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**ANCIENT GREEK MYTHOLOGY MEDIATED BY LATIN  
CULTURE: ON VLASTIMIR TRAJKOVIĆ'S *ARION* AND  
*ZEPHYRUS RETURNS*\***

**Abstract:** Vlastimir Trajković (b. 1947) is a prominent Serbian composer with a strong inclination towards subjects from ancient Greek mythology. Among his most important achievements may be counted *Arion – le nuove musiche per chitarra ed archi* (1979) and *Zephyrus Returns* for flute, violin and piano (2003). Two important aspects of those works are discussed in the present article: 1. the line that connects them to ancient Greek culture via French Modernism (Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen) and Renaissance poetry and music (Petrarch, Caccini, Monteverdi); 2. modality, which has proved its vitality through long periods of the history of European music, beginning with ancient Greek modes, reaching its high point in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and re-emerging at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in different hybrid forms. Trajković is seen as a composer who has shaped his creative identity by exploring the rich musical heritage of the Latin European nations, especially the contributions of Debussy and Ravel.

**Key words:** Vlastimir Trajković, Serbian music, ancient Greek mythology

The list of works dealing with ancient Greek myths in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Serbian art music is not a particularly long one. The reason for that may be found almost certainly in the predominant orientation, at least in the first half of the century, towards subjects from Serbian cultural heritage, with the aim of creating a national school of music. After a modest collection of only a handful of works dealing with ancient Greek topics written before 1945,<sup>1</sup> the two post-war decades saw a growing number of pieces of different genres

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<sup>1</sup> Among them was the melodrama *The Death of Pericles* by Stanislav Binički (1872–1942).

inspired by those themes: several operas and ballets, an oratorio, a cycle of songs, and incidental music.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to be certain about the reasons for this heightened interest, especially as the quantity of works was still not very large. It may simply be that the then younger generations wished to enlarge the programmatic scope of their works towards ancient Greek (and Roman) subjects that were seen as universal – belonging to all humanity.

My article will focus on the works of one composer, Vlastimir Trajković, but first a few words will be devoted to the pieces of two other contemporary authors, both characterised by fresh and creative approaches to their chosen themes.

Vuk Kulenović's (b. 1946) *Mechanical Orpheus* for string orchestra (1991) is a piece based on repetitive procedures, which is a typical feature of this composer's style. The original impulse for the music came from Rainer Maria Rilke's poem *Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes* (1904) in which an original motif of Eurydice's indifference to her husband's striving to make her return to the world of the living is introduced. Rilke explored the myth from Eurydice's perspective, re-imagining her as numbed by death and therefore unaware of her extraordinary chance to leave Hades: "Like a fruit / suffused with its own mystery and sweetness, / she was filled with her vast death...". In a short comment on his own work, Kulenović makes reference to that poem, adding a new motif of lost memories, derived from the story of the Underworld's River Lethe whose water brings forgetfulness. Having drunk water from Lethe, Eurydice does not recognize Orpheus and is not saddened by his having turned his head back in order to see her. Kulenović states that "Orpheus turns his head back many times, as if in some merry-go-round of memories" (Bulletin 1 1992: 4).

Anja Đorđević's (b. 1970) chamber opera *Narcissus and Echo* (2002), structured as a number-opera in three short acts (libretto by Marija Stojanović), takes place in modern times. It is centred on the self-obsessed yuppie Narcissus

<sup>2</sup> Mihailo Vukdragović (1900–1986), music for *Medea*; Milenko Živković (1901–1964), music for *King Oedipus*; Božidar Trudić (1911–1989), *Songs of Ancient Hellada* for voice and chamber ensemble; Rudolf Bruči (1917–2008), *Circe*, ballet, and *Prometheus*, opera; Svetomir Nastasijević (1902–1979), *Antigone*, opera; Petar Stajić (1915–2008), *Odysseus and the Phaeacians*, oratorio; *Odysseus and Circe*, ballet; *Laocoon*, opera; Vasilije Mokranjac (1923–1984), incidental music for *Orestes* and *Heracles*.

and his opposite number, the girl Echo, who is in love with him and who is represented by her voice only (sung “naturally”, in a non-operatic way). The opera is heavily charged with layers of meaning that invite psychoanalytical interpretations. The overall tone is one of parody, and critical of the contemporary orientation towards corporeality, hedonism, and rapid social advancement – somehow strange in a country that had recently emerged from a nightmarish decade of wars in ex-Yugoslavia, and was highly traumatized by them. The musical models parodied are taken from baroque operas (even including arias for a very high tenor that make reference to castrato arias), combined with effects derived from cabaret, pop and rock music.

