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Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

Citation

Potter, Keith. 1981. 'Review of 11th Zagreb Music Biennale, May 9-16, 1981'. *Contact*, 23. pp. 36-40. ISSN 0308-5066.

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**11TH ZAGREB MUSIC BIENNALE
MAY 9-16, 1981**

KEITH POTTER

Invited at rather short notice to Yugoslavia's principal festival of contemporary music, I set out with two related preconceptions; they stemmed largely, though by no means completely, from ignorance. In the event they turned out to be both true and false, though, I think, more false than true. The first was that the Zagreb Biennale is a kind of poor relation of the better-known Warsaw Autumn festival, reviewed fairly regularly in these pages over the past six years. The second was that Yugoslav contemporary music is mostly a set of watered-down, second-hand reactions to contemporary developments elsewhere; in particular to the various stopping places along the path to the New Music as already mapped out by the history books: the tonal-to-atonal-to-twelve-note-to-serial-to-aleatoric-and-back-to-tonal hitchhikers' guide to the millennium.

The second point will have to await a future article for a detailed consideration. For the moment I will risk the submission that contemporary Yugoslav music is of more interest to the foreigner than my preconception might lead him to suppose, and I produce two pieces of evidence as proof of this. Exhibit A, the Yugoslav content of this year's festival, will be examined in part here. Exhibit B, records of some 60

pieces by Yugoslavs, which I brought back from Zagreb and have listened to since my return, will have to await retrial as mentioned above; the case comes up in a future issue of *Contact*.

As to my first preconception: well, a number of points of comparison can quickly be made. In several senses the Zagreb Biennale is Yugoslavia's answer to Poland's Warsaw Autumn. It consists of just over a week of new music, by no means all of it from the host country but certainly giving the foreigner as well as the native an opportunity to hear what appears to be a reasonably representative sample of the local product. This year's Biennale confined itself largely to mid-evening and late-night events each day, though some of the concerts that started at 7.30 were of what Zagreb calls the 'Non-Stop' variety and went on past midnight, and there was sometimes at least one other event going on somewhere else. In the absence of the 5 p.m. concerts that take place in Warsaw, the sheer bulk of music on offer was inevitably smaller in Yugoslavia than in Poland, though apparently there has been more in the past; besides, as visitors to Warsaw have found, the human mind can only stand so much.

Zagreb's festival began in 1961, five years after Warsaw's, and was undoubtedly to some extent modelled on its already quite illustrious predecessor. And since it is held every two years, this year's was only the eleventh festival (though incidentally the Biennale's 20th anniversary). Warsaw, annual since its second festival in 1958, has, quirkily, managed to celebrate both its 25th festival and its 25th anniversary this year.

Zagreb's Biennale does not, I think, have quite the international reputation of Warsaw's Autumn, though I can't really see why it doesn't, certainly why it shouldn't. They are both good festivals, valuable to the local population for whom they're primarily intended and to the international participants and listeners who go there. Both are hospitable and extremely friendly to the foreigner; and the Zagreb press office carries informal and idiosyncratic charm to new heights.

The Biennale, it was suggested to me while I was there, has been better in the past: there has been more music-theatre, more environmental work, and the first festivals were among the most exciting of all. Responsible for this impression is a mixture difficult for the outside newcomer to disentangle: a strong element of basic truth, the particular enthusiasm and feeling of innovation that must have surrounded the festivals of the 1960s, a certain amount of rose colouring in the spectacles through which the past is viewed, and, last but not least, the less radical, and therefore to some less exciting, state of new music generally in the last few years compared with the immediately preceding ones. But then the same observations have been made at Warsaw.

One aspect of both festivals' importance, which is often overlooked or at least misunderstood, is the precise function of each in the cultural matrix of its own country. We know that the cultural thaw made possible by the political thaw in the years immediately after Stalin's death in 1953 gave rise to the first Warsaw Autumn, allowing not only the composition of music in more 'advanced' styles but the opening up, the internationalising, of musical life that helped to make the Polish music of the last 25 years possible. And the present situation in Poland makes it more obvious than it has probably ever been since those first exciting years how important it must be for Polish composers and others involved with new music to have an annual international gathering acting as a shop window to the world for the latest Polish compositions and as a means of cultural interchange which can serve to emphasise independence from the Soviet Union and connections with the West.

