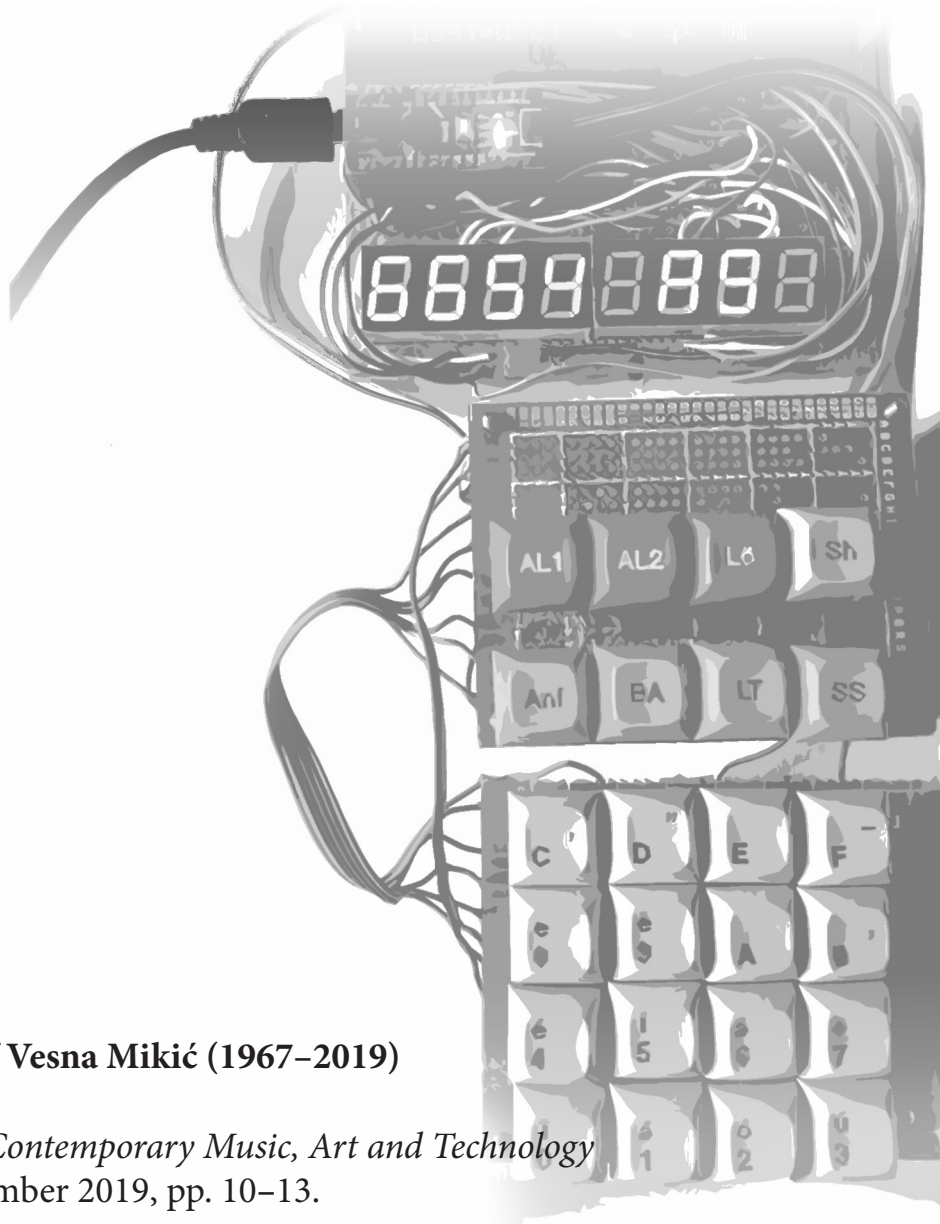


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In Memoriam:

Steps and Traces of Vesna Mikić (1967–2019)

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IN MEMORIAM STEPS AND TRACES OF VESNA MIKIĆ (1967-2019)

Dr. Vesna Mikić, full professor at the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, left us prematurely on October 30th, 2019, after suffering from a serious illness. This news has deeply distressed her closest associates, colleagues, and students, as well as those who had the opportunity of at least once coming into contact with her fascinating personality. Due to her extraordinary positive energy, briskness and agility, refined intelligence, altruistic nature, and nobility, Vesna left unforgettable and indelible traces in our lives.



In her nearly three-decades-long professional career, Vesna actively, and with great dedication, traced and directed the development of her field of pedagogy and scientific musicological research, making an immeasurable contribution. As a teacher, she set and maintained high professional standards, demonstrating exceptional knowledge and capacity for critical thinking, breadth of understanding, extraordinary erudition and eloquence, boundless creativity and imagination, and, most importantly, a strong commitment to students who find in her a true interlocutor, role model, and inspiration.

