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THE IDEOLOGY OF MODERATED MODERNISM IN SERBIAN MUSIC AND MUSICOLOGY

Abstract: The term ‘moderated modernism’ has been current for quite some time in Serbian music historiography, but there have been only a few attempts to define it. I shall try to define the term, introduce some of its key concepts and features and demonstrate its applicability. Although moderated modernism was an international phenomenon which had divergent manifestations in various periods before and after the Second World War throughout Europe, my aim is to focus on the period between the decline of Socialist Realism and the ascent of post-modernism (roughly 1950 to 1980) in socialist Serbia, and to discuss the discourses and ideologies surrounding moderated modernism then and there.

Keywords: socialist realism, moderated modernism, avant-garde, Theodor W. Adorno, Serbian music, Cold War, music criticism.

‘Moderated Modernism’ is an oxymoron that has been commonly used, but rarely defined, in histories of European music.¹ In Serbian music historiography, the term has been current for quite some time, but there have been only a few attempts to define it.² However, the term can

¹ It was probably Theodor W. Adorno who first used this term (‘gemässigte Moderne’ in German): see Adorno, “The Aging of New Music”, “On the Social Situation in Music” and “Difficulties” in: *Essays on Music* (ed. Richard Leppert), Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 2002, especially pp. 197–198, 406–408, 652. His attitude towards moderated modernism was clearly negative, as he calls it ‘ominous’, ‘despicable’, etc. However, the term has seen wider (and not so biased) acceptance in the realm of musicology only since Hermann Danuser appropriated it. Compare: Hermann Danuser, “Tradition und Avantgarde nach 1950”, in: Reinhold Brinkmann (ed.), *Die Neue Musik und die Tradition*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung Darmstadt, 19, Mainz, 1978, 22–54.

² The term has been recognized and commonly used by Serbian art theorists working in the domains of visual and performing arts. Although Serbian musicologists have used as well, it has not been properly defined, but is used rather colloquially, accidentally or in passing; therefore it lacks theoretical foundation and explanation. Besides, it was never widely accepted, and although there is a common consensus that it existed indeed, histories of Serbian music usually do not mention it. For some recent accounts on moderated modernism see Melita Milin, *Tradicionalno i novo u srpskoj muzici posle Drugog svetskog rata 1945–1965* [The Traditional and New in Serbian Music after the Second World War 1945–1965], Beograd, Muzikoloski institut Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti, 1998; Ivana Medić, *Klavirska muzika Vasilija Mokranjca* [Piano Music of Vasilije Mokranjac], Beograd, Studentski kulturni centar – Bookwar, 2004; Miško Šuvaković et. al., “Umetnost XX veka u Srbiji”, in: H. V. Janson & Anthony F. Janson, *Istorija umetnosti* [History of Art], new Serbian edi-

be used as a label for a majority of works produced in the period between the decline of Socialist Realism and the ascent of post-modernism (roughly 1950 to 1980). I shall try to define the term, introduce some of its key concepts and features and demonstrate its applicability. I should stress that moderated modernism was an international phenomenon which had divergent manifestations in various periods before and after the Second World War throughout Europe. However, my aim is to focus on the postwar period in socialist Serbia, and to discuss the discourses and ideologies surrounding moderated modernism then and there. I shall examine the circumstances that led to its promotion, and compare it to postwar avant-garde positions, in order to clarify the ideological differences between them.

Moderated modernism³ denotes a politically neutral, socially acceptable, non-avant-garde, non-challenging form of modernism, whose most obvious feature was the artists' desire to make peace between modern and traditional and between regional and international. The authors who adopted moderated modernism were interested in approaching the dominant streams of international modernism; however, its most radical variants were alien to them. Moderated modernism was situated between avant-garde and tradition, between the international and regional ideas and ideals. It had the strongest effect on the composers who became active immediately after the Second World War, but also left an impact on the oeuvre of both older and younger generations of authors; and some of its ideological premises have been present up to nowadays. Moderated modernism is an oxymoron because modernism⁴ is not supposed to be

tion, Novi Sad, Prometej, 2005; Misko Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950. godine* [The Dictionary of Modern and Postmodern Visual Arts and Theory after 1950], Beograd/Novi Sad, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti/ Prometej, 1999, especially pp. 194 and 321.

³ The 'moderate' part of this term can be expressed in two ways in English: as an adjective (moderate) or participle (moderated). In both cases, the denoted meaning is essentially the same – something opposed to radical, extreme, provocative, troublesome. However, the adjective suggests that moderateness is in the very nature of the phenomenon, while the participle puts an emphasis on human agency; hence my preference for the second option.

⁴ Disrespective of all the controversies surrounding the megaculture of modernism, its core feature may be described as the awareness that we live in modern times, which are "better" and "more advanced" than the previous epochs, and that we are a part of the general development of human civilisation. According to A. Marino, G. Vattimo and others, modernism is an epoch in which *being modern* is a fundamental value, on which all other values are dependent; faith in progress, understood as a historical process, equates to faith in the value of novelty. Đani Vattimo, *Kraj moderne* [Gianni Vattimo, The End of Modernism], Novi Sad, Svetovi (Bratstvo–Jedinstvo), 1991,

moderate(d), but maximalist,⁵ experimental, futurist,⁶ radical,⁷ unsettled, anti-traditional, utopian!

