

This collective monograph gives a complete insight into the origin, premiere and nature of this operatic piece and its place in Despić's oeuvre as well as its place in the overall genre within the history of Serbian music. Together with the score, this monograph will be the starting point for many researchers, their questions and quests for new answers

and interpretations of Despić's work, which will – we believe – continue to bring humor and mirth to the lives of its listeners, in spite of the challenges and circumstances of the environment. Also, we believe that the success of this opera will inspire other authors to tackle the challenges of composing for the stage.

Article received on April 30th 2020

Article accepted on June 5th 2020

UDC 78.071.2-055.2(497.11)(049.32)

305-055.2:781.7(497.11)(049.32)

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Iva Nenić, *Guslarke i sviračice na tradicionalnim instrumentima u Srbiji – identifikacija zvukom* [*Gusle female players and female players on traditional instruments in Serbia – identification by sound*], Beograd: Clio, 2019, 299 pages, ISBN 978-86-7102-576-8

The book *Gusle female players and female players on traditional instruments in Serbia – identification by sound* by ethnomusicologist Iva Nenić was published in

2019, and it is based on her PhD thesis defended at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade in 2015. This book is the very first ethnomusicological study of female performances on traditional instruments in Serbia and it represents a significant contribution and a breakthrough in the subject which had, somehow, eluded the attention of local academia within the framework of contemporary theories of ideology, identity and gender performativity.

Through the five chapters of her book, Iva Nenić systematically develops and chronologically explains the practice of women playing traditional instruments in Serbia, as well as its genealogy and the identification processes that this practice entails. The author's discourse and her specific writing style are very innovative and clear – refreshing in comparison with the dominant narratives in ethnomusicology, even humanities in general. Another, very special contribution that this book makes is a bold, well grounded and constructive critique of the role of theory in ethnomusicology. In spite of (but, at the same time precisely

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because of) the acerbic writing style, this book is also suitable for a broader audience, interested not only in women performing but in the subject of playing of traditional instruments in Serbia in general.

The first chapter describes the practice of women performing on traditional instruments in the discourses of culture and of the humanities, primarily by elaborating on the approach to the issues of gender and femininity in ethnomusicology. The central place of the chapter is the (self)critique of ethnomusicologists who had somehow neglected and omitted the phenomenon of women playing traditional instruments in their work, by predominantly interviewing male sources and reflecting upon their statements about performing on traditional instruments as more relevant. This was common in ethnomusicology, not only in Serbia, for almost the entire 20th century. The author gives a brief overview of the cultural constructs of femininity which were shaped during the 20th century by the dominant social systems, and of the typification of the gender roles, especially in patriarchal environments.

In the second chapter, titled *Identification of Musical Practice*, the term *interpellation* is introduced and elaborated on as the opposite of *identification* (with/by) music as the very act of gender performance at the moment of playing. A critique of the essentialist theories of identity was made explicit in this chapter, although it permeates the entire book. Iva Nenić wonders about the purposefulness of introducing collective identities, particularly considering their hegemonic position in the academic world regarding

traditional music. On the other hand, she clearly presents the obvious advantages and benefits of the use of the term *interpellation*. She agrees with Timothy Rice who criticized the use of the default meaning of the term 'identity' and suggests: "the implementation of the materialist theoretical setting of becoming a subject under ideology in the light of identification, and its correction or further development on the background of discussion about concrete music practices" (30).

The very beginnings of examination of the ideological shaping of identification is by all means in the oeuvre of Louis Althusser; his description of the mechanism of one's *becoming a subject* as the initial definition of interpellation and the latter interpretations and insights in the field of the identity ideologies, given through discussions by a number of authors in the culture studies, represent an extremely informative theoretical framework for the author's concept of the ideological establishment with (by) music. Interpellation by means of music refers to "construction, restructuring or renewal of the subject position as the material signifying practice by (with) music" (35). The term interpellation here can also refer to "the moment of adoption – response, when we are taking an active part in a certain musical practice as the subjects, and which, in turn, can influence our other identification matrices by questioning them or making them even stronger" (35).

The example of young, female frula players clearly shows their multiple identification positions – *sound interpellations*, as they are performing in the glo-

balisation époque in the sphere of neo-traditional music.

When she speaks about gender performativity, i.e. gender establishment in the act of playing music, Iva Nenić illuminates the term *gender* in ethnomusicology but also in the studies of gender, performance and culture in a completely new way: by relying on the philosophical and feminist theory of Judith Butler. The reader is faced both with the complexity of the term and with gender identification in the act of musical performance. In this book, gender performativity is established, elaborated on and observed through the example of the young female frula players at the Frula festival in Sopot (Serbia).

Through the elaboration of her main topic in this book, the author also addresses the Profession, i.e. the professional public. She criticizes the lack of the theoretically established ways of insight into the interrelations of music and identification (the inconsistent implementation of existing and / or development of new theoretical approaches).

