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# Margins of Music

## Meje glasbe

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## IZVLEČEK

## ABSTRACT

Poetika Marka Radmija (1910–1996) je bila zaznamovana z zavrnitvijo koncepta »skladatelja«, in sicer z argumentom, da termin sam implicira redukcijo glasbenega na račun znanja in tehnike. V nasprotju s terminom skladatelj pa se je Radmiu zdelo, da pozabljen nemški izraz *Tondichter* (»pesnik tonov«) ohranja bistvo glasbenega in je zato uporabljal ta termin, kadar je skušal označiti svoje lastne aktivnosti. V članku so posledice te spremembe raziskane prek Radmiovih glasbe in njegovih misli o glasbi.

The poetics of Marko Radmio (1910–1996) was marked by the rejection of the concept of “composer,” with the argument that the term implies the reduction of that which is musical to knowledge and technique. In contrast, in the forgotten German expression *Tondichter* (tone poet) Radmio found preserved the essence of the musical and therefore used this term when trying to designate his own activities. In this paper, the consequences of this change are explored both through Radmio’s music and through his thoughts on music.

*Ludwig hat als ein Künstler gelebt; was sich die Décadents des ausgehenden Jahrhunderts erschrieben oder ermalten, hat er zu bauen oder zu leben versucht... Doch ist er ein Künstler ohne Kunstfertigkeit. Außerdem ist er ein König, dem nicht so sehr irgendeine Furcht vor Skandal, vielmehr ein tiefes Gefühl von Würde jeden Gedanken an ein bohemhaftes Doppelleben untersagen.<sup>1</sup>*

*Quelqu’un est là, où je suis seul.<sup>2</sup>*

1 Hans Mayer, *Aufseisseter* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 258–59. “Ludwig lived like an artist; what the decadents at the end of the century had written about or painted, he tried to build and to live... Still, he is an artist without craftsmanship. Besides, he is a king, whom not so much the fear of scandal but rather a sense of dignity forbids every idea of a bohemian double life.” Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

2 Maurice Blanchot, *L’espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 27. In Ann Smock’s translation: “Someone is there, where I am alone.”

When we find ourselves before the work of an unknown artist, a particular carefulness is recommended. Not because we could lose our balance on being touched by his work but because we could hastily reduce it to something else (“this is something like Chopin”) and, in doing so, deprive it of the possibility to appear as it is. Therefore, every identification of style or genre, every historiographic periodisation, and every recommendation (“if you like this, you will like that”) means at the same time the oblivion of individuality. Instead of reducing someone’s work to something familiar, every identification should be put into brackets so that we can start from the beginning. But where to start in the case of Marko Radmio’s musical work? If we take the author as a starting point, we will already encounter considerable problems. Radmio is the artist’s name in the world of art, but he was born in 1910 under the name Marko Kiš Šaulovečki, as a descendant of an old aristocratic family which even today resides in the Šćrbinec castle in the Hrvatsko Zagorje region of Croatia. Very little is known about the life of Marko Kiš. Perhaps not without reason, because his very life seems to be reduced to a minimum, to almost nothing. Marko Kiš spent most of his life in retirement: he was pensioned at the age of thirty-six as a legal clerk in the municipal administration of the city of Zagreb.<sup>3</sup> For most of his life, he was a civil servant who was no longer in that role. He lived in Zagreb, in an apartment at the end of Primorska Street, as a single man. On Sundays, he would go for dinner at his relatives’, at the beginning of the same street. In this reduction of his life to almost nothing, there is something enigmatic that might stoke the imagination. How was his relationship with his parents? Did he study law because he liked it? Why was it that he retired so early? Is there something in his retirement that should not or could not be talked about?<sup>4</sup> Does his solitude indicate a certain fear or discretion, perhaps even within the family circle? Did he ever fall in love? Was there any woman – or any man – in his life? What did he dream about? A photograph of Marko Kiš that the author of these lines had the chance to see shows him in his younger days, elegantly dressed and wearing the small metal-rimmed glasses once often worn by the educated. He had been sitting at a desk, holding a quill in his hand. A scene of writing. The cigarette in his mouth was half-burned, as if he were so absorbed with writing that he had forgotten about it. What had he been writing?

Unlike the life of Marko Kiš, the life of Marko Radmio seems to be more accessible. It was divided between public appearances – mostly as a listener, less frequently as a writer, and only exceptionally as a composer – and his solitary dwelling in his own world of art. This life is testified to by the numerous music manuscripts (never published and mostly unperformed in public) that today are preserved in the archive of the Croatian Music Institute, as well as in his writings, among them particularly the almanac titled *Down with the Dead Art! We Want Live Art! (Dolje mrtva umjetnost! Hoćemo živu umjetnost!)*, published in Zagreb in 1931 at Radmio’s own expense.<sup>5</sup>

3 Cf. Ivona Ajanović-Malinar, “Kiš Šaulovečki, Marko,” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, accessed March 1, 2018, <http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=10430>.

4 Was the explanation given by Radmio, a law graduate, merely an *official* one? In an application for membership to the Croatian Association of Composers Radmio states that he had to leave his job “because of medical reasons... and because of advanced disease he had claimed a disability pension.” Marko Radmio, Application for Membership to the Croatian Association of Composers, November 21, 1984 (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb), 1.

5 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Dolje mrtva umjetnost! Hoćemo živu umjetnost!* (Zagreb: Kugli, 1931).

For the public, Marko Radmio was a rather unusual person, a bit shy and secluded. He would appear at concerts dedicated to modern music and only his enthusiastic look would reveal his passion towards the art,<sup>6</sup> a passion which seemed to preoccupy him more than anything else and that did not leave space for anything else. His biographers mention that during the 1930s he was involved in theatre as a promoter, director and actor, and from 1940 to 1945 he was also known as a journalist.<sup>7</sup> In the long period after his retirement, Radmio was occasionally heard from as a writer, mostly to testify – through his own *marginal notes*<sup>8</sup> – to artistic phenomena, and mostly on the margins of the official musical life that occupied his attention.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the public became acquainted with Radmio also as a composer, albeit only exceptionally at public concerts;<sup>10</sup> his music could be heard more often on the air. The recordings of Radmio's music preserved in the phonoarchive of the Croatian Radio, among them some of the composer's own performances, were recorded and broadcast mostly thanks to Dubravko Detoni, a composer colleague and then a music editor at the Croatian Radio, who was perhaps the greatest enthusiast of Radmio's work.

Compared to Radmio the listener and Radmio the writer, Radmio the composer received the most attention, although the word *most* in this case relates just to some radio portraits broadcast on the Croatian Radio<sup>11</sup> and to some passing *marginal* references – mostly in the footnotes – in a few scholarly works on the history of composition in

6 An article from the Sunday supplement of the Zagreb daily *Vjesnik*, preserved as a cutting in the Marko Radmio Fonds, testifies that he was a careful listener. Published as a part of the "programme tasks for 1980" announced by what was then Zagreb Radio Television, the article is a sketch of a television portrait of Radmio: "Marko Radmio (pseudonym). An interesting, fine face with a sharp profile which attracts all of the directors of the television concert transmissions as a picture of a careful, maybe even an unusual listener. But didn't we overdo it in wondering whether there are still careful and passionate listeners of serious, even new, music? He is a composer, but entirely unknown, notwithstanding his membership in the Croatian Composer's Society. He is neither a composer by profession, nor is composing just his leisure activity, nor is he an amateur. He must be a music aficionado and connoisseur. The documentary. On him, a talk with him, his story." \*\*\*, "Žubor glazbe," *Vjesnik*, November 25, 1979 (A cutting in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb). On the next page of the cutting Radmio added, by hand: "But it was not realised."

7 Cf. Ajanović-Malinar, "Kiš Šaulovečki, Marko."

8 This expression appears in the title of two of his writings from this period; cf. Marko Radmio, "Marginalije uz jednu desetogodišnjicu," *Prolog* 6, no. 21 (1974): 17; Marko Radmio, "Marginalije uz 25-godišnjicu ACEZANTEZ-a," in *ACEZANTEZ*, ed. Raul Knežević (Zagreb: Muzički informativni centar Koncertne direkcije Zagreb, 1999), 57.

9 It was also during this period that the extensive – unpublished, but publicly available – family chronicle written by Marko Kiš and his brother came into existence. Cf. Krsto Kiš, and Marko Kiš, *Kronika rođa Kiš Šaulovečki* (Manuscript in Croatian State Archive, Zagreb, 2000).

10 Radmio himself mentions that his works have been performed in concert on only three occasions: "Of all this material only very little has been performed, and that was back in 1969 – be it at the Forum of Composers in Opatija, in the Student centre in Zagreb, on the occasion of the Days of Croatian music, and there are also radio recordings. Thereafter, the performed pieces are: 'For Piano' I and II, three movements from the 'Indian Suite', 'An Unknown Song from an Unknown Port' for mezzo-soprano and piano, 'Prelude for cello and piano', and the second version of 'Chiemsee' for baritone and chamber orchestra." Radmio, Application for Membership, 8–9. There is also a document on the public performance of Radmio's piano piece *In the Range of Ballad*; cf. Dubravko Detoni, Programme Notes for the Concert within the *Europhonia* cycle held on October 16, 1988 in Istra Hall, Zagreb (the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb).

11 Cf. Eva Sedak, *Vrijeme jednog skladatelja: Marko Radmio*, broadcast at the Third Programme of the Croatian Radio, 1984 (Documentary recording, phonoarchive of the Croatian Radio); Alida Saračević, *Vrijeme jednog skladatelja: Marko Radmio*, broadcast at the Third Programme of the Croatian Radio, September 11, 1989 (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb); Dalibor Davidović, *Glazba koju valja tražiti pod krevetom*, broadcast at the Third Programme of the Croatian Radio, December 9, 1994 (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb); Dubravko Detoni, *Pierrot mjesecar: Skladatelj Marko Radmio*, broadcast at the Third Programme of the Croatian Radio, 1995 (Documentary recording, phonoarchive of the Croatian Radio); Dubravko Detoni, *In memoriam: Marko Radmio*, broadcast at the Third Programme of the Croatian Radio, 1996 (Documentary recording, phonoarchive of the Croatian Radio).

Croatia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> The very contexts of the public performances of Radmio's music (specifically, at the "Musical showroom" of the Student centre in Zagreb, Yugoslav Forum of Composers in Opatija, the *Europhonia* cycle of the world premieres of chamber music, Zagreb) suggested its resolutely *modern* character. The emphasis on the *modernity* of Radmio's music, noticeable in the radio portraits of the composer and in the relevant historiographic studies, was coupled with a narrative on its historical place, namely, on the history of composition in Croatia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the period "between *Moderne* and the *avant-garde*,"<sup>13</sup> Radmio's music, because of its resolutely *modern* character, was considered to be a phenomenon on the margins, but since the early 1960s, with the foundation of the Zagreb Music Biennial and the Yugoslav Forum of Composers in Opatija – that is, the festivals which promoted the modernist or *avant-garde* tendencies in music – Radmio's music found an appropriate context. This gave him the possibility to come out in the public sphere as a composer. It seems that Radmio himself had nothing against this way of understanding his music. Thus, in an application for membership to the Croatian Association of Composers, seemingly a dry juridical document, though at the same time a kind of autobiography, Radmio mentioned the "avant-garde character"<sup>14</sup> of a group of his works composed during the 1960s and 70s. On the other hand, in a conversation with musicologist Eva Sedak on the issue of the "developing tendency" (*razvojni trend*) of his music, he mentioned the path "towards serialism and complexity" (*serijelnost i slojevitost*), pointing out the "catalytic effect" of the Zagreb Music Biennial, in light of which his earlier efforts were allotted the sense of "anticipations."<sup>15</sup>

But what did Radmio mean when he spoke about the *avant-garde character* of his music? Is it a name for a certain music that abandoned its inherited terms, music free of any aesthetic and historical predeterminations? For *Piano II (Za glasovir II)*,<sup>16</sup> according to Radmio, one of his *avant-garde* pieces, seems to confirm this definition. Here, the succession of sound events is neither determined by the logic of tonality (if under tonality the system of music of the Modern Era is meant, a system which determines not just the elements considered musical but also their relations) nor by traditional musical forms. The texture of the piece does not indicate any apriority – for example, the differentiation between the main and the secondary line does not appear to have been decided in advance. The music departs from the narrow

12 Thus, musicologist Eva Sedak, writing on the local musical occurrences that could be subsumed under the name *historical avant-garde*, in one of the footnotes in her historiographic overview of the history of composition in Croatia in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mentions the following: "A sort of the futurist episode (*uklon*) at the outsider margins of Croatian music could be seen in the Satie-esque piano miniatures of Marko Radmio (Marko Kiš, 1910–1996), as well as in his unusual work in general, including his little almanac *Down with the Dead Art! We want Live Art!* from 1931." Eva Sedak, "Hrvatska glazba između moderne i avangarde," in *Hrvatska i Europa: Kultura, znanost i umjetnost*, vol. 5, ed. Mislav Ježić (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti – Školska knjiga, in print), 12, note 31.

