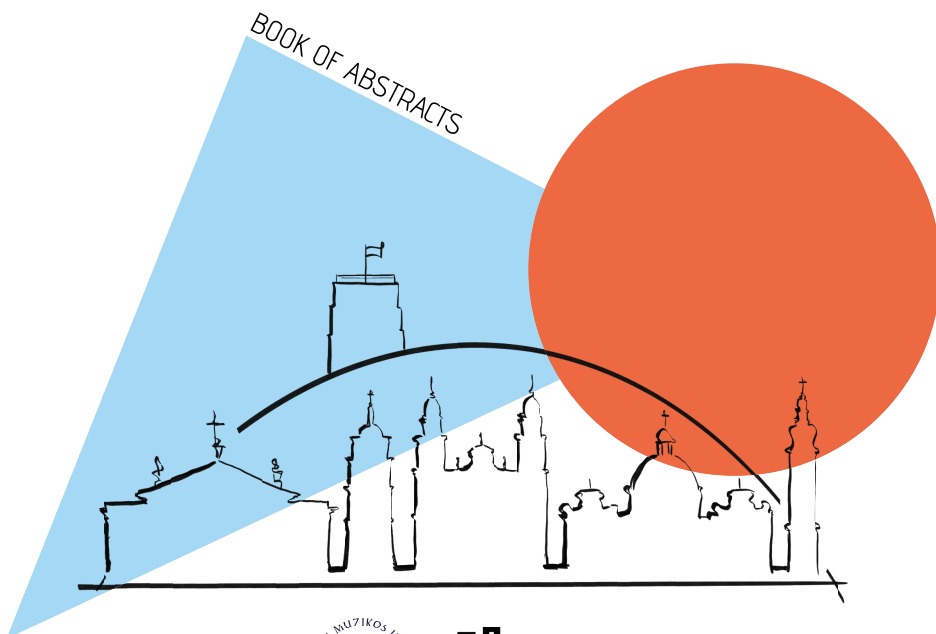


CENTENARY OF THE MUSICAL (TRANS)AVANT-GARDE

IMPULSES AND CONTEXTS



Internationale
Gesellschaft
für Neue Musik



ISCM Lietuvos sekcija
ISCM Lithuanian Section

2023

**CENTENARY OF THE MUSICAL
(TRANS)AVANT-GARDE:
IMPULSES AND CONTEXTS
BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

International Musicological Symposium
6–7 October 2023, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre
Vilnius, 2023

CENTENARY OF THE MUSICAL (TRANS)AVANT-GARDE: IMPULSES AND CONTEXTS

In 1923, the first festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music was held in Salzburg – the event became a model for the presentation of new music. The International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) was the first international organization to consistently promote new music and to bring together networks of composers, performers, and music critics in this genre. Founded on the initiative of Austrian composers, the ISCM has become an influential platform for the presentation and dissemination of the work of young composers and has contributed to the careers of generations of creative young people. To celebrate the centenary of the movement that gave rise to the international musical avant-garde, the Research Centre of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, together with the ISCM Lithuanian and Austrian sections, is organizing a symposium and a series of concerts on 6 and 7 October 2023, with a special focus on the impulses of the musical (trans)avant-garde and the movements of young composers. The symposium program includes lectures by Georgina Born (University College London), Monika Voithofer (University of Vienna), invited presentations by musicologists from Poland, Serbia, Georgia, Lithuania, compositions by Austrian and Lithuanian composers and premieres of young composers in the concert programs of the ensembles *Twenty Fingers Duo* (Lithuania) and the *duo ovocutters* (Austria), Agustín Castilla-Ávila's exhibition *Still Life with Silence* and a discussion on the global context of (trans)avant-garde movements in music, with the presentation of the collective monograph *Sonic Utopias* (2023).

