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**MUSIC BIENNALE ZAGREB (WWW.BIENNALE-ZAGREB)
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For ten days in April, Zagreb was the center of international contemporary music. Namely, from 15-24 April 2005 two festivals dedicated to the music at the turn of the 21st century took place. Beside the regular Biennale program, there were concerts as part of World Music Days held by the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music). In so doing, Zagreb confirmed its status of a center of contemporary music, which dates back as early as the third meeting of the ISCM (1925) and which is precisely the place where the Yugoslav section of the Society was established. It happened in the Hrvatski glazbeni zavod (Croatian Institute of Music), at the initiative of Maja Strozzi-Pečić and Bela Bečić. Among the board members were composers Krešimir Baranović, Antun Dobronić, Miloje Milojević, Kosta Manojlović, Božidar Širola, Anton Lajovic. This status of Zagreb's was reaffirmed later with the establishment of one of the most significant European festivals of contemporary music – Music Biennale.

In April 2005, the 23rd Biennale was organized to coincide with World Music Days, so that a very rich program contained as many as 44 concerts, of which 25 at the Biennale and 19 at the ISCM festival. So, 167 works by composers hailing from 43 countries were performed at the Biennale. The ISCM jury selected 77 works, less than a third of the number submitted, written in 27 member-countries. Represented among them were Croatia and Slovenia, but unfortunately not Serbia and Montenegro. However, after a longer period, several works by Serbian composers were included in the Biennale program. All events took place in no less than 14 institutions in Zagreb, including the Hrvatsko narodno kazalište (Croatian National Theater), Gradsko dramsko kazalište *Gavela* (Gavella Theater), Zagrebačko kazalište lutaka (Zagreb Puppet Theater), Koncertna dvorana *Vatroslav Lisinski* (Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall), muzej Mimara (Mimara Museum), Gliptoteka HAZU (Museum of Sculpture of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Matica hrvatska, Klub net.kulture MAMA (Multimedia Institute MAMA). Given the number of the concerts, video and audio installations, multimedia projects, workshops, and a lecture, it is not surprising – although it certainly is impressive – that each day saw 4 to 5 concerts, from noon to midnight. Even more impressive, especially from the perspective of the status of contemporary music in Belgrade, and in Serbia, was that all concerts were very well attended. It seems that these differences can be surmounted with a better-planned system of performing contemporary music, like one during the Biennale: for instance, pupils from the elementary and secondary schools regularly attended symphony concerts in the *Lisinski* Concert Hall.

The festivals' programs included works by composers of different generations, from Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988), Ljubica Marić (1909-2003), Milko Kelemen (b. 1924), Pierre Boulez (b. 1929), Emil Petrovics (b. 1930), Sofija Gubajdulina (b. 1931), to Jane Stanley (b. 1976), Philipp Neil Martin (b. 1979), Viktorija Čop (b. 1979). It is worth noting that the ISCM, in collaboration with the Society of Composers of Hong Kong, encourages and promotes musicians under the age of 35. The award includes financial support as well as a commission for a composition for a chamber ensemble, which will be performed at the Gaudeamus Musical Week in Amsterdam. Among 39 compositions, the winner for 2005 is *Signature* (2003) by Finnish composer Sampo Haapamäki (b. 1979).

The compositions that were performed were mostly written at the beginning of the 21st century, but there were also ones composed during the second half of the 20th century. In that way, as a kind of frame for the new works, “classics” of European avant-garde, the minimalism of Boulez, Kelemen, or Steve Reich were represented. Not only were their compositions performed together with the new compositions, but they had an added significance. Namely, numerous middle-generation and young composers studied with the “classics” of contemporary music, either attending seminars in Darmstadt or IRCAM, or as students and collaborators of Olivier Messiaen, Boulez, Pierre Schaeffer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Witold Lutoslawski, Iannis Xenakis, Luigi Nono, Luciano Berio, André Jolivet, Krzysztof Penderecki, Ivo Malec. It is interesting that the most numerous were Louis Andriessen's students, even six of them: Aleksandar Ščetinski (b. 1960), Mary Finsterer (b. 1962), Yannis Kyriakides (b. 1969), Raminta Šerkšnyte (b. 1975), Krzysztof Wolek (b. 1976), Marius Baranauskas (b. 1978), young composers from the Ukraine, Australia, Lithuania, Poland, Cyprus. This may be taken as a starting point in defining the presented poetics, since in many cases a teacher's influence on the student or follower's attitude, compositional techniques, or not least media, is obvious, if not at the level of the *language* then at the level of *dialect*. Let us examine Kyriakides, the author of one of the regarded compositions, through the minimalist fantasy *Tinkle Spin Out*. As the title suggests, the composition is based on the stressed, obsessive repetition of a model, that is associative of a movie hero, who spins out in an airport building like a dervish, as the composer pointed out.

