

The Memory About Skopje and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9

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ABSTRACT

In 2013, the International Skopje Summer Festival (founded in 1980) was traditionally opened on June 21, the World Day of Music, with Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The opening ceremony had a symbolic message: the performance of the symphony marked the 50th anniversary of the devastating earthquake in Skopje in 1963. This musical event was the starting-point of the research which is aimed at presenting a contemporary redefinition of Beethoven's musical legacy and to analyze the meaning of the composition in the context of memory about a particular urban environment. At the same time the primary topic for analysis was expanded with the recent cultural-political project titled "Skopje 2014," realized in the last decade, with purpose to obtain a more dynamical level of discussion that marks the relationship between music and memory in the urban history of Skopje.

KEYWORDS

Ludwig van Beethoven, Ninth Symphony, Skopje, memorial culture

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this paper is to analyze Beethoven's musical heritage in the local urban environment of Skopje, considering the relationship between music and memory about the city. For that purpose, I use an interdisciplinary analytical approach from musicology, urban and memory studies. My research of the above-mentioned topics will be based on two main case studies: the earthquake in 1963 and its 50th anniversary in 2013, as well as the project "Skopje 2014" in the context of two state formations.

In the period between the two world wars, when the territory of Macedonia was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), in compliance with the official politics of the Kingdom, a good condition was created for the development of musical art through the establishment of new music societies, the construction and opening of theaters, an increased number of concerts for classical music, and the development of musical education. According to musicologist Jelica Gjorgjieva Porenta, the new state system acted in two directions: socio-economic, which meant the development of capitalist productive relations, and cultural and educational assimilation. For the latter, university professors, doctors, teachers, judges and others were mobilized in order to provide a faithful implementation of cultural and educational assimilation and cultural enlightening of the underdeveloped Macedonian population.¹ Nevertheless, the urbanization of the city in the 1920s and 1930s with an increased number of cultural activities left a positive mark for the next phase of the city's development.

The framework of research will be determined by historical circumstances. The Republic of Macedonia was a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1991) when it attained the status of independence. Due to the entangled histories of the Balkans, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia after the dissolution of Yugoslavia was exposed to the hegemonial politics and attempts at appropriation by Greece. Its very name and even the language were denied. Therefore, it was renamed the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and since 2018 North Macedonia. The two case studies in the focus of this article are related to both contexts. In order to explicate the role and reception of Beethoven in the above-mentioned events, my departure-point will be the construction of a great master of the canon, as well as the theoretical framework of urban studies.

For many authors,² the musical heritage of Ludwig van Beethoven is considered to be the central point of "all musical value" as he is seen as the "formulator of a distinctive musical language" especially in his symphonies, which present the "highest pinnacle of human and spiritual aspiration."³ Although there are some challenges in the analysis or in a comparison between the symphonies of Beethoven and those of Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann or Johannes Brahms, Beethoven's works are dominant in the formation of music history and Western European mu-

¹ Jelica Gjorgjieva PORENTA, "Muzičkite priliki vo Makedonija megju dvete svetski vojni," in *Struška muzička esen* (Struga, Skopje: Društvo na makedonskite kompozitori, 1977), manuscript, pp. 1 and 2.

² Scott BURNHAM, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Tia DENORA, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius. Musical Politics in Vienna 1792–1803* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995).

³ Lise WAXER, *The City of Musical Memory: Salsa, Record Grooves, and Popular Culture in Cali, Colombia* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), 32.



sical heritage, as David Schroeder claims that Beethoven's works with an accent on the symphonies are in the center of the formation of the Western canon in art music.⁴ They take part in the construction of myths as a vital part of cultural beliefs in the context of national, ethnic groups or subcultural movements, related to "authenticity" and "purity," anchoring subjectivity, and social identities through a number of codes, representations and practices.⁵

Burnham and Comini based their theoretical approach to Beethoven's mythmaking as cultural history and heritage centered around his Symphonies Nos. 3 and 9. Making a comparison between Symphony No. 9 and the Beethoven statue created by Max Klinger in 1902 in Vienna, Comini wrote:

And it was exactly that total united-work-of-art, or *Gesamtkunstwerk*, aspect of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with its "inevitable" combination of instrument and voice in the fourth movement, which Klinger strove to approach in his technically extravagant and multicolored marble monument, gleaming with ivory and precious-stone inlay. He provided not only a Zeus-like image of the composer, his features remote and brooding, but also an Olympian environment, with throne, mountain peak, and empyrean eagle.⁶

