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ISIDORINE KLAVIRSKE BALADE

Od dana kada je, sa pet godina, počela da uči muziku, pa tokom celog života, klavir je u muzičkom čarobnjaštvu Isidore Žebeljan bio trajna i najčvršća veza između idejnog, maštovitog sveta muzike i stvarnog zvuka. Posredstvom klavira, svirajući, Isidora je otkrila zavodljivi, bajkoviti, uzbudljivi svet muzike, koji joj se prvi put ukazao kada je u srednjoj školi svirala *Prolazne vizije* (*Visions fugitives, op. 22*) Sergeja Prokofjeva. Ta čarolija zamalo da je odvede na studije klavira kod legendarnog profesora Arba Valdme, koji je zapazio njen izraziti, snažni talenat. Ipak, kao kompozitor, nikada nije prestala da svira, i to ne samo dok je komponovala, nego je i aktivno nastupala na koncertima, izvodeći prvenstveno svoja dela, ali i dela drugih, uglavnom srpskih kompozitora, kao što su Ljubica Marić, Dušan Radić i Vlastimir Trajković. Koncertirala je i snimala sa čuvenim Brodski kvartetom iz Londona, čiji su članovi bili oduševljeni ne samo njenom genijalnom muzikom, nego i njenim maestralnim pijanizmom.

Komponujući isključivo za klavirom, Isidora je svirala svakodnevno, tako da je svaku svoju kompoziciju mogla da izvede u tačnom tempu, napamet, i one najvirtuoznije, i one najkompleksnije, najizazovnije, i svaku svoju operu od početka do kraja, pevajući pri tom vokalne deonice. Bila je muzički virtuoz.

Iako su sva njena dela prvobitno oblikovana na klaviru i iako klavir zauzima važno mesto u njenim kamernim kompozicijama, Isidora zapravo nije imala dovoljno vremena da se, između opsežnog rada na operama, velikim simfonijskim i koncertantnim delima, posveti komponovanju muzike za solo klavir, mada je nameravala da od svojih najznačajnijih instrumentalnih kompozicija načini i klavirske verzije (primer toga je *Pesma putnika u noći*), inspirišući se svojim velikim uzorima Prokofjevim i Stravinskim, koji su od delova svojih kompozicija pravili klavirske komade. Isidora je u notnom zapisu ostavila nekoliko kompozicija za klavir, koje se često izvode po celom svetu – *Umbra, Il Circo, Dark Velvet, Sarabanda, Koral*. Osim toga, nekoliko klavirskih minijatura nalazi se u partiturama Isidorinih opera (*Zora D.* i *Maratonci*), dok je većina njih sačuvana isključivo u vidu zvučnih snimaka.

Kao muzički stvaralac, Isidora je izuzetno mnogo radila u pozorištu, komponujući pozorišnu muziku, čije je delove svirala na klaviru (ponekad uživo u predstavama, kao *Ruski vergl*, na primer) i snimala. U Isidorinim muzikama za četrdeset pozorišnih predstava, koje je radila u najznačajnijim pozorištima u Srbiji, Hrvatskoj, Crnoj Gori i Norveškoj, krili su se muzički biseri pijanističkih minijatura, koje nikada nisu bile zapisane, nego samo snimljene, a nastale su kao nadahnute, briljantne improvizacije. Neke od tih minijatura (*Dark Velvet, Sarabanda*) Isidora je oblikovala u klavirske kompozicije, dok je većina njih, po završetku života pozorišne produkcije, ostala nepoznata. A ipak je ta muzika bila sastavni deo velikog emotivnog dejstva i uspeha kultnih pozorišnih predstava za koje je Isidora komponovala muziku, radeći sa najvećim i najznačajnijim rediteljima svog doba sa prostora nekadašnje Jugoslavije, kao što su Dejan Mijač, Slobodan Unkovski, Tomi Janežič, Vida Ognjenović, i dobijajući za svoju muziku Sterijine nagrade, najznačajnije nagrade za pozorišnu umetnost u Srbiji. Te predivne pozorišne minijature sačinjavaju jedan deo ove zbirke. A njihovo oličenje u vidu notnog zapisa bilo bi neostvarivo da u tome nije pomogla nadahnuta čistota Isidorinih divnih, odanih studenata, koji su se i na ovaj način trajno odužili svom učitelju i vodiču.

Po ugledu na Bartokov ciklus *Mikrokosmos*, klavirske kompozicije u ovoj zbirci raspoređene su prema njihovoj muzičko-tehničkoj zahtevnosti, počevši od najjednostavnijih, koje će najmlađim pijanistima, deci, omogućiti da iz bezazlenog okruženja dečje muzike neosetno zakorače u emotivnu zavodljivost sveta odraslih, osećajnih i dirljivih, krećući se zatim sve složenijim muzičkim putanjama duboke tragike i neobuzdane radosti, do kompleksnih, maštovito izvajanih partitura Isidorine muzičko-doživljajne unikatnosti, u kojima blista njena autentičnost, a čijim prohtevima mogu da udovolje briljantni, mudri izvođači, oni kojima je tehnička bravuroznost samo sredstvo za otkrivanje (muzičkih) tajni. Kako je za ostvarenje punog doživljaja Isidorine muzike neophodno striktno poštovanje naznačene artikulacije i tempa, to su svi notni zapisi u ovoj zbirci tačni odrazi Isidorine muzičke zamisli i najjasniji put ka savršenoj interpretaciji.