After listening to the newest world music production, the Eggebrechtian question arises: is contemporary music also new music, and to what extent? It seems that the two terms cannot be taken as synonyms, but as signifiers of two, sometimes quite distant musical worlds. The program of the two festivals, as a model of the music composed during the past several years, proves it. Compositions were mainly dedicated to different chamber ensembles, sometimes “hiding” expected sounds by prepared instruments, by using peculiar performing techniques and playing, or other ways of sound production, or playing with tape and live electronics. Other performers included a string quartet, symphony orchestra as well as solo piano, wind or percussion ensemble, choir, flute orchestra.

A separate group of works consisted of three operas, two ballets, and three dance performances. It was such stage works as, for instance, operas by Emil Petrovics (*C'est la guerre*, 1962), János Vajda (*Mario and the Magician*, 1988), Nicola Sani (*Diotima e Euridice*, 2004), along with certain neoclassical,

late/neo/romantic symphonic ones (Silvio Foretić: Concerto for Second Violin and Orchestra, 2005; Zoltán Kovács: Symphony no.1, 2001), that made the main points of the world of contemporary, but not new music.

Since the program consisted of similar works, the concert of Serbian music was also deemed to be among those that belong to new production only on the basis of its time of origin. This was caused partly by the fact that the choice of compositions, presenting Serbian music at the Zagreb Biennale after many years, was completely determined by the repertoire of a performing ensemble. Namely, this concert was entirely performed by the trio Donne di Belgrado (Stana Krstajić, flute; Maja Rajković, piano; Aneta ilić, mezzosoprano), a chamber ensemble of confirmed reputation, but not a leader among ensembles that play contemporary (Serbian) music. Members of the trio played compositions by Ljubica Marić (*Čudesni miligram* for soprano and flute), Dejan Despić (*Prolećne pesme*), Ivana Stefanović (*Nad vodom*), Dragana Jovanović (*Krhkost tišine*), Milana Stojadinović-Milić (*Suze*), Isidora Žebeljan (*Sarabanda*), as well as a vocalise close to Isidora Žebeljan's by young Croatian composer Sanda Majurec-Zanata. It seems that the choice of works from the trio's repertoire did not fully coincide with the representative compositions by the most significant contemporary Serbian composers – numerous other compositions by Despić or Žebeljan, for instance, would have been much more appropriate to show not only the poetics of these composers, but the profile of Serbian music in general. Thus, compositions by Ljubica Marić and Ivana Stefanović were closest to the new sound compared with their young colleagues, while Dejan Despić's opus was presented with traditionally articulated Romantic lyric songs inspired by Desanka Maksimović's poetry. It could be concluded that contemporary Serbian music should be more carefully chosen at similar events in the future, especially if numerous music critics and selectors of international festivals of contemporary music make up a significant part of the audience.

New music in the frame of contemporary music included works signified by recent mathematical-acoustical research of aliquots, from which natural tone rows originate, as in spectral works by François Paris, for instance. The composer explained his own techniques at a very interesting lecture in the Multimedia Institute MAMA. Sofia Gubaidulina also reached the individual, her own vocal and instrumental voice, investigating the natural system of non-tempered instruments from different cultures and by using the unusual sound possibilities of the accordion, which was highly valued at the concert of her music.