She continued that the entire Vienna art community joined forces to support Klinger's work. Gustav Klimt painted a great frieze with allegories referring to the *Ode to Joy* (drawing inspiration from both lyrics and music), Gustav Mahler re-orchestrated the fourth movement of the Symphony for wind and brass instruments.⁷

Burnham would reshape the research work on Symphony No. 3 that we have heard many times, based on the relationship between music and the mythmaking of real heroes, mythical heroes or even humankind itself. The well-known content according to Burnham, is preserved and refreshed with new metaphors in the translation process. He analyzes the myth about *Eroica* through the points of adversity, crisis and new triumph. To manage this, Burnham focused himself on the passages that have generated the most extensive commentary and that are heard as crux points, hinges, turning-points, ends and beginnings.⁸ Theoretical discussions that revive the Beethoven work emphasize the universality of his music and the positive values for humanity that at some points are expanded with the level of mythmaking.

Most of the previously mentioned revisions of Beethoven's music centered around the meaning of "universality," "joy" and "ideals" are reflected primarily in the famous *Ode to Joy*.⁹ This research follows and re-analyses the theoretical discussions about the place and meaning of Beethoven's music in the creation of a canon in the history of music through the concepts of: the universality of music, the relationship between music, memory and the city, and between music and ideals.

⁴ David SCHROEDER, *Our Schubert: His Enduring Legacy* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 124.

⁵ WAXER, *The City of Musical Memory*, 32.

⁶ Alessandra COMINI, *The Changing Image of Beethoven: A Study in Mythmaking* (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone, 2008), 13.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ BURNHAM, *Beethoven Hero*, 3.

⁹ COMINI, *The Changing Image of Beethoven*, 18–19.



2. URBAN MEMORY AND MUSIC

Urban memory has indicated the city as a physical landscape and collection of objects and practices that enable recollections of the past, and that embody the past through traces of the city's sequential building and rebuilding.¹⁰ Halbwachs analyzed memory through collective experience. Memory, according to Halbwachs, binds groups of people together recharging their commonality by reference to the physical spaces and previous instances which are often a founding moment of that collective identity.¹¹ Musical or theoretical studies about music and urban space show that musical cultures are deeply affected by urban social change and that the role of music as an instrument of power has evolved in the urban order.

This research, apart from the Halbwachs analysis of memory as a collective experience, also covers the urban geographer Ray Hudson's explanation of "places." He describes places as

complex entities, ensembles of material objects, people, and systems of social relationships, embodying distinct cultures and multiple meanings, identities and practices ... [that] are contested and [are] continually in the process of becoming.¹²

Places are not just spaces, but also the emotions and behaviors that the activities they host foster. While we are walking through a certain city in which we have lived or in which we are still living, we can have various types of memories pleasant, but also unpleasant, or we can have a memory that makes us ashamed and we avoid it.¹³

The selected city for analysis, Skopje, is located in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, whose territory has been inhabited since the Neolithic period. In more recent history, the urbanization of the city began in the nineteenth century (Skopje was a province of the Ottoman Empire), after the construction of the Vardar Railway in 1873, and grew even more in 1888, when the Moravian Railway and the Vardar Railway were incorporated or connected. The city began to record a steady stream of population. In the period between the two world wars on two occasions from 1929–1936 and from 1939–1941 the mayor of the city of Skopje was Josif Mihajlović-Jurukoski (1887–1941), who is considered as the creator of modern Skopje. Mihajlović transformed Skopje from an oriental city into a Western European one. By profession an engineer and architect, Mihajlović constructed an urban plan which included: the city water supply, train station, People's Assembly, Officer's home, City Hospital, Hygiene Institute, Green Market, zoo, schools and other facilities. After World War II, Skopje became the capital of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, one of the six republics in the SFR Yugoslavia. During this period Skopje was the center of the main educational, cultural, political, and economic developments. At some point after the devastating earthquake of 1963, the city experienced an almost complete destruction, and over the next few years, with the help of domestic and foreign factors,

¹⁰ Mark CRINSON, "Urban Memory: An Introduction," in *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*, ed. by id. (London: Routledge, 2005), xi–xii.

¹¹ Maurice HALBWACHS, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1992), 2–3.

¹² Ray HUDSON, "Regions and Place: Music, Identity and Place," in *Progress in Human Geography* 30/5 (2006), 627.

