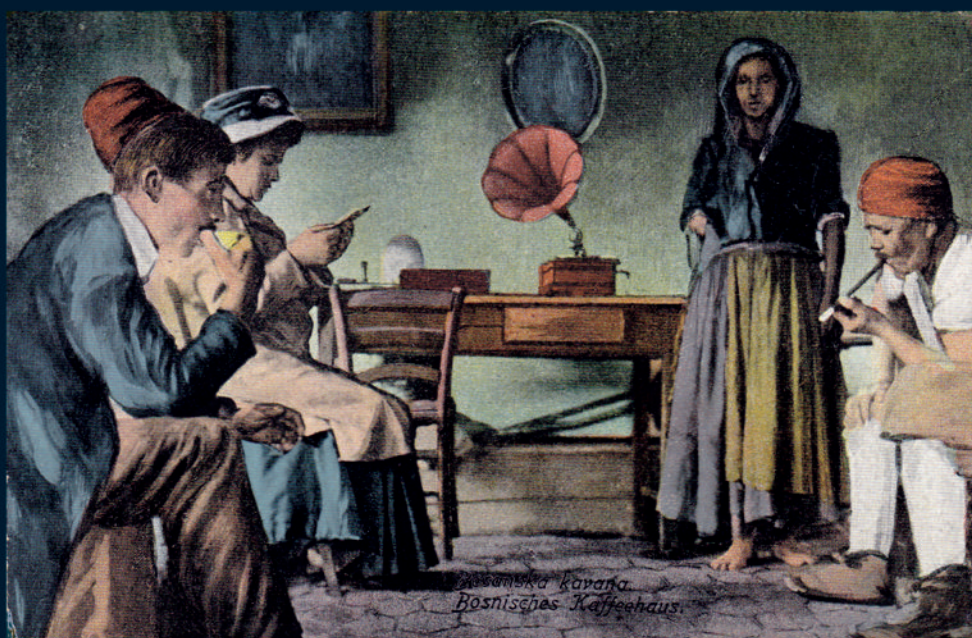


OTTOMAN INTIMACIES, BALKAN MUSICAL REALITIES



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BALKAN MUSICAL REALITIES

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BALKAN MUSICAL REALITIES

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The Balkan Wreath: Multicultural Balkan Identity in Film Music

Nevena Daković and Marija Ćirić

The turbulent history of the Balkans, conceived as crossroads (the point of intersection between Ottoman and Occidental influences), is examined as it is inscribed and constructed within the multicultural cinematic (sound)scape. Through an interdisciplinary approach combining ethnomusicology, cultural studies, film studies and anthropology, this article addresses the relationship between music, image and identity.

We argue that influences of identity of the Orient, the Balkans and the Occident and their intricate relations can be expressed in film music that, furthermore, articulates and expresses Balkan multicultural, intercultural and eventually transcultural identity. The formal structures, melodic and rhythmic patterns, instrumental colour and orchestration of such music represent the coexistence and interactions of the different identities in the common Balkan cultural space. Through the analysis of the chosen body of films by two authors, the paper focuses particularly on the work of the composer Zoran Simjanović (b. 1946) in collaboration with director Srđan Karanović (b. 1945). The five films chosen as case studies are: *Miris poljskog cveća* ("The Scent of Wild Flowers", 1978), *Petrijin venac* ("Petrija's Wreath", 1980), *Nešto između* ("Something in Between", 1983), *Virdžina* ("Virdzina", 1991) and *Sjaj u očima* ("Loving Glances", 2003).

The term "Balkan wreath" is a metaphor used in this chapter for Balkan music and other facets of culture which are constructed through intertwining various musical and cultural influences, and we analyse this phenomenon through concentrating on a narrower and specific space that accommodates the narratives and music scores of the selected films. This space is defined by the borders of former Yugoslavia as a typical Balkan country; its typical nature is constructed on the basis of ethnic, national, language, religious and cultural heterogeneity. The issue of former Yugoslavia as the paradigm of the Balkans and their identity expressed in images, legends and fiction-fiction forms has been raised during this century by different researchers, for instance military strategists, historians, politicians, anthropologists and cultural theorists. Regardless of the approach, the "Balkan problem" always turns out to be a Pandora's box. Furthermore, the negative spotlight which the raging Yugoslav wars cast over the region at the beginning of the 1990s revived the historical metaphor of the Balkan powder keg and yielded the hitherto richest and fullest meaning of the pejorative term "Balkanization".

