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## REVIEWS

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(2013). *Vinko Globokar: muzička odiseja jednog emigranta*

[*Vinko Globokar: The Musical Odyssey of an Émigré*].

Belgrade: Faculty of Music,  
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*Vinko Globokar: muzička odiseja jednog emigranta* by Dr Dragana Stojanović Novičić is the result of her continuous, years-long interest in this extraordinary composer and performer, a major representative of the European post-war avant-garde. In the author's words, the freeness, breadth and multifaceted character of Globokar's creativity dictated the structure of her study, which comprises five large chapters complemented by extensive and exhaustive appendices, totaling 231 pages.

Stojanović Novičić conducted most of her research at the Paul Sacher Stiftung in

Basel, Switzerland, where, as part of *Sammlung Vinko Globokar*, a large number of the composer's printed and autograph scores, letters, sketches, and other documents are kept, as well as a substantial audio and video archive. The work on original materials gave the author an exclusive insight into Globokar's "thought matrices", which she deftly analyzed and interpreted, penetrating the composer's world and recreating it for her readers, albeit from a refined critical distance. To a large extent, her discourse is impartial and, even when her views of certain occurrences in society that inspired some of Globokar's pieces significantly diverge from his own (for instance, in the case of his *Élégie balkanique* from 1992, pp. 58–59, footnote No. 83), Stojanović Novičić does not allow such disagreements to affect her position regarding her object of study. A similarly objective (as much as that is possible) approach also guides her assessments of Globokar's oeuvre, which she bases on contextualizing and comparing his accomplishments with those of the most prominent representatives of European and American avant-garde music, such as Luciano Berio and John Cage, who also valued Globokar's work. However, in order to let the composer's voice "be heard", Stojanović Novičić based some of her research on several interviews she conducted with Globokar himself in 2008. An excerpt from that "serial interview", transmitted in Chapter 5, is a valuable testimony of the composer's personal

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view of his own life and creative journey, marked to a high degree by constant changes of environment and a dominantly émigré sentiment. One may therefore conclude that the book's title superbly sums up its subject matter.

Already in her introduction, Stojanović Novičić stresses the chief characteristics of the composer's creative personality, above all his stepping out of "pure" music in the direction of performative practices. She also points out that to understand Globokar's creative approach, one must bear in mind that society, rather than solving some purely musical problems, is the main catalyst for his creativity. Like so many avant-garde composers, Globokar has written extensively about his creative preoccupations, attempting to "dictate and present a specific discourse about himself as an author, as well as an entity and personality" (p. 14), thus a part of the book is dedicated to interpreting his self-reflexive writings.

The title of Chapter 1, "Trombon, džez...; Lajbovic, Berio i Kejdž (utiranje snova)" [The Trombone, Jazz...; Leibowitz, Berio, and Cage (Paving the Way for Dreams)], singles out major influences that formed Globokar's idiosyncratic creative profile. Interestingly, Globokar received his initial training in the instrument that shaped his entire creative oeuvre – the trombone – only after moving from France to Slovenia as a teenager. Also, his beginnings in professional music happened in jazz, not in "classical" music, since he got a place in Radio Ljubljana's Big Band as an 18-year-old. This early impact of jazz music proved decisive, since it "freed" Globokar's approach to the instrument and paved the way for his experiments in com-

position as a mature author. In 1955, he began studying the trombone at the Paris Conservatory and in 1959 went on to study composition and conducting with René Leibowitz. This well-known theorist, composer, and conductor was also interested in jazz and during his "Paris years", Globokar remained active as a jazz performer. Later on, in his own work in composition, Globokar avoided all divisions between "art" and "popular" music, viewing all musical materials as equal. On the other hand, studying with Leibowitz encouraged Globokar to take a more serious interest in composition, as well as to start moving in the circles of France's leading intellectuals, with whom Leibowitz maintained close relations. Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical reflections made a special impact on some of Globokar's own thinking and positioning regarding art, as Stojanović Novičić shows in her book.