¹³ Graeme GILLOCH and Jane KILBY, "Trauma and memory in the city: From Auster to Austerlitz," in CRINSON (ed.), *Urban Memory*, 10.



the city was rebuilt. After the breakup of the SFRY, Skopje has remained the capital and largest city in the state where the most musical, artistic, theatrical and other cultural events are held. In the past ten years, with the cultural and political project “Skopje 2014” the city center has been undergoing a negative transformation with a number of new kitsch buildings.

The recent urban memory about Skopje, in the last couple of decades is divided, in general, into two points: around the strong earthquake that happened in 1963 – meaning what happened or what was built before and after the earthquake; and the second point is connected with the recent new urban cultural and political project called “Skopje 2014.”

Music has had an important role in the process of the rebuilding of Skopje after the earthquake during the 1960s and 1970s. In this period, during the summer, Skopje held numerous concerts titled *Sredbi na Solidarnosta* (Meetings of solidarity). Some famous musicians performed at these concerts, such as: Mina, Golden Gate Quartet, Miroslav Čangalović¹⁴ etc.¹⁵ Also, some of the composers wrote songs dedicated to the city, such as the popular children’s song “Pesna za Skopje” (Song about Skopje) by Aleksandar Džambazov (b. 1936)¹⁶ and the poet Boško Smakjovski (1938–1998).¹⁷ The main purpose of the creation of this song was to give new positive hope for the people who lost their families and homes. During the years, this song was also performed at children’s festivals, youth concerts, holidays or school jubilees. In addition, it was covered by the rock band Totalno opuštanje (Total relax).¹⁸ Additionally, in the last couple of years songs, albums and videos inspired by “Skopje 2014” were promoted primarily as critical products.

The project “Skopje 2014” was officially launched in 2010. It was financed by the Government of Macedonia¹⁹ and then ruling party VMRO-DPMNE (Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna

¹⁴ Mina (b. 1940) is an Italian pop singer, very popular in Europe during the period of the 1960s and 1970s. Golden Gate Quartet is a vocal group formed in 1931 and, with changes in membership, remains still active. It is one of the most successful African-American Doo-wop music bands. Miroslav Čangalović (1921–1999), is considered as one of the greatest Yugoslav and Serbian bass singers. His most famous roles were the title role from *Boris Godunov* (Mussorgsky) and *Dosifey* from *Khovanschina* (Mussorgsky).

¹⁵ N. N., *Sredba na solidarnosta, 1964–1968* (Skopje: Komitet na Sredbata na solidarnosta, 1969), 30–34.

¹⁶ After graduating from the Music Academy in Belgrade (1960), Aleksandar Džambazov was employed as a conductor of the Big Band at the State TV and Radio channel – MRT in Skopje and remained there until his retirement (2001). He composes a great number of classical, popular, children’s and patriotic compositions. As a composer, he is the record holder for song performances at the renowned Yugoslav festival for popular music “Opatija.” His notable compositions are: *Rapsodija za Skopje za pijano i simfoniski orkestar* (Rhapsody for Skopje for piano and symphonic orchestra), a prizewinner at the 5th International Competition for Rhythmic-Symphonic Music in Cava de Tirreni 1966; *7 Tancovi Varijacii za pijano i simfoniski orkestar* (7 Dance Variations for piano and symphonic orchestra); *Tutunoberačite za mešan hor* (Tobacco Growers for mixed choir); *Nasmevka pred zorite za glas i pijano* (Smile before dawn for piano and voice); popular songs: *Samo ti* (Only you), *Detstvo* (Childhood), *Doviduvanje* (Goodbye).

¹⁷ Boško Smakjovski is considered as one of the most important Macedonian children’s writers. He graduated at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje and spent his career as a journalist in Radio Skopje. His notable books are: *Golemi i Mali* (Biggs and smalls); *Majski zvončinja* (May bells); etc. Smakjovski wrote song lyrics for the children’s festival Zlatno slavejče (Golden Nightingale, 1971–), where Džambazov was a prominent organizer and conductor.

¹⁸ Totalno opuštanje is a rock band founded in Skopje in 1993. The band performed at important local festivals such as: Pop Rock fest (1996), Bit Fest (2013), Alternativno Skopje (Alternative Skopje, 2015), Zemjotres Festival (Earthquake festival, 2017).

