

NOISM

Sveska #01

Tekst **Skica za jednu fenomenologiju improvizovane muzike** je prvi put objavljen u izdanju Boris Kovač, NOVI RITUAL: jedno poetičko mišljenje (nove) muzike. (Niš: SKC, 1990), 59–70.

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**Fragmenti o savremenosti
i sjevremenosti
improvizovane muzike**

**Fragments of the Contemporary
and Contemporaneity of
Improvised Music**

Fragmenti o savremenosti i svevremenosti improvizovane muzike

Napisi o improvizovanoj muzici danas nisu ni retki, ni nedostupni, ali se ipak čini da je malo referentnih tekstova uz koje bi pristup ovoj temi mogao da nadraste skup raspršenih pogleda i pretpostavi neki kolektivno zasnovan stav. Značenjska neuhvatljivost improvizacije jeste deo njene (društvene) prirode. Međutim, improvizovana muzika nije lišena *logosa*, baš kao ni *te/a*. Njeno biće traži mišljenje, i to dijalektičku otvorenost pre nego čvrstu kodifikaciju. Namera da se ostvari prožimajući susret različitih, a opet, idejno komplementarnih uvida u pitanja improvizovane muzike rezultirala je uparivanjem tekstova koji svedoče o srodnom interesovanju, dubokoj zapitanosti nad istim fenomenom, ali i različitim pozicijama sa kojih se kreće u promišljanje njegovog predmeta.

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U vreme kada sam pisao tekst „Istorijska svest slobodne improvizacije“ nisam bio upoznat sa knjigom Borisa Kovača „Novi ritual“; pa tako ni sa poglavljem te knjige pod naslovom „Skica za jednu fenomenologiju improvizovane muzike“. Da jesam, svoj tekst bih napisao drugačije, možda upravo razvijajući Borisove motive ili polemišući sa stavovima koje iznosi. Nakon što sam pročitao ovu izuzetno zanimljivu i sugestivnu knjigu iznenadila me je spoznaja da lokalna scena na kojoj improvizovana muzika postoji više od četiri decenije, ali koja ipak nema razvijenu tradiciju u smislu refleksije sopstvene povesti, uopšte podstiče na pisanje koje prelazi granice prigodnog komentara. Filozofska uopštavanja i obuhvatna muzikološka tumačenja obično predstavljaju poslednje stanice na putu žanrovski diferencirane spisateljske aktivnosti i raznovrsnog beleženja u otvorenom komunikacionom polju. Ne tvrdim da je takvo beleženje u potpunosti izostalo u ovom slučaju, ali smatram da su Kovačev i moj tekst u manjoj meri artikulacije kolektivne „misaone klime“, a više produkti ličnih orijentacija.

Daleko od bilo kakve idejne ili metodološke samoniklosti, i Kovač i ja nastojimo da improvizovanu muziku definišemo, smestimo u određeni kontekst i tipološki razvrstamo. Kao što naslovom sugeriše, Kovač svoju „skicu“ razvija na bazi ličnog iskustva, dok ja konsultujem, ako ne opsežnu, a ono bar relevantnu literaturu u nastojanju da pribavim argumente za svoju tezu. Generacijska

distanca između dva autora ispoljava se na različite načine. (Ne treba izgubiti iz vida da je Kovačeva knjiga pisana krajem 80-ih i objavljena početkom 90-ih godina 20. veka, dok moj tekst datira iz druge polovine druge decenije 21. veka.) Stoga ne čudi što između redova Kovačevog teksta provejava duh postmodernog mišljenja, dok je moja pozicija bliža ambivalentnoj nostalgiji za modernizmom. Iako Kovač improvizovanu muziku misli šire od savremenog fenomena tzv. *free impro music*, koji je kod mene u fokusu, pojam slobode konstitutivan je kako za njegov, tako i za moj horizont razumevanja.

Različita usmerenja naša dva pristupa reflektuju se u tome što Kovač improvizaciju razmatra kao arhetipsku, univerzalnu, ritualnu i antropološki determinisanu praksu – svakako i istorijski određenu, ali po svojoj prirodi ipak transistorijsku – dok je moj cilj bio da pokažem kako improvizacija koja pokušava da se emancipuje od istorijskih nanosa i konvencija postaje izrazito podložna oblikotvornim mehanizmima „kanona zabrane“ kao svojevršnim manifestacijama istorijske svesti. Ako je Kovač ponudio optimističnu mistifikaciju improvizovane muzike, kod mene je na delu pesimistična demistifikacija. Ključna razlika u tumačenju improvizacije kao savremene muzičke prakse ogleda se u tome što Kovač improvizaciju odlučno razdvaja od aleatorike i izvođaštva, a pridružuje kompoziciji, smatrajući da i jednoj i drugoj u osnovi stoji – stvaralačka namera. Kao što je poznato, Boris Kovač je bliskost između kompozicije i improvizacije „dokazao“ i u sopstvenoj stvaralačkoj praksi, postavši jedan od istaknutijih kompozitora svoje generacije. S druge strane, kao neko ko je studirao kompoziciju, lično zastupam stav da kompozicija i improvizacija stoje u zaoštrenom, čak i međusobno podrivajućem odnosu, te da je duh participativnosti i emancipacije koji slobodnu improvizaciju čini privlačnom ljudima različitih profila, senzibiliteta i nivoa muzičkog obrazovanja, zasnovan na mogućnostima uživanja u stvaralačko-istraživačkom estetskom ponašanju i bez jasno profilisane umetničke namere.

Bilo da se čitalačka pažnja fokusira na konvergentne ili divergentne misaone tokove u tekstovima „Skica za jednu fenomenologiju improvizovane muzike“ i „Istorijska svest slobodne improvizacije“, verujem da će rezultirati novim dijaloškom impulsom i nekim budućim priložima teorijskoj praksi improvizacije.

Fragments of the Contemporary and Contemporaneity of Improvised Music

Writings on improvised music are neither rare nor inaccessible today, but there are a few reference texts helpful in overcoming a great variety of views on this topic and in taking a collective approach. The signifying elusiveness of improvisation is part of its (social) nature. Improvised music, however, is not devoid of *logos* or *Eros*. Its existence seeks contemplation and, more specifically, dialectical openness rather than firm codification. The intention to achieve a pervasive encounter of different, yet conceptually complementary insights into the issues of improvised music has resulted in a pairing of texts that testify to a similar interest and deep questioning of the same phenomenon, though employing different starting points in the process.

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At the time when I was writing the text “The Historical Consciousness of Free Improvisation,” I was not familiar with the book *A New Ritual* by Boris Kovač and the chapter “Sketch for a Phenomenology of Improvised Music.” If I had been, I would have written my text differently, perhaps by developing Boris’s concepts, or by contesting his views. After reading this extremely interesting and evocative book, I was surprised to learn that the local scene of improvised music, which has existed for more than four decades, but which does not have a developed tradition of reflection on its own history, encourages writing that goes beyond the limits of mere commentary. Philosophical generalizations and comprehensive musicological interpretations are usually the last stop on the genre-differentiated path of composition and heterogeneous recording in an open communication field. I do not claim that such a record is completely absent in this case, but I believe that both texts are less of an articulation of the collective intellectual climate and more a product of personal orientation.

Far from any conceptual or methodological autochthony, both Kovač and I strive to define improvised music, place it in a specific context, and classify it typologically. As the title suggests, Kovač develops his “sketch” based on personal experience, while I consult, if not extensively, then at least the most relevant literature to obtain arguments for my thesis. The generation gap between the two authors is represented in different ways. (One

should not lose sight of the fact that Kovač's book was written in the late 1980s and published in the early 1990s, while my text dates from the second half of the second decade of the 21st century). It is therefore no wonder that Kovač's text is permeated by the spirit of postmodern thinking, while my position is closer to an ambivalent nostalgia for modernism. Although Kovač defines improvised music more broadly than the contemporary phenomenon of *free impro music* (which is my focus), the idea of freedom is constitutive for both horizons of understanding.

The difference between our approaches is reflected in the fact that Kovač considers improvisation as an archetypal, universal, ritual and anthropologically determined practice – historically defined, but nonetheless, essentially trans-historical – while my aim was to demonstrate that improvisation, in trying to emancipate itself from historical layers and conventions, becomes extremely susceptible to the formative mechanisms of the “prohibitive Canon” as a kind of manifestation of historical consciousness. If Kovač offered an optimistic interpretation of improvised music, it is a pessimistic demystification at work in my case. The key difference in interpreting improvisation as a contemporary musical practice is in Kovač's decisive separation of improvisation from aleatoric music and performance, and its association with composition, as they are presumably both based on creative intent. As is well known, Boris Kovač “proved” the connection between composition and improvisation in his own creative practice, becoming one of the most prominent composers of his generation. On the other hand, as someone who has studied composition, I believe that composition and improvisation have an intense, even mutually undermining relationship, while the spirit of participation and emancipation, based on the ability to enjoy in a creative and aesthetic experience without clearly profiled artistic intent, makes free improvisation appealing to people of different backgrounds, sensibilities, and levels of music education.

Whether the reader's attention focuses on convergent or divergent thought patterns in the “Sketch for a Phenomenology of Improvised Music” and “The Historical Consciousness of Free Improvisation,” I believe it will result with a new dialogic impulse and some fresh contributions to the theoretical practice of improvisation.

Nemanja Sovtić

Skica za jednu fenomenologiju improvizovane muzike¹

Ako o svakom predmetu valja primereno njemu misliti, tada će ovo hermenautičko pravilo kad je u pitanju improvizacija u muzici glasiti: treba misliti improvizovano. Fenomen koji, u savremenom kontekstu počiva na težnji da se izbegne opsesivna tehnološka potreba za redom i organizacijom, ne može, kao problem, biti organizovan po uzoru na većinu predmeta našeg razumevanja. Priroda improvizacije je u njenoj nesvodljivosti na unapred zadatu konstrukciju, njen je tok i karakter produktivno neizvestan. To znači: produktivnost improvizacije je u njenoj neizvesnosti, nefiksiranosti. Ovo, ipak, ne znači da se mišljenje o takvom predmetu mora ostaviti bez ikakvog plana i pretpostavki. Činjenica da se krećemo u jezičkom okviru nameće potrebu utvrđivanja osnovnih pojmovnih koordinata kao minimalnog uslova razumevanja. Problem „muzike improvizacije“ ovde ćemo shvatiti u užem i širem smislu. U užem će se odnostiti na svaku muziku koja sasvim ili jednim svojim delom nastaje u relativno slobodnom, unapred nefiksiranom načinu muziciranja koje nazivamo improvizacijom. Tu se ne misli ni na jedan određeni muzički žanr, oblik, niti istorijski kontekst. U širem smislu pitanje improvizacije shvatam kao paradigmu za jedan umetnički koncept, koji se, u vremenu sveošte tehnologizacije života pa i umetnosti, nudi kao alternativa ponovnim otkrivanjem izvornog igračkog spontaniteta kao bitne pretpostavke slobodnog ljudskog produkovanja. Improvizacija je u tom smislu povod za problematizovanje civilizacijske intencije da tehnologija bude nova, savršena i fiksirana priroda. Tako okamenjena priroda je, u svom krajnjem ishodu, ostvarenje utopističke vizije smrti umetnosti, rastvaranje umetnosti u čistoj, apstraktnoj duhovnosti koja više ne komunicira sa prirodom, već jedino sama sa sobom.

Uz ogradu da se ovde ne povlađuje romantičnom antitehnologizmu, želim predočiti jedan širi plan na koji fenomen improvizacije baca svetlo. Utoliko se tema improvizovane muzike može shvatiti kao jedna od mogućnosti dijaloga o umetnosti danas, a

¹ Termin improvizovana muzika preuzeo sam kao već upotrebljavan u našoj muzičkoj literaturi, iako ovde nije reč o tome da je muzika improvizovana, već da je to muzika koja nastaje improvizacijom.

ne samo kao pitanje specifikacije jednog umetničkog postupka u odnosu na druge. Daleko od pretenzije da se u improvizaciji može pronaći obrazac za rešenje svih bitnih pitanja koja umetnost našeg vremena postavlja, ona je kao alternativni, subverzivni fenomen jedan od elemenata na kome se može zasnovati predstava autentične umetnosti.

Računajući sa mogućnošću uopštavanja i uprošćavanja, može se konstatovati da muzička kompozicija dvadesetog veka ima jednu izrazito tonsku nijansu, a to je njena intelektualnost. Ona ima svoje prednosti i mane, ali uostalom bitnu, neporecivu istorijsku zasnovanost. Ovom relativno novom bojom, ona proširuje paletu svojih izražajnih mogućnosti u jednom pravcu koji je čini ravnopravijom literaturi i nauci. Muzika prestaje biti pošteđen rezervat sentimentalnosti, što je uglavnom bila u svojoj klasičnoj i romantičarskoj fazi. Ona se priključuje nauci i tehnologiji u svojoj težnji da se zasnuje na nečem čvršćem od osećanja, u nastojanju da se vremenu revolucija dâ jedna revolucionarna nova muzika. Sama ideja da se muzika može izgraditi kao sistem baziran na mislenim pretpostavkama za Šenberga je značila preokret, a za mnoge, iza njega, težnju da slede tu liniju preokreta. Tehnologija postupka je, naravno, uvek bila bitna za umetnost pa i za muziku, ali od tog momenta ona je postala dominantna. Vreme u kome nova religija naučnog duha teži da začepi sve rupe čovekovog broda u svemiru, vreme u kom analitička filozofija odbija svaki dijalog izvan onog koji se može provesti na logičke i brojne odnose, vreme je u kom i muzika pokušava da matematički organizuje ono što je do juče bila stvar osećaja i intuicije. „Revolucionar“ se na kraju počeo predomišljati ali „revolucionari“ su nastavili još idalje i još gore... Muzika se počela stvarati za pisačim stolom i za laboratorijskim pultom. Sve ostalo je značilo anahronizam, naivni realizam i jednostavno nije bilo povrtka u tom velikom čišćenju od svega ljudskog, svega što nije mentalna sposobnost manipulacije u okviru aksiomatski datog sistema elemenata. Serijalizam je, naravno, kao i svaka igra sa fiksiranim strogim pravilima vodio svom zasićenju. Totalna organizovanost je počela da liči na svoju dijametralnu suprotnost-neorganizovanost, haos i besmisao.

