

## WHEN THE CURTAIN FALLS: THE SUSTAINABILITY OF INCIDENTAL MUSIC\*

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НАКОН СПУШТАЊА ЗАВЕСЕ:  
ОДРЖИВОСТ ПРИМЕЊЕНЕ МУЗИКЕ

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### ABSTRACT

Starting with the idea that sustainability as a concept can (and should) be applied in the field of incidental music, thus, ensuring the continuation of its life after the curtain falls, we argue that discography is one of the main ways in which incidental music (like any other type of music) can be preserved and later studied. We argue that discography (as a sustainability tool) equals the survival (survivability) of incidental music and test this hypothesis on four case studies – compact discs and releases of incidental music of four composers: Vojislav Voki Kostić, Zoran Erić, Zoran Simjanović and Isidora Žebeljan.

KEYWORDS: incidental music, sustainability, music sustainability, discography, theatre.

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## АПСТРАКТ

Полазећи од идеје да одрживост као концепт може бити (и требало би да буде) аплицирана у пољу примењене музике у позоришту, тиме омогућавајући наставак њеног живота након спуштања завесе, тврдимо да је дискографија један од главних начина на који примењена музика (као и свака друга) може бити очувана и касније проучавана. Дискографија (као средство одрживости) једнака је преживљавању примењене музике првенствено у условима где не постоји нотни запис, те се ова хипотеза испитује на четири студије случаја – компакт-дискovima и издањима примењене музике четворо композитора: Војислава Вокија Костића, Зорана Ерића, Зорана Симјановића и Исидоре Жебељан.

Кључне речи: примењена музика у позоришту, одрживост, одрживост музике, дискографија, позориште.

The sustainability of incidental music in recent years has become a question of great importance. A great number of composers in Serbia create or created extensively in the field of incidental music, whether due to practical and/or existential reasons. It is important to bear in mind that working on incidental music most certainly guarantees a constant influx of commissions for the composer, thus, ensuring his or her position and relevance in the cultural life in this day and age where commissions for “non-incidental” pieces are getting fewer in number.

Incidental music has long been considered “less worthy” than “serious music” and regarded as a mere thread in the theatrical tapestry. However, such an attitude has been refuted by both composers and other theatrical practitioners (primarily theatre directors) and, time and again, it has been proven to be an obsolete perspective. Music, as well as the artwork (theatre plays, film, etc.) it is incidental to, is preserved primarily by composers 1) who use musical material that originated in the music incidental to a play in their “serious” works such as concerts, symphonies, chamber music and the like, thus developing the potential for the thematic material that they would not otherwise be able to do, or 2) they arrange, edit and create their own compilations for later publishing and discographic release, simultaneously documenting and preserving their work and ensuring it can reach a broader audience outside the confines of a theatre. The latter point will be addressed in this article in detail.

In theatre especially, we are inclined to ask ourselves whether or not it is possible to preserve such music, simultaneously showing respect for the theatrical context in which it was placed before being recorded and published on a separate compact disc or published online on various internet platforms (such as YouTube, Spotify, SoundCloud, Deezer, Amazon Music, Bandcamp and many more). What can ensure the continuation, the survival of incidental music? In what way can it continue its life off stage? Why are these questions important and (why) do we dare utter the word

*sustainability* in the context of incidental music? To our knowledge, the concept of sustainability has not been reviewed with regard to incidental music. The use of the word sustainability is justified in the case of this genre due to the fact that incidental music – at least in the present day – does not depend on the score. It is, in most cases, preserved (“sustained”) as an audio recording.

What does sustainability mean *for* and *in* music? How can sustainability be applied and thought of in incidental music – or more precisely – what can it mean for the preservation of incidental music in Serbia? We are encouraged to take on this task, since, to our knowledge, there are no sources that specifically make connections between incidental music and sustainability or sustainable development. In order to provide answers to the previously asked questions, first we must address the core idea of sustainability, and then address the very nature of incidental music, as well as the problems that are inherent to this genre.

One article that prompted the thoughts of incidental music in relation to sustainability is Yosef Jabareen’s *A new conceptual framework for sustainable development* (2008), in which he aimed to “theoretically synthesize the interdisciplinary literature on sustainable development” (Ibid.: 179). The author points out the vagueness with which the concept of sustainability (and sustainable development) is being utilised, lamenting the fact that there is no general consensus on the way in which this concept should be applied in practice (Ibid.: 180). We could presume that the problem lies in the non-differentiation of the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’. One need only look up the definitions UNESCO provide: sustainability is the end goal or, rather, a long-term goal, as UNESCO defined it, while “sustainable development refers to many processes and pathways to achieve it” (UNESCO<sup>2</sup>). With that in mind, discography is a means to an end. Sustainability as a concept can, and should, be applied to incidental music, though it should be thought of in terms of the sustainable development of discography of incidental music, or rather, in terms of the processes that would ensure that incidental music is sustained and preserved. Catherine Grant, music researcher and educator in the domains of ethnomusicology and music education, defines “music sustainability as the ability of a music genre to endure” (2013: 1) How does, in that sense, any genre of incidental music endure (and continue to endure)? Incidental music in the previous centuries was closely tied to the notion of musical score. With the advent of computer technologies, creators of contemporary music more often than not forego paper. This statement is not to be understood as definite, as there are composers who still make sketches and still rely on pen and paper, while at the same time use available technology with ease. Continuing on from the previous statement, the score is digitally written in a computer and at the same time preserved in various formats. Depending on the software used for committing the score to the digital ‘paper’, this score can later on be exported and printed, making a physical copy instantly available for performers.

A musicologist that researches and studies incidental music is bound to ask the following questions: What happens in the cases where performers are not required

2 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd> (ac. 1.5.2022).

for the reproduction of the music in theatre? A set of well-placed speakers and sound system will suffice if the director of the play wills it to be so (whether due to his artistic view of the play he is producing or personal preference and, more often, due to the cost-effective ways of using music in a theatrical production). Also, what happens when we do not have sketches, scores – even plain notes – that will reveal to us what music was used in the theatrical production and what purpose was given to it? What if there is no opportunity to speak to the author directly about the music? On the other side, what if we only have recordings of theatrical plays or are just left with published incidental music that was extracted and divorced from the theatrical play? This is where discography comes into play, as well as the concept of sustainability and sustainable development, used here primarily to understand discography as an extension and survival tool of incidental music. Thus, in the case of incidental music, sustainability would mean turning something as intangible and fleeting as the inherent nature of incidental music into something tangible (and, at the same time, commercially consumable if we are to speak in a discographic way), tapping into its potential as a resource for research that cannot be depleted. Having a tangible document, an object of research, we are able to approach it anew every time without worrying about it depleting and perishing. Not only is it a resource, but it is a *biocultural resource* – as ethnomusicologist Jeff Todd Titon identified it – further clarifying that it is “a product of human life; further, it is a renewable resource” (Titon, 2009: 5). It is, therefore, encouraging to think of sustainability<sup>3</sup> in relation to the genre of incidental music. It is, however, not without problems.

Namely, the problem with committing incidental music to a compact disc or repository on an online platform is, as we have previously pointed out, the fact that incidental music is being extracted from the final product that is a theatrical production. On the other hand, the problems that arise from the failure to ensure the survival of incidental music (excluding written documentation on the basic information regarding the person or persons who wrote the original music, or perhaps chose the music numbers that would be used in the production, etc.) include but are not limited to: lack of information on who wrote the music for a certain play; lack of information on who performed the music (if live performance was included)<sup>4</sup>; lack of information on the genre of music being used in the theatrical production; lack of information on the ways in which the music was being used in the theatrical production (whether it be themes tied to the form of the play, specific characters,

3 It is important to note that Huib Schippers established a framework of five key domains – the main forces impacting sustainability in music according to his findings and experience. These key domains are the following: 1) systems of learning music; 2) musicians and communities; 3) contexts and constructs; 4) regulations and infrastructure; and 5) media and music industry (Schippers and Bendrups 2015: 5–6.). The last one concerns us the most as the discography is, according to authors, one of the most crucial features of this fifth domain.

4 In the cases where we do not possess any information on who the performers were, we are, at least, able to recognise which instruments were used and what type of ensemble was included, claim Bužarovski, Đurković-Pantelić and Jordanoska (Bužarovski et al. 2020: 79). Then, we should further interview any available contemporaries that perhaps remember other participants (Ibid).

musical cues...), etc. Luckily, nowadays, we need not worry about the complete loss of material, as we are often left with video recordings and audio files. There are other challenges to tackle and perhaps it is not of great consequence to mention the financial aspect that often stands in the way of the digitalisation and preservation of music, especially of the one genre we have been discussing here. Remedies for this impediment will not be further entertained, for they deserve a separate study on the problems and solutions regarding such situations. Continuing onwards from this brief digression, we will entirely concentrate on case studies.

The works of four Serbian composers, three of whom are no longer alive – Vojislav Voki Kostić (1931–2010), Zoran Simjanović (1946–2021), Zoran Erić (1950) and Isidora Žebeljan (1967–2020) – have been selected here, because we wanted to gain an insight into compilations of incidental music written for several theatre plays by these composers. Our intention to review and understand what is considered the *best of* incidental music of a particular composer meant putting aside compact discs that contain only incidental music for a single play – examples being a compact disc with Žebeljan’s incidental music for *Mileva Ajnštajn*<sup>5</sup> – a play staged in the National Theatre in Belgrade, in 2002, or a compact disc with Irena Popović Dragović’s incidental music for the play *Otac na službenom putu* [*When Father Was Away on Business*], staged in Atelje 212, in 2011. Compact discs were issued by the theatres where the plays were staged. Our four case studies were also chosen for their visual identity, in an attempt to decide if the choices made in designing these four compilations were justified. Do they serve their purpose and, if so, to what extent? Finally, these four composers were chosen due to the fact that they are among the main ‘protagonists’ of my doctoral dissertation,<sup>6</sup> in which I researched incidental music in Serbia during the 1990s and early 2000s.