¹⁹ From 1991 until 2018 the official name of the Government was Vlada na Republika Makedonija (The Government of the Republic of Macedonia). In 2018 the government changed its name to Vlada na Republika Severna Makedonija (The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia).



organizacija – Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo / The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity). The plan was to be completed by 2014, but in 2019 part of the project was still in the process of building. The project “Skopje 2014” consists of building monuments (inspired from different historical periods with an accent on antiquity, mid-century to recent history), buildings (theaters, museums, ministries), bridges, gulleys, constructed within a very narrow space in the city center of Skopje and built with low material quality within a kitsch quasi “neo-Baroque” style. The project “Skopje 2014” has received criticism from numerous domestic and foreign journalists, art historians, architects etc. Some of them analyzed this project through the aspect of memory. For the curator and art historian Suzana Milevska the project created “false memories”:

Kitschy, but overpriced monuments and memorials representing figures and events from the remote national past (some relevant, some marginal), vulgar public sculptures and administrative buildings with obvious references to Westernized aesthetic regimes (mere imitations of styles from periods atypical for the local architecture) transformed the city squares into theatrical-like backdrops, or memorial parks of “false memories.”²⁰

In my ongoing research about the history of local indie music in Skopje I incorporate the negative reactions of musicians for the project. With an accent on the messages of song lyrics I include a comparative analysis of music and memory for the city for the time and place that is moving between the recent past and present. Therefore, the significance of “cultural memory of the present”²¹ can be placed in the context of the “Skopje 2014” project, with its duration, that changes the daily environment of the citizens, which means that what the citizens saw one day could be changed the very next day and at the same time our memory of the city changes daily. In the case of “Skopje 2014,” in the last nine years, the look of downtown Skopje has been a result of the constant change of the same space through the construction of a huge number of monuments, such as the Warrior on Horse (unofficially, Alexander the Great), the Warrior monument (unofficially, Philip II of Macedonia), Tsar Samuil, Justinian I, etc.; buildings: State National Theater, Museum of Architecture, Philharmonic Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance etc.; bridges: Art Bridge, Eye Bridge, and three gulleys in the river Vardar – all of these in an extremely small area.²² The opposite activities about the rebuilding of the city after the earthquake and within the project “Skopje 2014” lead this research in two directions that consider the relationship between the city and memory: memories of natural disasters and memories of the present, respectively.

Memories of natural disasters are connected with traumatic events, that shock the inner core of community identity, underline collective needs and lead to considerable and persistent

²⁰ Suzana MILEVSKA, “The False Memory Syndrome and Ultrationalism in the Politics of Representation in Macedonia,” manuscript, 2019, p. 1. The essay was written during Suzana Milevska’s engagement as a Principal Researcher at the Horizon 2020 project TRACES, Politecnico di Milano.

²¹ See <<https://www.sup.org/books/series/?series=cultural%20memory%20in%20the%20present>> (accessed August 1, 2019).

²² Julijana PAPAZOVA, “Megju muzikata i memorijata: Doživuvanje na proektot Skopje 2014,” in *Struška muzička esen. Memorija i perspektivi*, ed. by Jelica TODORČEVSKA and Ivona O. TATARČEVSKA (Skopje: SOKOM, 2016), 155–165.



changes.²³ According to Ventura, after an earthquake there is both a form of collective repression, necessary to continue and inhabit the earth, and an individual one that refuses to communicate the experience.²⁴ However, from a narrative perspective, storytelling can be a powerful tool for the processing of trauma. Narrating on both collective and individual levels is a way to give meaning and sense to the event to open new perspectives and support the collective rebuilding.²⁵ Considering our topic of research after the strong earthquake in Skopje, construction of collective memory was dominant in the process of recovering and in the process of a new phase for living in Skopje. Musical events that supported this approach were the already mentioned festival “Meetings of Solidarity,” and anniversary concerts supported by music and other cultural events. In 2013, for the 50th anniversary of the earthquake, the “Skopje Summer” festival was opened with Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The memory of the present is inspired by the past that has not ended with the ongoing project “Skopje 2014,” which in the last ten years has transformed the central area of Skopje. Thus, what was built in the last years is partly not finished, and does not allow the project to be considered as finished. A series of publications by Stanford University Press, dedicated to “cultural memory of the present,” demonstrates and emphasizes the current production and organization of words, things, images, sounds and silences that were created in the past which is not over or not completed.²⁶ Most of the music products that criticize the “Skopje 2014” project belong to the indie music scene. For example, through the lyrics of the songs “80ti” (The 1980s), and “Kultura” (Culture), from the album *#ExYou* (2015, PMG Rec.) of PMG Collective,²⁷ or in the compilation album *Skopje 2014 The End Game* (2014, PMG Rec.), the memory about the city is presented by comparing the past and the present with urban values – rock or indie music, culture and architecture in Skopje in the 1980s and architecture in the last couple of years.