Prazna apstraktnost ovakve muzike bila je posledica negiranja bilo kakve prirodno-istorijske osnove na kojoj se bazira muzički jezik. Upravo je reč o tome da se ovaj jezik mogao proizvoljno izmišljati bez odnosa prema bilo čemu, sem prema strogim formalnim pravilima, koja su nužna da bi to opšte i bio

nekakav jezik. Ova se igra vremenom zasitila same sebe, ali je dala pečat celoj epohi. Muzika je postala apstraktnija i svaki drugačiji pokušaj ličio je na romantizam u okretanju pogleda unazad. Takvo stanje je pospešila i pojava elektronske muzike koja je, naravno, rođena kao dete nauke i tehnologije, više ličila na malog robota nego na čoveka. U toj situaciji je sve izgledalo kao trijumf „ljudskog“ duha, ali taj duh je u svemu ostao prazan i nastupila je dosada... Čovek, čini se, ipak nije stvoren za savršenstvo, njemu su nedostatnosti neophodan uslov kretanja. Istorija ne može unazad, ali je očigledno da ide kružno, poput spirale. Tako se otvorio novi krug koji uzima u obzir, ali i dovodi u pitanje sve prethodno. U tom krugu prepoznajemo i muziku improvizacije, minimalizma, novu jednostavnost, rok, džez itd., šarenilo boja koje čine jedno izuzetno raznovrsno vreme muzike u kome živimo. U tom kontekstu treba shvatiti i ovo razmišljanje o improvizaciji.

Pre svega, valja da preciznije odredim šta pod ovom pojmom podrazumevam. Počnimo negativno: muzika improvizacije nije isto što i aleatorika, pojava u savremenoj muzici koja se bazira na slobodi interpretacije i koja računa sa slučajem. Iako, jasno, imaju izvesnih zajedničkih osobina, ova dva muzička fenomena su bitno drugačijeg karaktera. Aleatorika nema u sebi ono što je za improvizaciju suštinsko: eros slobodnog i kreativnog muziciranja u kome muzičko delo nastaje bez striktno veze njegovog rezultata i njegovog prethodnog plana. Kod aleatorike je, ipak reč o izvođenju, repordukciji, a ne o stvaranju – produkciji, bez obzira što je priroda ovakvog izvođenja formalno slična improvizaciji. Bez obzira da li je folklorna, renesansna, džez ili savremena, muzika improvizacije je, pre svega, autorsko muziciranje, nastajanje muzike u praktičnom oblikovanju zvuka koje nazivamo sviranjem. Za razliku od aleatorike, improvizacija ima unutrašnji razlog koji je pokreće. Razlog nije spolja, u bilo kakvoj partituri, bilo kojoj ideji koja se ima samo zvučno realizovati ali koja, u svom idealnom obliku, postoji već kao zamišljeno ili zapisano muzičko delo. Improvizacija ne postoji pre same improvizacije. Čak i da postoji određena koncepcija koja bi joj prethodila, njen će ishod biti sasvim ili delimično neizvestan i u svakom slučaju, po svojoj biti, neće se moći svesti na svoj koncept. Ona bitna inicijacija improvizovane muzike nije u bilo kakvom idejnom planu, već u samom erosu stvaralačkog muziciranja. Ona takođe računa na slučaj, ali to za nju nije primarno. Autentična improvizacija, naime, nije slučajna. Ona je potpuno namerna i duboko zasnovana,

doduše ne u nekoj ideji koju ostvaruje, već u samoj sebi. *Eros* koji je pokreće i *logika* kojom se kreće unutrašnji su razlozi bića improvizacije koji je bitno razlikuje od njene „izmišljene“ posestrime aleatorike.

Aleatorika je, naime, vrlo slična serijalizmu. Nastala je kao reakcija na ovu krajnost matematičkog konstruktivizma u istoriji muzike i to kao antitetička negacija. No, ta je reakcija samo polarno suprotna pojava: od težnje da se sve izračuna i organizuje, prešlo se na glorifikaciju slučaja, neorganizovanosti i često hasa. U krugu se, dakle, ipak ostalo. Jedan pokušaj je zamenjen drugim, ali bitno novo nije postignuto. Oba muzička koncepta došla su izvan muzike i zvuka kao njenog bića, došla su iz glave i tu ostala. Pokušaj da se muzičkom materijalu nametne veštački stvoren jezik i ovaj put je propao jer taj materijal ima svoju prirodnu i istorijsku osnovu, koja se ne može tek tako zaobići i zameniti nekom drugom „izmišljenom“. Otuda je ono što u toj muzici neupućen slušalac doživljava kao neutemeljenosti, beživotnost i dosadu. Nemotivisanost ove „umetnosti“ je u tome što ona ne odgovara nijednoj ljudskoj potrebi. To je muzika koja kao da ima neki svoj život, izvan čoveka, izvan njegove kontrole, namere i želje. Slično svakom drugom tehnološkom idiotizmu, i ovde je obrnut odnos cilja i sredstava i to na štetu čoveka.

U tom svetlu improvizovana muzika ovde nije shvaćena kao jedan od stilskih trendova koji su došli posle romantizma, impresionizma, serijalizma itd. Ona se ne bazira na određenom pronalasku poput dodekafonije. Njena prirodna osnova čini je univerzalnim muzičkim fenomenom prisutnim od prapočetka do danas. To što se javlja na svim nivoima muzičke istorije govori o tome da je ona jedan do njenih najvitalnijih elemenata. Zato tema improvizacije u kontekstu savremenih muzičkih trendova nije novoizmišljena iako je u muzici zapadnog sveta dugo bila zastavljena, posebno u trendu tehnološkog racionalizma, koji je bitno obeležio tokove XX veka, a koji je logička posledica tehnološkog razvoja muzike u prethodnim vekovima. Taj razvoj je išao, bez obzira na sva vrludanja, jednom bitnom linijom: konstrukcije, organizacije, aranžmana, tehničkog usavršavanja i grandomanije. Išao je linijom koja za pretpostavku ima bukvalno shvaćeni dijalektički princip da uvećanje kvantiteta automatski sobom donosi i viši kvalitet. No da li to u umetnosti važi isto kao i u ekonomiji? Ne bi se moglo reći. Kriza umetnosti Zapada, njeno okretanje egzotičnim kulturama kao terapijskom sredstvu – indikatori su zaboravljanja bitnog smisla umetnosti: ona je, ipak, zbog čo-

veka, a ne obrnuto. Istočna kultura, na primer: manje podložna tehničkoj racionalizaciji života, daleko je više sačuvala vitalnost svoje umetnosti iako je ona, razumljivo, na nižem tehnološkom nivou. Za istočnjaka glavno polje čovekove delatnosti je u njemu samom, a ne u ospoljenju kroz duhovni proizvod, povezan sa materijalom i tehničkim postupkom. Otud je on i u današnjem vremenu sačuvao balans unutrašnjeg i spoljašnjeg, sadržinskog i formalnog, duhovnog i materijalnog, na kome bi trebalo da se bazira umetnost. Ovo se odnosi na umetničku praksu ne samo istočnih već i afričkih i latinoameričkih naroda. Njihov uticaj na savremenu umetnost Evrope i Amerike je očit i plodotvoran, on otkriva modernom čoveku bitne pretpostavke njegove vlastite duhovnosti koja je dobrim delom zaboravljena i pohranjena u prošlosti. Naravno, povratka nema, isto kao što je i ugledanje na egzotične kulturne modele neuspešno bežanje od sebe, šizoidni pokušaj promene identiteta. Tema improvizacije se javlja kao jedno od mogućih rešenja za muziku Zapada da se okrene svom izvornom spontanitetu koji, kako bi rekao Hajdeger, „leži u zaboravu“. Ovo rešenje, možda, nije revolucionarno, ali je jedan od elemenata na kome bi moglo da se bazira to bitno sećanje.

Dalje otkrivajući prirodu improvizacije, može se reći da je ona, u stvari, komponovano sviranje, stvaranje muzike samim sviranjem i kroz njega. To je povezano sa bitnom pretpostavkom da je muzika, pre svega, zvuk i da njen idealni smisao ne prethodi zvuku već je samo sećanje na zvuk, svest o njemu. Osim što je stvaranje muzike u samom njenom materijalu, provocirano zvukom, improvizacija možda najautentičnije ostvaruje i drugi egzistencijalni i esencijalni osnov muzičkog bića, a to je vreme. Improvizacija ima jednokratani smisao, poput vremena, ona se ne može ponavljati – neponovljivost je srce njene prirode i to u smislu suštinskog određenja (ono bez čega nije više ono što jeste), a i u smislu onoga što je pokreće, poriva „da se dogodi“. Ako je vremenska dimenzija osnovni egzistencijal na kome počiva izvorna konačnost čovekovog bitka pa i same umetnosti, tada je muzika, kao najizrazitija vremenska umetnost, sposobna da bude sâma ova konačnost kao paradigma čovekovog bitka u svetu. Improvizacija najdirektnije od svih muzičkih postupaka ostvaruje ovu fundamentalnu kategoriju bića muzike. Ona je, zaista, sâmo to muzičko vreme i ništa van njegove konačnosti. Improvizacija nosi u sebi eros „uvek poslednjeg muziciranja“. No, muzička istorija zapadnog sveta stavila je u drugi plan i ovu bitnu dimenziju bića muzike. Muzika je prešla u oblast pisa-

ne kulture koja je omogućila njeno konzerviranje i ponavljanje. Krajnju posledicu toga da se muzika piše a ne svira videli smo u krajnostima kao što je „muzika bez muzike“ – serijalizam, zatim kompjuterska u njenom rđavom smislu (kompjuter kao autor), te svaki konstruktivizam u kome muzika nastaje za pisačim stolom naučnika, a ne za klavirom ili bilo kojim drugim izvorom zvuka muzičara-kompozitora.

Naravno da se ne može negirati neprocenjiv značaj muzičkog pisma, ali se mora odrediti „granica“ gde počinje njegova zloupotreba, kada se umesto za beleženje muzičkog materijala muzičko pismo koristi bez obzira na njega, kao što je to postala navika u savremenoj muzici. Moderna notacija je, doduše, savršenija od klasične jer obuhvata više parametara i neuporedivo je preciznija, ali tim se povećala mogućnost da se muzika bukvalno piše, ali više i ne čuje. Sistemi komponovanja su prešli na stranu sasvim drugačije vrste kreativne delatnosti koju bismo mogli nazvati matematičko-logističkom kombinatorikom. Ovaj element je uvek bio deo stvaralačkog procesa, ali se nije u njemu iscpeljivao.

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Muzika improvizacije se, nasuprot tome, ne može zapisati pre nego što se dogodila. Mogu postojati delimična uputstva, okvirni plan, ali ne mora čak ni to. Tek kada se dogodila, može se opisati ili zapisati, pismeno i još vernije – tonski. Tonski zapis improvizacije je najdirektnije beleženje muzičkog produkovanja koje se može zamisliti. Ono je kao direktno prenošenje ideja iz glave na papir bez posredništva. Naravno, to je omogućio jedan važan pronalazak tehnološke revolucije pomoću kog se muzika zapisuje i konzervira za ponavljanje i za budućnost na način koji joj je najsvostveniji – direktno, zvučno, u materijalu u kome ona jedino realno postoji, u kome je ona potpuno i bez ostataka ono što jeste – zvuk, artikulisan po čovekovoj meri. Muzička improvizacija je u naše doba dobila priliku da pređe iz usmene kulture u materijalno kulturno dobro, pomoću tonskog zapisa ona ima istu mogućnost kao i knjiga i partitura da nadživi svoju jednokratnost. Ovo je, verovatno, jedan od važnijih elemenata koji su joj omogućili da postane umetnička muzika u pravom smislu, a ne samo folklorna pojava. Gledajući iz te perspektive, improvizacija je i prastari i, poput elektronske muzike, sasvim nov fenomen pošto u savremenim tehnološkim uslovima stiče šansu da trajno živi.

U osnovi improvizacije, kako sam već spomenuo, jeste ujedinjavanje produktivnog i reproduktivnog čina u jedan. Posma-

trajući novovekovnu istoriju muzike, vidimo da je ona pre išla svojim institucionalnim i ekonomskim tokovima, pa tek onda umetničkim. To se manifestovalo u sve užoj specijalizaciji instrumentalista, kompozitora, dirigenata, pisaca libreta, pedagoga i ostalih struka vezanih za ovo područje umetničke delatnosti. To je dovelo, kao i svaka podela rada, do naizgled pozitivnih, ali i negativnih posledica. Specijalizacija je, nesumnjivo, povećala kompetentnost umetnika u pojedinim oblastima, ali ih je načinila fah-idiotima. Reproductivni muzičari su postali umetnici-činnovnici koji visokokvalitetno obavljaju svoj posao, ali samo na nivou zanata, dok im je smisao vlastitog proizvoda, dakle dela koja izvode, uglavnom nepoznat: „on je vrhunski violinista“, ali muziku, sem s njene tehničke strane, ne poznaje više od laika koji u njoj sporadično uživa. Kompozitor je, takođe, tehničar, ali sa one druge strane manufakturnog stola. On daje idejno rešenje, ali sa praksom njegove realizacije ima sve manje direktne veze. On prestaje da bude muzičar-autor-svirač i postaje, sve više, matematičar, kalkulanta, kombinatoričar, aranžer, orkestrator, postaje pisac a sve manje svaralac muzike u direktnom smislu proizvođenja zvuka. Jedan Baha je bio, pre svega, veliki svirač, improvizator na instrumentu. Njegova je muzika nastajala kao posledica živog kontakta sa muzičkom materijom, on je zapisivao svoje osmišljene improvizacije. Zato njegova muzika nema ničeg nemuzičkog u sebi i poseduje univerzalnu vrednost dostupnu razumevanju i onih koji nisu specijalisti. Pravac muzičkog razvoja od Baha nadalje ide ka sve većoj apstraktnosti kompozitorskog rada. Taj rad postaje sve manje stvaralačko muziciranje, a sve više zanat pisanja. Sa druge strane dolazi do sve većeg unificiranja, automatiziranja karaktera izvođenja, te do toga da sviračka umetnost postoji jedino kao reproduktivna, bar kada je reč o takozvanoj ozbiljnoj muzici. Muzičar prestaje da bude celovito biće i postaje parcijalno, a odnosi između pojedinih delova tog muzičkog bića bitno su institucionalizovani, dakle posredovani na principu koji, možda, pogoduje industriji, ali ne i umetnosti.

