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Eclectic-pluralist Methodology and the Local, “Small” History of Twentieth-century Music

Eklektinė-pliuralistinė metodologija

ir lokali „mažoji“ XX a. muzikos istorija

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Abstract

The methodology of historicizing the small, local history of twentieth-century music requires specific solutions adapted both to the research subject and the existing tradition of historiography. Basic premises stem from a close examination of the key terms that make up the title *The History of Music on the Slovenian Ground IV*. Reflections presented here were reached during the process of writing a new history of Slovenian twentieth-century music, which is conceived as a “history of works” with constant jumps into taking stock of contemporaneous contextual characteristics. The smallness of national history is what prevents methodological “purity.”

Keywords: Slovenian music, twentieth-century music, musicology, music history, *Werkgeschichte*.

Anotacija

XX a. lokalios muzikos istorizavimo metodologijai reikalingi konkretūs sprendimai, pritaikyti tiek tiriamajam objektui, tiek esamoms istoriografijos tradicijoms. Pagrindinės prielaidos kilo po atidaus žvilgsnio į terminus, sudarančius pavadinimą „Muzikos istorija Slovėnijos žemėje IV“. Straipsnyje pateikiamos refleksijos kilo rašant naują XX a. slovėnų muzikos istoriją, suvokiamą kaip „kūrinių istorija“, kartu darant nuolatinius ekskursus į to meto kontekstus ir vertinant jų būdinguosius bruožus. Siekti metodologinio „grynumo“ trukdė mažas nacionalinės istorijos mastas.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: Slovėnijos muzika, XX a. muzika, muzikologija, muzikos istorija, muzikos kūrinio istorija (*Werkgeschichte*).

Introduction

Present observations are the result of the necessary self-reflection which has accompanied the creation of the new *History of Music on the Slovenian Ground*, namely its fourth volume, which is dedicated to twentieth-century music. These reflections began even before the writing started, and they accompanied the process of gathering materials and writing out the history, while a portion of them can also be understood as a reflection on the work done. They could be of particular interest to those who are at the beginning of the twenty-first century themselves, tackling the writing of partial, national, or locally delimited music histories, as numerous problems beyond the basic considerations on the role of historicization in contemporary musicology reveal themselves only once the basic research subject has been determined, given the latter does not consist only of works of art with surplus aesthetic value or subversively innovative compositional solutions.

The History of Music on the Slovenian Ground IV: Music on the Slovenian Ground Between 1918 and 2018 is at the moment, beside the first part, *The History of Music on the Slovenian Ground I: The History of Music on the*

Slovenian Ground till the End of the 16th Century, the second monograph that has been completed, and we cannot ignore that these two works are distinctly different in their methodology. What indubitably matters most when deciding on the use of a particular methodology considering the specific characteristics of the investigated subject? We can hardly ignore the fact that twentieth-century music is, in its basic aesthetic, sociological-contextual, and perhaps even ontological parameters, at least in Slovenia, quite different from the music of the nineteenth century, while remoteness is even more evident in relation to the music before the eighteenth century. The methodology was chosen to match the research subject; the basic methodological lens determined the manner in which materials were collected, arranged, interpreted, and recorded. The connection to the Slovenian tradition of music historiography, especially that linked to twentieth-century music, which is richer than that concerned with former periods, at least as regards synthetic overviews or their attempts, seemed especially important to consider. Thus, a new writing of the history of twentieth-century music can be understood as a dialogue with other attempts of this kind, one that has established a critical,

affirmative, and complementary relationship, that is, a kind of upgrade of the level of knowledge on Slovenian music of the last century.

The present state of the research

Some attention has already been dedicated to Slovenian music of the twentieth century in the form of monographs with shifting research perspectives, emphases, and findings.¹ The first seeds of a historical study on Slovenian music can already be found in Cvetko's pioneering monograph *The History of Musical Art on the Slovenian Ground*, on the basis of which the work *Slovenian Music in European Space* was created three decades later, which already included some reflections on Slovenian music after the first and second world wars, by Dragotin Cvetko (1911–1993). Cvetko's analysis is value neutral and focuses on the succession of generations of composers, without being particularly interested in the characteristic stylistic or compositional traits of a particular generation or even a particular composer. Ten years later, the monograph *New Music in Slovenia* appeared, by Niall O'Loughlin, an English musicologist who took an intense interest in contemporary Slovenian music after completing his PhD thesis. O'Loughlin chose completely different methodological procedures than Cvetko—at the center of his reflections are analyses of individual works, based mostly on discussing motifs and themes (traditional works) or descriptions of the flow of sonic events (sonic compositions), yet the author seldom synthesizes his research conclusions into higher-level insights into the underlying connections, and avoids the structuralist construction of a stylistic or compositional-technical grid into which he could integrate individual groups of composers, schools, or personalities. The third monographic publication, focused only on twentieth-century music, was written by Darja Koter. Methodologically, her monograph *Slovenian Music 1918–1991* represents a continuation of Cvetko's tradition, as it is an attempt to outline a broader historical fresco: her research includes the development of musical institutions, an examination of general historical conditions, and biographies of seminal performing artists and composers but seems to be somewhat less interested in analytical, stylistic, and compositional-technical questions, namely musical compositions. Her extensive and exhaustive work can thus serve as an important source for placing composers' work into the context of the broader twentieth-century musical culture, while it is less useful for identifying essential characteristics of individual composers' opuses. Despite being short and sketch-like, Leon Stefanija's *A Brief History of Slovenian Music after 1918*, published online, adopts wholly