The world book market continues to proliferate with books exploring the topic, either concerned with the different representations of the Balkans or searching for their putative essence, i.e. their "Balkanness".¹ Inspired by previous research, this paper seeks to briefly examine the representations and constructions of the Balkan hybrid and the multicultural identity in the film music of Zoran Simjanović. Thus, although the films belong to the cinema of the former Yugoslavia, they most certainly testify about the broader phenomena of Orientalism, Occidentalism and Balkanism in Balkan identity.

¹ See, e.g. Petrović 1989; Stoianovich 1994; Todorova 1997; Goldsworthy 1998; Norris 1999; Golemović 2006; Milosavljević 2007 and Hobsbawm 2008.

The problematization of the film score is somehow pushed into the background in spite of the fact that the work of music, although it is more discreet, is not less efficient. Additionally, research on the music as an element of the film text is supported by the claims that we live in a visual culture and that contemporary art theory prefers image.² Thus, the hypothesis of the analysis is that only joint works of image and music provide insights into the process of Orientalization, Occidentalization and Balkanization of the regional identity. The original film scores of Zoran Simjanović are not preserved and thus we are not able to provide concrete musical examples. The analyses are based upon the film soundtracks and interviews with Simjanović. We start with the theoretical framework and the definition of the basic terms and subsequently analyse the film scores as the multicultural and transcultural field of conflicting and interacting formative influences of the Orient, the Occident and the Balkans.

The Films in Multicultural Context

The three resonant terms, were conceived of as Orientalism, Balkanism and Occidentalism. In inspiring book, *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova offers a complex historical, political and geographic study of this topic and appropriates the original notion of orientalism provided by Edward Said. She discusses the relationship between Said's Orientalism and Balkanism, and suggests a definition through analogy as "dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short [...] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient".³ This paper expands Todorova's notions replacing -ism with -ization terms, i.e. Orientalism, Occidentalism and Balkanism are replaced by Orientalization, Occidentalization and Balkanization. The new -ization terms, instead of -isms, designate the broadest cultural influence in identity construction, self-representation and self-imaging. They imply the Balkan identity as the field of zealous conflict and dense interaction of all various cultures. All of the influences are to be found in the music score of Zoran Simjanović as an exponent of multicultural, dynamic Balkan identity, within the field of their representation and construction.

The notion of cultural identity is taken from the theories of Stuart Hall and his discursive approach: "In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them [i.e. identities] – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them".⁴ The Balkan identity is cinematically and musically constructed through narratives on diverse cultural border crossing: between the Orient and Occident and within the Balkans. The borders are concretely and metaphorically marked in space (the centre and periphery, Europe and the USA, the Balkans and Europe) and time, but also between male and female, refugees and old settlers, rural and urban, traditional and popular culture.

Srdan Karanović, a prominent member of the Czech School⁵ explains that within

² See, e.g. Fulkinjoni 1980; Jay 2006.

³ Edward Said, quoted in Todorova 1997, 7.

⁴ Hall 1997, 3.

⁵ The Czech School consists of the prominent ex-Yugoslav directors Rajko Grlić, Srdan Karanović, Goran Marković, Goran Paskaljević and Lordan Zafranović and the cameramen Predrag Popović and Živko Zalar who graduated from the famous FAMU (Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague) in the

his work one can distinguish three tendencies.

