

Bojana Radovanović

Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

Marija Maglov, *The Best of: umetnička muzika u PGP-u* [*The Best of: Art Music in PGP*], Belgrade: Faculty of Media and Communications, 2016. 132 pp, ISBN 978-86-87107-68-7 (FMK)

Maria Maglov, author of the book *The Best of: umetnička muzika u PGP-u* [*The Best of: Art Music in PGP*], is a musicologist whose interests include music practices of the 20th and 21st centuries, music industry and discography, and media and cultural studies. Her book represents a revised and expanded version of her Master's thesis, which was written under the mentorship of Dr. Vesna Mikić, and defended in 2013 at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade. The fact that this thesis, along with four more, got published in the new series of the edition *Nova humanistika* [*New Humanities*], launched by Faculty of Media and Communications in 2016, proves the seriousness of the intention to enrich the field of written theoretical works of local contemporary interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary humanistic studies.

The title of the book itself is already somewhat indicative of the primary issues of Maglov's research. Formulation of *the best of*, which is provocative as well as symptomatic, leads us to reminisce about some of our favorite popular music compilations. The author's insistence on this wording is based on the specific methods used to popularize art music. Likewise, Maglov highlights another possible reading of the title that refers to the establishment of the Western European art music canon, which consists of "representative works of art, the ones that are understood as 'the best of' overall music production, the ones in which certain values are inscribed" (9). Although terms such as 'serious' or 'classical' music are occasionally used in the book, the author opted for the term 'art music' (in the title and throughout the text), while noting the certain limitations and difficulties which come with utilizing any of these expressions. The last, third element from the title marks the institution, Production of Gramophone Records – Radio-Television Belgrade /Radio Television Serbia, (PGP-RTB/RTS) whose mechanisms of releasing and placement of music can be detected as crucial to recognizing certain features of cultural politics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

By positioning herself as a musicologist working in the interdisciplinary field which, when necessary, introduces beneficial approaches and insights of sociology

and the institutional theory of arts, Maglov seeks to examine the ways in which the PGP-RTB/RTS functioned, from 1968 to 2000, in regards to this institution's influence on generating the corpus of representative musical works of the SFRY. The core of Maglov's book consists of extensive archival research that took place in PGP-RTS. It is worth noting that, as the author herself underlined, an official archive or database of this institution does not exist. Therefore, the information on licensed (foreign) and local editions are collected from the primary sources.

Including the introductory notes (*Uvod*), the book consists of six chapters, appendix (*Prilog*), and bibliography. Following a very precise and comprehensive introduction, the first chapter, *PGP: nastanak institucije u okviru Radio Beograda* [*PGP: The Emergence of Institution within Radio Belgrade*], deals with the history of PGP and its development and publishing politics since 1951. Also concerning Maglov is the relation between popular music and music releases, considering the fact that, although there are no official, institutional data on the subject, the percentage of art music copies is significantly lower compared to other publications. However, the author emphasizes, the state's support to cultural workers was implied, thus making a link to the next chapter.

The importance of a specific state model of cultural politics is examined in the third chapter, *Kulturna politika u Jugoslaviji i uloga muzike* [*Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia and the Role of Music*]. Here Maglov emphasizes the importance of André Malraux's concept of democratization of culture, which is viewed as a foundation for the Yugoslav model of state cultural politics. According to this bureaucratic-enlightenment model, elite culture was to be available to all citizens. In this regard, what follows in this chapter is the overview of the reactions of cultural and musical workers to this model of cultural politic. Questions were raised about the role of mass media, the passivity of the masses, and the problematization of the 'high' and 'low', that is, *art* and *popular* culture in particular. Moreover, Maglov discusses the previously-mentioned art music promotion through the means of popular music industry methods.

In order to understand the distinct features of the publishing politics of PGP, in her next chapter, *Od imaginarnog muzeja do snimka kao muzičkog artefakta* [*From Imaginary Museum to Record as Musical Artefact*], Maglov addresses the questions of "mainstream of 20th century music" through the concepts of imaginary museum and concert as a bourgeois institution. She argues "when it comes to art music, there is a goal to reproduce paradigmatic and canonic works of Western European 'high' music, that are already represented in the institution of concert" (42). Furthermore, this chapter raises intriguing issues such as the paradigm of Western European music, the significance of Beethoven for this paradigm, problems with canon in music, and discographic institution and music industry, with a special reflection on the Yugoslav context. It can be said all of these problematic areas are, in a way, examined through the prism of the Artworld, as Danto would put it, or Dickie's institutional theory. The notion of the *institution* is what leads us through this chapter, and, admittedly, the entire book.

The fifth chapter named *Pregled izdanja umetničke muzike u PGP-u* [Overview of Art Music Editions in PGP] presents publishing of PGP in the period from 1968 to 2000 while taking into account points previously discussed. Maglov interprets the materials by dividing them into subsections and several categories, which are not mutually exclusive: *Licensed Editions*, *Opera "Under the Stars" – Licensed and Local Editions*, *Local Production: Releases of Prominent Soloists and Ensembles*, *Old Music*, *Inter-institutional Cooperations* and *Local Creatorship and Institutional Forming of Canon.*"

There are several qualities of this book that are worth emphasizing: Maglov offers an insightful and interesting study, written in a clear and intelligible style. This research, interpretation and, especially, the overview of *our* art music releases, make an important contribution to Serbian musicology.