The situation in Zagreb is both simpler and more complex. Simpler because, since Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform and hence effectively from what we usually call the Eastern block in 1948, the country has been non-aligned, though it practises its own brand of Communism. This should have resulted in an independence from Soviet Socialist Realist thinking even sooner and even more extensive than in Poland. Why then didn't Zagreb's Biennale precede Warsaw's Autumn? What was going on musically in Yugoslavia between 1948 and 1961? These are undoubtedly more complex questions than they seem, and they require more complex answers than space allows here. Besides, I don't as yet have anything like complete answers.

I was, however, told a few things during my visit which may help to explain why the Biennale began when it did. That it began at all seems to have been owing to the work of one

man. Milko Kelemen (b. 1924) is a Croatian composer who now teaches in West Germany but travels quite freely and extensively in Eastern and Western Europe — as, indeed, do the better-known of the Poles. (He had, for example, just come back from Moscow's First International Festival of Contemporary Music, an event of peculiar significance which I hope we may be able to investigate in the future).

I don't know whether Kelemen's Theme with Variations in C sharp major of 1949, included on a record I brought back of solo piano music played by the young whizz-kid Yugoslav Ivo Pogorelič,¹ is typical, but if it is, then Kelemen's early music lies at the conservative end of the neo-classical line: less advanced than Stravinsky or even Hindemith. Its mixture of wry beauty and moments of quite indulgently Romantic pianism, its severe sense of form and balance, and its expert writing for the piano sometimes recall Shostakovich's 24 Preludes or 24 Preludes and Fugues (the latter composed after Kelemen's piece). Kelemen himself told me that the music of Debussy, for example, was generally regarded in Yugoslavia as suspiciously modern until into the 1950s: a situation much less likely in Poland at that time, though admittedly Szymanowski's version of the Debussyan revolution did not exactly meet with instant approval earlier in the century. And while Hungary had the example of Bartók for radical as well as not so radical composers of the immediate post-war years to follow, nearly all Yugoslavia's music until the 1960s seems to have been a much more watery mixture of folkloristic and vaguely neo-classical tendencies.

Kelemen, who studied with, among others, Messiaen for a year in Paris (1954-55), did a great deal to put Yugoslavia in touch with the Western avantgarde and made it unafraid of regular contact with and influence from the music of Messiaen, Boulez, Stockhausen, and Cage; the Yugoslavs were also encouraged to keep a beady ear open for the emerging Polish colourist composers. A diplomat of something approaching genius, as well as a good composer, he was instrumental in founding the Zagreb Biennale. There had been nothing like it in Yugoslavia before and there was no money to start it. Undeterred, Kelemen paid visits as a private citizen to Moscow, Washington, and a good few points in between, cleverly playing off East and West so that each was encouraged to spend the maximum on the Biennale in order to impress upon the other its influence on and goodwill towards Yugoslavia.

Nowadays there are composers of all kinds in Yugoslavia, from the Socialist Realist composers who wrote appropriate music for the first anniversary of Tito's death, recently commemorated, to a group of minimalists from Belgrade who are heavily into Steve Reich and Philip Glass. But it seems that even so 'enlightened' a Communist government as the rotating collective Tito left behind him would look on Yugoslavia's avantgardists and experimentalists with much more suspicion than it does if the Socialist Realists were not there to act as a buffer, as the acceptable cultural face of Yugoslavia's Communism.