3. THE MEMORY ABOUT THE SKOPJE EARTHQUAKE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF BEETHOVEN’S NINTH SYMPHONY

One of the most tragic natural disasters in the country’s history was the earthquake in Skopje on July 26, 1963, which destroyed almost 82 percent of the city, more than 200,000 people became homeless and ca. 1070 inhabitants lost their lives. The first to come to help the citizens of

²³ Manuela FARINOSI and Alessandra MICALIZZI, “Geolocating the Past: Online Memories after the L’Aquila Earthquake,” in *Memory in the Mediated World: Remembrance and Reconstruction*, ed. by Andrea HAJEK, Christine LOHMEIER and Christian PENTZOLD (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 94.

²⁴ Stefano VENTURA, “Terremoti ricostruzioni e memorie,” in *Sismografie. Ritornare a L’Aquila mille giorni dopo il sisma*, ed. by Fabio CARNELLI, Orlando PARIS and Francesco TOMMASI (Arcidosso: Effigi, 2012), 25.

²⁵ FARINOSI and MICALIZZI, “Geolocating the Past”, 95.

²⁶ See <https://www.sup.org/books/series/?series=cultural%20memory%20in%20the%20present> (accessed July 31, 2019).

²⁷ PMG (Progressive Multimedia Group) Collective is an artistic organization founded in 1995. A great number of musicians, DJ’s, actors, directors, and artists pass through this collective. PMG Collective produces music, albums, organizes musical and artistic events. Tošo Filipovski, journalist and writer, described the musical style of PMG Collective as modern disco-punk, post-industrial. Its recognizable songs are *Skopjanka* (Girl from Skopje), *Nie sme od Skopje* (We are from Skopje), *80ti* (The 1980s), *Ti si mojot svet* (You Are My World). Tošo FILIPOVSKI, “PMG Kolektiv,” in *Makedonska rok enciklopedija 1963–2018* (Skopje: Corpus Delikti Records, 2018), 274.



Skopje were the soldiers of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (Jugoslovenska narodna armija) and the citizens of all Yugoslav republics; afterwards, rescue teams began to arrive from all over the world. According to reports, 87 foreign nations sent the most diverse assistance to Skopje and beyond in order to expedite the reconstruction of the city. Skopje has since been called "the city of solidarity."²⁸ The Japanese architect Kenzo Tange (1913-2005) won the public competition for urban design for Skopje. Tange's plan for the city (one of his major works) remains partially implemented, specifically concerning the New Skopje Railway Station and the area in the city center called Gradski zid (City Wall). In the 1990s, a new phase of Skopje's urban planning was gradually launched. The sociopolitical transition of the 1990s created quite unfavorable conditions for the construction. The transformation of land ownership completely changed the former socialist self-planning of space. The price of reconstruction has increased steadily, and the implementation of the new urban plans has become increasingly difficult. In the process of privatization, the previously large design and construction companies collapsed, and new, smaller engineering firms emerged.²⁹ The new buildings are overcrowding the old city neighborhoods with limited infrastructure. In this way, a new kind of urban chaos has developed, which often causes civil discontent and protest. A negative example of this urban transformation in the last decade of the twentieth century is the central area of Debar neighborhood (Debar Maalo). During the last few years, the city center of Skopje was transformed with the new so-called "Baroque look" within the previously-mentioned project "Skopje 2014."³⁰

4. BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC ON THE SKOPJE CONCERT STAGE: A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In Skopje in 1934 the first Music School "Mokranjac" was founded and that was an opportunity for the educational and professional levels of studying classical music repertoire where Beethoven's music was regularly played. During the same period, Skopje was the center of Macedonian musical life. At some of those concerts, Beethoven's works were in the repertoire. Beethoven's first concert performances were noted in the press (*Vardar, Skopski glasnik*) in the late 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. In May 1928, a lecture and a concert dedicated to Beethoven's work was held at Narodni univerzitet (People's University) in Skopje with the participation of Pero Slijepčević, a lecturer, the Štrajh Quartet ensemble, and the conductor Leopold Dvorak. Beethoven string quartets from op. 18 to op. 127 were performed.³¹

In the 1930s, Beethoven's works were in the repertoire of vocal, instrumental and chamber ensembles. In 1935 Skopje hosted a spiritual concert, organized by the Choral Society "Mokranjac" from Skopje, accompanied by the 50th Infantry Regiment Symphony Orchestra. They performed *Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur* (The Glory of God) op. 48 no. 4 in translation, as *Slava*