Organizers:

Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre Research Centre
ISCM Lithuanian Section
ISCM Austrian Section



ISCM Lietuvos sekcija
ISCM Lithuanian Section



Internationale
Gesellschaft
für Neue Musik

In collaboration with

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Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, the main / 1st Building, Gedimino pr. 42, D. Matvejev photo

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Friday, 6 October 2023

Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Gedimino pr 42, Vilnius)

JUOZAS KAROSAS CHAMBER HALL

SYMPOSIUM OPENING

10:30–11:00

Exhibition *Still Life with Silence*: presentation by Agustín Castilla-Ávila
(International Ekmelic Music Society / Mozarteum, Austria)

LECTURE 1 Moderator Rūta Stanevičiūtė

11:00–12:00

Monika Voithofer. Globalisation – cosmopolitanism – contemporaneity. On aesthetic and political ambivalences of the musical avant-garde

Coffee break

12:00–12:15

SESSION 1 Moderator Monika Voithofer

12:15–13:15

12:30 Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak. Polish composers and the International Society for Contemporary Music in the interwar period

13:00 Rūta Stanevičiūtė. ISCM as a platform for emerging composers

Lunch Break

13:15–15:00

SESSION 2 Moderator Ivana Medić

15:00 Miloš Bralović. The avant-garde inspired by the universe: Josip Slavenski's cycle *Misterij* [Mystery] – concept, plot, and finished parts

15:00–16:30

15:30 Rima Povilionienė. Longing for new sound – (micro)tuning practices and composing in 20th–21st-century Lithuanian music

16:00 Rasa Murauskaitė. *I am a human, I am free*: speaking of freedom in Lithuanian operas (1990–2022)

16:30–17:00	Coffee break
17:00–18:00	Presentation of the collective monograph <i>Sonic Utopias (2023)</i> and general discussion
19:00	CONCERT: <i>duo ovocutters</i> (Austria) and <i>Twenty Fingers Duo</i> (Lithuania) (LMTA Great Hall)
20:30	Reception party

Saturday, 7 October 2023
Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (Gedimino pr. 42, Vilnius)
JUOZAS KAROSAS CHAMBER HALL

11:00–12:30	Interactive installation by Julijonas Urbonas <i>Planet of People</i> (The Lithuanian National Museum of Art)
12:30–14:00	Lunch break
	SESSION 3 <i>Moderator Rima Povilionienė</i>
	14:00 Ivana Medić. Ludmila Frajt: A quiet avant-gardist
14:00–15:30	14:30 Edvardas Šumila. The New York avant-garde, Jonas Mekas, and musical milieu
	15:00 Nana Sharikadze. Musical “contact zones” as the main impulse for Georgian music avant-garde under the Soviet rule (on the example of Natela Svanidze)
15:30–16:00	Coffee break
16:00–17:30	LECTURE 2 (online) <i>Moderators Rūta Stanevičiūtė and Monika Voithofer</i> Georgina Born. The dynamics of pluralism in contemporary digital art music
18:00	CONCERT: <i>Twenty Fingers Duo</i> (Lithuania) and <i>duo ovocutters</i> (Austria) (LMTA Great Hall)
20:00	Conference dinner

LECTURE PRESENTATIONS

Georgina Born

University College London | UK

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Saturday, 7 October, 16:00 (online)

The Dynamics of Pluralism in Contemporary Digital Art Music

Academic electroacoustic music, and specifically acousmatic music, the modernist lineage that came to prominence from the 1970s in universities in the UK, Canada and Europe, has been both hegemonic and waning for around twenty years.

In this presentation, based on a chapter from the book *Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology*, Born explores this state of affairs through an ethnography mainly of British university trainings in digital art music and related scenes, trainings she gathers under the term 'music technology degrees'. The aim is to probe the burgeoning pluralism of digital art music in the UK, as this presses on contemporary music writ large.

Her study focused on three leading British academic centers; it also involved contacts with music departments at several other British universities and the sound art research center at London's University of the Arts, as well as a series of European new music festivals, from Darmstadt to Ultima (Oslo) and MaerzMusik (Berlin). Born observed events and teaching, attended concerts and conferences, and made relationships with teaching staff, masters and PhD students. By analyzing the music technology degrees, the chapter analyses a heterogeneous field in motion, buffeted by larger historical processes.

A core premise is that music-educational change of the kind she portrays in the UK is both a barometer and a catalyst of wider musical, cultural, social and political changes. The net effect is the blossoming of an extraordinary but patterned diversity of idioms in digital art music, analyzed in the final part of the lecture. This leads to a discussion of how we should conceptualize pluralism in music today, and of the complex legacies and contemporary forms of the musical avant-garde.

Georgina Born is Professor of Anthropology and Music at University College London. Previously she held Professorships at the Universities of Oxford (2010–2021) and Cambridge (2006–2010). In her earlier life she had a professional life as a musician in experimental music, rock, jazz and free improvisation. Her work combines ethnographic and theoretical writings on interdisciplinarity, music, sound, and digital/media. Her books include *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (1995), *Western Music and Its Others* (ed. with D. Hesmondhalgh, 2000), *Uncertain Vision* (2004), *Music, Sound and Space* (ed., 2013), *Interdisciplinarity* (ed. with A. Barry, 2013), *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics* (ed. with E. Lewis and W. Straw, 2017), and *Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology* (ed., 2022). She directed the ERC-funded research program 'Music, Digitization, Mediation' (2010–2015) and in 2021 she was awarded a second ERC grant for 'Music and Artificial Intelligence: Building Critical Interdisciplinary Studies'. She has held visiting professorships at UC Berkeley, UC Irvine and Aarhus, Oslo, McGill and Princeton Universities.

Monika Voithofer

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Friday, 6 October, 10:00

Glocalisation – Cosmopolitanism – Contemporaneity. On Aesthetic and Political Ambivalences of the Musical Avant-garde

In 2022–2023, the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) is celebrating its centenary. One hundred years ago, with the trauma of the Great War still viscerally present in recent memory, a group of composers gathered in Salzburg. There, they laid the foundation for their utopian project of a society that would transcend national and aesthetic borders and beliefs in order to perform and promote the most current tendencies of the respective musical present. To date, as one of the world's oldest and largest societies for contemporary music, the ISCM continues to aspire towards these goals through its 48 section members in countries and regions on all continents around the globe (with the sole exception of Antarctica).

In analyzing genesis, internal structures, and debates within the ISCM from its beginnings to the present, I will reveal aesthetic and political paradoxes that allow conclusions to be drawn about continuities and ruptures within a larger context of music historiography in the 20th century. In particular, I will elaborate upon three dimensions that illustrate such ambivalences:

Firstly, I will argue, that the ISCM, as a **glocal** phenomenon that oscillates between local and global levels, inevitably underpinning mechanisms of marginalization and conformism since its foundation, contrary to its intention.

Secondly, the idea of internationalization in the sense of a **cosmopolitanism** cannot simply be read as a utopian ideal; it must also be (re-)interpreted as a necessity arising from the catastrophic developments of WWI and WWII and the traumatic experiences of forced migrations that followed.

And thirdly, the founding and institutionalization of the ISCM highlights a completely unconventional understanding of the concept of “contemporary” and **contemporaneity** as such – by positioning itself as an opposition to the term “New”. Therefore, as I demonstrate, the various temporalities and changed conditions of “contemporaneity” must be critically reflected upon.

Monika Voithofer holds a Postdoc Position at the Department of Musicology at the University of Vienna. She studied Musicology and Philosophy at the Universities of Graz and Vienna and completed her M.A. at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz with an award-winning thesis on the role of female artists within the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). In her doctoral thesis, completed in 2021, she scrutinized conceptual music and its entwined history with conceptual art practices from a transatlantic perspective. To this end, she pursued research at several institutions located in London, New York City, and Chicago. Her academic work is focused on music aesthetics, 20th century avant-gardes and contemporary music/art in the 21st century.

