

# Rudolf Bruči and the Criticism of the European Avant-garde

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**Abstract:** Yugoslav composer Rudolf Bruči is known on the international scene primarily as the author of *Sinfonia Lesta*, a composition winning the first prize in 1965 at the Queen Elizabeth Competition in Belgium. On a national level, Bruči was a powerful social entity, not only in respect of his creative freedom. As a member of the League of Communists, Bruči spent a lifetime as an official in social organizations and cultural institutions, thus dictating the rhythm of musical life of Novi Sad and the Province of Vojvodina, until the collapse of Socialism when he was suddenly forgotten. The developmental line of Bruči's oeuvre – leading from Zhdanovian national classicism, through the adoption of elements of the European avant-garde, to the reaffirmation of a national/regional idiom in the mid-1970s – largely corresponds to the general tendencies of postwar art music in the socialist countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Bruči broke with the European avant-garde models not only in his creative practice, but he also reasoned it in the articles "The Composers' Role in the Modern Development of Self-governing Socialist Society," "Statements of Yugoslav Music Forum Composers' Workgroup," and "Manifesto of the 'Third Avant-Garde,'" where he based his discourse on conformism, lack of communication and dehumanization of avant-garde, and in particular on Yugoslav ideological projects, such as self-management, non-alignment, and deprovincialization. The article analyzes the context in which Bruči's creative transformation during the 1970s was expressed as the criticism of the Eurocentric cultural model, as well as the suspicion towards the imperative of modernization in a world obsessed with technological advances.

**Keywords:** Rudolf Bruči, Yugoslav music, European avant-garde, postmodernism, socialist realism, nationalism, modernization

Rudolf Bruči was a Yugoslav composer, educator, and cultural activist.<sup>1</sup> He approached the Communist Party in the interwar period, becoming during World War II an associate in the war of national liberation. After the war, he found himself in Belgrade where he played viola in the orchestra of the Yugoslav National Army for a few years. He studied composition with Petar Bingulac at the Music Academy in Belgrade from 1947 to 1952. During 1954–1955 he studied with Alfred Uhl at the *Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst* in Vienna. The major part of his life Bruči spent in Novi Sad, where he lived from 1950 until his death. He received numerous awards and recognitions for his work.<sup>2</sup> Even during his lifetime Bruči was included in all major Yugoslav encyclopedias and lexicons and entries about this composer can also be found in both *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.<sup>3</sup> On the international scene, Bruči is known as the author of the *Sinfonia Lesta*, the first-prize winning composition at the Queen Elizabeth Competition in Belgium (1965). Nationally, Bruči's social role was not just limited to the field of his creative freedom – as a member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia – but the composer spent his entire working lifetime holding responsible positions in various cultural institutions,<sup>4</sup> “dictating the rhythm” of the cultural life of Novi

1. Bruči was born on 30 March 1917 in Zagreb and died on 30 October 2002 in Novi Sad.

2. At the International Review of Composers organized by UNESCO in Paris in 1967, in the category of the contemporary music composers Bruči was awarded the ninth place. In 1968, he was awarded the “Peace and Friendship” Award in Prague and in 1972 “Liszt–Bartók” memorial plaque by the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. He was elected *membre adhérent* of the *Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques* in 1976. The following year he was awarded the *Ordre National du Mérite* by the President of France. Among Yugoslav prizes and awards, there can be singled out the following ones: Third Prize for the mass song of Radio Belgrade in 1948, Second Prize for the mass song of the Federation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia (1949), First Prize of Radio Novi Sad for the *Concert for Orchestra* (1959), the purchase of the cantata *Serbia* in the contest in honor of the forty years since the founding of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (1959), Second Prize (First not awarded) of the Yugoslav National Army in Belgrade for the cantata *Man is an Endless Horizon* (1960), October Award of Novi Sad (1961), Sterija's Award for Best Original Stage Music, Second Prize (First not awarded) of the Yugoslav National Army in Belgrade for the Cantata *Chasing Dawn* (1965), Acknowledgement and Appreciation for the cooperation and contribution to the artistic affirmation of the Art Ensemble of Yugoslav National Army (1967), First Prize at the Meeting of Solidarity in Skopje for the cantata *Sunny Bridges* (1968), Memorial plaque of the city of Ruma (1972), First Prize of the Yugoslav Radio Television for chamber music (1973), Vojvodina Liberation Award (1973), Order of the Red Banner of Labor (1974), Gold Badge of the Cultural and Educational Community of the Republic of Serbia (1984), “Seventh of July” Award of the Republic of Serbia (1985). It is noted thereby that the composer held a number of other awards and recognitions, as well.