There are also various more-or-less synonyms for moderated modernism, ranging from descriptive to pejorative, such as moderate mainstream,⁸ moderately contemporary language (or procedures),⁹ ostensibly moderate idiom,¹⁰ moderateness and accurateness,¹¹ socialist aestheticism,¹² academic classicism (or modernism),¹³ tempered modernism,¹⁴

103; Adrijan Marino, *Moderno, modernizam, modernost* [Modern, Modernism, Modernity], Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1997, 93–106.

⁵ The terms ‘maximalism’ and ‘maximalist’ in the context of musical modernism have been introduced by R. Taruskin; cf: Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 4 (*The Early Twentieth Century*), Oxford University Press, 2005; idem, *Defining Russia Musically*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997.

⁶ Vattimo calls modernism the “futuristic” epoch and remarks that it is characterized by abandonment of the secular vision of existence and affirmation of the profane spheres of value; furthermore, faith in progress and novelty are increasingly defined as values themselves. Vattimo, op. cit, 105.

⁷ Progress in modernism can be achieved by evolution or revolution. Avant-garde which, among the modernist tendencies, cries most strongly for revolution, is a radical form of modernism, often opposed to its less radical variants. According to M. Veselinović-Hofman: “Avant-garde is a unique psychological, social and artistic phenomenon, which is – in its most typical way – realized through the organized, declared and aggressively anti-traditional movement; it aims to fulfill the tasks proclaimed in its manifesto, and its specific life span unfolds between explosion and combustion. Avant-garde is not a stylistic category, since it stands for the break up with continuity; therefore its role is to criticize the institution of art. Avant-garde represents an excessive moment in the history of 20th century modernism; avant-garde is esoteric, since it locks itself into the world of structuralized planning, intellectualism and de-subjectivisation; but, at the same time, it rebels against the esoteric, by trying to integrate artistic creation and everyday life.” Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, “Teze za reinterpretaciju jugoslovenske muzičke avangarde” [The Sketches for Re-Interpreting Yugoslav Musical Avant-garde], *Muzički talas* No. 30–31, 2002, 18–33.

⁸ The term introduced by Arnold Whittall, alongside equally problematic “modernist mainstream”. Whittall includes the likes of Richard Strauss, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Francis Poulenc, Paul Hindemith, Sergey Prokofiev, Aaron Copland, Benjamin Britten and Dmitry Shostakovich in moderate mainstream as its most prominent exponents, while modernist mainstream is represented by Igor Stravinsky, Elliott Carter, Michael Tippett, Olivier Messiaen, Henry Dutilleux, György Ligeti and Witold Lutosławski. See Whittall, 364–394.

⁹ Jasenka Andjelković, *Klavirska dela Vasilija Mokranjca* [Piano Works of Vasilije Mokranjac], Beograd, Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 1986 (unpublished typescript).

¹⁰ Levon Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Age 1917–1987*, Stockholm, Melos, 1998, 76.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 146.

¹² Sveta Lukić, “Socijalistički estetizam – Novi fenomen” [Socialist Aestheticism – A New Phenomenon], in: *Matrica našeg književnog života* [The Matrix of Our Literary Life], Niš, Gradina, 1983, 67–69.

middle-of-the-road,¹⁵ humanistic tradition,¹⁶ tonal music with false notes,¹⁷ conservative-modern music,¹⁸ officially approved modernism,¹⁹ normal state of art, well-adjusted art,²⁰ politically correct composers²¹, etc.

Moderated modernism in post-war Serbian music

The end of the Second World War found Serbia (and the entire former Yugoslavia) impoverished, demolished, devastated; apart from rebuilding the country the newly-established communist regime had to affirm its power, found new institutions or re-programme the existing ones. In respect of the technical level of musical discourse, one must bear in mind that the development of the professional musical life in Serbia began relatively late, only in the middle of the 19th century.²² This late effort towards establishing cultural institutions, educating the people, promoting bourgeois cultural values, and so on, was interrupted several times by wars. Due to these unfavourable circumstances, not a single internationally important composer emerged in the period of early modernism, a composer which could become a role-model for future generations (as Stravinsky, Bartók, Janáček or Szymanowski). However, Serbian composers and performers took huge steps forward, trying to catch up with what they had missed, and in less than a century they crossed the path from early-romantic/Biedermeier salon music, patriotic choruses

¹³ The terms used by Serbian composer Vladan Radovanović to describe the academic canon that young composers had to deal with in the beginning of their careers. About Radovanović's artistic theory and practice see Ivana Janković [Medić], *Sintezijska umetnost Vladana Radovanovića*, [The Synthesic Art of Vladan Radovanović], *Muzikologija* No. 3, 2003, 141–186.

¹⁴ Yves Knockaert, "Music and Modernism in Flanders", (Accessed on 10th January, 2007) <http://www.muziekcentrum.be/english/cdb/genre.asp?page=articledetail&g=1&Id=4499>.

¹⁵ David Fanning, *Shostakovich's Eight Quartet*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 5–7.

¹⁷ Yuri Kholopov, "Philip Gerskhovich's search for the lost essence of music" in Valeria Tsenova (ed.), *Underground Music From the Former USSR*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997, 35.