Anja Đorđević has also composed the stage cantata *Atlas* for voice, narrator and chamber orchestra (2008), based on the book *Weight: The Myth of Atlas and Heracles*, by the contemporary British writer Jeanette Winterson. In an interview the composer said that she had always been interested in ancient myths that still resound in our time (S.L.R. 2010: 15). She found the text she needed in Winterson’s book, in whose preface the author summarises her motive for writing: “*Weight* moves far away from the simple story of Atlas’s punishment and his temporary relief when Heracles takes the world off his shoulders. I wanted to explore loneliness, isolation, responsibility, burden, and freedom, too, because my version has a very particular end not found elsewhere” (Winterson 2005: XIV).

Turning to Vlastimir Trajković, a composer to whose works referring to ancient Greek myths the rest of this article will be devoted, it is important to state that they are seen not only as highly accomplished from the artistic point of view, but also as signifiers of certain ideological content which invite interpretation.

Born in 1947, Trajković began to study in the post-serialist period, when the crisis of post-war Avant-garde was quite evident. He graduated in composition from the Belgrade Music Academy with Vasilije Mokranjac, a highly respected Serbian composer who, although himself very cautious in his approach to modern trends, encouraged his pupils to follow their creative curiosity in all possible directions.

In this article two of Trajković's works will be discussed from the point of view of a contemporary (Serbian) composer's desire to situate his world of music within the rich European tradition that had Greek culture as an important inspiration for renewal at a critical moment in its history. Trajković's works make evident his strong inclination to the Franco-Latin current of European music, whose outstanding creative periods such as the Renaissance, 18<sup>th</sup>-century Classicism and Impressionism, were different interpretations of ancient Greek culture.

After his earliest attempts to compose in the late 1960s, Trajković was drawn towards 20<sup>th</sup>-century French music, more specifically towards the works of Debussy and Ravel. He decided to spend the year 1977/78 in Paris in order to continue his studies in the class of Olivier Messiaen. His case was unique, as the Serbian composers of his generation were chiefly attracted by the possibilities created by Polish Avant-garde music. Trajković obviously felt that there still existed new approaches to music that would strive neither towards the continuation of Avant-garde trends, nor towards post-modernist "games". As a result, his œuvre contains well merged elements of different styles, which in most works create a kind of post-impressionistic effect and atmosphere, a balanced and clear form, with a complex harmonic and rhythmic organisation.<sup>3</sup> Trajković also shows a refined feeling for suggesting the changeable pace of time and its illusionary effects, which was one among many aspects that drew him to the music of Claude Debussy, as shown in *Tempora Retenta* for symphonic orchestra (1971), one of his first fully accomplished works. Exploring the modal harmonies in the works of French modernists, especially those of Debussy, Ravel and Messiaen, he developed

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<sup>3</sup> Trajković's works have received laudatory remarks from Olivier Messiaen and Alexandre Tansman, amongst others: "Vlastimir Trajković is a Yugoslav composer of very great talent. He is endowed with a poetical nature, and possesses an acute sense of timbre and original harmonies, as well as an excellent orchestration technique [...]. His *Duo for piano and orchestra*, very strong and very powerfully written, probably his masterpiece, is certainly a work of exceptional beauty [...]" (Olivier Messiaen in the brochure about Vlastimir Trajković, published in French, Éditions Max Eschig, Paris, 1979), and the following: "I consider Vlastimir Trajković a revelation of a peerless talent [...], a talent of powerful individuality in which strong vitality combines with a very appealing poetic imagination. [...] His music [...] reveals itself as an admirable (and nowadays rare) synthesis of intuitive invention and constructional, controlled intelligence. [...]" (Alexandre Tansman in the same brochure).