different, distinctly more contemporary methodological bases of research, as he tries to capture, in a holistic manner, "the interweavings of the histories of institutions, ideas, musical creativity, performances and, as far as studies allow, also reception" (Stefanija 2019).

His research has turned away from sheer historical descriptiveness, biography, and a history of compositions or genres, and perceives music/musics in terms of its/their intense relationship with broader cultural and social implications.

A comprehensive historical overview of twentieth-century Slovenian music can be also found in some works that are methodologically conceived more loosely and do not bring in a fully fledged research apparatus but nonetheless do open up a deeper insight into the process of creating compositions.² These historical overviews have been significantly complemented by the monograph *Slovenian Musical Works* by Andrej Rijavec, which focuses on representations of the selected works of twentieth-century Slovenian composers, presenting their comments on the first performances of their works and already analytically outlining the compositions' essential traits. Some information, although with little historical weight, can be gleaned from the overview *A Hundred Slovenian Composers* by Franc Križnar and the promotional booklet of the Slovenian Composers' Association *Composers' Traces after the Year 1900*, which offers short visiting cards from composers and their thoughts on their poetics; an outline of the stylistic sequence is delineated in the afterword of the translation of Roger Sutherland's *New Musical Perspectives*; and Andrej Rijavec's promotional brochure *Twentieth Century Slovene Composers* offers some information about leading composers and their works.

There are few holistic studies; those that prevail are partial, focusing only on shorter, isolated periods, a particular musical style, or a composer's opus, the development of a genre, or the operations of a particular music institution.³ Well covered is the institutional work of the Slovenian Philharmonic, its "predecessors," "side branches," and "substitutes" (the Ljubljana Philharmonic, the Orchestral Society; Klemenčič 1988, Kuret 2001, 2008, Šramel 2010, Neuberger 1940) and *Glasbena matica* (Cigoj Krstulović 2003), which dictated the fundamental "ideological" tone of Slovenian musical culture at least up to the mid-1930s, but what is missing is more detailed research on the operations of the Ljubljana Opera and radio (especially its orchestra) and institutions outside of Ljubljana. A partial overview is also given through monographs about the life and work of particular composers; a significant part in this regard was played above all by special themed issues of

the *Musical-Pedagogical Annual*, dedicated to particular composers. A relatively in-depth insight was presented into only 25 twentieth-century composers, only four of whom left a strong mark on the music of the second half of the twentieth century, which definitely reflects the problem of a lack of historical distance.

As evident from the above short cross-section, the overviews of Slovenian music in the twentieth century—either holistic or partial—are very methodologically diverse, but they all primarily center on biographical data and work carried out by musical institutions and intertwine moments of creation and performance while not being particularly interested in analyses of individual pieces. If we use the somewhat pejorative terms employed by Vlado Kotnik in reference to musicological efforts concerning the history of Slovenian opera, we can talk about the predominance of “musical-historical descriptionism and stock-taking” (Kotnik 2005: 223), which should nonetheless not be interpreted as a kind of whim on the part of Slovenian musicology or even methodological backwardness, but simply a reflection of the need for basic research—a large portion of materials still needed to be gathered, put in order, and labelled with the help of the most rudimentary historical tools. In other words, Slovenian musicology has been carrying out mostly primary, “archaeological” work of excavating historical sources and documents and organizing them while neglecting their interpretation and examination from various scientific perspectives.

Methodological concept tied to the core issues

An analysis of the current state of knowledge on Slovenian twentieth-century music, especially in the light of the methodological foundations that have been used so far, determined the choice of the methodological model of this new history. In addition, our approach was guided by considering the core issues suggested by the title—we refer to the seemingly simple terms “history,” “music,” “Slovenian/on the Slovenian ground,” and “twentieth century.”