SESSIONS

Miloš Bralović

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The Avant-Garde Inspired by the Universe: Josip Slavenski's Cycle *Misterij* [Mystery] – Concept, Plot, and Completed Parts

Josip Slavenski (1896–1955) started drafting his cycle *Misterij* [Mystery] at the end of WWI. In the beginning, the cycle was imagined as a symphonic opera in two acts for soloists, mixed choir, and a full orchestra. Although the name of this cycle sounds similar to the unfinished *Mysterium* of Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915), the two concepts do not have much in common. While Scriabin's *Mysterium* is connected with Russian Silver Age symbolism, theosophy and religious mysticism, Slavenski's *Misterij* owes its conception to fundamental sciences. The cycle was supposed to cover all the essential events starting with the formation of the universe, the Solar system, Earth, flora, fauna and finally human evolution and human history. During Slavenski's stay in Paris, in 1925–1926, he drew his attention of the Zenithist literary avant-garde movement which emerged in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1921. The founders of the movement, Branko V. Poljanski (real name Branislav Micić, 1897–1947) and his brother Ljubomir Micić (1895–1971) recognized their own tendencies – the striving for the Balkanization of Europe and a comprehensive reform of the European art – in Slavenski's music, rooted in musical folklore. Slavenski's research of musical folklore, sound as an acoustic phenomenon and astronomy, led him to develop his own science, *astroacoustics*, during the late 1920s. Astroacoustics served as a foundation of the cycle *Misterij*. The avant-garde of *Misterij* lies in the 'translation' of the sounding of natural phenomena to 'cosmic music', as Zenithists called it, something that had never been heard before. Therefore, *Misterij* should have been made of sounds present in the universe – from black holes to earthquakes, and folksongs. Throughout the 1930s, Slavenski transformed his intended symphonic opera into a cycle of four symphonic/vocal symphonic pieces: *Heliophonia*, *Cosmogony*, *Prasymphony*, and *Religiophonia*. The only completed parts of this cycle are *Chaos* for full orchestra (1932), originally conceived as an introduction for *Heliophonia*, and *Religiophonia*, later renamed *Symphony of the Orient* (1934).

Miloš Bralović completed bachelor, master and doctoral studies at the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade. He is a researcher in the Institute of Musicology of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His fields of interests include modernist tendencies in Serbian music from the end of the WWI onwards, and outputs of various Serbian composers, Josip Slavenski, Milan Ristić, Stanojlo Rajčić, etc.

Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak

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Polish Composers and the International Society for Contemporary Music in the Interwar Period

The aim of the paper is to examine the participation of Polish composers in the ISCM in the Interwar period. If one talk about the participation of Polish composers in the ISCM and its festivals, Poland-based composers, living in the country which regained independence in 1918, largely worked on creating the image of the Polish state and their musical activities abroad were directly financed by the government. On the other hand, Polish émigré composers living outside of Poland mainly pursued their individual goals, such as Karol Rathaus (in Europe and North America) or Ludomir Michał Rogowski (in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Exploring new territories in the modernist or avant-garde movement, both the former and the latter faced a dilemma: national or cosmopolitan, national or supranational.

Dr. hab. **Jolanta Guzy-Pasiak** is a musicologist, the University of Warsaw graduate. She is the member of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences; a PhD and Habilitation (Arts Studies) at the same institution. The member of the Academic Board of IS PAN. A grantee of The Kosciuszko Foundation in New York and The Robert Anderson Research Trust in London. A co-editor of the *Muzyka*, the oldest Polish musicological journal. A member of Editorial Boards of journals: *Arti musices* (Zagreb) and *Lithuanian Musicology* (Vilnius). An Editor-in-Chief (together with Beata Bolesławska-Lewandowska) of a book series *Muzyka polska za granicą [Polish music abroad]*. Faculty advisor at Postgraduate Studies of Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences ('History of music and contemporary musical culture'). She lectured at the Collegium Civitas in Warsaw (2002–2015). The member of Honorary Committee for the Karol Rathaus Foundation. Her research interests are music of the first half of the 20th century, Polish émigré composers, music and politics, Pan-Slavism in music.

