

***DIFFRACTIONS***  
**OF BERISLAV POPOVIĆ'S COMPOSITIONAL,  
MUSIC-THEORETICAL, PEDAGOGICAL,  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CREATION**

*Editors*

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Ivana Medić

## **CONSTRUCTIVE ENGINE OF MUSIC: BERISLAV POPOVIĆ AND THE SERIES *MUSIC TODAY* / *MUSICAL MODERNISM* OF THE THIRD PROGRAM OF RADIO BELGRADE<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** The cycle of concerts of contemporary music called *Musical Modernism* (originally named *Music Today*) was broadcast live on the waves of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade from 1967 to 1985. During the first two years, after each concert, there were discussions about the performed works, but also about various problems of contemporary music. The moderator of these public discussions on radio waves was Pavle Stefanović, and on those occasions various problems of modern, avant-garde and experimental music were highlighted, ranging from technical concerns to essential questions of the meaning of new music and the prospects of its long-term survival and sustainability. One of Stefanović's interlocutors was Berislav Popović, who took part in the conversation on the occasion of the concert held on 28 December 1967, at which compositions by Niccolò Castiglioni, André Jolivet, Iannis Xenakis, Vladan Radovanović and Edgard Varèse were performed. The transcript of the discussion, typed on a typewriter, is preserved in the archival documentation of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade. While commenting on the compositions of Castiglioni, Jolivet, Varèse, and especially Xenakis, Berislav Popović shared with the listeners his own artistic, musical-theoretical and philosophical-aesthetic views. Throughout the conversation – or rather, a polemic – with Pavle Stefanović, Croatian musicologist Petar Selem and conductor Konstantin Simonović, Berislav Popović lucidly commented on the demands placed on the European composers of that time, as well as the questions of originality and consistency of musical processes, and the logic of creating the works of “new music”. Of particular interest is his expression *constructive engine of music*, with which Popović described formative compositional strategies applied in order to avoid incoherence, or mannerism of the musical flow, in the absence of clear and lasting “rules” for contemporary composition. The goal of this paper is to comment (from a distance of 55 years) on Popović's viewpoint and observations, as well as his criticism of two opposite groups of composers who “fill each empty sound space with themselves”, and those seduced by the ideology of uniqueness and originality at any cost.

**Keywords:** Berislav Popović, Third Program of Radio Belgrade, Pavle Stefanović, *Music Today* / *Musical Modernism*, polemics.

One of the many important segments of critical, academic and socio-cultural engagement of composer and music theorist Berislav Popović (1931–2002) during the decades of his career was his participation in public forums, roundtables and other events that

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<sup>1</sup> This study was written within the scientific research organisation the Institute of Musicology SASA (RS-200176) financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

were characteristic of music life in Serbia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In this article I will analyse Popović's participation in public life using the example of the series of talks broadcast on the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, within the cycle of concerts entitled *Music Today / Musical Modernism*. A preserved transcript of the recorded show from this series gives us a direct insight into Popović's assessment of the compositions that were performed on that occasion; those works had not previously been known to him, hence he had to form his critical opinion about them on the spot, after only hearing them once, and then share his view with the listeners of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade. Before considering Popović's participation, I will make a few remarks about the forum itself.<sup>2</sup>

The cycle of concerts of contemporary music, broadcast live on the waves of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, was initiated in 1967. The mastermind and editor of this series was Mira Daleore, who was in charge of the Music Department of the Third Program since its inception in 1965. This cycle was initially called *Music Today* (throughout 1967); starting from 8 February 1968 it was renamed *Musical Modernism*, and this title survived until 1985. Thanks to this cycle, the music of John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Luciano Berio, Karlheinz Stockhausen and other important protagonists of the post-war avant-garde, 'lived' on Belgrade's concert stages and, through radio waves, reached the homes of listeners receptive to such aesthetics and interested in discovering new sound worlds. The cycle was primarily focused on experimental and avant-garde music created in Western Europe, the United States, but also in Slavic countries that had strong avant-garde currents, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and, of course, SFR Yugoslavia. This so-called "new" music, which dominated the Western cultural space during the two immediate post-war, Cold War-coloured decades, entered its final phase towards the end of the 1960s.