The first one is 'experimental.' These are films that offer space to amateur actors to allow them gain a reputation, films where improvisation allows different versions of popular culture to become the prevalent element of fiction (*Društvena igra/Society Game*, 1972; *Pogledaj me, nevernice/Faithless Woman Look at Me*, 1974; and *Miris poljskog cveća/The Scent of Wild Flowers*, 1977). [...] The second tendency is represented by films preoccupied with characters from the director's generation, where the plot is located in a middle-class environment (*Nešto između/Something In-between*, 1983; a section of *Za sada bez dobrog naslova/Film with No Name*, 1988). Here, the middle-class setting usually determines both the psychology of the characters as well as their morality: it imposes values and lifestyles, and determines relationships. The third tendency involves films that are, foremost, of 'ethnological interest.' These are based on myths and stories of the past, which include sufficient material to fuel the telling of a story. Films like *Virdžina* (*Virdzina*, 1991) and *Petrija's Wreath* [...]. In these films, it is popular tradition, manners and customs that determine the framework, and it is their dynamics that create the necessary conflicts in the plot.⁶

The film scores of Zoran Simjanović, one of the best and most prominent composers of film music in the region, are characterized by adaptability, unexpected textures and fine, catchy themes which were often created under the influence of popular music genres, including folk styles. His music smoothly transcends particular films; it independently achieves huge popularity (themes of *Nacionalna klasa* ["National Class"], 1979, dir. G. Marković), *Scent of Wild Flowers*, *Something in Between*; *Petrija's* theme is (mis)recognized as a folk song) and elegantly fulfils distinctive genre demands. Together, film and music vividly portray the situation and theme of the cultural identity clash which is typical and ever-present in Karanović's films that are of ethnological interest. These are based on myths and stories of the past, which contain sufficient material to fuel the telling of a story focused on identity transition, changes, mutual (re)defining and othering. *Petrija's Wreath* traces the rural-urban migration; *Something in Between* explores the relations between the Balkans and Europe, while *Virdžina* walks the tightrope of sexual ambiguity. The Balkan identity is metonymically problematized in the narrative about the main character through the identity transitions of rural-urban, male-female, national-(multi) cultural, patriarchy-modernity, America-the Balkans and West-East. Furthermore, the Balkan identity is expressed in the pattern of relations between various cultural legacies inscribed in iconography, *mise-en-scène* and music. As well as underpinning identity and the reality of the Balkans as intercultural space, film music also investigates the articulation of the moments of disenchanting reality. These moments are those of changes or loss of the original identity through the enchantment by the different, Other, and the encounter with the cultural "other".

late 1960s. Their filmmaking, however, is not stylistically uniform. The work of the Czech School initiated the revitalization of the Yugoslav cinema.

⁶ Daković 2006, 162–163. *Vlaško* in English means Vlachian, whereas the word *Vlasi* refers to the Vlachs.

Male-Female and Urban-Rural Turning Points

Most obviously, *Petria's Wreath*, *Virdzina* and *The Scent of Wild Flowers* are built upon the same ethnological and anthropological theoretical and genre foundations of melodrama and women's film. In the context of the predominantly macho Yugoslav cinema, Karanović stands out as a director adept at representing various women on-screen. *Petria's Wreath*, made after the eponymous novel of Dragoslav Mihajlović, recounts the life story of the ordinary and illiterate Petrija who is one of the strongest and most vibrant female characters of realistic literature. She lives through hard historical and personal moments, loses her dearest ones, only succeeds in gaining some emancipation, and moves from a small village to a blossoming miner's town. The narrative accommodated in the contrasted surroundings, together with an array of typical and persuasive characters, is neatly reflected in the musical themes and the overall score.

The ethnographic background here is provided by the vlaško surrounding. The Vlasi are an ethnic minority inhabiting the North East parts of Serbia and speaking a Romance language that is believed to be close to Latin. They live near the Bulgarian and Romanian borders and are known for magical talents that take on a certain primitive and atavistic sensibility, as well as for a supernatural heritage that finds expression in various superstitious beliefs, healing practices and fortune telling rituals.⁷

Since it is mainly women who are endowed with such powers, the world order is matriarchate, while the film genre can be described as a matriarchal melodrama. Petrija's greatest tragedy, accordingly, is her inability to bear or foster a child.