What most readers of *Contact* would, I imagine, regard as the 'real' new music of Yugoslavia survives, though hardly thrives, on state support. For a composer to be a Catholic and not a member of the Communist party is not dangerous, but it's not advisable either; 'real' new music's relationship with the state seems to be an uneasy one. The present function of the Zagreb Biennale is still to wave the flag for contemporary music in Yugoslavia, to say that new music of all kinds still happens there and that it's allowed to happen; it also tells the outside world of this and brings that outside world in. In its way the Zagreb Biennale is clearly still just as important to Yugoslavia as the Warsaw Autumn must be to Poland.

One other point must be made before I move on to discuss some of the music I heard at this year's Biennale. Yugoslavia is not a country in the sense in which most of us use the word; it is a collection of federal republics whose peoples are more divided than united by their racial, historical, and geographical backgrounds. Belgrade, ostensibly the capital of the whole country, lies in Serbia, the Orthodox state that covers a large part of the north and east of Yugoslavia and has, I'm told, a somewhat oriental feeling about it. Zagreb is the capital of Catholic Croatia, the western state that borders on Austria and Italy. Its architecture, its women's fashions, its culture are all very Westernised. Whether for that reason alone — or again for a whole complex of reasons too difficult to unravel on a single visit — the Yugoslav music we hear or hear of in Western Europe tends to be Croatian. Undoubtedly, too, the Zagreb Biennale has a good deal to do

with this, for no matter how much it may officially be the contemporary music festival of Yugoslavia in general, it turns out to be a contemporary music festival of Croatia in particular. Most of the music described below as Yugoslav is thus Croatian; I heard very little Serbian music and almost none from the smaller republics such as Slovenia in the north and Macedonia in the south. Whether such a policy is justified by the superior quality of Croatian music is something I am as yet in no position to judge. Perhaps Belgrade or Ljubljana should have its own festival too.

In this year's Biennale I heard neither Yugoslav Socialist Realism (unless the 'Folk' Symphony by Boris Ulrich (b. 1931), which was used for the Sarajevo Ballet's production on the opening night, falls into that category) nor any Yugoslav minimalism. But I did hear pieces by quite a wide range of composers working in between, as it were. Kelemen himself was represented by *Mageia* (1977), an orchestral composition inspired by a trip to Mexico. His use of what he called a 'prototype rhythm', a simple, repeated structure that alternated with another more complex and constantly varied one, gave some idea of how Kelemen has worked his way through the techniques of European avantgardism to achieve a personal style; he is currently in the process of reintegrating some more 'traditional' gestures into a manner which by no means throws out the techniques – both of note manipulation and of orchestration – acquired earlier. At the risk of forcing the Polish analogy too far, I would say that Kelemen has something of the technical fastidiousness of Lutosławski and the orchestral flair of Penderecki. As a composer he sounds not remotely like either (their mean age, by the way, is very close to his own) but his music is more individual than even the most well-meant emphasis on his craft might suggest.

There is, I think, no composer who is the equivalent of Lutosławski or Penderecki in terms of the history of Yugoslav music, no matter how tempting it might be to the outsider to look for one. Their equivalents in terms of foreign recognition are hard to find too, for although Kelemen has an international reputation, it has not, for instance, yet travelled as far as Britain. Of the older Yugoslav composers who, somewhat like Lutosławski, changed styles in reaction to the work of the European or American post-war avantgarde, only Natko Devčić and Branimir Sakač were represented in this year's Biennale.

Formerly a folkloristic neo-classicist, Devčić (b. 1914) responded to the new music he heard at the early Biennial by exploring new sounds, including electronics; he spent 1967-68 in the USA, including six months at Columbia University where he made a tape piece called *Columbia '68*. The Zagreb Dance Ensemble did some beautiful things to a rather fine tape piece by Devčić called *Entre nous*; more than merely functional, it nevertheless may not suggest the real scope of his work.