his own use of harmony, tending towards sensuous and more relaxed harmonic landscapes, thus rejecting the line of harsh sounds and atonal climates of much of post-1945 music. The world of Franco-Latin Europe had always been close to him, and in some works he also expressed high esteem for the heritage of ancient Greece, specifically that of mythology, as will be shown shortly. One detail may also shed some light on Trajković's special relationship to ancient Greek culture. Specifically, he insisted that the titles of the three movements of his Concerto for piano and orchestra in B flat major (1990) should be always written in Greek, in the original or in transcription: 1. Stásis. Anoché. Hypóstasis; 2. Áchtchos. Epískepsis. Hesychía; 3. Diaponémata. Apólysis.<sup>4</sup> Trajković's *Concerto for viola and orchestra in G minor* (1993) also has subtitles in Greek: 1. Théseis kai metathéseis prōtai; 2. Nēmēmía. Algos hēsychaion; 3. Théseis kai metathéseis deúterai.<sup>5</sup> Some of his works make use of Italian or French for the same purpose. For instance, his Sonata for flute and piano and his Sonata for violin and viola have Italian texts. They are French and Italian in *Le retour des zéphyres / Zefiro torna* and exclusively French in *Jugs and stoups (D'aiguières et d'alcarazas)*. All these carefully formulated texts indicate the specific worlds of culture closest to Trajković, those with which he has always felt strongest connection.

Before approaching *Arion* and *Zephyrus Returns*, the two works announced in the title of this article, a short comment will be given on *Epimetheus* for organ, a piece preceding the other two. It was written in 1977, at

<sup>4</sup> The words are in ancient Greek but are still used and are common in modern Greek:

*Anoché* means forbearance, endurance, allowance.

*Hypóstasis* (produced from hypo, meaning under, and stasis) means the foundation, something that supports. Also, the essence, the substance (which is the latinization of hypóstasis) It is also the name of a category of neumes in Byzantine music notation.

*Áchtchos* means weight, burden, as well as sorrow, grief.

*Epískepsis* [deriving from epi (on) and skepsis (thought)] means in ancient Greek a looking at, inspection, consideration, reflexion. In modern Greek its most common meaning is visit.

*Hesychía* means stillness, quiet, silence.

*Diaponémata* is very little used in modern Greek. It is the plural of *diapónema* that means a work or anything achieved through hard labour, proving a theory.

*Apólysis* means release, deliverance. It is used in church for the end of the liturgy (the dismissal). I am grateful to Prof. Katy Romanou for kindly providing me with the meaning of those terms.

<sup>5</sup> In English: 1. First Theses and Metatheses; 2. The Windless Landscape. A Tacit Pain; 3. Second Theses and Metatheses.

the time when Trajković was staying in Paris as Messiaen's student, but perhaps surprisingly, it does not contain any reference to the music of the French master. Instead, the influence of American minimalism may be detected, and this would prove to be more than just a passing interest for the composer. The three movements bear the titles *Epimetheús*, *To koutíon tís Pandóras* [Pandora's box] and *Elpís mataía* [Futile hope].

One may wonder exactly how the titles of the work and of its movements relate to the music. It is significant that Trajković, according to his own testimony,<sup>6</sup> gave those titles only upon having finished the piece; he became aware then of the "minimalistically-pagan sound of the work" and found it suitable to employ titles referring to ancient Greek myth. The same applies to his other works, to mention only *Arion* and *Zephyrus Returns* – and not only to their titles and subtitles, but also to the glosses and dedications they carry, all those texts being viewed as "corresponding in a relevant way" with the musical text.

The first piece that will be discussed is *Arion – le nuove musiche per chitarra ed archi* (1979) whose first performances were received with great surprise by the Belgrade public, accustomed as they were to the often aggressive Avant-garde music of younger composers, since the 15-minute-long piece was almost defiantly gentle and peaceful. Its title refers to the monodic *stile recitativo* – an allusion to Giulio Caccini's collection of madrigals and arias *Le nuove musiche* (1602). Trajković's work obviously pleads for a reappraisal of the post-1945 development of art music, rejecting the obsessive avant-garde search for novelties. As is well known, Caccini's "new music" was an important contribution to the aspirations of certain Italian composers of his time to create music that would possess a new expressivity – "almost speaking in tones" (as he writes in the Introduction to his collection). Trajković's *Arion* has no vocal parts in it; the "new expressivity" is explored there within the frame of monodic writing in the strings, but also, in a way, in the guitar part.