3. Tatjana Marković, “Bruči, Rudolf,” in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), *Personenteil* 3, 1034–1036; Niall O'Loughlin and Bogdan Djaković, “Bruči, Rudolf,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 3, 350–351.

4. Bruči was director of the Opera and Ballet of the Serbian National Theatre on two occasions, between 1962 and 1964 as well as 1978 and 1982, respectively. From 1955 to 1974, he was a headmaster of the music school “Isidor Bajić”. Also, he was professor of composition, first dean and one of the founders of the Novi Sad Academy of Arts and the first director of the Music Center of Vojvodina, founded in 1980. He belonged to group of founders of the *Vojvođanska akademija nauka i umetnosti* [Vojvodinian Academy of Sciences and Arts (VASA)]. Bruči was the President of the Composers' Association of Serbia, President of the Composers' Association of Vojvodina, President of the Union of Yugoslav Composers (SOKOJ), member of the SAKOJ Managing Board and the SAKOJ Copyright Committee, member of the Committee for the aesthetic education

Sad and the province of Vojvodina until the collapse of Socialism, when he retired from public life.

Rudolf Bruči left behind over a hundred musical-dramatic, vocal-instrumental, symphonic, concert, and chamber works. Transformations of the composer's creative persona range from the Zhdanovian national classicism of the late 1940s, through the adoption of the elements of European radical modernism during the 1950s and 1960s, to the reaffirmation of national/regional idiom in the mid-1970s. Thus, a developmental line of Bruči's oeuvre conjugates general tendencies of the postwar music scene in Eastern Europe. Some of the most significant stylistic features of Bruči's artistic creation include heterogeneity of musical material, genre syncretism, symmetry as a regulator of musical flow, expressive treatment of twelve-tone melodies, use of musical folklore, imitative polyphony, whole-tone and eight-tone scale. The few musicologists who have studied Bruči's music gave a relatively adjusted assessment about the composer's creative development. Bogdan Đaković noticed that Bruči's maturity in terms of compositional technique relies on the "combination of ongoing research and positively affirmed elements of musical tradition,"<sup>5</sup> while Vesna Rožić characterized Bruči's creative approach as the application of "new musical (avant-garde) techniques to the traditional thinking of music."<sup>6</sup>

Despite being a man of letters, Bruči rarely wrote. He would rather engage in conversation to make statements and assumptions about his work. Although aware that the art of his time lost the privilege of being self-evident, Bruči still believed that the personal attitude towards worldview issues was better described by musical means of expression. On two occasions he stated that "music (...) is primarily a way of thinking" and "that it is less than any other art just a performance of a God-given talent, echo of sensibility or an act of human will".<sup>7</sup> It is interesting

of the Educational Council of the Republic of Serbia, member of the Council for Culture of Vojvodina, member of the Presidency of the Cultural Community of the Province of Vojvodina, member of the Committee for the Award of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia), member of the Worker's University Council, Chairman of the Committee for musical life of the Self-Management Interest Community for the culture in the Municipality of Novi Sad, member of the Council for Culture and Arts of the Municipality of Novi Sad, councilor of the Municipality of Novi Sad, member of the Board for the preparation of the Fifteenth Conference of the Communist Party of Vojvodina, delegate at the Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia, jury member for selection of the national anthem of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, President of the Association of Music Schools of Vojvodina, member of the editorial staff of the Review of Yugoslav Music in Opatija, a President of the Cultural Artistic Society "Svetozar Marković" from Novi Sad.

5. Bogdan Đaković, *Опера Гилгамеш као уметничка синтеза стваралачког пута Рудолфа Бручија* [The Opera "Gilgamesh" as a synthesis of Rudolf Bruči's creative path], unpublished thesis (Library of the Belgrade Faculty of Music, signature: ДИПЛ-4/1, 1992), 29.

6. Vesna Rožić, "Adaptacija novoglazbenih tehnika na tradicijski slog: skladatelj Rudolf Bruči [Adaptation of new musical techniques on traditional foundation: composer Rudolf Bruči], (Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, 2000), 4. Published thesis in *Arti musices: hrvatski muzikološki zbornik* [Arti musices: Croatian Musicological Anthology] 36/1 (2005), 15–62 and 36/2 (2005), 197–234.