Looking into the syntagma “twentieth century” brings up the question of historical borders and dividing lines—the possibility of relying on visible historical changes, general historical turning points, which also affected the shifts in musical culture, on the one hand, and of blindly trusting the wholly arbitrary delineation of time frames as far as the content is considered and defining the boundaries of the twentieth century with the years 1900 and 1999, on the other. My choice is linked to both historical shifts as well as arbitrary demarcation. The year

that marks the beginning is thus tied to the concept of “the long nineteenth century” as identified in the work of Eric Hobsbawm, namely his famous historical “trilogy” (Hobsbawm 1962, 1975, 1987), and which equates the ending of the period with the beginning of World War I. Personally, I have chosen as the starting point the end of World War I (1918), which bears special significance for Slovenians: this year did not only mark the end of World War I, but it was also the year when the Slovenian national territory separated from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the state and cultural coat which had long determined the outlines of domestic culture and life, and joined the new South Slavic federation, first for a month in the form of the State of Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs, and then, from 1 December 1918, in the form of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians, which at least partly satisfied the desire for Slovenian national state independence and liberation from the German cultural yoke—a desire which had been growing from the middle of the nineteenth century. Such new foundations provided a fertile ground for a new beginning: for letting go of the old practices and ideologies and for establishing new orders, relationships, and practices. My demarcation of the end of the period was more arbitrary, however—the last works that I have included were created in 2018, which on the one hand fits the year I finished my research, while on the other the book thus covers exactly a century of music in Slovenia. The choice of the starting point is thus solid and historical, while the ending point is “open,” arbitrary.

The question of geographical, local, or national delimitation raises more problems. Today it seems:

[In the light of] cultural studies and their systematic deconstruction of supposed coherent concepts like nation, race, gender etc., that a certain tendency can be noted within general and music historiography to overcome national and nationalist mappings. (Boisits 2013: 187)

On the other hand:

[...] in today’s global poststructuralist and postcolonial discussion, the question of the national has overnight acquired greater significance, translated into the regional, the supra- and transnational, especially the extra-European, non-Western, i.e. other and different, foreign, special, as a side branch of the so called microhistory, as small, marginal and luminal. (Sedak 2000: 137)

All these dilemmas were already indicated at the end of the 1950s in Cvetko’s pioneering history, namely with the phrase “on the Slovenian ground,” which means that the national designation “Slovenian music” was replaced with

a more neutral one, the geographical "on the Slovenian ground," which, however, still opens up many dilemmas. The first dilemma naturally concerns the question of which areas can be understood as Slovenia in the long historical period covered by Cvetko. From the time Slavs occupied the present region of the northern Balkans in the sixth century to the end of World War I—could this region be understood as Slovenia, which with some exceptions, formed as a fully independent state only at the end of the twentieth century? But what seems even more symptomatic than these questions, in relation to Cvetko's interpretation of this expression, is that the latter serves him mostly as nothing more than a neutral, hazy wall behind which, in fact, hides the history of "Slovenian music." This issue shows most clearly in his treatment of musical immigration and emigration. According to the concept of "music on the Slovenian ground," Cvetko includes in his discussion all those composers who were active within the Slovenian territory, though they were not necessarily of Slovenian nationality—some of the names that certainly stand out are Wolfgang Striccius (before 1570–after 1611); Gabriello Puliti (1575/1580–1642/1643); Isaac Posch (?1591–?1623); Franz Benedikt Dussek (1765–after 1817), the brother of the more famous Jan Ladislav Dussek; and Leopold Ferdinand Schwerdt (1773–1854). In the nineteenth century, numerous Czech musicians can be included, such as Anton Foerster (1837–1926), the uncle of the more famous Josef Bohuslav Foerster. At the same time, Cvetko does not exclude composers of Slovenian origin who spent most of their lives living abroad and who left a mark on the local musical culture. The most typical examples include Jurij Slatkonja (Georg Slatkonja, 1456–1522), the founder and head of the court chapel in Vienna, where Heinrich Isaac and the young Ludwig Senfl (see: Snoj 2001), among others, worked as his apprentices; Jakob Handl Gallus (1550–1591), probably the most renowned "Slovenian" composer in the broader international environment, who, however, spent most of his life on the Czech territory and achieved his greatest success in Prague; Janez Krstnik Dolar (1620–1673), who was, among other things, the head of the Jesuit seminar in Vienna and the music director in the local church Am Hof; and Jurij Mihevc (1805–1882), a pianist and composer who wrote several operettas in Vienna and then moved to France, where he worked as a pianist and a composer of parlor piano music. Cvetko thus does not actually stick to a set methodology and set boundaries—his pool of "music on the Slovenian ground" tends to include both "foreigners" who worked on the Slovenian ground and left a special mark on the local musical life as well as those who worked abroad and had practically no contact with the Slovenian

territory and culture. Such broad inclusivity echoes Cvetko's fundamental desire to demonstrate and prove that it is possible to find all stylistic periods in Slovenian music and draw a single stylistic line of development and that it makes sense to draw parallels between the latter and the history of world music at any given moment in history.