¹⁸ Arnold Whittall, *Music since the First World War*, Oxford, Clarendon Paperbacks, 1994, 90.

¹⁹ Hakobian, op. cit, 319.

²⁰ Ješa Denegri, *Pedesete – Teme srpske umetnosti* [1950s – The Themes of Serbian Art], Novi Sad, Svetovi, 1995, 12–13, 17–18.

²¹ Hakobian, op.cit, 146.

²² About the early development of Serbian musical culture see Tatjana Marković, *Transfiguracije srpskog romantizma – Muzika u kontekstu studija kulture* [Transfigurations of Serbian Romanticism – Music in the Context of Cultural Studies], Beograd, Univerzitet umetnosti, 2005.

and folk-music collections,²³ to the radical avant-garde works of the composers educated in Prague in the late 1920s/early 1930s, mostly in the class of Alois Hába. The avant-garde works of the members of the so-called 'Prague group' were youthful, technically unconvincing and experimental, but they still marked the period when Serbian music for the first time truly caught up with Europe. However, this was not the case with Serbian musical life in general, and upon their return to Belgrade, these composers found their quarter-tone, serial and expressionist works rejected both by critics and audiences. The reason for their failure to promote radical modernism music in Serbia was not the technical inconsistency of the pieces, but the under-development of musical life and its institutions in general.

A further reason for the lack of success and deeper impact of the Serbian music avant-garde in the 1930s can be found in Peter Bürger's claim that the main condition for it is a self-critique directed towards the entire institution of art in the mature bourgeois society.²⁴ Since Serbian/Yugoslav society was only just establishing bourgeois order and its institutions, there was no room for self-criticism; also, the radical interruption of this development after the Second World War, with the establishing of the communist regime and its cultural dogma, made it still less possible to criticize tradition.

After the Second World War, the Belgrade Music Academy continued its work, having been briefly interrupted during the war. The late 1940s saw the emergence of the first generation of composers completely trained in Belgrade. However, their point of departure was not the pre-war avant-garde, but socialist realism. The reasons for this were both technical and ideological. In the first respect, the fact that the Academy was still only a decade old made its professors fearful of dillentantism; hence they insisted on their students' mastering traditional forms and musical styles from the past, believing that without a solid technical base there could be no 'superstructure'.²⁵

²³ Marković identifies three characteristic discourses of Serbian musical Romanticism: the discourses of patriotism, folklore and lyric sentimentalism. Cf. *ibid.*

²⁴ Peter Bürger, *Teorija avangarde* [Peter Bürger, *The Theory of Avant-Garde*], Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1998, 23–50.

²⁵ See, for example, Vlastimir Peričić, „Tendencije razvoja srpske muzike posle 1945. godine” [Tendencies of Development in Serbian Music after 1945], *Muzički talas* br. 26, 2000, 68–70; Mirjana Veselinović–Hofman, *Srpska muzika druge polovine XX veka* [Serbian Music in the Second Half of 20th Century], manuscript, Beograd, 1998; Marija Kovač, *Simfonijska muzika Vasilija Mokranjca*, [The Symphonic Music of Vasilije Mokranjac], Beograd, Udruženje kompozitora Srbije, 1986, 1–6. Melita Milin explains the main reason for the preference for traditionalism over avant-garde

On the ideological level, the Communist party proclaimed that the ideal society had already been achieved, and so there was no need for further artistic (or political) revolutions (in fact, they would be harmful)! In the realm of music, the pre-war equalization of radical avant-garde music with the radical political left, promoted most eagerly by Vojislav Vučković,²⁶ was substituted by socialist realism imported directly from the USSR.²⁷ As Vlastimir Peričić noted, immediately after 1945 a paradoxical situation occurred, as the representatives of all three generations of composers expressed themselves in an almost identical musical language.²⁸ Socialist Realism was clearly anti-modernistic, and its ideologists imposed strong demands for “realist” art; however, art works were not supposed to represent life as it was, but rather a utopian vision of it. Hence, all genres of music, academic and popular, were supposed to be a soundtrack for the projected Bright Future!²⁹

The dogma of Socialist Realism was abandoned after only several years (as soon as Yugoslavia parted ways with the USSR and Eastern Block in 1948), but this only meant that the technical and ideological conditions for the creation of music became slightly less repressive. So-

in Serbia: “The negation of tradition, which is one of its [avant-garde’s] main positions, as well as the demand to start from ‘zero’ (tabula rasa), were too radical for the musical culture which had been trying to build its own tradition for the past century or so with a lot of enthusiasm and effort; so it was impossible for it to take a nihilist attitude towards tradition.” Milin, op. cit, 84.

²⁶ Vojislav Vučković (1910–1942) wrote his PhD thesis *Music as a Means of Propaganda* in Prague (where the Communist Party had been working legally), under the supervision of Zdeněk Nejedlý, another prominent exponent of communist ideas. Vučković continued his socio-cultural and political activism when he returned to Belgrade in 1934, and certainly influenced some of his friends and colleagues with his ideas and numerous writings. About his life and work see: Vojislav Vučković, *Studije, eseji, kritike* [Studies, Essays, Reviews], Beograd, Nolit, 1968 (collected and edited posthumously).

