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- I have kept the idea of the Croatian Glagolitic Requiem for a long time, one could say I was born with it. Namely, the island Silba, where I come from has managed culturally to keep some archetypal layers typical for the most part of our Mediterranean regions. I would say that we have a misconception about this region since it sees a coexistence of traditional klapa singing and older layers which kept the Slavic heritage and attachments to early Christian traditions. I think that one of the main qualities of Croatian culture lies in its polyvalent character, and our attitude towards it should be inclusive and not reductionist, putting away paths that do not fit in the image that we have about ourselves. The text that I have used for the Requiem is very archaic, but still follows the structure of the Latin mass for the dead, and is divided in 6 parts.

* *Some of your older works use archaic musical language. What attracted you to it?*

- I will tell you a story from my years of apprenticeship in the electronic studios of RAI in Milan. The electronics was a new and interesting media, but what bothered me the most was the fact that all the electronic compositions that I had heard sounded very similar one to the other. Since I was more interested in studying the medium, then creating some compositions out of it, I have decided to focus completely on the technical procedure and the possibilities of manipulation of the primary musical material. Therefore, I came to the idea to use and mix the original recordings of folk music. I was interested to see how it would react to the specific almost scientific procedures applied on it in the electronic studio. One of the most interesting examples was when I modulated the jingling of the jewelry heard in the folk dances of Imotski with the high sounds of sopela from Istria and then slowed down the material, the result was astonishing – the sound of Indian sitar. On the other hand, the folklore is not just some background, I always wanted to point out my roots, although I did compose other more experimental works.

* *However, you think those works would not reveal your origins?*

- Actually, I don't know. It seems that the feeling of belonging is more on the emotional level.

* *If we analyze your opus, especially those pieces that make use of folkloric elements, we could say that you use mostly the folklore of a specific region, the one connected to the dinaric region...*

- Actually, I don't like folklore at all. Although my pieces are charged with intuition and emotion, my main interest as composer is the structural element in music which doesn't have anything to do with folklore that is driven by improvisation and open structure.

- * *That might also depend on the folklore that is used.*
- You are right. Bartok for example, used the folklore in a constructivist manner. This approach I find close to mine, and it seems to be supported by the folk substance found in the dinaric region.
- * *What do you think about the neofolk music?*
- I would say that today one can use but not compose folklore. I see neofolk music as a recycling process with very little folklore left in it.

CANTUS, after the premiere

... The liturgic and Para liturgic folk singing of the Glagolitic clergy is a true testimony of the tenacious battle to preserve the Croatian language, and Zadar and its surroundings managed to keep for a long time the Glagolitic heritage, until mid XX century. The official liturgy was later established, but until then, it was possible for the area of the Archbishopric of Zadar to preserve this practice, as well as a large number of texts printed in Latin letters in folk language with a lot of archaisms. The oldest preserved document from the region dates from 1177 and describes the arrival of Pope Alexandre III in Zadar where he was welcomed by lauds and cantiques chanted in, what his biographer cardinal Boson called *sclavica lingua*. Since the Glagolitic tradition relied mostly on oral transmission, it is possible to reconstruct its meaning through the old versions of Para liturgic texts dating from the XIV and XV centuries, some of which are still in use today.

The composer Igor Kuljerić has a theory about the lack of any written musical record for these chants. He thinks that the unusual Glagolitic ornamentations and improvisations were hard and too particular to write down. Characteristic and complicated singing required educated singers that could document this practice and the Glagolitic clergy (clero Illirico) had completely different life from the urban clergy living in the cities...

He remembers the first years after II World War in Zadar and Silba the places of his childhood, when there was still some Glagolitic practice. "The old people remembered well the old, authentic melisma. Personally, I haven't remembered them as facts, nor did I write them down, but they stay in my subconscious. When creating my work, I didn't stop just there, trying to copy the original, but moving towards my fantasies. What was in me, that was a starting point, and the things I remember don't exist anymore. In my piece, I believe you will find elements that come from the Croatian Glagolitic tradition but not the Glagolitic singing itself. The Requiem simply comes from my childhood and the land where I was born.....

NARODNI LIST AUG 2 1996

...The text of the Requiem is a compilation that I have found with the help of Antun Dolički, the director of the Evenings in st Donat and dr. Nikica Kolumbić, Dean of University for philology and social sciences in Zadar...

...* *What was your dramaturgy behind Requiem*

I chose between several manuscripts. I picked those that suited best my dramaturgical idea. Of course, I used just parts of it. When I did a comparative analysis with the Latin liturgical text Glagolitic, I found it to be a direct translation of the Latin mass. I have put special emphasis on certain parts like. It feels like there are two parts. One is deeply spiritual and religious. The other one is the medieval sequence about the Judgement day. The prophecies of Sybille and David, the dramatic content connected to human fear and the terrible notion about all that is happening in human lives, culminating with death, almost transcends the religious frame.