Personally, I understood the geographical delimitation in the sense of the sphere of influence or visibility, and thus I tried to transcend "the categories and implications of national historiography, as, for instance, including or excluding composers according to their ethnicity, or claiming a distinct national character of music" (Boisits 2013: 190).

This is why I also discussed the music by those Slovenian composers who spent a great part of their creative life abroad (e.g. Vinko Globokar, Božidar Kos, and Janko Jezovšek, minority Slovenians in Austria, Italy, and Hungary as well as postwar political emigrants) but nonetheless significantly influenced the Slovenian music scene or were connected to it somehow. For example, the work of composer Vinko Globokar (1934), who lived most of his life abroad and divided his time between Paris, Berlin, and Florence, was markedly influential. His music was presented on several occasions at Festival Slowind and in many ways affected the youngest generation of Slovenian composers, who have in recent years received a lot of attention in the international environment (Vito Žuraj, Nina Šenk, Matej Bonin, and Petra Strahovnik, for example). The same holds for those "foreigners" who made a long-term commitment to Slovenian music and have actively cocreated it, filling its gaps and changing it (New Zealander composer Nevill Hall, American conductor and composer Steven Loy, and Mexican composer and sonic artist Mauricio Valdés San Emeterio). In the future, in the contemporary globalized world, we can expect more of such two-way "crossings," which will be assessed in the light of various national allegiances. Nationality as a cultural paradigm is losing its validity.

Even larger questions are revealed by the truly too broad term "music," as it is almost impossible to overlook the existence of a multitude of musics as regards the differences in function, material, and structure. Should history deal with only one of these, or is its duty to commit itself to the broadest kind of inclusivity? In this respect, models from abroad cannot be of much help either, as the Oxford and Cambridge histories considerably differ on this point—Richard Taruskin (2010) includes only what could be understood as "artistic" or "classical" music, while the Cambridge history (2004) attempts to cover a whole gamut of genres, in a series of different partial articles. What often comes up when deciding on such a narrowing

or expansion in connection to twentieth-century music is the question of the *autonomy* of music in the twentieth century. Leon Stefanija thus emphasizes as one of the crucial shifts in the Slovenian music of the twentieth century the “transition from the musical habits of the reading society movement to becoming conscious of music as a beautiful and not only useful cultural practice which is based on professional grounds” (Stefanija 2019), thus the autonomization of music. Of course, musical autonomy is in truth characterized by two things (Massow 1993): on the one hand, this is a concept from music aesthetics which signifies the self-sufficiency of a musical work of art, that is, its distinction from ideas or program external to music, while this is also, on the other hand, a musical-sociological category according to which music seems independent from the norms and social functions of compositions. It makes sense to claim that both views are applicable to the twentieth century—music in the twentieth century lives, or at least dares to imagine it does, an independent existence beyond esoteric program and hermeneutic explorations. What moves to the center is the quality of sound which has replaced music semantics, associated with the well-established topoi, while music has also withdrawn from its bonds of social functions, convinced that it is an autonomous aesthetic subject that can live its own life independent from other environmental conditions. Such an autonomist position indubitably reaches its peak with Modernism after World War II, which Susan McClary associates with the ultimate level of elitism, since it was Modernist music, more than any other, that:

[...] sought to secure prestige precisely by claiming to renounce all possible social functions and values. (McClary 1989: 60)

It seems that the autonomy of music in the twentieth century can still be seen as part of a changeable fluctuation—just as at the start of the century we could still recognize remnants of functional ties, characteristic of past periods, so in recent decades the idea of complete autonomy is being ever more quickly extinguished at the hands of the all-pervasive predominance of the neoliberalist capitalist, namely marketing logic, which increasingly permeates all aspects of social and cultural life. It was precisely this kind of arc that I tried to establish in the new history, which mostly deals only with the autonomously conceived music, but which widens this perspective in relation to church music (in the first half of the century, the latter tried to shake off its functional fetters to start to live as an independent aesthetic object) and electronic dance music, which is occasionally difficult to distinguish from the autonomist, artistic endeavors of composers of electroacoustic music, where this time

around, the link is not rootedness in the ritual function, but the adjustment to technological progress.

