

---

---

## NEW WORKS

---

---

Article received on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009

Article accepted on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

UDK 785: 78.071.1 Erić Z.

*Marija Nikolić*<sup>1</sup>

University of Arts in Belgrade

Faculty of Music – Department of Musicology

### WHAT IS HIDDEN BETWEEN THE ACTS?

*Entr'acte, фарса-епизода за оркестар*

[*Entr'acte, farce-episode for orchestra*] by Zoran Erić

**Abstract:** The text discusses the latest work by Zoran Erić, *Entr'acte (Između činova)*, *farce-episode* for symphony orchestra. Starting from perception of the work's morphological aspects – from the structure of the materials and their relationships, to the dramaturgical tissue, to the author's note to the work – we wanted to discover what is really hidden *between the acts*, and whether the composition which, in the author's words, should be 'performed between some more important things surrounding it', can and may outshine 'the main event'.

**Key words:** *Between the Acts*, Zoran Erić, theatre, ostinato layer, sound vignettes, fragmentary structure, neutrality, *between*, farce-episode.

---

*The latest work by Zoran Erić, Entr'acte (Između činova), farsa-epizoda [Entr'acte (Between the Acts), a farce-episode] for symphony orchestra, composed on a commission by the 40<sup>th</sup> BEMUS, had its premiere performance at the festival's opening ceremony, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 in the Sava Centre. The composition was performed by the Belgrade Philharmonics conducted by Bojan Sudić.*

Looking at the title of the work, I first thought that the theatrical spirit definitely 'moved into' Erić's music and that this must be yet another composition in his more recent opus which directly stems from one or more musical compo-

---

<sup>1</sup> Author contact information: mrjnikolic@gmail.com.

sitions he has written for the theatre.<sup>2</sup> Then other associations started to follow one another – Virginia Woolf? Eric Satie? *La serva padrona*? etc.<sup>3</sup> After becoming acquainted with the score and the composer's note on the work, I realized I was only partly right. Yes, there certainly is a trace of the theatre, but there are no self-quotations.

Even by a cursory glance at the score, I recognized the distinctive hand – repetitive technique in the material build-up, the simultaneous flow of ostinato layers of different physiognomies, the predominance of the rhythmic component over the melodic one... Everything pointed to Erić's authorship, yet everything sounded somehow new and original.

First of all, we had not heard a symphonic work by Erić in a long time. Inclined to the chamber genre and renowned in our midst by his masterful treatment of string texture, this author, in his very successful career as a music creator, did not turn to symphony orchestra many times.<sup>4</sup> Therefore one is captivated (but not surprised) by his ease in manipulating the orchestral apparatus, incarnated in finding the 'right' measure of expanding and compressing the sonic space, with emphasizing the refined nuances of the orchestral groups, especially those of percussion,<sup>5</sup> complemented by two prepared and amplified pianos and an amplified harpsichord, which are for the most part treated percussively.

The formal concept of the work *Između činova* can be explained in terms of order and disorder, which Erić was preoccupied with in the cycle *Slike Haosa*.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Zoran Erić used his musical ideas from theatrical productions in the following compositions: *Oberon koncert* [*Oberon Concerto*] (the last work in the cycle *Slike Haosa* [*Images of Chaos*]), 1997; *Šest scena-komentara* [*Six Scenes-Comments*], 2001; *Ko je ubio galeba?* (*Ti, zar se ne sećaš?*) [*Who Shot a Seagull? (Don't You Remember? You SHot a Seagull)*], 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Here we refer to the book *Between the Acts* by Virginia Woolf, written in 1941; the movie *Entr'acte* from 1924, played between the acts of Satie's ballet *Relâche*; and Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's opera buffa *La serva padrona*, which was originally performed between the acts of an opera seria, and only later became a 'serious' work for separate performance.

<sup>4</sup> Erić wrote only a handful of works requiring a symphony orchestra: *Iza sunčevih vrata* [*Behind the Sun's Door*], choreographic image (1973); *Koncert za orkestar i soliste* [*Concerto For Orchestra And Soloists*] (1975); *Mirage*, a concerto for piano, polyphonic synthesizer, electric piano and symphony orchestra (1979); *Banović Strahinja*, a one-act ballet (1981); *Jelisaveta, kneginja crnogorska* [*Elisabeth, the Princess of Montenegro*], for electronics, symphony orchestra and the ensemble of period instruments (1986).

