

**“THE MUSIC IS HIGHLY ECLECTIC, AND IT SHOULD BE
APPROACHED ACCORDINGLY”:
VOICE IN JUG MARKOVIĆ'S COMPOSITIONS***

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**„ОВА МУЗИКА ЈЕ ВИСОКО ЕКЛЕКТИЧНА И ТРЕБА ЈОЈ
ПРИСТУПАТИ У СКЛАДУ С ТИМ”:
ГЛАС У ДЕЛИМА ЈУГА МАРКОВИЋА**

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ABSTRACT

Music for voice holds a special place in the opus of Serbian composer Jug Marković. In all of his pieces, Marković maintains a type of care for the vocal part that distinguishes him in the context of Serbian art music, and, at the same time, puts him on the international map of contemporary composers who work with voice in non-traditional ways. This is reflected in his intention to diversify performing techniques and vocal styles, in the detailed instructions regarding technique and scenic gesture, and in the use of technological means in vocal performance and manipulation of sound. In this paper, I investigate the expansion of vocal and bodily expression via performing techniques and new technologies, and address the issues of autonomy, agency, and responsibility of composer and vocal performer, in order to determine the characteristics and different factors of eclecticism in Marković's vocal music.

KEYWORDS: voice, vocal music, Jug Marković, vocal technique, vocal technology.

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АПСТРАКТ

Музика за глас има посебно место у опусу српског композитора Југа Марковића. У својим делима, Марковић се с посебном пажњом посвећује вокалној деоници, што га истовремено издваја у контексту српске уметничке музике и ставља на међународну мапу савремених композитора који се гласом баве на нетрадиционалне начине. То је приметно у његовим намерама да се диверзификују извођачка техника и вокални стил, детаљним инструкцијама о техници и сценском гесту, као и употреби технолошких средстава у вокалном извођењу и манипулацији звука. У овом тексту предмет истраживања су проширење вокалних и телесних експресивних средстава у виду извођачке технике и нових технологија, питања аутономије, заступања и одговорности у односу између композитора и вокалног извођача, а све у циљу одређивања карактеристика и различитих фактора еклектицизма у Марковићевим вокалним делима.

КЉУЧНЕ РЕЧИ: глас, музика за глас/вокална музика, Југ Марковић, вокална техника, вокална технологија.

INTRODUCTION

The inclination of Stuttgart-based Serbian composer Jug Marković (also Jug Konstantin Marković, b. 1987) towards innovative and attentive composing for the voice has been noticeable since his student days. He very quickly established himself as a composer who works in different mediums of music (acoustic, electro-acoustic and electronic), unrestrained by the typical academic compositional discourses in Serbia. Namely, in the period from World War II until today, Serbian art music (both in the Yugoslav context and afterwards) functioned dominantly around the axis of “moderated modernism”² and, from the early 1980s, postmodernism, with some rare exceptions of the avant-garde type such as the composer and artist Vladan Radovanović (1932–2023), a group of avant-garde composers of the 1960s dubbed as the “Second Avant-Garde Wave” (Petar Bergamo, Petar Osghian, Zoran Hristić and Rajko Maksimović; see Veselinović 1983), the Fluxus-inspired minimalist group OPUS 4 (mid-1970s – 1982), and Ernő Király (1919–2007). The aforementioned (post)modernist “discourse” in academic composition, particularly at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade where Marković completed his BA and MA degrees, to this

2 In the decades after World War II, Serbian art music was, for the most part, shaped within the framework of moderated modernism, which represented a sort of a “middle road” between the polarities of socialist realism and the avant-garde; this situation continued until the onset of postmodernism in the 1980s (see Medić 2007; Mikić 2007; Mikić 2008; Bralović 2022a).

day remains the basis of the compositional curriculum and, in a way, inhibits young composers from exploring beyond those strict academic frameworks (see Bralović 2022b). Strikingly, in the domain of vocal music, the traditional approach to voice and singing is unmatched and mostly unchallenged, with some rare exceptions in the works of Király with artist Katalin Ladik (b. 1942), and more recently, Anja Đorđević (b. 1970), Jasna Veličković (b. 1974), and Ana Gnjatović (b. 1984) (see Sabo 2021; Radovanović 2021a; 2021b; 2023a), or performance practice of singers such as Ana Radovanović (b. 1982) and Mina Gligorić (b. 1993).

As one of the exceptions to this rule in recent decades, Marković states that "he tries to refrain from strict and rigid premeditated concepts and formalistic systems and is particularly interested in stylistic heterogeneity, the hybridity of genres and exploring/recontextualising manners and sound gestures that have historically been charged with certain meaning and connotation" (Marković, s.a.). This unrestricted and impulsive approach³ to composition, genre and style determinants – which could be seen as a symptom of contemporary music in within the 21st-century (poly)stylistic complex (as explained regarding the global contemporary art by Terry Smith [Smit 2014], and "translated" into Serbian musicology by Vesna Mikić [2018]) – also shines through his treatment of voice in music, making him stand out among Serbian composers of different generations.

Marković's compositional style has been regarded highly not only in his own country – with the prestigious award *Stevan Mokranjac* of the Composers' Association of Serbia for 2019 – but also internationally. Namely, since graduating from the Department of Composition of the Faculty of Music in 2016 (where he studied in the composition classes of Vlastimir Trajković [1947–2017] and Zoran Erić [b. 1950]), Marković has worked diligently to gain international recognition, which has resulted in numerous awards, collaborations, completed master courses and more.⁴ These circumstances undoubtedly influenced and stimulated the creation of several pieces with the voice, which was incorporated in diverse ways, mostly in regard to vocal styles of contemporary art, experimental, alternative, folk, and popular music, and vocal techniques extended way beyond classical *bel canto*. As the composer himself points out, since creating his piece *Ultraterreno* for two voices and piano in 2016, he has regularly composed for voice in choirs, solo and ensemble arrangements, as well as voice combined with electronics (Radovanović 2023b).

