

trends in the field of classical music may be heard in these parts as well. The Symphony Orchestra of the Serbian Broadcasting Corporation, the St. George Strings, the Construction Site New Music Ensemble, the conductors Biljana Radovanović and Bojan Sudić and soloists Natalija Mladenović, Jasna Miličić Brandstätter, Ljubiša Jovanović, Srđan Sretenović, Marko Miletić, and the duo comprising Ljiljana Nestorovska and Milena Stanišić performed as confident, skilful, and inspired interpreters, faced with the daunting task of interpreting complex scores that are, unfortunately, seldom heard in our concert halls.

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### **Fourth Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe**

The ICTM Study group on music and dance in Southeastern Europe is a dynamic and rapidly growing group of scholars dedicated to capturing the complexities of music and dance genres in Southeastern Europe. Its fourth biennial symposium was

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organized jointly by the Faculty of Music in Belgrade and the Petnica Science Centre in Petnica, Valjevo from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014. This symposium was dedicated to the sisters, Ljubica and Danica Janković, whose pioneering work in dance research in Serbia laid the foundations for the discipline of ethnochoreology in Serbia and beyond. The guest of honour was professor Olivera Vasić from the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, whose long and productive career in ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology sets an example for sustained quality research in music and dance. As customary at the Study group meetings, the conference offered many additional activities including evening concerts, dance and singing workshops and an excursion to the Pustinja monastery. As usual, the hospitality of the conference organizers and informal get together sessions enhanced by the beautiful Petnica scenery were impeccable and memorable.

The conference themes were organized around three major research topics. The first topic was improvisation (17 out of 54 papers), which addressed, among many other issues, the following questions: spontaneity and competition (Lozanka Peychева, Daniela Ivanova Nyberg); identity: urban/ethnic/gender/religious (Alexander Markovic, Ivanka Vlaeva, Jane Sugarman, Şebnem Sençerman, Ahmed Tohumcu); teaching and learning (Elsie Dunin, Petac Silvestru, Miroslav Stoisavljević, Péter Lévai); community discourses (Nick Green, Ferruh Özdiñer); tradition and change (Athena Katsanevaki, Speranta Radulescu, Aleksandra Kuzman, Merve Eken-Küçükaksoy), and many more. Improvisation proved to be an important and potent topic for music and dance research. The

second topic was professionalization, by far, the most popular (25 out of 54 papers). Within this topic, several important issues were explored: professionalization and economy/commodification (Carol Silverman, Margaret H. Beissinger, Burcu Yıldız, Serkan Şener); professionalization and gender (Hande Devrim Küçükbebe); professionalization of religious/heritage/traditional music (Naila Ceribašić, Ali Keles and Ozgur Dogan, Mehmed Öcal Özbilgin, Goran Angelov); ethnic representation and identity (Sara Revilla Gútiéz, Gonca Girgin Tohumcu, Murat Küçükbebe); professionalization and education/institutionalization (Sanja Ranković, Muzaffer Sümbül, Maja Krasin, Vesna Bajić Stojiljković). Perhaps the biggest surprise in the area of professionalization topics was the presence of papers and panels on professional folk dance ensembles. Ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology, for a long period of time, have been dominated by the paradigm that favoured the traditional, village music of small communities and viewed the high professionalization and ‘staging’ of this music as an ideological distortion of pure traditional/folk expressions – or, as Anthony Shay remarks, they were viewed as ‘slick’ and ‘inauthentic’<sup>1</sup>. As a result of this paradigm, research on professional folk dance ensembles is still lacking in both longevity and rigour. This conference might have pointed to the important shift in this regard - in total, three whole panels were dedicated to professional folk dance and music ensembles, approaching the issue

from various angles including detailed case studies on leading regional ensembles (Joško Čaleta, Iva Niemčić, Velika Stojkova Serafimovska, Ivona Opetcheska Tarchevska) and high insights and conclusions about professionalization during the pre-socialist, socialist and in post-socialist era (Jelena Jovanović, Filip Petkovski, Liz Mellish, Marija Dumnić, Funda Bozkurt, Bülent Kurtişoğlu). Another slightly neglected research topic (also pertinent for a certain tradition of ethnomusicology<sup>2</sup>) is the shortage of research on popular music. Only two papers, dealing with popular music and political resistance (Jana Zorić) and popular music and amateurism (Jelka Vukobratović), were presented. I hope that future conferences will address this imbalance. The third topic was interdisciplinarity/postdisciplinarity in music and dance research (14 out of 56 papers). This topic explored a wide range of important issues: interdisciplinarity in ethnochoreology or ethnochoreology as an interdiscipline (Seleno Rakočević); using psychology and linguistics in music theory (Ana Živčić); points of convergence between dance anthropology and dance studies (Dunja Njaradi); dance and well-being (Maria Hnaraki); theory and methodology in music and dance research (Belma Kurtişoğlu, Ventsislav Dimov) and the theory, practice/praxis and politics of music making, researching, teaching, and understanding (Mira Zakić, Iva Nenić, Ana Hofman). Although the topic of interdisciplinarity was less explored in comparison with others, it raised, to my mind, some very important

<sup>1</sup> Anthony Shay, “Parallel Traditions: State Folk Dance Ensembles and Folk Dance in ‘The Field’”, *Dance Research Journal*, 31(1), 1999, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Wild “Ethnomusicology Down Under: A Distinctive Voice in the Antipode?”, *Ethnomusicology*, 50(2), 2006, 345-352.

questions related both to the field of ethnomusicology/ethnochoreology and to the very dynamics of the conference as such.

To begin with, the constant presence of different methodologies within different academic traditions employed by the participants seems to be a recurring theme. This variety of methodological approaches raises the question of disciplinary boundaries and several papers and panels within this topic explored the conventions, traditions and discourses of both ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology from this perspective. The question of disciplinary boundaries was raised once more as a way of searching for the balance between music and dance scholarship within the ICTM. It seems that the Study group, which is now coming of age, so to speak, has to find a way to re-think the (slightly tense) relationship between music and dance scholarship, especially as the number of papers and panels on dance is growing exponentially.

Another interesting and equally important topic that has been raised by some young colleagues is the very question about the role of ethnomusicology. The issue of our engagement with our informants, colleagues and wider public emerged. Some of the questions raised were: What is our role and responsibility as scholars in an age of austerity? How do we represent our informants within academic work and various policy engagements? How do we find work and engage in interdisciplinary work? All these questions were most meticulously explored in one panel (Zakić, Nenić, Hofman), but they also raised an interesting discussion during the closing session of the conference. It seems that these questions are more likely to generate discussions during informal gatherings and coffee drinking

sessions (i.e., when we talk about ‘private’ things) but most scholars are not prepared to address them theoretically as a part of their professional activities. It seems that the question of power is still quite salient in scholarship presented by the Study group. The similar thing has been observed regarding the lack of comparative research in scholarship presented at the conference. As remarked by a scholar during the closing session it seems that researchers still prefer to develop their research interests within their separate national frameworks, whereas the very phenomena of music and dance in Southeastern Europe defies many of these separations. Again, scholars compare notes and discuss points of convergence during (it seems very productive) free and informal time. There is no doubt that these aspects of research will be developed in the future of this still quite young but already very productive study group. Indeed, the year 2014. was a record breaking one for the symposium organizers in terms of the number of proposals received (many of those from young and upcoming scholars). It seems that, so far the biggest strength of the conference was the productive melange of scholars coming from different countries, different academic traditions and different career pathways. As the beautiful autumn week in Petnica showed, this Study group is already setting the foundations for serious scholarship regarding both music and dance in the future.