Six verses by the Roman poet Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) from the *Liber Fastorum* Calendar, Book II – February, stand as a motto of the work, which make reference to the legend of Arion, and are linked with the

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<sup>6</sup> Related by the composer to the author of this article.

disappearance of the constellation of the Dolphin on 3 February.<sup>7</sup> A poet and singer from Lesbos, inventor of the dithyramb, Arion could be compared to Orpheus. After having stayed in Sicily and southern Italy (Magna Graecia) for some time, he wished to return to Greece, but the sailors of the boat planned to kill him. He obtained the favour of singing one last time and then took the chance to escape, jumping into the sea, where he was saved by a dolphin charmed by his song. Apollo then welcomed Arion among the stars and transformed the eight-star constellation of the Dolphin into a nine-star one.

Known for his inclination to supply the scores of his (almost exclusively instrumental) works with comments regarding his aesthetical aims and performance details, Vlastimir Trajković also added a short text on the occasion of the premiere of the work: “Arion.../ heavenly player; heavenly singer;/ Arion.../ Harmony, simplicity, tonality, repetition.../ REPETITION.../ obsessive repetition. / Flow. / Time from times. / TIME / THE TIME / IN TIME / Kairos and Chronos”. Although Trajković has not been willing to reproduce this text since the premiere, it is quoted here as a relevant testimony to the author’s aims concerning the emotional climate of the piece. Another comment by Trajković, quoted in the booklet that accompanies the CD of his music, completes the author’s perspective: “This is *Greek* music, Mediterranean music, a musical harmony of natural elements, but above all, *Arion* is an apotheosis of the aquatic component, that of the Sea, a sea of which the surface is not agitated but perfectly calm. The music is serious, more *Doric* than *Ionic*.” (Bebler 2001: 6).

To sum up: Vlastimir Trajković, as author of the work, found it necessary to make the listeners of *Arion* aware of his cultural and artistic preferences, by linking the work (1) to Greek and Roman mythology (the title), (2) to Roman poetry (Ovid’s verses); (3) to the Renaissance movement, itself of course, linked to Antiquity (Caccini’s collection); (4) to Trajković’s own aesthetics based on

<sup>7</sup> “(...) Inde (fide maius) tergo delphina recurvo / Se memorant oneri supposuisse novo. / Ille sedens citharamque tenens pretiumque vehendi / Cantat et aequoreas carmine mulcet aquas. / Di pia facta vident: astris delphina recepit / Iuppiter et stellas iussit habere novem (...)” [verses 113–118]. Translation into English: “Then (beyond belief) they say a dolphin / Yielded its back to the unaccustomed weight. / Sitting there, Arion gripped the lyre, and paid his fare / In song, soothing the ocean waves with his singing. / The gods see good deeds: Jupiter took the dolphin / And ordered its constellation to contain nine stars.” From: Ovid, *Fasti*, Book Two. Translated by A. S. Kline. See the Internet site: [http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/OvidFastiBkTwo.htm#\\_Toc69367684](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/OvidFastiBkTwo.htm#_Toc69367684)

“harmony, simplicity, tonality, repetition” (fragment from his comment on the work); as well as to his high esteem for ancient Greek culture as a whole (“This is *Greek* music...”). The music of *Arion* corresponds fully to the programme described: its character is meditative and slightly nostalgic, objectively distanced; the sounding of the chords is prolonged and separated by pauses, suggesting tranquillity and stillness; the effect of simplicity is achieved through the use of minimalistic and repetitive techniques, the harmony is derived from the monodic line and has modal (tonal) features. At the time (1979), those features were regarded as almost subversive, since Avant-garde thinking was still considered to be a necessary requirement for a piece of new music to be considered “serious” and “responsible”, at least in Serbia (itself part of ex-Yugoslavia). Trajković’s affinity with the aesthetics of Impressionism, concretely of Debussy and Ravel, may be observed in the refined sonorities and sensuous harmonies of *Arion*, its static quality and quasi-improvisatory effects, with subtle changes of tempi. Eight sustained chords whose modal sounds can easily be associated with jazz, presented successively in the strings from the very start, and followed by eight short melodies of modal features in the guitar part, are conceived as an introduction to the central sections in which the singing of Arion is evoked in the strings with the magical effects of glissandi and flageolet-tones, whereas the guitar part illustrates the mythical singer as accompanying himself on the lyre. See EXAMPLE 1.