One strong impetus for examining the status and place of voice in Marković's opus, is the fact that throughout his pieces the composer maintains a specific type of care for the vocal part, be it in the domain of meticulous instructions, diversifying

3 In an interview for the *Serbian Composers* internet portal, Marković said: "My creative process is very impulsive. I try to restrain myself from any intention or prejudice. Aside from conscious impulsivity, a very important role is given to intuition and the absence of a firm and uniform compositional system. This exact absence of a system I see as a great advantage. The creative process for me depends on many subconscious factors. I do not try to mystify the compositional process, but I also do not want to approach it in a rationalistic or positivistic manner" (Savić 2019).

4 Marković's detailed biography is available on his website: <https://www.jugmarkovic.com/bio>.

performing techniques, or introducing various technological means. Focusing both on compositions realised as sheet music scores and as audio or audio-visual recordings, in this article I investigate the methods of using and expanding the voice and vocal expression through performing techniques and new technologies. I also address the issues of autonomy, agency and responsibility of the composer and vocal performer, as well as the particularities of the written score and its live performance. All of these points are persistent in the discourse on the composer's authority and agency over performances of their music, but they seem even more critical when it comes to the matters of voice and vocal performances/performers, which will be specifically addressed below. I aim to show the ways in which Marković's compositional style in this domain stands out from the historical and current practices of local composers who wrote for voice, and to introduce his work to the international musicological and theoretical audiences by putting his work on the map of many composers who work with the voice in a similar fashion.

JUG MARKOVIĆ'S MUSIC FOR THE VOICE

On his website, Marković lists nine compositions in his Vocal / Vocal and Choral Works section: *Serbian Love Songs* for soprano and string quartet (Српске љубавне џесме, 2016), *Ultraterreno* for two female voices and piano (2016), *incidAnces* for soprano, flute, clarinet and contrabass (2017), *Nirvana* for choir (2017), *Eurydice's Monologue* for soprano and seven instruments (2018), *De Rerum Natura* (version for soprano and orchestra, 2019),⁵ *Chant de Vélès* for large choir and Balkan brass inspired ensemble (2019), *Traces / Tragovi*, for chamber choir (2019), and *Defiant walks barefoot*, a duo for voice and electronics with video (2021).⁶ These include choral, chamber, orchestral and electro-acoustical works with voice; notably, Marković did not write any solo voice music. My focus here is on the six pieces with scores and recordings – *Serbian Love Songs*, *Ultraterreno*, *Nirvana*, *incidAnces*, *De Rerum Natura*, and *Defiant walks barefoot*. I will introduce these compositions and their stylistic and lyrical features, and thus open the pathways towards discussing technical, technological and scenic features through the lens of the composer's and performer's autonomy, agency and responsibility in the processes of conceptualising, shaping, and performing vocal music. These six pieces were written for various occasions over the course of six years. Among them, only *Serbian Love Songs*, which had its first performance in December 2016 at the KoMA Festival in Belgrade,⁷ were not written as a commission or result from a master course or a workshop. In contrast, *Ultraterreno* was commissioned by the Festival International d'Art Lyrique

5 Aside from the cantata version that was premiered 13 July 2019, *De Rerum Natura* also has the orchestral version, which was performed twice in 2019. As the jury of Mokranjac award noticed, it is quite a rarity – and a sign of a successful musical work – to have an orchestral piece performed multiple times over such a short period (see Composers' Association of Serbia 2019).

6 He omits his student works such as *Pohvala vatri* (2011) and *Lullaby* (Усјавањка, 2013).

7 Written in February 2016. The premiere performance took place on 25 December 2016 during the

d'Aix-en-Provence and premiered during the 2016 edition of this manifestation,⁸ while *Nirvana*,⁹ *incidAnces*,¹⁰ *De Rerum Natura*¹¹ and *Defiant walks barefoot*¹² ensued from Marković's work during the Tenso workshop in Nova Gorica (Slovenia), Snape Maltings residency, ENOA workshop at Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, and IRCAM course, respectively.

Within those contexts and situations, Marković had the opportunity to collaborate with different performers throughout Europe. Moreover, as will be shown later, in this period his preferred approach evolved from writing for the unknown/any performer to shaping the vocal part for and often together with a particular vocal artist (Radovanović 2023b).

One of the most distinctive features of Marković's vocal opus is the fact that these compositions are built upon well-known works of poetry from Serbian and foreign poets and authors of different periods, implying that the composer carefully tends to the literary aspect of his pieces and does not experiment with the sound of non-semantic vocalisations. More specifically, Marković often puts together poems stemming from folk lyricism, romanticism, modernism, expressionism, and surrealism, as seen in, for example, *Serbian Love Songs*. This cycle contains seven songs in which the composer employs his personal selection of Serbian love poetry, that is, lyric folk poetry of unknown authors (collected and edited by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić), as well as the poems written by notable Serbian romantic and modernist

KoMA Festival (Koncerti mladih autora – Young Authors Concerts) organised by the Faculty of Music in Belgrade at the Belgrade Philharmonic Hall. The piece was premiered by Aleksandra Stanković (soprano), Aleksandra Jović and Larisa Tereščenko (violins), Sreten Jović (viola) and Stefan Gavrilović (cello). The audio-visual recording of the performance is available on the composer's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/cpD9aCVAAsc> (accessed 1 June 2023).

