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JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC. ART AND TECHNOLOGY



**Book Review: *Shaping the present through the future – Musicology, Ethnomusicology, and Contemporaneity*. Edited by Bojana Radovanović, Miloš Bralović, Maja Radivojević, Danka Lajić Mihajlović and Ivana Medić**

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*INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*

No. 7, Vol. II, December 2021, pp. 82–86.



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## **SHAPING THE PRESENT THROUGH THE FUTURE: MUSICOLOGY, ETHNOMUSICOLOGY, AND CONTEMPORANEITY**

**Edited by Bojana Radovanović, Miloš Bralović, Maja Radivojević, Danka Lajić Mihajlović and Ivana Medić**

**Belgrade: Institute of Musicology,  
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2020.  
ISBN 978-86-80639-56-7**

The collection of papers *Shaping the present through the future – Musicology, Ethnomusicology and Contemporaneity*, published by the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) in 2021 and edited by Bojana Radovanović, Miloš Bralović, Maja Radivojević, Danka Lajić Mihajlović and Ivana Medić, is a result of the third conference in the *Young Musicology* franchise, held in Belgrade between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020. As Radovanović, Bralović and Radivojević write in the editor's introduction note, the main goal of both publication and conference was to question the place of musicology and ethnomusicology in a contemporary context, viewed from the lens of the younger generation of researchers who strived to enlighten the issues of pressing research questions, appropriate methodologies, the impact of new technologies and media on the research process, as well as the place of these disciplines within the broader context of humanities and science.

This collection, which consists of 14 selected papers divided into three sections, encompasses a wide range of topics such as challenges in musical performance and fieldwork research, the question of musical folklorism and contemporary ethnomusicology, relations between musicology and media, film studies, metal music studies, feminism and postfeminism, current challenges in the realm of education, computational musicology, music analysis, and many other intriguing subjects.

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The opening chapter, entitled *Musicology and Ethnomusicology Today: Perspectives of Illustrious Scholars*, includes two papers based on topics presented by plenary lecturers. In his article “Musicology’s Crises of Identity”, David Beard questions how musicology evolved over the last five years, placing it in the context of a society facing neoliberalism, globalization, racial and social inequalities, exclusions, and prejudices. Starting from the perspective of the Anglosphere and the identity crisis caused mainly by increasing external pressures on the discipline and the humanities in general, the author focuses on three new responses: applied, colonial, and ideological musicology. In the end, he looks back on his own experiences and thinks about how young musicologists could turn to the future.

Within the paper “Challenges of Ethnomusicological and Ethnochoreological Research within the Ever-Changing World: A View of a Scholar from Serbia”, Selena Rakočević considers fundamental issues of ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological research influenced by diverse multidimensional challenges of contemporaneity such as disciplinary boundaries, reshaping scholarly identities, and adapting to new technological capabilities, including some reflections on all segments of life during Covid-19 pandemic time. Starting from a brief historical overview of the disciplinary development, especially post-socialist realities after 2000, Rakočević considers how various local and global socio-cultural processes direct scholarly research. The primary methodological approach strives for a “polyvocalism”, including the views and opinions of colleagues from Serbia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

The second section, dubbed *Musicology and Ethnomusicology Today: Questions concerning literature and methodology*, is opened with Richard Louis Gillies' article "Teaching Between the Lines: Approaches to Interdisciplinarity and Intertextuality in the UK Higher Education System". Noticing that musicology has been enriched in the last four decades by various sociological, historical, and anthropological approaches to music, the author strives to open the dialogue with other scholars on teaching musicology and offers a panoramic view of the historical-cultural context in which music, literature, and visual art are understood as being in a state of aesthetic connection rather than being treated as mutually exclusive.

In her article "Connections Between Feminist Musicology, Liberalism and Postfeminism", Adriana Sabo considers specific aspects of feminist musicology, examining elements of postfeminism and liberalism within the writings created in the Anglo-American context. Following some of the examples from the literature, which affirm liberal concepts of individualism, freedom of expression and female empowerment, as well as the postfeminist idea of femininity as a physical property, the article focuses on how feminism is envisioned within feminist musicology and what the limits of such thinking are.

Bojana Radovanović in "Debunking 'Potentially Monolithic Perceptions of Musicology': The Role of Musicology in Metal Music Studies" analyzes the relationship between one traditional discipline such as musicology, and the metal music studies, as a relatively new academic paradigm. After a brief overview of the pioneering steps in metal music research, the author emphasizes the foundation of the International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS) in 2013 as crucial in the institutionalization of metal music studies and its affirmation as a new scientific autonomous discourse. Recognizing musicology as a discipline with a vital role in this field, this paper seeks to examine the musicological contribution to the study of metal music and encompasses contemporary methodologies and interdisciplinary connections established in the research process.