The courses she taught, dedicated to the general and national contemporary history of music, were intelligently created, detailed, and complex. Her aim was to interpret and present music as a layered phenomenon associated with different non-musical spheres (history, aesthetics, philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, cultural studies). Besides this, Vesna has shown great courage in opening up new, often marginalized topics for problematization in local academic circles, and creating new curriculums, at all levels of study, including: “Theory of Popular Art and Culture”, “Arts and Politics” (Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Arts in Belgrade), “Electroacoustic Music”, “Popular Music: Theories”, “Popular Music: Genres”, “History of Popular Music”, “Music and Politics”, “History and Theory of Film and Television Music”, “Theory and Practice of Musicology in Media”, and “Aspects of 20th and 21st Century Music” (Faculty of Music). Vesna also made exceptional pedagogical contributions, not only at her main faculty and university, but at other institutions as well, in the countries and regions where she was occasionally or continuously engaged (the Faculty of Philology and Arts, FILUM; the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad; the Academy of Arts in Priština; the Music Academy in Cetinje; the Academy of Arts of the University of Banja Luka; and the Academy of Arts “Slobomir” of the University of Bijeljina). Her pedagogical qualities were recognized and highly valued abroad. As a guest lecturer, she gave lectures at the Paris Conservatory (Conservatoire Supérieure de Musique et de la Danse de Paris), the Institute of Musicology at Humboldt University in Berlin, and the Faculty of Philosophy (Department of Musicology) in Ljubljana.

Vesna Mikić’s scientific work was extremely rich, diverse, layered, and characterized by a tendency to innovate and discover new topics and fields of research, often questioning and re-examining the boundaries of musicology. Interested in contemporary music, Vesna laid the groundwork for three important thematic fields in the context of global and local musicology: first, the interpretation of neoclassicism in the context of European and Serbian music (which she considered in her crucial book, *Lica srpske muzike: neoklasicizam/Faces of Serbian Music: Neoclassicism*, 2009); second, the still progressive and current problematization and systematization of the relationship between music and new technologies/media (this problem is addressed in her doctoral dissertation and the book *Muzika u tehnokulturi/Music in Technoculture*, 2004), in the context of technoculture (she introduced this term into our musicology, and gave a new interpretation of the

term “technomusic”); and third, the interpretation of the concept of popular music in an international and national context, as well as the institutionalization of this practice, which Vesna boldly initiated in the field of Serbian musicology. A result of her special interest in this field was the establishment of the Center for Popular Music Research (founded in 2013), dedicated to the scientific research of different local popular music practices, and the realization of a monograph called *Faces of Serbian Music: Popular Music*, which, unfortunately, was not finished.

Vesna Mikić has dealt with these topics in various ways, from different angles, in an impressive number of papers—close to one hundred—published in respected domestic and foreign publications. Her bibliography comprises thematic collections of papers and collective monographs (two of them are *European Theories in Former Yugoslavia: Trans-theory Relations between Global and Local Discourses*, 2015 and *Musical Identities and European Perspectives: an Interdisciplinary Approach*, 2017), conference proceedings from national and international musicological conferences (for example, *Crossroads: Greece as an Intercultural Pole of Musical Thought and Creativity*, 2013 and *Music: Function and Value*), leading professional journals (*New Sound International Journal of Music*, *Зборник Матице српске за сценске уметности и музику*, *Музикологија/Musicology*, *Мокрањац*, *Music and Society in Eastern Europe*), and encyclopedias (*Grove Music Online*, *EPOW: Encyclopedia of the Popular Music of the World*, Vol. 11). She was also active as a translator from English and French, and among her translations are three important books for our musicological community: *The Concise Oxford History of Music II and III* by Gerald Abraham and *Popular Music Genres: An Introduction* by Stuart Borthwick and Ron Moy (in collaboration with Aleksandra Čabraja). As well as this, Vesna Mikić was appointed to numerous editorial positions in her career, among which is her long-standing role as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *New Sound International Journal of Music*. With her scientific results, classified in the highest research category according to official standards, she has directly influenced the sustainability, visibility, and success of Serbian musicology.

Vesna participated in all of the scientific projects of the Department of Musicology, Faculty of Music in Belgrade, including “Identities of Serbian Music in a World Cultural Context” (sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia) and Jean Monnet modules “Musical identities and European Perspective: An Interdisciplinary Approach” (within the ERASMUS + EU program). Also, she was involved in several international projects, such as “International Relations in the Context of Yugoslav Music Institutions: Case of Serbia and Slovenia (2008–2009)” and “Eurovision Song Contest and New Europe” (2009, 2011). As the founder and director of the Center for Popular Music Research, she initiated several projects with the aim of encouraging and motivating younger colleagues to research and create together. She constantly promoted the idea of teamwork at the Department of Musicology, especially when she was the Head of Department from 2016 to 2019. Her exceptional work was,

unfortunately posthumously, awarded the prestigious prize—The Great Plaque of the University of Arts in Belgrade.

With her exceptional pedagogical and scientific results, high level of professionalism and collegiality, extraordinary energy and creative enthusiasm, and dedicated and selfless engagement in various spheres of activities, Dr. Vesna Mikić made a tremendous contribution. Although she has left a grand pedagogical and scientific heritage, her early departure has left an irreplaceable emptiness in our community, and beyond. The emptiness, also, would be in our hearts, were it not filled with the most beautiful memories of her. For all her *steps* and *traces*, we owe her our sincere gratitude.