8 It was performed on 16 June 2016 by Ines Simoes (soprano), Heloise Mas (mezzo-soprano), and Marwan Dafir (piano). The recording is available on the composer's YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/jqX_VJBualk (accessed 1 June 2023).

9 *Nirvana* was premiered and recorded by Latvian Chamber Choir during the Tenso workshop in Nova Gorica (Slovenia) in 2017. The audio recording is available on the *Serbian Composers* YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/31_uy8-zjIw (accessed 1 June 2023).

10 *incidAnces* were premiered on 6 December 2017 at the Kiln Studio, Snape Maltings (United Kingdom). The audio-visual recording of this performance by Suzanne Fischer (soprano), Alyson Frazier (flute) Oliver Pashley Contrabass (clarinet), and Elena Marigomez (contrabass) is available on composer's YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/mUliNDtrInE> (accessed 1 June 2023).

11 The cantata version of this composition was premiered at the Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon on 13 July 2019, by Lara Martins (soprano) and Gulbenkian Orchestra, conducted by Pedro Neves. The audio recording of the premiere is available on the composer's website: <https://www.jugmarkovic.com/vocal> (accessed 1 June 2023).

The orchestral version was also performed twice during 2019, and, as the jury of Mokranjac award noticed, it is quite a rarity – and a sign of a successful musical work – to have an orchestral piece performed multiple times over such a short period (see Composers' Association of Serbia 2019).

12 Premiere performance is accompanied with video by Sara Marković Sara. The audio-visual recording on the premiere is available on IRCAM's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/5AFIbFtlcQ> (accessed 1 June 2023).

poets Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833–1904), Miloš Crnjanski (1893–1977) and Vasko Popa (1922–1991). The tendency towards compiling lyrics from diverse sources is also present in *Ultraterreno*, where the composer uses six texts or fragments of texts by Torquato Tasso,¹³ Michelangelo Buonarroti,¹⁴ Marina Tsvetaeva,¹⁵ Thomas Bernhard, and a piece of personal correspondence – a rejection email that followed Marković’s application for master studies of composition in Germany. Similarly, in *De Rerum Natura*, Marković pairs excerpts from the eponymous poem by Lucretius and Fernando Pessoa’s *The Keeper of Sheep* II. Going further, *Nirvana* is based on the eponymous poem by Serbian symbolist poet Vladislav Petković Dis (1880–1917) (chosen as an answer to the TENSO workshop’s theme – composing to texts inspired by or originating from World War I), *incidAnces* are based on the prose text by Russian absurdist and avant-garde writer Daniil Kharms, and in *Defiant walks barefoot* Marković uses text written by contemporary Serbian poet Ana Marija Grbić.

Composing music to the rich and broad selection of Serbian and international poems and texts also reflects Marković’s *modus operandi* with the abundant heritage of music history and the present moment. As he highlighted on multiple occasions, his music is eclectic and polystylistic, “often even in the course of one composition” (see, e.g., Savić 2019). This groups him with composers of the 20th and 21st centuries such as Charles Ives, Alfred Schnittke, George Crumb, Peter Maxwell Davies, John Zorn, Osvaldo Golijov, and many others, who explored the idea of piecing together stylistically heterogeneous influences and ideas. Different aesthetics, styles, and compositional languages, which Marković deems crucial for the musical dramaturgy of his works (Savić 2019), on the one hand, ensue from his intuitive approach to the creative process and, on the other, build a peculiar contemporary musical expression. Compared to late 20th-century postmodernism, this expression openly and non-ironically communicates with its musical past and experiences, incorporating and recontextualising them in an all-inclusive 21st-century, eclectic but organic, layered but cohesive final product. Moreover, in his “love relationship with tradition” (Ćirica 2021), Marković also embraces the postmodern methodology of working with citations, emulating earlier stylistic complexes and compositional languages, and further filtrating them through his expression as one of the possible modes of creation.

For instance, in the *Serbian Love Songs* Marković recontextualises the aesthetic of Serbian art songs, which is deeply rooted in lyricism and romanticism. In the programme notes for the premiere, Marković emphasised his fondness for Serbian poetry, which guided his work on this piece (2016a), and also warned the listeners that “what may seem like an archaic expression to the conservative ear, is actually lead by the progressive impulse of the composer’s personal need to be a part of the recontextualised aesthetics and to enjoy it” (Ibid.). The expression in question pertains to the rethinking of the lyrical idiom, which has a place in the long history

13 Sonnet *Scipio, o pietà de è morta* and a short verse from a madrigal *Mentre in grembo*.

14 A fragment from a sonnet *Non ha l’ottimo artista alcun concetto*.

15 Poem *Esli dusha rodilas krilatoy*.

of Serbian art song (cf. Stefanović 2007; 2009). Intuitively following the vocals, i.e., the melodic and textual component that carries the dramaturgical weight of this cycle, Marković creates free, through-composed structures, incorporates dissonant vertical formations, and loosens the bounds of tonality.

