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## **Review of the 27th International Review of Composers Belgrade, Serbia 4–8 October 2018**

The 27th International Review of Composers was held at the Studentski kulturni center [Students' Cultural Center] in Belgrade from 4th to 8th October 2018. Unlike the previous years, this year's Review didn't have a specific title that would further determine the thematic framework of the festival. Instead, the Review's artistic selector, Branka Popović, opted for a concept that she characterized as "A Unique Collection of the Latest Achievements of Contemporary Music." Hence, the audience could hear a heterogenous selection of authors of different generations and their works that are results of various stylistic orientations and diverse inspiration impulses, from Egyptian and Greek mythology to contemporary science and philosophy.

The Review's programme, divided into six thematic concerts, one musicological discussion, and promotion of the edition of works, included fifty compositions written in the last three years by authors from eighteen countries. In addition, the programme included pieces by two eminent authors who who left their mark on 20th and 21st century music, Sofia Gubaidulina and Brian Ferneyhough, and works by two composers who are not well known in Serbia – Poul Rovsing Olsen and Erkki Jokinen. The audience could hear more about these four authors and their pieces from two musicologists, Ivana Miladinović Prica and Milan Milojković, during the opening discussion, named *A Review within the Review*.

Amongst the performers at the Review were established, and to the musical audience well known, performers of Serbian contemporary music, such as the string orchestra Metamorphosis and Construction Site New Music Ensemble, young soloists, duos and smaller chamber ensembles who specialize in performing contemporary music, as well as some ensembles that made their debut this year. On the second day, we heard a performance by Belgrade Baroque Ensemble, and the last

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concert of the Review was marked by a performance from the *Balkan Connection Brass Quintet*.

At the official opening ceremony of the Review, which followed the musicological discussion, the Mokranjac Award for the best composition in 2017 was presented to Ivana Stefanović for the radiophonic poem *Veliki kamen* [Big rock], based on fragments extracted from Ljubomir Simović's drama *Hasanaginica*. As the Jury stated in their explication, in *Veliki kamen* we hear "knowledgeable organization of the musical process, meticulous work with the sound material, technical perfection of its realization, the strength of the inspiration and the timelessness that the radiophonic poem carries" that make it a work of "exceptional value." The concert that followed the Mokranjac award ceremony was entirely dedicated to music written for string orchestra and performed by *Metamorphosis*. The piece that opened the concert was *Abgrund* by Sonja Mutić, and it was followed by *Und wie Fruchte sid wir* by Caterina di Cecca, *Four harmonic transformations* by Miloš Zatkalik, and Tatjana Milošević's *Whilst Thinking of You*. The concert proceeded with Stanko Simić's *Memoria*, in which the composer invited us to explore his own recollections, experiences, and memories. In the second part of the concert, the audience could hear trumpeter Mladen Djordjević performing Dejan Despić's *Concerto* for trumpet and string orchestra op. 168, which featured a classical division into three movements full of motion and virtuosity, followed by Mirjana Živković's *String diptych*, Miloš Raičković's *Passacaglia & Double Fugue on B-A-C-H and B-A-G-D-A-D* and Nataša Bogojević's *Dissolvenza*.

Apart from the Mokranjac Award, on the third and fifth nights of the Review, two more awards were presented: the Aleksandar Pavlović Award for the promotion and performance of Serbian contemporary music to the Construction Site New Music Ensemble and their pianist and artistic director Neda Hofman Sretenović, and the Pavle Stefanović Award for music criticism and writings on music to the musicologist Ana Kotevska for the inspiring essay *Naracija koja ne priča priče. Ivana Stefanović – Veliki kamen* [Narration that doesn't tell stories. Ivana Stefanović – Big Rock]. Another noteworthy event happened on the last day of the Review, at the Atrium of the National Library of Serbia, before the official closing concert. The event in question was the promotion of scores of works by Ivan Brkljačić, who is the first Serbian composer to have his works published by a Serbian publishing company.

The first concert of the second night – which was, owing to the conception of its programme, one of the most interesting nights of the Review – was the Doctoral artistic project of young flutist and doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, Hanan Hadžajlić. This concert took the audience into a specific sound-world – it featured a selection of recent works for flute, bass flute, and electronics. Firstly, the audience could hear compositions written for amplified flute/bass flute: Panayiotis Kokoras's *Cycling* (for amplified flute) and Dominik Karski's *Open Cluster M45* (for amplified bass flute). The concert proceeded with two pieces written for flute/bass flute and tape – Mario Davidovsky's *Synchronisms no. 1* (for flute and tape)

and Brian Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne* (for bass flute and tape). The last segment of the concert consisted of two compositions written for flute/bass flute, processors, and tape. The pieces in question are Hadžajlić's *A Thousand Plateaus: Hommage a Deleuze & Guattari* for flute/bass flute and processors that was based on the philosophical notion of rhizome that is, through its six principles, mirrored in the six parts of this piece, and Dino Rešidbegović's *Concerto* for flute, processors, and tape, whose title refers to the specific relationship of the flute and electronics which, in this case, symbolizes the "orchestra."