The very question of autonomy also relates to the decision that the new history should cover only the broadly conceived genre of artistic music, which stresses its autonomy, while the treatment of other musics has been left out; the question of historicizing popular music seems to stand out as the most problematic in connection to this. A present-day musicologist is clearly aware of the fact that, as far as this question goes, they cannot resort to solely aesthetic considerations and linking these to value judgments, which finally turn out to be highly marked by ideology, which is why other “excuses” or methodological turns seem to be more practical. Despite the explicitly broad, democratic view of the existence of very different musics that are equal and thus also historically relevant, Taruskin still includes in his extensive overview of the history of Western music only that portion of musical culture which is, somewhat clumsily but persistently, in everyday communication referred to as “classical” music. The reason behind this is supposed to center on written music. This argument definitely holds when considering older historical periods, in which the whole of musical life is practically impossible to reconstruct in all of its traits and in which the notable historical role was played by the musical practice with the tradition of musical notation; the methodological approach of the first part of the *History of Music on the Slovenian Ground* reflects this line of reasoning. However, an argument of this kind was in the twentieth century increasingly losing substance given the fact that there was a mass of music which has not been written down but is still accessible to a historian in the form of recordings (beside a sound recording, a video also often exists), which means that this music can be analyzed from positions that are wholly immanent to music. The reason for focusing on the history of works belonging to artistic, quasi-autonomous music has to be sought elsewhere and reveals itself most clearly on the methodological level. Research on popular music should probably proceed in the manner that is diametrically opposed to the type of methodology that marks the new history—as far as popular music is concerned, it would make sense to first check the social situations, states, and sociological relations and conditions into which we could place musical works and processes in the next step. Such distinctions in methodology should not be understood in the sense of value hierarchization; the important insight reached through writing this new history should be precisely the awareness of the necessity of continuing or upgrading it with a volume, which would, from a changed methodological angle, look into popular Slovenian music of the twentieth century.

Regarding the term "history," I tried to be guided primarily by the principle of new history as a continuation and upgrade of the work that has been done to date, which means that my research focus shifted from collection and editing (nonetheless, music after the year 1945 also demanded such basic research) to interpretation of musical works. The new history can thus best be understood as a history of musical works, as advocated most clearly by Carl Dahlhaus (1928–1989) in his famous work *Grundlagen der Musikgeschichte* from what now seems the already long-ago year of 1983. Of course, this is not limited to a desire to blindly follow a methodological concept which by itself already belongs to history, which has been several times justifiably problematized and using some premises also rejected (Geiger & Janz 2016), but rather derives from a belief that it makes sense, within a particular national history, to avoid "skipping" methodological models. One of the key motives for writing history that is highlighted by Dahlhaus is establishing a relationship towards the past, already written, known, and entrenched histories and, consequently, also towards the canon of musical works (Dahlhaus 1983: 105), which history can illuminate by problematizing and challenging it, as it attempts to uncover the reasons behind its emergence or even as it attempts to establish a new canon. However, when discussing the history of Slovenian music, especially the Slovenian music of the twentieth century, we could hardly talk about an entrenched canon. Instead, the canon exists only in very rudimentary outlines. The general Slovenian public probably is not capable of listing a few seminal Slovenian musical works of the twentieth century, and musicians also tend to have problems when faced with such a task, since twentieth-century works seldom appear in concert programs. In sheer outlines, these works are present only to musicologists, and they are able to recognize them based on existing historical research. The majority of historical treatises are focused on biographies, taking notes on sources, and unveiling the broader musical culture, and only in fragments do they reveal a canon of musical works.

Final decision: history of the musical works and their context

For all these reasons, it seemed to make sense to write the history of Slovenian twentieth-century musical works and thus fill the gap in methodology and content. Nonetheless, when assuming such a methodological approach, we must tread carefully due to the method's disadvantages. Dahlhaus's reflections indubitably present a document of