His next work shows his inclination towards the exploration of different stylistic paradigms and a variety of approaches to vocal techniques within the framework of a single piece. Additionally, in *Ultraterreno* Marković instructs the performers to approach the piece with the idea of achieving stylistic eclecticism: "[t]hese aesthetical differences should be stressed and even exaggerated. Do not be afraid to emphasise the presence of different 'musics' within the music as a whole" (Marković 2016b, 9). Here, the "highly eclectic and polystylistic" nature of music is underlined in the performance notes of the score and also stems from comprising into one piece "a story of passion and love for creation, doubt, frustration, intuition and necessity for everpresent faith", a narrative of a personal journey on a path of a professional music creator today (Ibid.). The performers are "warned" about different stylistic complexes and compositional techniques and should collaborate in this stylistic "unsettlement", encompassing sound situations that evoke music styles of the renaissance, baroque, romanticism, expressionism, and more recent music of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as directly refer to music by Monteverdi, "Debussyesque" atmosphere, Sprechstimme ("alla Schoenberg" and "alla Wozzeck"). Perhaps less explicitly than in *Ultraterreno*, but nevertheless still actual in the following compositions for voice (and beyond this category), stylistic eclecticism remains one of the main features of Marković's opus, expanding even more towards non-academic and popular music practices and styles, as well as the extended vocal and instrumental techniques used in *incidAnces* and *Defiant walks barefoot*. On the other hand, *De Rerum Natura* calls for the aesthetic complexes of sacral music, early baroque, or vocal music of Canadian composer Claude Vivier as paragons for performance style.

In the only choral composition in this selection, *Nirvana*, which was written for a chamber choir of 24, 48, or 36 singers, Marković uses a style of text painting, particularly prominent in the 16th-century madrigals. Namely, throughout one movement, this piece introduces a sort of anxious, uneasy, atmospheric meditation on death, built from sustained tones that move through the mostly dissonant chord formation with a fluidity (gained from the abundant use of glissando) that evokes the seas from the poem (paired with Dis' verses on "the seas, All dried out without any waves and foam").¹⁶ Several culmination points appear in the short outbursts of yelling/screaming and a generally uneasy flow, only to return to the "sea of voices".

Finally, the piece *Defiant walks barefoot* is noteworthy as the only piece in this selection that includes technological means (a microphone and the Ableton software) in the live performance, but also because the acknowledgment in the score underlines that the "piece has been developed in close collaboration with vocalist Thea Soti" (Marković 2021, 7). Thea Soti is an experimental vocalist and

16 From Marković's translation of the poem. In the original, these verses read: "Noćas su me pohodila mora / Sva usahla, bez vala i pene".

sound artist, born in Subotica (Serbia) in a Hungarian family, who is now based in Cologne, Germany. Her extensive capabilities, preferences, interest in improvisation, experiment, performing arts in general and electro-acoustic composition became some of the crucial factors for shaping this piece.¹⁷ Hence, due to having Soti as a reliable collaborator, Marković included experimental, jazz, and folk-like singing styles, with extended and non-bel canto techniques at the forefront.

From this overview, it becomes clear that Marković tends to explore heterogeneous styles and vocal techniques from one piece to another, as well as within the framework of the same work. The continuity throughout the years is seen precisely in the nature of this approach and in the careful selection of poems and texts he uses. Thus, his stylistic eclecticism is twofold and relies upon a strong foundation of his “love relationship with tradition” and openness towards different contemporary music genres and styles, and productive outcomes and meaningful collaborations with other artists, including vocal artists and soloists.

WHAT DOES ECLECTICISM ENTAIL VOCALLY?

ON THE TECHNIQUE, TECHNOLOGY, SCENE AND THE PERFORMER

I will now look into the specific vocal techniques and styles, as well as scenic and technological tools that Marković employs in these works. The meticulousness of Marković's score and instructions for performers will also be addressed throughout this section, which will further open the discussion on the composers' authority and agency over performances of their music, particularly when it comes to the matters of voice and vocal performance/performers. Namely, as the core of subjectivity (Dolar 2006), the voice is particularly theoretically intriguing in the perpetual debate between the composer's metaphorical and authoritative voice on the one hand and a performer's carnal and, thus, flawed voice on the other.¹⁸ We will see in what ways this *gap* and tension influence the outcomes of Jug Marković's vocal music.

THE ARTISTIC RESEARCH OF STYLE AND PERFORMING TECHNIQUES

Regarding the vocal style – and subsequently, employed vocal techniques, Jug Marković operates with the idea that the “human voice can have diverse forms of appearance in music, and European classical singing tradition is just one of them” (Radovanović 2023b). However, not only is it just “one of them”, but it is also the most deeply rooted, canonised, and acknowledged tradition in the art music circles.¹⁹ Throughout the years, Marković has avoided the “classical voice” and

17 For Thea Soti's biography, see <http://theasoti.com/about/> (accessed 1 June 2023). More on her musings on voice and technology in Radovanović 2021c.

18 The debate was famously opened by Edward T. Cone in 1974 and has been continually revisited and built upon with critical stance (see, e.g., Abbate 1996; Young 2015; Bell 2015).

19 This idea has been discussed in the musicological literature in recent decades. For example, John

operatic singing style in his music, and he persistently steered performers to explore other means of vocalising. To "remedy" the mainstream, academic *bel canto* rooted in performance practices of the 19th-century opera, Marković explicitly asks for singing "without any unnecessary dramatisation, [and] with light, youthful quality, lyrical, child-like colour" and voice that "never exaggerates with vibratos" in *Serbian Love Songs* (2016c). He also uses various nuances of whispers, spoken word, *Sprechstimme*,²⁰ yelling, and chest/folk singing in *Ultraterreno*, bases his musical language of gestures such as glissando and whistling in *Nirvana*, calls for mainstream and underground popular music vocal styles and techniques in *incidAnces*. In *De Rerum Natura*, he repeats his plea to the performer should sing the piece "without any unnecessary operatic dramatisation", with as little vibrato as possible, and a "precise, clear, bright, simple tone quality and very focused sound" (Marković 2019). Furthermore, he points to the aesthetic complexes of sacral music, early baroque, or vocal music of Canadian composer Claude Vivier as paragons for performance style. Marković's composition *Defiant walks barefoot* is equally unambiguous in avoiding the operatic approach to voice in favour of styles one finds in popular, electronic, experimental, and jazz music.