The conceptualisation of Petrija's theme sustains the ever-present motif of border transgression. The original melody belongs to Serbian folklore but is set apart from it. The increasingly complex harmonic structure reveals the assimilation of Western models which, in return, erase the untempered and modal rural tradition. The arrival to the town and ensuing emancipation is announced by the waltz-like character of the theme and by the arrangement which is in urban folk style; the waltz does not exist in Serbian rural folk music. Iconographically, the transformation is visible as she takes off her headscarf, cuts her hair short and perms it. In diegetic structure she is finally able to return the gaze, to look man straight in the eyes and she confirms her role as narrator.

The *Scent of Wild Flowers* could be viewed as a gender-inverted story of rebellion and emancipation, this time of the man, in search of a new, truthful and honest life. His escape involves the episodic appearance of a female Petrija-like figure. Ivan (Ljuba Tadić) is a cynical, promiscuous actor dreaming of an idealized rural-pastoral life far away from the stage, media and city. He decides to realize his dream of escape to the scent of wild flowers, but the curious media crowd and fans follows him. When the rural, almost utopian, resort is destroyed by obtrusive intruders, Ivan is disappointed; in the ambivalent ending, the issue as to whether anyone has found and gained something remains unsolved. The first musical theme of *The Scent of Wild Flowers* is meticulously and functionally related to Ivan's contemplations and indecisiveness, but retains a non-diegetic status. The first theme is shaped in a slow tempo, through a folk motif played on a non-folk instrument – the synthesizer. The melody successfully represents the ambivalence of Ivan's po-

⁷ Daković 2006, 164.

sition: being part of the urban milieu and being frustrated with the everyday city routine.

During his stay in “paradise lost”, Ivan longs for the ideal, rural (but somebody else’s) girl and experiences disappointment. As the rural milieu is divested of its “ideal” nature, the “ideal” Stana (Rastislava Gucić) goes through an (un)expected transformation. The moment of triple identity transgression – the loss of her rural appeal, her disappointment and timid steps towards emancipation – is marked by her playing the title theme on the leaf. She takes over the man’s task of playing the instrument. The second dance theme of the Serbian traditional dance *kolo* gradually acquires a more prominent place. Subtly revealing the true origin of the *kolo*, Simjanović underlines the revelation of the true nature of urban characters. The *kolo* theme emerges from another secondary theme which already depicts the contamination of the rural milieu. The melody is highly efficient in the theatricalisation and spectacularisation of the traditional modes of life saturated with rows, drunkenness and gluttony. All these audio, visual and narrative effects smoothly grow in the satirical media images.

Gendered identity transformations supported by music are also visible in the film *Virdžina*, which deals with the rural custom of the isolated Dinaric Serbs. The narrative of *Virdžina* is an austere, ethnographic story, while the twist and melodramatic happy ending allows for a strong pro-feminist reading. In the widest sense, the plot depicts a battle for true gender identity through the growth and development of the main female character. In some poor and ultra-conservative parts of the country, one of the daughters is ordered to adapt a male role if the family lacks a son. She pledges never to reveal her true gender but to accept the socially-imposed travesty that effaces her biological identity. These girls are called *virdžinas* or *virdžinas*. Virdžina (Marta Keler) grows up torn between two worlds, the hidden female and the public male, drifting into situations that are familiar from Shakespearean comedies and comic tradition in general, but acted melodramatically and occasionally highly dramatically. Someone is in love with him (or her); she is in love with a boy (her or his best friend) while he is in love with another girl: mapping out entangled love relations. Virdžina’s mother dies after giving birth to yet another daughter, and that prompts Virdžina to break through the sham and reveal her true woman-self. Her initiation is both carnal and emotional as she, for the first time, meets intimately with the man-boy she loves. She decides to run away with him and his uncle to America, taking her baby sister with her. When the small group is walking through the barren countryside, Virdžina’s father appears, threatening to kill her if she does not return. The boy’s uncle, also revealed to be a *virdžina*, kills him. While Virdžina cries over the father’s dead body, parting from the past and the country, the long-awaited rain starts to fall.