* *Your childhood was connected with Glagolitic singing...*

That is an integral part of the history of Dalmatia, all along the coast, especially Zadar that kept this tradition for a long time. The Italians in Zadar went to Latin masses and we went to the Glagolitic ones.....What I remember doesn't exist anymore. Let's take the Silba dance. Today it is similar to so many things except to its original self. I remember an old man from Silba who used to play on a two-string simple instrument with the melody based on the Istrian scale and uncertain tonality. Later it changed, today it is played on accordion or another modern instrument. That is just a distorted version of the original. Just like the old Dalmatian song that is completely lost in the modern klapa singing.

...For a long time, I have been preoccupied with the phenomenon of Glagolitic singing. I used the elements of melisma that could be heard along the coast. There is not much difference with the Latin melisma, the seconds, the thirds are the same, and yet they are different...

* *It seems that the relation between solo and choral parts is treated differently than in the usual construction of Requiem*

I decided not to follow the Latin tradition of arias and closed numbers when the male voice starts with the theme, the choir responds, then male voice, then female voice. My idea is to have an overflow. No strictly choral or solo numbers, they are all interlaced. That felt truer to the original. The strong connection and interaction between solo and tutti parts is one of the main features of the Glagolitic practice. This liberated me from the given frame, I let myself be led by the architecture of the text, which is sometimes unexpected, exposed by the soloists or the choir, or all together.

I used polyphony but not in a classical way. Very often it is just one voice but it can lead up to 12 voices, not to mention the improvisations that are all written down.

* *The piece leaves a very strong emotional impact upon the first listening. What are your own inner feelings about it*

When one reaches a certain age, one starts to look back and not so much forward. Croatian Glagolitic Requiem was created out of a deep personal need, in the first place and it grew from the place where I live. I was driven into introspection about life's secrets and its meaning. I wouldn't use many big words since the inner self is

hard to describe. I have limited and focused myself on the lands by the sea and the Glagolitic, that is what I hear in my head.

** It is interesting that they didn't leave any liturgical books. Did you miss a tangible document of this practice?*

There is no doubt that it was very difficult to write down their very particular improvisation. They seem not to have found a formula to write it down. The singing was unique and complicated and they didn't have any educated musician among them. They passed on their tradition orally, from generation to generation and we have a very small archived material. The only practice that survived in Dalmatia is the singing on Big Friday (Puče moj). There are probably many reasons for this slow extinction.

Initially it was an obstacle for me, but eventually I decided not to listen to any of it at all. Once, while already working on the score, I asked for some editions from the Academy of Arts and Sciences and was tempted to look into it but decided to avoid any quotation. What I wanted with this piece is to bring back to memory the rich, old and special Glagolitic tradition in Croatia. I didn't want to create a mass based on the existing material. Look at Janaček. He is the author of a profane mass, he was creating his own vision without copying the check, Moravian or any other Glagolitic singing. The music in my world can be connected to the Glagolitic tradition in an associative way. The role of art is not to scientifically document but to create....

VJESNIK Feb 11 2001

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** Croatian Glagolitic Requiem is not your first work that follows the steps of the Croatian music tradition, starting with the music for the Croatian middle age play in 1968. that was formed later into the choral piece "Cross Give Us Mercy". What did precede the Requiem?*

- When I took part in the avant-garde movement, at some point, I found myself as some kind of disappointed "communist" or even "socialist". What I want to say is that, avant-garde disappointed me with its absolute absence of individuality and connection with one's roots, and, very early, I became a dissident, in the way that I was looking for things that connected me to my origins which eventually gave me impulse for my work. First came the piece "Ommaggio a Lukačić" – Quam pulchra es (Lukačić is a Croatian baroque composer) composed with radical avant-garde technique but nevertheless with colors of Dalmatian lands. Then "Kanconijer", composed on old Croatian renaissance texts, then the ballet – Folk-art, based on the electroacoustic research I did in the electronic studios of RAI in Milan.....

** In which circumstances Requiem was composed and when was the premiere*

- I always composed for particular performers and for a particular commission or occasion. I have always been around active musician, and have been active myself as conductor. In my professional life the two activities, composing and performing, have

always been connected. The piece was first performed in Zadar for the Evenings in saint Donat in 1996.....

The adjective Croatian in the title is a distinction towards other Glagolitic cultures. It is also a tribute to all the hard life of the islanders, for centuries, in Dalmatia.