As noticed, this active seeking of "other" ways of vocal expression in the context of contemporary classical music consequently means introducing (or insisting on) various vocal techniques that usually fall outside of its scope. Therefore, next to enriching the vocal technique spectrum with glissando (in *Nirvana*, for example), spoken voice and *Sprechstimme* – which have (re)gained their spot in the art music over the last hundred years – composers also reach for vocal techniques coming from the folk tradition and popular music. In this light, we can read Marković's inclusion of chest singing inspired by Slavic folk tradition in *Ultraterreno*, as well as chest voice sung "with ritualistic persistence" in *Defiant walks barefoot* (see. Figures 1a and 1b).

Potter wrote about the history and formation of the concept of "classical singing" (1998); Pamela Karantonis investigated European (specifically Italian, French and German) schools of classical singing as a subject of colonial politics (2015); Gelsey Bell discussed Joan La Barbara's use of extended vocal techniques in the "context as a conservatory-trained American of European descent developing work in the mid-twentieth-century" (2016, 145); Nina Sun Eidsheim examines politics conducted through vocal timbre, vocal technique and style in African American music (2019); Charissa Noble questions the concept, various definitions, and cultural and historical background of extended vocal techniques (2019) and examines the contribution of the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble of the University of California, San Diego, to this field (2022).

20 In *Ultraterreno*, the term *Sprechgesang* is used for "sungspoken" in the style of Schoenberg and Berg and interchangeably with *Sprechstimme*. However, in the later compositions, Marković uses *Sprechstimme*, a more precise term for the vocal style Schoenberg conceptualised around *Pierrot lunaire* (see Bryn-Julson and Mathews 2009; Radovanović 2021b).

Allegro $\text{♩} = 120$

156

f

Если ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той, ес-ли ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той, ес-ли ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той,
Es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy, es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy, es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy,

f

Если ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той, ес-ли ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той, ес-ли ду-ша ро-ди-лась кры-ла-той,
Es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy, es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy, es-li du-sha ro-di-las kri-la-toy,

f

ff

Fanatically

♩ = 76 CHEST VOICE

p *f*

44

V.

SCENE 2a

El.

ff Tape_03, total dur: 1'52"

Video 2 Lobsters

Freely, actively, with agility. Sing with ritualistic persistence. Notes with fermatas can be prolonged intuitively. Dashed barlines are for general orientation.

Furthermore, if we consider the fact that currently active composers practically attested to the expansion of the music industry simultaneously with the processes of globalisation and the democratisation of access to the internet, and thus had an opportunity to enjoy many genres and styles of music, the intention towards the inclusion of different (vocal) popular music techniques is entirely expected. When speaking to Marković about this, he concurred:

What we name as the expanded voice is actually a natural gesture that is “extended” only from the perspective of our type of music (meaning, art music, B. R.). This voice is something I grew up with, and my interest and affinity towards it do not come from the tradition of (contemporary) classical music but from the world of metal music, especially its more aggressive subgenres (death, black). I am not saying I use those exact ways of singing, but rather that my relation towards an “unconventional” use of voice is, for the most part, formed outside of the art music world (Radovanović 2023b).

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"THE MUSIC IS HIGHLY ECLECTIC, AND IT SHOULD BE APPROACHED ACCORDINGLY"

In this regard and from the perspective of vocal technique diversity and 'expansion', we turn to *incidAnces*, where Marković instructs the performers – interestingly, everyone but the vocalist! – to perform *growl*, a technique typical of death metal music, while at the same time playing their instruments. When layering onto the line of the vocalist, the instrumentalists should growl, while she performs her part with a spoken voice and/or *Sprechstimme* (see Figure 2). This can be seen as a "protective gesture" towards the main vocalist, since the stigma following the extended and extreme vocal techniques is still strong in the art music world (see Bell 2016; Wallmark 2018; Noble 2019; Radovanović 2021b). The vocalist is thus relieved of the most demanding and potentially harmful vocalisations, which are "transferred" to those who do not have to maintain their voice in such a manner.

A similar procedure is seen in *Serbian Love Songs*, specifically, songs *Izgovor* [Excuse], when the members of the string quartet are instructed to speak loudly or shout loudly in anger (Figure 3). The vocal part in *incidAnces*, moreover, includes another reference to popular music, only this time, a requirement for a "jazzy, popular manner" of singing in a non-operatic voice, "à la Alicia Keys". These references towards specific popular music styles and singers are reminiscent of one of the first examples of such work in art music, namely, John Cage and Cathy Berberian's piece *Aria* (1958), which was conceived as a "one-woman simulacrum of rapid tape editing that leapt from one type of voice to another, but maintained the expressive integrity of each" (Osmond-Smith 2014, 23). In his graphic score, Cage connected different colours with the styles or techniques Berberian sang to it (jazz, *Sprechstimme*, folk singing, nasal, like Marlene Dietrich...). Compared to Marković's *incidAnces*, however, alternating styles and techniques in *Aria* are practically used as a gimmick, an effect to show Berberian's unique skill, while Marković cultivated his polystylistic ideas on his own and worked on incorporating them more organically and in a less condensed fashion.

19

The image shows a musical score for measures 23-26 of the piece *incidAnces*. The score is written for four parts: Soprano (Sop.), Piccolo (Picc.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Contrabass (Cb.).