Sakač (b. 1918) seems to have struggled earlier than Devčić towards a more 'advanced' style; as a writer on contemporary music as well as a composer he helped prepare the ground for the first Biennale. He was also the first Croatian electronic composer: his *Three Synthetic Poems* date from as early as 1959, thus seeming to contradict earlier impressions I have given about the state of Yugoslav music in the fifties. I missed Sakač's 'Matrix' Symphony at the festival, owing to my enthusiasm for Sylvano Bussotti's *Le Racine* (see below), but fortunately it's on record and I have heard it since my return. Composed in 1972, the Symphony seems already almost to have attained the status of a Yugoslav classic. A masterpiece it isn't, I think, but it's fairly easy to appreciate why it has attracted attention. Three quite short movements – the work lasts only 14 minutes – present a range of ideas with a depth unusual for a shortish piece with such pretensions. Admirers of Stockhausen, particularly British admirers, will be amused by the titles of the first and third movements – 'Ylem' and 'Gentle Fire' – names that reflect the 'primary archetypes' that apparently form the bases for the work's 'matrices'. But it is the second movement, entitled 'Caspar Casparius', that is the least ambiguous, since it contains a spoken text compiled from Peter Handke (the play *Kaspar*), Aimé Césaire, and Antonio Machado on the subject of the power of perseverance over 'the destruction of personality'. Most of the work is 'modern' in idiom, though the C minor thematic substance of the Finale could fit into a piece by Elgar were it not surrounded by a transparent but quite complex web of very undiatonic figurations which offset it.

Besides Kelemen, the only Yugoslav composer born in the 1920s to have made any kind of international reputation that I know of is Ivo Malec (b. 1925), who has lived in Paris for many years and was unrepresented in this year's festival. Of the many composers born in the early 1930s whose music was played, I single out two for contrast as well as unusual talent. (Vinko Globokar (b. 1934), perhaps the best-known Yugoslav composer in the West and also for many years a French resident, was unrepresented this year, though he has received considerable attention from the Biennale in the past.)²

Stanko Horvat (b. 1930) was President of the festival's Artistic Council this year. His previous works seem to have ranged from serial to colourist to neo-tonal, but his piano piece *Accordes*, played by Pavica Gvozdić, approached a minimalist stance in its use of chordal repetition 'within extremely simplified formal outlines'. Horvat typifies the composer of around 50 who has lived with the changing fashions of the European avantgarde for many years and drawn much from them, but who now seems to be moving away – whether from a neo-romantically motivated sense of despair or what I am not entirely sure. If his position sounds too close for comfort to the 'second-hand reaction' syndrome I outlined at the beginning of this review, then I can at least point to Horvat's very real achievement within these confines. My impression, also, is that it is more correct to regard him as an open-minded individualist. The best Yugoslav composers of this type have perhaps mined more than one stylistic seam in the course of a lifetime, but have remained truer to themselves because of it. They face very much the same issues as British composers, with a tolerance of their particular difficulties that in itself compels admiration.

Composers like Horvat develop in public, baring their stylistically inconsistent souls for our general edification. The result is not always a pretty sight, but the type is familiar to British listeners and no doubt to others as well. The opposite approach seems represented in Yugoslavia by Vladan Radovanović. Born in 1932 in Belgrade, he was one of the few non-Croatian composers represented at the 1981 Biennale. Radovanović runs the electronic music studio at Radio Belgrade and has been composing electronic music for the past 20 years. His output seems small, for he is the type of composer, often found in the electronic studio, whose preoccupations range far outside the domain of music as most musicians understand the word. He is a frequent writer on topics that fall into such interdisciplinary areas as semiology and synaesthesia studies.

The precise intentions of his non-electronic pieces entitled *Transmodalisms 1* and *2* (1979) eluded me, partly because of the language barrier, though their execution was actually extremely simple. Radovanović's analysis of an art object in terms of twelve 'modalities' here took the form of a single note as sung or played (by a single voice or instrument), as seen (in musical notation or other descriptions hung in sequence on the wall and revealed one by one; or in a silent glimpse of the clarinet that played it) or as spoken about (by the composer himself), etc. The effect was bizarre, but I should like to know more about what motivates a composer seemingly so far removed, not only from the musical fashion parade but from the so-called 'higher level' operations that most composers perform as a matter of course before considering calling what they produce a 'composition' at all.