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<sup>2</sup> A brief overview of the cycle *Musical Modernism* presented in this article is based on my previously published studies, in which I wrote in more detail about this cycle of contemporary music concerts, its specific position within the overall concept of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade and its mission to foster and promote contemporary art music, as well as the role of Pavle Stefanović as a panel moderator: Ivana Medić, "Ciklus koncerata *Muzička moderna* Trećeg programa Radio Beograda (1967–1985)" [The Cycle of Concerts *Musical Modernism* on the Third Program of Radio Belgrade], in: Ivana Medić (Ed.), *Radio i srpska muzika* [Radio and Serbian Music], Belgrade, Institute of Musicology SASA, 2015, 141–176; "Pavle Stefanović i tribina *Muzika danas/Muzička moderna* Trećeg programa Radio Beograda" [Pavle Stefanović and the Forum *Music Today / Musical Modernism* on the Third Program of Radio Belgrade], in: Sonja Marinković and Jelena Janković-Beguš (Eds), *O ukusima se raspravlja: Pavle Stefanović (1901–1985)*, [De gustibus est disputandum: Pavle Stefanović (1901–1985)], Belgrade, Serbian Musicological Society and Faculty of Music, 2017, 192–206; "The Role of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade in the Presentation, Promotion, and Expansion of Serbian Avant-Garde Music in the 1960s and 1970s", *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 40, No. 5–6, 2022, 482–511, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2021.2022885>.

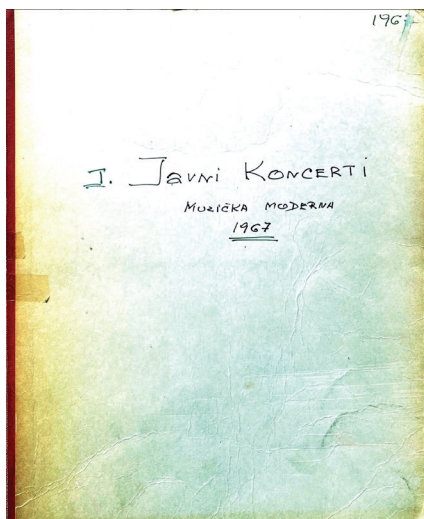
The editor of the cycle *Musical Modernism*, Mira Daleore, was aware of its educational 'mission' from the very beginning, as evidenced by the fact that during the first two years – ending with the concert held on 24 April 1969 – after each concert there was a discussion about the performed works. Serbian aesthetician Pavle Stefanović moderated these forums, in which the broader problems of contemporary music were discussed. In the second half of 1969 this practice was abandoned, due to a certain tiredness of his interlocutors; instead, during the intervals or after the concerts, the radio audiences could listen to translations of scientific studies, interviews with composers and performers, etc. During the two years of this public forum on the air, various problems of contemporary music were highlighted, from the issues of compositional technique to essentialist questions of the meaning of new music and the possibility of its long-term survival. Pavle Stefanović's discussants were musicologists, composers, aestheticians and performers: Dragutin Gostuški, Dragomir Papadopolos, Enriko Josif, Vladan Radovanović, Petar Selem, Rajko Maksimović, Zoran Hristić, Miodrag Azanjac and others were most often in front of the microphone in the studio.

Fortunately, all these conversations have been preserved, if not on tape, then at least in the form of transcripts of discussions, typed on a machine, with a large number of subsequently added corrections and remarks, which Mira Daleore wrote in her own handwriting. The credit for the preservation of these texts belongs to the music department of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, especially to Hristina Medić. The transcripts were transferred from the tape literally, as the words were spoken, hence they bear all the hallmarks of oral speech, with a large number of digressions, hiccups, unfinished sentences and such. However, even in such an unedited form, they are very valuable; precisely because they lack subsequent intervention, they convey the aesthetic and philosophical views of Pavle Stefanović and his interlocutors in a much more direct way. Namely, while written texts allow for subsequent reflections, corrections and more precise formulations, oral speech is much less susceptible to self-censorship, and conveys the authors' thoughts in an 'undistilled' form (see **Image 1** below).

In his introductory speech after each concert, Pavle Stefanović would formulate several questions or problems that were assigned the role of guiding ideas for the ensuing discussion, and then he would allow the polemic to branch out in different directions – depending on what inspired or provoked the panel participants the most. Some of the topics discussed after almost every concert, included: (1) the "message" and meaning of new music; (2) whether this music was obvious to the listeners, i.e. whether they understood its ideological and emotional content; (3) if there was a human component of that music; (4) how to treat music not primarily determined by its thematic content, i.e. music in which there was no melody in the traditional sense; (5) which formal patterns were used in new music and how they were used; etc.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ivana Medić, "Pavle Stefanović i tribina *Muzika danas/Muzička moderna...*", op. cit., 197.