²⁷ Vučković was the first member of the Prague group to realize that the maxim ‘left in music – left in politics’ could not be applied adequately in Serbia; also, he was the one to “import” and promote Socialist Realism in Serbian music. One cannot know whether he would have maintained the same ideological positions after the Second World War, since he was killed by the Nazis in 1942.

²⁸ The members of the oldest generation of Serbian composers continued writing in their pre-war post-romantic manner, with notable effort to simplify their harmonic language; the members of the former “Prague group” (now in their late thirties/early forties) gave up their avant-garde past (which brought them closer to the eldest generation); this also determined the starting-point for the youngest generation, because most of them studied with the former avant-gardists. See Peričić, op. cit, 70.

²⁹ Compare to Šuvaković, op. cit, 320–321. Šuvaković, who writes from positions of poststructuralism and analytical theory, also reminds us that realism is but a theoretical dogma; cf. *ibid*, 289.

cialist Realism was gradually replaced with moderated modernism, an “official” form of modernism – modernist enough to promote the country’s relative openness towards world, but not radical enough to criticize and disturb the established order.

So, the decisive step was taken, but most composers were unsure how to continue from there. The attempt to establish continuity with the pre-war avant-garde was more difficult for composers than, say, painters or writers, because the visual arts and literature had much stronger and more influential pre-war avant-garde movements. On the other hand, the officials found art music generally unharmed because of its ambiguous and abstract nature, and they could tolerate excesses (in both technique and ideology) in music much easier than in more obviously mimetic arts such as film or literature.

The general opinion among music professionals in the early 1950s was that composers should seek novelty, but without discarding the traditional artistic means; that gradual and continuous introduction of new techniques was more desirable than an abrupt break with the past.³⁰ The word “new” here has relative meaning, since in the post-war Serbia even neo-classicism could be perceived as new, even avant-garde, because that style had not existed in the local pre-war musical scene.³¹

As for the technical level of musical discourse, Arnold Whittall identifies three typical features of works belonging to what he terms the ‘moderate mainstream’: 1) the distinction between consonance and dissonance (even though this was no longer an absolute), 2) the identifiable presence of motivic or thematic statement and development, and 3) the consistent use of rhythmic, metric regularity.³² Also the works should refer not only to tonality but also to the established genres of tonal composition, as sources to be critiqued, and even destabilized, but not disrupted – still less destroyed. Yet Whittall also admits that significant intersections between the moderate and the modernist could be detected, and that the immediate accessibility of either could not be guaranteed.³³

³⁰ See Milin, *op. cit.*, 56–59, where she quotes opinions of some of the most active participants in Serbian musical scene.

³¹ For example, one may refer to the critical reception of the first public presentation of the works by two young composers, Dušan Radić and Enriko Josif: Pavle Stefanović, “Dva seva munje u našoj muzičkoj žabokrečini” [Two Lightning-Strikes in Our Musical Mud], *Književne Novine*, 25th March 1954. On discrepancies between the critical reception of local avant-garde and the actual situation see “Prvi muzički biennale u Zagrebu – Pogledi i utisci” [The First Music Biennial in Zagreb – Overviews and Impressions], *Zvuk* 49–50, 1961, 485–492.

³² Whittall, 370,

³³ *Ibid.*

He also identifies certain common topoi of moderate music³⁴ and traces a basic separation in its corpus in terms of its adherence either to the relatively ‘romantic’ aspects of Mahler or the relatively ‘classic’ aspects of Sibelius.

However, when discussing Serbian postwar music, Melita Milin is much more precise, as she identifies four relatively independent ways of articulating moderately modern works, some of them having predecessors in Serbian music.³⁵ The first stream is the neo-expressionist one. Expressionism had divergent manifestations in pre-war Serbian music, ranging from atonal ‘maximalism’ rooted in late Romanticism, to quarter-tone and sixth-tone experiments; hence it was a handy tradition to relate to. On the other hand, the postwar academic community favoured preservation of traditional forms. So, the majority of composers started off by filling classical forms with freely-atonal music and gradually dissolving formal boundaries. Later on some of them introduced elements of twelve-note and serial techniques – but never consistently, and their role-model became Berg rather than Webern or the Darmstadt serialists.

The second approach could be described as a late reception of the objectivist type of neo-classicism, with possible role models of Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Hindemith. The sharp anti-romantic attitude, detachment, irony and general anti-expressiveness of neo-classicism were considered a major novelty in Serbian post-war music and greeted with both surprise and acclaim. Composers such as Dušan Radić, Enriko Josif and Milan Ristić wrote music that was perceived as avant-garde and non-conventional (due to the lack of Neo-classicism in Serbian music thus far), and yet relatively accessible, when compared to more radical forms of modernism. Vladan Radovanović in his early days also pursued Neo-classicism (which he called ‘polymusic’, thus distinguishing it from the canon of ‘academic classicism’)³⁶, but he soon became engaged in much

³⁴ Such as: the requiem, eternal rest in the face of violence; turbulent unease, psychic despair and spiritual conviction; irony; questioning of straightforward affirmation; etc. Whittall also notes that most prominent moderate composers (Britten and Shostakovich) were perfectly capable of using the ‘abstraction’ of symphonic design as the basis for profound ‘topical’ discourse, as well as achieving a balance between the personal and the traditional. Whittall, op. cit, 385, 389–390.