13 Sedak, "Hrvatska glazba između moderne i avangarde," 1.

14 "The pieces with the *avant-garde* character: five pieces under the title 'For Piano': I (1967), II (1969), III (1973), IV (1974), and V (1977). Also belonging here is, in a sense, 'Lento cantabile' for piano from 1961, 'In the Range of Ballad' from 1969, some movements in already-mentioned collections, and 'Chiemsee' in three versions: a) for baritone (mezzo-soprano) and piano (1964), b) (much later) for baritone, synthesizer, electric organ, horn, and wind chime, c) for baritone, the same chamber ensemble and one actress (music theatre)." Radmio, Application for Membership, 7.

15 All quotations are from Sedak, *Vrijeme jednog skladatelja*.

16 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Za glasovir II*. (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1969).

tone range in the middle of the keyboard, expanding it gradually in order to gain the whole tone range of the instrument, from the highest tones to the dark murmur of the subcontra A, which appears and dies away at the very end of the piece. However, although the sound events do not seem to be connected to each other, this is not the case – the initial tone figure, which consists of fast hovering in the narrow tone range, returns again and again during the piece, functioning as a kind of axis, a centre or a measure for other figures. Its characteristic trait is an interval of the great third ( $d\sharp' / e\flat'-g'$ ), which appears for a moment as a vertical structure at the end of the first bar and is prolonged in bar 4 (see example 1).



Example 1: Marko Radmio, *For Piano II*, p. 1, lines 1–2.

Other figures that appear during the piece seem to be derived from the initial one, whether in the movement consisting of parallel thirds, an isolated sixth as an inverted interval of the third, a movement of the parallel sixths (the first step being the parallel sixths  $g'-e\flat''$  and  $f\sharp'-d''$  in the first lines of the piece), or just in the movement consisting of any parallel intervals (mostly of sevenths and ninths). The expansion of the tone range, like the course of the piece, does not proceed uniformly but in several sections, whereby every section has a characteristic, recognizable trait. The first section is marked by the initial figure in the initial position, in the middle of the tone range of the instrument. While the tone range of the initial figure expands with each repetition, the initial texture splits into different levels, at first into separate chords for the left and the right hand, then into three levels, with the parallel movements in the high, middle and the low piano registers. The appearance of a violent, rhythmically distinctive iambic figure in the low register of the instrument (see example 2) – which initiates the parallel movement in the sevenths and the ninths and where the left and right hands are widely separated – marks the beginning of the second section. The next one builds on this movement but introduces extreme exchanges of dynamics and the marked isolated tones, ending in long sustained chords in the low register.

It is with the return of the initial figure in the initial position, which initiates a new wave of intensification, that the fourth section begins, its central part consisting of a virtuosic passage towards the highest registers. The last two sections return to the initial tempo and are marked by a fast exchange of the initial figure and intensive movement in widely separated piano registers. During the last pages of the piece, the movement slowly subsides, becoming less intensive, splitting into long isolated tones that are from time to time interrupted by trills.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (lines 1-2) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The right hand starts with a melody in the treble register, while the left hand plays a bass line. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *(p)*, *(mpp)*, and *pp*. The second system (lines 3-4) features a more complex texture with triplets and a tempo change to *poco accelerando e stringendo* with *nagli crescendo*. Dynamics here include *sf* and *mp*. The piece concludes with a *subito f* section marked with a ring-like sign above the staff.

Example 2: Marko Radmio, *For Piano II*, p. 2, lines 1–2.<sup>17</sup>

Composed during approximately the same time period but not publicly performed for the first time until twenty years later – namely, at the concert of the *Europhonia* cycle in Zagreb – the piano piece *In the Range of Ballad (U domašaju balade)*<sup>18</sup> reveals already at the level of its material a proximity to the previous piece. Also here it is possible to find sound figures marked by iambic rhythm, virtuosic passages formed of sequences, and even the initial figure from the former piece appears, albeit in an episodic role. The course of the piece is also similar: derived from the initial texture, always-different sound figures arise until they reach a maximum of intensity, which is followed by the gradual release of tension. The initial uniformity of rhythm gradually changes, and there is a certain logic to this change: each new tone duration is shorter, like the quaver move already in bar 2 (see example 3), followed by the quaver triplet and the semiquavers. The rhythmically distinctive iambic figure gives the impetus to the next section of the piece, marked by the abandonment of the bar lines and the rise of intensity; the left and the right hand are far apart.

Each hand follows obsessively the iambic impulse and moves in parallel octaves or sevenths, imitating the other. The demisemiquaver appears as a new rhythmical unit, introducing the episode in which both the initial figure from the piece *For Piano II* and the virtuosic passage towards the highest registers of the instrument return. The iambic impulse interrupts it abruptly, and the imitative movement in widely separated registers continues, reaching a maximum of intensity.

<sup>17</sup> The designation *m. g.* in bar 3 is an abbreviation for the left hand (*main gauche*). The meaning of the ring-like sign in the last bar is not clear. It is probably a sign indicating soft pedal use.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Marko Radmio, *U domašaju balade* for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1969).

Example 3: Marko Radmio, *In the Range of Ballad*, p. 1, lines 1–2.

Afterwards, the iambic impulse gradually disappears, the note values become longer, and the long melodic phrases appear for the right hand. One of them runs to the higher registers, in order to repeat or even top the former climax but does not succeed in this. In the last two sections, the movement calms down; the melodic phrases appear in the longer note values (first in the crotchets, then in minims), gradually becoming a succession of chords. The quiet murmur in the lowest registers of the piano moves around the tone Eb, from time to time dwelling on it, foreshadowing the dark tonality of eb minor as the final destination (see example 4).

Example 4: Marko Radmio, *In the Range of Ballad*, p. 10, lines 5–6.<sup>19</sup>

19 The tone g in the right hand at the beginning of line 2 is written down in the manuscript as a dotted minim, but this duration would not suit the other tones. Therefore, its duration is here reduced to the minim. In the second line, the crotchet rest in the left hand (in brackets) is an editorial addition. Finally, the chord eb–g–bb in the left hand at the end of the second line, written down in the manuscript as a semibreve, is here reduced to the minim.

In the case of *Chiemsee*, a piece written originally for voice and piano and later arranged for voice and chamber ensemble (there is also a third, scenic version),<sup>20</sup> every predetermination of music could be put into brackets in order to foreground the poem. But the poem itself seems not to be something given in advance: Radmio pointed out that the poem was written alongside and in parallel with the music. Perhaps because of that, the piece consists of relatively independent episodes. The lyrical subject addresses Lake Chiemsee, which reminds him of another lake, the one near Berg Castle in which the unfortunate King Ludwig II of Bavaria ended his life under mysterious circumstances. Everything that follows is just details, predominantly acoustic ones, which bear witness to the uncanny landscape marked by Ludwig II's disappearance: the dark shadows, the rustling of the leaves, the dewdrops, the singing of the nuns, the sound of bells, silence. Consequently, the music is built as a succession of sections that correspond to the respective episodes of the poem. The poem itself consists of long free verses penned in Radmio's somewhat idiomatic German and written down in the score mostly without punctuation:

*Chiemsee Du bleiches totes Gewasser  
 Als ob es wäre der Bergersee  
 Dunkle Schatten ziehen am Waldesrande her und spähen nach den Tiefen, der  
 Königsleiche nach  
 Elfbeiner Glieder sinken immer tiefer in des Moores grauen Sand  
 Der Augenblitz verglomm für immer in den schwarzen Schädels Höhlen  
 und alles wird zum Eins im Schlamm, das Herz und die Locke, Sehnsucht und  
 Liebe, Bein und Arm, Gram und Haß  
 Und es ist so bitterkalt und öde  
 Das Grauen lastet über des Königs Ruhestätte  
 Und es wird Nacht  
 Der Saum des tiefen Dunkels verhüllt die Verborgenheit  
 Entlang des Ufers Buchten huscht das Geheimnis zwischen den Blättern  
 die zitternd beweinen das grausame Geschick!  
 Und die fallenden Tautropfen an der Sees düstren Fläche – es ist der letzte Gruß  
 dem König.  
 Und Nonnengesang da drüben beschließt das Ganze, und gibt Sinn und Ruhe  
 und Requiescant in pace singend verstummt auch diese Stimme bald  
 und paar Glockenschläge noch dazu  
 dann tritt die Grabesstille ein  
 Natur erstarrt auch überall  
 Und alles ist zu Ende  
 die Mär und das Leben.*

The end of each syntactic unit is at the same time the end of the respective musical section, with some of the sections connected through relatively long instrumental

20 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Chiemsee* for voice and piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1964). See above note 14.



interludes as a kind of echo of what was previously said. In the first of such interludes, after the mention of the *dark shadows*, the exchange of the monophonic phrases and the chords in the low registers seems to imitate the previous texture for voice and piano, as if it were its shadow. In the interlude, which follows the mention of the *secret that flies off between the leaves*, the rhythmically distinctive figures build cascades and sequences (see example 5).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a voice and piano piece. The top system is labeled 'Canto' and 'Piano'. The piano part features a series of triplet figures in the bass register, marked 'nagli crescendo'. The bottom system also shows 'Canto' and 'Piano' parts, with the piano part marked 'ff' and continuing the triplet-based rhythmic patterns. The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings.

Example 5: Marko Radmio, *Chiemsee*, version for voice and piano, beginning of the second interlude, p. 5, lines 2–3.

The third interlude appears before the last syntactic unit of the poem and begins with a kind of imitation of the bell sound (tones  $g'-db'-eb'$ ), with the exchange between the broken-chord figurations and the uniform movement of chords being reminiscent of a *choral* and tending to the major triad  $eb-g-bb$ .

However, the musical sections of the piece are not entirely unconnected to one other. While the vocal phrases frequently begin with a descending semi-tone, resembling a mournful litany (whereby the lines of the poem a good many times begin with the conjunction “and,” suggesting enumeration), the uniform movement of chords in crotchets, recalling a funeral march, seems to be the principal setting of the piano part, to which the music returns again and again. Finally, the music reveals also a certain sense in terms of tonality: while the opening sections move around the dark regions of f minor, c minor and – in the second interlude – f# minor, the final ones, particularly after the evocation of the nun’s singing, tend to the  $eb$  region (a tonal region of considerable importance for Radmio’s music in general), oscillating between the minor and the major.

Why did Radmio characterise these pieces as belonging to the *avant-garde*? If the music of the Modern Era started as a *stile rappresentativo*<sup>21</sup> – that is, as an art which *represents*, stages, enacts the subject as the founding centre of music, thus defining the music as a means to an end – Radmio’s music seems not to subscribe to such a programme. His music is rather ambivalent towards the determination of Modern Era music: on one hand, his music is defined by the categories of the Modern Era (music founded in subject), but on the other hand it maintains a certain distance towards this determination. Putting into brackets predeterminations like tonality, traditional syntactic structures and the respective musical forms, and, in doing so, keeping distance from the determination of music as a language, a medium of communication, this music suggests that music as such should not be equated with music founded in a subject and defined as a means to an end. However, when Radmio mentions the *avant-garde*, perhaps he is speaking about these pieces with something else in mind. These pieces are not just abandoning the Modern Era definition of music, keeping distance from the idea of tonality and of music as a kind of language; *at the same time* they have recourse to other foundations of music. Their suspension of *one* foundation does not mean that they are free of *any* foundation. All of the previously discussed pieces show a tendency towards *greatness* (of course, not absolute greatness but greatness in the realm of Radmio’s work), towards something that would finally be stable and solidly grounded, and they leave aside every ephemerality, everything that could distract music from the planned course. It is as if the manner in which these works are composed would reveal an attempt to derive the whole from the initial material, to reduce music to the *logical* development from one centre, which prefigures everything that succeeds. As if they were giving evidence of the will for a “total consolidation,”<sup>22</sup> as Morton Feldman characterised the efforts of the post-war musical *avant-garde*. To safeguard music from everything that is unknown and mysterious, to enter into *eternity* (that is, into History by finding recognition among music historians and within the Academy in general) thanks to knowledge of compositional technique – are these pieces not marked by this demonstrative gesture?

That being said, in the already-mentioned autobiographical document, Radmio explicitly stated that the musical itself should not be equated with the technical level of music. “Essentially the same criteria should be applied to the composer as to the poet or writer. Hence the very appropriate expression ‘Tondichter’ in German (an expression that, however, has completely disappeared from verbal practice).”<sup>23</sup> Did Radmio, despite the insight that the musical as such should not be reduced to knowledge and technical mastery (mentioning therefore the forgotten German term *Tondichter*, the tone poet, in which the essential characteristic of the musician’s profession seems to be still preserved), surrender in the previous discussed works? In other words, was he trying to join the others, the members of the *avant-garde*, to show that he was one of them? On the other hand, didn’t he, precisely as an *avant-garde* composer, gain access

21 Cf. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Musica ficta (Figures de Wagner)* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1991), 13.

22 “Total consolidation. Those two words define the new academy.” Morton Feldman, “Conversations without Stravinsky,” in *Essays*, ed. Walter Zimmermann (Kerpen: Beginner Press, 1985), 61.

23 Radmio, Application for Membership, 1.

to the concert halls and the radio shows, even to Music History, if only as a loner at the margins of music?

But in refusing to reduce the music as such to knowledge and compositional technique, to the question *how* a particular music is made, Radmio seems to sense that becoming an *anticipation* respectively a fully-fledged protagonist of Music History means at the same time the greatest danger for music itself, and therefore for his own music. To identify a particular music as *avant-garde* and other music as being a *thing of the past* means consuming both of them entirely, seeing them as something totally transparent. Identifying the music as one or the other implies considering the music as being of temporary interest, as something that is no longer interesting after the act of identifying, pigeon-holing, and labelling has been carried out. For this view, the music is just a kind of sign that allows one to recognise something that lies behind it, namely, its historical position, whereby the History is understood as a succession of discreet moments. Becoming an index of a particular moment of History, a particular music sees itself, at the same time, as having been relegated to the background, being just a *thing of the past*, like a used ticket. Just as the individual moment in such a conception of history has importance only until the next moment replaces it (thereby dwindling into nothing), so too is music in the sign (and *as* the sign) of History always already a *thing of the past*. To treat music as a sign of History therefore means to annihilate it.

Did Radmio have an inkling of such a danger? It seems that he tried to neutralise it in a certain way, mentioning in an autobiographical statement, besides his *avant-garde* music, also the other pieces within his oeuvre. Moreover, in his description, the music he considered to belong to the *avant-garde* does not appear in an honoured place, as it is mentioned neither at the beginning nor at the end. Radmio's description of his own work is indeed closer to a kind of suite, a succession of movements without a predetermined form, than to a development from one centre. Somewhat like the Chinese encyclopaedia mentioned by Borges,<sup>24</sup> Radmio's description contains categories like "greater things" (*veće stvari*) (which comprises a piece for piano and orchestra, an oratorio, a ballet for chamber ensemble and a relatively long piece for piano for four hands), "comprehensive pieces" (*omašne skladbe*) (this category includes piano cycles of programme movements or cycles of variations), "other pieces for solo piano" (*ostale skladbe za klavir solo*) (sonatas, études, nocturnes, variations), "suites and collections of preludes" (*suite i zbirke prehudija*) (albums of short piano pieces), the already-mentioned pieces of "avant-garde character," works for

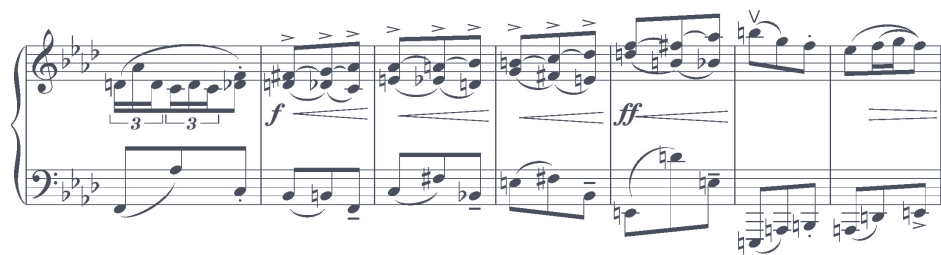
24 "These ambiguities, redundancies, and deficiencies recall those attributed by Dr. Franz Kuhn to a certain Chinese encyclopedia called the *Heavenly Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*. In its distant pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies." Jorge Luis Borges, "John Wilkins' Analytical Language," in *Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, transl. Esther Allen et al. (New York: Viking, 1999), 231. Of course, Borges' intention is not to show that this classification is false and that it should be changed for another one, allegedly correct and universally valid: "I have noted the arbitrariness of Wilkins, the unknown (or apocryphal) Chinese encyclopedist, and the Bibliographical Institute of Brussels; obviously there is no classification of the universe that is not arbitrary and speculative. The reason is quite simple: we do not know what the universe is." Borges, "John Wilkins' Analytical Language," 231.

“individual instruments” (*pojedini instrumenti*) (pieces for organ, a piano trio, pieces for violin and piano and for cello and piano), “vocal lyric pieces” (*vokalna lirika*), and finally “other” (*ostalo*), without closer determination.<sup>25</sup> Of all the sound recordings preserved in the phonoarchive of the Croatian Radio, just one piece (*Scherzo* for piano four hands, which is a part of a broad cycle) belongs to the category of “greater things”; Radmio includes three pieces (*Trois études*, *Three nocturnes*, the piano barcarolle *Chopin, which is not one*) under the category of “other pieces for solo piano”; the piano cycles consisting of five (*Railroad*, *The Well*, *Prelude*, *Some Moments Passed as in a Breath*, *Poskočnica dance*), respectively, seven movements (*One Year After...*, *L'air sonnante*, *Josephine Baker*, *Turning*, *Folklore Reminiscence*, *Prelude u Ab major*, *March*), together with the piece *Air espagnol*, are parts of the “suites and collections of preludes”; *The Desinić Elegy* for organ, two *Preludes* for cello and piano, as well as *Elegy* for the same ensemble, are works for “individual instruments”; the songs *An Unknown Song from an Unknown Port* and *Lamento* are, of course, “vocal lyric pieces”; and the composer includes under the category of his *avant-garde* works the piano piece titled *Lento cantabile*, together with the previously discussed pieces. Taking into consideration the portion of recorded music in each of the categories, the emphasis on the *avant-garde* works is remarkable.

In contrast to Radmio's *avant-garde* pieces, his works from other categories were often composed over a long period of time, whether because they include different movements collected through the years or because they achieved their final form many decades after the first sketches. In this part of Radmio's work, at least in the recorded pieces, it is barely possible to find something like an evolution of a musical idiom; rather, one sees that every single piece was a new beginning, something unique. Instead of a tendency towards *greatness* and an attempt to develop the whole from the initial musical material, these works are more playful and can allude to a particular familiar musical idiom. A piece can be identified as belonging to a particular genre or idiom, yet at the same time there is something in the work that exceeds this identification. Thus, the title of the *Orient étude*, the first of Radmio's piano études,<sup>26</sup> evokes a certain “oriental” atmosphere, but in the course of the piece it is barely possible to find something more than just a couple of augmented seconds (which was a stereotyped element for the depiction of the “oriental” scenes in 19<sup>th</sup>-century music). The interval of the augmented second (d $\flat$ –e, respectively, g $\flat$ –a) appears in the first phrases of the piece, being just a part of the harmonic minor scale, and immediately disappears. On the other hand, the metrical structure of the piece suggests the character of a waltz, though the slight irregularities of the succession of two-bar phrases which appear from time to time obstruct its dance character. Similarly ambivalent is also the relation towards tonality: while the key signatures suggest f minor and a minor, the musical course shows that neither is a useful description. Moreover, at the moment of culmination (while the notation suggests f minor; see example 6), and at the very end of the piece, the music unexpectedly drifts into the region of e minor, ending very far from the initial tonal region.

25 Cf. Radmio, Application for Membership, 2–8.

26 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Trois études* for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1933).



Example 6: Marko Radmio, *Orient étude for piano*, p. 3, line 2.