It seems, however, that new music was embodied mostly in the works which fascinatingly unified the highest art of performing and creativity, as was the case with *Xenakis [a]live!* by Reinhold Friedl and *Voyage that Never Ends* by bass player Stefano Scodanibbio. In both compositions, the traditional treatment of instruments was significantly modified, both by new poetics and supreme interpretation. So, the ensemble *Zeitkratzer*, including eight instruments (piano, violin, violoncello, double bass, clarinet, trumpet, tuba, percussions), with electronics, reached an illusion of pure electronic media by playing the mentioned instruments in unusual ways: firstly, *passing through* a dynamic range, and a traditional melodic range, too. This homage to Xenakis was a fifty-minute sound cluster of *fffff* dynamics, in other

words – noise. Inside the noise, refined arabesques of short melodic lines, exposed in micropolyphony, show a highly creative step beyond the symphony orchestra sound, as well as a vision how this kind of Romantic ensemble could be redefined.

Successful collaboration between the Biennale and the Multimedia Institute established two years ago resulted also in other midnight concerts beside *Zeitkratzer's*, such as concerts by the Austrian *Regenorchestra XI*, led by the famous quarter-tone trumpet player Franz Hautzinger, and Norwegian artist Maja Ratkje with her collaborators. All of them in their own way showed the paths of new music, or new archipelagos of sound, which is the title of a project including these Biennale midnight concerts¹. Similarly, Scodanibbio resolutely demonstrated virtuoso improvisation playing the double bass, creating a new sound world, unknown not only in the treatment of this, but all string instruments as well.

In spite of the fact that at festivals of contemporary music – and also in their reviews – greater attention is dedicated to individual works, or composers, it is necessary to mention outstanding performing interpretations, which in contemporary or new music have a specific significance. Actually, the superiority of performers, convincing interpretation, highly technical tasks and surmounting of significant physical effort, supreme and precise interpretation and intonation, their inspiration – these are the visitors' strongest impressions. As mentioned, the most numerous groups of performers were chamber ensembles, ones specialized for new music; let us mention outstanding artists from the Swiss ensemble *Antipodes*, the first official ISCM ensemble, then the Austrian *Studio Percussion Graz* with six members, the Swedish instrumental ensemble *KammarensembleN*, the vocal symphonietta *Rilke* of twelve singers, the Italian *Ansambl Icarus*. Among the ensembles specialized for contemporary music, the only one of its kind in Croatia *Cantus* deserves to be mentioned. It was founded in 2001 and its conductor since then has been Berislav Šipuš.

A special contribution to the festival was the premiere of 18 new compositions, 12 of which by Croatian composers, which is unquestionably a very good way of promoting national music. In this way, the Hrvatsko društvo skladatelja (Croatian Composers' Society) celebrated its 60th anniversary. The traditionally impeccable marketing and organization of the two events were the result of long-term efforts put in by the board: composers Ivo Josipović, general director, and Berislav Šipuš, artistic director of the Biennale, as well as musicologists Sanda Vojković, production director, and Nikša Gligo, press director. Thanks to collaborators from the Cantus Society and the Croatian Composers' Society, very well designed bulletins were published daily, which contained a great amount of information, interviews with some guests from the country and abroad, all of which was documented with photos from literally all concerts and other daily activities thanks to photographer Damil Kalodjera.

¹ Moreover, the project is theoretically defined in a publication written by musicologists Dr. Dalibor Davidović of Zagreb and Ksenija Stevanović of Belgrade, cf.: *Archipelagos of Sound. Music and Its History Within the Imperial World Order*, Zagreb, Croatian Composers' Society – Cantus d.o.o., 2005 (cf.: www.explicit-music.org). This is actually a collection of three texts: Peter Szendy: *1787: Bentham, Mozart*, 9-20; Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky that Subliminal Kid: *Uncanny/Unwoven*, 23-46; Ksenija Stevanović & Dalibor Davidović: *Archipelagos of Sound. Navigating the sound straits*, 48-77.

The successful work of hundreds of musicians and the flawless organization of the two big festivals were made possible by the sponsors of the Zagreb Biennale, from the Croatian president himself, Stjepan Mesić, to the Ministry of Culture of Croatia, to the Office for Cultural Affairs of the Zagreb City Assembly.