³⁵ Milin, however, does not argue (as I do) that the entire bulk of works that she analyzes should be labeled moderately modernistic. Her theoretical approach and analytical procedures are motivated with the desire to explore the nature of novelties in Serbian postwar music: what was considered new, how it was introduced, what was the reception and impact of those novelties etc. Cf: Milin, op. cit, 85–89.

³⁶ See Janković [Medić], *Sintezijska umetnost Vladana Radovanovića*, 141–186.

more radical pursuits and emerged as the sole consistently avant-garde Serbian composer.

The third way of articulating moderately modern music works, which aroused a lot of controversy but also met with critical approval, overlapped with the previous two in that it intertwined the neo-styles with a specific reception of Serbian medieval heritage and tradition. This was controversial because the communist ideologues of the multinational Yugoslavia demanded the suppression of national and religious characteristics, and instead imposed upon its peoples the creation of a new, super-national and atheistic Yugoslav identity. However, it was not musical features that distinguished this type of moderated modernism from the two already mentioned (although the incorporation of church modes, religious tunes and quasi-archaic instrumentation and manners of performance made it clearly distinguishable), but the general choice of topics and subject, the nostalgic/poeticized relation towards the distant past, and the aim to revive the “archaic” by using contemporary artistic means. The most prominent composers in this group were Ljubica Marić, Dušan Radić and Rajko Maksimović, whose entire output is characterized by the combination of extremely modern technical means and a lifelong inspiration with the Serbian Middle Ages.

The fourth, most ‘up-to-date’ and clearly internationally orientated tendency emerged in the late 1950s. Although avant-garde musical means had already become available to Serbian and Yugoslav composers, it was chiefly after the Biennale of Contemporary Music was founded in Zagreb in 1961³⁷ that composers were strongly encouraged to master and assimilate the latest avant-garde techniques (among them most notably tone clusters, aleatorics, micropolyphony, and to a lesser extent serialism). Gradually, almost all composers (especially the younger ones) felt the necessity to assimilate at least some avant-garde procedures, if not the avant-garde ideology in its entirety,³⁸ because avant-garde as a total social and artistic formation never really happened

³⁷ Ever since its foundation in 1961 the Festival welcomed the most important contemporary composers, such as Stockhausen, Lutosławski, Kagel, Schaeffer (in 1961), Cage, Stravinsky (in 1963) etc. and played a decisive role for many young Yugoslav composers because it helped them become up-to-date with all the latest achievements of contemporary music.

³⁸ György Peteri defines this ideological position as “defensive integrationism”. In his view, cultural and academic relations with the West during the 1960s (he uses the example of Hungary, but the same might be said for Serbia/former Yugoslavia) were marked by deliberate efforts to import and “domesticate” Western economic [and cultural] knowledge. See Peteri, “Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in Hungary in 1960s”, *Slavonica* Vol. 10 No. 2, 2004, 119–120.

in Serbia. Although most scholars who analyzed the ‘post-Biennale’ period in Serbian and Yugoslav music did consider it avant-garde,³⁹ it is my belief that this “local avant-garde” actually also belongs to moderated modernism, for both technical and ideological reasons. Firstly, it appeared relatively late and its artistic means were only new (and relatively “shocking”) in the local context.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it emerged through the process of gradual assimilation of new technical means, and not through radical and organized artistic revolution. Also, it never functioned as an organized social formation, and it produced neither influential manifestos nor a strong discursive environment. But, the most decisive reason may be that it never really questioned the entire ideology of moderated modernism, which could be characterized as the determination to open towards Europe and ‘modernize’ and actualize Serbian culture, but not at the cost of destroying the existing institutions of musical and cultural life, and without calling for the radical denial of tradition.⁴¹

Critical reception of moderated modernism

As is already widely understood today, music histories only tell us about historiography, not about the actual music. Opinions regarding Serbian moderated modernism have ranged from apologetic to dismis-

³⁹ In the first book devoted to the musical avant-garde in Serbia M. Veselinović-Hofman introduced the notions of the “local type of avant-garde” and “pseudo-avant-garde” to describe different problems of avant-gardes in the countries “outside” European artistic “centre”: cf. Mirjana Veselinović, *Stvaralačka prisutnost evropske avangarde u nas* [The Creative Presence of the European Avant-garde in Our Country], Beograd, Univerzitet umetnosti, 1983, 33–34; Tijana Popović-Mladjenović accepts these notions and argues that the works by composers such as Vladan Radovanović, Berislav Popović, Petar Bergamo, Petar Ozgijjan, Rajko Maksimović and Zoran Hristić belong to the local type of avant-garde, i.e. that they represent a local version/reception of European postwar avant-garde; but also that they, nevertheless, produced “the second avant-garde impact in Serbian music” (the first one being the impact of Prague group): cf. Tijana Popović-Mladjenović, “Differentia specifica – Iz kompozitorske prakse 60-ih godina u Beogradu” [Differentia specifica – From the Composers’ Practice of the 1960s in Belgrade], *Muzički talas* No. 4–6, 1995, 28–38; No. 1–3, 1996, 36–52; No. 4, 1996, 49; see also Milin, op. cit, 156–209.