- Soprano (Sop.):** Measures 23-26. The lyrics are: "to the ground, and was smashed to pie-ces. The - -". The performance instruction is "spoken ad libitum, mf, leggiero". The dynamics are *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). There is a *gliss.* (glissando) in measure 26.
- Piccolo (Picc.):** Measures 23-26. The performance instruction is "Muta in Flauto Grande".
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Measures 23-26. The performance instruction is "Muta in Cl. Basso". The instruction "non legato, growl with given words" is written above the staff. The lyrics are: "and was smashed to pie-ces and was smashed to pie-ces and".
- Contrabass (Cb.):** Measures 23-26. The performance instruction is "ASP" (Aspirato) with a graphic of a hand blowing into a tube. The dynamics are *fff* (fortissimo) and *sfz* (sforzando). The instruction "Growl (death metal style)" is written below the staff. The lyrics are: "and was smashed to pie-ces".

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written below the corresponding staves.

Figure 2. *incidAnces*, measures 23–26.

Figure 3. *Izgovor*, measures 1–6.

In more recent years, Marković's tendency towards extended vocal techniques and extension of voice beyond the body with the aid of technology was encouraged in an artistic collaboration with the aforementioned vocal artist Thea Soti. In line with his position that his work with the voice heavily depends on the context and whether he is working with a specific performer (Radovanović 2023b), Marković engaged in this cooperation in moulding the vocal part. Due to Soti's capabilities and inclinations, this piece encompasses a more comprehensive range of techniques than previously explored by Marković: improvisational percussive sounds, inhaled multiphonic screams, above-mentioned chest voice, clean singing voice, whispers, speech, approximate pitch and glissando. Additionally, for the first time in his opus, a vocalist ought to use a microphone, demonstrating precision and mastery of microphone technique.

Marković maintains the “position of power” via live electronics,²¹ given that the piece is played and organised in time by triggering the scenes²² in the electronic part, which has two layers: the fixed one, automated in the Ableton software, and the other that is processed live during the performance; by changing the scenes and the atmospheres at the indicated spots in the score, the electronics performer “carries” the piece and abruptly transports listeners to contrasting or differing

21 This is also not unusual practice. One recent example of such dynamics on stage/between the performer and composer in Serbian music is the piece *Bez jave, U potrazi za Pjeroom Arnolda Šenberga* (2017) by Srđan Hofman (1944–2021).

22 The piece is structured within an intro and six scenes that are each additionally divided (all the scenes have two parts, except the third, which does not have any divisions, and the last one, which has four).

sound situations, which are also reflected in the vocal part. Each sound situation is equipped with a part of the text by Ana Marija Grbić, apart from several measures in Scene 2a (Figure 1b) where she sings an uninterrupted melody with chest voice on the vowel e ("eh").

The live electronics in *Defiant walks barefoot* adds another layer of technical and technological extension of the voice. Besides the microphone, the vocal part is also manipulated by the electronics player who controls both the level of fixed media and the live processing. The singer's voice is processed throughout almost entire composition. Depending on the scene, its sound is handled through the spectral harmoniser, led through the process of recording and scrubbing, transforming, and playing with that recording, freezing and unfreezing the singer's voice. For this layer to (in a more or less improvisational fashion) build upon the vocalist already performing the text with various vocal techniques, the singer and the electronics player, who ideally also gets to be on the stage, should be in constant and intensive communication.

SCENIC POTENTIAL AND AWARENESS

The potential and requirements for scenic action and gesture in Marković's music for voice range from performers' basic movements and uncomplicated gestures to elaborate and precise instructions and concepts prepared *to be staged*.²³ The most straightforward but nevertheless noticeable engagement by the performers is seen in the *Ultraterreno*, where Marković directs the vocalists and the pianist the following: "Tutti: Complete silence. Without any sound or movement. Like the time has stopped!" (measures 15 and 26). Similarly, in *incidAnces*, all the participants have some non-musical stage tasks. However, the most striking emotional turmoils are reserved for the vocal performer, whose part includes gestures and scenic action that is, in a way, complementary to her vocal part.

In *Nirvana*, aside from using hand tremolos and leg stomps that are tied with more intense yelling, screaming and speaking at several dramatically important points in the piece, Marković engaged the choir in small-scale scenic actions such as to "freeze and do not move" during measurements of complete silence, or to sing "drunkenly and mysteriously, like some besotted ritual" (Marković 2017a, 37–38). The choir is, therefore, used as one acting body that should depict and add to the text painting and general atmosphere.

incidAnces are determined by Marković as seven monodramatic madrigals²⁴ or situations and left with an option to perform the piece as a concert work or as a scenic piece of music theatre. These vignettes are not to be "understood as conventional sequence of events, but rather to be intuitively felt" (Marković 2017b, 3).

23 In the notes on performance of *incidAnces*, Marković quotes Claude Vivier's saying for his own composition *Love Songs*, writing "TO BE STAGED OR NOT" (Marković 2017b, 4).

24 Seven madrigals/situations are as follows: I – Blue notebook no. 10 (or 'The red-haired man'), II – Incidents, III – An Optical Illusion, IV – A Symphony, V – Plummeting old women, VI – An Encounter and VII – Lynching.

The singer takes the role of a narrator – she tells the stories but also feels different emotions and states as she moves through the piece. If the performance is set in a music theatre version, the ensemble should implement theatrical and bodily gestures, mimicry and acting motions, which are carefully noted in general textual instructions at the beginning of every madrigal, and with more detailed and precise guidance in the score, above individual vocal and instrumental parts. These can be omitted in a concert performance, but it is not recommended to do so since, as Marković suggests, they were “composed together with the music” (2017b, 4).