Muzičar koji sam stvara i izvodi svoje delo ideal je kome teži muzika improvizacije. To, naravno, ne čini samo ona. U današnje vreme postaje sve češća pojava da ansambli izvode muziku svojih članova, dakle vlastitu. Ovo ponovno ujedinjenje ostvaruje i tzv. „tejp“ muzika gde je kompozitor većinom i realizator svog dela do finalnog umetničkog proizvoda, snimka ili javnog izvođenja uz pomoć tehnike. No, ovo su, ipak, relativno marginalne i alternativne pojave koje stoje naspram ogromne muzičke industrije koja svoje

funkcionisanje bazira na „građanskim“ ekonomskim principima koji je stavljaju u red sa svim ostalim granama industrije, čiji je pokretač i cilj profit. Otuda nije čudno što se muzika improvizacije javlja u potencijalno subverzivnom socijalnom kontekstu, recimo među crnim muzičarima Amerike, koji nemajući šansu da učestvuju u institucijalnoj podeli kolača počinju svoj alternativni put uličnih svirača-autora. Tek se kasnije ovaj opozicioni socijalni fenomen prihvata kao autentična umetnička alternativa koja značajno utiče i na tzv. visoku kulturu. Danas se više fenomen savremene improvizovane muzike ne može objasniti samo socijalnim razlozima. On je postao jedan od elemenata koji u muzici teže njenom umetničkom revolucionisanju, ali i razotuđenju kroz negiranje njenog institucionalnog karktera. Utoliko taj fenomen ima i socijalni smisao, jer je teško pretpostaviti da bi se mogao roditi u okviru same institucije.

Govoreći o fenomenu improvizovane muzike u savremenom kontekstu, osvetlili smo njen osnovni smisao postojanja danas. Tako je sama specifikacija prirode ovog muzičkog fenomena ostala delimično neosvetljena. Sledeći redovi imaju zadatak da to isprave.

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Može se reći da je prvobitna muzika bila, u stvari, improvizacija. Ona je nastajala spontano u izvornoj potrebi za artikulacijom zvuka. Muzika nije imala formirane uzore prema kojima bi se mogla reprodukovati i prenošena je usmeno, što je uvek potencijalno improvizacija. Ovakva navika je delimično sačuvana do renesanse u kojoj još možemo prepoznati elemente fiksiranog i improvizovanog. Razvojem notacije, aranžmana, povećanjem orkestra itd., improvizacija je sasvim iščezla iz umetničke prakse, ali je sačuvana u folklornoj tradiciji. Tek u novije vreme ona postaje umetnička alternativa čiji smisao pokušavamo da odgonetnemo ovim redovima.

Improvizacija ima svoj monološki i dijaloški oblik. To važi kako za njen folklorni, tako i za profesionalno-umetnički vid. Monološka improvizacija je, dakako, najmanje sputana – ona je najneposredniji odnos čoveka i zvuka. Dijaloška već mora posedovati izvesnu organizaciju, nužni jezički okvir koji svi učesnici dijaloga prihvataju kao minimum uslova moguće komunikacije. Što je veći broj ravnopravnih učesnika u kolektivnoj improvizaciji, sve je, naravno, manje stvaralačke slobode za pojedince, a nužnija je veća organizovanost muzičkih parametara. Kod kolektivne improvizacije treba razlikovati njen folklorni, ritualni karakter, u kome dijalog još uvek nije prisutan u vidu komuni-

ranja individualnih različitosti već samo u vidu potvrđivanja kolektivnog identiteta, i, sa druge strane, savremenu kolektivnu improvizaciju u kojoj se muzički ekstazis ne postiže zaboravom vlastitosti i suženjem svesti, već afirmacijom različitosti samostalnih i svesnih individua u dijalogu. Utoliko se savremenoj improvizovanoj muzici ne može prebaciti arhaizam i naturalizam jer je reč o otkrivanju muzičkog erosa na sasvim drugom nivou, koji ga istorijski čini samo uporedivim, ali nikako identičnim sa iskonskim prauzorom. Kolektivna improvizacija se, dakle, može shvatiti kao jedan od arhetipova muzičkog bića, koji ne možemo negirati a da to biće ne osiromašimo za jednu bitnu dimenziju.

Veoma je važno improvizaciju razlikovati od samovolje prozivljnosti i anarhije. Što ne znači da loša improvizacija to nije. Stvaralačka improvizacija je vrlo slična kompoziciji. Ona mora polaziti od svih apriornih muzičkih parametara kao što su tonovi, skale, harmonije, ritmički i dinamički obrasci, ona se bazira na poznavanju muzičke baštine, na vladanju instrumentima, na stilskom opredeljenju, na formalnim pretpostavkama muzičke celine itd. Sloboda u improvizaciji nije samovoljna sloboda „od svega“ već sloboda „za sve“, a to važi i za komponovano stvaranje. Prednost improvizacije nalazi se u njenom spontanom karakteru, u mogućnosti da se stvaralački manipuliše čitavim, muzičkim izlaganjem, dok se tok misli ne prekida, te da se ostvari idejno, emotivno i atmosfersko jedinstvo muzičke celine na neposredan način. Prednost zapisivačkog komponovanja je u mogućnosti pisanja i brisanja, u mogućnosti da se stvaralačka refleksija zasnjuje sa distancom u odnosu na muzičku ideju. To obezbeđuje mogućnost postizanja savršene forme, organizacije, tehničku perfekciju, bogat aranžman i zvučnu raznovrsnost. Kod orkestarske muzike ova prednost se ne može bilo čime nadoknaditi, ali kod kamerne mogućnost spontanog dijaloga čini improvizovanu muziku motivisanijom i življom od izvedbe striktno zapisane.

Autentična improvizacija nije nesvesno stvaranje. Ona ima svoj refleksivni nivo koji joj prethodi i koji je prati. No, taj je refleksivni plan bez ostatka utkan u sam događaj muzike. Kod reprodukovanja zapisanih muzičkih ideja, uz automatizam čitanja i proizvođenja tonova, postoji i stvaralačka refleksija koja se odnosi jedino na takozvanu kreativnu interpretaciju i koja ima sasvim usko polje mogućnosti u odnosu na stvaranje muzike u celini, koje ostvaruje improvizacija. To čini i kompozicija, ali samo na idejnom planu. Ipak, sigurno je da improvizacija ima u sebi više nesvesnog nego sâmo komponovanje. Kod nje je svesna

kontrola delimično sužena, što ima i dobru i lošu stranu. Dobra strana se sastoji u jedinstvenosti njenog bića, svesnog i nesvesnog, predrazumskog i razumeskog, ersa i logosa. Loša strana je u relativno suženoj svesti koja je prati: otud se parametri u kojima ona postiže kvalitet ne mogu uvek postaviti kao najvažniji za neko muzičko delo. Ovi parametri, naime, insistiraju na subjektivnom kvalitetu i mnogim stvaracima, kod kojih dominira potreba za redom, te maksimalnom organizovanošću i fiksiranošću svih elemenata, neće biti plodonosno da stvaraju na način improvizovane muzike. Improvizacija je delom rizik, ona „stvara iz ničega“ i ta kula u zraku se uvek može srušiti. Ta stvaralačka avantura uvek balansira na tankoj niti između genijalnosti i neuspelosti. Autentična improvizacija odbija svaki obrazac, čak i onaj koji bi joj već u startu omogućio uspešan rezultat. To, ipak, ne znači da dobar deo muzike koja nastaje improvizacijom nije puki manirizam, reprodukovanje naučenih obrazaca, instrumentalistički rad prstiju, koji je u džezu vrlo čest kao samozadovoljni egzibicionizam virtuoznih svirača. Ali, to i nije improvizacija, već reprodukcija. Improvizacija je, naprotiv, izazov stvaranja.

„Filozofija improvizacije“ nam, sve u svemu, sugeriše: trajnih rešenja nema, sistemi racionalne organizacije materijala ne znače ništa drugo sem što zadovoljavaju sujetu umetnika u ambiciji za remek-delom, a ta patvorena volja za savršenstvo i veličinu guši izvornu potrebu za stvaranjem. Tako rezultat, tj. delo postaje važnije od same potebe njegovog stvaranja. Opsesija kvantiteta, intenziteta, šarolikost aranžmana i ukrasa dominirala je klasičkom i romantičkom umetnošću, tim najvećim ponosom građanske kulture. Improvizacija ima nečeg ironičnog i subverzivnog u odnosu na patos ove „velike umetnosti“. Ona, naime, ne želi doteranu i ukrašenu sliku sveta. Ona računa sa merom čovekovih egzistencijalnih određenosti, bitnom konačnošću i nedovršenošću njegovog bića. Improvizacija je umetnost po meri čoveka, što ne znači pohvalu mediokritetstvu: umetnik će uvek govoriti ono što ima da kaže, ni manje, ni više. U tome mu bogatstvo posredujućeg materijala ne može pomoći, iako se iza njega dâ vešto zakamuflirati. Improvizacija ne želi takve mistifikacije, ona insistira na direktnom sučeljavanju čoveka i umetnosti.

Boris Kovač, januar 1986.

Sketch for a Phenomenology of Improvised Music¹

If every subject requires thinking appropriate to it, then in the case of music improvisation this hermeneutic rule reads: one should think improvisationally. The phenomenon that, in contemporary context, rests on the aspiration to avoid obsessive technological need for order and organization, cannot be treated similarly to most common subjects familiar to us. The nature of improvisation is in its irreducibility to predetermined structure; its flow and character are productively uncertain. That is: the productivity of improvisation is in its uncertainty and indeterminacy. This, however, does not mean that thinking about such a subject must leave us without a plan or accordant assumptions. The fact that we are operating in a linguistic framework imposes the need to determine the basic conceptual coordinates as a minimal condition for understanding. We will in this text understand the problem of “improvisational music” in a broader sense and in a narrower sense. The latter relates to all music that is completely or partially created in a relatively free, non-predetermined mode of music production that we call improvisation. It is not defined by genre, form or historical context. In a broader sense, I understand improvisation as a paradigm of an artistic project, which in a time of universal technologization of life, and thus art, offers itself as an alternative by rediscovering the authentic spontaneity of playing as an important precondition for free human production. In this respect, improvisation is the cause for problematizing the civilizing intention of technology becoming the new, perfect and determined nature. Such petrified nature is, in its ultimate outcome, the realization of a utopian vision of the death of art, the dissolution of art into pure, abstract spirituality, which no longer communicates with nature, rather only with itself.

Without indulging in romantic anti-technologism, I want to present a broader plan illuminated by the phenomenon of improvisation. In that regard, the subject of improvised music

¹ I have used the term improvised music as already used in our music literature, although this is not about that music is improvised, but rather that is music are creating by improvisation.

can be understood as one possible dialogue on contemporary art and not only as an issue of specifying one artistic procedure in relation to others. It would be far-fetched to suggest that improvisation offers a model for solving all relevant questions posed by contemporary art: as an alternative, subversive phenomenon, it is one of the elements suitable for creating the idea of authentic art.

Not without considering the possibility of generalization and simplification, it can be stated that twentieth-century music composition has a distinct sonic imprint, that being its intellectualism. It has its advantages and disadvantages, but also an important and undeniable historical foundation. With this relatively new feature, music broadens its spectrum of expressive abilities in a direction that makes it more on par with literature and science. Music stops being a disconnected safeguard of sentimentality, which is what it mainly was in its classical and romantic phases. It joins science and technology in its tendency to become based on something more solid than feelings, in an effort to offer revolutionary music for revolutionary times. The very idea that music can be constructed as a system based on concepts was a shift for Schoenberg, and for many after him, there was an urge to continue pursuing the path of that shift. Technological procedure was, of course, always relevant in art and music, but from that moment, it became dominant. A time in which the new religion of the scientific spirit tends to plug the holes of humanity's boat in space, a time in which analytical philosophy refuses any dialogue beyond that which can be translated into logical and numerical relations, is a time in which music also tries to mathematically organize that which was, until recently, a matter of feeling and intuition. The "revolutionary" eventually changed his mind, but the "revolutionaries" carried on even further, with even worse consequences. Music started to be created at the writing desk and at the laboratory stand. Everything else meant anachronism, or naive realism, and simply – there was no going back in the tidying up of everything human, from everything other than the intellectual ability of manipulation within an axiomatically given system. Of course, serialism, as any game with fixed, strict rules, led to its saturation. Total organization started to look like its diametrical opposite – disorganization, chaos, and nonsense.