The other work by Vlastimir Trajković worth mentioning in the context of ancient Greek mythological subjects is *Zephyrus Returns [and Brings Clear Weather]* (*Zefiro torna e 'l bel tempo rimena*), or: *Three live images of mythological scenes*, after Petrarch (1304–1374), for flute, violin and piano (2003). Subtly evoking far-away landscapes and mythical events, illustrating them at certain points (mild winds, waves on the surface of the sea, sprinkling water, birdsong) or marking the presence of the main “phenomena” and “characters” (the appearance of which – for instance of Mars, Venus and Harmonia in the second movement and that of “The stars turning pale” in the first – is indicated in the score), the composer creates luminous and magical sound images rich with inner movement, but at the same time retains control over them, suggesting nevertheless a marked sense of freedom. Constant, but almost imperceptible



changes of the musical material on the micro level lead to moments when the need to introduce new material is felt, but this is never done by sharp contrast. The imaginative and refined ametrical rhythmical animation of the musical material produces the effect of fluidity and dematerialisation – suitable for the suggestion of emotions born from meditations on eternal Nature and man's confrontation with the World and its Mystery. The third movement is imbued with dance rhythms, which is most probably to be understood as a gesture of honouring Maurice Ravel's poetics of dance.

As is often the case, in his wish to explain his poetic inspiration, Trajković supplied the score of the piece with a number of interesting texts which give valuable insight into the work. A sentence from Simone Weil's *L'Enracinement* serves as a motto for the whole work: "The acquisition of knowledge brings one nearer to the truth when it comes to cognition of something one loves, and only in that case". This thought could perhaps be interpreted as a call to bring together rational and emotional energies while attempting to achieve a creative act worthy of that name. The other texts figuring in the score indicate that the composer was inspired by a sonnet of Petrarch, whose beginning became the title of the musical work *Zefiro torna*. That same sonnet was chosen by Claudio Monteverdi as a text for a 5-part madrigal which was published in his Sixth Book of Madrigals (1614), a piece of which Trajković is particularly fond. Petrarch's poem is built upon the contrast between the return of spring, which brings with it the rebirth of life and love, and the poet's distance from that joyful event on account of the death of his beloved. He is insensitive to the beauty of nature, whose forces are evoked through the mythological figures of Jupiter, Venus, Progne and Philomena. It is possible that Petrarch wrote the sonnet moved by the premature death of his beloved Laura. The same was the case with Monteverdi, whose madrigal on those verses of Petrarch was a tribute to his wife who had died 7 years earlier (1607).

The first movement ("live mythological scene") is entitled *Cephalus and Rosy-Fingered Aurora (Dawn): Praise to the morning breeze coming from the stars turning pale*. The reference to the breeze is made because the myth of Cephalus (prince of Thessaly and grandson of Aeolos, god of winds) and his wife Procris tells us that he used to talk to the breeze as if it were a woman, thus

provoking some confusion. Procris' subsequent jealousy of Aurora (Eos), the goddess of Dawn, eventually led to Procris' death. The second movement bears the title *Mars and Venus Rising from the Sea: Praise of the Nymph Harmonia, the Essence of the World, Issued from the Two of Them, the God and the Goddess*. There is no allusion to a mythological story connected to Harmonia (for instance that of her cursed necklace), the names of Harmonia and her parents being sufficiently symbolic. The title of the third and last movement is *Danaë and Jupiter; Golden Rain: Praise of Perseus, Victor Over the Gorgon Medusa* (Perseus is the son of that god and Danaë, a mortal girl).