⁴⁰ Even before the Music Biennale in Zagreb had been founded, many Yugoslav music professionals (mostly composers and musicologists) had already been well informed about the European avant-garde; however, the pieces in which the most radical compositional techniques were applied did sound disturbing to the majority of music listeners who didn’t have the opportunity to travel abroad and/or to read about the contemporary trends in Europe.

⁴¹ Besides, by this time European avant-garde had already lost its sharpness and the ability to shock, and the imminent emergence of the new paradigm of postmodernism would soon put an end to all modernist utopian ideals and obsessions with constant progress.

sive, from eulogistic to condemnatory. So far not a single piece of research has been carried out in any of the former Yugoslav republics regarding the political significance of moderated modernism (especially its later and more “avant-garde” fractions) in the light of the country’s policy of flirting both with the Western and Eastern bloc during the Cold War (but being a member of neither). The policy of Tito’s and Communist Party’s regime towards the West was to promote the country as the most “western”, liberal, advanced and democratic among the communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Cultural (including musical) products were designed and advertised in accordance with this strategy/ideology, both in the West and at home; and the foundation of Zagreb Biennale and other similar events confirmed the country’s “openness” towards Western Europe and assimilation of its cultural values.

This cultural exchange with Western Europe also left an impact on local music historiography. By the end of the 1950s, as Serbian composers and critics started to have regular contacts with West, and especially after the Biennale was established, the general doxa emerged that a vast majority of Serbian music was old-fashioned and backward, an attitude that was only enhanced by similar objections coming from the Westerners themselves.⁴²

To call someone a moderated modernist 30 years ago would have been an insult. The fact that “the serialist mafia overtook music historiography”⁴³ strongly shaped the musical discourses in Western Europe, since their premises and ideologies were built on the basis of romantic/modernist notions of progress, evolution, artistic/aesthetic values, geniuses and masterpieces. Until recent revisionism, the scholars inclined to modernist thinking believed musical means to be evolutionary

⁴² However, their criticism was directed towards both Eastern and Western moderated modernism. As Danielle Fosler-Lussier puts it: “While some Western critics, such as Adorno and Scherchen, regarded the twelve-tone music as the best bulwark against the populism promulgated in the East, the relative merits of modernist and tonal idioms remained the subject of controversy, and many composers continued to employ a variety of tonal styles. Still, the twelve-tone technique and other serial methods remained prestigious and influential among academically trained composers until the 1970s, when the abandonment of this technique by some prominent composers began to garner critical attention.” Danielle Fosler-Lussier, “Multiplication by Minus One’: Musical Values in East-West Engagement”, *Slavonica* Vol. 10 No. 2, 2004, 131. Fosler-Lussier rightly argues that the reason for this reaction against tonal and moderate music was the Cold War: “During the early years of the cold war, political pressures led many composers and critics to dogmatism as the cultures were defined in contradistinction to one another.” *Ibid*, 136.

⁴³ Susan McClary, “The World According to Taruskin”, *Music and Letters*, Vol. 87 No. 3, August 2006, 408–415.

in nature; also, they regarded the entire history of music as a continuous progress, where a style is supplanted and surpassed/improved by another one, leading straightforwardly from romanticism towards serialism.⁴⁴ Maybe this was not a deliberate fabrication of history, but how the music professionals participating in the events saw them; and, gradually, they acquired the institutional and discursive power, which enabled them to promote their standpoints and to create the avant-garde mythology.

An analysis of postwar music historiography and other writings proves that there were at least three relatively different and independent streams of criticism directed towards moderated modernism. Although their writers represented different ideologies, all of them were sharply opposed to the possibility of an affirmative evaluation of moderated modernism.⁴⁵

The first stream originated from Anton Webern's belief in the 12-tone technique as an unavoidable historical development of musical means.⁴⁶ For him, tonality was a thing belonging to the past, and he adjusted the entire history of music to fit his agenda. His discourse is naturalistic, quasi-scientific and evolutionist, while his trajectory is mostly concerned with technical level of musical discourse, although its ideological level is not to be neglected.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Richard Taruskin famously calls this interpretation of postwar music 'pseudohistorical fiction', 'rhetorical' 'historiographical myth', 'propaganda', 'browbeating'; he claims that the most iniquitous thing about it was that historians have believed it, and in books, particularly textbooks, propagated it in association with the ideas of the increasing importance of motivization over the course of the 19th century and of the supposed collapse of tonality. Cf. Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. IV, 259–261. The same tendency is confirmed by Arnold Whittall, to whom Taruskin is otherwise quite opposed: "These comments reflected the increasing tendency for most younger music critics of the time to downgrade the moderate mainstream; by the late 1960s it was common to take Britten and Shostakovich for granted, and to regard the fringe rather than the centre as the principal site of significant development." Whittall, op. cit, 375.

⁴⁵ The critics of the "Darmstadt" clique were harsh even towards Germany's own moderate composers, such as Hans Werner Henze; and Ian Kemp reminds us that Hindemith, who was once proclaimed the "leader of Germany's avant-garde composers" was after the war considered "an antiquated irrelevance". See Ian Kemp, *Hindemith*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970, 7; 56.

