

Ivana Vuksanović

Muzička analiza I (Music Analysis I)
(compact disc, capacity 126 MB)
Authors: Miloš Zatkalik, Milena Medić, Smiljana Vlajić
Publisher: Klio, Belgrade, 2003

The compact disc *Muzička analiza I (Music Analysis I)* is a pioneering project in the domestic musical-theoretical and pedagogical field. Not only because of the medium it uses but also because of the fact that this is the first textbook in the field of music analysis in which the authors deal in greater detail with elementary or syntactic analysis of the musical form.¹ It is an analysis that is essentially based on examining the basic principles of the formation of the music flow (repetition and change, tension and relaxation, the architectural and evolutionary principle, equivalence and contrast...) and on studying the behaviour of musical components. The authors teach theoretical subjects: Miloš Zatkalik and Milena Medić are both assistant professors at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, while Smiljana Vlajić works at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. This textbook is the result of their practical and theoretical experience in working on the subject Analysis of a Music Work.

In the preface, the authors point out that the idea of this textbook is an attempt to define precisely what each thorough analysis must consider. We should mention that the whole project is founded on the following positions: a) the music flow is a dynamic process, an activity, b) no element of the structure of a work (composition) has independent meaning, but rather acquires meaning by establishing a relationship with other elements of that work and being different from them, c) just as the context of the work is important, so we should also take into consideration the style code or the rules of the compositional system.

Such an approach is a consequence of the premise that the music flow is the result of total activity of the musical components, so that an examination of their specificities is a starting point in the structure of the whole compact disc. The complete material is logically organized into the following chapters: *Muzičke komponente (Musical Components)*, *Muzički planovi (Musical Planes)*, *Koordinacija komponenti i planova (The Coordination of the Components and Planes)*, *Funkcije i tipovi izlaganja (The Functions and Types of Exposition)*, *Ekvivalencija (Equivalence)* and *Simetrija (Symmetry)*. Each of these chapters is further divided into appropriate subchapters.

¹ *Nauka o muzičkim oblicima (The Study of Musical Forms)*, a university textbook by Vlastimir Peričić and Dušan Skovran, is a systematization of formal types, but Berislav Popović's *Muzička forma ili smisao u muzici (Musical Form or Meaning in Music)*, which establishes the bases of syntactical analysis, is not a textbook.

The musical planes (thematic, tonal and structural) are explained as aspects or layers of a work (composition), defined by a set of musical components and their relationship. Which components define certain planes, how the components or planes complement one another and what their functional behaviour in a work is like depends most often on the style of the epoch and the compositional system. All the aforementioned principles, the characteristic and specific behaviours of the components, as well as the relationships between the planes, are illustrated with appropriate examples. The last two chapters, *Ekvivalencija* and *Simetrija*, provide an excellent basis for a non-formalist understanding and interpretation of formal types.²

In addition to its systematic quality and undeniable expertise in the interpretation of form and analysis, the selection and numerousness of the examples are perhaps the most striking features of this electronic textbook. Most of the examples on the compact disc are in audio-visual form (notational transcription and sound), although a certain number of examples is presented only in audio form, thus stimulating the users to listen actively, that is, analytically. Examples cover all the problem areas and they extend from the Renaissance to the music of the post-modern age. Examples from all the instrumental genres of “high” art and some areas of “lower” art (jazz) have been included. The authors have not left out folklore practice either, or church music, thus confirming the applicability of the method or the universality of the analytic strategy they advocate.

The other very useful feature of this project is a glossary of terms used in the analysis. It does not represent a list of fossilized definitions to be learnt off by heart, but rather a guide through the terms used in the literature selected by the authors.

The bibliography is not impressive in terms of number, but it is diverse, various analytic schools are present, the literature is from different language areas and from different fields (psychology, philosophy, aesthetics, linguistics, history and theory of music).

The moot point concerning this electronic textbook is its target group. Namely, who is the disc for? The authors emphasize that the disc is “primarily intended for undergraduates, high-school students, laymen, but some of it can be of use to graduate students as well”. One might say the target group is so large that it practically includes all those interested regardless of their prior knowledge. The concept of “something for everyone” has resulted in an attempt to present the subject matter on two levels (most of the chapters and subchapters include a link to a “higher level”). It was an overly ambitious idea, which when realized showed its shortcomings. “The higher level” in reality amounts to several useful, but insufficiently elaborated observations by the authors, which could have been integrated into the main text.

² The subject of formal types will be examined on the next compact disc.

Regardless of the foregoing comment, this is a compact disc that every musician should have in his or her collection, because an analysis of a music work is the starting point for its understanding and for every form of interpretation.

Translated by Jelena Nikezić