7. Bruči first enunciated this thought in public in the Novi Sad newspaper *Dnevnik* in an interview led by the poet Miroslav Mika Antić. Мирослав Антић, "Да се победи ћутање" [To overcome silence], *Дневник*

that Bruči described his beliefs in more detail only when he began to question modernism with its demand for conceptualization of the creative practice, i.e. only after he modernized his musical language to the point where it dissolved into the silence of new sound. Bruči explained the breaking with the radically modernist/avant-garde European models, conducted at the immanent level of the musical discourse in the second half of the 1970s in his writings.<sup>8</sup> Criticism of the European avant-garde is a part of a more comprehensive, self-critical review of Yugoslav music in the first and the second article, while it is the central theme of the third. Well-known theses on conformism, lack of communication and dehumanization of the European avant-garde served the composer for an optimal projection of self-governing, non-aligned and deprovincialized Yugoslav musical culture rejecting the Eurocentric modernist cultural model.

In his article “The Role of the Composer in the Modern Development of Self-governing Socialist Society,” Bruči states that Yugoslav music “in the past twenty years has been more and more in discrepancy with the spiritual needs and views (...) of wider circles of Yugoslav music audience,” despite the fact that it was “precisely the democratic development of the Yugoslav society” which enabled for Yugoslav composers “the epochal development of their creativity.” Knocking the “creative-thinking drabness” of the Yugoslav music, its “vagueness,” and “isolation from the social and life tendencies,” Bruči aimed at the “academic, but essentially idealistic conceptions” of the majority of composers and other professionals, criticizing them for neglecting the cultural needs of Yugoslav society. “The obsession with the avant-garde,” he considered, led the composers to the “covert or open epigonism of someone else’s – for us unnecessary and excessive, often harmful – thoughtfulness”. Departing from the assumption that “a particular culture, including our own, can be affirmed in the world and in its own country only within the fundus of its own values,” Bruči concludes that “art and music may

[Dnevnik], 27 February 1966. Several years later, the interview “Rudolf Bruči: kompozitor sveže invencije” [Rudolf Bruči: composer of the fresh invention] appeared in the volume of interviews *Vojvodanski razgovori: šesnaest umetnika o svom stvaralaštvu* [Vojvodina conversations: 16 artists on their work] led by Radovan Popović, (Subotica: Minerva, 1981), 45–50. On Popović’s question “What is your understanding of music actually like?”, Bruči repeated that for him music was “primarily a way of thinking,” in both cases adding that “in music, with its twofold demands, rational-constructivist and emotionally-poetic, there comes the greatest reveal of one’s entire personality, with all their individual components, as well as their decisions influenced by the cultural milieu in which the artist lives and works.” A subtle, but noticeable difference between these two almost identical statements is reflected in the fact that in 1966 Bruči added in brackets the designation “left” to the rational-constructivist demand and the designation “right” to the emotionally-poetic one, which he omitted in 1981.

8. Rudolf Bruči, “Uloga muzičkog stvaraoca u savremenom razvoju samoupravnog socijalističkog društva” [The composers’ role in the modern development of self-governing socialist society] *Zvuk* 22/4 (Winter 1977), 30–35; idem, “Postavke radne grupe kompozitora redakcije programa Jugoslovenska Muzička Tribina” [Statements of Yugoslav Music Forum Composers’ Workgroup] manuscript in Bruči’s personal archive, 1977; idem, “Manifest ‘Treće avangarde’” [Manifesto of the “Third Avant-garde”], *Oko* (Zagreb, 15–29 December 1977), 6; the title of an unedited manuscript version of the latter reads “On the Need for Humanizing Tradition in Music; We Fight for the Dealienation of Art.”

reach the fullness of their own artistic being (...) only if they (...) keep their own physiognomy and individuality (...) without rejecting any fruitful influence on the side". Rather than adopting "foreign models and standards," Bruči suggests "the path inspired by the age" which leads through the "revolutionary developments in music." The integration into the "courses of 'new world culture'" based "on our own elements of sensibility and understanding" is for Bruči the final stage on that way. "The new world culture" this composer perceives as a "new, global culture (...) to which greatly contributed the people of the newly freed world of the non-aligned." Therefore, Bruči points out that "Yugoslav composers should (...) advocate the Yugoslav policy of nonalignment and the support of the cultural achievements of the Third World," by "disproving colonialist concepts towards particular cultures and especially musical creativity of those people" with their creativity.<sup>9</sup>

