both pianos in the lower (the second piano) and higher registers (the first piano), which releases the accumulated energy and enables a kind of 'breathing' of the musical flow of the piece. First it is done in a shorter time interval (lasting one two-four time), and then longer in the next two moments: in the second moment, the repetition of tones lasts one two-four time and two four-four time (marked horizontal polymetry), and in the third, at the same time at the last moment, it lasts three four-four time. In the overall sound result, these repetitive 'beats' give the impression of a gradual penetration of ontological, real time, and the entire second part of the composition gives the impression of a kind of struggle between musical time and real time.

That struggle of different times culminated in a gradual slowdown of time in the third part of *14:30*. Immediately before this part of the composition, the flow of repetitive tones, more precisely, at that moment of the repetitive tone (b3) in demisemiquavers, is already somewhat slowed down by its augmented appearance in the form of a sestole in semiquaver (the first piano, m. 44), which 'flows' into a two-layered, predominantly repetitive process that begins the third part. This part is actually entirely shaped by the mentioned process in which, first of all, by diluting the sound density, the impression of a gradual slowing down of time is created through three phases. In the first phase (mm. 45–52), against the background of a rhythmic drone, given in the first piano in the form of the fourth chord doubled in octave (e2 - a2 flat - d3 and e3 - a3 flat - d4), and rhythmically articulated as a quintole in quavers, a repetitive process takes place in the second piano. The repetitive model is constructed of two parts (Example 3).

The first part (m. 45) is formed by the same fourth chord, also doubled in octave, but in the flow of quavers, i.e. in a polyrhythmic relation to the rhythmic drone, while the second part represents a new rhythmic prominent motif (m. 46). The model is variably repeated, i.e. alternately in its 'faster' and 'slower' variants. The flow of the fourth chord in quavers (the first part of the model) turns into a 'pulsation' of the cluster in semiquavers (also doubled in octave, d2 - e2 flat - e2 and d3 - e3 flat - e3), which is also in a polyrhythmic relation to the rhythmic drone and which gives one the feeling of a kind of resistance to this process of the gradual slowing down of time. This resistance continues in the next phase (mm. 53–62), which is perhaps the most explicit

Example 3: Branka Popović, *14:30*, the end of part B and the beginning of part C, b. 44–48. (*Molto energico* ♩ = 72)

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The image displays a musical score for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II, across two systems of measures. The first system covers measures 44 to 48, and the second system covers measures 47 to 48. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as *Molto energico* with a quarter note equal to 72 (♩ = 72). The dynamics range from *ff* (fortissimo) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, such as triplets and sixteenth-note runs, and various articulation symbols like accents and slurs. The bass clef parts feature a prominent rhythmic drone with a '5' marking, likely indicating a fifth interval. The treble clef parts have a more melodic and rhythmic character, often with slurs and accents.

way of expressing the typically postmodern multiplicity of musical time, i.e. multiple temporality.²⁷

There is a two-layer repetitive process that involves the variant repetition of two models. In the first model, exposed in the first piano (mm. 53–54), the rhythmic drone was transformed into a half-phrase rhythmic model (four quavers and triolets in crotchets in the m. 53, and two triolets in crotchets in the m. 54), whose harmony is also fourth chord doubled in octave (but now e2 - a2 - d3 and e3 - a3 - d4). The second model, in the second piano, of the same duration as the first model (two bars), consists of a sustained tone (e1, m. 53) and a 'pulsation' of the incomplete seventh chord doubled in octave (g2 - d3 - f3 and g3 - d4 - f4), interrupted by semiquaver rests (m. 54), so that a

²⁷ Cf. M. Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 86.

polyrhythm occurs between the models. The variant repetition of these models implies: shortening by omitting the second bar in both models and the repetition of such a shortened but at the same time harmonically and 'metrically' modified variant (minor sixth chord doubled in octave, f2 - a2 - d3/ f3 - a4 - d4, instead of a fourth chord and whole rest instead of sustained tone, m. 58); then, harmonic changes of the second model (sustained tone – a1 flat and 'pulsating' incompleted seventh chord – g2 sharp - d3 - f3 and g3 sharp d4 - f4) with repetition of the shortened and also harmonically and rhythmically modified variant of the first model ('pulsation' of the minor sixth chord doubled in octave, f2 - a2 - d3/f3 - a4 - d4, in crotchet triplets, mm. 59–60); and finally, superimposing the model so that three different layers sound at the same time – the sustained tone (a1 flat), the metrically shifted 'pulsation' of the octave double seventh chord in semiquavers (g2 sharp - d3 - f3 and g3 sharp - d4 - f4) and the 'beats' of the octave-doubled minor sixth chord (f2 - a - d 3/f3 - a4 - d4) in the form of crotchet triplets (mm. 61–62, Example 4).