Another important influence or, perhaps, combination of multiple influences that Stojanović Novičić discusses in her book concerns Globokar's relationship with Luciano Berio. For a year, Globokar studied composition with Berio in Berlin (1964–1965) and, according to Stojanović Novičić: "What was an important area in Luciano Berio's explorations during the 1950s and the following decade, as well, became the starting point of Globokar's quests in the mid-1960s: measuring and trying out various degrees and ways of relating the human voice, instruments, and poetic texts, as well as vocal sound groups and electronic sounds" (p. 26). Still, Stojanović Novičić also points to certain elements where the two composers essentially differed, such as improvisation, to which Berio "attached no special impor-

tance” (p. 30), whereas for Globokar it constituted one of the most important formal devices, a fact emphasized throughout the book. His experience in jazz, mentioned above, as well as his later work with the New Phonic Art ensemble for free improvisation conditioned Globokar to leave much freedom to his performers, trusting and treating them, in a way, as co-authors of his works.

Another specific characteristic of Globokar’s work, pointed out by Stojanović Novičić, concerns his equal treatment of different components of a piece, whereby music is by no means the dominant segment of the piece as a multimedia entity. Nevertheless, she is entirely right when she argues that Globokar’s projects should be viewed as musical, because “for Globokar, even when ultimately marginalized, music always constitutes a suitable ground for conceptualizing an enterprise as a whole...” (p. 31). In that regard, Stojanović Novičić draws parallels with Berio’s poetics and explains what might have attracted someone like John Cage to Globokar’s work, who included Globokar, a relatively unknown composer at the time, in his great archive of 20<sup>th</sup>-century musical notation and his book *Notations*.

The title of Chapter 2 is “Lična staza (studije o hrabrosti)” [The Personal Path (Studies in Courage)] and the chapter comprises two subheadings. In the first of these, which may be considered central, “Vinko Globokar... medij – profil autora” [Vinko Globokar... The Medium – The Author’s Profile], Stojanović Novičić analyzes Globokar’s approach to composition, which radically departs from “‘worrying’ about compositional technique or strictly musical problems” (p. 42). In other words, his “pri-

mary impulses for work cease to be musical and social motivations replace ‘compositional’ ones” (p. 43). Globokar regards conceiving works according to an immanently musical logic, that is, focusing on the musical substance, as inexpedient – which is why, according to Stojanović Novičić, Globokar broke with IRCAM and composers affiliated with the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music. Namely, for years, composers of this avant-garde orientation focused exclusively on searching for a new sonic substance, a new “material”, neglecting the functionality of music, which Globokar considered essential. In Stojanović Novičić’s words, Globokar’s objective is to humanize music/art, whereby the piece/work becomes “a means for improving the human condition” (p. 47).

In this segment of the book, among other things, Stojanović Novičić also discusses the activities of Globokar’s ensemble, New Phonic Art, which formed the ground of his ideal of group improvisation as a means of communicating among musicians. At the same time, the ensemble was “a true laboratory for Globokar’s (and also other members’!) experiments with sound and shifts in the domain of the theatricalization of sound, as well as for an intensive expansion of the ‘self’ as a specific ‘musical field’, a medium” (p. 53).

The author also analyzes Globokar’s approach to musical folklore (which he treated like any other sonic substance) and points to the principle of improvisation as an important characteristic that links folk and jazz as well as art, that is, avant-garde music, forming the basis of Globokar’s unique expressivity. The composer reflects on moral aspects of group music-making/

improvising, which he views as a sort of “social communication”. Finally, Globokar is preoccupied by the performer’s body, which, in performance, “behaves” in various ways and constitutes the main means of expanding music into theater – whether “instrumental” or “musical” (p. 66). Globokar perceives the instrument – specifically speaking, the trombone – as “an amplifier of his own body” (p. 67), which expands the range of its technical abilities to unforeseen limits.

Under the subheading “Improvizujmo, razmišljajmo, komunicirajmo! Globokarove zvučne koprene...” [Let’s Improvise, Think, Communicate! Globokar’s Sonic Veils], Stojanović Novičić examines the composer’s self-poetic statements, pointing to two important themes that permeate them, which are precisely the instrument and improvisation. One may conclude that Globokar, in theory and practice alike, addressed the same issues, solving them in his own ways.

Chapter 3, “Proširivanja... (studije o konceptima)” [Expansions... (Studies on Concepts)] is likewise divided into two sections. “Misaone matrice Vinka Globokara” [The Thought Matrices of Vinko Globokar] links up with the foregoing and expands the author’s analysis of the general concepts that Globokar developed, which include: equality between performers and the composer, composing or creating with a view of an extra-musical objective, the introduction of text into the discourse of works (because the semantics of music, by itself, is not explicit), music’s engagement, willingness to take risks, the intertwining of multiple “interpreting subjects” in a single actor on the musical scene, and, finally, moving away from the traditional concept of the work. The second subheading, “Krik

iz trombona” [A Trombone Scream] posits performativity as the dominant characteristic of Globokar’s work. His “disinterest” in musical material was not universally appreciated – but Stojanović Novičić mounts a defense of Globokar against his critics such as Dubravko Detoni, pointing out that the musical substance of Globokar’s works, although of “relative” quality if viewed in isolation, is actually part of his music-theater, multi-disciplinary experiment. In her opinion, key to understanding Globokar’s approach to music, as well as to life, is improvisation, because it brings together “the main factors of his concept of the sound sphere: acting morally on the part of its agents and their free exchange of musical information” (p. 113).

Although the book as a whole abounds with numerous examples from Globokar’s pieces to illustrate the author’s points, its fourth chapter, “Malo više ludosti! (studije slučaja)” [A Little More Madness! (Case Studies)], the author takes a further step and provides detailed analyses of two of his characteristic pieces. She views his *Cri des Alpes* for solo alphorn as a paradigm of “Globokar’s instrumental aesthetic, on the one hand, and his poetic and even political position, which respects the interference of music, theatre, life situations, their blending and co-existence, on the other. The instrument is entirely subservient to the performative whole and the connection with life, as the carrier of the creative point, is compelling and suggestive. The instrumental theater of Vinko Globokar is at the same time a reflection and metaphor of our lives” (p. 128). By contrast, his *Kolo* (Round Dance) for mixed choir, trombone, and electronics, a piece belonging in the domain of musical (as opposed to instrumen-

tal) theater, illustrates the composer's feeling of nostalgia and offers an example of the "instrumentalization" of musical folklore. The quotations from two Bosnian *sevdalinke*<sup>1</sup> appear as a symbol of the past, of memories, and also testify to Globokar's equal treatment of all kinds of music in his approach to composing. He confirms his peculiar approach to folklore in a conversation with Stojanović Novičić, which she quotes in the final chapter of her book, stressing that in folk music he is more interested in the "behavior of musicians" than the melody itself, which shows that he views folklore, too, as a performative practice and not as a source of musical substance.

The main quality of this book is reflected in its contemporary methodological approach, shaped so as to encompass Vinko Globokar's work in all of its complexity and wealth of meaning. Stojanović Novičić brilliantly supports her insights not only with examples from Globokar's pieces, but also with a critical view of existing discourse concerning the composer. Her studious approach and meticulously cited sources, exhaustive footnotes, and appendices testify to the seriousness of her research procedures. The high concentration of her narrative style means that the tangle that is Globokar's creativity will come apart only upon repeated close readings of the book. Therefore, this is a monograph that entirely satisfies all scholarly and literary criteria and may be a model for similar explorations in our music scholarship.

<sup>1</sup> Highly expressive love songs, typical of Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian folk music – Translator's note.

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### **Dragana Jeremić-Molnar, Aleksandar Molnar:**

*Adorno's Schubert. A Path towards the  
Theory of Mimesis.*

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Dragana Jeremić-Molnar, Associate Professor of Music History at the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music in Belgrade, and Aleksandar Molnar, Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, demonstrated their outstanding expertise on Theodor Adorno. The study *Adorno's Schubert. A Path towards the Theory of Mimesis* is a sequel to their previous research presented in the book *The Disappearance of the Sublime and the Mastering of the Avant-garde in the Music of the Modern Epoch. Book One: Musical Avant-gardism in Schoenberg's Dodecaphonic Poetics and Adorno's Critical Aesthetics*, published in 2009.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dragana Jeremić-Molnar, Aleksandar Molnar, *Nestajanje uzvišenog i ovladavanje avangardnog u muzici moderne epohe. Knjiga 1: Muzički*