The empty abstractness of such music was the consequence of negating any natural or historical foundation of musical lan-

guage that could be arbitrarily invented unrelated to anything else but strict formal rules, which are wholly necessary to make it a language. Over time, this game saturated itself, but it marked the entire epoch. Music became more abstract and attempts to differentiate resembled romanticism in its gaze towards the past. Such a state was intensified by the emergence of electronic music, a child of science and technology, which resembles more a robot than a human. In that situation, everything appeared as a triumph of the “human” spirit, though that spirit remained entirely empty and boredom set in. The human being, it seems, was not created for perfection after all; imperfections are a necessary condition for its progression. History cannot move in reverse, but it is obviously cyclical, like a spiral. Thus, a new space opened, considering but also questioning everything that preceded it. In that space, we find improvised music, minimalism, new simplicity, rock, jazz, etc.; the multitude of colors that make our musical present exquisitely versatile. It is in this context that this reflection on improvisation needs to be understood.

First, I need to specify what I mean under this term. Let us begin by negatively formulating the thesis: the music of improvisation is not the same as aleatorics – a phenomenon of contemporary music based on freedom of interpretation and employment of chance. Although they clearly have some commonalities, the two music phenomena fundamentally differ in character. Aleatoric music does not contain what is crucial for improvisation: the *Eros* of free and creative music production in which musical work emerges without a strict connection between the result and the previous plan. In aleatoric music, however, it is about performance/reproduction, and not about creation/production, even though the nature of such performance formally resembles improvisation. Regardless of whether it is folk, Renaissance, jazz or contemporary, improvised music is, first and foremost, authorial music making, the creation of music through the practical shaping of sound that we call music performance. Unlike aleatoric musical production, improvisation is driven from the inside. Its *raison d'être* is not in any score or any sonic concept that exists in its ideal form as an already conceived or notated musical work. Improvisation does not exist before it takes place. Even if there is a certain idea preceding it, its outcome will be either completely or partially uncertain, and in any case, essentially, irreducible to its concept. The essential initiation of improvised music is not contained in any conceptual plan but

in the *Eros* of music creation. It also relies on chance, but not primarily so. In other words, authentic improvisation is not incidental. It is completely deliberate and profoundly grounded, not in some idea that needs to be carried out but grounded in itself. The *Eros* and logic that drive it are the internal reasons of its existence, significantly different from that of aleatoric music, its fictitious half-sister.

Aleatoric music is, in fact, very similar to serialism. It arose in reaction to this extreme mathematical constructivism in the history of music, as its antithetical negation. However this reaction is just the opposite: the tendency to calculate and organize everything was replaced by the glorification of chance, disorder, and oftentimes chaos. So, the circle was never abandoned. One attempt was replaced by another; but nothing relevant was accomplished. Both musical concepts originated outside of music and its sonic essence, from the head, where they remained. The attempt to impose an artificially created language onto musical material failed yet again because that material has its natural and historical foundations, which cannot be simply dismissed and replaced with fictitious ones. Therefore, an uneducated listener experiences the music as unfounded, dull, and boring. The limitation of this “art” is that it does not meet any human need. The music in question seems to take on a life of its own, beyond human control, intention, or desire. As with any other technological idiocy, here too the relationship between the means and the end is inverted, at the detriment of the human being.

In this light, improvised music is not understood in this text as one of the stylistic trends that follows romanticism, impressionism, serialism, etc. It is not based on a particular invention, such as dodecaphony. Its natural foundation makes it a universal musical phenomenon, which has been present from the beginnings of humankind until present time. The fact that it has existed in all periods of music history indicates that it is one of its most vital elements. For this reason, the theme of improvised music is not new in the context of contemporary musical trends, although it was for a long period neglected in the West, especially with the tendencies of twentieth-century technological rationalism, and as a logical consequence of the technological development of music in previous centuries. In spite of all its meandering, this development followed one notable line of construction, organization, arrangement, technical perfection, and grandomania; all under the assumption that the dialectical

principle literally means that increasing quantity automatically brings with it higher quality. But does this apply to the arts in the same way it applies to economics? Hardly so. The crisis of Western art and its turning to exotic cultures as a therapeutic remedy indicate the forgetting of the essential meaning of art, which is that it exists for the sake of the human being and not the other way around. For instance, Eastern culture, which is less susceptible to the technological rationalization of life, has preserved the vitality of its art to a greater extent, although it is, understandably, technologically less developed. For the Easterner, the main field of activity is inside the human being, and not in the materiality of the spiritual product and its relation to material and technical procedure. As a result, the balance between internal and external, between content and form, and between spiritual and material, on which art should be based, exists even today. This applies to the artistic practice not only of the Eastern but also to African and Latin American cultures. Their influence on the contemporary art of Europe and the United States is obvious and fruitful, revealing to modern humans the essential elements of spirituality, which is largely forgotten and stored in the past. Of course, there is no going back, just as the emulation of exotic cultural models acts as an unsuccessful escape from oneself, a schizoid attempt to change identity. The issue of improvisation emerges as one possible solution for Western music in turning to its own original spontaneity that, in Heidegger's words, "lies in forgetfulness." This solution is perhaps not revolutionary but it is one of the elements on which that relevant memory could be established.

By further revealing its nature, it could be said that improvisation is, in fact, a composed music performance – creation of music in and through performance. This relates to the important assumption that music is, first and foremost, sound, and that its ideal purpose does not precede sound, but is only its evoking of memory and awareness. Aside from the fact that the creation of music is, in its very material, provoked by sound, improvisation perhaps most authentically brings about another existential and essential foundation of musical being, that being time. Improvisation has an ephemeral purpose, and like time, it cannot repeat itself – its inability to repeat is its nature, both in terms of its essential purpose (without it, it is not what it is supposed to be), and in terms of what drives it and pushes it "to happen." If the temporal dimension is the basic existential entity on which

the original finality of human existence and art itself rests upon, then music, as the most expressive temporal art, is the paradigm of the human being in the world. Improvisation, most directly of all musical procedures, attains this fundamental category of musical existence, existing indeed only during its musical time and nothing beyond its finality, while embodying the *Eros* of a “perpetual last performance.” However, in the history of music of the Western world, this important dimension of musicality was kept in the background. Music moved into the realm of written culture, which has enabled its conservation and reproduction. Over time we have seen the ultimate consequences of music that is notated rather than performed in such extremes as “music without music” (serialism), then to the worst of computer music (computer as author), and in any production in which music is made at the desk of a scientist, and not at the piano or from any other source of sound by the musician-composer.

Of course, the invaluable importance of notation cannot be denied, but it is necessary to determine the “boundary” of its misuse when, instead of writing down the musical material, notation is used regardless of it, as it is a habit in contemporary music. Modern notation is certainly more perfect than the classical one as it covers more parameters and it is exceptionally precise. However, this also increases the possibility for music to be written down but not necessarily heard. Systems of composition sided with a completely different kind of activity, which we might call a mathematical-logical combinatorics. This element was always a part of the creative process, but it never exhausted itself in it.

Improvised music, by contrast, cannot be notated prior to its performance. There could be partial instructions, a general plan, or not even that. It can be written down or described, notated, or, even better, recorded, only after it has taken place. Sound recording is the most direct way imaginable of documenting improvised music. It is like a direct transmission of ideas from head to paper without mediation. Of course, this is possible because of an important invention of the technological revolution, which records and preserves music for reproduction and for the future in a way that is most intrinsic to it – directly, in sound, in the material in which it only truly exists, and in which it is completely and without reservation what it is – sound articulated by a human being. In our time, music improvisation has had the opportunity to shift from oral to material culture; with the

help of sound recording, it has attained a similar ability as that of a book or a score: to outlive its single performance. This is probably one of the more important elements that has allowed improvisation to become artful music, and not only a folk phenomenon. From this perspective, improvisation is both ancient and a completely new phenomenon similar to electronic music, since it has been given the chance, in a modern technological context, to live permanently.

As I mentioned above, the basis of improvisation is the unification of a productive and a reproductive act into one. By looking at the modern history of music, we can notice that it followed traditional and economic trends rather than artistic ones. The manifestation of this was more and more narrow specialization of instrumentalists, composers, conductors, librettists, educators and other professions related to this field of artistic activity. Like any division of labor, this resulted with seemingly positive but also negative consequences. The specialization undoubtedly increased the competence of artists in certain areas, but it made them into one-track experts. Reproductive musicians became like artistic clerks with excellent job performance but only at the level of craft, while the meaning of their own product, i.e. the work they perform stays largely unknown to them: “he is the finest violinist,” but, except for its technical aspect, knows music no more than the laic who occasionally enjoys it. The composer is also a technician, though from the other side of the desk. S/he offers an idea, but has less and less direct connection with its realization. S/he ceases to be a musician-author-performer and becomes, more and more, a mathematician, estimator, arranger, orchestrator; s/he becomes a writer and less and less creates music in the direct sense of sound production. Bach was, first and foremost, a great performer and improviser. His music was created as a result of live contact with musical matter as he wrote down his own improvisations. That is why his music has nothing non-musical in itself, but possesses universal value accessible to non-specialists. After Bach, music develops towards greater and greater abstractness of a composer’s work. That work becomes less of a creative music production and more a craft of writing. On the other hand, there is a development towards a greater unification and uniformity of the performing character, where the art of performance exists only as reproduction. The musician ceases to be a whole being and the relationship be-

tween the parts of that being become mediated on a principle that may be useful in industry, but not in art.

Improvised music strives towards the ideal of a musician who both creates and performs their own work. And not only that. Nowadays, it is more common for ensembles to perform their own music, that is – music of their members. This reunification is also achieved in *tape music*, where the composer is also mostly the performer who creates the final artistic product, recording or technologically supported public performance. These are, however, relatively marginal and alternative phenomena standing against the vast music industry that functions on bourgeois economic principles, and that is positioned with all other branches of the industry whose stimulus and aim is profit. It is no wonder, then, that improvised music appears in potentially subversive social contexts, like among black American musicians who, not having a chance to share a slice of the institutional cake, start their own alternative paths as street performers and authors. It is only later that this opposing social phenomenon becomes accepted as an authentic artistic alternative that significantly influences the so-called high culture. Today, the phenomenon of contemporary improvised music cannot be explained purely with social reasoning. It has become a revolutionary element of music, but also strives towards de-alienation through the negation of its institutional character. It is difficult to assume that this phenomenon could be born within the institution itself, which also gives it a social sense.

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In discussing the phenomenon of improvised music in the contemporary context, we shed light on the basic meaning of its existence today. Thus, the very definition of the nature of this musical phenomenon has remained partly obscured. This will be corrected in the following lines.

It could be argued that the first music was, in fact, improvisation. It emanated spontaneously from the initial need for the articulation of sound. Music did not have established models for reproduction and was transmitted orally, which is always potentially an improvisation. This practice was partly preserved until the Renaissance, in which we can still recognize the elements of the fixed and the improvised. With the development of notation, arranging, orchestral enlargement, and the like, improvisation entirely disappeared from artistic practice; instead, it was preserved in folk tradition. Only recently has it become

an artistic alternative and of what meaning we are trying to decipher in this text.

Improvisation has its monologic and dialogic form. This is true for both the folk as well as professional and artistic variants. Monologic improvisation is, of course, the least restrained – it is the most direct relationship between human being and sound. The dialogic one must already possess a certain organization, a necessary linguistic framework that the participants accept as a minimal condition for potential communication. The greater the number of equal participants in collective improvisation, the less creative freedom for the individual, thus the need arises for more organized musical parameters. In the case of collective improvisation, one should distinguish between its folk, ritual character, in which dialogue does not entail the communication of individual differences but only the affirmation of collective identity, and the contemporary collective improvisation in which musical ecstasy is not achieved in forgetting the self and narrowing the consciousness, but by affirming the differences of independent and conscious individuals taking part in the dialogue. In that sense, contemporary improvised music cannot be blamed for anarchism or naturalism because it involves a discovery of musical *Eros* on a completely different level, which makes it historically only comparable but never identical with the past archetype. Collective improvisation can therefore be understood as one of the archetypes of musical being, whose negation can only take away one important dimension from that being.

It is very important to distinguish improvisation from the tyranny of arbitrariness and anarchy. However, bad improvisation can also mean exactly that. Creative improvisation is very similar to composition. It must begin with all *a priori* musical parameters, including tones, scales, harmonies, rhythmic and dynamic patterns; it is based on the knowledge of musical heritage, the mastery of the instruments, the stylistic position, the formal premises of the musical whole, etc. Freedom in improvisation is not an arbitrary freedom “from everything”, but a freedom “for all.” This also applies to composition. The advantage of improvisation lies in its spontaneous character and in its ability to creatively manipulate the entire musical presentation without interrupting the flow of thought, while directly realizing the conceptual, emotional and atmospheric unity of the musical whole. The advantage of written composition is in the possibility of rewriting and basing creative reflection on an indirect rela-

tionship to a musical idea. This enables achieving perfect form and organization, technical perfection, rich arrangement, and diversity of sound. In orchestral music, this advantage cannot be compensated for with anything, but in chamber music there exists the possibility that spontaneous dialogue will generate an improvised music that is more motivated and lively than in a strictly written performance.

Authentic improvisation is not an unconscious creation. It has its own reflective quality that precedes and accompanies it. But this dimension is fully woven into the musical event itself. In reproducing notated music ideas, along with the automatism of reading and producing tones, there is also a creative reflection related only to the so-called creative interpretation that has a very narrow field of possibilities in comparison to the holistic approach achieved in improvisation. The same goes for composition, only in conceptual terms. It is certain, however, that improvisation carries more of the unconscious than composing. Conscious control is partially narrowed in it, which has its good and bad side. Its good side is reflected in the uniqueness of its being, of conscious and unconscious, of pre-rational and rational, of *Eros* and *logos*. Its downside is the relatively narrow mindset that accompanies it: that is why its qualitative parameters cannot always be established as crucial for a work of music. Namely, these parameters insist on a subjective quality, and many artists who are guided by the need for order, extreme organization, and fixation of all elements, will not find it fruitful to create in an improvised manner. Improvisation is partly a risk, it “creates from nothing,” and that house of cards can always collapse. This creative adventure always balances on a thin line between ingenuity and failure. Authentic improvisation rejects every pattern, even the one that would enable it a successful result. This does not mean, however, that much of improvised music is not mere mannerism, reproduction of learned patterns, or finger work, which is very common in jazz as the egotistical exhibitionism of virtuoso performers. Yet, that is not improvisation but reproduction. On the contrary, improvisation is the challenge of creation.