The characteristics of being marked by this inner split or “cut,” which essentially determines the respective entity, is even more remarkable in Radmio’s piano nocturnes.<sup>27</sup> The movement of the first one is so mechanical that it seems to be the embodiment of everything that runs counter to the typical musical idiom of a nocturne, but its character changes after the culmination point. Yet the nocturnal music of the last part of the work remains incommensurable not just with the beginning but also with most of the piece. The other two nocturnes begin in an atmosphere of perhaps the most famous nocturnes, playing with the wish to reduce them to something familiar (“this is something like Chopin”), but in the middle section, they drift towards a rather faraway land. While the second nocturne, in a reprise, returns not to the initial e $\flat$  minor, ending instead in b minor, the third nocturne, with the subtitle *As in a Dream (Kao u snu)*, moves just slightly from the initial atmosphere. The most distinctive change in this relatively static music comes just before the beginning of the reprise, with the odd step in the left hand moving to the tones D–C $\sharp$  in the low register (see example 7), which are extreme in relation to the previous course of the piece as well as to the rest of it. It is as if this dreamlike music found itself upon a threatening abyss.



Example 7: Marko Radmio, *Nocturne No. 3, “As in a Dream,” for piano*, p. 2, line 4.<sup>28</sup>

Such discreet gestures appear also in the elegiacal *Prelude* for cello and piano.<sup>29</sup> From the very beginning of the piece, its tonal foundation is much clearer than elsewhere in Radmio’s music (which, if there is a recognisable tonal centre at all, tends

27 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Tri nokturna* for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1937–1941). The signir, rukopis u sklad1941.tged for another one, ion is sign for their the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

28 The designation *ev.* in the penultimate bar probably relates to the semiquaver rest and the preceding semiquaver.

29 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Preludij za cello i klavir* (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1976).

towards minor keys in general), but already the first piano phrase, through the simultaneity of the tonic and dominant functions, indicates a certain ambivalence: the tonality is indeed specified, but at the same time it is left vague. Also the climax of the piece is divided. The cello achieves it through the ecstatic impetus to the highest register, leaving behind its previous cantilena as it moves through the development. As soon as the cello returns to it, the piano suddenly cancels participation in communal play and starts to repeat the fourth  $e_b''-ab''$ , in order to prepare itself for its own climax. The piano stays discreetly distanced until the very end of the piece, exposing in the low register the tones E–D–A, which indeed suggest the initial key of e minor, but in such depths that every tonal determination seems to become vague.

In contrast to that vagueness, the *abyss* in the piano piece *Lento cantabile*<sup>30</sup> seems to be much more frightening. After the calm first part, marked by the multiple repetition and variation of the initial situation, built on the pedal tone contra B, to which, each time, the other *mixtures* are added, the music changes its metre and suddenly moves in the other direction. The indication in the score at this place suggests that the character of the music is that of a “dancing swing, which borders on banality” (*tänzelndes an Banalität grenzendes Wiegen*) (see example 8).

Example 8: Marko Radmio, *Lento cantabile* for piano, p. 2, line 3.

The strong dynamic impetus and wide distance between the left and the right hand, with the second (i.e. right) hand often moving in parallel sixths or great thirds or exposing the sequential or ornamental figures, resembles the sound intensive sections of other of Radmio's *avant-garde* pieces; here, however, the distance towards the initial situation is more drastic and the music seems to go crazy, as if a frightening gap had opened in its heart. The development runs to the climax, with the hands maximally distanced from each other, reaching the chord  $b-d\#-f-a$ . Thereafter the texture just dissolves into isolated tones, in order to slip into silence (see example 9).

30 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Lento cantabile* for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1961).

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calmato

Tempo primo

subito *p*

das noch unbeholfene zuerst sich zurechtfindenmüssende calmato

*pp*

Example 9: Marko Radmio, *Lento cantabile for piano*, p. 4, lines 1–4.<sup>31</sup>

The piece has two variants: while the first one is shorter and includes just a shortened reprise of the initial sound constellation, the second one returns after the reprise once more to the *abyss*, this time, however, safely and from a distance, animating the initial texture through the movement of the inner lines, like a reminiscence of a wound that cannot heal. Should the *avant-garde* character of this piece be sought in the very depth of its frightening *abyss*?

Distancing himself in an autobiographical statement even from the term *composer*, Radmio argues that the term reduces music to knowledge, to the technique of calculated

31 The meaning of the sign in the left hand in bars 5 and 6, with the square brackets, is not clear. Perhaps it just shows the grouping of the tones.

effects (and affects) that have been institutionalised through schools and academia in general – that is, the institutions where solely the technique of music is taught, with the premise that the technique of musical composition equals music as such. In contrast to that, in the term *tone poet* there still resonates the essential trait of music, which is as forgotten as the term itself – that is why Radmio used “tone poet” when speaking about himself. However, the very term “tone poem” (*Tondichtung*), if it should designate what the tone poet does, had a similar destiny: in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it had been used as a term for a certain kind of music, even more, for a musical genre. Since the apposite musical works were composed for an orchestral setting, as a rebirth of symphonism after the presupposed *death* of the symphony, Franz Liszt, the first composer of such “tone poems,” called them “symphonic poems” (*symphonische Dichtungen*).<sup>32</sup> This reductive meaning resonates, perhaps, in Radmio’s gesture of remembering the term. Taken as “tone poems,” his works could be indeed seen as belonging to the aesthetic category of “programme music.” His pieces have mostly *programme* titles, evoking a particular scene, location or atmosphere, even if the location evoked is an unknown land, like in the song *An Unknown Song from an Unknown Port* (*Nepoznata pjesma iz nepoznate luke*).<sup>33</sup> What else could evoke the freely-composed syllables (written by Radmio himself) and the static music built on the multiple repetitions of a pentatonically sounding phrase based on the tone sequence b–a–f#?

But Radmio did not call himself a *tone poet* just because he composed programme music but also because of the fact that he composed music at all. What do his pieces, taken into consideration as *tone poems*, reveal? Perhaps it is not by chance that his works – with the exception of his *avant-garde* pieces – are marked by a certain cut that suddenly changes the tone. And that is the case from the very first works, like the short piano piece titled *The Well* (*Bunar*), written down when Radmio was just seventeen years old,<sup>34</sup> until the last ones, like the prelude with the title *L’air sonnante*, a piece composed in June 1980.<sup>35</sup> While in the first one the cut appears not far from the beginning – as the fast descending passage in bar 5, after which the music becomes suddenly stabilised, as if the passage were guiding it in another direction – in the piece *L’air sonnante* (which is perhaps a reminiscence of Radmio’s own youthful publication),<sup>36</sup> the cut appears near the end and, so to speak, from an opposite direction: as if the fracture

32 The very history of this term is marked by the forgetting of that which is poetically irreducible, in favour of compositional technique or knowledge. Already at the beginning of the Modern Era the poetical with respect to music has been understood as something ontic, as a name for the ability to invent a melody in contrast to composition based on the rules (cf. Rainer Schmusch, “Symphonische Dichtung,” in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht et al. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), 1). Later it was used to characterise the compositional invention of the genius in contrast to the prosaic mediocrity of the craftsman (cf. Schmusch, “Symphonische Dichtung,” 5). Consequently, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term *symphonic poem* designated a musical work composed after a literary source, but having also the surplus of touching the spheres considered inaccessible to poetry, in contrast to the musical work composed after the traditional musical schemes (cf. Schmusch, “Symphonische Dichtung,” 10).