"Statements of Yugoslav Music Forum Composers' Workgroup" gives a somewhat closer definition of this new, global culture. In this article as well, a critical attitude towards the Eurocentric avant-garde represents an important *definiens* of Yugoslav cultural policy for which Bruči and other composers plead. The authors wonder why "in (...) the time when the world is changing, turns around and enters a new epoch of human history" they would have to consider "current European and Eurocentric art as the only possible perspective of the art in the world (...) in the time when a new, still unaware of itself, yet a planetary artistic culture looms in the horizon – the culture, in its expression, much broader and richer than the existing one – which will necessarily, as it can be assumed, synthesize the current Greek-European tradition with newly awakened worldwide influences, and become something completely different from what it was."<sup>10</sup> For the editorial staff of the Yugoslav Music Forum choosing a "planetary artistic culture" instead of "contemporary music which carries (...) destruction and dehumanization" did not mean the restoration of the previous composition-technical resources. Without giving up "experiencing new sound possibilities and dimensions" and stating that the "return to tonal music and great, but dead European tradition, is creatively impossible," the authors come out in favor of "such contemporary music, which – being based on (...) the most recent way of musical thinking – would be people-centered, towards fullness of his being and personality." In this regard, the composers emphasize that "the dilemma old or modern, traditional or contemporary, tonal or atonal is no longer present," but that the growth of these dilemmas takes place "on the ground of contemporary music itself, in its human or antihuman and even ahuman orientation". Bruči and his supporters believe that the necessary condition for the humanity in music is communication with the listener. Only if there is "a feedback impulse which constantly oscillates between the composition and

9. Bruči, "Uloga muzičkog stvaraoča," 35.

10. Bruči, "Postavke radne grupe kompozitora," 5.

the recipient and vice versa, completely free, without any external coercion,” can the piece perform its social function, and “only if it possesses the artistic quality, creative level, and force of inspiration.” The fact that they put “empirical correlation” before “artistic self-regulation” which leaves “the composition alienated and isolated,” does not mean that these Yugoslav authors have the “intention to inflict their creative beliefs and their artistic way of thinking on anyone.” Pointing out that “every artist chooses his own creative path” and that “in our society, everyone is free to compose tonally or atonally, with or without a sound, to play the piano or on the piano fallboard, to create together with the listeners or exclude them out completely,” the authors of the article express that “in this choice of possibilities” according to their experience “reflexivity between the ‘piece–society–history–world–altogether’ i.e. the relationship between the composition and totality, is essential.” Rejecting the “artistic taste of a lesser value, rejecting to pander to that taste” and advocating to encourage listeners to “make effort in approaching and understanding the piece and its artistic essence,” the authors of the article indicate that “not once in history had the demand (...) for simplicity been emphasized,” as well as that “the demand (...) usually occurs when art becomes overloaded with critically accumulated empty means of expression.” Having noted that “simplicity is not (...) a synonym for simplification,” Yugoslav composers remind, by making a comparison with old Dutch polyphonists, that “the utterly simple music of Palestrina did not represent poorness, but, on the contrary, great richness of musical expression,” as well as that for the “cancerogenic accumulation” of means of expressions “very often (...) it is not the art to be blamed, but rather the false thoughtfulness by which the art is governed.”

Bruči’s most intense review of the European avant-garde is given in the article “Manifesto of the ‘Third Avant-garde.’”<sup>11</sup> In this paper, the postwar musical avant-garde opposed to the humanism Bruči advocated. He begins by acknowledging that “it is difficult to speak of humanism, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after two world wars and bloody epopees which still persist, with the possibility of the third world war which would bring the unmatched destruction, maybe even the apocalypse of mankind.” In a situation as such, says Bruči, “humanism may sound hollow, empty, and fake,” especially in the West, where there is “too little spiritual strength to (...) give back the word *humanism* its primeval, direct sense,” since “it is not in the interest of the power centers of Western consumer society to bring the real humanism into the forefront, for it could jeopardize their privileges.” While “the West does not accept, even refuses a composition with a message of humanity,” Bruči remarks that “incomparably the greatest part of what is going on in the contemporary music has been out of date.” The composer believes that