Example 4: Branka Popović, 14:30, the end of the third phase, part C, b. 60–62. (*Molto energico* ♩ = 72)

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After this kind of counterpoint of different times, the slowing down of time continues in the third, last phase of the third part of the composition. Similar to the first phase, a repetitive process takes place in the second piano against the background of a rhythmic drone, exposed in the first piano in the form of an octave doubled, now augmented five-three chord (f2 - a2 - c3 sharp and f3 - a3 - c4 sharp) rhythmized as an quaver quintolet. The model is shaped in a somewhat similar way as the model from the first phase:

in the first part also an octave double augmented five-three chord (the same that makes drones) 'pulsates' in a polyrhythmic relationship (in quaver) to a rhythmic drone, and the second part represents a sustained tone (a1 flat). The effect of slowing down time is achieved by the gradual disappearance of the model in the second piano, transforming the rhythmic drone in the first piano into the rhythmically same repetitive model as in the second phase, but now octave double major five-three chord (f2 - a2 - c3 and f3 - a3 - c4), and finally by slowing down the tempo (*ritenuto*) by subtracting the tones up to one tone doubled in octave (c3 and c4) in the flow of quavers and then crotchets and *p* dynamics.

The repetition of the second part of 14:30 (the fourth part B1), which begins in *fff* dynamics, has the effect of a surprise, a kind of dramaturgical turn. The 'time vortex' dynamically intensified gives one the feeling of being even faster than in its first appearance. It is shaped by a similar repetition of the same complex model with which part B is articulated. The repetitive process also implies different regroupings of the original elements of the model and their variants, but with a significant difference. Instead of repetitive 'beats' of tones in demisemi-quavers, which we understood as a gradual penetration of real time, now superimposed an octave double augmented five-three chord (f2 - a2 - c3 sharp and f3 - a3 - c4 sharp) and cluster (F - G - A flat and f1 - g1 - a1 flat) are in action, and which also flow in demisemi-quavers, at first in a shorter time interval (only half of the time unit, m. 77). As in the second part of the composition, this time interval becomes longer: in the second moment it lasts one beat (m. 79), then in the third moment half of the four-four time (m. 81), so that this expansion 'from within' in the fourth, last moment included seven and a half bars, which can also be interpreted as a separate segment in the function of the transition (mm. 85–92). And not only because of the length, but also because in this segment, a repetitive process is basically taking place, aimed at creating the impression of a gradual slowing down of time. There are two superimposed chords built up in third and seconds (c2 - e2 flat - e2 and g2 - b2 flat - b2) that are constantly repeated. First, in the same or different rhythmic variants predominantly in demisemi-quavers²⁸ and in the same or different registers alternately in the first and second pianos; then, simultaneously in both pianos in different

²⁸ There are actually two rhythmic variants: the first is composed of one semi-quaver and two demisemi-quavers (in one place it is given in reverse, two demisemi-quavers and one semi-quaver), and the second, of four demisemi-quavers.

rhythmic variants, which even has the effect of the instantaneous 'freezing' of time,²⁹ and finally slowing it down by alternately presenting in the first and second pianos an 'augmented' form of the chords (both chords are given in the form of a sextolet in semiquavers) interrupted by pauses at the end of this segment.

A shorter, fifth part of 14:30 (D) follows, equivalent to the third part of 14:30 (C) in terms of the dilution of the sound mass, which gives the impression of a slower passage of time. However, it is realized in a different, more traditional way of exposition and exploiting the material, and in addition it includes concertante elements (elements of solo virtuosity). In three bars, different forms of two dominant seventh chords (d - f sharp - a - c and c - e - g - b flat)³⁰ are exposed in different registers in both pianos (m. 93), broken clusters in the first piano³¹ and harmonic figurations in demisemiquavers, ranging from the contra- to the three-line octaves alternately in the second and first pianos (m. 94), and the sustained multiple doubled augmented seventh chord in both parts (c - e - g sharp - b, m. 95, Example 5).