Among the composers born in the 1940s and 1950s whose music was played in the Biennale this year, I should again like to mention two. Marko Ruždjak (b. 1946) is clearly considered by some of his compatriots as the most interesting 'younger' Yugoslav composer around. In the move from 'promising' to 'established', however, his output seems to have declined, and his present preoccupations are not entirely clear to me. His development, like that of all the Yugoslav composers of around his age, has taken place in the immediate aftermath of the avantgardism of the early Biennial. A revealing passage in the sleeve notes to the record of Ruždjak's music on Jugoton points out that 'His beginnings as a composer came at a relatively happy time when it had become clear that the "coup" of the avantgarde in 1961 actually had extinguished fewer household fires than was surmised at first glance.'³ The reassertion of certain pre-avantgarde values, and in particular the return to a folksong heritage that is especially rich in this part of the world (as Bartók, for example, had earlier discovered) are features of the work of many of the most interesting young Yugoslav composers.

The way in which Ruždjak uses traditional gestures in

music that speaks in a straightforward language which the listener steeped in the Classical-Romantic heritage will easily understand, and which nevertheless usually manages to say something remarkably fresh and new, calls to mind nothing so much as the work of the British composer Nigel Osborne; it isn't at all surprising to discover that these two are enthusiastic about each other's music, especially as Osborne is already known for his Slavic sympathies. Ruždjak's *Swing Low* for percussion quartet (1981) was, however, rather disappointing. A composer who, on the evidence of other works I have heard, has a pronounced gift for melodic variation, often based on folk sources, would, I should have thought, have made much more of the 'sweet chariot' connection half given away in the work's title. But the piece obstinately, drily, refused to take off.

Much more immediately appealing was *Contro a bas* for double bass and tape delay by Frano Parać (b. 1948), which Barry Guy played in the foyer of the Vatroslav Lisinski main concert hall as part of the first Non-Stop programme. The cramped conditions were, frankly, insulting to any musician (and this was not the only instance of English performers being forced into inappropriately confined spaces during the week), but this work did not seem affected; indeed technically I understand it was the best performance yet. Tape delay can be boringly, stultifyingly predictable, but Parać's piece overcomes the limitations of the technique quite brilliantly. Not only are the technical manipulations highly sophisticated and therefore more interesting than usual, but the musical material itself is extremely distinguished, cleverly designed for consistently interesting results on delay and with a splendidly folk-like tune in the middle. I am keen to hear more music by this gifted and original young Croatian.

The main theme of the 1981 Zagreb Biennale was ostensibly 'the contemporary musical theatre in the broadest sense of the term', to quote Horvat's introduction in the festival brochure. (This jumbo-sized offering, by the way, was far too large to carry around; and it was additionally distinguished, if that's the word, by a pair of jumbo-sized ears on the covers. Just as well, perhaps, that it was too large to put under the arm, for to flaunt it in the street was inviting comment!) This 'musical theatre' theme has not yet emerged in my discussion of the Biennale since the Yugoslavs themselves made relatively little contribution to it. Ulrich's 'Folk' Symphony-turned-ballet, already mentioned, did fall within the theme's orbit, as would have Darijan Božić's opera *Lizistrata 75* had it not sadly been cancelled.

Nor did the theme exactly swamp the festival in general, and several of the theatrical events that did take place lowered standards a good deal. Ivo Cramér's Riksteatern ballet company from Stockholm presented a fairly excruciating evening of kitsch and water; some of both choreography and music was by Cramér himself, who is Yugoslav but now lives in Sweden. The Gelsenkirchen opera company from West Germany presented a one-act chamber opera entitled *Jakob Lenz* by Wolfgang Rihm, the darling of the young German neo-romantic school. It was well performed but the music laboured expressionistically until most of the credibility was gone; the hero's resemblance to Frankenstein was extremely disconcerting.