²⁸ N. N., "Zemjotresot vo Skopje od 26 juli 1963 godina," *Porta3*, January 17, 2018. <<https://www.porta3.mk/zemjotresot-vo-skopje-od-26-juli-1963-godina/>> (accessed August 20, 2019); N. N., "Skopje po zemjotresot-kako se gradeše gradot na solidarnosta?" *Faktor*, July 26, 2016. <<https://faktor.mk/skopje-po-zemjotresot-kako-se-gradeshe-gradot-na-solidarnosta>> (accessed August 12, 2019).

²⁹ N. N., "Skopje po zemjotresot-kako se gradeše gradot na solidarnosta?" *ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Personal archive of musicologist Jelica Gjorgjieva Porenta.



Bogu by Beethoven.³² In 1936, compositions by Ludwig van Beethoven were included in the annual concert of the Music School "Mokranjac."³³ Some of the music reviews highlight the performances of his works. In his reviews of the concert performed by singers Irma Kastro and Petar Kostić with a piano accompaniment by Josip Brnobić, Trajko Prokopiev wrote that one of the most successful interpretations of the evening was Beethoven's song *In questa tomba oscura* sung by Kostić.³⁴ The 50th Infantry Orchestra conducted by the chaplain Ferdo Herzog (1889–1957) performed a series (Symphonies Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6) of Beethoven's symphonies in the Officerski dom (Officer's Hall) in Skopje during the seasons between 1933 and 1935.³⁵ In the journal *Vardar*, Josip Brnobić wrote a positive review of the concert of the above-mentioned 50th Infantry Orchestra held on February 1, 1933 in the Officer's Hall. They played compositions by Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy, Rukić and Karl Goldmark. For the Beethoven Symphony No. 1, Brnobić wrote that its performance was a good opportunity and introduction for the audience for the more complex symphonies of Beethoven that should follow at the subsequent concerts.³⁶

After World War II, the territory of Macedonia became part of the new Yugoslav state, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, that is, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963–1991). In the postwar period, important music institutions such as the Filharmoniski orkestar (Philharmonic Orchestra), Makedonska Opera i balet (Macedonian Opera and Ballet House) and Institut za folklor (Institute for Folklore) were founded in the capital of the Republic. At the first official concert of the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra, in 1950, Beethoven's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in G Major was played with the Croatian pianist Melita Lorković (1907–1987) and the Macedonian conductor Todor Skalovski (1909–2004).³⁷

The premiere of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in Skopje was a guest performance of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra led by Bogo Leskovic and soloists: Nada Vidmarjeva (soprano), Bogdana Stritarjeva (alto), Mitja Gregorač (tenor), and Zdravko Kovač (bass-baritone) in 1959. The concert was sold out in a short period of time. On the stage of the Dom na JNA (Yugoslav People's Army House), 167 members of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra (orchestra, choir and soloists) performed the last symphony of Beethoven. In the daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija*, music critic Branko Karakaš wrote a positive review about the concert:

In festive atmosphere the conductor Bogo Leskovic and the members of this monumental vocal-instrumental ensemble have put forth the utmost effort and attention to convey to us the most consistently entrenched of Beethoven's thoughts, woven into a deep human pain and revolt that is steadily rising and closing with an anthem of joy, expressing at the surface all that is beautiful, sublime and noble connected with the unselfish Beethoven's love of humanity.³⁸

³² Miodrag VASILJEVIĆ, "Mužički pregled: Duhovni koncert Skopskog pevačkog društva 'Mokranjac,'" *Južni pregled* 3 (March 1, 1935), 141.

³³ Rudolf TROJ, "Godišnji koncert muzičke škole 'Mokranjac,'" *Vardar* 855 (June 30, 1936), 4.

³⁴ Trajko PROKOPIEV, "Koncert g-ce Irma Kastro i g. Petra Kostića," *Vardar* 917 (September 1, 1936), 4.

³⁵ Personal archive of musicologist Jelica Gjorgjieva Porenta.

³⁶ Josip BRNOBIĆ, "Jedan kulturni događaj: Drugi simfoniski koncert vojne muzike," *Vardar* 55 (February 5, 1933), 4.

³⁷ Vasil KJORTOŠEV, "Prv koncert na Makedonskata filharmonija," *Nova Makedonija* 1821, (November 12, 1950), 6.

