

Ana Kotevska

NADA KOLUNDŽIJA, piano
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
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A live recording of the recital held by Nada Kolundžija in Novi Sad's Synagogue in October 2004 was presented on the second compact disc of a new music publisher in Belgrade, Jovan Kolundžija's Centre for Fine Arts – *Guarnerius*. Apart from being the exhilarating and seductive immediate impress of a special moment that every successful *live* recording is, the latest recording medium of our passionate advocate of contemporary music testifies to her unique, rare and singular poetics of inspiration, which exceeds the confines of common performing praxis and manifests itself in the selection of works, concert dramaturgy and ways of performing.

The different generational and linguistic provenance of authors on the repertoire, from the oldest, internationally known cult names such as Louis Andriessen and Mauricio Kagel to the middle-aged Vuk Kulenović and Miloš Raičković, who have been pursuing their careers in the USA for the last ten years, to the youngest Irena Popović, who is currently attending advanced studies in Salzburg, does not provoke, as might be expected, tension between the selected works created in a span of almost thirty years, nor does it leave the impression of uneven music substance. On the contrary, the simplified piano texture and macro-plan form, with the simultaneous luxuriousness of timbres, touches and micro-dynamic changes, a circular style of music thought and interpretation, an absence of poster innovations, compensated by a discreet yet richly innovated sound that emerges from a different interpretation of recognizable pianistic conventions and praxes ... all these and other elements bring together diverse manuscripts whose sum creates an impression of unity. Preludes, toccatas, etudes, the harpsichord-like and whispering piano, euphemistically concealed, ironically intoned or overstated messages, converge into one another and empty into a composite flow.

The aspiration to a *whole* and *composite* sonic space and milieu is achieved through the dramaturgy of this concert-programme which, as always with Nada Kolundžija, is the result of a harmonized intuitive and intellectual process. It seems that it is accepted as a barely divisible whole, as if it were an equating of the sonic with the aquatic and/or aerial element. The asymmetrical flow of a "great suite" of sorts rests on two bases of great ambit and cumulative energy: the programme opens with Kulenović's *Virdžinal (Virginal)*, a developed ten-minute prelude which in the first layer alone sucks in the sound and technique of the piano's precursor and globally "examines" the organ and dramatic potentials of the instrument, while Kagel's fifteen-minute composition *On the Keys*, also euphemistically subtitled *Etude* for piano, placed near the end of the programme, is seen as a climactic plateau. Amid these works there flow, under the same light, Andriessen's compressed Toccata-*The Picture of Gustav Moreau* and the ironically tame *Muzika (Music)* – that is – another quasi-toccata by Miloš Raičković to

six notes carrying an unconcealed “message” and a manifest “attitude” – *B-A-G-D-A-D*. Like an anti-finale and a warning that this is an open programmatic concept, the end is marked by Irena Popović’s dualistic miniature *Tišina i ništa (Silence and Nothing)* for piano and whisperer, a title that may be lent to Nada Kolundžija’s project in general.

In keeping with Nada Kolundžija’s demiurgically-directional technique, her interpretation is at once familiar and reserved, intimately close to the keyboard and the complete gigantic mechanism of instruments as a totality of music, empathically associated with the substance of performed works and, paradoxically, estranged from their authors in an attempt to convey the notes as rigorously as possible and control all anticipated sounds and silences that belong to them.

It is precisely the antagonism between sonic hedonism and the pushing up of its frontiers, on the one hand, and a desire to give an absolutely accurate rendering of the note text, on the other, between the idealization of music as a secret and the transparent documentary *moment-of-no-return* in which it takes place, that sets off the tense, heated concentration of this seemingly “light” and “no-worries” cheerful programme.

A la Satie! For, in the depths of Nada Kolundžija’s “balancing-act” poetics one can discern Satie’s subversiveness without which none of the works featured in this superb discographic artefact could have been written or performed.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac