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## The Symmetrical-Modal Musical Thought of Dimitar Nenov in Piano Etude № 1

*“...And searching for the new, as-of-yet unsaid”*

### Part II

*Nikolay Gradev*

Etude № 1 for piano reflects Dimitar Nenov's creative attempts in the beginning of the 1930s to work out his own contemporary means of expression, compositionally-structurally based on “quasi-classical” musical foundations. The total modal organization of the hemiditone symmetrical mode (octatonic scale, whole-tone half-tone scale, diminished scale) was consecutively introduced interdimensionally to all modal levels, as it brought into action the full potential of the symmetrical modal system: from the two primitive intervals used as building blocks – the hemiditone and the tritone – through the three hemiditone (diminished 7th chords) single-structure groups, to the complete hemiditonal symmetrical modal structure of Type II (2.1) in their three transpositions (*Part I, Example 1, p. 49, Part II, Examples 8–11*). The strictly followed homogenous modal-thematic foundation is tonally centering due to the sharply dissonant interval of the tritone and the major seventh *c-fis-h*, which functions as the central chord in the dissonant tonality, which unites the entire musical form with the help of the “technique of the center.”

One of the major techniques in the textual development of the modal material is the principle of complementarity, derived from the incomplete chromatic nature of the symmetrical modes. Consecutively introduced by Dimitar Nenov both in a series and

simultaneously, it leads to various levels of chromatic saturation of the musical texture with an important compositional-structural function. Taking maximal advantage of the three compositionally-technically possible forms of development of the musical material in the hemiditone symmetrical mode – uni-transpositionality, multi-transpositionality and poly-transpositionality, Dimitar Nenov masterfully solves the problem of sonic renewal. As a result of the high level of individuality within the voice leading, which sometimes leads to an extreme stratification of the musical cloth with distinct differentiation of several textural levels, clear poly-harmonic ideas are reached. “*The search for the new, as-of-yet unsaid*” through creative improvisation on classical experience from the position of its new modern sonic conception leads Dimitar Nenov to rethink the traditional musical form as a structural matrix for his contemporary means of expression.

The **symmetrical-modal creative discoveries** of Dimitar Nenov demonstrate the synchronic inclusion of Bulgarian professional music from the beginning of the 1930s into the larger picture of modernism in music during the 20th century. **As an individual historical-stylistic solution** to the “*problem of the Bulgarian*”, they are the harbinger of new attempts in the Bulgarian compositional school of the 1950s by composers such as Lazar Nikolov and Konstantin Iliev.

## Musical Time and Its Multilingual Essence: A Poetic Reading of Stefan Dragostinov's Polytempia

*Angelina Petrova*

Visions of musical time from the end of the 20th century are an important indicator of the exhaustion of the postmodern state. In Bulgarian music, one such appearance can be found in experiments with polytempia, which are especially clearly represented in the work of Stefan Dragostinov. In the 1970s and 1980s he created a series of choral and orchestral scores using "controlled polytempia". His ideas about musical time also continue in his poly-metrical experiments from the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries.

In polytempia, the multi-part nature of time is shifted into various sonic realities: the sonic sphere of speech (following the description by folklorist Ivan Kachulev); the sonic sphere of "nature," oriented towards the sound/silence relationship; and finally, instrumental metaphor. The

encounter between controlled polytempia and folkloric-everyday word-formation is a prerequisite for a new reading of musical time.

One of the characteristics of controlled polytempia is a schema of proportions. The system of proportions in the polytempia technique can be defined as the multiple appearance of asymmetricality.

The basic key for deciphering Dragostinov's original conception is the idea of "makam-ness," introduced as the integration of quarter-tones and micro-chromaticism. Among different types of works using polytempia, Stefan Dragostinov's project is unique within international practice, he does not fall into any established tendencies. The reason for this is that the composer created a unique way of mixing/fusing language and temporality.

## Bulgarian Piano Concerts and Tendencies within the Genre during the 1970s

*Snezhina Vrangova*

The piano concert is a significant phenomenon in the creative history of Bulgarian music. During the 1970s the concert sphere was stratified by many different approaches with respect to process, performing groups, balance between the soloist and the orchestra, and between instruments in the orchestra as a whole. Some of the leading tendencies in genre development during this period include "chamber-ness," genre synthesis and increased interest in timbre. Their mutual interactions led to the creation of models that were unique simultaneously in terms of their synthetic genre basis and their accent on timbre. This expanded the arena of genre by emphasizing the periphery, which

was interconnected with the center, which is associated with works with more traditional dramaturgical interpretations.

Reasons behind the activeness of the concert model during the 1970s include creative and social necessity, the growing role of the interpreter, and the consideration of tradition as a possible appearance of continuity in culture and in the creative consciousness. The concert genre formed as a dynamic category, capable of orienting itself towards various stylistic conditions and of assimilating a wide range of genre methods and as a field for interaction and synthesis of various levels. Devoid of imminent structural characteristics, the piano concert began to express

much more the free movement of the creative idea, rather than a definite formal type. In the variety of its genre realizations in each of the examined cases, the concert preserves its most essential layer – the state of dialogue, improvisation and the possibility for social identification. Interpretations during this period categorically show the synchronicity of Bulgarian culture with that of Europe.

The range of creative interpretations transforms the concert into a holistic creative and social model. Precisely in the context of this possibility in the social-cultural situation of the time and the constant synchronizing and enlarging of cultural and geopolitical boundaries, “the concert” resounded with particular topicality as a metaphor for the united cultural space.

### On the Experimental Studio for Contemporary Music

*Diana Danova*

The Experimental Studio for Contemporary Music was founded in the beginning of the 1980s on the initiative of musicologist Anda Palieva, in cooperation with the Sofia Concert Department. It lasted for three seasons (1982–1984). It is an important albeit little-known occurrence on the way to the institutionalization of the idea of New Music; it preceded by nearly a decade the creation of the Society for Contemporary Music in Bulgaria and was a forum for the realization of a series of debut performances in Bulgaria of works that indicated the path toward contemporary musical culture.

The concerts in the Experimental Studio took place in the chamber auditorium of Bulgaria Hall once a month (and sometimes more frequently) late in the evening (beginning at 9 P.M.) and quite often provoked interesting discussions. For the first time in Bulgaria, classic works of the international musical avant-garde were presented, as well as works by

young Bulgarian and foreign composers. The first concerts in Bulgaria of electronic music (Live Electronics) date back to this concert series. The public, largely made up of young people from various professions, reacted with great interest; the concerts also received positive response from music critics.

The organizers set themselves the ambitious task of presenting music from a wide temporal range, from different styles and directions – classic works of the 20th century unknown until that time in Bulgaria, avant-garde and new music (in the sense of new musical ideas realized in recent years) – as well as providing a stage for Bulgarian New Music.

Twenty-five years after the event, the reconstruction of the concert schedules and programs is quite difficult. Most research is based on reports in the press and the memories of some of the organizers and participants.

### From the First Orchestras and Choirs to the Professional Choir for the Blind

*Vanya Mateeva*

The present text is just a fragment of a larger discussion about the cultural achievements of the visually impaired in Bulgaria and their integration into Bulgarian society. This work synthetically traces

the most important moments in the formation and development of the Professional Choir for the Blind in Bulgaria and is dedicated to its director of many years, Stoyan Babekov.

The research is based on published sources: material from the magazine *Zari*, published by the Association for the Blind, as well as other publications and archival data. Analysis of the author's personal interviews with the choir's most

senior member allows her to "enter into" the choral activities of the blind: preparatory and rehearsal work, interaction between the blind and the sighted, the role of the director and the drive for professionalism.

## Reviews

### Western Music according to Richard Taruskin

*Svetlana Neytcheva*

Richard Taruskin's six-volume *History of Western Music* (2005) has already been internationally recognized as a contribution to the field, largely due to the author's view on history as part of its social, political and intellectual environment. What makes this contribution challenging and controversial at the same time is Taruskin's analytical approach. Inasmuch as it breaks with the aesthetic concept of absolute music, this approach actually breaks with the basis of the romantic model both of writing a history of music (as a "linear" and goal-directed historic development) and of musical works' reception/evaluation, in particular in modern historiography.

The author argues his social-contextual position by relying on methods from beyond traditional (musical) historiography and by drawing particularly strong support from music theory and the Bakhtinian dialogue.

Also, with its story-like construction and corresponding narrative style that simultaneously carries more than one thread throughout the volumes, the book seems far from conventional. This proves that simultaneity is the adequate underlying principle for embodying insights on history that avoid totality and tend to conceptualize the object from the opposite perspective.

Taruskin's music history is a process-container for historic, political, intellectual, biographical, and creative events and artifacts, as well as for equally skillfully reconstructed re-

flections on these events and artifacts from different points of view and critical discourses.

The present paper does not attempt to present the book in all its thematic abundance, rather it focuses selectively on issues considered here the most representative of both the author's concept and its controversial nature.

As far as the concept is concerned, this paper underlines its basis: what Taruskin calls the "signal features" of Western music, namely, the Western tradition in musical literacy and the "generic" variety of genres that have developed throughout the centuries by the medium of writing. Insofar as the literary tradition has a "coherent" and "completed shape" (Taruskin), one may also presume that "Western" music exists as long as its own medium of writing does - from the first written documents of Roman liturgical song to its presumable end. If this end of the literate tradition does come, it should be taking place now and in the form of new beginnings, intensively emerging in the musical practice of present times (volume V).

Part of his attempt to write a history "as it was" is the author's critical reconsideration of the romantic myth-making historicism. The paper presents it in terms of the deconstruction of the romantic ideal and outlines the framework of this deconstruction.

The territory of the musical West is marked by cultural plurality. At the same time this aspect reveals the controversial side of the author's view:

While being open and dynamic in the sense of constantly expanding its impact, there are still blank spaces in this territory where one would expect to find more “newcomers to the tradition”. As Taruskin himself admits, he is dealing “primarily with matters of historic interest”. Therefore, the question arises of how he decides which “newcomer” (i.e. individual or country) is of “historic interest”, especially in a book in which two volumes (IV and V) claim to be a “first attempt at a complete history of twentieth-century music”?

The larger second part of the paper takes a closer look at one of the most broadly discussed and analyzed issues in the book, namely nationalism (in music). Given that “national music” was the cornerstone in the cultural strategy on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain, the paper points at some parallels and differences between Taruskin’s definitions and definitions drawn from the Marxist theory of the (national) state which used to be guidelines in Soviet (music) historiography.

**Anda Palieva: *Homo Musicus Between the Balkans and Europe. Intentions and Appearances of the Supra-National in the Bulgarian Compositional Consciousness***

Sofia, Mars, 2006, 271 pp.

*Rumyana Karakostova*

Anticipating the real state of Bulgarian musical culture after the country’s accession to the European Union, Anda Palieva’s book *Homo Musicus Between the Balkans and Europe* critically examines a wide range of actual musicological problems, established national idioms and evaluation criteria with polemical historical transferability in the context of many years of personal observations and grounded cultural theses. In relation to the key metaphor *Homo musicus* (understood as a sonic-creative *mental attitude*), projections of various analytical discourses build up every subsequent level of the harmonious composition of the research, in which the basic structuring impulse is the idea of a contemporary rethinking of “spiritual processes in terms of the holistic logic of their natural evolution as a synthesis of national and supra-national intentions within the creative consciousness”. The goal the author has set for herself is “to examine the European aspects of compositional work as a consequential line,” and to make sense of Bulgarian compositional achievements that have become part of the European musical tradition “not as individual artifacts, but

as a single constant tendency in Bulgarian musical culture in the 20th century,” which undoubtedly represents an *innovative* approach in contemporary Bulgarian musical historiography. The thematic sphere primarily problematized in Chapter Two (“*Homo Musicus* Between Global Tendencies and National Traditions - Directions and Appearances of the Bulgarian Musical Avant-Garde”) immanently reflects Anda Palieva’s research interests – resulting not only from long years of musicological practice, but also from her role as initiator of Bulgaria’s first “Experimental Studio for Contemporary Music” (1982–1984), which provided additional documentary value to her research work as a direct participant in the events being analyzed.

In the category of the “protesting artist” the author includes “that generation of composers born between the two World Wars” and above all emblematic figures such as Lazar Nikolov and Konstantin Iliev, to whose ranks Vasil Kazandzhiev, Ivan Spasov, Georgi Tutev and Simeon Pironkoff were subsequently added. With their radical ideas and experiments, which

opposed the official (ideologized) aesthetic doctrine, they legitimize themselves as a *musical avant-garde*, which emphasized a qualitatively new “decisive moment in the history of Bulgarian musical works”. Anda Palieva’s classification of clear examples of various *individual approaches* to national idioms categorically demonstrates the radical change that occurred in associative gestures toward the folklore tradition, historical memory and the “inalienably Bulgarian” in our national culture, which led to the appearance of new compositional conceptions, unique genres and musical-technological solutions – through self-identification with

avant-garde tendencies in European musical practice during the 20th century. The author, however, presents another analysis – a *linear-vectorial differentiation* of creative phenomenon in Bulgarian musical history from the beginning of the last century – through the introduction of keywords for their symbolic association with certain decades. Despite the pluralism of individual styles during the entire 20th century, the unifying keyword for the 1960s, in her opinion, could be “experiment,” for the 1970s “the history of the old culture,” for the 1980s “philosophy, the tragedian,” and for the 1990s “confession, prayer” (p. 92).

### Kristina Yapova: *The Music that Lifts up the Hearts*

Sofia, Institut of Art Studies, 2007, 183 pp.

Tomi Kurkliysiyski

In this work, Kristina Yapova pulls together in a creative conclusion the prominent, long-standing academic spheres containing ideas about liturgical-musical meaning, and academic approaches and methods for grasping and penetrating liturgical music, which form the main content and object of the text - critical reflection on *musicology* as a contemporary academic discipline. While the apparently metaphorical title hints at the book’s essayistic nature, its concrete subject – liturgical music – shows it to be an essentially specialized critical-methodological study of that phenomenon. Many pages are dedicated to causal mining of the fields of philosophy, aesthetics and the theology of music, while others address practical analyses and methods, which in the end are generalized into theoretically tested ideas and approaches to a concrete liturgical-musical phenomenon: that clear example of Bulgarian liturgical-musical composition “Tebe poem” from the “Lit-

urgy for St John Chrysostom with Additional Chants” (№1) by Dobri Hristov. To this end the author follows known principles in the establishment of living examples from the work of the same composer, already familiar from her book *Liturgicalness and Musical Thought*, as well as methods related to his *Chants for the All-Night Vigil*, published in 2005 as musical scores. In the given sense, results related to the latter work show new and as of yet undiscovered interconnections – with respect to the “pure” theory of *The Music that Lifts up the Hearts*. This impression is strengthened by the final chapter of the book, “Musical Sacrifice,” since the assigned role of the musical-analytical method as “advice” or “background” within the diagnostic methodology for studying liturgical music is in fact far more radical; the precise musical-analytical reflections in works with living musical material, as well as evaluative criteria deduced from analysis and approaches are significant and necessary in

the context of spiritual involvement, in the acceptance of the cognitive basis for faith – this is the heart of the academic message of this text. Similarly complex processes, indicated by the nontraditional genre of *The Music that Lifts up the Hearts*, are based fundamentally on new academic systematicity and new - essentially avant-garde - academic methodology. In it the complex subordination of the level of action and the dynamics of the conceptualizing-categorizing apparatus overcomes certain inertia and dogmatism inherent in Bulgarian musicology, and synchronizes its categorical language and objects with other academic spheres.

In this work, which is unique not only

to the Bulgarian musical-academic literature, the radical upheaval of the academic paradigm and the deeply original ideas are argued for and supported on various levels – a new type of *cognitive relationship*; a new type of *logos-identification of music*, different from familiar philosophical-aesthetic concepts; an understanding of the *language-music* relationship in church music, tracing their causal unity through and within its *logos* nature; a series of systematic interrelationships, stemming from the basic *liturgical-musical* correlation, and so forth. This work provides a holistic idea and view of liturgical music, stemming from and built upon layers of its uppermost meaning.

**Claire Levy: *Ethnojazz: Local Projections in the Global Village***

Sofia, Institute of Art Studies – BAS, 2007, 176 pp. + XVI pp. coloured illustrations and CD with music examples

*Georg Kraev*

Claire Levy is among those scholars whose advanced academic erudition organically complements the inherent musician's sensitivity. In her new book, the author undertakes a fascinating interdisciplinary journey which reaches a particular meta-level of theoretical perspective concerning the music in the postmodern world. Devoted to ethno-jazz as an innovative form of interaction between Bulgarian/Balkan folk and the global jazz vocabulary, the book discusses on the music of emblematic Bulgarian artists with different genre backgrounds, who outline a new trend in music as well as a new horizon in crossing of musical languages. The discussion explores both sociocultural aspects of this phenomenon and its musical "language" distinctiveness, projected in the open, flexible nature of particular musical texts, symptomatic in terms of a specific artistic awareness

which goes beyond the blank mimicry in the appropriation of the classic jazz idiom. Their common line, defined by Western analysts as an expression of "Bulgarian exceptionalism", is often stimulated by the affinity to improvisation in Balkan wedding music, which is now taking new, unpredictable directions. Drawing attention to what is considered nowadays as "returning to ethnicity" or a form of neo-folk attitudes, it is argued that today's folk musicians update the model of artistic behaviour, not identical neither to the glossy aesthetics of the folk ensembles (promoted by the state after World War Two), nor to the museum-like idea in terms of preserving tradition. The key thesis unfolds the idea that such musicians prompt a new wave of creativity and freedom in re-appropriating the "two sides of the coin" as if to revive the syncretism of that artistic attitudes, which –

in jazz as well as in folk – does not split musicians into “composers” and “performers” and turn them into full masters in the process of music-making, or, to put it in another way, in *musicizing* (Small).

*Part One* (The Idea of Ethnojazz) outlines basic points in understanding jazz as a particular novelty in the twentieth century culture. It is argued that jazz has become a broader term that fits a dynamic range of musical practices and may be understood as a context rather than a concept. This starting point is further developed by exploring views of Milcho Leviev – composer, arranger, piano player, and jazz innovator, – who still during the 1960s, the decade before his immigration to the U.S., played a key role in Bulgarian jazz and paved the way for a fusion, named at that time folk-jazz. *Part Two* (Con Mucho Gusto: the groovy aesthetics in the music of Milcho Leviev) analyses some of the artist’s earliest innovative compositions (*Anti-Waltz*, *Studia*, *Blues in 9*, and *Blues in 10*). *Part Three* (The Balkan Ethnic Wave)

explores, in a highly polemic way, the controversial local perceptions of the wedding bands boom during the 1980s and its crucial impact on both the dominant sound environment within Bulgaria and the innovative forms of jazz fusions, spiced with strong Balkan flavour. *Part Four* (From Wedding Bands to Experimental Music) takes a closer analytic look at recent “musical texts” recorded by Ivo Papisov and Trakia Orchestra, Ateshhan Yuseinov and Venera Marmozel, the group of Ikadem, Jony Iliev and his band, the drum duet of Stoyan Yankoulov and Elitsa Todorova, and the Gypsy brass band of Karandila. Special attention is paid to less explored issues in relation to regional exoticism, hybridity, pluralism, dialogism, and the postethnic identity perspective. It should be noted that *Ethnojazz* is not only a highly stimulating scholarly book – it is also an exciting account, which opens a new page in popular music studies and argues on hot issues in relation to substantial changes in modern musical culture.