³⁸ "Vo praznična raspoložba, svesni za odgovornosta pred goleminata na Betovenoviot muzički duh, pod elastičniot dirigentski gest na Bogo Leskovic členovite na ovaj monumentalen vokalno-instrumentalen kolektiv



Since the premiere of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 on October 1, 1956,³⁹ followed by the premiere of the Ninth Symphony in 1959, until the dedication of the entire Philharmonic Orchestra season of 1919/1920 in honor of Beethoven's jubilee called "Moja besmrtna ljubov" (My Immortal Love), Beethoven's orchestral works have been regularly featured on the Skopje concert stage mostly in the repertoire of the Philharmonic Orchestra.

5. BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 9 AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKOPJE EARTHQUAKE

On International Music Day, June 21, 2013, the 34th International Cultural Festival "Skopsko leto 2013" (Skopje Summer 2013) was held in the hall of the Makedonska Opera i Balet (Macedonian Opera and Ballet, MOB). It was organized by the Direkcija za kultura i umetnost (Directorate of Culture and Art) under the auspices of the Municipality of the City of Skopje and the Ministry of Culture. The festival "Skopje Summer" was held for the first time in 1980 and, through the years it fostered carefully selected programs that promoted various genres and artistic directions in the field of music, theater, film, fine arts, as well as multimedia performances and spectacles. Apart from the public cultural spaces or halls, the festival organizers have regularly used open city spaces as concert stages, such as the Old Skopje Bazaar, Marko's Monastery, or Matka (a natural resort outside Skopje). In 2013, "Skopje Summer" prepared an extensive program to mark the 50th anniversary of the Skopje earthquake.

The Skopje Summer 2013 opening concert was a co-production project between MOB (Macedonia) and MK Limited (Japan). This musical-stage spectacle was Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, led by the Japanese conductor Shungo Moriyama with soloists from Macedonia – Irena Kavkalevska (mezzo-soprano) and Gjorgji Cuckovski (tenor), and Japan – Emi Hishiki (soprano) and Keisuke Otani (baritone), and the Choir and the Orchestra of MOB, along with Japanese guests in the ensemble of MOB.

At the opening concert of "Skopje Summer" Mirko Stefanovski, manager of the Directorate of Culture and Art, said:

In these 40 days, our faithful audience which has been following "Skopje Summer" for 34 years, will have the opportunity to watch 70 cultural and artistic programs in 26 spaces. We had Beethoven 14 years ago at the "Skopje Summer," and now, Skopje marks the 50th anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake. With the Ninth Symphony again, we thank Japan for the solidarity shown all those years ago in 1963.⁴⁰

vlagaa maksimum um trud i vnanie za da ni gi prenesat što podosledno zanesnite Betovenovi misli, istkaeni na edna do krajnost dlaboka čovečka bolka i revolt što nezadržljivo se iskačuva kon završnata himna na radosta, iznesuvajki go na površina seto ona ubavo, vozvišeno i blagorodno, zgusteno vo nesebičnata ljubov na Betoven kon čoveštvo." Branko KARAKAŠ, "Prva izvedba na IX Betovenova simfonija vo Skopje. Gostovanje na Slo-venečkata filharmonija," *Nova Makedonija* no. 4729 (October 18, 1959), 8.

³⁹ Branko KARAKAŠ, "So Betovenovata 'Eroika' – Skopskata filharmonija ja započna koncertnata sezona," *Nova Makedonija* no. 3716 (October 3, 1956), 4.

⁴⁰ "Počna Skopsko leto 34", official portal of the city of Skopje (June 22, 2013), <<http://www.skopje.gov.mk/ShowAnnouncements.aspx?ItemID>> (accessed August 16, 2019).



Plate 1 Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, Skopje Summer Festival, June 21, 2013

Свечено отворање на **СКОПСКО ЛЕТО 2013**
Skopje Summer
на првиот ден на летото и светскиот ден на музиката

21 *јуни*
ПЕТОК

МУЗИЧКО-СЦЕНСКИ СПЕКТАКЛ
“БЕТОВЕН 9-ТА СИМФОНИЈА”

21.00
САЛОН НА МОБ



диригент:
SHUNGO MORIYAMA (Јапонија)

солисти:
ЕМИ HISHIKI - сопран (Јапонија)
ИРЕНА КАВКАЛЕВСКА - мецосопран (Македонија)
KEISUKE OTANI - баритон (Јапонија)
ГОРГИ ЦУЦКОВСКИ - тенор (Македонија)

