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# Dossier Thematic Eastern European Music in Global Context

*Dossier Temático*

*Música da Europa Oriental no Contexto Global*

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## Thematic Dossier

# Eastern European Music in Global Context

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It is with great enthusiasm that we present this thematic dossier on Eastern European Music in Global Context—a collection of articles that moves beyond traditional canonical studies to examine the profound relationships between musical creation, state systems, acoustic innovation, and the enduring construction of national identity. The thematic dossier highlights that the rich and often politically volatile history of Central and Eastern European art music must be understood not as series of insignificant events at a European periphery, but as a dynamic and crucial site of global cultural discourse.

The articles gathered in this issue explore three distinct vectors of this regional musical identity: the fragility of political infrastructure and its influence on creativity; radical acoustic experimentation rooted in local traditions; and the contemporary, defiant role of art music in asserting national sovereignty and memory.

The first contribution, ‘The Ascent and Decline of Serbian Symphonic Music’, by Ivana Medić, offers a vital commentary on the institutional lifeblood of art music. Medić’s analysis focuses on the rapid, state-supported development of the Serbian symphonic tradition during the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), followed by its swift collapse after the dissolution of the systemic infrastructure in the 1990s. This study provides a necessary corrective to ‘unproblematic’ historical accounts, establishing the history of the Serbian symphony as a dramatic, non-linear narrative defined by the fragility of institutional support. Medić concludes that the history of this genre ultimately confirms that the ideology of artistic autonomy cannot withstand practical challenges; in other words, without public subsidies and infrastructure, ambitious, large-scale contemporary works such as symphony cannot exist.

Moving from infrastructure to innovation, the second article, ‘Music in Natural-Tone System: Josip Slavenski, Microtonal Folklore, and Electroacoustic Music’, by Miloš Bralović, investigates the work of the seminal Yugoslav composer Josip Slavenski (1896–1955). Bralović presents compelling research on Slavenski’s unique microtonal system. By analyzing the

unperformed experimental piece, *Music in the Natural-Tone System* (1937)—which Bralović posits as the most accurate representation of the composer's 'musical truth'—the author positions Slavenski as a pioneering figure ahead of his time, whose innovations were often misunderstood and underappreciated. Despite the lack of performance and critical evaluation of *Music in the Natural-Tone System*, Slavenski's solitary yet bold compositional poetics left a distinct imprint, particularly on his students, the first successful contemporary female composers in Serbia, Ljubica Marić (1909–2003) and Ludmila Frajt (1919–99), whose peculiar interests reflected their teacher's visionary ideas.

Finally, Olha Kushniruk's article, 'Alexander Jacobchuk's Symphonies and the Construction of Ukrainian National Identity', brings the volume into the present moment of crisis and resilience. Written against the backdrop of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine (beginning in 2022), Kushniruk's scholarly (yet deeply personal) study examines how Jacobchuk's symphonies contribute to the defiant assertion of a sovereign Ukrainian national identity. The research is fundamentally motivated by the critical task of dismantling false Soviet interpretive layers and engaging with cultural memory as the foundation for collective identity. By offering a platform for reflection and contemplation, Jacobchuk's music stands as a powerful expression of national pride and solidarity, actively shaping the nation's collective memory and inspiring hope for the future.

Together, these three articles underscore the necessity of approaching Eastern European art music through diverse lenses—institutional, theoretical, and geopolitical. They demonstrate the region's vital role in shaping global conversations about musical support systems, acoustic theory, and the enduring power of music to construct and defend identity.