The “philosophy of improvisation,” all in all, suggests: there are no permanent solutions; the systems of rational organization of musical material mean nothing and only satisfy the artist’s vanity in the ambition of creating a masterpiece, while this artificial desire for perfection and greatness stifles the original need for creation. Thus the result, the work, becomes more im-

portant than the original urge for its creation. The obsession with quantity, intensity, and variety of arrangements and ornaments, dominated classical and romantic art, the greatest pride of bourgeois culture. There is something ironic and subversive in improvisation when compared to the pathos of this “great art.” Namely, it does not seek a polished and decorated picture of the world. It reckons with the measure of human existential causes, with the important terminality and imperfection of human being. Improvisation is a human-tailored art, which does not mean that it is an ode to mediocrity: the artist will always say what s/he has to say, no more, no less. The abundance of mediating material cannot help, although it can be used as camouflage to a certain extent. Improvisation does not desire such mystifications, rather it insists on the direct confrontation between human and art.

Boris Kovač, January 1986

Istorijska svest slobodne improvizacije

Slobodna improvizacija predstavlja veliki izazov za muzičku istoriografiju. Rasprava o pojmu slobodne improvizacije deo je istorizacije kompleksnog fenomena čija konfiguracija nije vidljiva ako se pitanje šta je danas slobodna improvizacija pred-postavi pitanjima kako je nastala i razvijala se ova muzička praksa.

Različiti pisani osvrti saglasni su oko genealogije slobodne improvizacije. Kao presudni, navode se uticaji *free jazz*-a, evropske avangarde iza Drugog svetskog rata i američkog eksperimentalizma. Inicijalno prožimanje navedenih muzičkih pravaca događalo se tokom 60-ih godina 20. veka. Uloga Džona Kejdža (John Cage) posmatra se u svetlu jake veze između neodređenosti (indeterminacy) i *slobode* u muzici,¹ ali se uočava i distanciranje slobodne improvizacije od Kejdžovog koncepta neintencionalnosti. Evropski i američki kompozitori, poput Karlhajнца Štokhauzena (Stockhausen), Silvana Busotija (Sylvano Bussotti), La Monte Janga (La Monte Young), Mortona Feldmana i drugih, uključivali su improvizaciju u svoje stvaralačke prakse, ali ne kao totalnu oblikotvornu snagu i alternativno ontološko tle (ground), već zarad destabilizacije, a posledično i regeneracije muzičkog dela shvaćenog kao hijerarhijski poredak zvuka. Promena paradigme, kada je u pitanju improvizacija, dogodila se u okviru *free jazz*-a. „Oslobađanje” improvizacije u *free jazz*-u ostvareno je na planu zvuka i forme, odnosno na planu muzičkog materijala i njegove dispozicije u vremenu. „Umesto forme oslonjene na harmonsku progresiju unutar *chorus* i *open for solo* odseka,

1 „Kejdžova vrsta eksperimentalizma doživela je transformaciju kada je uvezena u Veliku Britaniju tokom 60-ih godina. Tamo je, nasuprot dobro poznatim američkim preferencijama, nederminisanost modifikovana kroz slobodnu improvizaciju poteklu iz džeza, i to zahvaljujući diskursu koji je naglašavao slobodu i kreativnost izvođača, a umanjivao značaj konceptata kao što su neintencionalnost i disciplina. Autori takvih komentara stvorili su diskurzivne uslove za mešanje avangardnih tradicija, dok za one materijalne uslove treba zahvaliti Viktoru Šonfildu (Victor Schonfield), čija je neprofitna organizacija *Music Now* funkcionisala kao svojevrсни umetnički savet koji je zastupao stilski heterogene avangarde i koji je uključivao umetnike koji rade kako sa improvizacijom tako i sa neodređenošću.“ Benjamin Piekut, „Indeterminacy, Free Improvisation, and the Mixed Avant-Garde: Experimental Music in London, 1965–1975”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 67/3 (2014), 769–824 (769).

džez muzičari poput Orneta Kolmana (Ornette Coleman), Sesi-la Tejlora (Cecil Taylor), Čarlsa Mingusa (Charles Mingus) i San Raa (Sun Ra) opredelili su se za dosledan improvizacioni diskurs zasnovan na „svežem, spontanom protoku ideja” i „istraživanju svih zvukova koji se mogu izvući iz instrumenata”²

Najistaknutiji predstavnici slobodne improvizacije od 60-ih naovamo nisu, međutim, pojedinci, već grupe muzičara, među kojima se izdvajaju AMM (Velika Britanija), *Spontaneous Music Ensemble* (Velika Britanija), *Musica Elettronica Viva* (Italija), *Sonic Arts Union* (SAD) i drugi ansambli. Dubok trag u istoriji slobodne improvizacije ostavili su umetnici internacionalnog renoma, kao što su Kornelijus Kardju (Cornelius Gardew), Frederik Rževski (Frederic Rzewski) i Derek Bejli (Derek Bailey), ali je, uprkos tome, slobodna improvizacija ostala sinonim za alternativnu i kolektivnu muzičku praksu.

Umesto suspendovanih poetičkih, estetičkih i stilskih konvencija, muzičku i društvenu vezu između aktera na sceni improvizovane muzike grade nekonformistični lični senzibiliteti, konvergentna ideološka uverenja i, često, zajednički politički stav. Raniji nanosi „sedimentiranog duha” razvejeni su zarad ideje o novoj muzičkoj i društvenoj zajednici u kojoj romantičarski mit o harmoničnom odnosu između Ja i Mi oživljava izvan okvira partikularnih identitetskih konstrukcija, poput nacije i etniciteta. Patos samozastupanja, kontrakulturna egzistencija i revolucionarna energija postavljaju, međutim, prepreku odmerenom historiografskom narativu o slobodnoj improvizaciji. Potreba za takvim narativom proizlazi iz višedecenijskog zrenja slobodne improvizacije, tokom kojeg se iza mitskog nihiliranja istorijske logike sve jasnije pomalja svojevrсна istorijska svest. Pre ispitivanja ove istorijske svesti treba podrobno razmotriti mitske askripcije i deskripcije slobodne improvizacije.

Apologija ove muzičke prakse u prvi plan stavlja njenu spontanost, hrabrost i odgovornost. Herojska artikulacija polazi od imanentno muzičke smelosti da se napusti „sigurno tlo” muzičkog dela, notnog zapisa i prepoznatljivih zvučnih idioma u improvizacionoj praksi.³ Ontološki status slobodne improvizacije dirketno

² Michael Tosko, „Free Jazz and Free Improvisation”, *Booklist*. March 15, 2005, Vol. 101, Issue 14, American Library Association, 1317, 1p.

³ „Improvizacija je umetnost postajanja zvukom. To je jedina umetnost u kojoj čovek može i mora da postane muzika koju on ili ona stvara. To je umetnost stalnog, opreznog i opasnog života u svakom trenutku. To je umetnost istupanja

vodi u predvorje njenog društvenog protivstava. U kontekstu kapitalističke društvene proizvodnje, muzički događaj lišen objektnih relacija deli subverzivnu poziciju sa strategijama dematerijalizacije umetnosti. Na taj način slobodna improvizacija apsorbuje negativne impulse društvene stvarnosti i sublimira ih u kritički iskaz o svetu. Drugim rečima, slobodna improvizacije detektuje i transcendiraju *otuđenje*.⁴ Kao simptom društvenog otuđenja, ona je marginalna, prenadražajna i neshvatljiva sa savremene konzumente visoke i popularne muzičke kulture. S druge strane, ona je inkluzivna, demokratska i participativna, jer delimičnim ili potpunim ukidanjem podele rada u muzici deterritorijalizuje područje zvuka i ogoljuje elitističku prirodu muzičkog umeća. Klasno artikulisani estetski kriterijumi povlače se u slobodnoj improvizaciji pred izvornom snagom gestualne komunikacije i nesputanim izražavanjem „zvučno-muzičkih identiteta“, kako ih je nazvao Derek Bejli (Bailey). Briga za uspeh komunikacionog čina pritom sprečava pad u anarhiju proizvoljne, isprazne i nemušte muzičke retorike. U slobodnoj improvizaciji estetski kriterijum je hipostaziran etikom odgovornosti. Uspeh komunikacionog čina automatski postaje estetski vredan rezultat, čime se konstituiše jedna otvorena, nenormativna estetika. Umesto da krene od problematične figure Drugog, slobodna improvizacija polazi od ideje o brisanju granice između Ja i Ne-Ja kroz voljno, osećajno, intuitivno i refleksivno utapanje individue u kolektiv. Kolektiv kao *druga priroda* individualnosti ostvaruje u slobodnoj improvizaciji jednu utopijsku egzistenciju. Njen dinamizam kreće se u rasponu od uživanja do traume, od kontemplacije do ekstaze, od razobručenosti do askeze. Slobodna improvizacija je neka vrsta urbane psihodrame. Desubjektivizacijom muzike

iz vremena, nestanka u njemu i postanka njime. To je u podjednakoj meri lepa umetnost slušanja i komuniciranja kao i još delikatnija umetnost tišine. To je jedina muzička umetnost u kojoj celokupnu 'partituru' čine ja i drugi, kao i prostor i trenutak u kojem se sve dešava. Improvizacija je jedina muzička umetnost koja se zasniva u potpunosti na poverenju.“ Alvin Curran, „On Spontaneous Music“, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 25, Nos. 5/6, October/December 2006, 483–490 (483).

- 4 „Improvizacija deli sličnu strategiju alijenacije: njena pretenzija ka životu van formi zagušujućeg institucionalizovanog poretka – bilo da je reč o zapadnjačkoj klasičnoj estetici (Kejdž), kapitalističkoj kulturi pod belaćkom dominacijom (džez), ili drugim komercijalnim faktorima i ustanovljenim estetičkim sistemima – vodi ka rađanju slobodne improvizacije i kao takva ostaje ključni estetski fokus“. Matthew Sansom, „Imaging Music: Abstract Expressionism and Free Improvisation“, *Leonardo Music Journal*, Vol. 11, 2001, 29–34 (33).

ostvarenom kroz emergenciju, a ne potiskivanje individualnosti, ona se konstituiše kao urbani folklor.

O temeljnom nerazumevanju između savremene alternativne muzike i integrativnog historiografskog diskursa svedoči tendenciozna kritika slobodne improvizacije. Različiti principi od kojih polaze kritičari i apologete slobodne improvizacije nalaze se u osnovi neutemeljenih korektivnih ambicija muzičke kritike i indiferentnih ili preosetljivih reakcija na njih od strane aktera na alternativnoj muzičkoj sceni. Kao svojevrsni korifeji muzičkog napretka, *free impro* muzičari kontinuirano privlače pažnju zaslužnih umetnika na „vrhu strele” muzičke istorije. Svoju skepsu prema dometima slobodne improvizacije svojevremeno je izrazio i Pjer Bulez, istakavši da preoštar fokus na fenomenu zvuka rezultira zanemarivanjem forme. Ovaj, verovatno najznačajniji kompozitor druge polovine 20. veka, izneo je stav u kojem tvrdi da „jedina struktura većih razmera koju KSI – ‘kolektivni psihotest koji pokazuje samo najosnovniju stranu pojedinca’ – može da ostvari jeste vrlo predvidljiv obrazac ‘uzbuđenje / smirenje / uzbuđenje / smirenje’.” (Canonne and Garnier, 145/146).⁵ Uprkos tome što je sám podvrgavao muziku apstraktnim oblikotvornim mehanizmima čija je procena nemoguća u režimu neposredne čulne opazivosti, Bulez je slobodnu improvizaciju ocenio iz stroge fenomenološke perspektive.

Kritika koja je slobodnoj improvizaciji upućivana sa adrese muzičkog modernizma često se zasnivala na konceptu organske forme koji počiva na pretpostavci o tesnoj i višeznačnoj vezi između delova i celine muzičkog toka. Međutim, slobodnoj improvizaciji je strana autonomna muzička logika čije stremljenje ka pojetičkoj ili estetijskoj izuzetnosti garantuje umetnički višak vrednosti.⁶ Takođe, organizacija muzičkog vremena u slobodnoj improvizaciji češće je orijentisana ka segmentiranoj, nego ka organskoj formi. Da li se, stoga, može zaključiti da kompozici-

⁵ Clément Canonne and Nicolas Garnier, „Individual Decision and Perceived Form in Collective Free Improvisation”, *Journal of New Music Research*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2015, 145–167 (145/146).

⁶ „Bilo koji stil ili pristup može biti usvojen, a improvizacija može postati deo nekog muzičkog dela, ali diskontinuitet između postavljenog plana dela i njegovog izvođenja ne ukida granicu između jednog takvog dela i slobodne improvizacije. Ove definicije sugerišu da improvizacija nije ubrzani kompozicioni proces. Bilo koja unapred smišljena ideja za improvizacionu aktivnost osujećuje improvizovanje muzičke strukture, a improvizacija tada postaje tehnika pre nego formalna disciplina. Unapred smišljeni plan smešta improvizacione elemente u kompozicioni okvir.” Valerie Pearson, „Authorship and Improvisation: Musical Lost Property”, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4, August 2010, 367–378 (367/368).

tori poput Buleza konstatuju neuspeh onog što slobodna improvizacija ni ne pokušava? Da li tragovi nesporazuma između određenih kompozitora i izvođača koji dele zajednički prostor *novog zvuka* vode do nerazmrsivih odnosa između avangardnih i modernističkih pojava u muzici 20. i 21. veka? Ključno pitanje, direktno vezano s prethodna dva, tiče se aktuelnosti samozastupanja slobodne improvizacije u savremenim historiografskim diskursima. Da li otpor slobodne improvizacije historiografskim narativima – koji, ma koliko insistirali na svojim postmodernim modifikacijama, uvek zadržavaju izvesan modernistički napon – svedoči o trajno avangardnoj prirodi ove muzičke prakse? Kao odgovor na postavljena pitanja nudim tezu o „starenju” slobodne improvizacije – istorijskom procesu tokom kojeg dolazi do jačanja modernističkog i opadanja avangardnog udela u konfiguraciji ideje slobodne improvizacije.

