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Ivana Petković, Olga Otašević,
Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac u
napisima „drugih“ [Stevan Stojanović
Mokranjac in the Writings of
“Others”]

Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac u napisima „drugih“ by Ivana Petković and Olga Otašević, both editors and authors of critical studies, constitutes an original and interestingly conceived, heterogeneous whole, whose principal aim is to bring together, present, and “network” all available musicological sources in which “others” wrote down their reflections on Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac.

The task that these two young authors and musicologists took upon themselves was by no means easy. They had to face a generically heterogeneous musicological material – from scholarly articles by musicologists and ethnomusicologists from across the former Yugoslavia (both the first and the second), via bibliographic units in various foreign encyclopaedias, to the monograph *Stevan Mokranjac and Serbian Music* by Soviet musicologist Ivan Marti-

nov – “the first and only monograph by a foreign author about one of our composers, published abroad”.¹

Most of these musicological studies had to be translated first and then adequately presented. Hence this “basically postmodernist” volume, according to its young authors, featuring textually and generically heterogeneous elements.

The book comprises four chapters. In the condensed and synthetic introductory chapter, titled “Recepcija/percepcija Stevana Stojanovića Mokranjca: ‘ovde’ i ‘tamo’” [The Reception/Perception of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac: “Here” and “There”], the authors carefully map the problems discussed in the book, inform the reader about the contents and conceptions of its chapters, and point to the cultural, historical, and ideological context of Mokranjac’s overall work in culture, creativity, conducting, music transcription, and pedagogy, as well as systematize the problems addressed in writings about this composer.

Clearly and effortlessly, the authors position the focus of their study in the field of the reception of Mokranjac’s versatile musical activities in writings by foreign authors, emphasizing that the only shared characteristic of these writings is precisely the fact that they were written by “others”, or, so to speak, by those to whom both Mokranjac and his music were in various

¹ Olga Otašević, “Stevan Mokranjac, srpska muzika i Ivan Martinov: ka sveslovenskom modelu” [Stevan Mokranjac, Serbian Music, and Ivan Martinov: Toward an All-Slavic Model], in: Ivana Petković and Olga Otašević, *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac u napisima „drugih“*, Belgrade, Muzikološko društvo Srbije and Muzička omladina Beograda, 2014, 123.

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ways culturally and musically “other”. Elaborating on this rather interesting problem layer in their book, the authors rightly point out that in the writings of “others” about Mokranjac, their assessments of the composer’s work and cultural activities are imbued with their views of Serbian music in general; in particular, the authors draw their readers’ attention to the fact that the reception of Mokranjac’s oeuvre changed in line with socio-political and ideological changes in this part of Europe.

Also, in their introductory chapter, the authors draw their readers’ attention to the task they undertook: to present the disparity between the selected writings, as well as to arrive at a synthesis between them, which – it is my pleasure to conclude – they accomplished, taking the volume as a whole, in an indirect way, leaving the reader to finally interpret and inscribe multi-layered meanings into this extraordinary, postmodernist collage of texts.

Chapter Two, “Stevan Mokranjac u napisima autora iz Hrvatske, Slovenije, Bosne i Hercegovine, Makedonije i Crne Gore” [Stevan Mokranjac in Writings by Authors from Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro], was conceived by its author, Ivana Petković, as an inter-textual dialogue between the writings of a number of ex-Yugoslav authors and her own critical reflections on their texts. In this “play” of different “cultural languages”, which informs the collage makeup of this chapter and thereby, as the author asserts, refers to the forms of Mokranjac’s *Rukoveti* [Garlands] themselves, one truly “hears” overlapping, different, spatially and temporally remote “voices” (as the author put it herself). The chapter is divided into segments

conceived around particular problems – (inter)textual views, in which the author confronts quotations from selected texts and her own positions regarding important issues in key themes related to Mokranjac’s work, his political stances, the “originality” of his *Rukoveti*, his work in transcribing sacred music, contacts with Yugoslav and Pan-Slavic-oriented colleagues, etc. Especially interesting is the third (inter)textual view, where the author confronts different opinions (her own with those of Kučukalić), in an “imaginary dialogue”, about the forms and significance of Mokranjac’s vocal works with piano accompaniment.

The book’s third and central chapter contains a complete translation of the monograph by the Soviet musicologist Ivan Martinov, *Stevan Mokranjac and Serbian Music* (1958), as well as a short study, “Stevan Mokranjac, srpska muzika i Martinov: ka sveslovenskom modelu” [Stevan Mokranjac, Serbian Music, and Martinov: Toward an All-Slavic Model], by the translator and author Olga Otašević. By virtue of its manifold significance, Martinov’s monograph merits an independent, broader critical study, so its scholarly qualities will not be discussed here (since that would constitute a book review within another book review!).

The translation of this monograph from Russian was more than a serious and onerous task, undertaken by Otašević. Her translation is extremely good, precise, and entirely reflective of the ideological, cultural, and musicological coordinates of the “time and place” in Martinov’s writing. The translation contains all the necessary explanations and additional references for some of Martinov’s data. Also – and this is a special quality of this, so to speak, “criti-

cal translation” – musicologist-translator Olga Otašević corrected some erroneous data in Martinov and brought them into line with data taken from relevant Serbian musicological sources, which brings this book into the “circle” of relevant contemporary literature on Stevan Mokranjac, available in Serbian.

