

## **Melita Milin**

### ***Byzantium as a spiritual homeland for a 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian (woman) composer. Ljubica Marić's bridging centuries***

In the oeuvre of Ljubica Marić (1909–2003), who was one of the most outstanding Serbian composers, a prominent place is occupied by works in which different and subtle ways of communication with the Byzantine past have been created. A radical modernist in her youth, member of Alois Hába's avant-garde circle in Prague in the 1930s, after 1955 she turned to the cultural heritage of the Serbian Middle Ages, which she viewed essentially as an integral part of the much wider Byzantine culture. The fact that Yugoslavia was a communist country at the time, very much isolated from Western influences, had certainly a role in her becoming fascinated with Byzantium. After having discovered the Serbian orthodox chant, especially the collection of Octoechos chants, she started to compose works based on organized fragments from it. The most important among those pieces are those that make the cycle *Musica octoicha*, whose especially elaborated part is the *Byzantine concerto* for piano and orchestra (1959). When compared to her early atonal music and several post-war pieces close to Socialist Realism, the encounter with the Byzantine heritage proved to be most potent in provoking a creative response that was far from avant-garde trends of the times, but nonetheless modernist and intense. Ljubica Marić's "dialogues" with the past were at the same time a quest for national and individual identity, and musical meditations on time, transience and lasting values. Her works could get new layers of meaning if compared with the compositions of other authors – mainly by those from orthodox Christian countries – that have also been inspired by the rich Byzantine.

## **John Plemmenos**

### ***Meanings and Gender Issues in Eva Palmer's Musical Settings of English Poetry: An Ethnomusicological Approach***

This article deals with the musical life and activity of Eva Plamer-Sikelianou, an American-born wife of acclaimed Greek poet, Angelos Sikelianos (+ 1951). Although she originally got a western musical education as a youth in New York, she managed to study Byzantine and Greek folk music, and eventually to excel herself in both branches as a teacher as well as a composer. She settled with her husband in Delphi, Greece, and began to materialise one of her dreams, that is to revive ancient Greek tragedy in a modern context. To this end, she organised two Delphic Festivals (1927 and 1930) on the ancient site of Delphi, with many artistic activities taking place, among which the performance of Greek drama, *Prometheus bound*, accompanied by music on ancient modes and rhythms. During II World War, she went back to New York, only to carry on her teaching of Greek music and dance for an American audience. She conceived a model of Greek-Byzantine music applied to English poetry, which, to her eyes, would be the best possible one to attain artistic unity and perfection. She financed the construction of an organ possessing special extra keys to achieve the micro-intervals of Greek music.

**Thomas Beimel**

***Chiuituri : Myriam Marbe Composition for Children***

The Romanian composer Myriam Marbe wrote *Chiuituri* in 1978. It is a work with a dual aesthetic: she brings together in music different ways in which children and adults express themselves. The literal translation of the title is “a cry of joy”, in other words how people vocally express irrepressible happiness. There was little cause for such elation during the dictatorship. And certainly no opportunities for expressing it in public - save as propaganda. Myriam Marbe’s work is a stroke of genius. Within traditional Romanian music, *chiuituri* are a literary phenomenon linked to this customary manner of expressing joy. However, instead of taking the usual approach of misusing a tame version of folklore to fit in with a national communist ideology, Myriam Marbe gives children and adults the freedom to meet and go “mad” once in a while in an imaginary world of *joie de vivre*.