

BETWEEN NOSTALGIA, UTOPIA, AND REALITIES

Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, Univerzitet umetnosti (Belgrade)

Date: April 14-17, 2010.

Locations: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti (Kralja Milana 50, Beograd) and Zadužbina Ilije M. Kolarca (Studentski trg 5, Beograd).

Deadline: October 1, 2009.

The language of the conference is English. It is possible to deliver papers in German, French, Russian, or Serbian, too, and the authors are kindly requested to provide translation to English. Each presenter will have 20 min. for presentation, followed by 10 min. for discussion.

Selected papers presented at the conference will be published in a volume of proceedings.

Send your abstract (200 words) in English to Tatjana Markovic (tatjanam@eunet.rs) or Vesna Mikic (mikic@eunet.rs).

The starting point of the *Tenth International Conference* organized by the Department of Musicology (University of Arts in Belgrade) is that nostalgia and utopia could be understood as synonyms, placed on the different poles of the time: utopia actually is nostalgia for the perfect future, as well as nostalgia is utopia of the past, a longing for idealized past that has never existed. Both terms refer to the identity question, either in personal, intimate sense, or in the sense of community, or specific groups within a society. Being related to the past and determined by arbitrarily chosen historical perspectives, both nostalgia and utopia are reflected in the cultural memories, and concepts of the self-representation, ranging from social behaviour and cultural practices to individual artefacts. In that way, musical life is also signified by the given codes of nostalgia and utopia, recognizable and identifiable for a certain society, offering a secure shelter from the Other, especially in the periods of crisis or social traumas. It is, therefore, understandable, why music and poetry had very significant role in different revolutions, uprisings, wars, etc. Considering the musical repertoires, it is also obvious that musical life is always socially explicable in the specific cultural and political contexts, reflecting the dominant ideology or ideologies. On the personal level, nostalgia is connected with the longing for »our childhood«. Consequently, nostalgia is both a cultural phenomenon and a personally subjective experience (Janelle L. Wilson).

Starting from this general point, theories of nostalgia include further divisions and definitions. Thus Fred Davis differentiates between public and private nostalgia, meaning the public is »the condition in which the symbolic objects are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character«, and private would then assume the »symbolic images and allusions from the past which by virtue of their resource in a particular person's biography tend to be more idiosyncratic, individuated, and particularistic in their reference«, including personal memories. One of the main theorists of the issue, Svetlana Boym, makes a difference between restorative and reflective nostalgia: »Restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future; reflective nostalgia is more about individual and cultural memory.« This theoretical field provides very fruitful approaches in the musicological research, very actual in a contemporary scholarship.

In a similar way, utopia joins the public and private perspectives, the political visions of an entire community, as well as individual visions expressed in individual work of art, like in Beethoven's 9th symphony, or in the musical setting of Schiller's ode *An die Freude*, e.g. An idealized (sc. impossible to realize) image of the future is contextualized by the past seen as well-known and experienced knowledge, assigned as a sublime model.

It seems that nostalgia and utopia are especially close to the issue of diaspora. Numerous examples show how societies of diaspora strongly rely on the frozen cultural memory, including musical memories. This aspect of nostalgia is connected with social psychology. After migrations and displacements, nostalgic feelings for the *Heimat* are being transformed into utopia, remaining often the only connection to the past or »roots« of the own idealized nation. Musical compositions, both classical and popular, folk rites, songs and dances are objects of (national) identification, via experienced or ancestral recollections. Thus, the conference addresses following topics:

- music repertoires as reflections of the nostalgic recollections of the former empires or countries, such as the Habsburg Monarchy, Yugoslavia (»Yugo-nostalgia«) or USSR: classical music, popular music, media (film music, program of the radio stations, music TV shows and advertisements, melodies for mobile phones), music stage, music festivals, Eurosong competition, (neo)folk music,
- musical culture identities between nostalgia and utopia,
- opera as embodiment of utopia from the Arcadian world in early opera and stage madrigals to Wagner's and contemporary opera concepts,
- music and patriotism,
- musical microspace(s) of/in diaspora,
- music historiography as nostalgic field of national images,



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- music iconography as the embodiment of nostalgia and utopia,
- musical work as a personal utopian vision of the world,
- musical work as expression of nostalgia,
- musical embodiments of nostalgia and utopia in the light of (social) psychology.

