

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.

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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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festival programme together, highlighting kinship among featured pieces in terms of genre, character, and other criteria. In any case, over the last few years, the festival's programming director Branka Popović (Бранка Поповић) has managed to strike and maintain a balance in selecting the festival's repertoire, striving, against its modest resources, to come up with dynamic programmes representative of different generations, aesthetic positions, and instrumental ensembles. The same may also be said of last year's Review, which went on for no less than six days. Like every year before, last year's festival likewise included the presentation of awards to prominent artists. Thus the Mokranjac Award went to Dejan Despić (Дејан Деспич) for his comic opera *Pop Ćira i pop Spira* (Пољ Ђира и пољ Спире; "Priest Ćira and Priest Spira"), Pavle Stefanović Award for music criticism and writing on music was presented to Dušan Mihalek (Душан Михалек) for his book *Muzika i reč* (Музика и реч; "Music and Words"), Aleksandar Pavlović Award went to Trio Pokret, while special prizes for "many years of dedicated and committed striving to promote Serbian music"¹ were awarded to Gordana Đurđević (Гордана Ђурђевић), Nada Kolundžija (Нада Колунџија), and Petar Ivanović (Петар Ивановић).

Specifically, this Review was inaugurated by a performance of the Tea Dimitrijević (Тea Димитријевић) and Dejan Subotić (Дејан Суботић) piano duo and

LP Duo. The first piece featured that evening was *An Islet in the Sea of Japan* by Ihar Komar (Игорь Кóмар). Inspired by Japanese Kabuki theatre, this piece revolves around creating a contemplative atmosphere, using subtle tonal movements and playing with timbre. The result is a meditative sort of atmosphere, featuring only occasional dramaturgic rises that distort its otherwise simple and transparent acoustic landscape featuring a characteristic thematic material subject to varied repetition. Dimitrijević and Subotić provided a carefully outlined rendering of the work's dramatic course, securely guiding their listeners through it from beginning to end. This was radically contrasted by Vladan Radovanović's (Владан Радовановић) *Furioso*, based on extremely expressive piano sections developing into a sort of perpetuum mobile, with broadly set out melodic lines, saturated chromatics, and sharp chromatic progressions. Following *Il mostro meccanico* by Miloš Zatkalik (Милош Заткалик), a piece based on repetitive patterns and an almost *barbaro* style, Dimitrijević and Subotić ended their performance that evening with a rendering of *Uragan* (Урајан; "Hurricane"), a piece by Jugoslav Bošnjak (Југослав Бошњак). The lively shaded musical flow of this work rests on a gradual and logic kind of development, building a condensed, yet richly varied musical vignette, espousing a neo-romantic kind of sensibility.

Sonja Lončar (Соња Лончар) and Andrija Pavlović (Андрија Павловић) presented a series of extremely interesting works: *Ariel* by Ivan Božičević, *Three Etudes for Piano* by Ana Sokolović (Ана Соколовић), *14:30* by Branka Popović

¹ See the jury's explications at <http://composers.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/UKS-obrazlozenje-Trio-pokret.pdf>

(Бранка Поповић), *Komad, kolaž, kolač* (*Комад, колаж, колач*; “A Piece, a Collage, a Cookie”) by Ivan Brkljačić (Иван Брклјачић), and *American Fantasy* by Kim Helweg. Vožičević’s minimalistically structured work and the charming and unpretentious etudes by Ana Sokolović, based on a single musical parameter, were followed by Branka Popović’s furious piece. Using numerous repetitions – repeated notes and motives – the composer constructed a work in which the two piano parts intertwine, take cues from one another, engage in dialogues, and generate a powerful sonic impression. Still writing communicative pieces inspired by contemporary musical influences from beyond the so-called classical domain, Ivan Brkljačić has produced an interesting and cleverly accomplished piece. Developing a sort of play between the instruments, by engaging them in a simulated musical ‘struggle’, Brkljačić sought to achieve a real interaction between the parts, by having them engage in a constant dialogue and complementary appearances. The LP Duo’s concert was rounded off with their interpretation of Helweg’s *American Fantasy*, which is dominated by large-scale technique [крупна техника] and fast-moving passages. Maintaining the high quality of their performances, once again the Duo demonstrated their admirable degree of interpretative lucidity and excellent collaboration, predicated on a lively interaction and musical understanding between the two pianists.

Saturday night, the Review’s second evening, saw a performance of the Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble. *Zašto* (*Зашто*; “Why”), a work

by Ana Kazimić (Ана Казимић) for mezzo-soprano, flute, violin, and piano, was followed by an intriguingly devised work by Aleksandar Perunović (Александар Перуновић), *Ajtiamantra iyouinori – Variationen und Reaktion über Klavierstücke I-IV von Stockhausen*. This piece for piano and electronics was exquisitely presented by Neda Hofman Sretenović (Неда Хофман Сретенковић), with ample attention, performance skill, focus, and care for the logic behind the construction of the work’s musical flow. In line with the author’s innovative conception, which entails observing stage directions, playing with her face covered, the pianist performed her improvisatory part, adapting to the sonic material played from the speakers. Conceived as a set of variations on piano pieces by Stockhausen, this work, neo-avant-garde in character and postmodernist in methodology, rests on an innovatively conceived flow featuring an exciting and unexpected dramaturgy that ends with a surprising and cathartic lapse into a quotation from Pachelbel’s Canon. Demonstrating her virtuosity and a finely tuned feeling for time, Hofman took her listeners into a unique and powerfully devised musical world. The evening also featured a work by Maja Bosnić (Маја Боснић), *Nadogradnja za grupu muzičara sa telefonima u izmišljenoj čekaonici iz ne tako daleke budućnosti* (*Надоградња за групу музичара са телефонима у измишљеној чекаоници из не тако далеке будућности*; “Extension for a Group of Musicians with Telephones... In a Fictional Waiting Room from a not so Distant Future”); *Planine* (*Планине*; “Mountains”), a piano quintet by Božo Banović (Божо

Бановић); and *Emulations* by Ljubomir Nikolić (Љубомир Николић), a work for clarinet and accordion. However, especially noteworthy was Rastko Uzunović's (Растко Узуновић) interpretation of *Klarinet br. __* (Кларинет бр. __; "Clarinet No. __"), a clarinet piece by Teodora Stepančić (Теодора Степанчић). Uzunović performed this piece, which revolves around long, sustained tones taking turns after prolonged rests, with much patience and focus, paying attention to its many tonal shades. Playing with time, the composer has created a simple piece, but one that is also laden with tension, which gives prominence to the performer's skills in focusing on the quality of a single note, its volume and intensity, something that Rastko Uzunović, with his sensitive and careful playing, accomplished to the full.

The Review's second concert that Saturday took place at the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, featuring Maja Smiljanić Radić (Маја Смиљанић Радић) on solo organ. Based on a not too developed melodic phrase, Zvonimir Nagy's *Angelus* has a meditative character and entails patience from the performer in building up the work's flow, evoking a Pärtian kind of sensibility. Especially noteworthy was Smiljanić Radić's rendering of *Expansion: une ode au Big Bang* by Laurence Jobidon. She interpreted this dramaturgically complex work with a clear idea in terms of creating a logically coherent dramatic thread, revealing the score's many divergent aspects and its wealth of expression. The same may be said about her performance of *Epimetej* (Епиметей; "Epimetheus") by Vlastimir Trajković (Властимир Трајковић). This monumental work by Trajković is his

only piece for organ. In that regard, it is evident that the composer sought to explore the instrument's sound potentials, making use of its heterogeneous sonic capabilities. From rhythmic motives to clusters, from its aggressive and virtuosic sections to repetitive, lyric, almost ethereal segments, the piece features heterogeneous musical contents that blend into a coherent and reflexive whole.