One may wonder why Vlastimir Trajković chose precisely those three mythological stories for his work. Although it may seem that there are no thematic links among them, it could be proposed that common elements are noticeable in the symbolism of Zephyrus, a divinity that certainly does not appear accidentally in the title of the whole work. Zephyrus is god of the westerly wind, and is associated with the first season of the year, as bringer of light Spring and early Summer breezes. The gentlest of the winds, Zephyrus is also known for being a fructifying wind, helping men's work in the fields. Zephyrus is sometimes accompanied by Aura (as in Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*), the female light wind whose name means *breeze* in Latin. That name is the Latin version of Eos / Aura / Aurora, one of the main figures in the myth of Cephalus alluded to in the first movement of the work.

It may seem clear now that all those narratives (Petrarch's sonnet and the three mythological stories forming part of Trajković's music) are centred on the celebration of Nature's beauty and force, and for obvious reasons, Spring is the main symbol of those forces, especially of rebirth and youth. We shall return to those keywords a little later.

It could be observed that the first two of the three basic elements of nature mentioned in Petrarch's poem – air, water and ground (*l'aria, l'acqua, la terra*) – which are "full of love" have an important place in all the three mythological stories chosen by Trajković: air / wind in the first movement (*Cephalus and Rosy-Fingered Aurora*), then water in the form of the sea in the second movement (*Mars and Venus Rising from the Sea*) and water in the form of Golden Rain in the last movement (*Danaë and Jupiter; Golden Rain*).

This explains why Trajković's work is so extremely delicate and refined, being a musical representation of fluidity, weightlessness and transparency. The atmosphere is meditative and the style a kind of Neo-Impressionism, with complex and refined harmonies and delicate colouring. See EXAMPLE 2.

As has been said earlier, Vlastimir Trajković always felt very close to French music and that of other Latin countries, especially Spain, as well as that of Slavic countries. So, what is missing here? In the first place Austrian and German music, those that are almost never omitted! In some of his published texts Trajković has elaborated his views on much of 20<sup>th</sup>-century music, which, according to him, took a wrong direction when it accepted the course led by Schoenberg and his twelve-tone music. He expressed there his admiration for the other direction, that of Debussy's "*hybrid modality*, a system capable of organizing *the totality of a new and systematic morphological dynamism*" (Trajković 2008: 30–31). Another thought of Trajković is worth mentioning in the context of this article: by drawing attention to the ancient Greek modes, he observed that the chromatic genus was projected into Debussy's "*fully three-dimensional chromatic musical space of [...] hybrid modality*"; a projection of the ancient enharmonic genus being expected to occur only with bi- and poly-modality, the systems to be found already in Debussy, but also in early Stravinsky, in Prokofiev, in late Ravel, late De Falla and in the music of *The Six*" (Trajković 2008: 31).

Some other layers of meaning of Trajković's *Zephyrus Returns* are provided by the composer's dedications of each of the three movements to the memory of a person he held in especially high esteem. He put only initials of those names, but the enigmas are easily solved thanks to the concise elaborations. The first movement is written "in memory of D(ragutin) G(ostuški), the founder of general morphology", the second to "C(laude) D(ebussy), the only true founder of the only truly modern music worthy of that name", and the third to "M(aurice) R(avel), whose exquisite phantasy led him to contemplate the splendours of Greek Antiquity only through the optics of the Century of Enlightenment". The three dedications make a complete picture, that of the composer's world of music and art. Dragutin Gostuški (1923–1998) was a Serbian