**Image 1** The front page of the bound first volume of the cycle *Musical Modernism* (1967) with transcripts of discussions, concert programs and announcements. Archival documentation of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade (uncatalogued).

One of Stefanović's interlocutors was Berislav Popović, who took part in a conversation on the occasion of a concert held on December 28, 1967 (see **Image 2** below), at which compositions by Niccolò Castiglioni, André Jolivet, Iannis Xenakis, Vladan Radovanović and Edgar Varèse were performed. The performers were an ensemble of Belgrade musicians and soloists: French artist Arlette Sibon-Simonovitch, as a performer on Ondes Martenot, mezzo-soprano Dragica Nikolić, and a Serbian conductor living in France, Konstantin Simonović (also spelled as Simonovitch).



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КОНЦЕРТНА ПОСЛОВНИЦА  
СРБИЈЕ  
ТРИБИНА ТРЕЋЕГ ПРОГРАМА  
РАДИО-БЕОГРАДА  
У ЧЕТВРТАК, 28. ДЕЦЕМБРА  
У 21 ЧАС

У ВЕЛИКОЈ ДВОРАНИ ДОМА ОМЛАДИНЕ

## ЈАВНИ КОНЦЕРТ „МУЗИКА ДАНАС“

КАМЕРНИ АНСАМБЛ БЕОГРАДСКИХ МУЗИЧАРА

Диригент: **КОНСТАНТИН СИМОНОВИЋ**

Солиста: **АРЛЕТ СИБОН - СИМОНОВИЋ**

МАРТЕНООВИ ТАЛАСИ — ПАРИЗ

НА ПРОГРАМУ:

**CASTIGLIONI, JOLIVET, XENAKIS, РАДОВАНОВИЋ, VARESE**  
О изведеном програму разговарају:

ПАВЛЕ СТЕФАНОВИЋ, БЕРИСЛАВ ПОПОВИЋ, ПЕТАР СЕЛЕМ и  
КОНСТАНТИН СИМОНОВИЋ

Продаја улазница на благалици велике дворане Дома омладине

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**Image 2** Announcement of the public concert and forum of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade – *Music Today*, published in daily newspaper *Politics*, December 26, 1967.



Commenting on the works of Castiglioni, Jolivet, Varèse and especially Xenakis, Berislav Popović shared his artistic, musical-theoretical and philosophical-aesthetic views with the listeners. Through a conversation with Pavle Stefanović, the versatile Croatian intellectual Petar Selem<sup>4</sup> and conductor Konstantin Simonović, Berislav Popović commented on the demands placed before the European composers of that time, as well as the questions of originality and consistency of musical processes, the logic of constructing the works of “new” music, etc. On this occasion, I will comment on Popović’s attitudes and observations from a time distance of 55 years. It is worth noting that both Popović and Selem were very young at the time the conversation was recorded, although they were already well-known – Popović was thirty-six years old, Selem thirty-one.

Reading the transcript of the discussion in a ‘raw’, unedited form, we conclude that Berislav Popović spoke much more fluently than his interlocutors, especially the moderator of the forum Pavle Stefanović, who had an extremely arabesque thought, redundant and interwoven with countless digressions. Unlike Stefanović, during the conversation Popović managed to reduce his mental and verbal meandering to a minimum and to offer his listeners clear and precise opinions – which was certainly the result of his pedagogical experience. Namely, Popović graduated from the Department of Music Theory and Pedagogy of the (then) Music Academy in Belgrade in 1956, and immediately after that began his pedagogical career. He left a special mark at the Secondary Music School *Josip Slavenski* in Belgrade, where he taught music-theoretical subjects from 1960 to 1967. Along with his job as a music pedagogue, Popović enrolled to study composition in the class of Stanojlo Rajičić. Popović graduated in 1966, and the following year he was elected assistant professor at the Academy of Music in Belgrade, where he taught a number of music theory subjects – Harmony, Counterpoint, Analysis of Form, etc. Working with various generations of students, Popović acquired the skill of precise expression, unencumbered by digressions. Therefore, in the continuation of this study, I will minimally edit Popović’s sentences in comparison to the “raw” typed transcript (in which punctuation marks are often missing, foreign names are incorrectly typed, etc.).