The third chapter, titled *Genealogy of the female instrumental performance*, brings a detailed historical overview of the female performances on traditional instruments, especially in the territory of Serbia, starting with the first references and descriptions and fresco paintings from the Middle Ages. The author here performs a genealogical analysis of women's activities within the different areas of traditional music and she provides an overview of the dominant dispositives at different moments in history. This is the basis and the starting point of her further theoretical suppositions. A subchapter

dedicated to the blind female *gusle* players describes a well-established practice of the female *gusle* playing, especially between the 16th and the 18th centuries. In the context of newly introduced social rules and transformed gender roles during the 19th and the 20th centuries and thanks to the dominant nationalist ideology, women have been pushed out of the sphere of private music performances, or even made invisible. Iva Nenić considers not only the *gusle*, but also the *frula* female players in the villages of Serbia during the 20th century in the subchapter *Ethnography of Exception*. She also presents less-known data about women playing other traditional instruments in Serbia.

Contemporary Music Practice of Female Players is the central chapter of the book. Here, Iva Nenić really gives a voice to the women performers by giving the transcripts of the interviews with her sources in the field. This provides for an extraordinary dynamic in the narrative of the book, but also allows us to mark the key moments of the (self)identification of female performers on traditional instruments in various spatial, temporal and ideological frameworks. The personal stories of the players are given through the short overview of the music scene during the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century and through the analysis of the dominant public and musical discourses. The author maintains that, at the present moment, the fact that women were playing traditional instruments was tacitly neglected and somehow 'forgotten' for as long as they fulfilled their other role – that of the conservators and carriers of the musical tradition. This conclu-

sion sheds light on the ambivalent status of women, i.e. on the femininity which is modified according to the current needs of the dominant social and cultural discourses in Serbia from a completely new point of view.

While describing the process of 'becoming the subject' Iva Nenić once again defines interpellation within the very act of playing music and the musical practice – not only as a concrete moment but as “a series of sequenced performative gestures from which the subject has risen, self confirmed and changed due to the changes in the social environment”. (144) Through the statements of her collaborators and sources in the field, the author traces two lines of understanding interpellations by/with music, i.e. in the concrete cases – becoming a female player – as a process and as a concrete event. Here, the event is defined as the moment when the players felt for the first time a call for identification and a strong desire to reach for a certain instrument. The player – instrument relation is emphasized and the attitudes of older and younger players are compared.

Music – the creative product of the female players of traditional instruments is signified as the material performative of the identity since “the very act of playing music and taking part in the material objectification of the discourses accompanying a certain musical practice sometimes stands as the basic performative gesture which establishes an individual as a subject in an ideology and, through ideology, places it within a certain identity” (158). By taking the semiological framework, naturalized in the Serbian ethnomusicology (Zakić, 2009), Iva Nenić con-

siders the modalities of the ways in which music supports the identity processes through the choice of the repertoire of players and musical characterization of their performances at different levels – qualisign, sinsign and legisign. She emphasizes the multiplicity of the identification processes as well as their intertwining in one subject – a single female player – by separating three modalities of the material performativity of music: the very act of playing music, direct and indirect participation in the music performance.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Ethno, the World Music and the neo-traditional music scenes have been important places where (predominantly younger) female players can be heard today. The author chose female gusle and frula playing as the dominant (but certainly not the only) female instrumental performance practices and she compared these two types of musical expressions on several occasions in the book and at its very end: “As frula players are more numerous and better accepted today due to the relative interruption in the (generally) poor visibility of their practice, which came with socialism, and the absence of strict regulations concerning female performers, female gusle players always had a special place during all historical changes” (191).

Considering the individual performance styles of the older and younger female gusle players in various ideological moments and social and performance situations, Iva Nenić presents the complexity of the female gusle playing (un)burdened by the different influences, ideologies and stereotyping by the audience but also by the performers themselves,

especially in the context of repertoire. Based on her own experience of more than a decade of continuous insight into the practice of women playing traditional instruments in Serbia, Iva Nenić initiates, emphasizes and encourages ethnomusicologists to engage in helping the fostering of better visibility of this musical practice and its carriers – women and girls.

The book ends with the impressive choice of literature from different domains (gender and culture studies, anthropology, ethnology, ethnomusicology...). There are interesting photographs from both the author's collection and from various personal and public archives. Forty two transcriptions of instrumental and vocal-instrumental melodies

played by female performers of different generations are also included in the book.

The lack of visibility, we could even say the marginalization of women performers on traditional instruments in Serbia has also led to their absence from the relevant scholarly discourse during the 20th century. In her book and in her general ethnomusicological engagement, Iva Nenić has made an important step forward to the better treatment of these women. She suggests relevant and appropriate methodological concepts, such as the theory of interpellation / identification by/with music. In this way *Guslarke i sviračice* are getting their (well-deserved) place amongst the extraordinary performers on traditional instruments in Serbia.

Article received on May 11th 2020
 Article accepted on June 5th 2020
 UDC 78.091.4(497.11)"2019"(049.32)
 78.071(100)"19/20":929(049.32)

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A Review of the 28th International Review of Composers, 4–9 October 2019

The International Review of Composers is Serbia's only festival of contemporary music, which has pursued its unique con-

ception since its founding. Bearing in mind that it is a review of current musical creativity, the Festival is open to divergent kinds of poetics, including those belonging to a neoclassical outlook. In that sense, the Review offers a wide spectrum of differing approaches and expressions, providing a cross section of musical creativity at the present time. Certain digressions in terms of programming, such as concerts featuring standard repertory works from the 20th century, 'disturb' the Review's main conception, although, taking the Festival as a whole, they do provide a certain dose of refreshment to the overall programming picture. That 'refreshment' is also supplied by thematic arcs, which bring various segments of the

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