

Tatjana Marković

**Bojana Cvejić: *Otvoreno delo u muzici: Boulez, Štokhausen, Kejdž*  
(An Open Work in Music: Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage),  
Beograd, Studentski kulturni centar, 2004, 170 p.  
ISBN 86-80957-36-4**

Among the musicological monographs of the “Music” edition in the (renewed) publishing activity of the Studentski kulturni centar (Student Cultural Centre) there is a book entitled *An Open Work in Music: Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage* by young author Bojana Cvejić, a musicologist, art theoretician, director of numerous opera performances in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany.<sup>1</sup> Bojana Cvejić’s profound dedication to studying contemporary music from different aspects, and presenting her own firmly established and richly argued stances, make this monograph very significant in the discourse of Serbian new musicology.

The study deals with open work in music, based on a consideration of more than fifty compositions by Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and John Cage written in the period 1939-1984. Establishing a very rich intertextual network of musicological, aesthetical, and (auto)poietical definitions of an open work in music using different criteria, as well as theoretical approaches to an open work of art and around it, the author sheds light on this problem from many different, interdependent angles.

The concept of the book is based on a very clear and dramaturgically logical gradation leading to the final synthesis. It respects a three-part form followed by a conclusion: an individually exposed theoretical interpretation of the open work (*Theoretical Models of the Open Work*) and its application to the concepts of the open work in Boulez, Cage and Stockhausen’s music, on the one hand (*Concepts of the Open Work in Music: Boulez, Cage, Stockhausen*), and a detailed consideration of the kinds of open structure/work of art (*Types and Tokens of the Open Structure/Work*), on the other. Between these subjects nestles a historical introduction into the open work of art and its anticipation in the music of the foregoing composers’ predecessors and contemporaries (*Histories of the Open Form in Music*). This plan is intermingled with a gradual layering, a networking of insights into the features of the open work, from the autopoietical attitudes of Boulez, Cage, and Stockhausen in relation to the theoretical models, to the different kinds of concepts of open work in the music of the three composers mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, to analyses of individual compositions reflecting compositional techniques and methodologies. This gradually growing path leads to a synthesis concluded by considering the status of the open work of art from a postmodern perspective of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century history of music.

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<sup>1</sup> The book’s technical presentation is excellent thanks to Dušan Časić. The aesthetically inspired cover design by Nenad Baćanović also merits special mention.

The threads of the first network are theoretical determinants of an open work of art by six authors: Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes, Morris Weitz, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Markuse. By defining the ideas of these art theoreticians and philosophers, Bojana Cvejić has constructed a multifunctional theoretical meta-model, comparing every exposed attitude with the other. Thus, she has revealed to her readers the open work as an historically established result of the *credo* of an individual author, which has been developing from Baroque times, as well as a model of the text after the author's death, as an act of establishing new rules in the concept of art frame, as a result of a subject's surrendering before the senseless reality of capitalism, and as a decisive step in surmounting the apparent absolute autonomy of the arts over society. In the frame of this intertextual theoretical context, Bojana Cvejić added another level to the network, clearly profiling the theoretical models of the very representatives of the open work, showing that their autopoietic attitudes are of different origin: from Boulez's Joycean-Mallarmean concept of the open work as a limited choice-controlled instance, to Cage's concept of music as general doing within the frame of the all-permeating *One* under the influence of Zen-Buddhist philosophy and the open work as a result of chance such as creation in nature, to Stockhausen's belief that composing is an intuitive as well as a Pythagorean mathematical process of translating cosmic vibrations into a work of sound art, which is always – even in the choice of chance – under the strict control of the author.

Besides the theoretical perspective from which the mentioned three concepts of an open work of art were considered, networking continues in still another direction, tracing the roots of "openness". Therefore, the opus of the three representative composers from the 1950s and 1960s is placed in relation to the music of late and/or post-romantics, like Gustav Mahler and Richard Wagner, but also Anton Webern, Erik Satie and Edgar Varèse.

At last, all the networks are connected in a very clear and logically detailed consideration of types of open form/work, on the basis of different, mutually permeated criteria such as structure, material, creation, recording, performer and performance, performer and audience, and the open opus. The existence and defining of all these types of open form/work are argued, proved, confirmed by a meticulous analysis of the chosen works by the three composers, noted separately also in the context of the compositions listed in the appendix.

In her concluding synthesis, Bojana Cvejić introduced one more dimension into the investigation of the open work of art of Boulez, Cage, and Stockhausen: besides a contemporary insight and that from an historical perspective, she also sheds light on the subject from the point of view of the future, in intertextual relations with the opus works, but also other activities of the three composers dating from the decades that followed.

Undoubtedly, the problem of open work in music could be considered in another way, constructed in a completely different way. However, the rich intertextual network is presented in a concise, clear, at times Americanized language for readers of different profiles, not exclusively musicological. Because of

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its intertextuality and versatile angles, Bojana Cvejić's study is comprehensive and multileveled, which is especially important since it is the first Serbian-language book on open work in music.