УЧЕСТВУВААТ ХОРОТ И ОРКЕСТАРОТ НА МОБ, ЗАЕДНО СО ХОРИСТИ ГОСТИ ОД ЈАПОНИЈА
КОПРОДУКЦИСКИ ПРОЕКТ НА МОБ (МАКЕДОНИЈА) И МК ЛИМИТЕД (ЈАПОНИЈА)

Through the speech of Mirko Stefanovski, the narrative treatment of the collective memory of the city is symbolically presented between the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange and the Japanese guest musicians at the concert in 2013. The positive role of Tange in the rebuilding of the city fifty years after the earthquake is still important for keeping the memory of the positive human values, and the memory that fits with the musical heritage of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and its fourth movement.

In this context, one of the soloists at the concert, Gjorgji Cuckovski, said:

For me as an opera singer, it was my first experience to explore Beethoven's Ninth Symphony more precisely through the tenor soloist part. The seemingly simple, mild sound confronted us with the serious preparation required by this artist's epic masterpiece on structural, harmonious, melodic, and interpretive level. The libretto of the text is in such a strong synergy with the musical background that as a reproductive artist it gives me a great feeling of excitement even today. Japanese soloists, amazed by our perfect readiness, impressed by the hospitality of our country and our historical connection through the architect Kenzo Tange, literally merged into our ensemble. There was a sense of compactness, unity, which helped the transcendent emotions to the audience to be even more intense ... I remember the incredible standing ovations after the performance. An evening to remember.⁴¹

In general, the retrospective analysis of the meaning of Beethoven's music for the "city of solidarity" over the past few decades, shows that the reception of Beethoven's symphonic opus has been based on the message of universality, joy and peace in both periods, before the earthquake and at the time when the city remembered the natural disaster at one of the anniversary cultural events. It is the concert dedicated to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and the 50th anniversary of the earthquake with bilateral musical cooperation between Macedonian and Japanese artists.

The research also provided a historical overview of Beethoven's works at the Skopje concert scene over the past nine decades from the first concerts held in the 1930s to the current season 2019/2020 of the Philharmonic orchestra titled "My Immortal Love" in honor of the Beethoven jubilee in 2020. The theoretical publications based on the treatment of Beethoven's music through the relation of universal positive messages for humanity up to the creation of the myth of Beethoven's music itself were starting-points for the development of the research dedicated to the local music scene in Skopje.

⁴¹ "Za mene kako operski pejač beše prvo iskustvo da se soočam so partituratata na Devettata Betovenova simfonija izveduvajkji ja tenorskata solistička delnica. Navidum ednostavnata milozvučnost ne soočii so seriozna podgotovka koja strukturalno, harmonski, melodiski i interpretativno od umetnicite ja bara ova epsko maestralno delo. Libretoto na tekstot e vo tolku silna sinergija so muzičkata podloga što kako reproduktivni umetnik mi stvara den denes neverojatno čuvstvo na vzbuda. Japonskite kolegi solisti vooduševeni od našata perfektna podgotvenost, impresionirani od gostoprimitivost, istoriskata povrzanost na našite zemji preku arhitektot Kenzo Tange bukvalno se pretopija vo našiot ansambl. Vladeeše čuvstvo na kompaktnost, zaedništvo, so što transcendentnata emocija kon publikata beše ušte pointenzivna... Se sekvavam na neverojatnite stoečki ovacii posle izvedbata. Večer za pametenje." Interview with Gjorgji Cuckovski, tenor, conducted on August 28, 2019 in Skopje.



The need for an artist's mythologization for Jones contributes to the creation of the aura of a particular work.⁴² Beethoven's aura is spreading, renewing through various projects, publications, concerts, as in our case-study related to the 50th anniversary of the Skopje earthquake with the performance of Symphony No. 9. At the same time, theoretical studies about the relationship between the city, memory and music have helped to expand the research in order to obtain a more complete picture about the changing urban landscape of Skopje through three key events – the 1963 earthquake, the transformation of the city after the earthquake and the current cultural project “Skopje 2014” that has changed the city's outlook over the past ten years. We have come to two contrasting memory levels for the city: marking the 50th anniversary of the earthquake by performing Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and conveying the famous message of solidarity and joy; a critique for the new look of the city within the creation of engaging lyrics in the songs of local indie bands such as PMG, Bernays Propaganda etc.

⁴² Carys W. JONES, *The Rock Canon: Canonical Values in the Reception of Rock Albums* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 34–36.