11. Bruči, “Manifest ‘Treće avangarde,’” 6.



“today, contemporary music is groping in the dark”, and that “its philosophy and ideology collapsed, no matter how much they once contributed to new musical knowledge.” Acknowledging that in the beginning “for many avant-gardists, hermeticism, alienation, and absurdity meant a kind of rebellion,” Bruči concludes that “today (...), generally speaking, the Western avant-garde is fully conformist, harmless, integrated into the system, and channeled,” that “it contradicts nothing”; that “its own crisis attributes to the general one,” whereby, “it is not able to resolve that crisis,” but still “it imposes – from its Eurocentric point of view – with great persistence, taking different ways, often with a very good strategy, its thinking and psychological model on ‘peripheral’ cultures. If such a peripheral culture, adopting from the avant-garde what makes it advanced and progressive, thus accomplishing a breakthrough into the new sound dimension (...), is not strong enough to resist the content side of the imported model as well, i.e. dehumanization and hollowness (...), inevitably, this culture happens to be mentally enslaved, subjected to the foreign model ideology, to become dependent, deprived of its essence, epigonic, eclectic, and in that way doomed to continue vegetating on the margins of universal culture, since there is nothing it could give or say to it, nor could it make changes within the global crisis situation.” Noting that during “the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe has experienced two avant-gardes: around World War I and after World War II,” Bruči predicts “the time when the third avant-garde should appear, based on the new experience of mankind.” “That third avant-garde,” believes the composer, “will not be possible if it continues to dissipate music and look for dimensions and thoughtfulness on the same path where the second avant-garde feverishly stooped: in anti-music – in silence, but rather if synthesizing the entire historical musical experience, musical linguistic, and operative acoustic means; facing the new sound, having a meaning of a profound recommencement of humanity, questing for the primeval need of art to search and examine the world and to find the truth.” “Today, it is no longer time to disclaim a man,” summarizes Bruči, “an artist should take care of how to establish him in his work.”

At the root of Bruči’s view of the European avant-garde, one finds his personal creativity reviews. This, however, does not make pointless the question of the interpretative framework in which these views are manifested as articulations of a broader discursive formation. It is perceived that Bruči formulates his critical stance towards the European avant-garde at the time of the postmodern turn; certain proposals of the composer belong to the ideology of a new, postmodern art. Communication and simplicity, so important for Bruči, correspond to the criticism of radical modernism as a self-referential practice giving up aesthetics in the name of hypertrophied poetic rationality. However, if postmodernism is to be defined in a broader sense, in relation to Jean-François Lyotard’s thesis of the *collapse of the grand narratives*, Bruči remains extremely modernist, i.e. consistent to the “grand narrative” of humanism and the political discourses adopting it.

Bruči insists on the issue of social responsibility of artistic creation at a time when postmodernism relativizes it,<sup>12</sup> so the judgment that the composer's writings are testimony of the individualized growth of postmodern condition would be incomplete, if not wrong. Given that Bruči's music emerged around/after the writings from 1977 stylistically belongs to the postmodernist "new sensibility," it can be stated that the composer's work, considered as a whole, emphasizes the difference between "postmodernism" as an artistic and musical style and as a metastylistic cultural formation.

If Bruči's appeal is not (just) the announcement of the new movement, can it be (as well) interpreted as a normative-aesthetic recidivation? Should the humanistic engagement of art Bruči speaks about be perceived as a modification of the educational-didactic requirements of *absent* socialist realism? The legacy of socialist realism in Bruči's comprehension is not negligible, neither should it be overrated.<sup>13</sup> In the concluding remarks of "The Composers' Role," it seems as if Bruči alluded, though more by his rhetoric than the content, to the conclusions of the *Second International Congress of Composers and Music Writers* held in May 1948 in Prague where the adjustment of Eastern European composers' creative poetics to socialist realism aesthetics was discussed. In the "Prague Manifesto" it is stated that the "successful overcoming of the contemporary music crisis seems (...) possible"<sup>14</sup>

1. if the composers in their creation give up tendencies of extreme subjectivism, and if their music reflects great, new advanced ideas and feelings of the masses and progressive contemporary characters;
2. if the artists decisively address the folk culture of their country and protect it indeed from fraudulent cosmopolitan modern tendencies, because the true

12. While the conformism of the postwar avant-garde represents the ultimate result of constant displacing of art from its co-modified "comfort zone," postmodernism refuses even a seeming discord with Western consumer society, which is why it is affected by the composer's rebuke as much, if not more than it is by the avant-garde.