aesthetician, musicologist and composer, whose writings Trajković considered to be extremely valuable, in particular his book *The Time of the Arts* (1968) subtitled *A Contribution to the Foundation of A General Morphology*. Among the ideas put forward in the book, Trajković seems to have been particularly impressed by those of the periodical recurrence of Classicism in European art, and the identification of the appearance of opera by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the short subsequent dominance of monody as Renaissance in music – not as early Baroque, which had often been asserted in histories of music. According to Gostuški, the last time Classicism was “re-incarnated” in art music was at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but then it was not powerful enough to provide a stylistic framework of longer duration (Gostuški 1968: 313). As had been the case with the Renaissance and 18<sup>th</sup>-century Classicism, the supposed Classicism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the consequence of a desire to restore classical values and the regeneration of art and music, hand in hand with the simplification of forms. Now, as we very well know, the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time when very diverse developments took place, amongst which most noteworthy were those linked to the achievements of Debussy in Paris and those of Schoenberg in Vienna. In his book Gostuški did not connect his idea of a new Classicism / Renaissance with any movement in particular, but he mentioned in that context the works of different composers: Schoenberg, Berg, Debussy, Satie, Stravinsky, without elaborating on their relatedness to his idea of Classicism / Renaissance. It was Vlastimir Trajković who in some of his writings undertook to discuss that hypothesis of a new Classicism which he called Modernism. According to him, it was Debussy who had performed a kind of modernistic revolution by giving his creative response to the crisis of tonality that preoccupied his contemporaries. So, Trajković wrote: “The historical crisis of tonality had been solved around 1900, Modern musical times began in Paris, the rotten classical tonality having been succeeded not by traditionalist and ‘devoted’ disciples of Germany’s ‘three-great-Bs’, but by Debussy’s system of genuinely novel *hybrid modality*, a system capable of organizing *the totality of a new and systematic morphological dynamism*” (Trajković 2008: 30–31). Trajković then expands on “a projection of the Ancient Greek chromatic genus

into the *fully three-dimensional chromatic musical space* of Debussy's hybrid modality" – thus making an implicit claim that Debussy's "modernist revolution" stood for a kind of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Classicism / Renaissance.

Let us return now to Trajković's two works, *Arion* and *Zephyrus Returns*. Taking into account both his music and his writings, one may see a firm logic in the relations between the two spheres. One line is drawn from the ancient Greek myths via Renaissance poetry (Petrarch) and music (Caccini, Monteverdi), to French modernist music (Debussy, Ravel, Messiaen); the other is an assertion of the importance of modality / non-functional harmony in the history of music, and it begins with ancient Greek modes, has its high point in 16<sup>th</sup>-century modality, and is reborn in the different kinds of (hybrid) modalities of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The sensitivity to the culture of Ancient Greece noticeable in the French composers at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the next decades cannot be viewed separately from the wider movement in French arts of the times, orientated towards a (re)definition of national identity, felt to be threatened in the first place by German art. Looking back at the glorious history of French music, composers could not but react positively to the charm of 18<sup>th</sup>-century French Classicism, which was itself largely inspired by Ancient Greek art and culture. Ravel speaks thus about the vision of "the Greece of his dreams", which inspired his *Daphnis and Chloe*: "My intention, when writing it, was to compose a vast musical fresco, caring less for archaisms, than for being faithful to the Greece of my dreams, closely related to that imagined and described by late 18<sup>th</sup> century French artists" (Ravel 1938: 21–22). It is possible to observe in Trajković's works a similar aesthetic attitude towards those specific periods of the past, including some features related to those of the Impressionists' – especially Debussy's – World of the Idyllic, to his vision of Arcadia.<sup>8</sup> To that should be added Trajković's marked affinity with the musical language of those French

<sup>8</sup> "Les références à l'Arcadie ne se trouvent pas chez Debussy dans ses opéras mais plutôt dans ses œuvres orchestrales ou instrumentales, et non des moindres: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, *Syrinx*, *Trois Chansons de Bilitis* sur un texte de Pierre Louÿs. On peut également citer chez Ravel, le *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912) et aussi *Écho et Narcisse* de Tcherepnine (1911), *Bacchus et Ariane* (1930) de Roussel et l'opéra de Jacques Ibert *Persée et Andromède* (1921), *Polyphème* de Jean Cras (1922)" (Gilbert 2008: 42,43).

composers, so it should not come as a surprise that his music, similar to that of the great Impressionists, is introspective, serene, with the prolonged duration of musical events bringing moments of complete silence, refined sonorities derived from post-Messiaen modal harmonies and complex and subtle metrical organisation. His music is evocative and descriptive in ways similar to those of Debussy and Messiaen: not only do the titles often have poetic qualities, but the scores have verbal indications similar to those in Messiaen's works.