Ivana Medić

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Ludmila Frajt: A Quiet Avant-gardist

In this paper I discuss the life and work of a remarkable Serbian composer of Czech origin, Ludmila Frajt, married Franović (Czech: Ludmila Frajťová, 1919–1999), and multiple influences that shaped her complex personal and artistic identity. Born in Belgrade in a musical family that arrived to Serbia in 1903, Ludmila Frajt was the first woman to graduate in composition at the Belgrade Music Academy. The fact that she began her studies in the years before WWII is important because composers trained before the war were lucky not to be influenced by the doctrine of socialist realism during their studies. Ludmila Frajt wrote chamber, vocal-instrumental, electroacoustic, and applied music, and was one of the most original Serbian avant-gardists of the second half of the 20th century. In the 1960s and 1970s, she studied and assimilated the latest compositional techniques of the European musical avant-garde, in particular, aleatory, the idea of “open work”, and various multimedia experiments, and combined them with her already established interest in folklore and ancient rituals, and a tendency to employ unusual, quasi-archaic instruments and naturalistic sound effects; for example, some of her works are scored for instruments such as folk pipes, silver spoons and children’s toys. She also wrote electro-acoustic works such as *Asteroids* (1966–1967), *Nocturne* (1975), and *Figures in Motion* (1979). But unlike some loud avant-gardists, who wrote manifestos and rebelled against the establishment, Ludmila Frajt was a quiet avant-gardist, who can be regarded as a pioneer of “écriture féminine” in Serbian music.

PhD **Ivana Medić** is a Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Musicology, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and Associate Professor at the Department of Multimedia Design, Faculty of Computing in Belgrade. She is also a Visiting Research Fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London. She serves as President of the Serbian Musicological Society and Convener of the BASEES Study Group for Slavonic and East European Music (SEEM). She has published five monographs and over 90 articles, edited nine books and two catalogs. She is currently head of the research project *Applied Musicology and Ethnomusicology in Serbia: Making a Difference in Contemporary Society* – APPMES (2022–2024), financed by the Serbian Science Fund.

Rasa Murauskaitė-Juškienė

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“I am a Human, I am Free”: Speaking of Freedom in Lithuanian Operas (1990–2022)

“I am a human, I am free” is a phrase from the Lithuanian opera *Traviatas* premiered at the end of 2022. *Traviatas* gives a voice to people working in the sex industry. This provocative work of art inspired my curiosity to look deeper into how the idea of freedom has been expressed in Lithuanian operas after the restoration of independence in this small Baltic state in 1990 after 50 years of Soviet occupation.

Considering the difficult history of this country, the struggle for freedom has become an important component of Lithuanian identity. After occupations and oppression, freedom cannot be taken for granted here. The half-century under Soviet rule greatly affected Lithuanian society and hampered its development, especially in the field of human rights. That is why even after more than thirty years of independence, we still face many problems in the areas of LGBTQ+ and human rights in general.

In this paper I set out the thesis that from the last decade of the 20th century Lithuanian operas reflected and eventually encouraged changes in Lithuanians’ understanding of freedom. Most important operas created during the 1990s and early 2000s focused on issues of nation-building or revived the stories of famous figures in Lithuanian history. After the country’s sovereignty was strengthened through membership of international alliances, such as EU and NATO, the borders of the whole world opened, and artists turned their attention to issues of personal freedom and human rights. In this paper, I will be using examples from the operas *Prūsai* (1996) by Giedrius Kuprevičius, telling the story of the long-extinct Baltic tribe of Prussians; *Alfa* (2018) by Dr. Gora Parazit, Albertas Navickas, and Gabrielė Labanauskaitė, dealing with gender and sexual minority issues; and *Traviatas* (2022) by Maximilianas Oprishka and Artūras Areima, which documents real stories from the sex industry in Lithuania.