The instructions for the general atmosphere and overall individual actions in *incidAnces* are given at the beginning of every “madrigal”, mainly referring to the dramaturgical dynamic of the performance. Besides the emotional state, a vocal performer should embody, these include the instructions to, for example, “hop like a child that is playing, from on one leg to another, making a circle(s) around the ensemble” (madrigal no. II), or assume the “starting position” in a manner of a sprinter before starting the piece (no. VII). More detailed and precise guidelines are given throughout the piece, above the designated performer’s part, which can refer to mimics (ex. “very shocked facial expression”, “close your eyes and mouth”, “hands in a sterile position by the body”), triggering concrete actions such as rotating for 90 degrees multiple times across the madrigal no. III, and other actions (Marković 2017b).

COMPOSER VS VOCAL PERFORMER:

AUTHORITY AND AGENCY IN SCORE AND PERFORMANCE

Marković’s dedication to voice(s) and bodies on the scene in the previously described manner leads us to rekindle the debate on the relationship between the composer’s authority and the vocal performer’s competencies. In that sense, we can look into *Defiant walks barefoot* as a metaphor for the composer regaining control on stage. Marković, of course, did give credit to Soti as a collaborator (if only in the performance notes of the score) and a role model for voice in this piece. However, the fact that the electronics can (and must) overpower the voice in the real-time live performing situation, robs the vocal performer of their autonomy and (bodily) integrity.²⁵ The dynamic that is established here is not without a precedent. Namely, the under-recognition of (particularly female) performers in their collaboration with (male) composers could be traced deep into history. Speaking of the 20th century and the avant-garde and experimental music that was highly dependent on the skill and courage of the female performers, we can pinpoint as most notable examples the collaborative work of Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian on *Thema (Omaggio a*

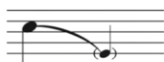
25 On the question of “direct sound”, the instructions for performers read: “In this piece there is no direct unprocessed sound in traditional sense. The track FX5 – VOICE is the main source of vocals. The track is controlled by the electronics performer and is also sent to a mixer (channel ¾) and then additionally used by a sound engineer as ‘direct sound’. This way, the electronics performer can modify the intensity of vocals” (Marković 2021).

Joyce (1958), *Circles* (1960) and *Visage* (1961), *Recital I (for Cathy)* (1972), as well as already mentioned *Aria* signed by Cage and *dedicated* to Berberian (see Meehan 2011; Stoianova 1985, as cited in Bosma 2014; Placanica 2018). Analogies to this can also be found in the Serbian and Yugoslav context, concretely in the collaborative work of avant-garde composer Ernő Király and actress and vocal artist Katalin Ladik (see Šuvaković 2010; Radovanović 2021a; Sabo 2021).

Since the collaboration with one individual (and particular) vocalist was only realised in the last of the works examined here, it can be noted that Marković's sensibility towards the individual voices and the performers' specific skills developed and culminated in this piece. Shaping the vocal part according to and together with a particular performer is an approach the composer himself has preferred in recent years (Radovanović 2023b). However, for future performers to be able to reproduce this and his other pieces, Marković has been diligent and thorough in his performance notes. Moreover, his attention to detail and meticulousness have increased with each subsequent work.

In addition to the verbal instructions for voice (and other performers) that have already been mentioned earlier, Marković also establishes a system of graphics and symbols for the extended, non-singing techniques. These also become more elaborate over the years but retain the basic symbols. Some of them are applicable for all performers independently of their part (such as the symbols for the lowest and highest possible notes), and some remain specific for vocals – *Sprechstimme*, spoken, whispered, etc. (see Figures 4a, 4b and 4c).

Symbols:



Irregular accelerating glissando



Any very low tone

Z - "sprechgesang" (sungspoken), *alla* Schoenberg or Berg

—————→ **Z** gradual transition from sung to spoken



imperceptible attack, from quietest piano (*ex nihilo*)

Figure 4a. *Ultraterreno*, notation and symbols (selection).

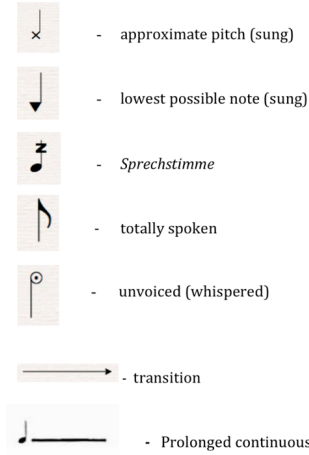
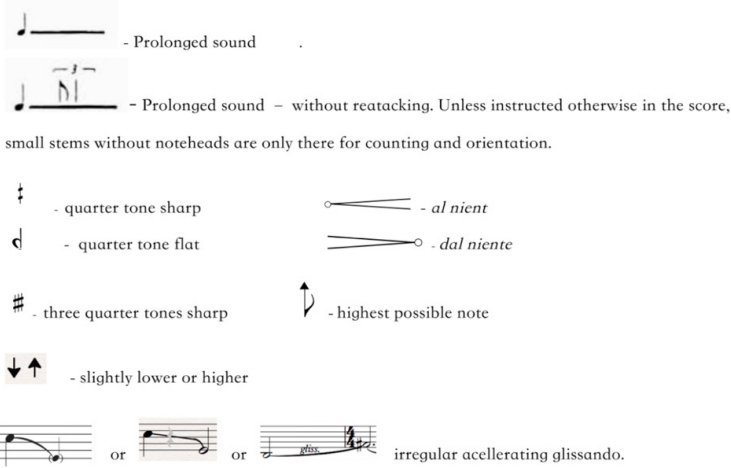


Figure 4b. *Nirvana*, notation and symbols (selection).

