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Re/Constructing collective memory musically

The IMS Study Group *Music and Cultural Studies / Musik und Kulturwissenschaft* was established in 2007 in order to research the construction of cultural and social functions assigned to music and the interpretation of meanings communicated by a variety of musical manifestations. Among the various aspects of cultural studies, which are in focus of the Study Group, a significant place is given to the memory studies, that is, the concept of individual, collective, and historical memory. As Avishai Margalit explicated in her theory of memory, this concept basically includes two aspects: remembering and forgetting.

¹ These were further refined in Aleida Assman's contributions to the memory studies and applied in some of the presented papers by the members of the Study Group. Assman developed four models of memory especially related to traumatic past: dialogic forgetting, remembering in order to prevent forgetting, remembering in order to forget, and dialogic remembering.²

Having in mind that the memory is not personal, but socially constructed category (Maurice Halbwachs), it is considered by the members of the Study Group from the point of view of the collective memory, seen through arbitrarily chosen anniversaries aimed to foster national identity and (self)presentation. The papers were originally delivered at the session held on the fifth anniversary of the Study group, named *Celebrating anniversaries: Musical life between political practice and cultural policy*, in the framework of the Nineteenth Congress of the International

Musicological Society *Musics, Cultures, Identities*, 1–7 July 2012 in Rome. Therefore they demonstrate the theoretical statement on collective memory by the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who elaborated the concept of collective memory: ‘Collective frameworks are [...] precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.’³

Scrutiny on anniversaries celebrations as being signifiers of the collective memory, shed light on musical life in different empires or countries and in different periods – from the Habsburg Monarchy to the United States, in the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The musical life was (re)considered from the various points of view – musical, historical, historiographical, social, political, cultural – that is, from the interdisciplinary perspectives.

Since ancient times, music was a part of different public political, social, and cultural events. The entire early history of opera, for instance, developed due to the significant social events, such as weddings or wedding anniversaries of noble families, the ruler’s birthday and anniversary celebrations, a ceremony of crowning or alike. Besides, the (associations of) choral societies had their performances in the framework of political manifestations, often related to the nineteenth-century national movements. It is also a fact that mass spectacles with music have been important for the constructing identity of a state, especially in the communist countries (The National Holidays, the Labor Day on First of May, a birthday celebration of the president and others). The role of music during the Olympic Games and other world or regional sport competitions is also noteworthy, as one of the means for national promotion. These were only a few examples directed to contextualising music as cultural/political practice related to the public celebrations of important anniversaries,

in different historical periods, geographical areas, political and social circumstances. The papers presented in the first issue of the musicological journal *Mousikos logos* examine the mentioned aspects of musical practice through (new) case studies.

The six papers dedicated to the (national) anniversaries consider the celebrations of memorised historical dates, arbitrarily chosen as signifiers of the national identities, either rising and strengthening or transforming from a point of view of a multinational state identity into different national identities. Among the chosen significant events from a given further or closer national history are significant battles or wars (Mayer-Hirzberger, Ilić), seen as traumatic (Second Siege of Vienna 1683) or victorious (October Revolution in Russia in 1917, Yugoslav anti-fascist revolution during World War II) as well as establishing a new independent country (Stefanija: 'Music as a pointer...'). There are also sport or cultural events taken as representative in the celebrating the nation: the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens (Charkiolakis) and the birth of chamber music in the United States (Baldassarre). In other words, 'to remember is to commemorate the past' (Edward Casey).

The second part of this *Mousikos logos* issue includes three chosen papers from the Study Group's first conference *Private musical culture in the Habsburg Monarchy* held in 2007. While one case analyses the role of music in women's lives at the end of the eighteenth and in the first half of the nineteenth century in the capital of the empire (Szabó-Knotik), two others consider characteristics of salon and private society's music in the context of the public sphere in the former Habsburg provinces Slovenia and Croatia during the last decades of the long nineteenth century (Stefanija: 'A note on the Slovenian salon music aesthetics...'; Bezić).⁴

The papers are classified in geographical and chronological coordinates,

providing musical Central and Southeast European microhistories in the context of cultural studies. The authors of the presented papers are musicologists working at the academic institutions in Vienna, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Luzern, Athens, and Istanbul.

In the name of the members of the Study Group *Music and Cultural Studies/Musik und Kulturwissenschaft*, I would like to express my gratefulness to the editor of the journal *Mousikos logos*, Dr. Panos Vlagopoulos for the invitation and possibility to present our work in this distinguished musicological journal.

¹ Avishai Margalit, *The ethics of memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

² Aleida Assmann, 'From collective violence to a common future: Four models for dealing with traumatic past', in *Justice and memory: Confronting traumatic past*, eds. Ruth Wodak, Gertraud Auer Borea. Wien: Passagen Verlag 2009. 31–48.

³ Maurice Halbwachs, 'The social frameworks of memory', in *On collective memory / Maurice Halbwachs*, transl. and ed. Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992. 40.

⁴ The editor applied the ISO 9 (1968) international standard for the transliterations of Cyrillic, that is, Slavic names and title of the mentioned works of art into Latin.