Rasa Murauskaitė-Juškienė, musicologist, culture journalist, and a senior editor at the LRT KLASIKA radio. In 2017 she graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre with a Master’s in Music Theory and Criticism. For half a year (2013–2014) she studied at the Paris National Conservatory of Music and Dance as well as the Paris School of Gregorian Chant. Since October 2022 she is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge. In 2023 Murauskaitė-Juškienė was awarded with the scholarship *Next 100* for her PhD studies. Since 2018, a lecturer at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and Vilnius University. Murauskaitė-Juškienė prepared the critical source edition *Liber Organistarum Collegii Cronensis Societatis Jesu* (2017) together with Laima Budzinauskienė in cooperation with Warsaw University, and edited the book *25 Years of Saint Christopher Chamber Orchestra* (2019). Murauskaitė-Juškienė has already published more than 300 reviews and interviews on culture, aired radio programmes dedicated to contemporary music with special focus on Lithuanian and Baltic music. She also actively participates in projects by European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Murauskaitė-Juškienė is a co-founder of the research network *Women and the arts in Eastern Europe*. Since 2022, she has been a member of Classical:NEXT Innovation Award Nominating Committee.

Rima Povilionienė

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Longing for New Sound – (Micro)Tuning Practices and Composing in 20th-21st-Century Lithuanian Music

Rapid advancement in technology and conscious opposition to the constraints of 12-tone temperament led to the increasing production of microtonal music at the beginning of the 20th century. In the context of creative ideas of *el sonido trece* (Julián Carrillo), sixth-tones scale (Ferruccio Busoni), bichromatic music (Willi Möllendorff), as well as the rich and refined oeuvres of Ivan Wyschnegradsky, Alois Hába, Charles Ives, the interwar Lithuanian music was enriched with the experiments by Jeronimas Kačinskas, transferring innovative ideas from Prague conservatoire and historically marking the first phase of microtonal composition in the Lithuanian musical panorama, however lacking the successors of Kačinskas' ideas and disrupted due to WWII. The emergence of the second phase spanning the 1970s to 1980s resulted as moderate manipulation with quarter tones, characteristic for close neighbor soundscape of academic music during the period, i.e. simply coloring or altering the ordinary harmonies of 12-TET. Since the last decade of the 20th century, principally started by Rytis Mažulis' advocacy for purified and highly precise microtonal approach, the establishment of composing with actual and derived scales and tunings simultaneously aligned with the notion that "nonstandard tunings offer a means to breathe new life into minimalism" (Douglas Keislar). The periodization of microtonality display in the Lithuanian contemporary music oeuvre should be integral to the development of microtonal composing practice. Thus, referring to the classification by Julia Werntz and Georg Friedrich Haas, supplemented with Mažulis's insights, questioning *how* the microtones are treated, the report will focus on the examination of contemporary Lithuanian works by Mažulis, Repečkaitė, Nakas, Germanavičius, Janulytė, Jurgutis, and others. The analysis allows to propose a binary model consisting of systematic and non-systematic application of microtones, operating with microtones such as expanding the borders of single tone (unison), ornamenting traditional pitches, shaping the glissando, manifesting integral micro-chromatics, etc.

Rima Povilionienė, PhD, is the member at the Lithuanian Research Council and a full-time professor at the Department of Musicology of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LAMT). She holds the position of assistant editor-in-chief of the annual journal *Lithuanian Musicology*, and an editor at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic. She has held internships at the Institute of Musicology at Leipzig University (2004) and IRCAM (2012), Eastman School summer courses in Paris (2019) and Manifeste Académie, IRCAM (2019, 2022, 2023). Rima has edited over 15 collections; her monograph *Musica Mathematica* (in Lithuanian, 2013) was awarded the Professor Vytautas Landsbergis Foundation Prize. Recently, she has published a collective monograph *Vox Humana Craftsmanship*, with co-authors Girėnas Povilionis and Diego Cannizzaro (Springer, 2022) and a collective monograph *Sonic Utopias. Trajectories and Contexts in Lithuanian Music Modernization*, with Rūta Stanevičiūtė, Vita Gruodytė and Donatas Katkus (in Lithuanian, 2023).