33 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Nepoznata pjesma iz nepoznate luke* (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1961).

34 Cf. Marko Radmio, *Bunar* (*Der Brunnen*) for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1927).

35 Cf. Marko Radmio, *L’air sonnante* for piano (Manuscript in the Marko Radmio Fonds, Croatian Music Institute, Zagreb, 1980).

36 In his almanac Radmio mentioned Busoni’s idea of music as “sounding air” (*tönende Luft*) being, as such, “free” (Ferruccio Busoni, *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, reprint of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), 11). Cf. Radmio, *Dolje mrtva umjetnost!*, 43.



were growing unseen until it suddenly changed the course of the piece. The first part of the piece is, namely, based on the tones of the whole tone scale (c–e–g $\flat$ –a $\flat$ –b $\flat$ ) in the middle register of the piano, whereby the longer basic tones are ornamented by the fast triplet figures (see example 10).

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a whole note chord (C4, E4, G4) and a triplet of eighth notes (C4, E4, G4). The second staff continues with a similar texture, adding a bass line. The third staff shows further development with more complex chords and triplets. Each staff begins with 'm. s. pausa'.

Example 10: Marko Radmio, *L'air sonnante* for piano, p. 1, lines 1–2.

From the initial situation the two-voice texture has been gradually differentiated (the first step occurs on the last beat of bar 2), the bass tone appears, followed by the parallel melodic line, thickened gradually through thirds, sixth chords and four-two chords. But appearing already in bar 2 is the tone g', which is external to the initial whole tone scale, and is followed by the tone e $\flat$ ' in bar 4. The two tones build not just a sixth g'–e $\flat$ ' in bar 5, but soon also the chord e $\flat$ –g–b $\flat$ . Once the melodic formations, which have arisen from the initial situation, have been consolidated by the triple meter, the music suddenly dismisses the whole tone scale, like a snake which has shed its skin, and conforms to the gravitational field of E $\flat$  major, resembling the choral texture built of voices regulated by the rules of classical harmony. It is as if the tone of *modern* music had unexpectedly turned into the tone of Bach's choral played on piano, a scene which embodies the academic instruction of harmony!

Does not the *poetic* trait of Radmio's music lie precisely in this cut? Is his music not marked by a "caesura"<sup>37</sup> of the type mentioned by Hölderlin, by a cut which gives poetry the possibility to be a witness to the incompleteness? It seems that even those works of Radmio which tend to completeness, to greatness, his *avant-garde* works, are marked by such a cut. Thus, the piece *For Piano II* ends having conquered indeed the whole keyboard of the instrument, but at the cost of the disintegration of texture into isolated sound events, as if the music had fallen into an abyss. In the case of the piano piece *In the Range of Ballad*, an attempt to gain unity through the development of the initial material will end in a long, gloomy vanishing. And *Chiemsee*? Is it not a piece in which one ambience has been recognised as another? Is it not a kind of requiem, after the tragedy had already happened? Is it not dedicated to the unfortunate king who

37 Friedrich Hölderlin, "Anmerkungen zum Oedipus," in *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in drei Bänden*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2008), 850.

believed that art was the true and only life, and everything else just its shadow? A shadow, which the king tried to escape as far as possible, until he found his end in lacustrine silt.<sup>38</sup> It seems that Radmio, living in his own world of art surrounded by prosaic reality (including schools of music which euthanise music, reducing it to knowledge, technique, calculation), could thoroughly identify with the unfortunate king. Radmio tore himself free of the clamps connecting him to prosaic reality. Writing the verses for *Chiemsee*, did he not – like King Ludwig II's ideal and *mimetic rival*<sup>39</sup> Richard Wagner – attempt to turn the whole of reality, including his own life, into art? Finally, did not Radmio reduce the life of Marko Kiš to almost nothing?

But the discussed cut in Radmio's pieces seems itself to be reduced to something present, as if it should show itself just in certain pieces of music, at the identifiable place. Such a cut would be a subject of calculation, of compositional technique, just as Hölderlin wrote when mentioning the various combinations of the “change of tone.” Did Radmio sense the other tone in the case of the cut itself, which reveals its own incompleteness? The photograph of Radmio with the half-burned cigarette in his mouth seems to suggest that his solitude was not just the solitude of a single person, but also the solitude of a writer. To imply or even to recognise the character and reason for his solitude – to treat it like an indication of something – means to convert it into an *inclination*, to understand it as an unrealised possibility, as something that could or should have taken place but that was thwarted by some obstacle. Such a solitude is understood just as a loneliness: Marko Kiš wanted to be with someone (with whom?), but could not do so or was not supposed to do so; because of that his art has to be understood as a means of flight into a world in which he could feel free to be what he was. When Blanchot, speaking of solitude, says that *someone is there, where I am alone*, the previous discussion of solitude, which presumes solitude to be equal to loneliness, would recognise in this *someone* the outline of a certain person. According to this view, nobody is alone because he is always already thrown into the world.

38 Thus, in the interpretation of Hans Mayer, King Ludwig II's idea of art as the true and only life has to be coupled with some *obstacles*: “Ludwig hatte ein Traumleben im Todestraum gipfeln lassen, der in die Wirklichkeit übergeleitet wurde: wie alles in dieser Existenz eines Königs, die stets formale Existenz gewesen war und zu sein hatte. Dreifache Einsamkeit: *die formale Existenz eines Königs; eines Künstlers*, der nicht schaffen kann, es sei denn in seinen Architekturträumen; *eines Homosexuellen*, der König ist und Katholik, also kein Doppelleben zu führen vermag. Verlaines Sonett läßt ahnen, daß der Dichter manches davon spürte. Er selbst hatte die bürgerliche Integration ebenso versucht wie die skandalöse Nichtintegration. Beides war mißlungen; beim ersten Experiment hatte er Frau und Kind verloren, beim zweiten den unvergeßlichen Rimbaud. Doch mit der dritten Möglichkeit, dem Todesrausch, hatte er stets nur gespielt. Neben der verzweifelt angestrebten Gleichschaltung und dem provozierten Skandal ist der *Todesrausch eine rare, dritte Möglichkeit der homosexuellen Existenz* im bürgerlichen Puritanismus des 19. Jahrhunderts.” (Ludwig crowned his dreamy life with the dream of death turned to the reality, like everything in his existence, which always was and had to be formal existence. Threefold solitude: *the formal existence of a king; of an artist*, who cannot create, be it in his dreams of an architecture; *of a homosexual*, who is a king and a Catholic, and therefore cannot live a double life. Verlaine's sonnet [dedicated to King Ludwig] hints that the poet sensed much of this. He himself tried to integrate into the civil life, as well as, through scandals, not to integrate. Both failed; in the first experiment, he lost his wife and his child, and in the second he lost the unforgettable Rimbaud. But with the third possibility, death-rapture, he had always only played around. Besides conformity he desperately sought and the scandal he provoked, *death-ecstasy is a rare, third possibility of homosexual existence* within the bourgeois puritanism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”) Mayer, *Außenseiter*, 250.