Kao ekcesna, eksperimentalna, hibridna i utopijska umetnička praksa, slobodna improvizacija neupitno ima avangardnu auru.⁷ Uprkos tome što je dosegla izvesan stepen popularnosti i prepoznatljivosti, ona se i dalje razvija u krugu alternativnih muzičkih institucija. Snimanje, reprodukovanje i objavljivanje slobodno improvizovane muzike danas nije retka pojava, ali se ipak ne može govoriti o komodifikaciji i komercijalizaciji ove muzičke prakse, niti o slabljenju njenog subverzivnog potencijala. Ako se bezuslovna kolektivna participacija, deautorizovana proizvodnja i depersonalizacija stvaralačkog ponašanja ne posmatraju kao stremljenje ka regeneraciji nekog arhaičnog muzičkog bića, jedina tradicija kojoj slobodna improvizacija zaista pripada jeste tradicija *zero hour* muzike posle Drugog svetskog rata. Sam pojam slobodne improvizacije opire se kodifikaciji i kanonizaciji na očigledan način. Međutim, slobodna improvizacija nije anarhična niti eklektična muzička praksa. Sloboda koju ovaj muzički pravac artikuliše sve manje je sloboda za nešto, a sve više sloboda *od* nečega.⁸ Ako se na početku razvoja slobodne improvizacije

7 „Nadrealistička zaokupljenost snovima i upotreba ‘automatskog’ metoda istakli su značaj nesvesnog, kao sile prisutne u svakodnevnom životu, ali i, što je još značajnije, kao orijentacije u umetničkom radu. Ovi postupci, zajedno sa upotrebom neobičnih materijala, obeshrabruju namernu kontrolu i ohrabruju razvoj nesvesnog imaginarijuma. Sve to ukazuje na značajnu sličnost sa procedurama slobodne improvizacije, tako da prethodni opis automatskog pisanja snažno podseća na proces slobodnog improvizovanja.“ Matthew Sansom, „Imaging Music: Abstract Expressionism and Free Improvisation”, op. cit., 31.

8 „Istorija ‘zapadne’ muzike dvadesetog veka u svom modernističkom i postmodernističkom vidu može se posmatrati kao niz pokušaja da se muzika oslobodi

suspencija konvencija zasnivala na *uključivanju* novih zvučnih fenomena, poput akustičkog šuma ili elektronski sintetizovanog zvuka, recentna praksa insistira na disciplinovanom *isključivanju* starih oblika muzičkoestetskog ponašanja. Na primer, jedna od definicija slobodne improvizacije kaže da je ona apstraktna muzika bez melodije, harmonije i ritma. Druge definicije polaze od nepostojanja zapisa ili ukidanja kompozicionog procesa. Diskurs slobodne improvizacije definisan je, dakle, *granicama* kao najčešćim odgovorom na modernističko pitanje *identiteta*.

Stav da slobodna improvizacija nije slobodna u apsolutnom smislu nalazi potvrdu i u literaturi o ovoj muzičkoj praksi. U tekstu *Playing by the Rules: A Pragmatic Characterization of Musical Performances* Ričard Kokrejn (Richard Cochrane) ističe da je

(...) jasno da slobodnu improvizaciju okružuju zabrane. Sasvim je sigurno da muzičar u takvim okolnostima neće svirati pravilan ritam, akorde poznatog džez standarda, materijal koji je isključivo u C-duru ili vesele popularne melodije jednu za drugom. Sasvim je očigledno da je slobodna improvizacija okružena velikim brojem zabrana, i to u tolikoj meri da upotrebu reči „slobodna“ treba smatrati problematičnom.⁹

Navedeni primeri nepoželjnih elemenata u improvizacionom diskursu donekle jesu simplifikovani, ali nisu pogrešni. Teško je zamisliti da bi se tokom izvođenja slobodne improvizacije mogla javiti želja za tonalitetom C-dura ili neprekidnim ponavljanjem popularne melodije, ali ako bi se to i dogodilo, takva želja vero-

od različitih oblika tiranije – pravila i tradicija, kako stvarnih, tako i imaginarnih: harmonije bazirane na terčnoj akordici; prijemčivih melodija; dvanaesttonske temperacije; metrički regulisanog pulsa, zvučne boje evropskog orkestra, opsega instrumenata, standardizovanih trajanja, straha od nereda i haosa, straha od tišine. Tokom sredine i kraja 60-ih godina svedočimo pokušajima da se obuhvate svi ovi aspekti oslobađanja muzike kroz istovremeno fokusiranje na filozofsko, političko i ekonomsko oslobađanje muzike od same sebe – to jest, oslobađanje muzike čak i od potrebe da bude oslobođena. Bez obzira na to, konkretizovano i uopšteno 'oslobađanje' muzike ne samo od svih predašnjih muzičkih ideologija i praksi, već i od čvrsto ukorenjenih društvenih i ekonomskih osnova kakvi postoje na Zapadu, postalo je utopijski izazov prihvaćen na mnogo različitih načina, od strane brojnih posvećenih muzičara i na celom svetu.“ Alvin Curran, „On Spontaneous Music“, op. cit., 484.

⁹ Richard Cochrane, „Playing by the Rules: A Pragmatic Characterization of Musical Performances“, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58:2, Spring 2000, 135–142 (141).

vatno ne bi bila pretočena u intenciju. Na putu između želje i namere isprečio bi se korpus latentnih, negativnih i obavezujućih normi – *kanon zabrane*. Teodor Adorno je ovaj pojam preuzeo iz kruga Šenbergovih ideja i razvio u svojoj *Filozofiji nove muzike*. U uvodu Adornove knjige nalazimo tvrdnju da „rastvaranje svih tekovina nije rezultiralo mogućnošću da se po volji raspolaže svim elementima građe i tehnike (...) već je umetnik postao prost egzekutor posebnih intencija koje mu se, izbijajući u vidu neu-moljivog naloga iz tvorevina na kojima radi, suprotstavljaju kao nešto tuđe”¹⁰ Kasnije, u poglavlju o Šenbergu, Adorno objašnjava anticipirani pojam kanona zabrane.

Danas kompozitoru nipošto ne stoje na raspolaganju sve one nekad upotrebljene kombinacije tonova bez razlike. Čak i tuplje uho primećuje otrcanost i izlizanost umanjene septime ili nekih hromatskih prohodnih nota u salonskoj muzici devetnaestog vijeka. Ta neodređena nelagodnost preobraća se za onoga ko je tehnički iskusan u jedan kanon zabrane. On već danas, ako nas sve ne vara, isključuje sredstva tonaliteta, dakle sredstva sveukupne tradicionalne muzike. Ne samo zato što bi oni akordi bili zastarjeli i nesavremeni. Oni su lažni.¹¹

Adorno nije pribegao samo negativnom određenju kanona zabrane, već je opisao i pokretačku snagu stvaralačkih ograničenja u sklopu teze o dijalektičkom kretanju muzičkog materijala. Za Adorna se „stanje tehnike (...) prezentira kao problem”, a „kompozicije nisu ništa drugo do (...) riješenja tehničkih skri-valica”¹² Uloga kompozitora svodi se na „izvršavanje onoga što njegova kompozicija objektivno od njega traži”, a da bi „bio tako poslušan, kompozitoru je potrebna sva moguća neposlušnost, samostalnost i spontanost”¹³ Kanon zabrane, dakle, ukazuje na pogrešne pravce u rešavanju kompoziciono-tehničkih problema, povezujući untarsvetska pitanja stvaralačkog postupka i društveno-istorijsku poziciju muzike. Kao takav, kanon zabrane predstavlja svojevrsnu *istorijsku svest*.

¹⁰ T. Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike*, transl. Ivan Focht (Beograd: Nolit, 1968), 46.

¹¹ Ibid, 61–62.

¹² Ibid, 64.

¹³ Ibid, 64.

U kontekstu slobodne improvizacije kanon zabrane se manifestuje kao inhibitorna sila o čijem dejstvu, između ostalog, svedoči preterana uzdržanost koju je kritičar Kajl Gan (Kyle Gann) primetio u kolektivnoj slobodnoj improvizaciji iz kasnih 80-ih.

Često sam primećivao da muzičari sposobni za divne solo improvizacije upadaju u nerazgovetne klišeje kada improvizuju u grupi. Dok sviraju sami u stanju su da provedu muzički motiv kroz iznenađujuće obrte i okrete. Ali kada se nađu u grupi oni „slušaju previše“, odgovarajući jedan drugom na znakove i čineći jedno te isto sve više i više. Kada neko ubrza, drugi ubrzaju takođe. Kada neko postane glasniji, drugi ga i u tome slede. Rezultat je taj da se skoro svaki impro set kreće pravolinijski ka velikom, bučnom vrhuncu, nakon čega postepeno opada do onog stvarno predvidljivog trenutka u kojem svako istrajava, istrajava i istrajava u nastojanju da pronađe pravu poslednju notu, ali je neminovno propušta.¹⁴

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Gan je usmerio kritiku zvučnog ostvarenja slobodne improvizacije na kreativni grč, svedenu imaginaciju i osujećeno uživanje u izvedbenom činu. Ovaj autor je uočio da posvećenost i odgovorno ponašanje često limitiraju događajnu i doživljajnu vrednost improvizovane muzike.¹⁵ Drugim rečima, evidentirao je negativan uticaj kanona zabrane na slobodnu improvizaciju.

Istorijska svest predstavlja jednu od glavnih pokretačkih snaga moderne muzike. Zatvaranje starih „proizvodnih pogona“ muzike tokom 20. veka pratilo je otvaranje novih „postrojenja“ u „stvaralačkim radionicama“ Šenberga, Veberna, Stravinskog, Kejdža, Buleza, Štokhauzena i drugih kompozitora. Nema sumnje da je umetnost odricanja produbila i obogatila improvizacioni jezik, ali je neupitno i to da se njime sve opreznije govori zbog

¹⁴ Kyle Gann, „A Statement on Free Improvisation“, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 25, Nos. 5/6, October/December 2006, 619–620 (619).

¹⁵ „Kao kritičara prati me reputacija da ne cenim dovoljno improvizaciju. Ta reputacija je nezaslužena. U stvari, postoji mnogo improvizatora čiju muziku volim da slušam iznova i iznova i sa nesmanjenim zadovoljstvom. Ali postao sam kritičan tokom godina u kojima je improvizacija bila na svom vrhuncu i kada su preterivanja i klišeji inherentni njenom mediju postali toliko sveprisutni da se više nisu mogli ignorisati.“ Kyle Gann, „A Statement on Free Improvisation“, op. cit., 619.

straha od greške. Zbog čega je kanon zabrane u savremenoj kompozicionoj praksi produktivan, dok se u slobodnoj improvizaciji ispoljava na restriktivan način? Odgovor na postavljeno pitanje treba tražiti u blizini određenja kanona zabrane kao potrage za rešenjem kompoziciono-tehničkog problema.

Kompoziciono-tehnički problem nije samorazumljiv pojam, već apstraktna kategorija koja sugerira kreativno čitanje kompleksnih sklopova, višestrukih potencijalnosti, polivalentnih logika, te konvergentnih i divergentnih usmerenja onog muzičkog materijala koji obezbeđuje individuaciju muzičkog toka. Ne oslanjajući se na Adorna, već imajući pred očima Kolingvudovu (Collingwood) i Djujjevu (Dewey) podelu umetničkog rada, Valeri Person (Valerie Pearson) je primenila kategorije *rešavanje problema* (*problem solving*) i *traženje problema* (*problem finding*) na diferenciranje kompozicione i improvizacione prakse.¹⁶ Za ovu autorku kompozicija je orijentisana ka *rešavanju problema*, jer polazi od unapred utvrđenih pretpostavki, među kojima su konkretne norme, odstupanja, ograničenja i stremljenja, dok se, sa druge strane, slobodna improvizacija zasniva na efemernom, kontigentnom i interaktivnom procesu *traženja problema*. Iz opisane perspektive postaje očigledno da se produktivna uloga kanona zabrane uspešnije ostvaruje u *problem solving* umetničkom radu, kako u stadijumu „predisređenja građe” o kojem govori Adorno u vezi sa dvanaesttotskom muzikom, tako i u refleksivnoj, intuiitivnoj i emocionalnoj pripremi za stvaralački čin.