Here, the gender conflict stands for multiple identity conflicts: between the biological and inherent on one hand, and the social and imposed on the other; between private and public; between natural, progressive and ritual, atavistic and, finally, between the present and the past – resulting in an ultra-conservative concept of patriarchy that turns out to be auto-subversive. Auto-subversiveness is additionally expressed through the elaborate score and inscribed “musical labour division” analogous to the phallogocentric structure of the society.

Despite the prevailing patriarchate, Virdžina’s constant fight for the denouncement and announcement of her true identity transforms the film into an undercover story of the matriarchate. When dealing with the Serbian traditional cultural and musical concepts, the notion of music obviously exists in two separate forms: singing (*pesma*) and playing

(*svirka*), or vocal and instrumental.⁸ The former positions the woman as the backbone of the Serbian vocal tradition, but does not exclude the man from the vocal tradition⁹. In the latter case, a musical instrument belongs to men and makes the playing of the music a “man’s” duty¹⁰. As the main musical theme of the film lacks singing, it confirms that men oppress and dominate women. The singing is set apart, pushed into the background, arguing the separation of *pesma* and *svirka*.¹¹ The instrumental part is imbued with the Dinaric tradition; the melodic line is untempered and the range restricted.¹² The theme underlying the score is played on the duct flute named *svirala* or *frula*. In the score of *Virdžina*, both terms could be applied as the story takes place at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹³

The *svirala* or *frula* explicitly represents the spiritual context of the film *Virdžina*. The sound of the flute with its levelled, almost monotonous rhythmical progression and simplified two-bar melodic line, convenient for fragmentation and sampling, perfectly epitomizes the meagre musical substance of the Dinaric region. The fact that Simjanović uses the forms of musical instruments ambivalently glorifies the seemingly dominant patriarchy, while simultaneously and emphatically concealing the true, female identity of the main character.¹⁴

Singing is heard only occasionally. The girl in the role of a man only secretly reveals her femininity when stealing the dolls from her sisters and singing when nobody hears her. Women are traditionally given the roles of *dodole* or rainmakers summoning the rain, in periods of drought. When no one hears her, the *virdžina* hums the melodies heard from the *dodole* groups of girls going around the villages and pleading for rain.

Lastly, the music can be understood as an exponent of the Serbian national identity, which is equal to the tribal one. Simultaneously, the music raises the question of the eternal tribe, or whether the nation inevitably preserves and keeps characteristics of a tribe.¹⁵ The hybrid character of the score, using music from different historical periods, when Serbs were interchangeably labelled as an eternal tribe, ethnicity and nation, supports the thesis that the tribe or the ethnicity are synonymous with the nation. Furthermore, the music confirms that the nation and national identity are still, after a century of disputes, “an organism that changes slowly, and can endure influences, but has a pure ethnic core reflected in language, memories, emotions; and this core must be purified from foreign influences as the major cause for *bleeding*, and its members must be convinced that they are the same as they had been a thousand years ago in order to save the nation”.¹⁶ The recognition of bleeding as a purely female characteristic relativizes the notion of purification; the nation epitomized in the group leaving for America. The nation is to be

⁸ Petrović 1989.

⁹ Golemović 2006.

¹⁰ Golemović 1995.

¹¹ Petrović 1989.

¹² See Golemović 1995, 102.

¹³ *Svirala* and *frula* are almost synonymous terms for a typical Serbian woodwind instrument. The word *svirala* can refer to all kinds of woodwind instruments, but the basic meaning of the word refers exclusively to a duct flute; the *frula* is synonymous with it. In addition, *svirala* is the term used in the western parts of former Yugoslavia, while *frula* is used in the eastern parts, and supposedly it derives from the Vlach language. Today, the distribution of the terms is blurred because of migration and the interferences of musical traditions; *frula* is undoubtedly the more frequently used term, however (Gojković 1989, 88, 175).

¹⁴ See Ćirić 2008, 56.

¹⁵ See Ćirić 2009, 116.

¹⁶ Milosavljević 2007, 230.

preserved and sustained exclusively by its female members since it leaves the single true male member lying dead.