Marija Maglov's paper "Radio Art in Musicology: Challenges and Possible Methodologies" brings new perspectives in research of this phenomenon. Shifting the focus from the work of radio art as a center of attention to the view where it's just one factor in a network comprised of different actors, the author (re)defines radio art and comments on the beneficial and challenging aspects of the chosen theoretical approach and methodology applied to radio art.

The article "Ethnomusicology Echoing Sound: Researching the Timbre Component of Musical Articulation in the Case Study of the Serbian Singing from Pešter" by Ana Petrović is based on research of specific articulation qualities of the sound made in traditional singing, where she uses the spectrogram analysis method (Sonic Visualizer software) to elaborate timbre, like one of the most prominent, multidimensional parameters of sound. Involving new interdisciplinary approaches in the articulation of the different sound attributes in the manner of performance which, at first, seemed to be "unanalyzable", the author strives to prove that it is possible to objectivize them and emphasizes the importance of the "raw sound" in the ethnomusicological discourse as an originating point for further theorizing.

In his paper “Application of an Action Research Model in Ethnomusicology”, Borisav Miljković discusses the possibility of applying action research models in contemporary ethnomusicology practice and within the repeated fieldwork method. Describing his experience using the mentioned methodological model in the Golija region, the author asserts that this research method contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of emic knowledge through interpretative narratives of individual experiences.

The second chapter is concluded with the article “Qualitative Exploration of a Contemporary String Quartet Phenomenon: a Methodological Minefield” by Jennifer Ansari, who explores the position of real-time interactive technology within Linson and Clarke’s ‘distributed creativity’ interface about string quartet performance, as an interface between the skills of performers, the ability of their bodies and instruments, as well as culturally conditioned performance practice and musical materials. Ansari proposes new methodological approaches that include the integration of existing music methodologies with an interdisciplinary theoretical approach.

The last section, entitled *Musicology and Ethnomusicology Today: Case Studies and Fieldwork*, is opened by Miloš Bralović’s paper “From Emulation to a Great Masterpiece. Case Studies: Serbian Composers of the 1950s”. Through the analysis of two orchestral pieces from Serbian music history, *Suita giocosa* (1956) by Milan Ristić (1908–1982) and *Passacaglia for orchestra* (1957) by Ljubica Marić (1909–2003), the author examines the similarities between their compositional techniques with those of the great European masters, recognizing these “reflections” as a way of developing individual expression rather than “imitating” particular compositional style.

In her paper “Creating the Repertoire of the Opera of the National Theatre in Belgrade (1970–1990)”, Vanja Spasić analyzes the repertoire as a “frozen picture” of the certain period created by the regime of self-management. Applying an interdisciplinary approach and establishing interconnections between musicology, sociology of music and cultural politics, the author identifies factors that modify and produce a repertoire, such as specific repertoire politics of its organizers and implementers, as well as a financial possibility, participators, public, critics, and finally, an overall social context.

Through the article entitled “(Not) Just Blips and Blops – Music for Early Home Computers (1974–1979)”, Milan Milojković gives an overview of computer music history, questioning how early home computers were used to produce musical sounds during the second half of the 1970s. The research results of this “forgotten” field prove that music was one of the most popular applications for these early machines, where musical knowledge was used as a tool for achieving the most demanding computing tasks. This paper is a “reflection” of Milojković’s aspiration towards constructing a historical narrative about the relationship between music and personal computer development, observing this connection as an unavoidable aspect in almost every field of contemporary musical practice.

The starting point of Ana Đorđević’s research, presented in “Artless Singing in Post-Yugoslav War Cinema”, is film music as an element with significant

dramatic, narrative, and structural functions. In this paper, the author examines how the variety of war-connected themes, presented in the films, are reflected in their soundtracks, showing the necessity of an interdisciplinary network for better understanding both, the intention behind the music expressed by film characters and the situation the characters are in.

As a closing topic of this publication is presented the article “An Audiovisual Ethnography of Timbila in Mozambique: Collaboration, Reciprocity and Preservation” by Gianira Ferrara. She writes about timbila through musical characteristics, mapping the historical, social, and political circumstances of its transformation. Sharing her own experiences, acquired during fieldwork in Zavala, the author describes the audiovisual methodology, used for gathering and studying information about timbila and as a path to preserve the performance actively and establish deep collaboration in the field.

After this “(ethno)musicological journey”, it is possible to recognize a complementarity of ideas presented through this publication. Defining the specific issues and analyzing the impact of new technologies and media on the research process, the authors question appropriate methodologies, the sustainability of previously established musicological and ethnomusicological approaches, and the possibility of creating new ones. Although they start from different research points, the necessity for interdisciplinarity, as a crucial approach in a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of contemporaneity, could be emphasized as a general conclusion.

Article received: December 1, 2021  
Article accepted: December 5, 2021