## DISCOGRAPHY AND INCIDENTAL MUSIC IN SERBIA. CASE STUDIES

In this article, as previously stated, the focus will be solely on a small sample of discography production in Serbia – discography of selected composers that have compiled and made their incidental music available – whether it be a carefully curated compilation of selected numbers from specific theatrical productions or a full discography of their works in the field of incidental music (and other applied music). The focus will be on dramatic theatre, with only brief mentions of musicals, if any. We will rely on the definition of the word *discography* provided by Elena Alessandri in her paper ‘*The discography, or what analysts of recordings do before analysing*’, where she establishes that:

5 Insight into this compact disc from the private archive of the composer was kindly provided by Borislav Čičovački.

6 The dissertation (in Serbian) bears the title *Primenjena muzika u beogradskim pozorištima na prelasku iz 20. u 21. vek* [*Incidental music in Belgrade theaters at the threshold of the 20th and 21st century*] – under the supervision of mentor, dr Biljana Leković and co-mentor, dr Sanela Nikolić at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade.

Discography is the systematic gathering and notating of data pertaining to all sound recordings of a specific category specially defined for the inquiry at hand. Generic categories of this kind might include all recordings of a particular musical work, of compositions by a single composer, of music performed by an individual artist or instrumental group, of music published by a certain label, or of music belonging to a chosen historical period, etc (2011: 111–112).

Alessandri concludes that “the value of a discography is linked to two main factors: the nature of the information in itself, for most of the data gathered is not easily obtained, and the very fact of being a *systematic compilation* of information where the significance of the whole is greater in value than that of the sum of the individual parts” (Ibid.: 121).

Following up on the question of the importance of discography that Alessandri raised, in this paper we will discuss the importance of discography for incidental music, music history and theatrical history in Serbia, starting with these hypotheses:

1. Sustainability as a concept can and should be applied to incidental music.
2. Sustainability ensures the extended life of incidental music outside the theatrical stage, simultaneously ensuring and building up from its prospect of survival (survivability). The purpose of discography application in the field of incidental music is/could be twofold: a) intent of preservation of the theatrical trace and b) the conversion of incidental music into music for listening. Both are manifestations of incidental music in its new life, but a necessary one, which is important both for music history and history of the theatre.

Although it seems quite contradictory to extract incidental music, “divorce” it from the theatrical play for which it was written and disseminate it independently, it is crucial for preserving it. We must bear in mind that, of course, incidental music becomes (solely) music the moment it is extracted from its theatrical context. It transforms from incidental music into music for listening, like any other genre of music, however, its original purpose it rarely forgotten. Film music is also extracted from the film as a final product and presented in various compilations. That does not prevent us, as viewers/listeners, from reliving the memories and emotions we felt in the cinema watching a particular scene. Oftentimes, in our minds we associate with the specific scene we committed to memory after watching a film. A similar situation happens in the case of theatre, for the theatregoers that saw a specific play. It is likely they would be reminded of a particular scene, an uttered line, of a certain actor that performed a musical number in a pivotal moment of the play and so on (Новаковић 2020a: 127). Seconding the statement of Leah Broad, we must stress the fact that recordings do hold an important place especially with the application of reconstructive methodology, as they allow us to get the sense of, as Broad states, the (role and function of) music in question (2017: 33–34).

Similar to film music, there is a need for and interest in incidental music after its use in theatre. We are strictly focusing on original music for the theatrical pro-

duction, not on pre-existing music or the choice of songs from popular music that will appeal to an audience and which that audience can fully access online today. Many composers actively sought to and made compilations of their incidental music, including my four chosen authors (Kostić Simjanović, Erić, and Žebeljan). Although it will not be possible to include them all on this occasion, they should be acknowledged in a brief overview. Incidental music in Serbia is a field occupied by many academically trained composers, as well as composers coming from the sphere of popular music,<sup>7</sup> music producers, sound engineers, and theatre directors.<sup>8</sup> As we have stated earlier, composers and music practitioners do it for practical, economical as well as artistic reasons. A great number of authors of various generations contributed to incidental music to varying degrees – whether it be their primary or secondary creative direction or genre in which they created. Besides those that we have already mentioned, the most notable names of Serbian composers (many, but not all, of them academically trained) who greatly contributed to the genre of incidental music include: Krešimir Baranović (1894–1975), Mihovil Logar (1902–1998), Vasilije Mokranjac (1923–1984), Dragutin Gostuški (1923–1998), Enriko Josif (1924–2003), Dušan Radić (1929–2010), Zoran Hristić (1938–2019), Predrag Vranešević (1946–2022), Vojkan Borisavljević (1947–2021), Mladen Vranešević (1947–2006), Ivana Stefanović (1948), Radivoje Rade Radivojević (1949), Gabor Lendel (1951), Ksenija Zečević (1956–2006), Dragana S. Jovanović (1963), Igor Gostuški (1966), Aleksandra Anja Đorđević (1970), Irena Popović Dragović (1974), Božidar Obradinović (1974), Vladimir Pejković (1976), Srđan Khan Marković (1984), and others.

Contemporary incidental music is not a substitute of, but rather a supplement to contemporary music in Serbia, although we will argue that commissions are more often made by theatre practitioners (and not to forget – tv and film producers) for new stagings of plays or other theatre projects. Therefore, a composer would be very inclined to accept work in the field of incidental music, because this is an excellent opportunity for his or her work to be showcased to a broader public, disseminated and heard. Of course, bearing in mind the nature of the theatre and theatre plays, the composer's incidental music lives as long as the theatre play lives. Thus, we need to “extend the life” of incidental music – the extension that sustainability can provide in the form of discography.