Multicultural Identity: The New York of the Balkans

Something in Between is one of the rare pure melodramas in the cinema of former Yugoslavia. The carefully-written script is by a group of authors, among whom the American screenwriter Andrew Horton provided a formative foreign gaze. The film is “a portrayal of a young American woman journalist who, in a brief six-week stay in Belgrade” on her way to Istanbul “finds herself caught ‘in between’ her sexual and sentimental attachments to two Yugoslav men who are best friends”.¹⁷ Here, an unexpected stay in Belgrade provides the opportunity for examining stereotypes and prejudices on both sides and for arriving at new self-recognition. Belgrade is presented as a place of initiation and coming to maturity, providing a nostalgically-viewed return to the lost paradise of the pre- or early consumerist era. Under the American visitor’s scrutinizing gaze the city undergoes a miraculous change from an old-fashioned, prejudice-ridden Socialist capital with Ottoman feudal hues to the “New York of the Balkans”, a city rewritten in cosmopolitan terms.

Being both a melodrama and a nostalgia film, *Something in Between* permits the analysis of the complex role the music plays in both genres. The main bittersweet musical theme during the opening credits is deciphered as a melody of remembrance. Furthermore,

Nina Kirsanova’s appearance and the first words uttered in her old female voice, slightly cracked and trembling, with a strong Russian accent evoke part of the Belgrade urban myth. It is the myth of the 1920s, of white Russian refugees as the last traces of the romantic and nostalgically-looked-upon era of Czarist Russia; of the role they played in cultural life and European urbanization of Belgrade. Probably, the awareness of her Russian origin allows us to compare the music of *Something in Between* with Maurice Jarre’s theme of *Doctor Zhivago* (1965, dir. David Lean) regarding the magnitude of mood and emotional variations. Moreover, both films are great melodramas when the importance of music is confirmed both etymologically – melodrama derives from the combination of melo+drama, or drama with music – and functionally. In the Shakespearean way, music is the food of love, as in melodrama it expresses and ‘nurtures’ the genre’s pertaining emotions of love, sorrow, despair, romance etc. The narrative growth is underlined by the variations of the opening credit’s motives. After Kirsanova’s scene-a-clef of the card game jablan or ‘something in between’, the opening credits begin. They are made up of the set of photographs from the Dubrovnik episode – the moment of creation of a ménage à trois as well as of paradise lost – showed on the zoetrope: the optical toy that preceded the invention of cinema. When the wheel – its literary meaning is the wheel of life – spins, the photographs are put in motion, they are brought back to life, and the past is instantly revived. The memory narrative is retold through the turning of the wheel and relived by the audience. The circular moves echo the motive of the *Merry go Round* (of their relation, destinies, technical device) or *Le Tourbillon* that is another of the repleted references to *Jules et Jim* (1962, dir. François Truffaut). Thus, the very first shots set the triple-pastiche nostalgic evocation of the history, the (hi)story of their

¹⁷ Goulding 2002, 175.

past love (photos); the history of film as media (zoetrope) and history of cinema as art (Jules et Jim).¹⁸

The overall hues of pastiche, provided by contaminated references, are most obvious in the portrayal of Marko (Dragan Nikolić). He is a Belgrade's *bon vivant* and the owner of the restaurant *Clementine* (*My Darling Clementine*; 1940, dir. John Ford), which is decorated with posters of cult scenes from *Casablanca* (1943, dir. Michael Curtis). As a popular culture connoisseur and fan, who knows English, he explains his own life attitudes through popular culture lines from films, music and comics. In addition, the wristwatch, that reminds him of appointments, plays different film tunes. The carefully selected music from *Godfather* (1972, dir. Francis Ford Coppola) to *The Sting* (1973, dir. George Roy Hill) provides some additional comment on the main narrative situation. On a more general level, Marko creates a pastiche image of Belgrade and the Balkans by perpetuating controversies and prejudices made in the West about the country, as well as by translating reality into Western idioms. This translation perfectly illustrates Frederick Jameson's claim that "the very style of nostalgia films [is] invading and colonizing even those movies today which have contemporary settings as, though, for some reason we were unable to focus our own present, as though we have become incapable of achieving aesthetic representations of our own current experiences".¹⁹