Like so many other composers, Vlastimir Trajković managed to find his identity as a creator by "choosing" his "ancestors" in the worlds of music, art and culture – in his case this meant mainly ancient Greek, Italian Renaissance and 20<sup>th</sup> -century French art and music. He has pursued an aesthetical aim which could be understood as a will to assert the continuity of European art based on Greek culture, and to demonstrate that a kind of a new Renaissance is still possible through exploring means of formal freedom always aiming at order and clarity – preserving at the same time refinement of rhythm and harmony – and integrating elements of popular music, which could help restore the components of emotion in art music. Keeping alive links with ancient Greek culture, specifically with its mythology, could be interpreted in Trajković's case as a small narrative of constituting / defining his identity as a composer by transcending national borders of tradition and opting for a cosmopolitanism for which Greek Antiquity may serve as a symbol. It is perhaps necessary to remark that such an aesthetic and ideological position does not by any means indicate the composer's anti- or a-national attitude, the evidence for which may be found in a number of his works. An attempt has been made in this article towards a clearer definition of Trajković's ideology manifested as a variant of cosmopolitanism which privileges the Franco-Latin branch of European art music over the Germanic. The keywords that characterise *Arion* and *Zephyrus Returns* being new music ("nuove musiche"), the Renaissance (Caccini), and Nature (Spring winds, Sea, the awakening of Nature), those key words can be seen as depicting the contemporary state of mind – not just one composer's – and calling for a fresh start to preserve continuity with the past but at the same time opening new horizons.

8

Chitarra

*p, ma non troppo*

V-ni

Vc.

1. *pizz. marc.*

2. *pizz. marc.*

**Example 1.** *Arion, le nuove musiche per chitarra ed archi*

V<sup>on</sup> : variante dans le cas où  
 l'harmonique ut<sup>2</sup> (II<sup>me</sup> corde)  
 ne sonne pas suffisamment  
 [harmoniques  
 II<sup>me</sup> et III<sup>me</sup> cordes]

p sur la touche  
 p près du chevalet  
 jeu ordinaire  
 pp, expressif

20 NAISSANCE D'HARMONIE  
 20 NAISSANCE D'HARMONIE  
 5  
 5  
 5

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Example 2. *Zephyrus Returns*, Second movement



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Мелита Милин

АНТИЧКА ГРЧКА МИТОЛОГИЈА  
ПОСРЕДОВАНА ЛАТИНСКОМ КУЛТУРОМ.  
О АРИОНУ И ПОВРАТКУ ЗЕФИРА ВЛАСТИМИРА ТРАЈКОВИЋА  
(Резиме)

Иако није једини српски композитор који налази инспирацију у мотивима из античке грчке митологије, Властимир Трајковић привлачи посебну пажњу због специфичности свог приступа тим митовима из кога се могу ишчитати како поетичке, тако и идеолошке позиције овог ствараоца. У овом раду оне се сагледавају на примерима два инструментална дела:

*Ариона* за гитару и гудачки оркестар (1979) и *Повратка Зефира* за флауту, виолину и клавир (2001). Поред саме музике, узети су у разматрање и вербални текстови В. Трајковића (коментари уз ова дела и други).

Анализа изабраних композиција упућује на два њихова битна аспекта: 1. укореееност аутора у област европске културе обележену линијом која води од античких грчких митова преко ренесансне поезије (Петрарка) и музике (Качини, Монтеверди), до музике француског модернизма (Дебиси, Равел, Месијан); 2. модалност, односно нефункционалну хармонију која се потврђује као витална кроз дуге периоде историје европске музике, почевши од старих грчких модуса, достижући високу тачку у модалности XVI века, да би се поново јавила почетком XX века, у различитим хибридниим видовима.

Трајковићев наглашени афинитет према музици Дебисија, Равела и Месијана рефлектује оба наведена аспекта. Удаљавајући се од основних постулата немачко-аустријске музике с краја XIX и почетка XX века, они су поново откривали изражајни свет француског класицизма, који је и сам био надахнут античком грчком уметношћу и културом. С друге стране, њихова употреба модалних средстава била је Трајковићу подстицајна да их даље развија у сопственим делима. Манифестације његове блискости са античком грчком традицијом и каснијом латинском струјом у историји музике могле би се интерпретирати као мали наратив личног трагања за стваралачким идентитетом.