their times and echo tensions with the Marxist theory of historiography, which centered research on questions of social conditions and influences, that is, distinctly sociological themes that replaced a more immanent analytical and aesthetic investigation of musical works. There was a discernible opposition against the kind of musicology that was promoted by Georg Knepler (1906–2003) in the neighboring East Berlin. Dahlhaus's central dilemma concerned the relationship between history and art (Dahlhaus 1983: 19), the historical and the aesthetic, and thus the seemingly non-immanent (i.e. external to music) and the immanent (the musical work itself); the dilemma can be generalized into the question of whether the musicologist writes the *history* of music or the history of *music*. Richard Taruskin (2010), one of the most determined to proclaim the non-sense of such a binary opposition, believes that a music historian should be interested in both/everything—both the elements constituting conditions of musical culture/life as well as musical works and their reception, or in Jean-Jacques Nattiez's language, the whole "musical fact" (Nattiez 1990). Taruskin thus in his own way embraces a methodological pluralism similar to the one promoted and even more coherently implemented by *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, which is not a work by a single author with a distinctive, "monological" methodological tool, but the result of collaboration between very diverse researchers, who shed light on their problem areas from distinctly varied, sometimes even polarized methodological positions. The key guiding principle of both works, that is, both the Cambridge history and Taruskin's overview, is tackling the swollen historical stiffenings, the deconstruction of the existing, the questioning and identifying the ideological foundations of the older attempts at history, and consequently the construction of a new history from the chips of different, pluralistically juxtaposed methodological and value perspectives, which makes us wonder whether the act of revealing the "old" ideology does not imply a simultaneous pledge to the "new" one. But due to the absence of the canon as well as the lack of a firmly established tradition of music historiography, in the context of Slovenian music, a blind adherence to such a "new" type of historicization would seem to lead to the methodological "skipping," applying methodology to a subject which has not even been read in its entirety. It is for these reasons, too, that deconstructive undertones seem less suitable in connection to the history of Slovenian music.

Due to the awareness of the reciprocal relationship between the musical context and musical works and the wholly evident premise that music can barely be extracted from its social and cultural embeddedness, it seemed reasonable to

expand the basic methodological line, namely focusing on musical works (their analysis and interpretation), in a way that seemed most suitable to each specific case: we brought musical works in touch with different discourses, and these perspectives were eclectically shifting, each time in the direction that would allow methodological “illumination” to most meaningfully reveal the immanent characteristics of a work and its context.⁴ When exploring music created during and after World War II, we cannot ignore the broader social and political implications determining the conditions of creativity. Occasionally, compositions were examined from the point of view of style, while at other times the development of a particular compositional technique seemed more important. The case of church music raises the question of functional autonomy or embeddedness, and electroacoustic music draws attention to dependence on technological changes. In this way we are moving closer to what Taruskin, with a reference to sociologist Howard S. Becker, calls the “art world” or what Laurenz Lütteken calls the “life world,” drawing upon Husserl’s philosophy (Lütteken 2000: 36)—in a life which is seemingly taking place *outside* of art, we try to discover the levers, impulses, influences, and triggers for processes going on *inside* of art, something which can be naturally found at the center of historical reflections.

The new history is thus set up as a succession of musical works, but it is written quite differently than the histories of works of Western European music. If both Dahlhaus in his overview *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* and similarly Hermann Danuser in *Die Musik des 20. Jahrhunderts* focus on those works of art that were outstanding, breakthrough, or distinctly innovative in aesthetic or compositional terms, there are only few works of this kind in the history of Slovenian twentieth-century music, and this is how the questions of value sneak in. The history of musical works on the Slovenian ground does not occur as a closed series of great works or at least pioneering works which break with established traditions. This succession of works does not revolve so much around trying to transfer European insights (most composers of this period were educated in Vienna or Prague) into the domestic context; the latter was greatly limited both on the level of infrastructure and discursivity. Whenever “new” ideas collide with traditional ones, inert solutions are subjected to shifts and adjustments, most often in the form of simplifications. In this respect, dealing with the adoption of the twelve-tone technique seems symptomatic.⁵ In the 1930s, Slovenian composers thus seemed to have equated dodecaphony with a wide-open chromatic stock of tones and the final dissolution of the traditional harmony, linked to functional relations. Such

an interpretation seems to be contextually marked: strongly chromaticized music without a tonal center intervened into the Slovenian musical space of the mid-1930s in a way that recalls the manner in which Schönberg’s consistently carried out dodecaphony entered mid-1920s Vienna, which was permeated with Expressionism and early Modernism. In this way, dodecaphony is no longer a clear term signifying a compositional technique, but to a large degree a typological tag.⁶

There are more of such local reinterpretations of foreign influences which are without a larger, international historical weight. Similar dilemmas come up when facing aesthetically valuable works that show considerable stylistic belatedness, which is true of three exceptional Neoclassicist musical scores created at the beginning of the 1950s. *The Second Suite for Strings* (1950) by Marijan Lipovšek, *Sinfonietta* (1951) by Primož Ramovš, *Sinfonietta* (1951) by Uroš Krek and *Serenade* (1951) by Dane Škerl were created at the time of the greatest postwar modernist breakthroughs—Boulez’s work *Structure Ia* (1951) and Cage’s composition *Music of Changes* (1951). It was precisely due to such aesthetic, historical, or compositional-technical asymmetries that we found it necessary to establish at all times a dialogue between musical works and the context; the value and level of innovativeness were determined according to contextual conditions. This is reflected in the titles of the seven chapters,⁷ which are embedded in historical succession, with the exception of the third chapter; these titles can be to some extent read in the sense of stylistic alternations. However, we should place less attention on stylistic signification itself and more on its (circumstantial) relativization.⁸