<sup>5</sup> The work calls for a big percussion battery: tympani, bass drum, suspended cymbal, metal and glass tubular bells, four snare drums, gong, glockenspiel, marimba and vibraphone.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Marija Nikolić, „*Slike Haosa*“ Zorana Erića. „*Ivica haosa*“ kao izvor umetničke kreativnosti [*„Images of Chaos“ by Zoran Erić. „The Edge of Chaos“ as the Source of Artistic Creativity*], degree essay, manuscript, 2007; Marija Nikolić, 'Uređenost nereda/neuređenost reda kao *modus vivendi* ciklusa *Slike Haosa* Zorana Erića' [*Orderliness of Disorder/Disorderliness of Order as a Modus Vivendi*]

Outwardly a well laid-out, one-movement ternary form with the recapitulation and transitions (**A** transition<sub>1</sub>, **B** transition<sub>2</sub>, **A**<sub>1</sub>), inwardly is organized in a mosaic fashion, by concatenation of shorter and longer structural segments. Therefore the complete sonic aspect of the work is built on six different materials, which I designate as **a b c d e f**, where the materials **c** and **f** are the formal pivots and they function as the primary subjects for the parts **A** and **B**.<sup>7</sup>

But what are these materials really like?

On the very first listening to the work, it is clear that *Između činova* does not count on broader, rounded musical entities which could be considered subjects in some generally accepted sense. Hence the motivic world of the work relies on a relatively neutral musical datum, such as a tremolo on a single note, which develops into a pulse layer, comprising the sound space of the orchestra almost completely (introductory material **a**), pedal notes, glissandos, figurations, runs (materials **b**, **d**, **e**). The absence of the melodic component is also conspicuous in the work's most expressive segments, **c** and **f**, which I have denoted as 'the first' and 'the second' 'subjects' in the formal schematics of the work, aiming to stress their importance as compared to the other materials. Hence the basic motifs of these 'subjects' take the shape of rhythmically striking, but melodically completely neutral bits of sound information, built by repeating one tone (material **c**), in oscillations of ascending-descending thirds, or by the 'circulation' of several tones (material **f**). Such a sound substance, reduced to a rhythmic parameter, is a characteristic of Erić's hand and is suitable for shaping ostinato layers and their specific distribution throughout a work, which is exactly the hallmark of the majority of the author's compositions. However, in this particular case it seems even more important that the neutrality of these six materials emanates from the contextual background of the composition, which, it should not be forgotten, is to be performed *between*, and that becomes even clearer when we perceive the segments' structural relationships.

Examining Erić's composition *Sedam pogleda u nebo* [*Seven Glances at the Sky*] from 2007, Zorica Premate noted that 'stvarajući muziku za pozorište, Erić razvio sposobnost da fragmentarno misli i iskazuje se putem kratkih, gotovo "isečenih" komada osmišljenog zvuka' ['creating theatre music, Erić developed the capability to think in fragments and to express himself in short, almost "cut-out" pieces of structured sound'], as well as that 'veće forme kompozitor "sastavlja"

---

of Zoran Erić's Cycle *Images of Chaos*], *Internacionalni časopis za muziku Novi Zvuk*, 31, 2008, 77-92.

<sup>7</sup> The materials are distributed as follows: **A** (aba<sub>1</sub> **c**) transition<sub>1</sub> (debe<sub>1</sub>d<sub>1</sub>) **B** (**f**) transition<sub>2</sub> (debd<sub>1</sub>) **A**<sub>1</sub> (**a c**). More details can be found in the formal schematics of the work, given at the end of the text.

nadovezivanjem dužih ili kraćih odlomaka...’ [‘the composer “assembles” bigger forms by the concatenation of longer or shorter fragments...’].<sup>8</sup> The same idea could be applied to *Između činova*, where the musical tissue flows in alternation of (predominantly) condensed sound vignettes, defined by all musical parameters. Therefore the realization of the work’s structural plan undoubtedly resembles the technique of sequencing movie frames (may I say: theatrical scenes?), since the vignettes do not develop or overlap, but are presented one after another, delimited by ‘clean cuts’. This is most obvious in the two transitions, where short time spans are populated by several contrasting sound situations positioned on the principle of growing and waning tension: 1. a contemplative fragment (material **d**), with an impressionist overtone, where the orchestral sound is reduced to metal and glass tubular bells, glockenspiel, vibraphone, harp, piano and harpsichord in *piano* dynamics (example 1); 2. *subito* change of texture to furious runs and figurations in loud dynamics (material **e**), with the employment of an almost full orchestral apparatus (example 2); 3. choral atmosphere (material **b**), realized by compressing the symphonic sound once more, this time into the string section, where the music substance is reduced to several pedal notes and a relatively static line, punctuated by narrow-span glissandos (example 3). After these three vignettes, the ‘bits’ of **e** and/or **d** segments are exposed once more.

