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TWO SELF-PORTRAITS OF JOSIP ŠTOLCER SLAVENSKI¹

Abstract: This paper analyzes the particulars of two *Self-Portraits* of Josip Slavenski from his Legacy in Belgrade; although done in one and the same technique (coloured pencils), they differ in stylistic traits and meaning. Slavenski's library is presented as the source of information on his extramusical interests and on his environment at the time the drawings were made (1926). The connections with Zenitists – Branko Ve Poljanski, with whom Slavenski visited some significant artists of the School of Paris, and Ljubomir Micić in Belgrade – are pointed out. Two other Slavenski drawings dedicated to astronomy, and France Kralj's portrait of Slavenski, are also mentioned.

Key words: Josip Slavenski, Ljubomir Micić, Branko Ve Poljanski, France Kralj, Balkanism, Zenitism, modern art, avant-garde, School of Paris, self-portrait, astronomy.

The motives for this paper are two *Self-Portraits* (1 and 2) of Josip Slavenski and the context which allowed their inception. The professional literature has already comprehensively covered the companionship of Josip Slavenski and Ljubomir Micić (Sošice, Jastrebarsko, Croatia, 1895 – Belgrade, 1971) and especially his brother Branko Ve Poljanski (Sošice, Jastrebarsko, Croatia, 1897 – near Fontainebleau, France, 1947).² What is established are their spiritual kinship and

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¹ I am deeply grateful to Ana Kotevska, as well as Gorica Dimitrijević and Marija Nikolić, directors and associates of Josip Slavenski's Legacy in Belgrade, who gave me the opportunity to publish this paper and kindly helped in acquiring the data necessary for dealing with Josip Slavenski's visual artworks.

² Slavko Batušić, 'Tridesetogodišnji dječak u velikom gradu', *Forum*, No. 12, Zagreb, 1971, 785–812; the same text in: *Pjesme, pripovijest, roman, putopis, članci*, Zagreb, 1973, 557–593; Mirjana Veselinović, *Stvaralačka prisutnost evropske avangarde u nas*, Belgrade, Univerzitet umetnosti, 1983; Sanja Grujić, 'Veze J. Slavenskog sa zenitističkim pokretom dvadesetih godina', *Međumurje*, No. 4, Čakovec, 1983, 53–60; Eva Sedak, *Josip Štolcer Slavenski – skladatelj prijelaza, I–II*, Zagreb, Muzički informativni centar i Muzikološki zavod, 1984; Eva Sedak, "Barbarogenius" und "Chaos". Der "Zenitismus" und sein Verhältnis zur Musik' in: V. Dietrich Kämper (ed), *Der musikalische Futurismus*, Laaber, 1999, 215–233; Katarina Tomašević, 'Istok – Zapad u polemičkom kontekstu srpske muzike između dva svetska rata', *Muzikologija*, No. 5, Belgrade, 2005, 119–129; Melita Milin, 'Tonovi naricanja, melanholije i divljine'. – Zenitistička pobuna i muzika, *Muzikologija*, No. 5, Belgrade, 2005, 131–144; Mirjana Živković, 'Jugoslovenstvo Josipa Slavenskog', in: Mirjana Živković (ed), *Josip Slavenski i njegovo doba*. Proceedings from the meeting marking 50 years of the composer's death, Belgrade, Muzički informativni centar, Muzikološki institut SANU, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2006, 13–26; Ana Kotevska, 'Pavle Stefanović o Josipu Slavenskom – od manifesta do sumnje i dalje', in: Mirjana Živković (ed), *Josip Slavenski i njegovo doba*. Proceedings of the meeting marking 50 years of the composer's death, Belgrade, Muzički informativni centar, Muzikološki institut SANU, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2006, 102–120; Danijela Špirić, 'Imagining a Balkan