The stylistic escape of the film is symptomatic of the crises of former Yugoslavia: the timid beginning of the break-up of the country and shattered identities. Such issues are too traumatic to be presented in any contemporary regional language, and thus the film escapes into the idioms of the past, Western popular culture, cinematic and popular culture memories that acquire explanatory value for outsiders. The film constructs Belgrade as a multicultural space, a space of ubiquitous transcendence of cultural and identity borders, a space where everything is like somewhere else with a bit of Vienna, Budapest and Italy. Accordingly, the score has the important task of mapping out a multitude of meanings situated somewhere in-between: between Turkey, Vienna and New York, between capitalism and communism, between wine and soda, i.e. spritzer, and, finally, between two men.²⁰ Eve (Caris Corffman) cannot decide until the very end whether to choose Marko or Janko.

The theme appears as a simulation of barrel organ or circus music, which weaves together several cultures accidentally present in Belgrade at the beginning of the 1980s; the period when the Yugoslavian capital was truly the New York of the Balkans. Simultaneously, the theme points to the underpinning concept of the Socialist Yugoslavian "circus". Simjanović occasionally handles the melody in common time and orchestrates it in the style of a big classical Hollywood score; as well as the glamorous Hollywood style, he emphasizes the power of the system from which Eva originates. The theme has a hymnal or march-like character. The Hollywood-ized conception of music underlines the overall American hegemony based not only on "bombs, but on an immense wealth of the USA and the core role its gigantic economy had in the world", as Hobsbawm writes. He further concludes that, regarding culture, the hegemony is based upon the allure of the consumer's society and its multiplication through the Hollywood conquest of the world.²¹

¹⁸ Daković 2008, 158–159.

¹⁹ Jameson 1993, 170.

²⁰ See Ćirić 2009, 112.

²¹ Hobsbawm 2008, 15.

Simultaneously, the theme neatly reflects the identity split of the characters, their longing for the West amidst Belgrade's Western-like glamour of the years that develops through the plot.

The most complex presentation of the theme is found in the barrel organ melody of the epilogue which is arranged for a symphony orchestra, and repeats the re-emphasized waltz-like tune of a vicious multicultural circle. As well as the standard instruments of the symphonic orchestra, instruments of the pop, rock and folk music spectrums, i.e. the electric guitar, bass guitar and cimbalom, are used. Simjanović again relies upon the charm of recognition in the new context, particularly in the colours of the sounds from the margin. He frequently uses old, played-out and untunable musical instruments or non-musical objects, such as combs and leaves, that produce the desired sound; fusing the classical and standard instruments. Such an exploitation of traditionally incompatible instruments can, according to Peter Kemper, be compared with the witticism of the bricolage combinatorics, i.e. the unconventional use of pre-existing elements, which offers a richness of association. The recognition of a theoretical joke expressed in contrast sustains the richness of association.²² The marked contrast unites the plethora of various identities in a common multicultural circle, thus marking their intricate relations. Through music we learn that these cultures are not incompatible with each other, nor are their overlaps coincidental.²³

Karanović's 2004 film *Loving Glances* could be seen as a variation of the generational theme, imbued with typical sentimental optimism. The story depicts a love triangle set among a group of refugees in Belgrade in the late 1990s. As a cross-over between characters from previous works, the protagonists in the film, Labud (Senad Alihodžić) and Romana (Ivana Bolanča), possess the same stoicism and soft humorous resignation as Petrija. They also talk with spirits from the past who, unlike Petrija's, keep them apart. The talk evokes the eternal conflict between the urban identity of the young refugees and the traditional nationalism of their peasant ancestors. Set in Belgrade, in the years of crises before the wars of the nineties, the narrative neatly combines nostalgic and grey Belgrade, warm and romantic love stories between refugees with humour, and a basically stoic and slightly pessimistic life attitude. The reminiscing of the characters sums up their identities as in-between urban and rural, displaced, lost, melancholic – yet warm – human beings. They bring together recognizable binaries; rural-urban and old-young are explored throughout Karanović's work.