13. In his "Manifest of the 'Third Avant-garde,'" Bruči reminds in a certain degree on the appropriation gesture of the avant-garde aspiration by the socialist realism, addressed in Boris Groys, "Борис Гройс, Стил Стаљин" [Boris Groys and Stil Stalin] and "Стаљинска уметност живота" [Stalinist way of life], *Београд Службени гласник* [Belgrade Official Gazette], (2009), 51–58. The aesthetics of socialist realism relies on the political ambition of the Russian avant-garde art, which had too little communicative power with everyday life it aimed to change. Socialist realism assumed and radicalized the very principle of aesthetization of the everyday, and the posthistoric logic of this normative aesthetics derived the operative ability of art not from the critical attitude towards the social reality, but from a synthesis of all the elements, historically anticipating the society's path towards its utopian goal. Therefore, socialist realism absorbed the way Russian avant-garde perceived art and then touched its objectives through other means. Bruči proposes something alike in his "Manifesto," when he accepts the "breakthrough in the new sound dimension" of the postwar European avant-garde, but not its (non-)aesthetical aspirations.

14. "Proglas Drugog međunarodnog kongresa kompozitora i muzičkih pisaca" [Proclamation of the Second International Congress of Composers and Music Writers], in "Muzika: Zbornik Udruženja kompozitora Srbije" [Music: Proceedings of the Association of Composers of Serbia] vol. 1, (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1948), 103–104., quoted from Vesna Mikić, "Socrealizam u muzici – produkcija i recepcija" [Socialist realism in music – production and reception], in *Istorija umetnosti u Srbiji – XX vek* [Art history in Serbia – 20<sup>th</sup> century] vol. II (Beograd: Orion Art, 2012), 323–331, here 325.



internationalism of music is born only by establishing their own national culture;

3. if the composers pay attention in the first place to the musical forms most specific in their content, especially operas, oratorios, cantatas, art songs, and mass songs, etc.;
4. if composers and music critics become active practical toilers in the field of musical education of their people.

In his article “The Composers’ Role,” Bruči states that music should:

1. be communicative, based on the composition–listener–composition feedback, that is, to be actively communicative, meaning that
2. it is humanizing and humanistically engaged, so that it contributes to the fullness of human being and personality, resisting destructive and dehumanizing tendencies;
3. it works on the consecration of human personality, the sense of belonging, and the unity among the people, not on separation and solipsism;
4. it works on the process of democratization as the ultimate value of the liberated man;
5. it has to be positively, yet in a critical way, socially functional;
6. it is to resist decisively, fully aware of the necessity for a global stream of information and harmfulness of cultural isolation in an ever more global world and time, any epigonism and imitation of other’s artistic models and any overestimation of imported artistic values.

Despite the associative connections between the criticism of “extreme subjectivism,” the affirmation of the “advanced idea” and the “musical education of people” on one hand, and criticism of “separation and solipsism,” the affirmation of the “human message” and “humanization of one’s personality” on the other, it would be tendentious to argue that Bruči in his article “adapts” transcultural norms of socialist realism to the intercultural regulations of Yugoslav socialist (post)modernism. Although Bruči did resort to decretal laying down of the prescriptions characteristic for Zhdanovism, his thinking was substantially distanced from the socialist realist doctrine. Recommendations from the “Prague Manifesto” are calling on the national culture being a source of the “only true internationalism” and they are designed as a structural model which can be applied to each individual national culture. On the contrary, Bruči develops a self-identifying framework of Yugoslav musical culture dominated by the dichotomy of ‘ours’ and ‘someone else’s.’ While phrases from the “Prague Manifesto” like “the masses,” “national culture,” and “musical education of the people” only consider a collective social entity, Bruči focuses on the individual – the human figure – as a self-governing unit of a united, but – in terms of its interests – diversified community.

Bruči replaces the pragmatic position from which the theorists of socialist realism viewed the educational-didactic function of art with the modernist figure of a hero-like artist who commits himself to the idealist mission of enlightenment. The composer's attitude that art should "examine the world and find the truth,"<sup>15</sup> reasons with the views of the Frankfurt Sociological School on the social function of art, but Bruči gets close to these views only to turn away from them. While Theodor Adorno adopts and develops Clement Greenberg's thesis on art splitting into kitsch and avant-garde, finding a lie of the first in "making pacts with wrong crowd", and the truth of the second in the fact that "with organized pointful emptiness, it denies the point of organized society,"<sup>16</sup> Bruči's understanding of the "great piece full of words that are human" points to the optimistic confidence in the projective power of art in the self-governing socialist society. For Adorno, the philosopher 'in opposition,' there is no reason for art to be optimistic and humanizing, because there is no society with which it could be in harmony, which is why art's critical function never becomes positive-projective, but rushes into taking the blame of the world on itself, to the moment of being speechless in front of dismay. Avant-garde ambitions are, on the other hand, bad transmitters of human message for Bruči, the composer "in position" whose confidence in the positive power of the art stems from the belief that the self-governing socialism is the path to the transition from the world of necessities to the world of freedom.