frequent similarities of life and family situations, leaving small, modest, poor environments for bigger and larger cultural centres, horrors experienced in Galicia during the First World War, then the same positive, almost enthusiastic attitude towards Yugoslavism and social engagement at the time of the uniting of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. They also shared honest leftist ideas and high evaluation of the Balkans as a separate entity full of specific qualities. They were proud to be Slavs. Some permeation of Zenitist ideas in the opus of our great composer is also researched. There are data, or more precisely assumptions, of their encounters in Zagreb around 1920–1921, then in Prague (until 1923), where Poljanski was spreading Zenitist ideas with the Dadaist Dragan Aleksić. After Prague, meetings in Zagreb could not have been possible because Ljubomir Micić moved the quarters of *Zenit* magazine to Belgrade already by the end of May, and Slavenski in Zagreb, in September of the same year, started working as a teacher of theoretic disciplines at the Elementary and High Music Schools of the Royal Music Academy. A year later, in September 1924, he also came to Belgrade – a city that attracted many by its openness and readiness to accept cultural innovations and European standards, sorely needed in the capital of the unified nations' new state.

As it appears, companionship between Slavenski and Poljanski was most intense in Paris: it is even assumed that the two of them came together to the City of Light in September 1925. Already in October of the same year, in *Zenit* No. 36, sheet music of Josip Slavenski's *Balkanska igra – Zagorski tamburaši* [*Balkan Dance – Tamburitsans from Zagorje*] was printed, as a part of the piano suite *Sa Balkana* [*From the Balkans*] written in 1910–1917, which is considered a part of the Zenitist programme in music. As an exponent of Zenitism, Poljanski roamed the editorial offices of various magazines, collected donations for *Zenit* and prepared a big exhibition for Belgrade and Zagreb, titled *Savremeni pariski majstori* [*Contemporary Parisian Masters*],³ which included some painters who had already exhibited in Belgrade, in *Prva Zenitova međunarodna izložba nove umetnosti* [*First Zenit International Exhibition of New Art*], held in the Stanković Music School in April 1924. Slavenski, as it seems, kept his company; they

Community: Modernism, Slavenski and the First Yugoslavia (1918–1945)', in: Mirjana Živković (ed), *Josip Slavenski i njegovo doba*. Proceedings from the meeting marking 50 years of the composer's death, Belgrade, Muzički informativni centar, Muzikološki institut SANU, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 2006, 157–168; Milana Slavenski, *Josip*, Belgrade, Muzička škola Josip Slavenski, SOKOJ-MIC, 2006; Katarina Tomašević, 'Musical Modernism at the "Periphery"? Serbian Music in the First Half of the Twentieth Century', in: Dejan Despić, Melita Milin (eds), *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, Proceedings of the International Conference held from October 11 to 13, 2007, Belgrade, Institute of Musicology, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Academic Conferences, 2008, vol. CXXII, Department of Fine Arts and Music, book 6, 83–101; Vidosava Golubović – Irina Subotić, *Zenit 1921–1926*, Belgrade – Zagreb, Narodna biblioteka Srbije, Institut za književnost i umetnost, SKD Prosvjeta, 2008.

³ The exhibition in Belgrade was organized with the patronage of Arts Lovers' Society 'Cvijeta Zuzorić', in September–October 1926, and in Zagreb in January–February 1927, in the Art Pavilion.

found themselves in the ateliers of many distinguished members of the School of Paris, with which Poljanski himself was to exhibit shortly.⁴ Among them were the favourite professor of many ex-Yugoslav students, André Lhote, painter of Lithuanian descent Léopold Survage, and painter and poet Max Jacob – both associates of *Zenit*; Sonia and Robert Delaunay, the disciples of Cubism in the sense of a peculiar type of colouristic expression – Guillaume Apollinaire called it Orphism; their works were exhibited by *Zenit* and kept by Micić in his collection; Marc Chagall on that occasion bestowed to *Zenit* his lithograph with *Self-Portrait*; Tsuguharou Foujita portraits of Poljanski; they are in the company of unavoidable Picasso, whose painting was also published in *Zenit*, and Ossip Zadkine dedicated an atelier photograph of his to the Yugoslav avant-garde magazine, preserved in Micić's heritage.⁵

It is possible that exactly those contacts stimulated Slavenski's desire to express himself visually: all these painters and sculptors, although authentic and different, were able to recognize the impetus of the new time, marked by the influence of the historical avant-gardes. But at the same time to dissociate themselves from their radical viewpoints. They shared the relationship towards the real world: for them, it was but a spur, a base for their free interpretations of nature. Distancing themselves from the objective image of the world and searching for subjective expression, they applied various approaches, often with a syncretic connection between the abstract and the concrete, i.e. figurative. As it appears, Josip Slavenski moved in the same direction.