Simjanović opts for a functional theme whose original form is taken from pop music and, as such, symbolizes the general urban setting. Depending on the character it depicts, the theme develops into an instrumental or a song, folk or popular music number shaped in the urban or the rural manner. It charts the space of Serbian and Balkan national and cultural identity as essentially transcultural and transnational. The final scenes take place on a football pitch metaphorically presented as a "sport" battlefield for the warring parties and identities. The fight of the real, invented or mythical ancestors is replete with an amazing wreath of Balkan identities: Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Serbian, Slovenian, Turkish, Greek, Croatian and even Neolithic. They all coalesce into the image of Labud's multicultural identity, accompanied by the particular variation of the main theme. He is ethnically undefined, and he explicitly chooses to be nationally neutral in music as well. His variation of the basic theme retains the Serbian language but distanciates itself from

²² See Kemper 1993.

²³ Hobsbawm 2008, 15.

any other folk music determinant, thus staying within the transnational pop genre.

Otherwise, the title theme of *Loving Glances* is presented as a multilingual construction that goes beyond the Balkans as in the moments of tranquillity, joy or pleasure; the characters of the film hum the song in his or her own language or dialect – not only Balkan but also in French and English. The appearance of “Simjanović (as) himself”, as a fine touch of *mode retro*, in this last of the thematically-related films, contributes to the intricacy of references and music. Simjanović is a member of the band playing the title song of the film, simultaneously re-enacting a part of his real career. His figure inscribes an additional layer of personal memories, while the chronotope of the 1960s adds nostalgia for the time when the characters, the authors and the city were young. In addition, the film is saturated with nostalgia for the country that all Yugoslavs used to have.

The visual aspect and the audioscape of Karanović’s and Simjanović’s work successfully portray an array of Balkan identities. All elements map out both films and their Balkan provenance (especially of former Yugoslavia) as the field of a permanent and dynamic intercultural encounter. The role of music in the composite audiovisual systems, such as film, is usually defined in terms of psychology and emotions. But the analyzed case studies confirm that the music also works in the domain of the representation and, more importantly, as a constituent of diegesis. As a narrative agency, music provides additional information, speaks instead, and for, the characters and frequently replaces verbal narration. Due to all of these narrative functions, music provides an insight into the problems and issues of the Balkan identity or identities. Intercultural and multicultural identity encompasses a span of forms and their transformations, for instance: urban-rural, male-female, manifested-hidden, monoethnic-multiethnic, social, economic, class, historical (Ottoman-European, Oriental-Occidental) and traditional-modern.

Mapping the cultural interferences in the Balkans in his film music, Simjanović offers folkloristic models but also paradigmatic rock, pop and classical arrangements, often combined in a most unexpected manner. Good examples are the bricolage model of the film *Something in Between*, or a folkloristic theme played on an electronic instrument, such as in the title theme of the *Scent of the Wild Flowers*. Simultaneously, Simjanović employs diverse ethnic melodies highlighting the mixed origins and identities of the characters as well as the multicultural Balkan world. A number of Simjanović’s folk melodies are of Oriental character; others escape to or emerge from Western popular culture, cinematic and musical memories. Their permanent “harmonization” includes a span of elements from music to identities. The result is a Balkan identity with recognizable Ottoman and Oriental influences, thus supporting Todorova’s thesis that Turkish or Ottoman heritage is an inevitable pivotal point of reference for the Balkans. The perennial historical Ottoman identity neatly allows the Balkans to become both the reflection and the sum of multitude identities in multiple fluctuating forms. The Balkan identity is confirmed as the floating signifier constituted not only within, but also outside, the text. As Todorova writes, “identity is a discourse utilizing the construct as a powerful symbol conveniently located outside of historical time”.²⁴

Unlike the Orient, which is incompatible with the West, the Balkans are always considered as something in-between, a bridge or a crossroads, a unique discourse of imputed ambiguity. The ambiguity does not encompass only geography, but also temporal dimension, as the Balkans are found somewhere in the semi-developed, semi-colonial

²⁴ Todorova 1997, 7.

space and suspended between the epochs and civilizations. The peninsula is the spot of various cultural influences coming together in the vortex and creating multicultural, transcultural and intercultural entity and identity.

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