The conversation on the occasion of the concert held on 28 December 1967 began with Pavle Stefanović’s observation that the electronic instrument Ondes Martenot, named after its creator Maurice Louis Eugène Martenot, was heard for the first time in Belgrade; neither Stefanović nor his panellists were particularly impressed with this instrument. At the beginning of the discussion, Stefanović presented his own opinion on the program, which included French and Italian contemporary composers (along with Serbian composer Vladan Radovanović), as well as the assessment of the “new” instrument:

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<sup>4</sup> Petar Selem (1936–2015) was a Croatian and Yugoslav historian, writer, Egyptologist, theatre director and critic, essayist, theatrologist, art and music critic. He was a full professor at the Department of General Ancient History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. Among other things, he edited an anthology of texts on contemporary music: Petar Selem, *Novi Zvuk: izbor tekstova o suvremenoj glazbi* [*New Sound: a collection of text on contemporary music*], Zagreb, Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1972.

Here, he, that newcomer, modestly, as if he were not a newcomer, submitted to the framework of the program. The program was extraordinarily delicious in its scope and a quiet inner mild variety. This guest made from wires and other tools also joined this direction of the program and its entire sound material.<sup>5</sup>

Stefanović also mentioned that the concert was extremely poorly attended, for which he blamed the bad weather and sleet (the concert was held in late December), and he joked with the listeners who stayed at home to listen to the broadcast of the Third Program, telling them that they missed the opportunity to see the extremely beautiful profile of the performer on Ondes Martenot, madame Arlette Sibon-Simonovitch, the wife of conductor Konstantin Simonović. The conversation continued in the direction of Simonović's explanation of the history of the instrument Ondes Martenot and the literature for this instrument, its solo appearances and the like. The next one to join the discussion was Peter Selem, a consistent apologist of "new music", who pointed out that Ondes Martenot were one of the first instruments to anticipate, define and introduce "a modern sonorous landscape" – referring to electronic sound.

The composition that inspired Berislav Popović to join the discussion was the famous *Suite delphique* of André Jolivet, for Ondes Martenot and chamber ensemble, with movements inspired by ancient Greece: *I. Prélude. Aurore magique, II. Les chiens d'Érèbe, III. Orage, IV. Le repos de la nature, V. Procession, VI. Joye dyonisiaque, VII. Invocation, VIII. Cortège*. Unlike the other discussants in the studio, who mostly commented on aesthetic issues, Popović immediately "heard" the form and structure of the work:

I think that Jolivet's composition is a very interesting example of how a technical novelty [*i.e.*, the use of *Ondes Martenot*, note I. M.] introduces some new moments, a new approach, although this device is really only a hint of that (modern sonorous) landscape mentioned by colleague Selem. But it is interesting how the presence of that new physical sound, the existence of such a special colour, simply drives the composer to start structuring in great detail a musical flow that would have some specificity, which would arise from the nature of that technical novelty – of course, these are really only occasional, barely visible places, details. By the way, it is mostly all in one traditional course of a very mobile evolutionary form with all the laws of opposition that haunt it.

But it is interesting, I say, how much it will inevitably lead the composer to the autonomy of all those combinations, elements, components of the musical works, which now exclusively use these new scales, electronics and other technical means. Jolivet certainly had no other intention than to expand the means of expression and to incorporate them, more or less successfully, into the general musical flow in his composition. So, he did not set a goal in advance. But, you see, they were looking for one another in passing, and that led to the occasional structuring of one particularity, specificity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Transcript (typed on a typewriter, in Latin script) of the discussion after the concert held on 28 December 1967. Archival documentation of the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, the cycle *Musical Modernism*, bound volume no. 1 (1967), uncatalogued, p. 3. Note: each transcript within this volume has a separate pagination.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

Petar Selem agreed with Popović's observation that the presence of a new instrument and a new sound (in that composition created in 1942–1943, i.e., a quarter of a century before its Belgrade performance) inspired Jolivet to be a little more modern than he would have otherwise been, that is, to modernise other layers of musical flow, not just instrumentation.