The Review's third day opened with a superb rendering of Luka Čubrilo's (Лука Чубрило) *Inégal* – transformations for violoncello, by Đorđe Milošević (Ђорђе Милошевић). Milan Aleksić's (Милан Алексић) academically constructed solo song *Zid* (Зид; "Wall"), a setting of verses by Vasko Popa (Васко Попа), was followed by a rendering of *318km, for two*, a work by Ivana Ognjanović (Ивана Огњановић). The work's title, which refers to the distance between Belgrade and Kosovska Mitrovica, generates a musical impression of constant motion. Inspired by *Eight Hundred Streets by Feet*, a piece by jazz pianist Esbjörn Svensson, Ognjanović's work is endowed with a certain melodic quality, as well as robustness, saccharine sentimentality, and an almost aggressive sort of power. Đorđe Milošević and pianist Bojana Šumanjski's (Бојана Шумањски) exquisite performance entirely captured the character of this work and faithfully presented its conceptual grounding. After *Even the Sky Screams Sometimes Too II*, a somewhat predictably designed piece by Dimitri Papageorgiou but rather well performed by the excellent accordionist Panagiotis Andreoglou, Miodrag Đorđević (Миодраг Ђорђевић) and Jovana Radovanović (Јована Радовановић)

gave a performance of *Romance, Waltz, KoltzeTrans*, a piece for accordion and piano by Dragana Jovanović (Драгана Јовановић). Successfully establishing communication with the audience by simulating familiar melodies and styles, Jovanović has produced a work that is dramaturgically clear and lively in character. This was followed by a solid rendering of Svetlana Savić's (Светлана Савић) work *Godzila*, a *scherzoso* setting of verses by Jelena Marinkov (Јелена Маринков), by Ana Radovanović (Ана Радовановић), mezzo-soprano, and Marko Dražić (Марко Дражић) on the accordion. The evening was rounded off with a performance of *Kada te ostavi onaj koga voliš* (Када те остави онај кога волиш; "When You're Left by the One You Love") by Tatjana Milošević (Татјана Милошевић), by the Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble, with Ana Radovanović as the vocal soloist. In this piece, a suggestively realized electronic tape track accompanies a dramatic and emotionally charged text. Maintaining constant tension by means of repeating notes and a vocal part that is almost operatic in quality, Milošević has created a work endowed with an extraordinary dramatic power, which was duly communicated in the performance.

The third day of the Review ended with a concert of *in process*, the German ensemble specializing in minimalist music led by Ulli Götte. We had an opportunity to hear works by Philip Glass (*Conclusion* and *Funeral*), Ulli Götte (*Two Groups* – Part III and *...dies ist mein* from *Grenzen*), Steve Reich (*Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ*), Steve Martland (*Dance Works* – Part I),

and Vladimir Tošić (Владимир Тошић; *Medial 6*). Impeccable in terms of tone, with excellently set up relations between the instruments, and insistence upon a stylistically faithful reading of the works, the ensemble performed rather well. Its rendering of Steve Reich's *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ* stood out as a representative work that showcased the ensemble's full potential, who performed it without a conductor, accurately following the score and taking care to avoid monotony in the repetitions. In fact, they strove to impart dynamism to the musical flow, marking the impact of each new part as it came in, baring the harmonic construction of every motivic pattern, stressing every change in the rhythm, and, overall, delving into the processuality of the piece with ample reflection. We had an opportunity to hear a variety of shades, colours, and ever-changing repetitions, pulling us into a mantric kind of atmosphere. The same may be said about their performance of Philip Glass's *Funeral*, which provided a fitting conclusion to the performance of this experienced ensemble, versed in the musical language of minimalism and capable of finding musical quality in it.