## Roma Music in Research Recordings

Ventsislav Dimov

This CD review is dedicated to two albums featuring traditional Roma music from the Balkans. The result of applied ethnomusicology, the albums are the work of authoritative researchers of Roma music and include recorded music, photographs and research data from their fieldwork.

We are indebted to Dimitrie Golemovic for the album *Memoire Tsigane. Serbie/Romany Musical Heritage. Serbia*, (AIMP LXXVII. *Arhives internationales de musique populaire*. Musee d’ethnographie Geneve. VDE-GALLO/CD-1184, 2006), which was published in Switzerland. The album contains traditional Serbian mu-

sic as performed by professional Roma musicians (men, *tambura* ensembles, and small groups made up of accordion, violin, guitar and double bass) and traditional songs in Romani (sung by women a cappella).

Speranza Radulescu is responsible for the album *Romi si tigani din satul Gratia, Teleorman/Roma and Gypsies from the Village of Gratia, Teleorman* (Ethnotopie, CD 008, 2004, Bucuresti). It includes performances by Roma musicians from the village of Gratia in the Teleorman region – both Roma (one family’s Roma songs) and Gypsy (professional musicians, or *lautari*).

## ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

## Fifth Meeting of the ICTM „Music and Minorities“ Study Group in Prague, 2008

Rosemary Statelova

The organizers of the Fifth Meeting of the ICTM “Music and Minorities” Study Group in Prague included the Humanities Faculty of Charles University in Prague and the Ethnological Institute at the Czech Academy of sciences (plus a structure called Slovo 21). The hosts consisted of a small group of young people led by Dr Zuzana Jurkova, and the conference took place in the Hotel Jeneralka, a historic mansion now run by the European Association of Baptists. The Bulgarian participation represented a definitive turn in our ethnomusicology towards so-called “new directions” in the discipline: minority music, Roma music, music and media, music of the Bulgarian diaspora, mutual influences between traditional and popular music, and faraway fields in ethnomusicology and ethnography. For that reason our papers clustered around three basic conference themes: 1. Roma music and dance; 2. Market and mass media representation of minority music and dance; 3. Cultural politics for the preservation of minority music and dance. Presenters, in order of appearance, included: Veselka Toncheva with her original film “The ‘Many-Coloured’ Bride from Galata, Teteven Region” (produced by Bulgarian National Television); Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov with a paper entitled „The Song Repertoire of *Servi*-Roma in Ukraine”; Ventsislav Dimov, “Roma Musicians in the Music Industry in Bulgaria (1944–1989)”; Lozanka Peycheva, “A Roma

Musician Bulgaria – Between the Local and the Global”; Angela Rodel (our colleague and translator, currently working on her dissertation on the topic of Bulgarian folk singing), “Bessarabian Bulgarian Musicians and the Politics of Culture and Immigration”; Ivanka Vlaeva, “The Safeguarding and Developing of Turkish Community Traditions in Bulgarian Cultural Politics”; Rosemary Statelova, “Lusatian Sorbs in Germany: Radio Broadcasts in the Upper Lusatian Language”. (Unfortunately, Claire Levy was unable to attend to present her paper “The Roma Impact on Wedding Music in Bulgaria and the Neo-Folk Perspective”.) One key factor in the “mass” Bulgarian participation at the ICTM conference in Prague was the presentation of the English-language volume *The Human World and Musical Diversity*, published in 2008 as part of *Bulgarian Musicology. Studies* series. The volume was compiled and edited by Rosemary Statelova, Angela Rodel, Lozanka Peycheva, Ivanka Vlaeva and Ventsislav Dimov. The 407-page collection contains all papers submitted for publication from the Fourth Meeting of the ICTM Music and Minorities Study Group in Varna in 2006. It also comes with a compact disc containing musical examples related to the papers, which were edited and mastered by Dr. Gerda Lechleitner of the Phonogrammarchiv-Vienna in the Austrian Academy of Sciences.