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**TRADITION AS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
HELD DURING THE NINTH MANIFESTATION OF
*THE VLADO S. MILOŠEVIĆ'S DAYS***

Banja Luka, April 9–11, 2008

A large number of artists and experts from various arias assembled during the manifestation *The Vlado S. Milošević's Days*, held for the ninth time in Banja Luka. Alongside the central festival event, an international ethnomusicological and musicological scientific conference, there were the accompanying programmes held as well – the promotion of Master of Arts and graduate students of the Academy of Arts of the University of Banja Luka, an exhibition of paintings by Leonila Jočić entitled *Tradition as Inspiration* held at the National and University Library of the Republic of Srpska, as well as presentations of several valuable publications.

The Festival was set between two concerts. At its opening, the Mixed Choir of the Academy of Arts and the University of Banja Luka performed under the leadership of conductor Nemanja Savić, while the closing was entrusted to the United Symphonic Orchestra of the students of the Banja Luka Academy, the Philological-Art Faculty in Kragujevac and students of the School of Music *Vlado S. Milošević* from Banja Luka. The young musicians of the joint ensembles demonstrated a high level of performance and professionalism; together with the eminent pianists Nevena Popović and Vladimir Cvijić, and conductors Darinka Matić-Marović and Branko Radošević, they performed a popular programme – Felix Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* ('Fingal's Cave', Overture op. 26), Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony* op. 25, and Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, which was, specially for this occasion, 'enriched' by a witty text by musicologist Aleksandra Paladin, which was interestingly and deftly interpreted by the narrators, students of acting from the Banja Luka Academy of Arts, Djurdja Vukašinić and Milan Trinić.

Although the Academy of the Arts at the University of Banja Luka only celebrated its tenth birthday this year, it can already boast a serious publishing output. Namely, the many years of effort of its associates, the Dean, Milorad Kenjalović in particular, dedicated to affirmation of the publishing activity in the field of music and preservation of the character and works of Vlado S. Milošević, resulted in a printed publication which represents one of the most prominent publishing events in the field of music, not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but in the wider region as well. It is two volumes of monograph-music publication, together with accompanying soundtracks of twenty compositions for orchestra from the 'Vlado S. Milošević' competitions in 2001-2002 and 2003-2004, organized with the aim to stimulate composers to generate works inspired by folk music, the way

Milošević had done. Besides this, another significant publication was presented at the Festival – A Collection of Works from the Ninth International Scientific Conference (edited by Dimitrije O. Golemović), which was traditionally published before the beginning of the manifestation, still representing a particular curiosity in our region.

At the Conference, which lasted almost two days, scholars from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Macedonia presented nineteen papers. Although the Conference was not organized into thematic sessions, the presented works could be classified by just a handful of themes – ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology, the character and work of Vlado S. Milošević, and compositions inspired by folklore.

In the ethnomusicological group of texts, two scholarly orientations dominated. One concerns the vocal/instrumental folk practice, connected to a certain type of song and/or geographical region (wedding songs of Lijeveče polje and Potkozarje by Sanja Ranković; ‘kraljičke’ songs in Jasenica by Jelena Jovanović; ‘vodičar’ singing in Macedonia by Rodna Veličkovska; paraliturgical songs of the Serbs and the Croats by Dragan Ašković), or individual performers (‘gusle’-player Petar Perunović Perun by Danka Lajić-Mihajlović; bagpipe-player Slobodan Dimitrijević Gale by Mirjana Zakić), while the other group concerns the current problems of music in the Balkans and the popular *world music* connected to it (*Balkan Beat: Music of Contemplative Balkans* by Aleksandra Marković; *Philip Koutev – Creator of a New Musical Arts in Bulgaria* by Lozanka Peycheva; *Around the Balkan Passions of the ‘Ethno-Fusions’* by Ventsislav Dimov). In both groups, one could notice that the majority of the authors presented case studies, focusing on particular phenomena, while only Ašković offered a more comprehensive insight into the chosen subject matter, reviewing similarities and differences of the status of the paraliturgical songs of the Serbs and the Croats and, thus, pointing out important questions about the attitude of Orthodoxy and Catholicism towards music, and also towards the needs of the believers. Dimov, also in a very creative way, explained the origin, meaning and effects of the *ethno-fusion* phenomena on the musical (and national) identity of the Balkans, as well as on its overall image ‘in the eyes of the West’.