Finally, there has to be determined whether the framework of interpretation proposed by the theme of this symposium – nationalism in totalitarian<sup>17</sup> states – gives more answers to intertextual questions posed by Bruči's criticism of the European avant-garde, if one takes into account that there are few intersections between the composer's writings, discursive formations of postmodernism, socialist realism, and critical theory. It can be stated that Bruči's call for rejection of "foreign models and standards" for the sake of "our own physiognomy and individuality"<sup>18</sup> is a characteristic of national identity politics. It is known, however, that nationalism in socialist Yugoslavia was primarily tied to ethnic and confessional self-identification of social groups, while Bruči's writings, viewed as a whole, have no ethno-nationalistic background. Although his exclusivist statements may be treated as ideological by-product of Yugoslav nationalism,<sup>19</sup> Rudolf

15. Bruči, "Postavke radne grupe kompozitora," 4.

16. Teodor Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike* [Philosophy of new music] (Beograd: Nolit, 1968), 49.

17. Socialist Yugoslavia should rather be characterized as an authoritarian, rather than a totalitarian state. Such correction in terminology would be sufficient to take into account the Yugoslav socio-historical specificity.

18. Bruči, "Manifest 'Treće avangarde,'" 31.

19. Ljubica Spasovska states that "from 1974 onwards it is possible to speak of Yugoslav supra-nationalism, in addition to the Yugoslav federalism (...). Although this feeling of over-ethnicity was conceptualized, internalized, transmitted and propagated in many different ways, it essentially represented an additional level of identity, as well as an additional sphere of interaction and convergence. From being purely political, the 'Yugoslav' identity gradually became cultural and national despite the often ambiguous state policy not to promote Yugoslavhood as a category of ethnicity and that even the label Yugoslavs is treated as 'nationally undetermined.'" Ljubica Spasovska, "Vavilonski košmar – jugoslovenstvo, antinacionalizam, alternative

Bruči as a composer, music writer, and member of the League of Communists primarily elaborates issues of supranational socialist patriotism in the field of musical culture. However, it should be noted that Yugoslav socialist patriotism did not exclude “democratic national consciousness,”<sup>20</sup> but dialectically tied it to socialist internationalism. This is what the “Program of the League of Communists” from 1958 has to say about the Yugoslav socialist patriotism:

Common interest has already become apparent and it increasingly manifests in general and cultural consciousness of the working masses. On this fundament there develops the Yugoslav socialist consciousness, Yugoslav socialist patriotism, which is not the opposition, but a necessary internationalist addition to democratic national consciousness. This is not a word about the creation of a new “Yugoslav nation” instead of the existing nations, but about the constitutional growth and strengthening of the socialist trade-unions, i.e. working people of all the nations of Yugoslavia, and the affirmation of their common interests based on socialist relations. Such a Yugoslavhood does not obstruct free development of national languages and cultures, on the contrary, it prefers it. In this sense, the socialist Yugoslavhood, as a form of socialist internationalism and as a democratic national consciousness, which is imbued with the spirit of internationalism, are not the separate phenomena, but two sides of a single process. Every absolutization of one or the other would necessarily lead to deviation towards either reactionary nationalism and chauvinism, or equally the same reactionary colonialist hegemonism and the negation of the principle of self-determination and equality of nations.<sup>21</sup>

Yugoslav Communists’ belief that national culture would dialectically transform into the international one, if it is to be engaged in a dialogue with the universal Enlightenment truths, gives evidence of the complex interaction between the national and class paradigm in the theory of dialectical materialism and self-governing socialist practice. The very model of the Yugoslav socialist federalism is designed as a solution to the national question which reconciles disparate ethnic narratives of the past and ensures ethnic and socio-economic equality. “The *raison d’être* of Yugoslavia” as Ljubica Spasovska states, “revolved around plurality of national identities and self-conceptions, all of which had almost equal importance and institutional protection: ethno-national, transnational, socialist, antifascist, federal, non-aligned, anti-Stalinist, pro-Western.”<sup>22</sup> In Yugoslavia, there was

1989–1991” [Babylonian nightmare – Yugoslavian, antinationalist, alternative 1989–1991], available online under <http://www.republika.co.rs/532-535/20.html>, last accessed on 22 December 2014.