General notation:



Soprano:

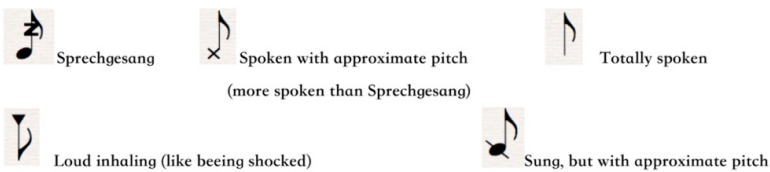


Figure 4c. *incidAnces*, notation and symbols (selection).

Furthermore, in *Defiant walks barefoot*, Marković gives guidelines for electronics, voice, and video, as well as the spatial arrangement of the performers and technical/gear aspects. Demonstrating that the score could not contain all the necessary information, Marković also directed the future performers to engage with the premiere video recording to reconstruct the movement, gestures, and light design. This step in the process of recreation of the piece is not obligatory if the performers envision the stage design. However, the reference to the premiere's video recording, together with the written score, adds another stratum and, after all, the media type of the composer's instruction.

Finally, given that the recording of *Defiant walks barefoot* is declared exemplary by the composer himself, we can briefly acknowledge the possibility of examining the rest of the audio and audio-visual recordings for their faithfulness to the score. Although the remaining recordings are not mentioned in the performance notes, Marković emphasised that he almost always knew (except with *Serbian Love Songs*) which vocalist and/or ensemble would premiere his music for voice (Ćirica 2021). In that sense, he could have adjusted and tweaked the vocal parts to accommodate the singers, which would have further reflected on the recordings made during the premieres. Thanks to these, one can analyse the range of vocal "elasticity" and adherence to the score. For example, the individuality in the dosing of speech component in the *Sprechstimme* or transitional vocal gestures is unmistakable and expected, and it is interesting to hear the struggle with controlling the vibrato in the pieces which have this exact demand. The performance of *De Rerum Natura* stands out in that sense, with the performer encountering difficulties in 'opposing' the orchestra as a single performer with nothing but her voice while maintaining a clear and non-dramatic tone.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to introduce the vocal music of Jug Marković and situate it primarily in the context of the local art music community, and, consequently, to signal its features to the global community of composers that work with voice, vocal performers, as well as composers that are at the same time performers of their own vocal music. It seems that Marković's self-proclaimed eclecticism resides in his own musical tastes and compositional skills, as well as his well-thought-out collaborations with experimental and contemporary vocalists of our time. In that regard, it is interesting to see how a composer, who does not perform his own pieces as a vocalist – which is a formula that is very common and successful in the works of artists such as Joan La Barbara, Pamela Z, Imogen Heap, Amy X Neuberg, Thea Soti, Ana Gnjatović (to name but a few) – finds a way to realize his ideas and transform them in close cooperation with people who will ultimately perform them.

As a representative of the younger generation of composers from Serbia – albeit already one of many who live and work abroad (cf. Medić 2020; 2023) – Marković has shown interest in and appreciation towards the voice which stands out in contemporary music in Serbia and in the former Yugoslav region. On that account, Marković's newest vocal piece was performed at the Music Biennale Zagreb festival

in April 2023, as a part of the program that ensued from the project *Balkan Affairs*, where Marković was the representative of Serbia. His composition *Nula* [*Zero*], aside from being a venture into a new type of ensemble, is the first one in Marković's opus that directly addresses social and political themes of the Balkan and, specifically, the Yugoslav past. Interestingly enough, all the pieces in this project were written for and in collaboration with Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, a renowned ensemble of six singers that specialises in contemporary vocal music. As to the future research of Marković's vocal music, *Nula* opens the possibilities to expand the discussion onto collaborative work (now in the context of a chamber vocal ensemble), the usage of various techniques and styles, further elaborations of the instruction system for vocalists, and all the other types of advanced research in the domain of composition and vocal performance.

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БОЈАНА РАДОВАНОВИЋ

„ОВА МУЗИКА ЈЕ ВИСОКО ЕКЛЕКТИЧНА И ТРЕБА ЈОЈ ПРИСТУПАТИ
У СКАЛАДУ С ТИМ”: ГЛАС У ДЕЛИМА ЈУГА МАРКОВИЋА

(РЕЗИМЕ)

У овом чланку разматрана је музика за глас у опусу српског композитора Југа Марковића, будући да је током година овај аутор профилисао свој еклектични стил у којем се с посебном пажњом бави вокалним деоницама и истраживањем гласа у музици. Како би се размотрили различити аспекти једног оваквог приступа гласу у музици, начињен је избор композиција које су, поред нотног записа, забележене и у аудио или аудио-визуелном формату. Тако се анализом композиција *Српске љубавне ђесме* за глас и гудачки квартет, *Ultraterreno* за два женска гласа и клавир, *incidAnces* за глас и камерни састав, *Нирвана* за хор, *De Rerum Natura* за сопран и оркестар и *Defiant walks batefoot* за глас и електронику испитује диверзификација извођачких техника и вокалног стила укључивањем искустава из популарне, експерименталне и традиционалне музике, као и увођење технолошких средстава у вокално извођење и манипулацију звука. У том смислу, у циљу одређивања карактеристика и различитих фактора еклектицизма у Марковићевим вокалним делима, сагледани су аспекти проширења вокалних техника и телесних експресивних средстава, односа између композиторског и извођачког гласа, као и карактеристике нотног записа његових композиција за глас.