The four compact discs we chose to present here and discuss range from compilations of selected musical numbers from various plays (Isidora Žebeljan), selected musical numbers from particular plays directed by one director (Zoran Erić), and compilations of incidental music where the composer preserved or managed to

7 For example, Srđan Gile Gojković (a member of the iconic new wave group *Električni orgazam*) released a three-part digipack of his applied music (also available online: [https://youtu.be/1O\\_zemDI8eo](https://youtu.be/1O_zemDI8eo) [ac. 4.5.2022]) (Gojković, 2021).

8 Theatre critics rarely pay attention or minimally write about incidental music in their critiques of theatre plays. They do mention the name of the author; often making one-sentenced comments on the purpose or some other quality of music, refraining from making statements about the music. It is unclear why is it so in reviews.

gather and form a retrospective overview of his most representative and most relevant work for theatre (Vojislav Voki Kostić, Zoran Simjanović). These commercially available discs are presented here in chronological order (from 1999 to 2013).

These composers (aside from Kostić, who was an independent, freelance artist – a status he was proud of) were professors of composition, orchestration and sound production, esteemed musicians who greatly valued their work in the field of incidental music (also film music, television music, etc.) and were often inspired and encouraged to base many of their non-incidental works on the thematic material that originated in the theatre. That was often the case with Zoran Erić and Isidora Žebeljan in particular – whether due to the desire to further develop the potential of musical material used in incidental music for theatre plays (Erić) or simply because of the satisfaction with their work in the theatre or the adoration of certain musical numbers that would later develop into concert suites, solo pieces, etc., with as little as possible or no intervention at all (Žebeljan) (Čičovački and Novaković, 1. 12. 2021). In fact, in the 1990s, when still a young and upcoming composer, Žebeljan spoke of the relevance of incidental music for her, both as a person and as a creator – not only because she was able to surround herself with creative spirits like herself (a sentiment that Erić shares when speaking of his experience in theatre [see Novaković 2020a]), but also because it enabled her to further develop her practice through writing music for acoustic instrumental ensembles (Žebeljan and Jovanović 2021: 84). Both Erić and Žebeljan dedicated their attention to this genre during the 1990s and continued to nurture it later in their careers (even moving on to conquests of the operatic genre, which Žebeljan did with enormous success, completing a total of five operas during her short life) — often using remediation as a way to further elaborate on what originated as a piece of incidental music. In a way, that in itself is an effort to provide sustainability and endurance to one's work. On the flipside of remediation is most likely the desire to present one's music in a more acceptable context via translation of incidental music into more 'valued' non-incidental genres (concertos, suites, works for various instruments, etc.), so that the music may reach broader concert audiences that did not have the chance to hear it in its previous incarnation as a part of a theatre play. Regarding the other two composers selected for analysis in this article – Kostić and Simjanović dedicated their compositional efforts to incidental music from the very beginnings of their composing careers, although Simjanović based himself mostly in film music, for which he is mainly known.

Vojislav Kostić's *Filmska, Televizijska, Pozorišna muzika* [Music for Film, Television, Theatre] released by PGP RTS in 1999 is, as we can conclude from the title, a compilation of Kostić's music written for twenty-one films, twenty television shows and twenty-nine theatre plays. The box (see Figure 1 in the Appendices) contains three compact discs, each dedicated to the aforementioned areas of his work, as well

9 Vojislav Voki Kostić (1931–2010) was a Serbian composer born in Belgrade. Although primarily dedicated to so-called applied music (he authored music for over 300 theatre plays, 20 television series, 27 television dramas, 20 radio dramas, over 40 films, etc.), he also wrote vocal, orchestral and choral music, as well as songs and various ballads. According to composer's own statistics, he worked with 77



as a list of the musical numbers and their respective titles. The box also contains a booklet of information on numbers listed on the compact discs, a short biographical note by the composer personally, as well as his commentary on the content of this compilation, anecdotal accounts and memories, lyrics to the songs in the compilation as well as a complementary text by director Boro Drašković, Kostić's associate and close friend (Kostić 1999, booklet). This information and collection of short texts are translated in English in the second part of the booklet, which shows the composer's intention to make his music more broadly available, not only to the national, but an international audience as well. Compact disc number three contains the music for theatre, namely, 30 numbers from various theatre plays. Some of these will already be familiar to listeners: for example, musical numbers no 29. *Gubilište* [*Scaffold*] and no 30. *Izgnanstvo* [*Exile*] (Kostić, 1999, CD3), which are from two plays: *Marija Stjuart* [*Mary Stuart*, Atelje 212, 1994, dir. Ljubomir Muci Draškić] and *Bekstvo* [Atelje 212, 1998, dir. Ljubomir Muci Draškić].<sup>10</sup> The cover of the CD is minimalistically designed and features Kostić's profile, his name written in gold letters and the title of the compilation, suggesting the content of the discs. The cover does not disclose information on performers of the musical numbers or precise dates of recordings, as everything is revealed in the aforementioned booklet. This edition gave the composer the opportunity to confide in us the details of his relationship with incidental music as he reveals that "devoting myself primarily to this *performing music*, I never had any doubts. I never had the feeling of following a wrong path in the art of music" (Kostić, 1999: 69). Although this boxset is truly a small extract of Kostić's immense opus of applied music, it fulfils its intended purpose: namely, it