From the items published in the newspapers and magazines, we learn that Slavenski, together with Poljanski and Mirko Kujačić, a painter, in January 1926 attended a lecture by Alfred Kerr in the Société Savante Hall. They accused this German publicist of anti-Serbian verses, popular during the First World War, and the protest found powerful response in the French press, but also throughout Europe.⁶ Slavenski, with Kujačić and Poljanski, making a 'Zenitist threesome', hailed *Zenit*'s fifth anniversary in a letter from Paris, concurrently with, say, Theo van Doesburg, Fortunato Depero, Ilya Ehrenburg, Konrad Veit, Herwarth Walden, Michel Seuphor, Jozef Peeters, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Henri Barbusse.⁷ Slavenski returned to Belgrade a year later, in the autumn of 1926. Poljanski never left France again – he turned to painting and exhibited successfully, but he still lived with difficulty, due to unresolved administrative and

⁴ On the School of Paris exhibition in the gallery *La Renaissance*, Poljanski took part in July 1929, and his two gouaches earned high appraisals by French critics.

⁵ Visual-arts heritage of Ljubomir Micić is kept in the National Museum in Belgrade, and the literary one in the National Library of Serbia.

⁶ *Zenit*, Belgrade, 1926, Nos. 39 and 40.

⁷ *Zenit*, Belgrade, 1926, No. 38.

financial problems which influenced his physical and mental health, although he later raised a family. As far as Ljubomir Micić is concerned, Slavenski probably could have met him in Belgrade, during a short period immediately after his return from Paris in the autumn of 1926. Namely, already in mid-December, due to the prohibition of the last, 43rd issue of *Zenit*⁸ and the subsequent judicial process, but first and foremost due to police persecution, Micić ran away from Belgrade and via Rijeka made it to Paris for the first time only a month later – in January 1927.⁹ It is possible that direct contacts with Micić continued later, when Micić returned to Belgrade in 1937. Slavenski's library contains Micić's book *Zeniton. L'Amant de Fata Morgana*, published in Paris in 1930 (and according to a note, written in 1928–1929: *Meudon – La Brée, Ile d'Oleron*).¹⁰ Notably, there is no dedication, no Slavenski comment whatsoever, not even the signature, which he so often placed – either in a Latin or Cyrillic lettering – to mark his ownership. It is a free assumption that Slavenski intimately disagreed with Micić's standpoints, his pathos in the book, his views of the past, history, the fate of Serbia and Kosovo, victims and heroes.

Two aforementioned *Self-Portraits* are preserved in Josip Slavenski's Legacy in Belgrade,¹¹ and they are above all interesting as a confirmation of the composer's wide interests, even skills. Those works point to an interpretation of his attitude towards modern art, to the possible influences he was exposed to in contact with other creators of the time, particularly those he met in Paris. It is known that the Legacy's comprehensive library offers a plenitude of information on our composer; besides music and music history, which undoubtedly were his basic preoccupations, the books attest to his various interests, to the diverse circles he frequented and the society he was a part of, to his passion for learning: 'He devolved knowledge', Ivana Stefanović remembers; he had hobbies, he loved astronomy and the planetary systems, atmospheric phenomena, atomic energy and the genesis of life, physics, crystallography, mathematics and Einstein's Relativity Theory, but also other sciences – philosophy, psychology,

⁸ Because of the text 'Zenitizam kroz prizmu marksizma' ['Zenitism through the Prism of Marxism'] by M. Rasinov, Ph.D.

⁹ He was arrested in Rijeka for not having proper documents, and released thanks to F. T. Marinetti's intervention.

¹⁰ Published by *Aux Arènes de Lutèce*; the book bears a stamp: *Exclusivité*, and the sign (probably of a library where it was sold): *Hachette*, 79, Bld. St. Germain, Paris; there is also an advertisement for Micić's previous book, *Hardi! A la Barbari!*, and quotations from various magazine, newspaper and journal items reviewing it.

¹¹ The drawings were discovered by Ana Kotevska, while she was the director of SOKOJ's Musical Information Centre and Josip Slavenski's Legacy, in the score of Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony*, at the end of May 2005, during the preparations for the 50th anniversary of our composer's death; they were first presented to the public by Zora Bojić in MIC, on 1st November 2006, and were written about by: Šehović, M.[uharem], 'Nepoznati crteži Josipa Slavenskog. Iznađenja u notama. Slučajno otkriveni pariski autoportreti iz 1926. našeg kompozitora', *Politika*, Belgrade, CIII/33403, 3. XI 2006, 16.

sexology, religions, aesthetics and ethics, anthropology, geography, theosophy and astrology, history, particularly the history of the Balkans, learning and memory, old civilizations and contemporary art; Slavenski was keen on old and modern languages... That is best seen by frequently non-representative, modestly printed, but serious books, encyclopaedias, reference volumes and dictionaries of the time. On the whole, that is a studiously structured library which does not allow for luxurious and ostentatious showcase publications whose content often leaves much to be desired.¹² Interestingly, there is not much literature on contemporary visual arts – except for one extremely important annual file of twelve issues of the Paris magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau* from 1926, founded and edited by Paul Dermée, associate of *Zenit*.¹³ The magazine is significant for recognizing, but also creating the values of its time, by speaking about them in a complex, multidisciplinary way, by connecting all the cultural departments of the time. *L'Esprit Nouveau* does not avoid the classics of world art, but it deals mostly with film and the theatre, African anthropology, new designs and contemporary architecture, sports and auction houses; it publishes reproductions of Picasso, Matisse, Braque and Derain, André Lhote and Gino Severini, Juan Gris and Mondriaan. Among the others, there are artists who intensively collaborated in *Zenit* – Lajos Kassák, Alexandre Archipenko, Albert Gleizes, Ossip Zadkine, Léopold Survage, Ladislav Medgyes. That particularly holds for the review of the *Salon des Indépendants*, one of the most famous events dedicated to modern tendencies, penned by Maurice Raynal. The annual file was obviously very important to Slavenski in more than a one way, because he repeatedly, always in the same blue and red pencil, underlined or marked poems and items where *Zenit* or its associates were mentioned – Jean Epstein, Pierre-Albert Birot, Boško Tokin, who here writes about Yvan Goll, a long-standing associate and, for a while, a co-editor of *Zenit*. This volume also quotes or advertises numerous magazines which the Yugoslav journal cooperated with and was close to its ideas and notions: *Cosmopolis*, *Ma*, *Prisme*, *Broom*, *Rassegna d'Arte*, *Der Sturm*, *Clarté*, *Tableros*, *Ça Ira*, *Valori plastici*, *Veraicon*, *L'Objet (Veshch)*, *La Vie des Lettres*, *Lumière*, *Der Ararat*. All of that can be taken as a basis upon which Slavenski builds up his attitude towards modern or, more precisely, avant-garde art.

¹² To be honest, there are a few old, valuable bibliophile editions – e.g. a brilliantly bound Koran with miniatures.

¹³ The annual file has 1925 pages, 17 coloured illustrations, 594 black-and-white reproductions, 176 illustrations outside of the text; Slavenski signed it in Latin lettering and marked it *Paris 1926*.