ISCM as a Platform for Emerging Composers

The International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) was initiated by young composers Rudolf Réti and Egon Wellesz during the epoch-making break. In the Interwar period, the gap emerging in the early 20th century between the regular concert life and the spread of contemporary music turned into a sharp conflict between composers and music institutions. The atmosphere of fury was particularly affecting the formation of a new generation of composers: in this context, not only did the ISCM become a model for the promotion of contemporary music, but it also significantly contributed to the emergence of the contemporary phenomenon of young composers.

At ISCM festivals, their mission as a platform for young composers was particularly pronounced before the WWII and during the first decade of the 21st century. In the periods of radical internationalization (modernity) and globalization (contemporaneity) of the contemporary music scene, the expectations for the introduction of young composers and the accompanying discourses of criticism differed. After the Society had been just freshly formed, the progressivist vision of the modernization of music stimulated the search for a genius of the new era. Particularly in the decade after the WWI, the festivals were expected to open up new talents and to indicate the direction of the new music movement to the younger generation. Meanwhile, in the early 21st century, special initiatives (such as competitions and prizes) to promote the work of young composers in the World New Music Days reflected the Society's efforts to break free from the obligations, which had turned into programming stagnation, to represent large national sections and at the same time enhance the prestige of the Society's festivals.

Rūta Stanevičiūtė is professor of musicology and research director at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Her current fields of interest are modernism and nationalism in 20th- to 21st-century music, philosophical and cultural issues in the analysis of contemporary music, music and politics, studies of music reception, and the theory and history of music historiography. She is the author of the monograph on ISCM and Lithuanian music modernization (2015, English version forthcoming in 2024), co-author of the books on Cold War and international exchange of Lithuanian Music (2018), and on (trans)avant-garde movement in Lithuanian music (2023). She has also edited and co-edited several collections of articles, including the recent collections *Microtonal Music in Central and Eastern Europe: Historical Outlines and Current Practices* (Ljubljana University Press, 2020), and *Music and Change in the Eastern Baltics before and after 1989* (Academic Studies Press, 2022). She is currently the principal investigator of the project *Moral Imagination in the 20th-21st-Century Lithuanian Music* and a researcher of the project *Lithuanian History and Mythology on the Opera Stage* (2022–2024, both funded by the Lithuanian Research Council). Since 2020, she serves as an editor in chief of the journal *Lithuanian Musicology*.

Musical “Contact Zones” as the Main Impulse for Georgian Music Avant-Garde under the Soviet Rule (On the Example of Natela Svanidze)

The concept of a contact zone in music reflects the broader notion of “cultural contact zones” introduced by Mary Louise Pratt in her essay *Arts of the Contact Zone* (1991). Pratt originally used this concept to describe spaces where different cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often resulting in the creation of new meanings, identities, and forms of expression. Much like the above-mentioned broader concept of a “contact zone”, a “musical contact zone” refers to a dynamic space where “cultural goods are exchanged” (Lisa Jakelski).

Soviet Union lacked a platform that could foster an exchange of views and ideas. Contact zones had a significant impact on the development and evolution of the musical avant-garde. The paper will argue that:

1. Namely these contact zones made it possible to build bridges between communities, promoting various musical styles and trends and, therefore, play a role of informational icebreaker; 2. Moreover, in a majority of cases, contact zones were linked to the idea of westernization of creative minds, which occurred through various channels, personal contacts, and external as well as internal contact zones; 3. The importance of the contact zones doubles especially through the light of dichotomy of official status of music in the Soviets and music that challenged an established norm and pushed the boundaries of musical expression.