Also well performed, and quite stunningly produced, was an operatic offering from East Germany, Udo Zimmermann's *Der Schuhu und die fliegende Prinzessin*, performed by the Staatsoper, Dresden, where the composer is 'collaborator - dramaturge'. The Schuhu is a kind of Peter Pan, a bird-man who never grows up, and this long three-acter is a kind of upmarket Socialist Realist pantomime ('the new Socialist Realism', I heard it called). We have become used to the near genius that East German opera producers sometimes manage through the work of several of them in Britain. One of them, Harry Kupfer, was the producer here, and he made a masterly job of *Der Schuhu*, backed by brilliant designs by Peter Sykora. No opportunity was lost for a theatrical effect and in the first act alone there were several that approached the level of *coups de théâtre*. I saw only the first act since I wanted to get to one of the Canadian programmes elsewhere. If the music of *Der Schuhu* had been half as good as the production I would have been sorely tempted to stay. But Kupfer's brilliance was wasted on Zimmermann's music, which sometimes approached the pleasant by way of pastiche of various sorts but was mostly swept from the attention by what was happening on the stage; it simply didn't have the strength to resist, still less to add anything meaningful.

But the real eye-opener, and ear-opener, of the week's theatrical offerings was Sylvano Bussotti's chamber opera in three acts entitled *Le Racine* (1979-80). A full-length opera though put on as a late-night event, it was performed by the Piccola Scala, Milan. As is the composer's custom, he himself was responsible for scenery, costumes and production; as is also often the composer's custom, all were lavishly camp. Information on the piece was hard to come by on the opera's first night. This being also the first night of the festival, it was doubly difficult to concentrate on what was going on and try to work it out only a few hours after a long journey followed by two hours of ballet. No one even seemed sure how long the work would be or how many acts there were: many left after the first and by the last only a handful of us remained, some more asleep than awake. In the circumstances the only thing to do was to go to the other performance the following night, which I did.

Even after two visits, though, there was still a lot I didn't understand. A note published in the press bulletin that arrived too late to go in the programme book explains that the composer 'imagined a member of the Comédie française who retires from the stage where she used to play *Phèdre* and is now the owner of a cafe which a certain Monsieur Jean Racine visits regularly'. (There are apparently three public places in Paris called 'Le Racine': a cinema, a hotel and a cafe.) 'In a room covered with mirrors (obligatory), he happily dresses up in the costumes of all the characters from *Phèdre*, looking at himself in the mirrors and while doing so meeting all the different "Hyppolites" of his imagination. Faithfully following the original story, the whole thing, quite naturally, comes to a tragic end: in a closed courtyard behind the cafe the characters die as they do in Racine's play, or rather just as was foreseen in ancient times by the Greeks.' The opera has a basis in *Oedipus Rex* and other Greek myths as well as in Racine.

The action progresses, I later gathered, through a single night, moving from drag to 'normality': hence the many changes of lurid and sumptuous costumes. *Phèdre* herself (Halina Niekarz) dominates the action, each act centring on one of her confessions. The French libretto is drawn in its entirety from Racine's *Phèdre*: apparently about a fifth of the original play is used. Words can apply in the opera to different situations from those in which they occurred in Racine, and they are anyway very difficult to follow. Also central is the character of one Monsieur Fred. He is the bar pianist in the cafe and is on stage for much of the time. There being no orchestra, Monsieur Fred (played by Yvar Mikhashoff) is responsible for accompanying much of the singing and also performs quite extended solos.

The music itself is as lurid and sumptuous as the costumes and decor. The final sentence in the press bulletin note made the somewhat suspect-sounding observation that the use of Racine's dodecametric verse for the libretto 'has facilitated the triumphant return of dodecaphonic technique'. I have it on good authority that *Le Racine* is, indeed, extremely serial, though just how 'totally' I have no idea. What I do know is that it is very powerful stuff. Some of the harmonies absolutely reek of French perfume and Italian operatic lyricism is very much to the fore. But much is also strong and sinewy: imagine Boulez in drag and wearing Chanel No. 5.

