

sounds and rhythms with Van Eyck's simple melodies. This concert programme, so different from everything else that we heard in this year's Gaudeamus, was organized in a former church, right above the composer's final resting place.

The festival ended with a provocative performance by the Looptail ensemble, who performed Thanasis Deligiannis's work *Thieves*. In a sort of witty, interactive, and dramaturgically dynamic piece of musical theatre, the Greek composer used a cleverly guided quasi-narrative to problematize the phenomenon stolen and the victim of the theft. The work features rather bare-sounding musical lines accompanying dynamic and sonic relations framed by short sentences spoken by the performers, often caricaturing the contents of their speech. Following numerous twists and turns, this ingeniously conceived piece ends with yet another surprise: the performers point the lights at the audience, suggesting that, symbolically speaking, everybody was in fact complicit in this sort of emotive or social crime.

Following this concert, the festival proclaimed its 2016 laureate. The award went to the US artist Anthony Vine, who, according to the jury, stood out by virtue of "his attitude to composition". The work that perhaps best illustrated his compositional procedure, performed at the festival by the Ensemble Modelo62, was *From a Forest of Standing Mirrors*. It is a piece realized in one breath, relatively static in character and featuring a directional type of dramaturgy that entails expanding the potentials of a single sonic impulse. As if in slow motion, the piece features numerous sonic echoes and blurred harmonic movements, with occasional distortions of

its quasi-melodic flow – "quasi-" because the piece is reduced to a bare minimum of movement and the focus is on the very atmosphere that the piece engenders. Although the award could have, perhaps, also gone to Shih-Wei Lo, who demonstrated in his pieces a high degree of musicality and compositional skill, with the most mature approach to the score itself, the choice of Anthony Vine is not surprising. It seems that this artist corresponded to the jury's sensibility and, moreover, to the concept of this year's festival, which, unlike before, did not favour neo-avant-garde or experimental strivings, but spectralism and musical explorations of harmony and inter-tonal relations – and in that sense, Anthony Vine was the most logical choice.

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25th International Composers' Review

Unlike some previous editions of the International Composers' Review, last year's 25th Review did not have a subtitle that might determine the structure of its pro-

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gramme. Branka Popović, the Review's artistic selector, opted for a somewhat broader programme framework and thus the festival was held under the following title: *A Panorama of New Tone Colours, Forms, and Contents*. The Review therefore gave us an opportunity to hear works embodying the most diverse stylistic characteristics and poetic principles. In addition to a large number of new pieces by Serbian and foreign authors, the organizers also included a certain number of repertoire pieces, mostly avant-garde, which Belgrade audiences otherwise have little opportunity to hear in regular concert repertoires.

The Review opened with the presentation of the Mokranjac Award to Srđan Hofman for his piece *Through Boxes of Sound I* (2015) for clarinet, viola, piano, and electronics. This was followed by a concert of St. George's Strings, led by Rade Pejčić, featuring the following works: *El viento distante II* by Cuban composer Orlando García, *Medial 8* by Vladimir Tošić, *Music of Silence* by Yugoslav Bošnjak, *Two Reflections on Nutcracker* by Andrey Rubtsov, *Eleganza nuova* by Ivan Brkljačić, and *Suite española para flauta y 15 arcos* by Vlastimir Trajković. Moving between various stylistic patterns in a postmodernist manner but remaining bound to a tonal language, Orlando García's piece is a rather contemplative work focused on instrumental timbre and the relationship between the sound of the clarinet and that of the string ensemble. Vladimir Tošić's *Medial 8* is based in its author's minimalist musical language, which is by now well developed. According to the composer, the work belongs to his third creative phase, which began in 2010 and forms part of a series of