The new history of music on the Slovenian ground is thus essentially an eclectic history: on the one hand, it brings together all materials that seem important for establishing a continuous historical discourse, but it is also pluralist in its method on the other, as the basic decision for the history of works is also continuously expanded through addressing different aspects of the accompanying context. Such a combination may appear to be paradoxical but can barely be avoided when discussing a local or national history, given its relative smallness—smallness makes methodological purity impossible, one that was, in the history of twentieth-century music, mostly associated with emphasizing “progress,” that is, with distinctly modernist ideological undertones. Cultures that are hanging on the fringes of “historical” nations also seem to be characterized by clinging to traditional means of expression. This is why the solution suggested by Joakim Tillman, namely that today’s pluralist culture calls for an eclectic approach as the most suitable one, although one “fraught with difficulties and contradictions” (Tillman

2000: 18), turns out to be helpful. In connection to music on the Slovenian ground in the twentieth century, this paradox expresses itself in joining broad methodological pluralism with national/geographical boundaries that clearly show traces of conservatism. The crucial effort was thus dedicated to the constant aligning of both the awareness of the "smallness" of Slovenian history and its embeddedness in the "big" history of European music.

Endnotes

- 1 For a more detailed analysis of the state of research on twentieth-century Slovenian music, see Stefanija 2010.
- 2 This is, above all, true of Klemenčič's overview *Musica Noster Amor: The Art Music of Slovenia from Beginning till Today*, conceived as a commentary on the anthology of Slovenian compositions. Klemenčič employs a well-developed stylistic terminology, which he connects to characterizing musical works in terms of Geistesgeschichte and their expressivity. His findings are barely based on analytical investigations or compositional-technical marks. This is not the case with an overview by composer and academician Lojze Lebič, who made his study *Voices of Times* available to the public in several successive issues of the magazine *Naši zbori*. Lebič conceived his original historical outline as the drawing of parallels between stylistic efforts and Slovenia's historical embeddedness; however, his research lens and methodology are not unified but tend to fit the given period or a composer's opus. Such an approach enables the author to highlight particular stylistic endeavors, but makes it more difficult for him to draw comparisons between achievements that are specific to particular time periods.
- 3 Andrej Rijavec delineated the basic development lines of the genre of string quartet (1973), and the work he started was later continued by Ivan Klemenčič (1988). Slovenian piano music was discussed by Marijan Lipovšek, the symphonic poem by Vesna Venišnik, and the development of musical theater was described by Jože Sivec and Špela Lah. Some texts focus on a particular style or compositional technique, such as Klemenčič's examination of Slovenian musical expressionism (1985, 1988) and of the artistic endeavors that could perhaps be placed into the context of historical avant garde (1998), the new objectivity was discussed by Leon Stefanija (2009), aleatoric techniques by Urška Rihtaršič, and spectral music by Larisa Vrhunc. Reflections on the activities of particular groups of composers or isolated historical periods have the same significance as cross-sections of particular styles. Matjaž Barbo prepared an overview of the work of the composers' group *Pro musica viva*, trying to place it in the historical context of Slovenian music after World War II, while Leon Stefanija took a special interest in Slovenian music of the last two decades of the twentieth century as well as questions concerning relationships between the old and the new; traditional and modernist; and the historical, transhistorical, and historicist, whereby he created a possibility for a distinctive and unique categorization of the compositional creations of the most recent period (2001).