Thematically neutral and formally fragmentary music of such this, whose segments appear to be ‘remnants’ of some greater imaginary entities, brings me back to the very concept of the work, where it is pointed out that this music should be performed ‘između nekih važnijih stvari koje je okružuju’ [‘between some more important things surrounding it’].<sup>9</sup> Hence the acoustic content of *Između činova* is not designed pretentiously since its purpose is not to outshine ‘the main event’, but one should not think it is unobtrusive and expressionless, because, in the author’s words, its goal is to:

‘gledaočevu pažnju [...] po završetku čina nekog pozorišnog događaja privuče, zadrži ili osvoji, a u ime čina koji sledi. Ova muzika, dakle, ispunjava prostor koji bi inače ostao prazan i zauzima vreme predviđeno za predah i opuštanje publike u okviru koga će biti izvršena promena dekora, kostima i sl. Funkcionalnost ove muzike meri se tako njenom

---

<sup>8</sup> Zorica Premate, ‘Sedam fragmenata o beskraju. *Sedam pogleda u nebo* Zorana Erića’ [Seven Fragments on Infinity. *Seven Glances at the Sky* by Zoran Erić], *Internacionalni časopis za muziku Novi Zvuk*, 31, 2008, 94.

<sup>9</sup> From the author’s programme note.

sposobnošću da animira, zainteresuje i sačuva gledaoca pretvarajući ga za svoje vreme trajanja (samo) u slušaoca.’<sup>10</sup>

The author’s note prompts me again to think about the traces of the theatre in this composition – only this time the music is not a part of the play (and the play is not a part of the music), but lies somewhere *between*. And in that interstice, the dramaturgy of the composition is arranged to animate the listener/spectator, not only by the relatively quick changes of musical situations/vignettes, but also by a deft game of extending and compressing musical time, which is accentuated by the alternation of dynamic and static states. Apart from the parameters of tempo, texture, various rhythmic configurations and the treatment of the orchestral apparatus, this is contributed to by the author’s markings which direct the performers to the characters of the sound vignettes. Hence the moods *Brillante* (a), *Appassionato* (b), *Agitato* (c), *Indolente* (d), *Con slancio* (e), *Con suono pieno* (b), *Brillante* (f) seem to be some ‘remnants’ of the emotional cycle established in *Slike Haosa*:<sup>11</sup> the only thing preserved from it is the relationship of the corresponding states of Unawareness and Acceptance (what was not comprehended is now being accepted), which in *Između činova* is expressed by the equivalence between the parts A and A<sub>1</sub>.

Alternation of the vignettes of a varying energy charge, affirms a kinetic aspect of the work, which is one of the characteristic qualifiers of Eric’s opus. The musical tissue culminates in the central part of the composition (part B/material f), where the states of motion and rest are transformed into a kind of turbulence, which points to yet another trace of *Slike Haosa* in Eric’s latest work. Thus the part B, where the full orchestra is employed, is built by a repetitive technique, with the simultaneous flow of several ostinato layers of various physiognomies. Since each layer travels along its own trajectory, and some of them even have their own metric pulse,<sup>12</sup> a friction between them is created, the accents of the models are shifted (their duration does not correspond with the time signature), and the

---

<sup>10</sup> ‘[A]ttract, keep or capture the spectators’ attention [...] after the conclusion of an act of a theatrical event, all to the benefit of the following act. This music therefore fills in the space which would otherwise remain empty and takes up the time allotted for respite and relaxation of the audience, when the change of setting, costumes etc. takes place. The functionality of this music is thus measured by its ability to animate, interest and hold the spectators, turning them, for the period of its duration, into (mere) listeners.’ Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The emotional cycle consists of: Incomprehension – Resistance – Anger – Wondering – Acceptance. More details in: Marija Nikolić, „*Slike Haosa*“ Zorana Erića..., op. cit.; Zorica Premate, ‘Deus et Machina’, in: *Folklor – Muzika – Delo*, Belgrade, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 1997, 65–82.