The next composition to be discussed was *Analogies A and B* by Iannis Xenakis. This work by one of the leading figures of the most radical current of the European musical avant-garde belongs to the group of his works of *stochastic music*,<sup>7</sup> that is, music based on probability theory, and also to Xenakis's not so numerous works for electroacoustic ensembles or for combinations of traditional and electronic instruments; specifically, *Analogies* were written for string instruments and tape. In *Analogy A*, Xenakis uses the so-called *Markov chain*: it is a stochastic model that describes a series of possible events in which the probability of each subsequent event depends solely on the state reached in the previous event; therefore, it is a question of cause and effect, hence, a "chain". From the discussion held after the concert, we can deduce that neither Popović nor other panellists were familiar with the principle of *Markov chain* that Xenakis applied in this work; besides, information about this compositional method did not appear either in the presenter's script or in the printed concert program. Therefore, the panellists had to make a judgment about this work solely on the basis of an immediate sound impression.

Commenting on Xenakis's composition, conductor Konstantin Simonović, who also chose the program for the concert, paraphrased Xenakis himself, who allegedly said (Simonović does not cite the source) that it was an etude for strings and electronics, meant to affect listeners only by its own frequencies, density and nuances of sound. Popović followed up on Simonović's words:

I am glad to hear that Xenakis himself entitled it as an etude, and I would indeed put it in that category; (not) in the classical sense, but (if we would) qualify the instructive etude as a cross-section of possible approaches. I think that it is very good that we heard that tonight. However, it seems to me that the value of one work, one approach, can only be assessed in comparison to the whole. But often one (type of) approach pretends to be dominant, which results in losing the whole.

The most impressive thing about Xenakis is his mathematical-scientific approach and rational attitude towards the material; it seems to me that there are various rhythmic formulas that constantly change. The dynamics are also very interestingly organised. So, several of these parameters have been programmed and put into action.

However, what impresses me the most in this composition by Xenakis is the composer's effort to use these means, such as a tape recorder, to try to establish a *constructive engine of music* [emphasis I. M.] that would push forward the whole composition and attempt to take it out of a closed circle, whenever he is unable to get out of it musically. It seems to me that (here) this constructive engine is a phenomenon related only to the diversity of

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<sup>7</sup> Iannis Xenakis, *Musiques formelles: nouveaux principes formels de composition musicale*, Chapitre II: "Musique stochastique markovienne", *La Revue musicale*, double numéro spécial, nos. 253–254, Paris, Éditions Richard-Masse, 1963, 59–131.

sources: on the one hand a traditional group of instruments, on the other hand a speaker with electronic sounds; their opposition, the sound opposite is that lever for eventual initiation. However, I would say that, in this case, these two sources collided, that they did not merge, that they acted as some, very often artificial echo – I think even conceptually, and not only in terms of (their) mutual distance – and that ultimately, we did not get the crown of Xenakis's effort.<sup>8</sup>

Here Berislav Popović introduces a very interesting syntagm, *constructive engine of music*, which describes new formative compositional strategies applied in order to avoid incoherence or mannerism of the musical flow, which appear due to the ideology of constant innovation and lack of clear and permanent 'rules' for contemporary composition.

In the continuation of the discussion, Popović applies this term to the works of Castiglioni and Varèse. Namely, the concert featured the composition *Tropes (Tropi, 1959)* by Niccolò Castiglioni, a prominent representative of the generation of Italian composers who attended composition courses in Darmstadt, as well as electronic music courses held by Luciano Berio in the Italian state media studio, RAI Corporation.<sup>9</sup> However, the composition *Tropes* was written for traditional instruments: flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion. In literature, tropes are stylistic figures that are created when the basic meaning of a word changes. The term originated from the Greek word *tropos*, which means *turn*, and reveals the character of these stylistic figures, which, by reversing the true meaning, give a new (often opposite) meaning to the words. The umbrella term encompasses: *metaphor, allegory, epithet, euphemism, metonymy, personification, symbol* and *synecdoche*. We can assume (since it is not explicitly stated in the presenter's script) that the composer's initial thought was to create musical tropes, analogous to literary ones. In accordance with the aesthetics of the Darmstadt school, the work is partly serially conceived, and the resulting sound is akin to Webern's punctualism. Popović said the following about this composition:

(In *Tropes* we have) the shifting of short note values with longer note values that are imposed as dominant and that in some way become central, due to the length of their duration; that is, it is a stasis, a base, a balance in relation to moving, flexible flows. The principle of how the organisation (of musical flow) is approached has been betrayed, because that form has been predetermined in advance.<sup>10</sup>

Popović immediately follows with the discussion of Varèse's composition *Intégrales* for eleven wind instruments and twenty-six percussion instruments, divided into four groups (for four performers). Although Varèse was one of the early pioneers of electronic music, he was represented at this concert by this composition written for traditional instruments (although very unconventionally treated). Varèse's thoughtful study of percussion sounds and their connections with vertical blocks of wind instruments

<sup>8</sup> Transcript..., op. cit., 15–16.