theatre directors, 26 TV directors, 8 radio programme directors and 39 film directors (Kostić 1995: 315.). He received over 32 awards and gold medals for his music across various mediums (Ibid.), among others, the *Stevan Mokranjac* award for his 1965 choral piece *Gypsy's story* (*Ciganska priča*), two *Sterijino pozorje* awards for incidental music awarded at the *Sterijino pozorje* festival (in 1969 for incidental music for *Electra* staged by Atelje 212; in 1988 for incidental music for the play *Spitting the Nation in Two Parts* [*Ruženje naroda u dva dela*], staged by the Yugoslav Drama Theatre), several *Joakim Vujić* awards for incidental music, awarded at the encounter of professional theatres (in 1976 for incidental music for the play *Servants* [*Sluge*] staged in the National Theatre in Šabac; in 1980 for incidental music for the plays *Impure Blood* [*Nečista krv*] staged at the National Theatre in Niš and *Beaten path* [*Brisani put*], staged at the National Theatre in Leskovac; in 1983 for incidental music for the play *White devil* [*Beli đavo*] staged at the National Theatre in Užice; in 1984 for incidental music for *Kolubarska bitka*, staged at the National Theatre in Niš) (Kostić 1995: 279–280). Kostić was at the head of the Serbian music copyright agency SOKOJ, the Organisation of Music Authors of Serbia (previously known as the Union of Composers of Yugoslavia), during which time he made a great contribution to the field of copyright. The composer was also an avid gourmet and wrote several cookbooks.

<sup>10</sup> A previous viewing experience changes the way in which we listen to any disc containing incidental music. Having listened to this compact disc and having had an opportunity to watch video recordings of plays for the purpose of researching and writing my dissertation, my experience is enriched, and I am able to make connections and compensate for the potential lack of certain information on the disc itself. Were it not for the video recordings that the Museum of Theatrical Arts in Serbia kindly gave to me, I would not have been able to draw conclusions about the plays based on the music only. I thank them for their kindness and readiness to assist researchers.

presents the listener with Kostić's work in the aforementioned genre, reveals his attitude towards incidental (and more broadly, applied) music, discloses information on participants and people who worked with him in creating and performing this music and reveals to us the need to internationalize his work and make it available.

*Peace of dream* is the title<sup>11</sup> of the compact disc of Zoran Erić's<sup>12</sup> incidental music for three plays staged in Theatre City, Budva (Montenegro): *Banović Strahinja*, *San letnje noći* [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*] and *Karolina Nojber*. The creative design of the cover (see Image 2 in the Appendices) and the casing of the compact disc (as well as the complementary booklet) imply the composer's understanding of incidental music, or rather, serve as a creative metaphor for the role and function of incidental music in theatre plays. The piece of the puzzle on the cover refers to incidental music as the equal of the other elements in the play it is a part of. The musical numbers from the three plays were performed and recorded in the studio of the Faculty of Music, in Belgrade (University of Arts, Belgrade) and produced by Zoran Erić. We also learn about the performers: Isztvan Varga (cello), Ljubiša Jovanović (flute), Zoran Erić (piano, harpsichord, sampler), Ana Sofrenović (vocals), Dragan Petrović (bass clarinet). The complementary booklet to this compact disc contains the composer's biography, a short commentary on the three theatre plays and, as Milosavljević says, "three musics" (Milosavljević, 2001). Even though these three plays were all directed by the same director, Nikita Milivojević, the booklet contains no written commentary from Milivojević himself,<sup>13</sup> which would have been a nice addition to this publication as a whole.

The box set of Zoran Simjanović's<sup>14</sup> incidental music (see Image 3 in the Appendices) released in 2009 under the title *Moje drage* [*My Dears*] by Multimedia Records in Belgrade represents the composer's efforts to preserve and, at the same time, record and reminisce about his time and work in theatre. As Simjanović explains in the accompanying booklet to this box set:

11 An explanation is required regarding this disc's title. Having had an opportunity to interview Erić during my previous work on his incidental music (Новаковић 2020a; Новаковић 2020b) on several occasions, the composer explained to me that the title, indeed, should have carried the title *Piece of Dream*, and due to this error, *Peace of Dream* remained as the title (Новаковић, 2020a: 116).

12 Zoran Erić is a Serbian composer born in Belgrade in 1950. Erić studied composition at the Academy of Music (now the Faculty of Music in Belgrade) with Stanojlo Rajčić. He teaches composition, orchestration, theatre and film music at the faculty. Besides his impressive opus of electronic, orchestral and chamber music, Erić is one of the most prolific composers of incidental and film music. He received, among others, the *Sterijino pozorje* award for the best music in the play *Smrtonosna motoristika* in 2000, as well as the *Sterijino pozorje* award for the best original music in the play *Oedipus Rex* (2008), the *Bora Mihajlović Prize* in 2008 awarded at the Kruševac Theatre for his outstanding contribution to the theatre life of Kruševac and Serbia (Erić, <http://www.arts.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Zoran-Eric-biography.pdf>, ac. 29.4.2022).

13 Except for the commentary on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, staged at the National Theatre in Belgrade and the result of the collaboration between the National Theatre in Belgrade and Budva City Theatre. Whether the commentary was written for this particular publication or for some previous occasion, is unknown.