The concerts of 7 and 8 October were an opportunity to hear pieces espousing diverse stylistic orientations and sensibilities. Thus we were treated to performances of *Reverse* by Laura Mjeda Čuperjani, *Crop Circle* by Petra Strahovnik, *Fiddle* by Chatori Shimizu, and *Jahre ohne Mozart* by Diana Čemeryté, as well as *Svi tvoji svetovi* (Сви њвоју свењову; "All Your Worlds") by Sonja Mutić (Соња Мудић) and *Kafanski sonoritet* (Кафански соноритет; "Tavern

Sonority”) by Nataša Bogojević (Наташа Богојевић). *Svi tvoji svetovi*, a sonorous and extremely sensitive work scored for trumpet, harp, accordion, and percussion, is focused on exploring the sonorities of its instruments and their sounding together. Using long, sustained notes and subtle dynamics, with only a few rises, Sonja Mutić has created a unique, contemplative atmosphere, successfully incarnated by Studio 6, an excellent ensemble. Pushing the limits of time, patiently building a well thought-out dramaturgy, the author takes us to her imaginary world, in an attempt to – as she put it in her commentary – “crack open individual pitches to expose the harmonic fields within. These fields are relational and influence each other, either melting to form resonant knots that rotate and coalesce, or becoming distinct and separable instrumental identities that emerge to inhabit their own sound world”.² In a total contrast, this was followed by Nataša Bogojević’s *Kafanski sonoritet* for violoncello, violin, accordion, piano, and bassoon, featuring an innovative simulation of quasi-folk elements combined with the minimalist method of taking musical fragments and subjecting them to repetitions. In fact, it was interesting to hear a seemingly banal melody, i.e. fragment transform into a broader, well-organized whole and functioning as prominent thematic material. The second part of the concert featured *Dr Wolfi and Mr Haydn in a New Episode: Sonata (quasi una fantasia) – non facile, per pianoforte e orchestrae ossia Moz-Art á la Haydn et vice*

² See the festival playbill at http://composers.rs/en/?page_id=3161

versa, a postmodernist play by Predrag Repanić (Предраг Репанић); *Flow Imprints* by Fani Kosona; *Fake Flutes* by Paul Pankert; *Mali kvartet za prijatelje* (Мали квариџеј за пријатеље; “A Little Quartet for Friends”) by Mirjana Živković (Мирјана Живковић); and *Oblačić na vrhu Atosa* (Облачић на врху Ајџоса; “A Little Cloud on Top of Mount Athos”) by Milana Stojadinović Milić (Милана Стојадиновић Милић). On this occasion, I especially want to mention Zoran Erić’s (Зоран Ерић) *Posveta prirodi* (Посвеџа природи; “A Dedication to Nature”) and Isidora Žebeljan’s (Исидора Жебељан) *Kad je Bog stvarao Dubrovnik* (Каџ је Бој стиварао Дубровник; “When God Made Dubrovnik”). The work by Erić was composed for solo flute and superbly performed by Ljubiša Jovanović (Љубиша Јовановић). It is a musical vignette dominated by a rather subtle and understated type of expression, perhaps atypically of Erić’s work. Making use of the instrument’s many technical abilities, constructing a rather interesting formally organized entity, whose complexity would arguably emerge in full view upon a more careful analysis of the score itself, Erić has written a piece that may face its interpreters with a serious challenge, but one that also achieves the necessary communication with its audience. The same type of communication is likewise present in the musical language and compositional approach of Isidora Žebeljan. An expressive and somewhat grotesque piece, *Kad je Bog stvarao Dubrovnik* features the scherzoso quality that characterizes much of her work, stemming from her simulation of folk elements. These are carefully chosen and employed in the

creation of this at times bewildering but, in the final analysis, certainly amusing work for its listeners.