This is exactly what made the various “contact zones” important for countries behind the Iron Curtain and especially valuable for peripheral Soviet republics such as Georgia. Natela Svanidze is the most neglected Georgian woman composer of Soviet times. She encountered a long wait until her works were performed for the first time on the stage in 2010. The fact that Svanidze drastically changed her style after she first visited the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1962 cannot be ignored. Serving as a contact zone, with its emphasis on cross-cultural interactions, exchange of ideas, and hybridization, WAF have played a role in shaping the Natela Svanidze as an avant-garde artist through cultural exchange and hybridization, expansion of sound palette, critique of cultural hierarchies, reinterpretation, and deconstruction.

Nana Sharikadze, PhD, Associate Professor and the Rector of the V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Her research and teaching are focused on 20th century music, totalitarian regimes and music. Participated in the various (inter)national conferences. Her research has been supported by the DAAD (2012), Georgian President Scholarship (2002–2004), Polish Institute of Culture in Tbilisi (2018, 2019) and Thesaurus Poloniae *scholarship* program (2022). Sharikadze was an invited lecturer at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She is a member of Georgian Composers and Musicologists National Union. Sharikadze is a frequent speaker on the problems of higher art education through AEC, Diku. Sharikadze was a member of the authorization council for higher educational institutions of Georgia (2017–2018). Chairman of the Sectoral Council for Higher Education in Music and Performing Arts (2022–2024) at the national center for educational quality enhancement of Georgia. In 2022, Sharikadze was awarded the Gloria Artis silver medal by the order of the Minister of culture of Poland for the development of the Georgian-Polish cultural relationships.

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The New York Avant-garde, Jonas Mekas, and Musical Milieu

Ironically, the notion of “milieu” in this presentation is not used in the philosophical sense, while it may evoke some of the elements of a metabolic relationship between Jonas Mekas’ intellectual persona and his musical environment. Jonas Mekas is known primarily as an avant-garde filmmaker, while in his native Lithuania, interestingly even more so, as a poet. However, his highly personal creative output is strongly imbued with musical images, allusions, and practices that connect his childhood experiences, friendships, and intellectual influence. Hence, this presentation explores the musical undercurrent running through Jonas Mekas’ films, writings, and experiences, as well as my own journey through these contexts leading to still evolving musical and curatorial ideas.

Edvardas Šumila is a scholar, writer, and curator, currently a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at The New School for Social Research in NYC. He started off as a pianist and entered the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, where he became interested in scholarship and his activities turned to musicology. Gradually, Šumila established his interests mainly in critical theory, aesthetics and politics, artistic intersectionality, and political commitment with a particular focus on the thought of Theodor W. Adorno. Recently he has been working on the theories of Second Nature in relation to the theories of the environment, specifically the notion of “milieu.” Šumila stood out when he won the first prize in the *Interdisciplinary Studies in Music: New Methods, Approaches, and Conceptions* competition held by the International Musicological Society when he was still an undergraduate student (2013, chair: Lydia Goehr, Columbia University, NYC) and was awarded professor Vytautas Landsbergis foundation award the same year. He is one of the founders and curators of AHEAD, a festival for electronic sound practices (held 2013–2018), and has also curated and directed *Druskomanija* (2015–2018), *Raseiniai* (2018), and contributed to the programming and publicity of Jauna muzika contemporary music festivals (2016–2018), while also working as a freelance curator for other events and exhibitions.

Notes

Centenary of the Musical (Trans)Avant-garde: Impulses and Contexts. Book of Abstracts. Editor: Rūta Stanevičiūtė. – Vilnius: Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, 2023. – 16 pages.

The Book of Abstracts publishes the texts for the International Musicological Symposium *Centenary of the Musical (Trans)Avant-garde: Impulses and Contexts*, held on 6–7 October, 2023, in Vilnius, Lithuania. The symposium brings musicologists from Austria, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, and UK together to approach the impulses of the International Society for Contemporary Music and international avant-garde movement from diverse conceptual and historical perspectives.

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