This three bars structure is then repeated, but modified in the last bar in which over the mentioned sustained multi-doubled augmented seventh chord in the second piano expose its multiple diminished, and broken incomplete variant, which is followed by only one of its tone doubled in octave (e2 and e3), whose duration is extended by the fermata. The impression of an additional slowing down of time is then created by pedal chords, i.e. layering of the mentioned, now multiple augmented dominant seventh chords, superimposed diminished triad (1C - 1E flat - 1A and c1-e1 flat - a1) and dominant seventh chord (f - b - d1 - g1 and f2 - b2 - d3 - g3) and also the aforemen-

²⁹ Both pianos have their own rhythmic pattern that is repeated for two bars.

³⁰ It is the same motive germ from which the first part of the repetitive process grows at the beginning of the second part (B). This fifth part actually begins with the same 'repetitive beats' of the octave double augmented five-three chord (f2 - a2 - c3 sharp and f3 - a3 - c4 sharp) and the cluster (F - G - A flat and f1 - g1 - a1 flat) in demisemiquavers from the part B1. However, we are not inclined to interpret this fifth part of the composition as a section within the part B1, because according to the type of texture and logic of musical events it stands out as a separate part that contrasts to the previous part and which, as mentioned, achieves equivalence with the third part by diluting the sound mass and creating the effect of a slower flow of time.

³¹ It is a cluster (c3 - d3 - e3 flat - f3 - g3) given in the right second relationship, i.e. in a narrow position in the first piano, and a cluster in a broader spacing in the second piano (C - A - B flat - d).

Example 5: Branka Popović, *14:30*, the end of part B1 and the beginning of part D, b. 92–95. (*Molto energico* ♩ = 72)

The image shows a musical score for two pianos, Pno. I and Pno. II, covering measures 92 to 95. The score is written in a multi-measure rest format for the first part of the excerpt (measures 92-94) and then continues with melodic lines in measures 93-95. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first part of the score (measures 92-94) features a multi-measure rest of 6 measures for both pianos, with a 'Ped' marking below the staves. The second part (measures 93-95) shows Pno. I playing a melodic line with a slur and Pno. II playing a descending eighth-note pattern. The score ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to two sharps (D major) in measure 95.

tioned multi-doubled augmented seventh chord, and by their echoing using the piano pedal.

The process of slowing down time continues in a significantly changed and shortened reprise of the first part of *14:30*, the only segment in the whole composition that is really at a much slower tempo (crotchet = 48 versus the basic timing by the metronome according to which crotchet = 72). This, of course, intensified the experience of a slower passage of time, i.e. the unfolding of musical events. This is additionally achieved by repeating certain tones of the augmented, interrupted by rests, although partially shortened variants of the initial motif (the last tone e is omitted and the tone f is multiply augmented instead), which is exposed in three bars in the first piano over some kind of figured passage in the second piano in hemidemisiquavers (repetition of the descending tone row consisting of the fourth, third, first and seventh

tones of the previously mentioned basic scale, e2 - e2 flat - c2 - b1). This three bar structure is literally repeated only with the exchange of material between the parts, so that the whole situation from the beginning of the reprise (all six bars) is then repeated in a kind of free sequence. The initial motif is repeated: a second lower in the first piano, with melodic and rhythmic changes of its second cell – first of all, the last tone (a4 flat) is not syncopated with its multiple extended variant, but a new tone (g4) is added for the entire four-four time. The mentioned figured passage is now exposed ascending from the sixth to the ninth tone of the basic scale (which coincide with the part of the harmonic/overtone scale, from the 12th to the 15th partial/harmonic tones), which after multiple repetitions turns into an ascending scale-wise passage. During the repetition of the three bar structure, with the exchange of material between the pianos, certain tones of the initial motif were omitted, its penultimate tone augmented, and the last diminished. The slow tempo, sounding not only these last two tones but also the entire motif due to the use of the piano pedal, even the whole beat after the motif is already exposed, which otherwise emphasizes the effect of the harmonic overtone spectrum, have the effect of almost 'stopping' time. It's as if time is standing still. Or maybe it disappeared somewhere?

It seems to us that this question is also asked in a short code, with the return of the basic tempo, but soon its slowing down (*rit.*). The slower and slower repetition of the shortened and melodically changed motif (g2 - a2 flat - b2 flat - b2 - c3 - e3 flat) alternately in the first and second pianos, with rests in the duration of the whole bars, even gives the impression of timelessness. We would say, it as if the composer is telling us that a 'section' of time can be experienced as the absence of time.