The performance by Belgrade Baroque Ensemble, the second concert of the evening, stood in sharp opposition to the sound of the previous one. In this concert, the audience entered the particular atmosphere that the baroque instruments provided, in which the performers played contemporary pieces that engage in the exploration of the timbre and possibilities of the old instruments, in order to create a new musical expression and experience. The repertoire of this concert included Moritz Lassmann's *Toccatà*, Dragana S. Jovanović's *Quasi la Nuova Musica Barocca*, Milana Stojadinović Milić's *Čudotvorna kolajna* [The Miraculous Medallion], Ivan Brkljačić's *B-G-B-A Ro(c)k*, Maja Bosnić's *Kavitacija* [Cavitation] and Dragan Latinčić's *Lijane* [Lianas].

The first concert of the third day of the Review was dedicated to pieces that were written for duos and soloists. Thus, we could hear Erkki Jokinen's *Alone*, Svetlana Maksimović's *Jedini glas* [The Only Voice], Poul Rovsing Olsen's *Without a Title*, Vladimir Korać's *Umbra*, Lazar Đorđević's *Quasi Sonata* and Sofia Gubaidulina's *In Croce*. The second concert of the evening was composed of pieces written for larger ensembles of instruments, and the performers were members of Construction Site New Music Ensemble, with Ivan Marković as conductor. The exception among an abundance of instrumental music, not only in its sound, but also in its adept conception and realization, was the second piece of this concert, *Phonation 2 – Memories* for voice and electronics which was performed by its composer, Ana Gnjatović. In this composition, the author very delicately and artfully explores her vocal past through some of the most significant musical pieces, songs and stories from her childhood. Other compositions that were performed were *Hálitos* by Luis Delgado, *Fantasy on a Theme by Charlie Chaplin* by Jonathan Graybill, *Image* by Milan Mihajlović, *Remnants* by Sunyeong Pak, *Mandala* by Jana Andreevska and *Tajimamori* by Demian Rey.

The penultimate day of the festival was very similar in its conception to the third day. The performers in the first concert were members of Construction Site New Music Ensemble. The audience could hear simplicity of expression in Ana Kazimić's *Auroriel*, freedoms and rules of play applied to music in *Homo ludens* by Mira Milosavljević, and Vladimir Tošić's *Multus*, an extremely repetitive and processual piece that contains all the important traits of the compositional style of this composer. Also included in the repertoire were Milana Milošević's *Toomač*, Ivan Božičević's *Ibis* and Jug Marković's *motherTongue*. The second concert was

dedicated to music written for duos and soloists – the audience heard performances of Christopher Cook's *Dreamscape*, Joshua Hey's *Specks*, Svetlana Savić's *Scherzo*, Chatori Shimizu's *Shiki to Unkai V*, Đorđe Marković's *Phonemes*, *Ghost* by Ivan Vukosavljević and *Vocabulary of Loneliness* by Ivan Chiarelli.

The 27th International Review of Composers was concluded with a concert that followed the already mentioned promotion of editions of Ivan Brkljačić's works. This concert gave the audience a rare opportunity to hear a performance by the Balkan Connection Brass Quintet, which is comprised of performers from Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia. Accordingly, on the programme were pieces for this specific combination of instruments, written by renowned Serbian composers – Rajko Maksimović's *Madrigal*, an adaptation of *Pero* for men's choir from his well-known book of madrigals *Iz tmine pojanje* [*Chanting from Darkness*], then Branka Popović's *Rainbow Walk*, which is based on the idea of the distortion of the familiar fanfare sound of brass instruments, and Isidora Žebeljan's *Duh iz tikve* [*The Ghost from the Pumpkin*]. Alongside these compositions, the quintet performed Alan Hankers's *Oasis*, Petar Obradović's *Tango to go* and Ivan Jevtić's *Quintette Victoria*. Overall, the 27th International Review of Composers can be considered a successful one thanks to its repertoire, which was comprised from pieces written by composers of diverse generations and stylistic orientations, allowing the Belgrade audience to hear the latest achievements of Serbian and foreign contemporary music.

Article received: November 5, 2018  
Article accepted: November 15, 2018