<sup>12</sup> For example, in the part B there are layers written in  $\frac{7}{8}$  time, divided 3+2+2, and in  $\frac{5}{8}$  time, divided 3+2. In the second segment of the same part of the composition, the ostinato models of

tissue becomes polymetric and turbulent. Should one even wonder whether such a content can be interesting enough to 'hold the spectators, turning them, for the period of its duration, into (mere) listeners'?<sup>13</sup>

Although, by the author's words, this music is expected to fill up the space during the change of setting, it is clearly very far from the compositions for 'light entertainment' (potpourris, divertimentos, waltzes etc.) which were once performed between the acts of operas or dramatic plays. Anyway, it could be said (with a tinge of irony) that sometimes it is exactly between the acts when the most important social events take place and that the secondary time *between* can be promoted into the central development.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, having in mind that Eric's music is critical, seductive and ironic and that it always speaks of its time, I wonder: if the author in the turbulent times of the 1990's had the need to express himself through *Slike Haosa*, is it a coincidence that today he wrote a *farce-episode*, whose title suggests the time *between*? Is he thus alluding to the current time of transition and the social hypocrisy, calling them a farce? And finally, is the author reminding us of the seriousness of that transition by introducing a dramatic motif in the trumpet part of 'the first subject', which in the given musical surrounding has a fateful overtone and is re-exposed in the work's final segment? Knowing Eric's poetics, rich in metaphorical discourses, I could say that the answers are positive.<sup>15</sup> But being aware of the possibility of getting caught in the web of my own speculations, somewhere *between* the story about the theatre and the current period of transition, I think that the foregoing trumpet motif is in fact just the author's need to add flourish to the BEMUS opening ceremony.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović

---

16 semiquavers are superimposed on those lasting 11 semiquavers (divided 3+2+2+2) within the common time.

<sup>13</sup> From the author's programme note.

<sup>14</sup> Let us remember the book *Between the Acts*, where Virginia Woolf, in her distinctive manner with many hidden meanings and allusions, described interpersonal relationships in a provincial British town, which are interwoven and unravelled between the acts of a village show, and hence she moved the gravity of the story from the central event to the developments surrounding it.

<sup>15</sup> In favour of this observation, I quote a part of the programme note: 'U tom među-vremenu nastaje i postoji ovo delo koje je između crnog i belog, između dole i gore, između levog i desnog, između napred i nazad, između juče i sutra...' ['That between-time is the point of origin and existence of this work, which is between black and white, between up and down, between left and right, between forward and backward, between yesterday and tomorrow...'].]

Марија Николић

ШТА СЕ КРИЈЕ ИЗМЕЂУ ЧИНОВА?  
*Entr'acte*, фарса-епизода за оркестар Зорана Ерића

САЖЕТАК

Најновију композицију Зорана Ерића, *Entr'acte* (*Између чинова*), фарса-епизода за симфонијски оркестар, премијерно је извела Београдска филхармонија под диригентском управом Бојана Сућића, на свечаном отварању 40. Бемуса, 3. октобра 2008. године у Сава центру.

Иако композиција није на директан начин повезана са Ерићевом позоришном музиком, сам наслов дела подстакао нас је на размишљање о присуству трага позоришта у овом остварењу. Тако смо нека од значења *Entr'acte* настојали да откријемо сагледавањем статуса/функције ове музике која, према речима аутора, треба да се изводи „између неких важнијих ствари које је окружују“, а са циљем да „гледаочеву пажњу [...] по завршетку чина неког позоришног догађаја привуче, задржи или освоји, а у име чина који следи.“

Већ приликом првог слушања композиције, било је јасно да она не рачуна на шире заокружене музичке ентитете који би се могли сматрати темама у неком општеприхваћеном смислу. Мотивски свет дела је ослоњен на релативно неутралне музичке податке, попут тремола на једном тону, из кога се гради пулс трака која заузима готово читав звучни простор оркестра, педалних тонова, глisanда, фигурација, пасажа. Поред тога, музички ток се одвија смењивањем (претежно) сажетих звучних сличица, дефинисаних по свим параметрима музике. Тако реализација структурног плана композиције подсећа на технику ређања филмских кадрова (семо ли рећи позоришних сцена?), будући да се сличице не развијају, нити наслојавају, већ се поступком „оштрих резова“ пласирају једна за другом.

