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Musical Multimedia as a Keystone of Artistic Manifestations in the 20th–21st Century Europe

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Activism on Musical Stage: The Case of the Opera “The Last Little Girls”¹

Abstract

The opera *The last little girls*, based on the libretto “about the future of human reproduction in 15 pictures”, was created by playwright Maja Pelević, composer Irena Popović-Dragović and director Kokan Mladenović (premiere performance on 29th December 2021, Theatre “Kosztolányi Dezső” in Subotica, Serbia). The work is initiated by an actual event, the interview with the director of a reproductive clinic in Ukraine (BioTekCom, a centre for human reproduction), who complained that babies born to surrogate mothers could not be delivered to their intended parents due to the global COVID-19 lockdown. This was an incentive for the authors to engage in an almost manifest way of critically questioning the new and current levels of the commodification of human life in which the female body becomes a factory, and the newborn child an expensive, perfectly packaged product. My paper will interrogate various aspects of this multimedia project to discuss not only the artistic and genre specificities but also the issues of the activist attitude towards opera creation, including placing this collaborative opera production in the diverse opera landscape of post-socialist Serbia.

Short biography

Biljana Milanović is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Musicology, SASA, Belgrade. Her scholarly interests include various historical, theoretical and interdisciplinary aspects of music from the 19th century onwards. She has edited several scholarly publications, authored one book, and written more than 80 studies. She is a member of the editorial boards of the journals “Muzikologija/Musicology” (Belgrade) and “Українська музика/Ukrainian Music” (Lviv), and a member of the board of the Department of Stage Arts and Music of the Matica Srpska, in Novi Sad.

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