A u svim tim blistavim kompozicijama čuvaju se iskre i svetlaci nežne, moćne, tanane, neodoljive Isidorine muzičke duše. I ona će osvojiti svakoga ko uroni u ovu zbirku nestvarno divnih melodija, čarobnih osvetlenja emotivnih žudnji i njihovih nijasni, viteški odvažnih i nesalomljivo žonglerskih ritmova, u ovu zbirku balada, koje nateruju suze na oči ali ih i brišu, koje umiruju dubokom verom u duhovnu Večnost, ma bili mi putujući skomrasi, zastali u drumskoj krčmi, ili usamljeni zaljubljenici što tek otkrivaju mirise svoje ljubavi. U svima nama ona budi radost i mi ćemo joj se, uz ovu muziku, uvek prepuštati, kao mestu konačne utehe, mestu konačnog, vedrog spokoja.

dr Borislav Čičovački

ISIDORA'S BALLADS

From the very day she started learning music, at the age of five, and throughout her entire life, the piano stood in Isidora Žebeljan's magical musical world as the firmest and most permanent link between the world of real sounds and the world of musical ideas and imagination. While playing the piano, Isidora discovered a seductive, exciting, fairy-tale world of music, which had revealed itself to her for the first time when she played Sergey Prokofiev's *Visions fugitives, op. 22* in high school. This enchantment nearly led her to study piano with the legendary professor Arbo Valdma, who had observed her striking, forceful talent. And as a composer, she never stopped playing, not only while she composed, but also when she actively performed in concerts, her own pieces primarily, along with the works of other, mostly Serbian composers, such as Ljubica Marić, Dušan Radić and Vlastimir Trajković. She gave concerts and recorded music with the famous Brodsky Quartet from London, whose members were delighted not only by her genius music but also with her masterful piano playing.

Composing solely on the piano, Isidora played every day, and was capable of performing all of her compositions at the correct tempo, by heart, the most masterful ones, the most complex ones and the most challenging ones, and each of her operas from beginning to end, singing along with the vocal parts. She was indeed a music virtuoso.

Although all her pieces initially took shape on a piano, and although the piano played an important part in her chamber compositions, since she was working extensively on operas, large symphonic works and concertos, Isidora actually did not have enough time to devote herself to composing music for the solo piano. However, she did intend to make piano versions of her most important instrumental compositions (as with, for example, *The Song of a Traveller in the Night*), inspired as she was by her great role models Prokofiev and Stravinsky, who transformed parts of their compositions into piano pieces. She composed several piano pieces, and they are frequently performed worldwide – *Umbra, Il Circo, Dark Velvet, Sarabande, Chorale.* Additionally, several piano miniatures can be found in the scores of Isidora's operas (*Zora D.* and *The Marathon*), although the majority of them have been preserved only in the form of audio recordings.

As a composer, Isidora worked very much for the theater, composing incidental music, parts of which she played on the piano and recorded (sometimes performing live in the plays – for example, *Russian Hurdy-Gurdy*). In Isidora's musical pieces for forty theatrical plays, which she composed for the most renowned theatres in Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Norway, her many piano miniature musical pearls were hidden, never to be written down, only recorded, often created as brilliant improvisations of the artist. Isidora shaped some of these miniatures (*Dark Velvet, Sarabande*) into piano compositions, while the majority of them remained unknown after the end of the particular theatrical production. And yet this music formed an integral part of the great emotional impact and success of the iconic theatrical plays for which Isidora composed the music, working with the greatest and most renowned directors of the time from the former Yugoslavia region, such as Dejan Mijač, Slobodan Unkovski, Tomi Janežič, and Vida Ognjenović, and which led to her winning Sterija awards, the most significant theatrical art awards in Serbia. These marvellous theatrical miniatures are a part of this collection. And their reification in the form of sheet music would have been impossible to achieve if help had not been provided by the inspired purity of Isidora's loyal and wonderful students, who reciprocated their teacher and guide in so generous a manner.

Taking Bartók's cycle *Mikrokosmos* as a model, the piano compositions in this collection are ordered by their musical and technical difficulty, starting from the simplest ones, which will enable the youngest pianists, the children, to make unknowingly the first steps from the innocent environment of children's music into the emotional seductiveness of the sensitive and stirring world of adults, and onwards down the increasingly complex paths of deep tragedy and uncontrolled passion, and towards the more intricate, imaginatively sculptured scores of Isidora's musical-experiential uniqueness, in which her authenticity glows, and whose demands can only be answered by the wisest, most brilliant performers, those whose technical mastery is simply a means to discover secrets – musical secrets. As reaching the full experience of Isidora's music requires a strict adherence to the indicated articulation and tempo, the notes written in this collection represent accurate reflections of Isidora's musical thought and the clearest way to perfect interpretation.

In all these brilliant compositions, sparks and embers of Isidora's soft, powerful, delicate, irresistible musical soul are preserved. Anybody who dives into such a collection of unimaginably wonderful melodies, magical illuminations of emotional yearnings and their nuances, chivalrously daring and unbreakably juggling rhythms, will be captivated, and wish to plunge deeper into these ballads that bring tears to one's eyes and wipe them along the way, that bring consolation and a deep faith in a spiritual Eternity, whether we be wandering minstrels resting at a roadside inn, or lonely lovers yet to discover the scents of love. She awakens love in all of us, and with this music we will always surrender to her, as a place of ultimate consolation, a place of final, bright serenity.

Dr Borislav Čičovački

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