<sup>9</sup> Antonino Geraci, "Castiglioni, Niccolò", in: Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (Eds), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), London, Macmillan, 2001, 1037.

<sup>10</sup> Transcript..., op. cit., 16.

that cover a huge sound range thanks to the use of instruments with very low and very high registers, gives results comparable to those that the composer would later achieve in electronic media. Varèse himself said:

*Intégrales* were created with the idea of spatial arrangement. I constructed them for certain sound devices that did not exist at the time, but which I knew would eventually be made and would be used sooner or later... While in a traditional music system we arrange the values, while the colours are fixed, I wanted the sound colours to change constantly in relation to the constant. In other words, it looks like a series of variations in which the changes are results of small changes in the form of one function or transposition from one function to another.<sup>11</sup>

We assume that Berislav Popović was not familiar with this description of the composition, which was neither printed in the concert program, nor read in the presenter's script, nor in any way mentioned in the subsequent discussion; nevertheless, the experienced analyst, Popović lucidly penetrated into the essence of Varèse's idea:

Here, too, we can observe the composer's effort to establish a *constructive engine* that would create that basic vital element, the principle of contrast, which is the only one capable of creating that evolutiveness of [musical] flows. It is a pioneering endeavour of great importance for the reforms that have taken place in music, and we can really observe it in parallel with Webern. We have all these already set principles and we feel the imaginary impression of one space. It is our illusion, but still (we maintain it) because something is going in circles. For example, with Varèse we have the principle of variation, of varying, with minor changes within that series of variations, which created the impression of movement, albeit in a circle, but still, the impression of some space. However, these are unrepeatable things; it seems to me that nothing should be repeated, because in fact everyone is trying to establish those constructive engines within their means; and if used again, then the composition has no authenticity, no originality. I am afraid that this problem was posed here, but it was not solved tonight by the composer.<sup>12</sup>

Petar Selem confirmed Popović's observations and stated that contemporary music probably owes Varèse as much as Webern – "if not in terms of strictly compositional technique, then in terms of making a breakthrough into a new taste that contemporary music would acquire much later."<sup>13</sup> In response to Selem, Popović agreed with his assessment of Varèse's importance, but also warned again that the ideology of uniqueness and constant innovation, which at that time was absolutely dominant in Western European "new music", would quickly result in any new tendency that aimed to be constantly original ending up in a dead end:

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<sup>11</sup> Edgard Varèse, "Programme du concert de l'Ensemble Intercontemporain au Théâtre d'Orsay", source IRCAM – Centre Pompidou, *Ressources.ircam*, <https://brahms.ircam.fr/works/work/12506/>, accessed on 1 April 2022. See also: John Strawn, "The *Intégrales* of Edgard Varèse Space, Mass, Element, and Form", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1978, 139.

<sup>12</sup> Transcript..., op. cit., 16–17.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

[...] when you say composers, you mean a whole group of contemporary music composers who have the same tendency to fill a space with themselves, i.e., with their materials and elements. However, I am afraid that this imperative does not arise because it is necessary, or because it is not only attractive but also a kind of solution, but because it is a consequence of a certain organisation of materials, certain directions that are unable to produce others. Therefore, even if we had an illusion of that imaginary space here, we later realise the futility of uniqueness.<sup>14</sup>

As the discussion was nearing its end, Popović became increasingly critical of the composers seduced by the ideology of uniqueness and originality at all costs, thus highlighting Adorno's thesis on the rapid consumption of all contemporary music techniques, while expanding the scope of his discussion beyond the composers of works that were performed at the concert:

The drama of the contemporary composers' creation is very impressive. Let's take Boulez as an example. How much effort he invests into *Structure 1b* to achieve flow; *Structure 1a* does not have it. Or Penderecki's *St Luke Passion*. I think they are simply forced, in the absence of another new process, to have to accept some of these reminiscences, associations, perhaps the risk of incoherence to achieve that constructive engine, to kickstart and revitalise the musical texture.<sup>15</sup>