14 Zoran Simjanović (1946–2021) was a Serbian composer, born in Belgrade, where he graduated

(...) rarely does incidental music live as film music. Why? Simply because when a play is not performed, it is forgotten (...) even directors were against recording theatre plays (Simjanović 2009: 2).

Music, being one of the basic elements of theatre (Simjanović 2009: 1), disappears if it is not preserved either via video or via audio recording (as is the case of film music). Therefore, Simjanović decided to make a comprehensive overview of his work in the field of incidental music (which he also did in the case of his own film music<sup>15</sup>). The end result is five compact discs, each containing over 25 musical numbers from various theatre plays Simjanović had an opportunity to work on. It is important to note that, similarly to the previously mentioned case of Zoran Erić, the back of each disc contains a list of titles of the plays from which the music originated, which is very helpful not only for the researchers seeking particular music, but music lovers that appreciate Simjanović's opus or are curious about his (other) music as well, bearing in mind he is best known for his film scores. One fact of consequence related to this box set that should be mentioned are the short texts written by Paolo Mađeli (1947) (*Muzika i pozorište [Music and Theater]*), Goran Marković (1946) (*Pozorišna muzika Zorana Simjanovića [Zoran Simjanović's incidental music]*) and Vida Ognjenović (1941) (*Moć scenske muzike [Power of incidental music]*) – directors with whom Zoran Simjanović worked (Simjanović 2009: 25–28, 32–34, 36–38). The inclusion of directors that he has worked with reflects the notion that music and theatre were always interdependent and involved with each other, and that the connection is being increasingly recognised and acknowledged, which makes this box set unique and truly an example of one of the ways that incidental music can be preserved and thought of in a sustainable way, preventing it from falling into oblivion. Moreover, it is, at the same time, a valuable document on the fruitful collaboration between composers and directors and the artistic views of both parties. Paolo Mađeli explains that “music is one of the protagonists of my plays. Actor free as air, capable to suggest images you haven't thought of (...) With music you succeed to find the unknown within yourself” (Simjanović 2009: 28). Goran Marković, on

from the Academy of Music (now the Faculty of Music in Belgrade). He is mostly known for his rich opus of film music and incidental music. He was a professor of film and theatre music at the Faculty of Music and the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Serbia as well as professor at the Faculty of Drama in Cetinje, Montenegro. Simjanović was also a member of the Belgradian based rock 'n' roll groups *Silnete* (*The Silhouettes*) and *Elipse* (*The Ellipse*), in the 1960s. Simjanović's iconic musical themes grace 61 films, over 50 television films and series, over 50 cartoons and short films and over 500 commercials, news jingles and introductory music for various broadcasts. He was awarded multiple times for his film music and contributions to film, at prestigious film festivals in Cannes, Venice, Montreal, Monte Carlo and Istanbul (Radović, 2007: 309).

15 Simjanović, Zoran (2018) *Druge teme*. Beograd: Multimedia music; Ibid. (2006) *Pesme iz filmova. Pop & Rock 1*. Beograd: MASCOM; Ibid. (2006) *Pesme iz filmova. Pop & Rock 2*. Beograd: MASCOM; Ibid. (2006) *Pesme iz filmova. Etno*. Beograd: MASCOM; Ibid. (2006) *Pesme iz filmova. Jazz obrade i aranžmani*. Beograd: MASCOM; Ibid. (2002) *Jedna tema jedan film*. Beograd: PGP RTS.

the other hand, stresses the importance of incidental music being unheard during the play. This ‘stealth’ of incidental music implies an excellent integration into the play, a perfect blend with the other elements of the play (Simjanović 2009: 32–33). Vida Ognjenović concludes that “the musical component of the theatrical work is its finest, vibrant connective tissue, without which the play would not be artistically complete” (Simjanović 2009: 36–37).<sup>16</sup>

Isidora Žebeljan’s<sup>17</sup> *Illuminacije* [*Illuminations*]<sup>18</sup> released by Mascom Records (both as a physical copy and online) in 2013, is a selection of the composer’s most relevant incidental music for sixteen plays (see Image 4 in the Appendices).<sup>19</sup> Similarly to Eric’s and Simjanović’s releases, *Illuminacije* comes with a booklet listing the plays and their respective musical numbers, as well as the dates the plays premiered and the respective theatres they were staged at (a quality this release shares with Simjanović’s *Moje drage*). Isidora Žebeljan is also the producer of this compact disc. Similarly to the case of Eric’s compact disc, the performers are listed and credited as follows: Isidora Žebeljan, Vladimir Stojnić (piano), Aneta Ilić, Branislava Podrumac, Mirjana Nešković, Isidora Žebeljan, Nebojša Ignjatović (voice), Nebojša Ignjatović (flute), Borislav Čičovački, Gordan Petrović (oboe), Borislav Čičovački (English horn), Veljko Klenkovski, Miloš Dragić (clarinet), Žorž Grujić (zurna, bagpipes, pipe), Vladimir Krnetić (trumpet), Nenad Petrović (saxophone), Jelica Stoiljković, Bojana Pantović, Gordana Matijević Nedeljković, Mirjana Nešković, Miloš Petrović (violin), Aleksandra Damjanović, Bojana Pantović (viola), Aleksandar Latković, Srđan Sretenović (cello), Nebojša Ignjatović (double bass), Siniša Jović, Veljko Nikolić, Isidora Žebeljan (percussion), Dejan Hasečić (electric guitar), Isidora

16 The written word of theatre directors and their testimonies on the collaborations with composers and other musicians are valuable and very important for the history of theatre, as it provides us with another perspective on the connection of theatre and music. One such example is the book *Umetnost pozorišne režije*, written by theatre director, writer, actor and professor, Miroslav Belović (1927–2005) and published in 1994, in which he dedicated a chapter to his fruitful collaborations with various composers and musicians (1994: 54–63).