39 On King Ludwig II's “mimetic rivalry” towards the artist, see Dalibor Davidović, “Filmfuge,” in *Music Cultures in Sounds, Words and Images: Essays in Honor of Zdravko Blažeković*, ed. Antonio Baldassarre and Tatjana Marković (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2018), 91. On the other hand, it is known that Wagner had by no means been deprived of the statesman's ambitions, and it is also known that he had a tendency to aestheticize his own life, particularly in the later years – consider his need for *beautiful things*, attested to in his correspondence with Judith Gautier. Cf. Richard Wagner, and Cosima Wagner, *Lettres à Judith Gautier*, ed. Léon Guichard (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

Because of that, in his solitude the others are always already implied, whether they are specified (for example, as mother, father, etc.) or not. But this is not the only tone of Blanchot's sentence, since this *someone* must not be understood just as another person, but could also be something *in* myself, in me as a single person. As something impersonal, general, but unknown at the same time. "Quelqu'un est le Il sans figure, le On dont on fait partie, mais qui en fait partie? Jamais tel ou tel, jamais toi et moi. Personne ne fait partie du On. 'On' appartient à une région qu'on ne peut amener à la lumière, non parce qu'elle cacherait un secret étranger à toute révélation, ni même parce qu'elle serait radicalement obscure, mais parce qu'elle transforme tout ce qui a accès à elle, même la lumière, en l'être anonyme, impersonnel, le Non-vrai, le Non-réel et cependant toujours là. Le 'On' est, sous cette perspective, ce qui apparaît au plus près, quand on meurt."<sup>40</sup> Even when I am alone, this anonymous, impersonal They (*On*) is always already there, precisely because it is not a certain being but something that lets me appear as a being, something radically unknown, which eludes every time when I try to bring it into the light.

But also Radmio's work, dedicated mostly to piano, an instrument of a solitary person, seems to testify that for him an act of composing was always anew listening to the unknown, the unknown beyond every technique and calculation, even if it was forgotten from time to time in a striving to something definite, united and developed from the one. Radmio the composer allowed anything to enter to his work, from the poet's lines to film, as evinced by his pieces (for example, the *Orient* evoked by the respective étude or the Hispanic atmosphere of his piece *Air espagnol* could be just cinematographic fantasies) as well as by his writings; his almanac concludes with an essay that reveals the passionate cinema-goer.<sup>41</sup> In his horizons, there was a place for the poet Heine,<sup>42</sup> for the tragic King Ludwig II, for Busoni the visionary, as well as for Greta Garbo, the "phenomenal acting individual."<sup>43</sup> His listening seems to be always singular, a listening to every single event as such, welcoming it – with love. Is this not something that makes his work less avant-garde and at the same time more avant-garde than any avant-garde? Perhaps it is therefore no coincidence that Radmio, from a lecture by a famous – avant-garde – composer, noticed and remembered his words, years later mentioning them in one of his rare public appearances as a writer: "In his very precious lecture held at the first Zagreb Biennial, Stockhausen said that in judging and relating to music one should relate to it as to the beloved one (*kao prema ljubavi*)."<sup>44</sup> One artist uttered what the other one already knew, always.<sup>45</sup>

40 Maurice Blanchot, *L'espace littéraire*, 27–28. In Ann Smock's translation: "Someone is the faceless third person, the They of which everybody and anybody is part, but who is part of it? Never anyone in particular, never you and I. Nobody is part of the They. 'They' belongs to a region which cannot be brought to light, not because it hides some secret alien to any revelation or even because it is radically obscure, but because it transforms everything which has access to it, even light, into anonymous, impersonal being, the Nontrue, the Nonreal yet always there. The 'They' is, in this respect, what appears up very close when someone dies."

41 Cf. Radmio, *Dolje mrtva umjetnosti!*, 44.

42 Cf. Radmio, *Dolje mrtva umjetnosti!*, 27.

43 Radmio, *Dolje mrtva umjetnosti!*, 47.

44 Radmio, "Marginalije uz jednu desetgodišnjicu," 17. The expression "kao prema ljubavi" can be translated both "as to the beloved one" and "as to the love." In the first case it is ambiguous in relation to gender: like the "beloved one" in English, "ljubav" can imply both the female and the male individual, but also non-human beings.

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## POVZETEK

Na ime Marka Radmija (1910–1996) naletimo ob nekaj kritičnih in zgodovinskih prikazih zgodovine kompozicije v 20. stoletju na Hrvaškem, in sicer kot primer »avantgardnega« skladanja, ki se začne na »marginah«. Razumevanje Radmiovega komponiranja kot »avantgardnega« so pospešile okoliščine, v katerih se je njegova glasba izvajala, tudi sam skladatelj je bil naklonjen takšni razlagi in se je bolj nagibal k »narrativu« o zgodovinskem razvoju glasbe, v katerem »outsiderska« prizadevanja v resnici »anticipirajo« kasnejše stanje. Hkrati ga je Radmio,

sluteč posledice, ki jih prinaša takšno razumevanje glasbe, skušal tudi nevtralizirati s pomočjo argumenta, da muzikalno nikakor ne gre izenačevati s tehnično platjo glasbe. Namesto izraza »skladatelj«, v katerem je razpoznal takšno enačenje, je Radmio, ko je govoril o sebi, raje izbral pozabljeni nemški izraz *Tondichter* (»pesnik tonov«), v katerem se je še ohranilo bistvo glasbene vokacije. V prispevku avtor raziskuje, kakšne posledice ima takšna sprememba za glasbo Radmija in njegovo misel o glasbi. Pri tem odkriva dvojen pomen reza oziroma cezure, v enaki meri v njegovem glasbenem opusu kot tudi v njegovi eksistenci.