Postoji mogućnost i drugačijeg posmatranja odnosa između kompozicije i slobodne improvizacije. Vrlo često se muzički tok slobodne improvizacije zasniva na *perpetuiranom sadašnjem trenutku* i tada se razlika između kompozicije i improvizacije zaostvara, uprkos tome što u određenim muzičkim pravcima, poput

16 „Kolingvud (Collingwood/1958) i Djuj (Dewey/1934) sugeriraju da postoji razlika između rešavanja problema –označenog umetničkim planom koji se realizuje kroz umetnički medij – i traženja problema (t. j. rada sa umetničkim medijem koji uključuje improvizaciju, započinjanje bez ideje). Rešavanja problema se po definiciji može primeniti na kompoziciju. Kompozicija je predstavljanje problema i rešenja, i konstituiše se kao dovršeni projekat. Kompozicija je rezultat procesa rada, ali ne i sam proces koji je izostavljen iz finalnog ostvarenja. Kompozicija može biti deljena i realizovana nezavisno od kompozitora. Traženje problema je, s druge strane, efemerno, kontigentno i neodvojivo od zajedničkog ličnog iskustva u određenom trenutku, čime se izjednačava sa slobodnom improvizacijom. Delo koje je predstavljeno jeste sam proces, konzumiran i proizvođen sinhrono, zbog čega je nemoguće reprodukovati ga.” Valerie Pearson, „Authorship and Improvisation...” op. cit., 372–373.

minimalizma, nailazimo na sličan tretman muzičkog vremena. Međutim, to ne znači da se u okviru improvizacionog diskursa ne primenjuju i kompleksne metode integracije i diversifikacije muzičkog toka, karakteristične za kompozicionu praksu. Oslanjanje na mehanizme retencije i protencije u složenim strukturama muzičkog vremena približava improvizaciju *real time* kompoziciji. Ukoliko se zamislimo nad konceptima *rešavanja* i *traženja problema*, uočavamo da se oni ne isključuju, već dijalektički prožimaju u slobodnoj improvizaciji. Uprkos tome što u ovoj muzičkoj praksi po pravilu nema unapred definisane izvođačke agende, ponekad se prave okvirni dogovori o formi, materijalu i efektima koji će se koristiti, ili se neće koristiti. Takođe, dobra praksa nalaže da se muzičari koji unapred znaju da će svirati zajedno upoznaju sa zvučno-muzičkim ličnostima jedni drugih, kako kroz razgovor, tako i kroz zvučne i video zapise. Ako nema nikakvih dogovora ili upoznavanja, očekuje se da prvi segment impro seta protekne u nekoj vrsti „ispitivanja terena”, odnosno *traženja problema* koji će se u toku seta *rešavati*.

Slobodna improvizacija je krajnje raspršena i decentralizovana muzička praksa, zbog čega je teško biti dovoljno obavešten o pravcima njenog razvoja u globalnim okvirima da bi se uočile bilo kakve sveobuhvatne tendencije. Ipak, čini se da se eksperimentalni i istraživački impulsi u slobodnoj improvizaciji sve više povlače pred imanentnom reestetizacijom koju diktira istorijska svest. Reestetizacija podrazumeva stabilizaciju i tipsku podelu na *narativni*, *meditativni* i *gestualni* improvizacioni diskurs. Navedeni tipovi razlikuju se prema tretmanu muzičkog vremena, odnosno *efektivnoj gustini promena* u muzičkom toku. U gestualnoj improvizaciji je frekventnost promena najveća, dok je u meditativnoj najmanja. Meditativna improvizacija zasniva se na ravnomernom muzičkom vremenu, statičnoj formi i prolomljenom sadašnjem trenutku. Narativna improvizacija se može shvatiti kao ranije opisana *real time* kompozicija u kojoj se prošlost, sadašnjost i budućnost muzičkog toka integrišu na osnovu kontrasta i/ili variranog razvoja unutar segmentirano-blokovske forme. Gestualna improvizacija oslanja se na nesvesni psihizam muzičkog ponašanja. Rastrazana je, heterogena i podseća na nadrealističko „automatsko pisanje”. Njen muzički tok odlikuje veliki broj promena po jedinici vremena, što za posledicu ima afirmaciju permanentne sadašnjosti na doživljajnom nivou. Predloženi tipovi improvizacionog diskursa predstavljaju hipotetički okvir za kritičko-analitički pristup slobodnoj improvizaciji. Kao

takvi, oni ne pretenduju na konačnost, sveobuhvatnost i univerzalnost, već artikulišu okvir za potencijalnu istorizaciju jednog neuhvatljivog fenomena.

Proces fiksiranja negativno određenih pravila u slobodnoj improvizaciji rezultira adornoovskim sedimentiranjem duha – „verziranim“ impro muzičarima jasno je čega treba da se odreknu da bi ostvarili zvučnu sliku u skladu sa očekivanjima. To znači da konvencije i estetska namera u slobodnoj improvizaciji ostvaruju dijalektičku relaciju sa spoznajom da prepuštanje konvencijama i estetskoj nameri ovu muziku vode u rutinu i ponavljanje, sami tim i *pad* iz slobodnog područja. Negativno definisanje pojma, istorijska svest i strukturno približavanje *real time* kompoziciji predstavljaju glavna uporišta modernističkog zaokreta slobodne improvizacije, premda se modernistički impulsi mogu detektovati i na planu intertekstualnih relacija između slobodne improvizacije, egzistencijalističke filozofije i apstraktnog ekspresionizma. Kao muzika koja ne uspeva da suspenduje svoju modernost u istorijskom trenutku koji joj na to daje puno pravo, slobodna improvizacija predstavlja izazov za buduću istoriju muzike. Koliko god kritički bile orijentisane buduće historiografske strategije, one će morati da prepoznaju slobodnu improvizaciju kao muzički pandan dematerijalizaciji umetnosti, simptom zasićenja muzičkom robom, pokušaj transcendiranja subspecijalizacije i, uopšte, podele rada u muzici, demistifikaciju stvaralačkog čina, suzbijanje izvođačkog egoizma, kombinaciju uživalačkog i kritičkog slušanja, te reafirmaciju čulnog, ali ne i ukidanje mišsonog režima zvuka.

Nemanja Sovtić

Historical Consciousness of Free Improvisation

Free improvisation is a major challenge for musical historiography. The discussion on the notion of free improvisation is a part of historization of a complex phenomenon whose configuration is not visible if the question of what free improvisation is today is asked before the questions of how this music practice emerged and developed.

Various written reviews agree on the genealogy of free improvisation. The influences of *free jazz*, the European avant-garde after the Second World War and the American experimentalism are being mentioned as the crucial ones. The initial intertwining of the mentioned music genres occurred during the 60s of the 20th century. The role of John Cage is seen in the light of the strong connection between indeterminacy and *freedom* in music,¹ but it is noticed, as well, the distancing of free improvisation from Cage's concept of non-intentionality. European and American composers, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Sylvano Bussotti, La Monte Young, Morton Feldman and others, included improvisation in their creative practices, but not as a total formative power and an alternative ontological ground, but for the sake of destabilization, and consequently for the regeneration of the musical piece understood as the hierarchical organization of sound. When it comes to improvisation, the change of the paradigm occurred within the framework of *free jazz*. The "release" of improvisation in *free jazz* has been achieved in the sound and form, that is, on the plan of musical material and its disposition in time. Instead of a form relying on the harmonic progression

1 "John Cage's brand of experimentalism underwent a transformation when it was imported into the UK in the 1960s. There, in contradiction to the American's well-known preferences, indeterminacy became twisted up with jazz-derived free improvisation, owing to discourse that stressed performer freedom and creativity while downplaying notions of non-intention and discipline. The authors of these commentaries created the discursive conditions for a mingling of avant-garde traditions, but the material conditions owed more to the efforts of Victor Schonfield, whose nonprofit organization, Music Now, acquired Arts Council subsidies on behalf of a stylistically heterogeneous avant-garde that included artists working with both improvisation and indeterminacy." Benjamin Piekut, "Indeterminacy, Free Improvisation, and the Mixed Avant-Garde: Experimental Music in London, 1965–1975", *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 67/3 (2014), 769–824 (769).

within the *chorus* and *open for solo* sections, jazz musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Charles Mingus and Sun Ra, have opted for a consistent improvisation discourse based on “fresh, spontaneous flow of ideas” and “exploration of all the sounds that could be drawn out of instruments”²

The most prominent representatives of free improvisation from the 60s onwards have not been, however, individuals, but groups of musicians, including AMM (UK), *Spontaneous Music Ensemble* (UK), *Musica Elettronica Viva* (Italy), *Sonic Arts Union* (USA) and other ensembles. A deep mark in the history of free improvisation has been left by the internationally renowned artists, such as Cornelius Cardew, Frederic Rzewski and Derek Bailey, but, in spite of this, free improvisation remained a synonym for alternative and collective music practice. Instead of suspended poetic, aesthetic and stylistic conventions, the musical and social connection between the actors on the stage of improvised music is built by the nonconformist personal sensibilities, convergent ideological beliefs and, often, a common political attitude. Earlier “sedimentary-like deposits” are swept away for the sake of the idea of a new musical and social community in which the romantic myth of the harmonious relationship between Me and Us is being revived beyond the framework of particle identity constructions, such as nationhood and ethnicity. The pathos of self-representation, counter-cultural existence and revolutionary energy pose, however, an obstacle to a steady historiographical narrative of free improvisation. The need for such a narrative stems from the decades-long ripening of free improvisation, during which, behind the mythic nihilation of historical logic, more evidently appears a kind of historical consciousness. Before examining this historical consciousness, mythical ascriptions and descriptions of free improvisation should be carefully considered.

Apologia of this musical practice puts in the forefront the spontaneity, courage and responsibility of this music practice. The heroic articulation begins with immanent musical courage to leave the “safe ground” of the musical piece, notation and recognizable sound idioms in improvisational practice.³ The on-

² Michael Tosko, “Free Jazz and Free Improvisation”, *Booklist*. March 15, 2005, Vol. 101, Issue 14, American Library Association, 1317, 1p.

³ “Improvisation is the art of becoming sound. It is the only art in which a human being can and must become the music he or she is making. It is the art of constant, attentive and dangerous living in every moment. It is the art of stepping outside

tological status of free improvisation directly leads to the doorway of its social opposition. In the context of capitalist social production, a music event devoid of object relations shares the subversive position with strategies of dematerialization of art. In this way, free improvisation absorbs the negative impulses of social reality and sublimates them into a critical statement about the world. In other words, free improvisation detects and transcends *alienation*.⁴ As a symptom of social alienation, it is marginal, overwhelming and incomprehensible to contemporary consumers of eminent and popular music culture. On the other hand, it is inclusive, democratic and participative, because by partial or complete abolition of division of labor in music, it deterritorializes the field of sound and exposes the repressive nature of musical skill. Class-like articulated aesthetic criteria are pulled back in free improvisation in front of the original strength of gestural communication and untrammelled expression of sonic-musical identities, as Derek Bailey called them. The care for the success of the communication act, therefore, prevents the fall into the anarchy of arbitrary, vain and inarticulate music rhetoric. In free improvisation, the aesthetic criterion is hypostasized by the ethics of responsibility. The success of the communication act automatically becomes an aesthetically valuable result, by which an open, non-normative aesthetics is constituted. Instead of starting from the problematic figure of the Other, free improvisation starts from the idea of erasing the boundary between Me and Non-Me through the willing, sensual, intuitive, and reflexive fusion of an individual into the collective.

The collective, as *the second nature* of individuality, achieves a utopian existence in free improvisation. Its dynamism ranges

of time, disappearing in it, becoming it. It is both the fine art of listening and responding and the more refined art of silence. It is the only musical art where the entire 'score' is merely the self and the others, and the space and moment where and when this happens. Improvisation is the only musical art which is predicated entirely on human trust." Alvin Curran, "On Spontaneous Music", *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 25, Nos. 5/6, October/December 2006, 483–490 (483).

- 4 "Improvisation shares a similar strategy of alienation: the aspiration to live beyond forms of stifling institutionalized order— be it Western classical aesthetics (Cage); white-dominated capitalist culture (jazz); or other commercial factors and established aesthetic systems (the "underground") – led to the emergence of free improvisation and remains a key aesthetic focus." Matthew Sansom, "Imaging Music: Abstract Expressionism and Free Improvisation", *Leonardo Music Journal*, Vol. 11, 2001, 29–34 (33).

from enjoyment to trauma, from contemplation to ecstasy, from disorder to asceticism. Free improvisation is some kind of urban psychodrama. By desubjectivization of music achieved through emergence, and not by suppression of individuality, it constitutes itself as an urban folklore.

The tendentious critique of free improvisation testifies to the fundamental misunderstanding between contemporary alternative music and integrative historiographic discourse. Different principles the critics and apologists of free improvisation start from are based on the fundamentals of speculative corrective ambitions of music critique and indifferent or overreactions to them by actors on an alternative music scene. As a kind of coryphaeuses of musical progress, *free impro* musicians attract the attention of renowned artists “on the top of the arrow” of musical history. Pierre Boulez expressed his skepticism on the scope of free improvisation, pointing out that the over-focus on the sound phenomenon results in neglecting of the form. This, probably the most important composer of the second half of the 20th century, expressed the view in which he argues that “the only large-scale structure that CFI – a ‘collective psycho-test which only shows up the most basic side of the individual’ – can achieve is the very predictable pattern ‘excitement/rest/excitement/rest’”.⁵ Despite subjecting music to abstract formative mechanisms whose estimation is impossible in direct sensory observer mode, Boulez assessed free improvisation strictly from a phenomenological perspective.

The criticism addressed to free improvisation by musical modernism often originated from the concept of an organic form based on the assumption of a close and versatile connection between the parts and the whole of the music flow. However, it is unknown to free improvisation the autonomous musical logic whose pursuit of poetic or esthetic excellence guarantees an artistic surplus of value.⁶ Also, the organization of music time in

⁵ Clément Canonne and Nicolas Garnier, “Individual Decision and Perceived Form in Collective Free Improvisation”, *Journal of New Music Research*, Vol. 44, No. 2, 2015, 145–167 (145/146).