The *SISU* percussion ensemble performed on 8 October. The ensemble was established in Norway in 1993, specializing in contemporary music. They performed *Sikoté Sukán* by Rob Waring, *Kuda sa pticom na dlanu* (*Куда са птицом на длану*; “Whither with a Bird in the Palm”) by Ivana Stefanović (Ивана Стефановић), and *Respons I–IV* by Arne Nordheim. Right from the first piece, which is virtuosic in character and showcased the ensemble’s superb command of their instruments, Tomas Nilsson, Bjørn-Christian Svarstad, and Bjørn Skansen demonstrated great interaction and technical proficiency. The work by Rob Waring is based on rhythmic plays inspired by the forms and character of Gamelan music. Paying attention to the accentuation, accurately rendering the work’s irregular rhythms, the ensemble introduced the audience to the evening’s programme in an effective way. It continued with Ivana Stefanović’s imaginatively designed work, which also revealed the ensemble’s more sensitive side, and concluded with a rendering of the Nordheim piece. Mysterious in character, building upon the sonority of the instruments, the work’s electronic part serves to impart a peculiar, at times meditative atmosphere. Developing the work’s dramaturgy in an unpredictable fashion, moving between contemplative, subtle timbres and shrill acoustic blows, Nordheim created an extraordinary work endowed with dramatic power and, in my view, philosophical depth. The ensemble succeeded in *reanimating* the piece, working together and

cooperating on an equal footing in order to create its sound image, venturing deep into a fruitful interaction with the work’s expertly realized electronic part.

The Construction Site Contemporary Music Ensemble had the privilege of concluding this edition of the Review. The final evening’s programme included *MOTUS 2* (*МОТУС 2*) by Vladimir Tošić (Владимир Тошић), *The Tempest* by Sungji Hong, *Light Lapse* by Marco Longo, *The Anamnesis of Miron Goldenberg, Esq., a Short Tavern Song for Baritone and Nonet* by Draško Adžić (*Драшко Аџић*), *Five Love Songs* by Emre Sihan Kaleli, and *Trinity* by Lazar Đorđević (Лазар Ђорђевић). Sungji Hong’s three solo songs for soprano and 12 instruments possess something of an operatic quality, with an extremely virtuosic vocal treatment and emotionally charged orchestral part. The composer uses various effects to maintain tension. For instance, in the first song, long, sustained notes imperceptibly move from the vocal part into the instrumental parts, generating an impression of extended time, which is deftly controlled. In fact, the artist took us into a bleak, expressionistic soundscape, wherein we could hear multiple arcs of tension and dramatic moments, often without an expected resolution. Marco Longo’s exciting, though not quite innovative piece was followed by a veritable piece of musical satire by Draško Adžić. The work’s title itself already foreshadows the character of the piece. And when one reads that the music is meant “to portray the condition of Miron Goldenberg, a fictional and mentally unstable opera singer of world renown, on the eve of his nervous breakdown triggered by

the unexpected demise of his dazzling career”,³ it becomes clear that this is a lucid postmodernist game. Using a comic and extremely banal text sung by a “neo-folk” (*новокомјонована музика, новокомпронована тизика*) chanteuse, about tavern life (*кафански животи, kafanski život*), the author uses the musical grotesque and hints of simulating folklore, as well as falsetto in the male vocal part, to create a communicative work, seeking to amuse his listeners as well as provoke them to reflect. Following Emre Kaleli’s dramatically predictable and in terms of form unimaginatively constructed songs, the concert ended with a rendering of *Trinity* by Lazar Đorđević. Grounding his work’s harmonic image on multiple harmonic series, insisting on expression by means of powerful dynamic strikes and a sense of tension maintained by constant movement in the parts and an ever-rising dramatic charge, Đorđević has produced

a compact, clear-cut, and effective piece. Stressing the brass as important carriers of the musical flow, as well as the percussion, the composer generates a peculiar kind of atmosphere, moving, as it were, from an insufficiently articulate noise all the way to some Shostakovich-esque moments in the final section of the piece. This interesting musical effort by a young composer provided a fitting ending to last year’s Review, which, like every year before, gave us an opportunity to hear a programme that was varying in quality and works espousing widely differing poetic frameworks. It is precisely this diversity that constitutes the main quality of this festival, which has, for many years now, lacked a more adequate media presence, strategically designed promotion, a more creative and bold approach to its overall concept, as well as an additional financial stimulus.

³ See http://composers.rs/en/?page_id=3194