17 Isidora Žebeljan (1967–2020) was an internationally acclaimed Serbian composer, esteemed academician of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and professor of composition at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She studied composition with Vlastimir Trajković at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. Her work spans from orchestral and chamber music, through piano music and orchestral music with soloists to incidental and film music, as well as operatic works. Incidental music made up most of her opus during the 1990s. Žebeljan received numerous awards for her music, notably, Sterija’s Award for incidental music in 1998, 2001, and 2006 as well as the YUSTAT Award of the Biennale of Theatre Design for the best original theatre score 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002, to name but a few (<https://isidorazebeljan.info/biography/>, ac. 29.4.2022)

18 Also available online on the label’s official YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgMHngIyhj3YL8PIp2rsp7WJdhWr0BS-W>.

19 Besides *Illuminacije*, other published discs of Žebeljan’s work, both by the publishing house MASCOM as well as other publishing houses abroad are presented extensively by Mirko Jeremić (Jeremić, 2022; [https://www.serbiancomposers.org/sr/пројекти/блог-реч-је-о-музици/прикази/дигитална-издања-музике-исидоре-жебе/?fbclid=IwAR3VM0kk5W0jbXfe0\\_8gAVtvZ9XALp2mIxXFH3ontPijpYcjQ\\_ynqFnqTXo](https://www.serbiancomposers.org/sr/пројекти/блог-реч-је-о-музици/прикази/дигитална-издања-музике-исидоре-жебе/?fbclid=IwAR3VM0kk5W0jbXfe0_8gAVtvZ9XALp2mIxXFH3ontPijpYcjQ_ynqFnqTXo), ac. 24.4.2022)

Žebeljan (electronics) (Žebeljan 2013: 11). Sound-wise, the stellar list of performers itself may give us an idea of what to expect. What made these reviewed compact discs unique is that, with time, we see discography getting richer and more informative in its presentation. Before pressing the ‘play’ button we can make some presumptions on what the music will sound like (provided we have not witnessed the theatre play beforehand and are not familiar with the music). Uninitiated listeners, with no previous involvement with plays that these composers worked on, approach this music simply as *listening* music (a notion we previously touched upon briefly.) However, these releases are so much more, as we have clarified earlier, particularly those that include a ‘view’ from the theatre (as in the case of Kostić and Simjanović). Such a view is valuable both for the music and the theatre, further establishing and confirming the idea of the everlasting bond that music and theatre share. This does not mean the editions not containing words from the theatre directors are lacking. Quite the opposite, their value is undoubted and the inclusion of theatre practitioners would just make the edition an extended project – in a sense – of the original theatre collaboration.

## CONCLUSION

It has been shown that discography is a sustainable way to ensure that the “life” of incidental music can be extended even after it leaves the stage. Discography allows for the preservation and later study of incidental music. Starting with the definition of sustainability and sustainable development, relying on the most relevant authors (Grant, Titon, Schippers, Bendrups) that made great contributions to defining music sustainability and acknowledging music as a biocultural resource (Titon), we turned to the question of the utilisation of this concept in the domain of incidental music (and other closely related genres that belong to the group of applied music). Incidental music, as practice shows, is a very relevant genre in Serbia and is produced by authors from various cultural spheres. In choosing four compact discs of four notable names (Kostić, Simjanović, Erić and Žebeljan) and reviewing them, we have acquired an idea of what a good compilation of incidental music should contain, spanning from valuable information such as dates when the incidental music was created/theatre play premiered, number and names of performers and ensembles, information on studios where music was produced and recorded, to the director’s commentary and accounts of the work processes, etc. These are important as the listener is able to presume what kind of sound he or she is going to hear once they press the play button. Discography connected to incidental music (as we have seen with these four examples) allows for creativity beyond the ‘confines’ of production: the composers’ understanding of incidental music can, via creative solutions when it comes to design, be implied and/or referenced to the listener via the cover design or the design of the compact disc’s accompanying booklet and, more importantly, by the inclusion of words penned by directors and other people from the theatre the composer worked closely with. This inclusion of the directors’ written word gives us a precious perspective on the relationship between the theatre and the music: we are

able to learn and understand what music means to a certain director. Either by his account or through some anecdotal stories, we can learn of the ways in which directors utilise music in their works. Naturally, four parts do not present the sum of the discography related to incidental music in Serbia, although they are sufficient to provide us with an idea of how we should approach the preservation of music and what key conditions we should have in mind and meet when attempting the preservation of (incidental) music for later research and study purposes, and, more importantly, documenting the creative meetings of two worlds – those of music and the theatre. It is safe to say that there is an audience for this genre of music and, therefore, these compilations serve to preserve and ensure the survival of a composer's incidental music. The musical numbers within these compilations are mostly well-known. The audience is most familiar with the musical numbers authored by Zoran Simjanović (who was primarily a film music composer) and Isidora Žebeljan. We could not claim with any certainty that a casual listener would be familiar, on the other hand, with the incidental music of Kostić, as he is primarily known for his iconic themes for *Bolji život* and other popular TV series. Still, these compact discs are invaluable, not just as the composers' method to preserve, sustain and promote their music, but also as a historical document. Though their primary function is that of documents and, as such, are of great interest to researchers and academia in general, these compact discs are meant not only to cater to the most avid connoisseurs of the work of these four composers, but to a wider audience as well, thus ensuring this music lives on long after the curtain falls.