⁶ “Any style or approach may be adopted and improvisation may be part of the work, but the discontinuity between the conceived plan for the work and its performance distinguishes it from free improvisation. These definitions suggest that free improvisation is not an accelerated compositional process. Any preconceived idea for an improvisational activity makes it impossible for the inventor to improvise the structure of the music, and improvisation becomes

free improvisation is more often oriented to segmented rather than organic form. Can, therefore, be concluded that composers like Boulez claim the failure of what free improvisation does not even try? Do the traces of misunderstanding between certain composers and performers sharing the common space of new sound lead to the inseparable relationship between avant-garde and modernist phenomena in the music of the 20th and 21st centuries? The key issue directly related to the preceding two, concerns the actuality of the self-advocacy of free improvisation in contemporary historiographic discourses. Does the resistance of free improvisation to historiographic narratives – which, no matter how long insist on their postmodern modifications, always retain a certain modernistic tension – testify to the permanently avant-garde nature of this music practice? In response to the questions asked, I offer the thesis on the “aging” of free improvisation – a historical process during which, in the configuration of the idea of free improvisation, a modernistic part gets stronger, while the avant-garde one decreases.

As an excessive, experimental, hybrid and utopian artistic practice, free improvisation undoubtedly has an avant-garde aura.⁷ In spite of having achieved a certain level of popularity and recognition, it continues to develop within the circle of alternative music institutions. Recording, playing and publishing freely improvised music is not a rare phenomenon today, but still, it cannot be talked neither about the co-modification and commercialization of this music practice, nor about the weakening of its subversive potential. If unconditional collective participation, de-authorized production and depersonalization of creative behavior are not viewed as an aspiration towards the regeneration of an archaic musical being, the only tradition to

a technique rather than a formal discipline. The pre-conceived plan subsumes the improvisational element into a compositional framework.” Valerie Pearson, “Authorship and Improvisation: Musical Lost Property”, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4, August 2010, 367–378 (367/368).

- 7 “Surrealism’s fixation with dream imagery and the use of “automatic” methods of working established the significance of the unconscious, both as a present force in everyday life and more importantly as a source of direction in artistic production. These procedures, along with the use of unusual materials, discouraged deliberate control and encouraged the emergence of more unconscious imagery. Such factors provide significant similarities with the procedures of free improvisation, and the previous descriptions of automatic painting are strongly evocative of the processes of free improvisation.” Matthew Sansom, “Imaging Music: Abstract Expressionism and Free Improvisation”, op. cit., 31.

which free improvisation really belongs is the tradition of *zero hour* music after the Second World War. The notion of free improvisation itself resists codification and canonization in an obvious way. However, free improvisation is not an anarchic or eclectic musical practice. The freedom that this musical genre articulates is less and less freedom *for* something, and more freedom *from* something.⁸ If, at the beginning of the development of free improvisation, the suspension of the conventions was based on the *inclusion* of new sound phenomena, such as acoustic noise or electronically synthesized sound, recent practice insists on the disciplined *exclusion* of old forms of musical-aesthetic behavior. For example, one of the definitions of free improvisation says that it is an abstract music without melody, harmony, and rhythm. Other definitions start from the absence of notation or the abolition of the compositional process. The discourse of free improvisation is, therefore, defined by *boundaries* as the most frequent answer to the modernist *identity* issue.

The approach that free improvisation is not free in its absolute sense, finds its confirmation in the materials on this music practice. In the text *Playing by the Rules: A Pragmatic Characterization of Musical Performances*, Richard Cochrane points out that

(...) it is clear that prohibitions certainly surround a free improvised performance. A musician in such a setting may not strike up a regular rhythm, start to play the chords to a famous standard, play everything in the key of C-major, or continuously perform a cheerful popular tune. It is perfectly plain, then, that free improvised performances are surrounded by a great many prohibi-

8 “The history of ‘western’ twentieth-century music in its modernist and postmodernist attributes can be viewed as a series of attempts to liberate music from various forms of tyranny—rules and traditions real or imagined: triadic harmony, memorable melody, the twelve equal-tempered tones, metered regular pulse, European orchestral timbres, ranges of instruments, standardized durations, fear of disorder and chaos, the fear of silence. In the middle and late 1960s we witnessed attempts to embrace all of these aspects of musical liberation while focusing at the same time on the philosophical, political, and economic liberation of music from itself—that is, the freeing of music even from the need to liberate itself. Nevertheless, a momentary and generalized ‘freeing’ of music, not only of all former musical ideology and practice, but from its fiercely rooted social and economic basis in the West, became the utopian challenge taken up in many different ways, by a number of dedicated musicians throughout the world.” Alvin Curran, “On Spontaneous Music”; op. cit., 484.

tions, to such an extent that the use of the word “free” must be considered questionable.⁹

The aforementioned examples of the unwelcome elements in improvisational discourse are somewhat simplified, but not wrong. It is hard to imagine that during a free improvised performance, a desire for the key of C-major or the continuous repetition of the popular tune might appear, but even if so, such a desire probably would not have develop into an intention. On the way between the desire and intention, as an obstacle there would appear a corpus of latent, negative and binding norms – *the canon of prohibitions*. Theodor Adorno took this concept from Schoenberg’s ideas and developed it in his *Philosophy of New Music*. In the introduction of Adorno’s book, we find a statement that “the dissolution of everything pre-established has not resulted in the possibility of disposing freely over all material and technique (...) but the artist has become the mere executor of specific intentions, which confront him in the work as something foreign, and even as inexorable exigencies on which he labors.”¹⁰ Later, in the chapter about Schoenberg, Adorno explains the anticipated notion of the canon of prohibitions.

By no means do all tonal combinations ever employed stand indifferently at the disposal of the composer today. Even the duller ear perceives the shabbiness and tiredness of the diminished seventh chord or of certain chromatic passing notes in the salon music of the nineteenth century. For the technically experienced ear, vague discontent of this kind is transformed into a canon of prohibitions. If all is not deception, this canon now debar the means of tonality, which is to say, the whole of traditional music. Not only are these sounds obsolete and unfashionable. They are false.¹¹

Adorno not only resorted to the negative definition of the canon of prohibitions, but also described the driving force of creative limitations as part of the thesis on the dialectical flow

9 Richard Cochrane, “Playing by the Rules: A Pragmatic Characterization of Musical Performances”, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58:2, Spring 2000, 135–142 (141).

10 T. Adorno, *Filozofija nove muzike*, transl. Ivan Focht (Beograd: Nolit, 1968), 46.

11 *Ibid.*, 61–62.

of musical material. For Adorno “the state of technique (...) presents itself as a problem”; and “compositions are nothing but (...) the solution of technical puzzles”.¹² The role of the composer is reduced to the “execution of what his music objectively demands from him”; and “for such obedience, the composer requires all possible disobedience, all independence and spontaneity”.¹³ The canon of prohibitions, therefore, points to the wrong directions in solving compositional-technical problems, linking the in-the-world issues of the creative process and the socio-historical position of music. As such, the canon of prohibitions represents a sort of *historical consciousness*.

In the context of free improvisation, the canon of prohibitions is manifested as an inhibitory force, about whose effect, among other things, bespeaks the excessive control remarked by critic Kyle Gann in a collective free improvisation from the late 80’s.

Frequently I noticed that musicians capable of lovely solo improvisations fell into undifferentiated platitudes when they improvised with a group. Playing solo, they could take a motive through surprising twists and turns. But when they put a group together, everyone “listened too much”, responding to each other’s cues by doing more of the same. When one person got faster, another would too. When one person got louder, another would too. The result was that nearly every improv set moved linearly to a big, noisy climax, from which it slowly subsided until that thoroughly predictable moment in which everyone is extending, extending, extending, trying to find, the right last note and inevitably past it.¹⁴

Gann directed the criticism of the sound realization in free improvisation to the creative stiffness, reduced imagination, and frustrated enjoyment in the performance act. This author discovered that dedication and responsible behavior often limit the performance-related and perceived value of improvised mu-

¹² Ibid, 64.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Kyle Gann, “A Statement on Free Improvisation”, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 25, Nos. 5/6, October/December 2006, 619–620 (619).

sic.¹⁵ In other words, he noted the negative impact of the canon of prohibitions on free improvisation.

Historical awareness is one of the main driving forces of modern music. Closing down the old music “production machinery” during the 20th century was accompanied by the opening of new “facilities” in the “creative shops” of Schoenberg, Webern, Stravinsky, Cage, Boulez, Stockhausen and other composers. There is no doubt that the art of renunciation has deepened and enriched the improvisational language, but it is, as well unquestionable that it is more and more cautiously spoken, because of the fear of slip. Why is the canon of prohibitions in modern compositional practice productive, while in free improvisation it expresses itself in a restrictive way? The answer to the question asked should be looked for in the resemblance of canon of prohibitions to a search for a solution to the compositional-technical problem.

The compositional-technical problem is not a self-explanatory notion, but an abstract category that suggests creative reading of complex formations, multiple potentials, polyvalent logics, and convergent and divergent orientations of such a musical material that ensures the individuation of the music flow. Without relying on Adorno, but keeping in mind Collingwood's and Dewey's division of art, Valerie Pearson applied the categories of *problem solving* and *problem finding* to the differentiation of compositional and improvisational practices.¹⁶ For this author, composition is *problem solving* oriented, since it starts from predefined assumptions, among which are con-

15 “As a critic I have sometimes had a reputation as being unappreciative of improvisation. The reputation is misplaced. At least, there are many improvisers whose music I love and listen to with repeated pleasure. But I became a critic during years in which improvisation was at its high-water mark, and the excesses and cliché's inherent to the medium were too ubiquitous to ignore.” Kyle Gann, “A Statement on Free Improvisation”, op. cit., 619.

16 “Collingwood (1958) and Dewey (1934) suggest that there is a difference between problem solving—marked out by whether an artist has a plan which they will realize through an artistic medium—and problem finding (i.e. working with the artistic medium using improvisation, beginning without an idea). The definition of problem solving can be applied to composition. A composition is the presentation of a problem and a solution, and constitutes a finished product. This is a result of the working-out process, but not the process itself, which is omitted from the final work. The composition can be shared and realized separately from the composer. Problem finding, on the other hand, is ephemeral, contingent and inseparable from interactive personal experience in the moment, and equates to free improvisation. The work that is presented is the process itself, which is consumed and produced simultaneously and is impossible to reproduce.” Valerie Pearson, “Authorship and Improvisation...”, op. cit., 372–373.

crete norms, deviations, limitations and aspirations, while, on the other hand, free improvisation is based on an ephemeral, contingent and interactive *problem finding* process. From the described perspective, it becomes obvious that the productive role of the canon of prohibitions is more effectively realized in the *problem solving* creative process, both in the stage of “pre-organization of the material” that Adrono speaks of concerning the twelve-tone music, and in reflexive, intuitive and emotional preparation for the creative act.

There is also the possibility of a different view of the relationship between composition and free improvisation. Very often, the musical flow of free improvisation is based on the *perpetuation of the present moment*, and then the difference between composition and improvisation sharpens, despite the fact that in certain musical genres, such as minimalism, we find a similar treatment of music time. However, this does not mean that within the improvisational discourse, complex methods of integration and diversification of the music flow characteristic for compositional practice are not applied. Reliance on the mechanisms of retention and protention in complex structures of music time makes improvisation closer to a *real time* composition. If we think about *problem solving* and *problem finding* concepts, we notice that they do not exclude themselves, but rather interact dialectically in free improvisation. In spite of the fact that in this music practice, as a rule, there are no predefined performance agendas, sometimes there are rough agreements on the form, material and effects which are to be or not to be used. Also, good practice requires that musicians who know in advance that are to play together learn about the sound-musical personality of each other, both through conversation and audio and video recordings. If there is no agreement or familiarizing, it is expected that the first segment of the improv set pass in some kind of “pulse checking”, that is, in *problem finding* which will be *solved* during the set.

Free improvisation is an extremely scattered and decentralized music practice, which makes it difficult to be sufficiently informed about the directions of its development in a global context, in order to notice any comprehensive tendencies. Nevertheless, experimental and research impulses in free improvisation appear to be increasingly withdrawn before the immanent re-aesthetisation dictated by historical consciousness. Re-aesthetisation implies the stabilization and type division on *narrative, medita-*

tive and *gestural* improvisational discourse. These types differ according to the treatment of music time, that is, the *effective density of changes* in the music flow. In *gestural* improvisation, the frequency of changes is the highest, while in *meditative* is the smallest. *Meditative* improvisation is based on a uniform music time, a static form, and a prolonged present moment. *Narrative* improvisation can be understood as the previously described *real time* composition in which the past, present and future of the music flow integrate on the basis of contrast and / or varied development within the segmented-like form. *Gestural* improvisation relies on unconscious psychism of musical behavior. It is distorted, heterogeneous and reminiscent of surrealistic “automatic writing”. Its musical flow is distinguished by a large number of changes per unit time, resulting in the affirmation of the permanent present at the experiential level. The proposed types of improvisational discourse represent a hypothetical framework for a critical-analytical approach to free improvisation. As such, they do not pretend to be finite, comprehensible and universal, but they articulate the framework for the potential historicization of one elusive phenomenon.

The process of fixing negatively determined rules in free improvisation results in Adorno-like sedimentation of the spirit – for the “experienced” impro musicians, it is clear what they have to give up in order to achieve a sound image according to the expectations. This means that conventions and aesthetic intention in free improvisation achieve a dialectical relationship with the realization that giving in to conventions and aesthetic intention lead this music into routine and repetition, and in that way, *falling* from the free domain. The negative definition of the term, historical consciousness and structural convergence in a *real time* composition are the main pillars of the modernist turn of free improvisation, although modernist impulses can also be detected in the context of intertextual relations between free improvisation, existentialist philosophy and abstract expressionism. As music that fails to suspend its modernity in a historical moment which gives it a full right to do so, free improvisation is a challenge for future music history. No matter how critical future-oriented historical strategies are, they will have to recognize free improvisation as a musical twin of art dematerialization, the symptom of saturation with music goods, as an attempt to transcend subspecialization and, in general, the division of labor in music, as demystification of the creative act, suppression of

performing egoism, as a combination of critical listening and listening for pleasure, and as a reaffirmation of sensitive, but not the abolition of a reflexive sound regime.

Nemanja Sovtić

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