Here, Popović practically agreed with Stefanović's previously mentioned statement that he primarily understood "new" music as meta-music, that is, music that deals with itself and its "state of material", to paraphrase Adorno again. Namely, in Stefanović's aesthetics, an avant-garde musical work is an essay, a treatise on music, but expressed by musical, not verbal means; Stefanović also thought of the "new sound" as an emancipated entity: it is a sound obsessed with itself, self-reflexive, meta-sound.<sup>16</sup>

Although the discussion whose excerpts we quoted lacked a common conclusion of all participants, the overall impression is that Stefanović and Popović prevailed over Selem, because they proved that the "new sound" at that time had not yet managed to grow into a new quality, nor did it succeed in generating adequate forms, which would have convincingly replaced traditional formal patterns and formative procedures. Furthermore, the electronic instrument Ondes Martenot did not leave a special impression on the panellists, because in the compositions represented on the program it was used primarily as a sound colour, and not as an innovation that would inspire composers to search for new forms immanent to this new sound source. Stefanović also agreed with Popović's conclusion about a certain stagnation of "new" music due to its ideological "obsession" with innovation, for which, however, he did not blame composers and their "exhibitionism", but rather listeners and critics and their "intellectual arrogance" – which, in turn, put composers in a situation where they constantly had to invent and "serve" to the audience constantly something new and interesting, so as not to be labelled as "inauthentic".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 22–23.

<sup>16</sup> Ivana Medić, "Pavle Stefanović i tribina *Muzika danas/Muzička moderna...*", op. cit., 197.

<sup>17</sup> Transcript..., op. cit., 23.



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## Rezime

### Ivana Medić

#### **KONSTRUKTIVNI MOTOR MUZIKE: BERISLAV POPOVIĆ I TRIBINA MUZIKA DANAS / MUZIČKA MODERNA TREĆEG PROGRAMA RADIO BEOGRADA**

Ciklus koncerata savremene muzike *Muzička moderna* (izvorno nazvan *Muzika danas*) emitovan je u direktnom prenosu na talasima Trećeg programa Radio Beograda od 1967. do 1985. godine. Tokom prve dve godine trajanja ovog ciklusa, posle svakog koncerta vođene su diskusije o izvedenim delima, ali i o različitim problemima savremene muzike. Moderator ovih javnih tribina u etru bio je Pavle Stefanović, a tom prilikom apostrofirani su različiti problemi moderne, avangardne i eksperimentalne muzike, počev od tehničko-zanatskih, do suštinskih pitanja smislenosti ove muzike i njenog dugoročnog opstanka i održivosti. Jedan od Stefanovićevih sagovornika bio je Berislav Popović koji je učestvovao u razgovoru povodom koncerta održanog 28. decembra 1967. godine, na kojem su izvedene kompozicije Nikola Kastiljonija, Andrea Žolivea, Janisa Ksenakisa, Vladana Radovanovića i Edgara Vareza. Transkript razgovora, prekucan na pisačkoj mašini, sačuvan je u arhivskoj dokumentaciji Trećeg programa. Komen-

tarišući kompozicije Kastiljonija, Žolivea, Vareza i posebno Ksenakisa, Berislav Popović je sa slušaocima podelio svoje umetničke, muzičko-teorijske i filozofsko-estetičke stavove. Kroz razgovor – bolje rečeno, polemiku – sa Pavlom Stefanovićem, hrvatskim muzikologom Petrom Selemom i dirigentom Konstantinom Simonovićem, Berislav Popović je lucidno komentarisao zahteve koji su postavljeni pred tadašnje (evropske) kompozitore, zatim, pitanja originalnosti i doslednosti muzičkih procesa, logike izgradnje ostvarenja „nove” muzike itd. Posebno je zanimljiva sintagma *konstruktivni motor muzike*, kojom je Popović opisao oblikotvorne kompozitorske strategije primenjivane u cilju izbegavanja nekoherentnosti, ili pak, manirizma muzičkog toka, u uslovima nepostojanja jasnih i iole trajnih „pravila” za savremeno komponovanje. Cilj ovog rada je da, sa vremenske distance od 55 godina, prokomentarišemo Popovićeve stavove i zapažanja, te njegovu kritiku kako kompozitora koji svaki zvučni prostor „ispunjavaju sobom”, tako i onih zavedenih ideologijom neponovljivosti i originalnosti po svaku cenu.