Otašević’s excellent translation of Martinov’s book is complemented in this volume with a short musicological critical study, which is not merely “supporting”, as Otašević modestly calls it. In its first part, this compact critical study observes the cultural, historical, and ideological context of Martinov’s writing, subtly explaining Martinov’s reasons for taking an interest in Mokranjac, his compositional approach to the folklore of all Yugoslav peoples, and his cultural activities in line with the ideas of Pan-Slavism.

The second part of the study discusses the organization and contents of Martinov’s book and offers a glimpse of the ideological code and model of Soviet post-WWII musicology, the “Soviet voice”, as the author puts it. Interestingly, in some of Martinov’s analyses of Mokranjac’s *Rukoveti*, which rely solely on the scores (with no reference to secondary literature!), Otašević recognizes Asafyev’s “intonation analysis”. The final segment of this valuable short study is devoted to Otašević’s consideration and assessment of the third chapter in Martinov’s book, which discusses Mokranjac’s *Rukoveti*. She compares Martinov’s insights, analyses, and critical assessments with those of Serbian musicologists who have discussed the same topics (Konjović, Živković), concluding, among other things, that Martinov, although his views and assessments of individual *Rukoveti* differ

from those of his Serbian colleagues, “successfully avoided taking up a strong critical position, but still correctly identified the characteristics of the genre of *rukovet* in Mokranjac’s oeuvre”.

The title of the fourth and final chapter, co-authored by Ivana Petković and Olga Otašević, reads “Stevan Mokranjac u napisima na ruskom, engleskom, francuskom, italijanskom (enciklopedijske jedinice), bugarskom i nemačkom jeziku (naučne studije)” [Stevan Mokranjac in Writings in Russian, English, French, Italian (Encyclopedic Entries), Bulgarian, and German (Scholarly Studies)]. Alongside the short sideline comments about these texts that are available in foreign languages inserted by the two authors, who are “featured” in this chapter as translators as well, the chapter contains the translations of three encyclopedic entries on Mokranjac, published in three different languages, and a full copy of Egon Wellesz’s article “Studies on Serbian Octoechos Music”. At the very beginning of this chapter, the authors ask their readers as well as themselves the following key question: “What do these encyclopedic entries tell us and what do they conceal about Mokranjac?”, but offer no explicit answers. Implicitly, the second and third chapters of this book, each in its own way, offer fragmentary answers to the question of how “others”, whose writings are available to us, view Mokranjac.

In her eighth (inter)textual view (Chapter 2), discussing Emil Cossetto’s article “Jubilej koji obavezuje” [An Obliging Jubilee], Ivana Petković, today, on the occasion of the centenary of Mokranjac’s death, almost re-actualizes, in her own “voice”, Cossetto’s call to the composers and, more generally, musicians of the (now

former) “Yugoslav art space” to revive, in a new way, “the age of Mokranjac”, which is “seemingly calling for a new dialogue”, as the author put it. Olga Otašević, too, although very briefly, discusses Martinov’s approach to Mokranjac in her short study, asserting that for Martinov, Mokranjac is “a representative of another, Serbian culture, which is nonetheless close to him, being essentially Slavic”.

Still, the “other” topic of this book – the positioning of “others” regarding Mokranjac – which appears in various ways and various lights in each chapter, is ultimately not quite developed; exactly as the authors put it in the final chapter, it remains in the form of a question inviting new reflections, scholarly dialogues, and vantage points.

Overall, Ivana Petković and Olga Otašević’s *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac u napisima „drugih“* is a major contribution to the jubilee – the centenary of Mokranjac’s death – its *raison d’être*. It brings together all available writings on Mokranjac by “others”, interprets them, interweaves its own “voice” with their texts, presenting them to its readers in their original languages and in translations, with plenty of photographs, bibliographic data, and important references. The main conception of this heterogeneous book stems from its authors’ open and free, postmodernist approach to every musicological text. The book’s chapters thus bear no imposing ideological inscriptions. Therefore, I believe this book will be broadly embraced, read, and widely used for new explorations in musicology and cultural studies.

Above all, the book is meant for professional musicians, but I believe its openness will attract readers of “other” profiles as well.

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Marko Nikodijević: *dark/rooms*
col legno, 2013

The publication of any CD containing music by a contemporary Serbian author is considered a rarity and a welcome anomaly. However, when this CD is published by one of the labels dedicated to “releasing top-class recordings of ground-breaking contemporary music” it is nothing short of a miracle. Or maybe not? The music of Serbian-born, now Stuttgart-based composer Marko Nikodijević has been steadily finding its way to prestigious concert halls and the repertoires of leading European orchestras in the past few years. Since his success at the Gaudeamus Music Week in 2010, his work has been receiving broader international recognition, and is becoming even more available to the wider audience, thanks to the renowned label *col legno*, which in 2013 published a CD titled *dark/rooms* exclusively containing compositions by Marko Nikodijević. The publication of this CD was supported by the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, which awarded Nikodijević (together with two other young composers – David Philip Hefti and Samy Moussa), with the Composers’ Prize for 2013.

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