*Self-Portrait I*¹⁴ was done on music paper in red and blue pencils. Although the whole surface is coloured, staves are not hidden, but on the contrary: it seems Slavenski deliberately used that background to emphasize his identification and symbiosis with music. Relatively flat surfaces are filled with finger-smear colours, so the effect of a thick pastel is obtained. Strong and confident strokes in the same pencils, occasionally in ink, are placed over those surfaces, and they define both the details and the essence of the drawing. Across the middle, the paper is divided in two: the upper part is dominated by a red incandescent hemisphere, most likely the representation of a sunset, an impression reinforced by the deep blue background on both sides of the sun, as well as an imaginary flat surface of a dark sea which the sun sets upon. The only dilemma as to whether this is a sunrise after all is aroused by playful rays which sway all the way to the upper edge of the paper, in the shape of clear flickers with dark blue accents, occasionally made in ink. The lower part of the drawing is more enigmatic: while the left-hand side is composed of two simple surfaces – blue and red which permeate and emphasize each other – the right-hand side is where the most important figuration is located – the artist's self-portrait, in a quite tentative sense. There we also find two complementary geometric surfaces: the blue one, with the dominant triangular shape whose acute-angle apex produces bundles of dark lines which cover an oval red surface in the lower part. One of the segments extends into a bundle of red lines, also forming a triangular shape. Both of these abstract forms, the blue one and the red one, can acquire associative portrait connotations only by means of the dominant element: upon each surface, between Symbolist bundles of blue and red lines, an eye is placed, and they seem to peer laboriously from beneath the lines of imaginary eyelids or eyebrows. Therefore both eyes are shown only half-way – more precisely, we see halves of irises on halves of eye-whites, with adequate blue and red reflections. Basically, this way of drawing the eyes indeed resembles numerous photographs of Slavenski, where half-closed eyes or drooping eyelids are a token of his personality. However, the eyes drawn on the *Self-Portrait* are not levelled in a usual manner, but as if each one looks autonomously, each in its own direction, by its own accord, with its own meaning: on the blue surface, the sharper look appears to be directed upwards, to the spiritual, philosophical and abstract spheres of the cosmos, towards the glaring solar hemisphere, whilst the eye on the red surface is softer, organically completed thanks to the warmer background; the look is directed downwards, to the pragmatism of the world, reality and life. These two eyes are

¹⁴ Width 22.4 × height 31.4 cm, inscription on the back: *Diese autoportrat hat alien Wert von 100.– mark – Josip Slavenski*; beneath, in Cyrillic lettering and red ink: *Београд 23. XII 1926*. This is a joke or some other personal strategy, which is easily seen from the comparison with the prices Wassili Kandinsky put on his lithographs in a letter to Micić in 1924: '3 and 5 dollars, i.e. 12 marks and 60 and 21 gold marks'.

the only elements which allow the drawing to be recognized indeed as Josip Slavenski's self-portrait.

Having in mind the rich symbolism of an eye as a source of light, knowledge and fertility, intellectual perception and the emanation of life, it is particularly challenging to try and identify these two eyes – one with the sun, as a notion of the future and activity, and the other with the moon, as a notion of the past and passivity. This results in their possible aggregation and synthetic perception in the shape of the third, all-seeing eye, the organ of inner sight or 'superhuman state, a state when acuteness achieves perfection' ['nadljudskog stanja, stanja kada pronicljivost dostiže savršenstvo'].¹⁵

*Self-Portrait 2*¹⁶ is more concrete, less abstract and less symbolic, but it also opens up wide interpretative possibilities. It is done in the same technique – red and blue pencils on an ordinary white paper. The face is represented in organic forms, under the probable influence of late synthetic cubism, without pronounced geometrization. The colour is sporadically smeared with fingers, which results in voluminosity and purple effects, where blue and red overlap. Special accents are obtained by strong strokes of darker intensity. On the drawing itself, in a sort of mildly arced arabesque, the artist placed his capitalized signature and date, done carefully and evenly, with the characteristic duality of Latin and Cyrillic lettering, in the same way as in *Self-Portrait 1*. However, Paris is indicated on one drawing and Belgrade on the other, which can be interpreted in various ways – either as the places where the drawings were made, or simply signed, or perhaps we are subjected to deliberate disinformation, joke or mimicry – which certainly is the case with the price stated on *Self-Portrait 1*. On the whole, the work is not free of literary, more precisely narrative discourse, which is underlined by the deformation of shape as a recurrence of freedom reached in interpreting reality. As if the author wanted clearly to externalize his subjective feelings. Even if he aimed to confirm the authenticity of the face drawn and its creator, Slavenski incorporated his signature, legible and clear, not obtrusively but, on the contrary, very subtly and deliberately on the darkest, blue-red, almost purple surface of the drawing. Unlike *Self-Portrait 1*, where coloured surfaces dominate the whole paper, *Self-Portrait 2* is primarily made of dynamically bent, expressive red and blue lines on a pale background, which is only sporadically overshadowed and darkened. The drawing shows influences of a

¹⁵ J. Chevalier – A. Gheerbrant, *Rječnik simbola [Dictionnaire des symboles]*, trans. Ana Buljan et al., Zagreb, Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1987, 450.