I write, I might say, as one who has only rarely been sympathetic to Bussotti's music in the past. I don't think all my ways in this regard were foolish (anyone who heard the much vaunted *Rara Requiem* in the QEH last December will surely know what I mean). But I must admit I was glad to hear that there will be a half-hour piano piece based on material from *Le Racine* entitled *Piano Bar*; and even more that *Le Racine* is itself just a 'study' for an opera, to be called *Phèdre*, for the large house at La Scala. Will someone at least bring the piano piece to Britain? Mikhashoff is not only the obvious choice, he's also a very good pianist (as those who heard his 'Concord' Sonata at the ICA in January will remember).

Perversion of a very different sort was on offer one evening in the concert hall, in the form of two pieces by Ladislav Kupkovič (b. 1936), a Czech composer now teaching in West Germany. I was prepared for it since a friend had only a month before played me a tape of Kupkovič's recent music, including the *Requiem for my Suicide* for two pianos, which was performed at Zagreb. Declaring that 'Atonality, to which I dedicated all my energies, has been exhausted.', Kupkovič has seemingly retreated into the past with a vengeance. Almost everything in the *Requiem* could have been written in the 19th century; almost everything in the Sonata for violin and piano

in F major could have been written in the 18th. Deviation from stylistic norms of the past takes the form only of an unexpected and uncharacteristic change of key or something like that. Strong men known to me personally as long-serving champions of the avantgarde left the hall in disgust. Whether it was not avantgarde enough or *too* avantgarde for their tastes I never found out. Whether Kupkovič's recent music is a ridiculous anachronism or not, I must confess I loved it.

The English presence in Zagreb was augmented after Barry Guy's performances by visits from two groups of musicians playing works by Trevor Wishart and Michael Nyman that have already been seen in this country; both contributed to the music-theatre theme. Wishart's familiar recent works went down very well with the Yugoslav audience.⁴ Nyman brought his music for *The Masterwork* (1979) complete with video of the Riverside Studios' live performance staged by Bruce McLean and Paul Richards. Both groups were shoe-horned into a tiny theatre in the local student centre; Wishart survived but Nyman's amplified band sounded a little peculiar in such a confined space and hardly anyone could see the video. None of the Yugoslav composers was treated like that. Hardly cricket, eh?

Other performances that qualified in the music-theatre category were those of a group from Toronto calling itself Soundstage Canada; they gave several programmes which were considerably enlivened by their use of dance, slides, the musicians' theatrical antics, and some splendid playing; Michael Pepa, a Yugoslav now living in Canada, was the group's director; his own *Mockingbird* combined dancers, slides, and music in a gratifyingly coherent way, and the music was strong enough to come through in its own right. Victor Davies's *The Musical Circus* (1981) had the long-suffering musicians dressed as circus animals with the soprano Mary Morrison as ring-master; it was better than it sounds.

And, finally, a confession. It does seem perverse if one lives in London to attend one's first rock concert in Zagreb; but that's what I did. I'm afraid I thought the three punk bands, including our own Gang of Four, with which the Biennale concluded, were pretty awful. I must be more old-fashioned than I thought. Serbo-Croat is the only non-oriental language I know of that has a word for music that is not patently some version of our own (usually it's 'musica' or some such). In Yugoslavia the most common word for music is 'glazba'. I'm really not sure whether punk is 'glazba' at all. Sorry about that.

NOTES:

¹ Jugoton LSY 66035. This also contains Prokofiev's Sixth Sonata and Debussy's *Bruyères*.

² For example in the 1977 Biennale, which is the only one we have previously reviewed: see Odaline de la Martinez' discussion of it in *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), p. 38.

³ Jugoton LSY 66080. The five works by Ružđjak on this record are *Trois chansons de geste* for baritone, orchestra, and tape; *Madrigal* for female choir; *Yours Sincerely* for solo clarinet; *Musette* for woodwind trio; and *Classical Garden* for string quartet (no dates given).

⁴ For a review of the works performed on this occasion see Brigitte Schiffer's 'New Music Diary', *Contact 22* (Summer 1981), p. 47.