⁴⁶ Since Webern was killed in 1945, his ideas and writings were transmitted and promoted by some of his students and apologists, most notably by Willi Reich, René Leibovitz, Hermann Scherchen, etc.

⁴⁷ Since 1930s Webern started to sympathize with Nazi ideology. He saw himself as the last bud of the magnificent German tradition starting from Bach, whose development was immanent, straightforward and superior to everything else. Compare Anton Webern, *The Path Towards New Music* (edited by Willi Reich), Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr, 1963: "Composition with twelve notes has achieved a degree of complete

The most influential “philosopher of new music”, Theodor W. Adorno,⁴⁸ believed the spirit of an epoch to be sedimented in the musical material. For him, all the works created on the basis of “old” means are false, conformist, regressive. Thus, only avant-garde music has the ethical reason to exist, because it does not conform to the ideology of capitalist society.⁴⁹ Adorno argues that tonal music can no longer reflect social relations because it is worn out, empty and banal, and thus it contributes to preserving the reigning social order. However, Adorno does allow the possibility that in peripheral parts of Europe, not “corrupted” by late capitalism, tonal music may not sound so worn out as in the West.⁵⁰

The third line of criticism came from the composers gathered around the summer courses in Darmstadt, who were the exponents of the “zero hour”⁵¹ philosophy/ideology. They wanted to start anew after the Second World War, from a time “without the past”, and to liberate music from its utilitarian function, because the great tradition of Romantic music was (ab)used during the war for the purposes of fascist propaganda.⁵² Thus, they aimed towards autonomy of art, precisely against Adorno’s claim that music could not exist apart from its social function⁵³ (which is why

unity that was not even approximately there before. [...] And all the rest is dilettantism” (p. 18); “For the last quarter of a century major and minor haven’t existed anymore! Only most people still don’t know it” (p.36); “This took place via Wagner and then Schoenberg, whose first works were still tonal. But in the harmony he developed, the relationship to a keynote became unnecessary, and this meant the end of something that has been the basis of musical thinking from the days of Bach to our time: major and minor disappeared. Schoenberg expresses this in an analogy: double gender has given rise to a higher race!” (p. 37); etc. About Webern’s controversial political engagement see Richard Taruskin, “Speed Bumps”, *19th Century Music*, Vol. XXIX No. 2, 2005, 205.

⁴⁸ Theodor Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike* [Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of New Music*], Beograd, Nolit, 1969.

⁴⁹ Adorno’s main objection against the postwar avant-garde is that it is formalist, non-expressive, autonomous, therefore insufficiently socially engaged.

⁵⁰ “... like in some rural parts of South-Eastern Europe, until recently, the tonal material could be used without shame”. Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike*, 63.

⁵¹ On the concept of “zero-point” or “zero-hour” of Western and especially German music see Dibelius, op. cit, 15–31; idem, “Komponovanje uprkos dogmatskom pritisku” [Composing Despite Dogmatic Pressure], *Novi Zvuk* br. 10, 1997, 17–27; Fosler-Lussier, op. cit, 130–131; Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Music*, Vol. V, 15.

⁵² Most of these composers came from countries which had fascist regimes during the war – Germany, Italy, Hungary, etc.

⁵³ But soon, some of them started to use music for purposes of expressing their political and religious beliefs, like Luigi Nono (who was a radical leftist), or Karlheinz Stockhausen, who put his entire output since the mid-1960s in the service of promoting the ideology of the New Age spiritual movement!

they worshiped the supposedly “abstract” Webern).⁵⁴ Their radical formalism, objectivism, constructivism and the quest for “new sound” were motivated by the desire to create absolute novelty, and to break any connection with the tradition which had been misused or had proved impotent during the war. In their outlook and output musical modernism reached one of its most radical points: everything apart from the completely new was considered bad! Their formalist and elitist position proclaimed the programmatic content, conscious usage of recognizable musical codes or “intonation spheres”, expressiveness and the urgency to communicate with the audiences (i.e. all the main preoccupations of moderated modernism) completely undesirable.⁵⁵

In Serbia, the musicologists and composers who were apologists for the avant-garde were equally critical towards moderated modernism; they drew on all three streams of criticism.⁵⁶ Others, more inclined to “accessible” music, used all sorts of euphemisms and explanations to justify it.⁵⁷ They either recognized its topoi and praised their ethical and moral values, or they promoted the moderated language for its presumed

⁵⁴ They paid no attention to the fact that Webern was sympathizing with the Nazi movement during the war (perhaps because his music was neither topical nor affirmative, which made it unsuitable for propaganda purposes; therefore it was not misused by the Nazis). In other words, they responded to the technical, not to the ideological level of his musical discourse (just as in his “manifesto” he mostly discussed technical progress). As Rachel Beckles Willson reminds us, “The trend towards twelve-tone and serial techniques intensified and in 1953 the celebration of Webern elevated him to the symbol of a prophet.” Rachel Beckles Willson: “Longing for a National Rebirth: Mythological Tropes in Hungarian Music Criticism 1968–1974”, *Slavonica* Vol. 10 No. 2, 2004, 142.