Упркос чињеници да је композиција *Entr'acte* мишљена тематски неутрално и формално фрагментарно, као извесна потврда тезе о музици која „само“ треба да попуни простор за време промене декора, јасно је да је ово дело веома далеко од композиција „лаког садржаја“ (потпурија, дивертимента, валцера и сл.), које су се некада изводиле између чинова оперских или драмских представа. Стога, имајући у виду да је Ерићева музика критичка, заводљива и иронијска, те да увек проговара о свом времену, упитали смо се: Ако је у турбулентно доба, деведестих година прошлог века, аутор имао потребу да се изрази кроз *Слике Хаоса*, да ли је случајно што данас има потребу да пише фарсу-епизоду, која у наслову сугерише време између? Да ли тако он алудира на актуелно транзиционо доба и хипокризу друштва називајући их фарсом? Познајући Ерићеву поетику, богату метафоричним дискурсима, могли бисмо рећи да су одговори позитивни. Али свесни могућности да упаднемо у клопку сопствених спекулација, негде између приче о позоришту и актуелном транзиционом тренутку, оставили смо ова питања отвореним, помишљајући да је све наведено само случајност.

**Кључне речи:** *Између чинова*, Зоран Ерић, позориште, остинатна трака, звучне сличице, фрагментарност, неутралност, *између*, фарса-епизода.



Formal schematics of *Entr'acte*

<b>A</b> →	introductory materials			<b>1<sup>st</sup> subject</b>	
	a (t.1) ♪ = 96 Tremando	b (t.16) ♪ = 56 Appassionato	a <sub>1</sub> (t.25) ♪ = 96	c (t.38) ♪ = 112 Agitato	
<b>transition 1</b> →	d (t.90) ♪ = 66 Indolente	e (t.96) ♪ = 76 Con slancio	b (t.99) ♪ = 66 Son suono pieno	e <sub>1</sub> (t.107) ♪ = 76	d <sub>1</sub> (t.108) ♪ = 66
<b>B</b> →	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> subject</b>				
	f (t.112) ♪ = 216 Brillante				
<b>transition 2</b> →	d (t.164) ♪ = 76 Come retro	e (t.169) ♪ = 76	b <sub>1</sub> (t.171) ♪ = 56 Ancora con suono pieno	d <sub>2</sub> (t.187) ♪ = 76	
<b>A<sub>1</sub></b> →	introductory material			<b>1<sup>st</sup> subject</b>	
	a <sub>2</sub> (t.191) ♪ = 96			c (t.194) ♪ = 112 Tempo giusto	



### Example 1

*Entr'acte, farce-episode, t. 90-95*

13

**G** Indolente  $J = 66$

90  
Picc.  
Fl. 1, 2  
Ob. 1, 2  
Eng. Hn.  
Cl. 1, 2  
B. Cl.  
Bsn. 1, 2  
Cbn.  
Hn. 1, 2  
Hn. 3, 4  
Tpt. 1, 2  
Tpt. 3  
Tr. Tbn. 1, 2  
B. Tbn.  
Tbn.  
Mst. & Cl. Cym.  
Gong  
Clock.  
Mar.  
Vn. I  
Vn. II  
Hr.  
Pno. I  
Pno. II  
Hrpd.  
Va. I  
Va. II  
Vi.  
Vc.  
Cb.

**Example 2**  
*Entr'acte, farce-episode, t. 96-98*

14

Con slancio  $\text{♩} = 76$

Picc.  
Fl. 1, 2  
Ob. 1, 2  
Eng. Hn.  
Cl. 1, 2  
B. Cl.  
Bsn. 1, 2  
Cbn.  
Hn. 1, 2  
Hn. 3, 4  
Tpt. 1, 2  
Tpt. 3  
Tbn. 1, 2  
B. Tbn.  
Tbn.  
Gong  
Harp  
Perc. I  
Perc. II  
Cym.

**Example 3**

*Entr'acte, farce-episode, t. 99-106*

**H** Con suono pieno  $J = 66$

99

Picc.

Fl. 1,2

Ob. 1,2

Eng. hn.

Cl. 1,2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1,2

Cbsn.

Hrn. 1,2

Hrn. 3,4

Tpt. 1,2

Tpt. 3

Tn. Tbn. 1,2

B. Tbn.

Tba.

Met. & Gl. Chan.

Cong.

Clock.

Vib.

Hrp.

Pno. I

Pno. II

Hpd.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

Cb.