works titled *Medials*. By means of repeating a simple piece of musical material based on third relations, Tošić created a rhythmically taut work characterized by an interesting type of sonority. Yugoslav Bošnjak's *Music of Silence* for guitar and string orchestra likewise offers a memorable sonic result achieved through a peculiar harmonic language of a postmodernist affiliation. The same postmodernist direction characterizes Andrey Rubtsov's *Two Reflections on Nutcracker*. The author borrowed materials from the ballet's *pas-de-deux*, using their developmental potentials and often playing with them in a minimalist manner. The meditative atmosphere of this piece was then supplanted by the grotesque character of *Eleganza nuova*. Portraying a character from his own piece of instrumental theatre, *Istar*, Brkljačić came up with a complex dramaturgical whole teeming with contrasting materials in simple textures, presented within repetitively shaped structures. *Eleganza nuova* features the readily recognizable handwriting of its author and the same may be said about *Suite española para flauta y 15 arcos* by Vlastimir Trajković. It is a rather imaginatively conceived work, in which one may recognize the composer's perfect mastery of orchestration and the musical languages of various epochs, which he successfully simulates. By means of a transparent, impressionistic harmonic basis, Trajković creates a peculiar musical world that belongs, in his words, to 'spiritual-archaeological, archaic-mythological, and geo-poetical fantasies'.

The Review's second concert was opened by Construction Site New Ensemble. The programme included the following works: *Three Poems* by Alexander Search

for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and piano by Miloš Zatkalik; *Hep 13 A.T.* for violin, violoncello, and piano by Szilárd Mezei; *Trio* by Raffaele Grimaldi; *Hibernations* for clarinet, violoncello, and piano by Ljubomir Nikolić; *Five Linearities* for flute, bassoon, and piano by Gundega Šmite; *Hovor II* for string trio by Mei Fang-Lin; *Hwesang* for flute, violin, and piano by Yung Wu Yu; and *Three Songs for Aneta* for soprano and string septet, by Dragana Jovanović. Apart from Miloš Zatkalik's new piece, the work by the Latvian composer Gundega Šmite also stood out. This is a mature work based on the idea of establishing a dialogic musical flow between the flute and the bassoon, whereby the bassoon, by means of over-blowing, provides a balance to the rest of the ensemble. The piece is dominated by the instruments moving in passages, whose parts, especially in the final segment, intertwine and musically compete. Unassuming themes, often based on repetitions and concise melodic phrases, form the peculiar character of this piece, which tends to explore the sonority and timbres of the instruments. At times, it may sound as if the performers were actually rehearsing, repeating only segments of phrases, or ways of generating tones. In fact, as the title itself also suggests, these are linear progressions moving in parallel motion, linked by sharing similar materials and often establishing complementary relations, but without ever losing independence from one another.

Combining the poetics of various authors, especially Messiaen, as well as relying on the punctualist logic of constructing musical wholes, Yung Wu Yu conceived her piece, whose title translates as *Memory*, with reference to its quasi-programmatic

content. The piece presents the life of her grandfather through a lively musical picture, teeming with interesting situations and thoroughly studied colours, while its jagged texture and imaginative use of instruments make the piece rather effective.

The latter part of the evening featured a concert titled *Tonal Monologues*, which presented several works. The guitarist Zoran Antić, trumpeter Petar Stevanović, clarinetist Veljko Klenkovski, double bassist Goran Kostić, and pianist Neda Hofman demonstrated an exceptional degree of mastery of their instruments. We heard the following pieces: the first movement of Leo Brouwer's *Guitar Sonata*, where the solo instrument's lyrical part is truly delightful, although it combines such temperamental dances as the fandango and bolero; *Alone 1* and *2* by Nickos Harizanos, two melancholic pieces, realized by using a discreet layer of *musique concrète* or tape sounds, which evoke a sense of *strolling* down city streets; *For Mima*, a 1970s work by Petar Ozgijan; *Lyntaris*, a piano piece by Alexandra Karastoyanova-Hermentin, comprising short and effective motives, lending the instrument a peculiarly disparate sound; and *Entre el cielo y la tierra* by José Miguel Arellano Armijo from Chile, a work featuring a neoclassical sort of expression. Two works that were especially noteworthy were Xenakis's *Theraps* for double bass and Srđan Hofman's *Through Boxes of Sound 2*. Goran Kostić found exactly the right way to present this capital work of the European avant-garde by Iannis Xenakis, with an extremely dedicated approach to the performance itself. The work places various demands on the interpreter, first and foremost in terms of patience, as well as mastery of the instru-