⁵⁵ As Beckles Willson argues, although some of the Western writers showed signs of polite tolerance towards Eastern composers, confessing that their eclecticism was linked to their domestic situation, this polite tolerance should not be mistaken for enthusiasm. *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁶ For example, Radovanović put it bluntly that moderate music was a “mixture of European music romanticism and our folklore plus occasional and moderate dissonance.” He also warned that promoters of such music suggested that contemporary music was all about “dodecaphony, dissonancy and lack of good musical ideas”. Cf: “Reč je o modernoj muzici, Mladi beogradski kompozitori o muzičkom životu kod nas” [A Word About Modern Music. Belgrade Young Composers About Our Musical Life], *Književne novine* No. 5–6, 1955, 10.

⁵⁷ For example, Vasilije Mokranjac was “defended” thus: “He didn’t pay attention to the lot of avant-garde experiments, especially those which were their own goal; and yet he wrote in a manner which could not be denied contemporaneity. His works, which have always been acclaimed both by critics and the audiences alike, have proved once again that the language alone can not determine the artistic value, but only what has been expressed by it!” Dejan Despić, *In memoriam Vasilije Mokranjac (1923–1984)*, *Zvuk* br. 3, 1984, 59–60.

communicative superiority over more radical musical means. As we have already observed, they believed that Serbian composers should gradually “modernize” their music. However, even they actually started following the modernist ideology, talking of music in terms of “retrogradeness” and “eclecticism” (though at least some of them, like Peričić and Stefanović, recognized underlying causes in political and cultural events and contexts). Luckily, neither of the two opposed factions had a decisive discursive power in Serbia; there was never a definitive consensus about which composers were exemplary (“the greatest”), and this “democratic” situation quite smoothly “evolved” (or dissolved) into the postmodern pluralism of styles and opinions.

The final problem regarding moderated modernism, which falls beyond the scope of the present writing, concerns with the evaluation of the entire “style”, as well as its specific products. In doing so, one must take into account both the technical and ideological level of musical discourse, as well as other discourses constituting the entire world of art in given societies. In the case of Serbian moderated modernism, any future attempt to analyze and evaluate either individual works or the period in general, should produce an intertextual discursive network, in which music pieces could be positioned, discussed and judged not for their “artistic value” (even if they do achieve the high level of technical mastery), but for their artistic and social relevance.

My aim here was to show that moderated modernism was neither good, nor bad, or it was both, depending on the context of its emergence, as well as on the ideologies brought to bear on it and which in turn determined the criteria. In any case, moderated modernism is a very useful construct for analyzing, on the one hand, political ideologies and their influence on arts, and on the other, artistic ideologies and their reciprocal impact upon societies.

Ивана Медић

ИДЕОЛОГИЈА УМЕРЕНОГ МОДЕРНИЗМА
У СРПСКОЈ МУЗИЦИ И МУЗИКОЛОГИЈИ
(*Резиме*)

Велики број музичких остварења насталих у Србији у периоду између 1950. и 1980. може се означити оксимороном *умерени модернизам*, који денотира политички неутралан, друштвено прихватљив, пријемчив и не-проблематичан тип модерног уметничког израза. Његове основне карактеристике јесу: склоност уметника ка помирењу авангардних и традиционалних, интернационалних и регионалних тенденција и вредности; уверење да

композитори треба да теже иновацијама, али не по цену одбацивања традиционалних изражајних средстава; схватање да је постепено увођење нових техника пожељније од наглог прекида са прошлошћу. Разлози за овакве ставове су како техничке, тако и идеолошке природе. Поред *умереног модернизма*, у употреби су и бројни сродни изрази: *умерени мејнстрим*, *умерено савремени проседе*, *умерени идиом*, *социјалистички естетизам*, *академски модернизам*, *темперовани модернизам*, *хуманистичка традиција*, *средњи пут*, *конзервативни модернизам*, *политички коректна уметност*, итд.

При одређивању музичких карактеристика умереног модернизма, установили смо да су у српској послератној музици била заступљене четири релативно независне тенденције (нео-експресионизам, нео-класицизам, нео-средњовековни модел и локална авангарда). Мада су неке од ових струја биле “модерније” од других (односно сразмера “иновативних” и “традиционалних” компоненти се разликовала од случаја до случаја), заједничке су им одлике: еклектичност, релативно кашњење у асимилацији нових тенденција у односу на шири европски контекст, релативна “новост” тих тенденција, као и оклевање да се предузме радикална и организована уметничка револуција. Умерени модернисти никада нису извели дефинитиван отклон од традиције, нити дестабилизовали постојеће институције музичког живота Србије.

Испитивање критичке рецепције умереног модернизма у Србији, али и у ширем европском контексту, показало је да се евалуација овог стила и његових појединачних продуката може вршити тек када се узму у обзир како технички и идеолошки ниво музичког дискурса, тако и други дискурси који утичу на формирање света уметности у датом друштву. У том смислу, умерени модернизам се указао као веома користан конструкт за анализирање како политичких идеологија и њиховог дејства на уметност, тако и уметничких идеологија и њиховог повратног утицаја на друштво у којем настају.

UDC 78.036:78.072[(497.11)“1950/1980”