## MONIKA NOVAKOVIĆ

WHEN THE CURTAIN FALLS: THE SUSTAINABILITY OF INCIDENTAL MUSIC

## APPENDICES

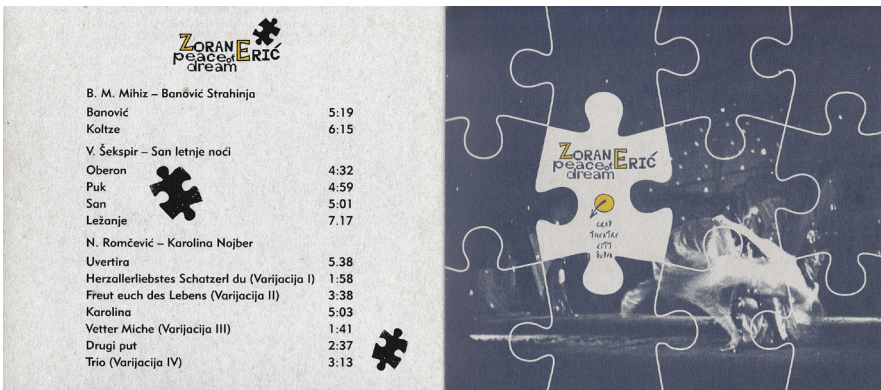
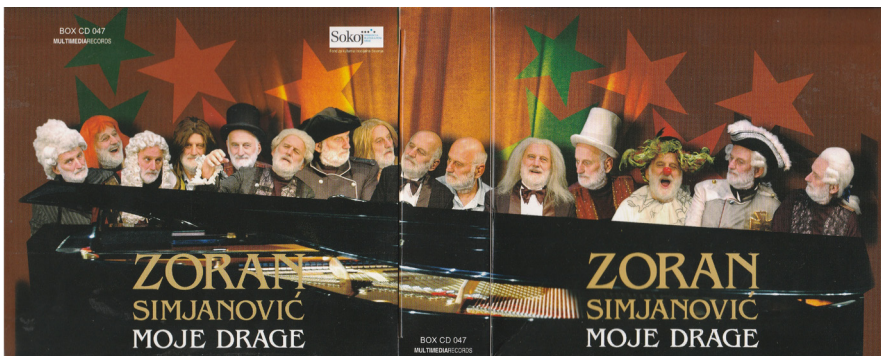
Figure 1. Vojislav Voki Kostić, *Filmska, televizijska, pozorišna muzika*, Belgrade: PGP RTS.Figure 2. Zoran Erić, *Peace of Dream*, Budva Grad Teatar.Figure 3. Zoran Simjanović, *Moje drage*, Belgrade: Multimedia Records.



Figure 4. Isidora Žebeljan, *Iluminacije*, Belgrade: Mascom Records.

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## МОНИКА НОВАКОВИЋ

### НАКОН СПУШТАЊА ЗАВЕСЕ: ОДРЖИВОСТ ПРИМЕЊЕНЕ МУЗИКЕ

#### (РЕЗИМЕ)

У овом раду поставља се питање да ли је концепт одрживости адекватан за примену у домену примењене музике у позоришту. Полази се од двеју важних хипотеза, да: 1) одрживост као концепт може бити и требало би да буде аплициран и на примењену музику и 2) одрживост обезбеђује продужетак живота примењене музике након што она напусти позоришну сцену, истовремено обезбеђујући изгледе њеног преживљавања. Сврха дискографије у овом контексту јесте двојака: а) намера да се овај јединствени позоришни траг сачува и да се примењена музика б) конвертује у музику за слушање. Овом приликом размотрена су четири компакт-диск издања с примењеном музиком Војислава Вокија Костића, Зорана Ерића, Зорана Симјановића и Исидоре Жебелан, с идејом да се сагледа на који начин се може приступити примењеној музици након њеног позоришног живота, шта је то што једно компакт-издање примењене музике треба да садржи и да ли је неким начином алудирано на претходни позоришни живот ове музике (било путем дизајна насловнице или целокупног издања, буклета, интервјуа и кратких текстова редитеља и блиских сарадника из позоришног света итд.). Поред потврде хипотеза уочено је то да дискографија примењене музике у позоришту дозвољава велику креативност ван оквира продукције: композиторово разумевање примењене музике може бити изражено и у самом дизајну насловнице компакт-издања, или, пак, буклета који је приложен компакт издању као импликације или референце, и најважније, писаних прилога редитеља и блиских сарадника из позоришта с којима је композитор имао прилике да сарађује. Четири поменуте студије случаја, наравно, не представљају суму дискографије везане за примењену музику у Србији, но, довољне су да нам дају идеју о начинима очувања ове музике, те које би услове дискографско издање требало испунити.