¹⁶ Width ca 18 × height 21 cm, the same dual Latin and Cyrillic lettering in the signature, the same red ink as for the inscription on *Self-Portrait 1*: ЈОСИП СЈАВЕНСКИ. PARIS 1926. There is no precise data as to whether the drawings were indeed made in Paris and Belgrade, respectively.

Futurist look towards the future, but also recurrences of Symbolist perception of a scene or a face: the left-hand eye, in the same way as in the *Self-Portrait 1*, is drawn half-hidden by a red lid, but the right-hand eye (more precisely, a quarter of it) is identified with the sun and its rays. From each eye, in a surrealistic or caricatural manner, sprouts a playful plant-like form, a sort of branch without leaves. Those details can also refer, in a way, to Josip Slavenski's prominent eyebrows, but also to his distinctive luxuriant hair, which was drawn schematically but quite convincingly by Slovenian artist France Kralj (Zagorica near Dobropolja, Slovenia, 1895 – Ljubljana, 1960)¹⁷ in the clear spirit of the late Secession, with reduced forms of decorative origin and Beardsly-esque purity of lines. The drawing is made in black India ink on white paper and clearly symbolizes Slavenski's known passion for nature and mountaineering.¹⁸ Kralj, in a simplified but very persuasive manner, drew Slavenski with heavy spectacles, luxuriant hair and a cane under the arm, pensively and enthusiastically walking through a forest and reading sheet music. He is surrounded by sparse, picturesquely placed high trees, whose crowns are not shown, and by flowers strewn on the ground. This work by a renowned artist attests to the connections Slavenski maintained in the twenties with the exponents of the Slovenian Modern and historic avant-garde, first and foremost with the brothers Kralj and Marij Kogoj.

Unlike the poetic, lyric and somewhat mystical *Self-Portrait 1*, it seems that *Self-Portrait 2* speaks of a different Josip Slavenski: of his expressive power, the drama of creation, perseverance, energy, of his will and originality, which are comparable to the Zenitist metaphorical figure – *Barbarogenije* [*Barbarogenius*]. Micić created it driven by the idea that his primordial powers, untaintedness and authenticity would transform the world and bring new blood to Europe. *Balkanize* it. Confident pencil strokes, occasional shadows, free stylization and non-mimetic form interpretation on Slavenski's works are done skilfully, with obvious experience of such types of visual expression, which leads to the assumption that these two *Self-Portraits* are not the only visual artworks the composer produced. At any rate, these drawings are complementary in a sense: *Self-Portrait 1* is done in the Symbolist key, with associative elements pointing to abstraction, contemplative, introverted and universal. *Self-Portrait 2*, on the other hand, is a more direct association with the elementary and authentic creative power of the composer himself. In that sense, this second *Self-Portrait* would be closer to the discourse Slavenski nurtured in his music based on Balkan sources.

¹⁷ The drawing is kept in Josip Slavenski's Legacy, and marked on the back by the number 184, which refers to the general list, made in SOKOJ when the heritage was received from the Bojić family in December 1981. The drawing is 28.5 cm wide, 41 cm high, signed in the lower right-hand corner: *Kralj*.

¹⁸ His library contains several travel guides dealing specially with Alpine regions.

The stylistic origins of these *Self-Portraits* are not difficult to find in the chronological and regional settings between Paris and Belgrade during the twenties. It was the time when theories and criticisms, analyses, even controversies developed around Slavenski's music, when attempts were made to place his work between Balkanism and Europeanism, orientalism and folklorism, modernism and avant-gardism, traditionalism and originality, the dying past and the upcoming future, archaic, ancient and cosmic, astral, the periphery and centre, musical and extramusical researches, intellectual and emotional approaches... And at the same time, it is the period of syncretic art forms; hence Slavenski had no trouble transposing his researches into a visual form, as an adjunct to his musical creation. It is also obvious that these drawings were not overly ambitious: on a relatively small sheets (music paper and ordinary white paper), in a modest technique (only two coloured pencils; most likely it was a two-coloured pencil sharpened at both ends, ordinarily used in administration but not in art; Slavenski also used it to underline the books he read). It is symptomatic that exactly these two juvenile, complementary *Self-Portraits*, so different in style, were the ones the author kept almost as a secret, until the end of his life, as a sort of personal testament or confession. As it appears, even his wife Milana, a devoted life-time companion, did not know about their existence – or at least never mentioned them. They were not intended for public display, which is shown by the fact that they were discovered only recently, not being exhibited previously, let alone published or at least put at a conspicuous spot in their home...

At the time of their conception, Slavenski was heading for adulthood. He was surrounded by happy events: success in Donaueschingen; signing a contract in Paris with the famous publishing house *Schott*; wide possibilities for working with musicians around the world presented themselves; he was welcomed in great concert halls, artists' studios, clubs and bistros, cafés and pubs of Montparnasse. However, he returned to Belgrade; new challenges awaiting him – a professorship, family life, but also limited possibilities for maintaining a world-wide career. Perhaps these two *Self-Portraits* are in fact two mirrors of the moods, ambitions and reality he was facing?

The Legacy still contains two other drawings by Slavenski – but of a completely different origin, interest and ideas: they are connected to the composer's true love, one could even say passion, for astronomy, which appeared in his earliest childhood and was definitely a part of his interest for nature and its phenomena. It is known how devotedly he watched star-ridden skies through his small telescope placed on the balcony of the apartment in 33 Sveti Sava Street, how deeply he was obsessed with *cosmic speculations*, how thoroughly he searched for regularities

which would unite music, astronomy and nuclear physics.¹⁹ Thus he came up with a proposal to establish *Astroacoustics*, an auxiliary science which would interpret nuclear physics and astronomy by comparing mathematical relationships, molecules of chemical elements, acoustic formulas, tone systems theories... Slavenski translated his interests for astronomy into music. The ideas on astromusic came before the contacts with the Zenitists,²⁰ where in the early stages he could also find references to cosmism, astrality and verticality of spirit – the *zenit* itself. His *Prasimfonija* [*Protosymphony*] or *Kosmogonija* [*Cosmogony*], ‘a work of a great tension’, according to Pavle Stefanović,²¹ represents sound images of the Kant–Laplace cosmogony hypothesis on the origin of the solar system. By Vlastimir Peričić’s testimony,²² what is left after these various experiments in connecting science and art is a plethora of notes, sheet-music examples and coloured schematics, number tables, sketches of atomic structure, drawings and positions of the nearest stars, with commentaries, marginalia, ideas, calculations and writings. The material also comprises two drawings from the Legacy, titled *Evolucija sveta* [*Evolution of the World*] and *Mapa 5* [*Map 5*]. They are done in ordinary graphite pencil, with sporadic blue, red, green and yellow colourings. They were probably inspired, among other things, by the researches of Milutin Milanković (1879–1958), our greatest geophysicist, climatologist, astronomer and engineer, the founder of the Celestial Mechanics Department at Belgrade University. In Slavenski’s library there are three popular Milanković books: in *Istorija astronomske nauke od njenih početaka do 1727*. [*History of Astronomical Science Since Its Beginnings to 1727*] with astronomical map and star magnitudes, Slavenski, with the same blue and red pencil, underlined some of the author’s thoughts and conclusions,²³ and on the back cover he noted his ideals, affinities and put his signature: ‘Iz nauke: Demokritos, Aristarhos, Kopernikus, Kepler, Newton, Einstein; Iz filozofije: Sokrates, Marx, Lenjin; Iz likovnih umetnosti: stara egipatska, asirska i grčka umetnost: Fidija, Praksitel, Mikelandjelo, Rodin; Iz muzike: Bah, Beethoven, Chopin, Moussorgsky, Debussy; Iz literature: stara Kina, Indija, Arabija, Grčka, Homeros, Shakespear, Gete, Tolstoj, Gorki’ [‘In science: Democritus,

¹⁹ Vlastimir Peričić, ‘Josip Slavenski i njegova “Astroakustika”’, *Zvuk*, No. 4, Sarajevo, 1984, 6.

²⁰ A. Kotevska, op. cit. He probably started dealing with the subject around 1918.

²¹ Pavle Stefanović, ‘The Drama of Josip Slavenski’s Artistic Work’, *International Magazine for Music New Sound*, Belgrade, No. 7, 1996, 25–30.

²² V. Peričić, op. cit., 7.

²³ Belgrade, Naučna knjiga, 1948; written in Belgrade, 1947; the cover bears the signature: *Slavenski Beograd 1948*. The underlined thoughts refer to the significance of astronomy, its laws and its history as a history of the human mind and the entire human race. The remaining two Milanković books – *Osnovi nebeske mehanike* [*Basics of Celestial Mechanics*], Belgrade, 1947, and *Osnivači prirodnih nauka – Pitagora, Demokritos, Aristoteles, Arhimedes* [*Founders of Natural Sciences – Pythagoras, Democritus, Aristotle, Archimedes*], Belgrade, 1947 – contain no marginalia or underlinings by Slavenski.

Aristarchus, Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, Einstein; In philosophy: Socrates, Marx, Lenin; In visual arts: ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Greek art: Phidias, Praxiteles, Michelangelo, Rodin; In music: Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Moussorgsky, Debussy; In literature: ancient China, India, Arabia, Greece, Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, Gorky’].²⁴ It is interesting that these summaries do not allow mention of modern art – the list ends with Rodin, but he is not underlined, meaning he was not particularly significant. The other artists he could have met in person, appreciated or loved their works, looked up to while working on his *Self-Portraits* – are mentioned nowhere. We will probably never be able to say with any certainty – why.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović

Ирина Суботић

ДВА АУТОПОРТРЕТА ЈОСИПА ШТОЛЦЕРА СЛАВЕНСКОГ

САЖЕТАК

Јавност је упозната са постојањем два *Аутопортрета* (1 и 2) Јосипа Славенског у његовом Легату у Београду тек недавно када их је мр Ана Котевска открила крајем маја 2005. године међу нотама Дмитрија Шостаковича које је наш композитор чувао у својој библиотеци. Ти цртежи су потписани и датовани – један у Паризу, други у Београду 1926. године; рађени су дрвеним оловкама – црвеном и плавом, истим бојама којима је Славенски подвлачио мисли, идеје и информације које су га посебно интересовале у књигама и часописима. Иако рађена по свој прилици у исто време, истим материјалом (један је на нотном папиру а други на обичном, белом), ова два *Аутопортрета* су комплементарна - различита по стилским особеностима и значењу. Својим симболистичким одликама *Аутопортрет 1* је ближи апстрактном изразу, интровертован је, мисаон и у њему је могуће пронаћи универзална значења. *Аутопортрет 2* представља директнију асоцијацију на елементарну и изворну стваралачку снагу самога композитора и у том смислу би био сродан дискурсу који је Славенски неговао у својој музици заснованој на извориштима Балкана. Текст представља контекст у којем су *Аутопортрети* Славенског могли да настану: његово дружење са зенитистима и блискости које су их повезивале, пре свега са Бранком Ве Пољанским у Паризу и са кругом уметника Париске школе, посебно око часописа *L'Esprit Nouveau* који је основао и уређивао Пол Дерме (Paul Dermée). Комплет тог часописа из 1926. године сачуван је у библиотеци Славенског. Са Љубомиром Мицићем композитор се по свој прилици сусретао у Београду. Приказан је и цртеж са портретом Славенског, рад познатог словеначког уметника Франца Краља из 1920. године, такође из уметничког Легата. Поменути су још два цртежа која показују велику посвећеност Славенског астрономији - *Еволуција света* и *Мана 5*. Укратко је представљена и композиторова библиотека која пружа извор информација о његовим интересовањима изван сфере музике. Она садржи занимљиве књиге из астрономије, физике, математике, Ајнштајнове теорије релативитета, филозофије, психологије, религије,

²⁴ Slavenski's transcriptions and underlinings; only Beethoven is triply underlined.

естетике, етике, антропологије, географије, теозофије и астрологије, историје, посебно историје Балкана, књиге о учењу и памћењу, старим цивилизацијама и савременој уметности, старим и модерним језицима.

Кључне речи: Јосип Славенски, Љубомир Мицић, Бранко Ве Пољански, Франце Краљ, балканизам, зенитизам, модерна уметност, авангарда, Париска школа, аутопортрет, астрономија.

Self-Portrait 1



Self-Portrait 2