- 4 For example, the interpretation of the opera *Black Masks* (1927) by Marij Kogoj (1892–1956) seems to call for the biographical method (in the symbolist drama by Leonid Andreyev, we come across numerous parallels with the composer's life, and we can barely overlook the question of identity).
- 5 Twelve-tone series were present already in the 1930s in the work of Slavko Osterc (1895–1941) but never as part of the system or characterizing all of the composer's choices. True "dodecaphony" could be, however, anticipated from the title of the composition by Pavle Šivic (1908–1995), *Twelve-Tone Studies in the Form of a Minor Piano Suite* (1937). Obviously, beside the terms "suite" and "twelve-tone" that appear in the title, we must accurately read the term "studies," too—dodecaphonic systematics is not realized coherently in any of the movements. In this regard, the very first movement, "Marsh," already comes as a surprise, considering that no twelve-tone logic can be identified in it; the second movement, "Romantic Fantasy," is based on the twelve-tone melody, which at first functions as passacaglia, but then this non-baroque logic is dropped, too; and, just like in "Marsh," there is no recognizable twelve-tone sequence in the finishing "Scherzo." *Twelve-Tone Studies* are characterized by a consistent use of chromatics more than dodecaphonic systematics.
- 6 However, this understanding of dodecaphony is but the first chapter of the Slovenian use of twelve interdependent tones—after World War II, there were several more attempts at using the twelve-tone logic, which, however, settled for the linear stringing of the twelve-tone sequences (without transpositions, inversions, retrogrades) and which were far removed from the fully-fledged Schönberg type.
- 7 "Prolonging Early Modernism," "New Music," "Catholic Church Music from the Beginning of the 20th Century to the Second Vatican Council," "In the Grip of Politics—War and Postwar Flames," "The Breakthrough of Modernism," "From Modernism to Postmodernism," "Contemporary Pluralism."
- 8 When considering the question of the Slovenian music of early Modernism, we must thus be aware of its prolongation from the period before World War I. "New Music" is characterized by all kinds of, also pluralist, hunger for the new; the title "In the Grip of Politics" draws attention to the intimate intertwinement of social conditions and art, "The Breakthrough of Modernism" points to the dominance and non-exclusiveness of a particular style, "From Modernism to Postmodernism" reminds us of the nature of processual changes and mutual connections, whereas the most recent creativity can only be contemplated from a position of accepting diversity that is decidedly unmarked as regards making value statements.

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikiami apmąstymai, kilę rengiant ir rašant naują slovenų XX a. muzikos istoriją kaip naujos visuotinės Slovėnijos muzikos istorijos dalį. Jei lygintume su kitais laikotarpiais prieš XX a., būta pastangų parašyti ir glaustą XX a. slovenų muzikos raidos istoriją, tačiau dažniausiai dėmesys koncentruotas į svarbiausių muzikos įstaigų evoliuciją arba pateikti vien analitiniai metmenys. Tad atrodo logiška naujojoje istorijoje taikyti labiau holistinį požiūrį. Tinkamos metodologijos paieškose pasirodė prasminga panagrinėti „sąvokas“, slypinčias naujosios knygos pavadinime: „istorija“, „muzika“, „slovenų“ ir „XX amžius“. „XX amžiaus“ laikotarpis apibrėžtas ir istoriškai, ir santykinai: jo pradžia pasirinkti „stabilūs“ 1914-ieji (Pirmojo pasaulinio karo pabaiga; Slovėnijos teritorija tampa serbų, kroatų ir slovenų karalystės dalimi), o 2018-ieji pasirinkti vien tik kaip šimtmetės muzikos istorijos baigiamieji metai. Terminu „muzika“ vadinau „tik“ akademinės muzikos žanrą plačiąja prasme. Sprendimo sutelkti dėmesį į akademinę, kvaziaautonominę muziką priklausantių kūrinių istoriją priežasties reikėtų ieškoti metodologiniame lygmenyje. Populiariosios muzikos tyrimai turėtų būti vykdomi visiškai priešingais metodais nei naujosios istorijos studijos: būtų prasminga pirmiausia tirti socialinius kontekstus, būsenas, sociologinius santykius ir sąlygas ir tik tuomet į šį kontekstą kelti muzikinius kūrinius ir procesus, bet ne atvirkščiai.

Spręsdamas, kaip turėtų būti suprantamas terminas „istorija“, bandžiau vadovautis principu, pripažįstančiu naująją istoriją ankstesnės kūrybos tęsiniu ir modernizavimu; kitaip tariant, mano tyrimai buvo skirti muzikos kūrinų interpretacijai.

Taigi galutinai pasirinkta metodologija labai artima garsiajai Dahlhauso muzikos kūrinų istorijos koncepcijai. Tačiau dėl žinomo šios prieigos ribotumo ir pirmiausia dėl lokaliaus muzikos, susiformavusios Vidurio Europos periferijoje, specifikos, kai pagrindinės muzikos srovės buvo ne vystomos, o dažniausiai imituojamos, dėmesį muzikos

kūriniais papildė nuolatiniai ekskursai į juos supantį kontekstą. Skamba paradoksaliai, tačiau naujoji Slovėnijos žemės muzikos istorija yra iš esmės eklektiška: viena vertus, joje surinkta visa medžiaga, atrodanti svarbi tęstiniam istoriniam diskursui įtvirtinti ir pliuralistinė savo metodologija, antra vertus, pagrindinės išvados dėl kūrinų istorijos nuolat plėtojamos skirtingų juos supančio konteksto aspektų analize. Ši prieiga atrodo tinkamiausia geografiškai „mažesnių“ kultūrų / tautų istorijoms.

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