ment. The piece is based on juxtaposing single and double glissandi and natural harmonics. Playing with time, using stochastic processes, using rather complex notation to make the performer's job as difficult as possible, this piece is a sort of *tour de force*. The performer must be inclined to exploring his instrument and open to discovering new expanses of sound. In that sense, the selector made the right choice when she opted for Goran Kostić. *Through Boxes of Sound 2* is an extremely exciting piece, featuring an unusual formal structure and juxtaposing the electronic medium and the piano in a rather intelligent way. The presence of a dominant rhythmic component leading toward ecstatic apexes and the alternation of several contrasting sections that constitute impulses for further development of the material make this piece effective and challenging for the listener.

The Review's third day was likewise reserved for solo music. Thus, we had an opportunity to hear a sort of *play on a single note* in Ivan Elezović's *Suspension* for piano, presented by Nada Kolundžija; *Kadenza* for double bass, a gentle piece with a subtle sort of sound by Teppo Hautaaho, interpreted by Goran Kostić; Pierre Boulez's classic piano virtuosic piece *Douze notations*, presented by Natalija Mladenović; and Héctor Oltra García's piece *clariMIXnetTUR*, which places numerous demands on the clarinetist in terms of interpretation, including an excellent breathing technique, which was rather effectively demonstrated by Rastko Uzunović. In addition to Boulez's piece, Luciano Berio's *Sequenza X* for trumpet was another curiosity that evening. Employing the piano's potential for resonance

in a special way, in order to, as it were, amplify the sound of the trumpet, Berio used this piece to explore the numerous potentials of the instrument. Nenad Marković, a high-quality, dedicated trumpeter, successfully took us into a special world, maintaining sonic tension from the beginning right to the end of the piece. He was likewise successful with Zoran Erić's *Images of Chaos 7*. This piece constitutes the Third List from Erić's *Images of Chaos* for trumpet and electronics, a part of this exciting cycle that puts individual pieces into various relationships with the chaos theory. Juxtaposing the electronic layer with the trumpet, whose part is improvisatory in character, Erić forms a *double image* whose relations are unpredictable, frequently close but also remote. The work's peculiarly structured sound demands special attention from the listener for the sake of mentally deconstructing what is heard and to establish correlations between various elements of the work. The composer's masterful treatment of the trumpet and the work's electronic layer, based on the recording of the last improvisation of the harpsichordist Miloš Petrović, attests to Erić's exceptional command of these media and creative lucidity.

On the fourth day of the festival, as part of the first concert, we could mostly hear pieces of a neoclassical stylistic orientation. These included the following: *Trio* for flute, violin, and piano by Jovica Mutavdžić; *Three Piano Pieces* by Aleksandar Vujić, in an excellent interpretation by Ivan Bašić; *Songs of Transience* by Mirjana Živković; *Of Mystical Love* by Svetlana Maksimović, for mezzo-soprano, harp, and piano; *Meditations*, by Stanko Simić, for piano; and *In Frame* by Jelena

Dabić, for clarinet, harp, and violoncello. In terms of musical expression, these are all fully established authors, who presented, in terms of harmony, exceptionally well-grounded works, reflecting a very high degree of familiarity with the music of past epochs. The only author to venture into a somewhat freer, postmodernist type of language was Stanko Simić, a composer belonging to a younger generation. Simić incorporated his own command of the piano as a performing medium into five contrasting pieces, virtuosic in character and reductive in texture. Simić used a broad range of expression in order to realize his intended sonic result, focusing, first and foremost, on the timbre and sonority of the instrument itself.