What is, in any case, undoubted is that the composition 14:30 provokes its listener not only to the "creative interpretation" (Marija Masnikosa) of musical time, but also to contemplating the complex issues of time in music. That is, it confronts him with a complex question of time in general or, better, any time – real, psychological, historical, musical time, time of perception, time of reception ... but also with the multiplicity of its own time. This multiplicity is not only achieved by the mentioned different speeds of movement of the layers in the third part of the composition, but also arises from the musical intertextuality or intermusicality,³² more precisely, the open, unstable referentiality of the musical flow of the piece. Because this game of musical chronos is a game with minimalist techniques (repetitiveness, to a much

³² Cf. M. Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 79.

lesser extent drone), but also Webern's variational principle, traditional shaping techniques (imitation, traditional ways of thematic work), genre features of the concert (elements of solo virtuosity in the fifth part of the composition), as well as elusive "musical quotes 'without quotation marks'",³³ so that the initial motif of *14:30* can be understood in essence, and which evokes an association with a Webernian motif. This elusive referential layer also derives from the percussion effect of clusters and percussion treatment of the pianos in parts B and B1, which can be associated with one Béla Bartók, and the expressionist tension that results from it and the "soft atonality" (Marija Masnikosa) of these parts of the musical flow of the composition *14:30* refer to the modernist plane of this work. That is why it would be said that *14:30* mostly resonates with the postminimalism of the "other modern".³⁴

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³³ M. Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 337.

³⁴ Considering postminimalism in Serbian music in an extensive and important study (not only for understanding postminimalism but also postmodernism in music in general), which is quoted several times here, Marija Masnikosa distinguished between postmodern minimalism, postminimalist postmodernism, and as one of the rare phenomena postminimalism of the "other modern". According to the author, in the works of "**postmodern minimalism, the minimalist process** permeates all segments of form, thus preserving the organic **unity of the work and its textual coherence** as a 'totalizing metanarration' of modernism, from which (modernism) it is clearly separated by (self) referentiality and/or reaching out to traditional aspects of music", while "[p]ostminimalist postmodernism [...] limits the formative share of minimalist processes, to some segments/sections of the composition or to the layers in the texture of its parts, and, unlike postmodern minimalism, does not expose minimalism as 'the natural discourse of the work' in which other discourses fit, already affirms **textual heterogeneity** within which minimalist segments or layers have a significant or even the most significant place" (M. Masnikosa, *Orfej u repetitivnom društvu...* [Orpheus in repetitive society...], 19); the works of post-minimalism of the "other modern" are characterized by the "use of the 'vocabulary of liberated history', which 'exists independently of current programming', as the 'historical sediment of modern' which, as the 'fundus of history', is always available". Ibid., 296–297.

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Summary

The composition *14:30* for two pianos by Branka Popović was created as a result of cooperation between the composer and the *LP duo*, whose performances of minimalist music initiated the specific shaping of the piece. The mechanics, tension and stable pulse that are characteristic of the performance of this ensemble initiated the composer's typically postmodern game with musical time, i.e. the game of "musical chronos" (Igor Stravinsky) which confronts the listeners with a complex question of musical time, but also time in general. Conceived in six parts, schemes A B C B1 D A1 with short code, a consistently fragmentary structure and without traditional themes, *14:30* is mostly guided by the logic of alternating 'faster' and 'slower' segments, in fact segments in which certain ways of playing with musical material alternate creates the effect, i.e. the impression of acceleration and deceleration, occasionally stopping time. This game is a game with minimalist techniques (repetitiveness, to a much lesser extent drone), the Weberian variational principle, traditional shaping techniques (imitation, traditional ways of thematic work), genre features of the concert (elements of solo virtuosity in the fifth part of the composition), as well as elusive "quotes without quotation marks" (Maria Masnikosa), which point to the motif of one Webern (initial motif of the whole piece), the percussion effect of clusters and the percussion treatment of piano by one Bartok, to the general expressionist intensity, and consequently the modernist plane of this work, which was also achieved by applying "soft atonality" (Maria Masnikosa; parts B and B1). With an open, unstable intertextuality, which also

results from the simultaneous flow of different layers (segment from the third part of the composition), this game confronts the listeners simultaneously with the multiplicity of its own time and their time, but also with any other time. It invites them to reflection and to a personal creative interpretation of a complex phenomenon to which it already refers with its title. Namely, the multiplicity of the meaning of one 'section', i.e. 'fragments' of time.