20. Branko Petranović and Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918/1988* (Beograd: Rad, 1988), 1074.

21. Ibid., 1074–1075.

22. Spasovska, “Vavilonski košmar.”

eventually created an opaque ideological *galimatias* the interpretation of which was delegated to prominent social agents able to adjust it to the needs of a coherent politics within different social spheres. One of these activists was Rudolf Bruči, as well. In the mid-1970s, the composer became extremely annoyed by the disorientation of Yugoslav music, torn between traditional and modern, national and international, West and East, aesthetic autonomy and ideological engagement. In the paradigm of Yugoslav socialist patriotism, the mentioned binary oppositions are (de)legitimized through a dialectical resolution of their ultimate perspectives, and one segment in a discursive chain which articulates Bruči's socio-patriotic self-reflection is the criticism of the European avant-garde, too.

The abstract Yugoslav creative subject, constituted within Bruči's discourse, meets two sides of European avant-garde/radical modernism – for Bruči *avant-garde* and modernism remained undifferentiated categories – through a cultural complex of stagnation first. Noting that the “democratic development of the Yugoslav society” enabled, “in a relatively short period of time (...) overcoming fifty years of stagnation from the international music and its course,”<sup>23</sup> Bruči recognizes the delay as one of the neuralgic points of Yugoslav national musical cultures. Bruči demands from Yugoslav creators of music as well the timeskip Yugoslav society carried out in conditions of socialist self-management, pointing to the “necessity of revolutionary trends in music, the necessity of searching, modifying, and moving in pace with the epoch and its requirements.”<sup>24</sup> While the imperative of modernization is unquestionable for Bruči, being an integral part of the socialist worldview and many impacts of a corrective for the inherited allochronic inferiority remain deniable. The composer is suspicious about a dynamic scientific-technical civilization in the circumstances of the Cold War division of the world, when the fear appeared that the uncontrollable achievements of modernity would end human existence whatsoever. A dialectical review of modernity in the discursive field of Bruči's texts was reflected in the existential concern for ‘man’ conceptualized as an essential anthropological constant, in a tense relation with the changing world. In accordance with the personal experience of the gap between man's ‘first’ and ‘second nature,’ dramatically presented and ranging from the utopian potentials of the Non-Aligned Movement and decolonization on the one hand, to the apocalyptic nuclear phantasm on the other, Bruči intended for contemporary art to have the role of a “modest contribution to a release from the feeling of doom and demoralization which (...) hover over people.”<sup>25</sup> For Bruči art is, metaphori-

23. Bruči, “Manifest ‘Treće avangarde,’” 30. Bruči also states here: “Nowadays we can say that our musical opus, in compositional-technical terms, and otherwise, has indeed reached the European level and that today's high standards of our music may equally match the same high standards of international music.”

24. *Ibid.*, 32.

25. Popović, “Rudolf Bruči,” 46. Bruči also said in 1981 that “in our time, science and technology disprove all the set premises, ruthlessly destroy tradition and demand full engagement of the mind in finding new means of artistic expression. In the past, instinct, inspiration, and artistic clairvoyance were the strongholds

cally speaking, “an island” of humanity “in the rapids” of scientific-technological progress. Bruči’s suspicion towards the effects of modernization strengthened his conviction that between art and society there has to be a relation of mutual curiosity and interaction. Bruči believed that art was to offer society an avant-garde experience of modernity as an accidental ‘voice’ of permanent human nature. Speaking of the phenomenological split into a world and world’s experience, Bruči implicitly articulated the latency of Marx’s message that the world should not be described, but changed. The mission of the contemporary art is not, therefore, to ascertain and describe the external coercion of the modern world, but to show, within its medium, how it is possible to conform modernization to the authentic being of the mankind. On the basis of Bruči’s writings, it can be concluded that the avant-garde social functioning of art is conditioned by the synthetic attitude towards its own medium, while the postwar avant-garde art, which contributes to the oblivion of a being – by treating its own medium as the inconsistent experimental polygon – becomes the negative exemplar for the unrealized project of people-centered Yugoslav music.

of the creator of the new. These sublime qualities are not enough anymore for a contemporary creator. He is no longer able to create the new work of art based on his instincts. He contemplates. He is considered obliged to give mankind at least a *modest contribution to the release from the feeling of doom and demoralization which*, with the astonishing development, together with atomic destructive means, *hover over people*. In his laboratory, he does become more and more a scientist. He strives for balance in our time.”