The festival's fourth day was rounded off by a performance of the Meitar Ensemble from Tel Aviv. They performed the following pieces by Israeli composers: *Jazz à propos de Matisse*, a piano trio by Ruben Seroussi; *InsideOut* for clarinet, violin, violoncello, and piano by Ofer Pelz; *Mosaics* for clarinet trio by Menachem Zur, as well as older works by Serbian composers: *Torso*, a piano trio by Ljubica Marić; *Micro-sonata* for clarinet by Aleksandar Obradović; and *Suite* for violoncello and piano by Vladan Radovanović. Regarding the works that had their Belgrade première that evening, especially noteworthy was Seroussi's clarinet trio *Jazz à propos de Matisse*, written in 1991 and referring to a book of reproductions by Henri Matisse. Conceived in terms of a mosaic, this piece features a large quantity of contrasting material, juxtaposed and overlapping, including divergent stylistic orientations – from neoclassicism to jazz. The work's powerful rhythmic component forms its axis, where

one finds a large number of motivic nuclei concentrated in a small amount of music.

The penultimate day of the festival was dedicated to organ music, presented by Ivan Božičević and his guests: the organist Maja Smiljanić Radić and violinist Miljana Popović Materni. The three artists assembled a rather interesting programme that presented to Belgrade's concert-going public some classic 20th-century works, some of them for the first time. The repertoire that evening included the following: *Hell und Dunkel* by Sofia Gubaidulina, *Pari intervalo* by Arvo Pärt, *Satyagraha, Act III: Conclusion* by Philip Glass, *Toccata* by Paul Ayres, and *Sonata religiosa* for violin and organ by Josip Slavenski. Especially noteworthy was the performance of György Ligeti's *Volumina* (1962–66), an erstwhile controversial work, based on a graphic score. In this piece, the composer plays with the saturation degree of textural image, generating dynamism on the basis of the relationship between the respective densities of individual cluster structures. Ivan Božičević made good use of the freedom Ligeti affords to the performer and came up with an intelligently conceived interpretative dramaturgy.

The concert was rounded off by his piece *The Moonpiper Suite*, with certain folklore elements intertwined with a repetitive approach to the organization of material. Relying on irregular metres and the toccata tradition, Božičević based his texturally reductive piece on simple motivic patterns.

The International Review of Composers ended with a performance by the Construction Site New Music Ensemble, who appeared in multiple configurations: as a duo, trio, and an octet. Moving between the

musical heritage of the avant-garde and the French spectralist tradition, Nemanja Radivojević presented *Pharos*, a work rich in sonority and complex in dramaturgy. This piece, written for an octet, opened the concert, followed by Milana Stojadinović Milić *Tango per tre*, based on simulating elements of the Argentine dance; this was followed by Jana Andreevska's *2.2.4 to 4.4.2*; Caterina di Cecca's *Du, der ichs nicht sage...*, a setting of the Lied from Rilke's novel *The Notes of Malte Laurids Brigge*, as well as Tatjana Milošević's *Chatatutu*, a deftly and masterfully realized piece for piccolo flute, violin, and piano. *Revolt*, an octet by Milan Mihajlović, comes from the body of works that form his most recent creative phase and represents a result of accumulated knowledge and compositional experience. A clear-cut piece in terms of texture, moving in a steady tempo, with the horn playing a prominent role, is clearly related to the piece *Melancholia* by the same composer, not only in terms of compositional solu-

tions, but also because Mihajlović quotes a fragment of the latter piece in *Revolt*. The International Review of Composers concluded with the performance of a work by Isidora Žebeljan, *Needle Soup*. By using lucid, often witty musical solutions and instrumental combinations, most varied in character and colour in a sort of collage, Žebeljan generated a rich and somewhat grotesque sonic world. In her own words, from her explication of the piece: 'A single initial idea starts a chain reaction of unpredictable musical ideas and events – giving rise to a "stream of consciousness music" with elements of a "mystical musical surrealism"'

Although perhaps there could have been more works by foreign composers, both in terms of number and stylistic orientations, the 25th International Review of Composers was a success, presenting a significant number of pieces by Serbian composers, as well as several repertoire works that were premiered in Serbia on this occasion, several decades after their emergence.