The largest number of documents concerning vocal/instrumental folk practice were based on formalist analysis, and reduced to the description of intonational and rhythmical models of the songs, their formal and textual aspects, in some cases without a serious theoretical contextualization of the selected subject matters. In opposition to this approach, which does not leave the framework of descriptive ethnomusicology, Danka Lajić-Mihajlović and, especially, Mirjana Zakić, entered the realm of interdisciplinary methodology, advocating the contextual interpretation of folk music. Thus Danka Lajić-Mihajlović, on the performance practice of the ‘gusle’-player Perun, touched on the important questions of tradition and its changes, the modalities of remembrance, and the relationship between the collective and the individual, establishing the relationship between the musical, ethnological, and psychological texts. Mirjana Zakić, while observing the repertoire of the bagpipe-player Gale, showed the three-layer methodological mechanism, *context-consituation-text*, explaining

that the meaning of the musical text is being 'read' from a particular situation (consituation), which is formed by a cultural context.

Three authors replied to numerous and provocative questions about contemporary phenomena in the music of the Balkans, each from their own interest sphere. Thus Peycheva, Marković, and Dimov, in the above mentioned works, saw this music practice as a hybrid of stereotypical elements of the traditional and popular music and presented interesting theses about the status and role of Balkan music in the Balkan and non-Balkan context (*not-so-European* Balkan seen as a hedonistic Orient, and its music as a passive object of the 'Western world'). These studies raised many questions, of which the most important were – does the idea of the co-existence of 'music' of different Balkan countries contribute to the loss or the confirmation of the identity of those countries? Does it necessarily result in the concept of annulling Balkan borders at a time when it seems that they are very important?

Three works presented ethnochoreological themes. Olivera Vasić discussed the similarities and differences of dance heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the Slav heritage on the Balkans, concluding that today it can be seen only on the performing scene, and most often as a 'fabrication of tradition': the essential differences, which had in the past clearly shown characteristics of the different parts and regions of the Balkans, have vanished. Milivoj Rodić described atonal elements in the folk dance and song of the people from Mt. Kozara (*kozaračko kolo*), and Selena Rakočević and Zdravko Ranisavljević, in the joint study regarding the older and more contemporary ways of performing a *veliko (great) kolo* from Banat, showed the basic differences between the consistency of their musical and dance components.

Sanda Dodik and Aleksandra Paladin wrote the only works directly focused on the creative work of Vlado S. Milošević. While the first author, through comparative research of the opera *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky and *Jazavac pred sudom (A Badger at the Court of Law)* by Milošević, highlighted the presence of national realism elements in the works of these two composers, the other indicated, in a warning tone, a very poor representation of the works by Milošević within Radio Belgrade programming. Dragana Stojanović-Novičić and Ivanka Vlaeva, from their unique perspectives, addressed the media presentation of folk music creativity. The former made an overview of the activity of Mihailo Vukdragović at Radio Belgrade (as one of its directors) and reminded us of his advocacy of artistic arrangements of folk songs, aiming at 'forming the awareness of the performers and the audience about the new approach to *sevdalinka*'. The latter author, Vlaeva, using the example of a selected unit from the multimedia database of Bulgarian folk music (Bulgarian composer Todor Djidjev) showed how folklore creativity could be presented through modern mass-media such as the Internet. This group of themes was indirectly 'joined' by the work of Vesna Ivkov, in which the author discussed forms of representation of the vocal music practice of Bosnian Serbs in Bačka, with a focus on its media promotion.

Compositional creativity inspired by folklore occupied the interest of Danijela Stojanović and Nataša Nagorin Petrov. In analytically oriented works, in which the authors endeavoured to shine light on issues of the polyphonisation of Macedonian folk song '*Pečalbarska*' by Stojan Stojkov (Danijela Stojanović), and the presence of folklore elements in the texture of *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* by Antonín Dvořák (Nataša Nagorin Petrov), the methodological practice was reduced to retelling scores, so not enough convincing arguments were produced which would respond to the 'promised' topics from the works' titles.

A special treasure of the symposium were the dynamic discussions in which views and concerns of the participants sharpened, such as those on contemporary methods of ethnomusicological and musicological research, and the concept of 'ethnomusicology of the Balkans', or possible interpretations of case studies, in which the essence is often neglected due to the attractiveness of the central problem. In the atmosphere of live debate, there were discussions about genre pervasion of the songs, synthesis of the sacred and the sacral principle in a ritual, an issue of confirmation/modification of identity in different social, political, and cultural circumstances, the relationship between traditional and new, and many other important issues which may be discussed in new light and with different arguments as early as next year, at the tenth anniversary of *The Vlado S. Milošević's Days*.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović