

The Use of Serbian Folksong in the Trumpet Music of Nikola Resanovic

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Abstract

This document examines the trumpet compositions of the American composer Nikola Resanovic, and the influence of his Serbian heritage on his music. It contains a brief biography of the composer, and lends insight into the background of his style and composition. It includes a historical background regarding the use of the trumpet in Serbian culture, and its relation to the composer's music.

The three compositions examined in this document are Resanovic's works specifically for trumpet. *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* is his longest work for the instrument. The three movements contain elements of Serbian folk music, yet are each individual in their conception. His *Blast from the Past*, a work for two trumpets and compact disc accompaniment is one of the few electro-acoustic compositions in his catalogue.

The final of the three compositions is his arrangement of the middle movement of his *Sonata for Horn and Piano*, *Signal Tree*. This work contains less overt references to Serbian folk music, but maintains a style of composition that bears similarities to both the composer's other works and to Balkan folk songs. These three pieces demonstrate Resanovic's diverse approach to composition. In addition, the music illustrates its worth in becoming part of the common repertoire for trumpet.

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Introduction

This document will introduce, to a wider audience, the trumpet music of Nikola Resanovic. This paper will mainly aim to analyze and describe the Serbian and Balkan aspects of Resanovic's compositions. His style is notable for combining contemporary techniques with aspects of the composer's own Serbian musical heritage. Resanovic is one of the few American composers of Serbian descent to embrace his ethnicity to the degree that he has in his musical career.

The composer is perhaps best known for his works for woodwinds, particularly those for clarinet.¹ It is clear that these works have taken on a more significant following than his compositions for brass instruments.² That being said, he has written a number of pieces for brass, including three specifically composed or arranged for trumpet.

Resanovic's work often incorporates aspects of Serbian folk music. Along with the musical aspects, he has written with Serbian extra-musical thematic material in mind. Examples include his *South Side Fantasy*, for double bass and compact disc as well as the clarinet concerto, *Collateral Damage for Clarinet and Orchestra* (2000).

The influence of the Balkan idiom is present in the concerto's outer movements. This composition is one of the most specific in its musical intentions. Its inspiration comes from the events of the breakup of Yugoslavia during the 1990s.³ Though this ethnic flavor is present in

¹ "Andrew DeBoer: The Clarinet Music of Nikola Resanovic by Andrew DeBoer — Kickstarter," accessed March 26, 2014, <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/339320817/andrew-deboer-the-clarinet-music-of-nikola-resanov>.

² "Nikola Resanovic: Performance Information," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Performances-index.html>.

³ "Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra," accessed April 5, 2014, <http://nikolaresanovic.com/CollateralDamage-index.html>.

many of his works, it is often without the type of specific narrative attached to *Collateral Damage*.

This study is a consideration and analysis of the three works that Resanovic has composed in which the trumpet is the principal instrument. The first piece is his Sonata for Trumpet and Piano. This is his longest single work for solo trumpet and accompaniment. The three movements each portray a different facet of Serbian folk music. This project represents the Sonata's world premiere.⁴

The second work described is his *Blast from the Past* for two trumpets and compact disc. This is one of only four electro-acoustic compositions in Resanovic's catalog. This accompanied trumpet duet begins in the tongue-in-cheek manner characteristic of his electronic works. The "Intrada (after Sermisy)" begins with an introduction for brass instruments in a pseudo-renaissance styled introduction of electronic brass instruments, which quickly breaks down into dissonant swells and complex, interwoven lines. It progresses into fast-paced Balkan-inspired rhythms and melodies. The exotic tonalities and rhythmic drive create a decided contrast from the stark electronic beginning.

The final piece is the composer's transcription of one of his own compositions, originally for French horn, *The Signal Tree*. This work takes inspiration from the landscape of the Cuyahoga River Valley in northeastern Ohio. It has been taken from Resanovic's Sonata for French Horn and Piano, and transcribed by the composer to be performed by trumpet, trombone, or euphonium in place of the original instrument.

⁴ Nikola Resanovic, letter to author, May 11, 2013.

Nikola Resanovic

Nikola Resanovic was born in Derby, England in 1955. He is the son of Serbian parents who fled to England after World War II, in 1945. In 1966, at the age of eleven, Resanovic's family crossed the Atlantic to immigrate to the United States. They sailed on the *Queen Elizabeth*, arriving in New York as many immigrants had before them.

His collegiate music education took place in Ohio. Both his undergraduate and his master's degrees were earned at the University of Akron, in 1977 and 1979, respectively. He studied voice, as well as piano and composition. He earned his doctorate in composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1981. At CIM, he studied composition with Donald Erb, piano with Olga Radosavljevich, as well as electro-acoustic music technology with David Peele.⁵

Resanovic is currently Professor of Music at the University of Akron in Ohio. He teaches both music composition and theory.⁶ He has taught there since 1984, and became the director of the school's electronic music program in 1987. In 1999, he oversaw the construction of the University's electronic music facility, which he designed.⁷

American groups as renowned as the Cleveland Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, and the woodwind quintet, Imani Winds, have performed his compositions. His works have also been heard worldwide at numerous festivals, concerts, and solo recitals.⁸ As noted above, Resanovic is best known for his works for woodwinds and his creative uses of electronic accompaniment, in particular, his clarinet work, *alt.music.ballistix*.

⁵ "Nikola Resanovic," accessed March 26, 2014, http://clevelandartsprize.org/awardees/nikola_resanovic.html.

⁶ "The University of Akron : Additional Information," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.uakron.edu/music/faculty/bio-detail.dot?identity=7fb63662-b847-4134-9a83-db4cbbb7d4fe>.

⁷ "Nikola Resanovic," accessed March 26, 2014, http://clevelandartsprize.org/awardees/nikola_resanovic.html.

⁸ Nikola Resanovic - Composer," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Bio.index.html>.

Well-known musicians have also performed his brass music. Groups such as the Air Force Academy Brass and the Chicago Brass Choir have performed *Fantasy and Flight for Seven Brass*.⁹ Edward Zadrozny, the “first call” substitute trombone for the Cleveland Orchestra and now retired professor of thirty-five years at the University of Akron, premiered Resanovic’s Trombone Sonata.¹⁰ His brass quintet, *Wind-did* was first performed by the University of Akron’s resident brass quintet, The Paragon Brass.¹¹

In addition to his instrumental compositions, Resanovic has created several volumes of Serbian chant. These collections of Serbian Orthodox chant have been translated from their original language to English and are currently published, as well as available online for free use in liturgical settings. He has provided extensive instruction for understanding the Orthodox chant and as well as performance recommendations.¹²

⁹ “Fantasy and Flight for Seven Brass,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/FantasyFlight-index.html>.

¹⁰ “Sonata for Trombone and Piano,” accessed March 26, 2014, http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Trombone_Sonata-index.html.

¹¹ “Wind-Did for Brass Quintet,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Wind-did-index.html>.

¹² “Anthology of Serbian Chant,” accessed April 5, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/AnthologySerbChant-index.html>.

The Use of the Trumpet in Serbian Folk Music

Resanovic's musical compositions are important for their ties to Serbian folk music and the folk music of the Balkans. His use of the music from his heritage in writing his trumpet works has far-reaching historical and cultural connotations. Even beyond the composer's intentions, the trumpet is an immensely popular instrument in Serbia, as are the brass bands that employ the instrument.

The Serbians trace their heritage of brass band playing back to 1831. By the royal decree of Miloš Obrenović, Prince of Serbia, the first groups of these musicians were created. The process of learning the trumpet was not always a simple or successful endeavor for the nineteenth-century musicians. Trumpet players gained their skills through aural and rote learning. They learned through playing familiar songs, and slowly developing their skills with these newly-introduced instruments.¹³

The wider adoption of the brass instruments in Serbia possibly came about as World War I era military bands traveled through the Balkan region. From the point of acquisition of these new instruments, the Serbians began creating brass bands that played a version of their folk music.¹⁴

The brass bands of the Balkans do not have the same instrumentation as those of the United Kingdom. Serbian brass bands utilize, customarily: three trumpets or flugelhorns, four tenor horns, one helicon, a bass drum, and a snare drum.¹⁵ The more traditionally played

¹³ "History of the Serbian Trumpet Tradition | Guca Sabor," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://gucasabor.com/en/about-the-festival/the-story-of-the-trumpet/>.

¹⁴ "A Frenzy of Trumpets: Why Brass Musicians Can't Resist Serbia's Wildest Festival | Collectors Weekly," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/why-brass-musicians-can't-resist-serbia's-wildest-festival/>.

¹⁵ Boban Marković Orkestar, *Live in Belgrade*. Piranha Musik CD-PIR 1685, 2002, compact disc.

instrument, over actual trumpets, is the rotary flugelhorn. The Serbian word “truba” has the dual meaning of both trumpet and flugelhorn, thus adding confusion when translated to other languages.

The importance of the trumpet in Serbian culture has grown enormously, especially in recent years. The Guča Trumpet Festival is a major Serbian, and now world, destination. Guča, the small town of 2,500 people in the Dragačevo region of western Serbia, grows to an estimated size of 600,000 people during the annual festival in August. Here, trumpet-playing bandleaders and their orchestras compete for the title of “best band” and “best trumpeter” in the country.¹⁶

From its humble beginning in a church courtyard in 1961 to the mammoth festival, Guča is a source of great national pride. The original festival of four bands was of questionable legality under the government at the time. Since then, this trumpet festival has become a living symbol of culture, nationalism, rebellion, and perhaps overall, celebration.¹⁷ When a composition such as Resanovic’s Sonata for Trumpet and Piano appears, imbedded within it are these ties to Serbian history and is deeply-rooted in the ethnic culture.

¹⁶ “A Frenzy of Trumpets: Why Brass Musicians Can’t Resist Serbia’s Wildest Festival | Collectors Weekly,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/why-brass-musicians-can't-resist-serbia's-wildest-festival/>.

¹⁷ “Национална Ревија - National Review,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nacionalnarevija.com/en/tekstovi/br3/guca.html>.

Sonata for Trumpet and Piano

The Sonata for Trumpet and Piano (2009) is Nikola Resanovic's only multi-movement work for solo trumpet. This is also his work for trumpet that most assertively presents aspects of Serbian folk music, though composed in a modern way. The arrangement of this work is a three-movement format: I. "Arabesque," II. "Nocturne," III. "Humoresque."

The sonata is unabashedly complex in its rhythmic content. The melodies are constructed in a manner that is reminiscent of Resanovic's other works, with an ethnically-tinged modal style. The third movement, entitled "Humoresque," is written in the style of a Serbian folk-dance.

I. "Arabesque"

The "Arabesque" is the longest and most rhythmically complex of the three movements. The title indicates a style reminiscent of Arabic art. The idea evoked with this title, is a type of ornate, delicate melodic pattern.¹⁸ In the case of this movement, this is an appropriate description. The piano creates a nearly continuous flow of sixteenth-notes throughout the movement. The trumpet line rides above and through this dense, swirling texture created by the piano.

The title does not necessarily relate to Arabic culture. This is true in most Western instances of its use, and has come to be associated with a style rather than a nationality or

¹⁸ Michael Kennedy, ed., "Arabesque," *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

ethnicity. Arabesques have been composed for piano and utilize highly embellished melodies.

Claude Debussy's (1862-1918) *Deux Arabesques* is a popular example of such a composition.

The title of the movement, whether purposeful in its cultural implications or not, indicates the historical influence of Ottoman and Turkish musical culture. The Ottoman Empire rule of the Balkan region left a mark on its musical culture, though this is not a comfortable cultural position for researchers in the field of Balkan folk music.¹⁹

At issue is the concept that folk music should be self-contained within a culture, without foreign influence.²⁰ There are arguments as to where scales or rhythms in the Balkan tradition are derived. The terms “Arabic music” and “Ottoman music” are sometimes used interchangeably. “Arabic music” has become a catch-all term that can refer to any number of locations and cultures, including Arabs, Persians, and Turks, among others.²¹

An immediate indication of Serbian influence is the time signature. The use of 12/16, which for one measure shifts to 15/16, is unusual in typical Western writing. The rhythms written within the movement are indicative of Balkan asymmetric rhythms as well. Resanovic’s take on rhythm in this movement relates to the use of additive rhythms in the Balkan region.

Additive rhythm differs from conventionally divided rhythm in that additive rhythms, being constructed from units of rhythm that are gathered into larger units of uneven length. For example, 5/8 can be built with alternating sets of 2/8 + 3/8. Additive rhythm is often associated

¹⁹ Risto Pekka Pennanen, “Lost in Scales: Balkan Folk Music Research and the Ottoman Legacy,” *Muzikologija*, no. 8 (2008): 127. Accessed March 26, 2014.

²⁰ Ibid., 127.

²¹ Ibid., 133.

with this type of folk music.²² Divisive rhythms, in contrast, are larger units that divide into smaller, often symmetric units.

These additive rhythms are a common identifying feature of Balkan folk music. Béla Bartók was one the first ethnomusicologists to take a serious interest in these types of folk-rhythms. In Bartók's case, it was his work with Bulgarian folk music that led him to this curiosity. His personal discovery of these "limping" rhythms, led him to coin them the, "so-called Bulgarian Rhythm." These peasant rhythms, to Bartók, warranted further serious study, which was lacking in the early 20th century.²³

Constantin Brăiloiu helped change the terminology describing such additive rhythms, applying the Turkish name *aksak*, which translates as "lame." He suggested this in agreement with Turkish composer, Ahmed Adnan Saygun.²⁴ The *aksak* or limping rhythms presented in the music of many cultures are depicted with different distributions of sets of long and short (2 and 3) beats.

Example 1 shows indications of Resanovic's intention to include Serbian folk rhythms. Much of what Resanovic composes is infused with a style, rather than directly reproducing existing melodies, although cases of the latter exist, such as his *South Side Fantasy* for Double Bass and compact disc, which includes the Serbian folk song "Maro Resavkinjo," sung by Teddy Popovich of the Popovich Brothers Orchestra of Chicago, Illinois.²⁵

²² Justin London, "Rhythm," *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

²³ Nice Fracile, "The 'Aksak' Rhythm, a Distinctive Feature of the Balkan Folklore," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 44, no. 1/2 (January 1, 2003): 197. Accessed March 26, 2014.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

²⁵ "South Side Fantasy for Double Bass and CD," accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/South-side-fantasy.index.html>.

I. Arabesque

Nikola Resanovic

Allegretto $\text{♩} = 100$

Example 1: Nikola Resanovic, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, “Arabesque,” mm. 1-10²⁶

The rhythm of the trumpet line in the Sonata transcends the continuous flow of sixteenth-notes in the piano. As seen in m. 2 of Example 1, the added slurs and accents aurally redistribute the stresses and grouping. The placement of accents in Resanovic’s work is a recurring factor that determines how the music is meant to be performed and heard.

Example 2: Nikola Resanovic, *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*, “Arabesque,” mm. 16-21.²⁷

²⁶ Nikola Resanovic, “Arabesque,” in *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 2009).

²⁷ Ibid.

The way that the trumpet melody is constructed creates shifting sets of two and three eighth-note groupings. Depending upon the way any particular measure or set of measures is analyzed, different possible sets of *aksak* rhythms emerge. In Example 2, the last beat of m. 18 and the first two beats of m. 19, can be viewed in several ways. The most obvious way follows the time signature of 12/16, with four sets of the three sixteenth-notes. However, with the addition of the ties, these three beats become: 2+2+3+2 or 4+3+2.

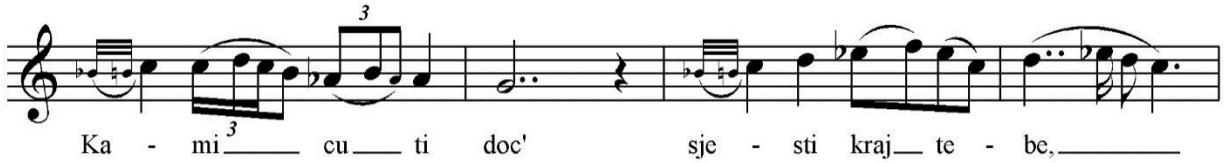
Once again, the complexities of Resanovic's rhythmic procedures come through in a subtler manner than simply incorporating a folk song note for note. The implication that the composer is using *aksak* rhythms, or a variation thereof, makes it even more plausible that he composed this movement with these ethnic rhythms in mind. Common Serbian patterns, placed throughout the "Arabesque" provide further proof.



Example 3: Nikola Resanovic, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, "Arabesque," mm. 43-45.²⁸

Example 3 provides several rhythmic patterns that are uncommon outside of Balkan folk music. Beat four in m. 43 and beat three of m. 44 are examples of such a rhythm. This style appears quite often in Serbian folk music. In some ways, it is a byproduct of transcribing heavily ornamented music of an oral, rather than written tradition.

²⁸ Ibid.



Example 4: Serbian folk song, “Grana od bora evala kraj mora” (A fir branch blossomed beside the sea.) Verse 3, mm. 1-4.²⁹

Béla Bartók explains this type of ornamentation in his text, *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs*. He describes different degrees of ornamentation in terms of “weight.” Ornaments of less importance are sung in a lighter tone quality and are transcribed with the small note heads.³⁰ In Example 4 these different types of ornaments are present. The triplet notation in m. 1 (bottom line) of this example provides a similar comparison to Resanovic’s melody in Example 3.

Other than rhythmic curiosities, the “Arabesque” includes several examples of ethnic modes in its melodic content. This is a recurring aspect of Resanovic’s style. M. 43 and m. 44, respectively, in Example 3, provide such content. When rearranged, the notes in these measures form tetrachords (F#-G-A-B_b) and (A#-B-C#-D#). These tetrachords are examples of note collections that fit into examples mentioned by several different musicologists, relating to Serbian folk styles.

Several sources reference the first tetrachord, although not always in the same arrangement. Outside of traditional Serbian melodies, several “scales” exist that are most likely of foreign origin and appear in urban songs.³¹ Bartók mentions a “peculiar scale formation” with

²⁹ Béla Bartók and Albert B. Lord, *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs; Texts and Transcriptions of Seventy-Five Folk Songs from the Milman Parry Collection and a Morphology of Serbo-Croatian Folk Melodies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 229.

³⁰ Ibid., 17.

³¹ Dragoslav Dević, Roksanda Pejović, and Jane Sugarman, “Yugoslavia,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

the notes (F-G-A \flat -B \flat -C \flat).³² The latter four notes of Bartók's scale transposed down a half-step yield the same tetrachord (F#-G-A-B \flat) in m. 43 of the "Arabesque."

The second tetrachord (A \sharp -B-C \sharp -D \sharp) from m. 44 is another example of a collection of notes that relates to the more unusual scales in the Serbian folk idiom. This tetrachord, when it is transposed down an augmented second, forms the first four notes of the scale (G-A \flat -B \flat -C-D-E \flat -F).³³ With the addition of the B \sharp in m. 45, the newly-formed pentachord resembled the scales that Bartók describes as structures that exist between diatonic and chromatic scales.³⁴

The "Arabesque" movement, overall, displays aspects of Serbian and Balkan folk music. However, as previously described, Resanovic rarely provides the listener with entire modes or scales. The melodies in this movement tend to repeat, as is a standard practice in Serbian folk music. Yet, the melodies often shift tonally, and appear with melodic additions and alterations. The composer creates a mood while rarely providing the performer and listener with any straightforward examples of folk music proper.

II. "Nocturne"

The second movement provides a stark contrast to the first. The tempo is considerably slower, and the overall rhythmic motion and complexity are much more subdued. The title indicates a musical reaction to a scene at night. The arpeggios in the left hand and melody in the

³² Bartók and Lord, 61.

³³ Dragoslav Dević, Roksanda Pejović, and Jane Sugarman, "Yugoslavia," *Grove Music Online*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

³⁴ Bartók and Lord, 61-62.

right of the piano closely follow the definition of this type of piece.³⁵ A slight jazz quality characterizes this movement's style.³⁶

The trumpet melody is less typical of the brass music of Serbia. Traditionally, an overall, more limited range is indicative of vocal folk music. In this case, scales extending more than an octave are somewhat rare.³⁷ Though the trumpet melody is not quite as limited in range as in the traditional folk manner, it only extends above the staff on relatively few occasions.

The syncopated rhythms that appear in the trumpet melody are common in Serbian folk music. The rhythmic content and linear direction of the melody in the “Nocturne” bear a close resemblance to the Serbian folk song “Sunce nam se krajom krade” (The sun is stealthily approaching.)³⁸ Though the titles of these two pieces share a common theme of changing times of day, but they are most likely unrelated.

³⁵ Jane Bellingham, “Nocturne,” ed. Alison Latham, *The Oxford Companion to Music*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

³⁶ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, March 9, 2014.

³⁷ Bartók and Lord, 59.

³⁸ Milena Petrovic and Nenad Ljubinkovic, “Imitation of Animal Sound Patterns in Serbian Folk Music,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 109, accessed March 26, 2014.

II. Nocturne

Musical score for piano, Adagio tempo, 3/4 time. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a melody in G major with various note values and dynamics, including a forte dynamic (f) and a dynamic instruction (espressivo). The bottom staff shows harmonic support with sustained notes and a dynamic instruction (p).

Example 5: Nikola Resanovic, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, “Nocturne,” mm. 1-4.

Both examples feature the familiar “short-long” patterns of note lengths, mentioned previously. Furthermore, the Resanovic melody in Example 5 could be rearranged from its 3/4 time signature, to a 6/8. Once again, when viewed in this manner, the juxtaposed values of 2+3 or 3+2 note values appear. For instance, in mm. 3-4 of Example 5, the note collections form the pattern 3+2+2+2+3. This becomes more apparent in 6/8, rather than 3/4.

The scale created in the beginning of the second movement does not actually indicate any kind of pre-existing pattern or relation to folk music. Other than the added B \flat in mm. 3, the scale created is a Dorian mode on D. It is likely more the case that the composer is using neighboring tones and stepwise motion to emphasize the interval of a half-step. The constantly shifting harmonies in the piano, along with the use of polytonality, do not indicate any folk-inspired accompanying melody, but rather simply function as a drone under the trumpet voice.

Finally, this movement features the previously-mentioned ornaments from text by Béla Bartók. The most prominent example appears towards the end of the movement from mm. 72 – 81. Example 6 shows the different types of ornamentation. Both the heavy ornament, in m. 73 and the lighter ornaments (marked as grace notes), are present in the trumpet part.



Example 6: Nikola Resanovic, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, “Nocturne,” mm. 64-82.³⁹

In this case, the more subtle additions or ornaments add complexity for the performer and listener. The manner in which the line is phrased takes cues from how Resanovic notated each set of ornaments, depending on the type utilized. The embellishment of the melody lends an improvisatory nature to the movement. This feigned-extemporization of a melody is observable in many transcriptions of Serbian folk melodies

III. “Humoresque”

The final movement is the most obvious example of Serbian folk influence in the entire sonata. The title “Humoresque” implies a good-humored, lively composition.⁴⁰ This movement features a certain rhythmic drive that is characteristic of Nikola Resanovic’s writing and his

³⁹ Nikola Resanovic, “Nocturne,” in *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 2009).

⁴⁰ Alison Latham, ed., “Humoresque,” *The Oxford Companion to Music*, accessed March 26, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

Serbian heritage. In this case, the movement relates to the traditional Serbian *kolo* dance.⁴¹ This movement was originally created for euphonium and piano, but did not fit with the other movements of the Sonata for Euphonium and Piano (2004). Therefore, it became part of the Sonata for Trumpet and Piano.⁴²

The Serbian *kolo* dance is a popular ethnic dance. It is an “open chain” or circle dance.⁴³ *Kolo* literally means “wheel.” It is a national dance performed by all levels of society. A *kolo* might be in 2/4 or 3/4 time, and the tempo varies, though many are lively. This group dance either involves the participants placing hands on shoulders or linking hands. These dances are often intricate, with the group coordinating steps, forming different shapes as they move.⁴⁴

In the case of this movement, the composer relates the style to that of Serbian trumpet virtuoso, Miroslav Matušić.⁴⁵ Matušić was from an older generation of trumpet players, before the founding of the Guča Festival. He was born in 1925 in a Roma village. He was a young virtuoso, who learned by ear. He performed with Serbian folk music orchestras as well as with accordion players, such as virtuoso Miodrag Mia Kmjevcem.⁴⁶

The virtuosic playing of Matušić provides an excellent performance example for the style of “Humoresque.” The Serbian trumpet playing exemplified by Matušić is different in several ways from the standard Western style of trumpet playing. First, the tone production most traditional Serbian trumpeters use is significantly different. This is because, as previously

⁴¹ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, March 9, 2014.

⁴² Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2014.

⁴³ Danica S. Janković and Ljubica S. Janković, “Serbian Folk Dance Tradition in Prizren,” *Ethnomusicology* 6, no. 2 (May 1, 1962): 118, doi:10.2307/924671.

⁴⁴ Rodney Gallop, “Folk-Music of the Southern Slavs,” *The Musical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (October 1, 1937): 519-20, Accessed March 26, 2014.

⁴⁵ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, March 9, 2014.

⁴⁶ “Festival ‘Trumpet Miroslav MATUŠIĆ,’” accessed March 26, 2014.

<http://homoljskimotivikucevo.org/sr/program/100-festival-truba-miroslav-matusic-2>.

mentioned, Serbian brass bands traditionally employ the use of rotary-valve flugelhorns rather than trumpets. In recent years, younger Serbian trumpet players occasionally perform on actual trumpets in Balkan brass bands.

The vibrato employed by Matušić, as well as the vast majority of Balkan trumpet players, is, in many ways, contrary to what is accepted as “tasteful” in standard Western trumpet playing. This type of vibrato is recognizable by a rapid pulse, and at times, it may appear to take greater significance than the actual tone production in some performances. Resanovic did not have this type of vibrato in mind for this movement or any of the others. They are meant to be performed in a more typical manner, without this type of ethnic inflection.⁴⁷

In the case of the *Humoresque* movement, there is little room for interpretation as to the motives of the composer. Whereas the first two alluded to styles, rhythms, and tonalities, the final movement, as indicated by the composer, is a *kolo* performed on trumpet. Though, as with the other movements, the modern touch of the composer is heard throughout.

⁴⁷ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2014.



Example 7: Rodney Gallop, “Arapsko Kokonjeste,” *The Musical Quarterly*, 1937, Vol. 23, No. 4, 520, by permission of Oxford University Press.⁴⁸

Example 7 is a characteristic *kolo* tune. The fast tempo, the presence of “strong” ornaments, and the repetitive nature are all common features of the type. Sheepskin bagpipe, fiddle, flute, or trumpet are all possible instruments used for performing this *kolo* melody. These are instruments used to accompany the dancers. A double bass may also be involved to provide rhythmic reinforcement.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Rodney Gallop, “Folk-Music of the Southern Slavs,” *The Musical Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (October 1, 1937): 520, accessed April 2, 2014.

⁴⁹ Ibid.



Example 8: Nikola Resanovic, Sonata for Trumpet and Piano, “Humoresque,” mm. 15-

27.⁵⁰

Example 8 from the “Humoresque” bears a direct resemblance to the traditional *kolo*. The rapid, arching lines of sixteenth notes are a recurring feature in this type of music. Once again, “heavy” ornaments are present. There is also a similarity between the triple pattern in m. 19 and the pattern in m. 5 of Example 7.

The Sonata for Trumpet and Piano is the most expansive work for the instrument that Resanovic has composed to date. While there is a great deal of Serbian folk influence present throughout this composition, each movement exhibits an individual character. The first is perhaps the most standardized in its conception, with a more serious neo-romantic style. The tonalities of the second show a jazz influence, while the third has the sound of an imaginary “Vaudevillian Balkan carnival,” as the composer puts it.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Nikola Resanovic, “Humoresque,” in *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 2009).

⁵¹ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2014.

A Blast from the Past

A Blast from the Past, a 1989 work for two trumpets, is one of the few electro-acoustic compositions that Nikola Resanovic has written and published. This is his only work for brass that includes an electronic accompaniment, in this case in the form of a digital track. Much like his other electro-acoustic works, there is a definite joyful and capricious element present in the music.

The performance notes for the piece call specifically for “high efficiency loudspeakers and a professional quality power-amp.”⁵² In addition, the work relies on the backdrop of sound created by the electronic accompaniment. The stereo setup—with both performers and speakers—creates a wash of musical colors, while still being able to perceive the individual parts. The two movements continue without pause, and create a strong implied narrative of moving between archaic and modern styles.

I. “Intrada (after Sermisy)”

The short first movement is a tongue-in-cheek nod to the French composer Claudio de Sermisy (1490-1562). Four-voice chansons are Sermisy’s best-known works. Resanovic’s electronic accompaniment in this first movement primarily features “brass,” in four voices. The acoustic trumpet voices interject with the occasional fanfare, but the measured perfect pace of the electronic trumpets takes precedence.

The “Intrada” contains a direct quotation of Sermisy’s *Tant que vivray*. This chanson is written with simple, homophonic textures, and a clear, graceful style. The text of this chanson is

⁵² Nikola Resanovic, *A Blast from the Past: For Two Trumpets and Tape* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 1989).

interesting in that it is of fulfilled, joyous love. The optimism of the poem is quite different from the old concept of courtly love, and the character of the tortured lover.⁵³

The composer, through this and several other compositions, displays a penchant for writing in a way that includes ideas or influences of older periods in music. Another work from the same period of the composer's career as *A Blast from the Past*, is his *Twelve Variations on a Theme by Arcadelt* (1993). His *Sarabande and Chaconne for Orchestra* (2008), suggests historical forms, but is written in a more post-modern style.⁵⁴ What all of these compositions have in common is Resanovic's use of combinations of modern and historical idioms.

II. "Caccia"

The first movement leads directly into the "Caccia" without a pause. The second movement greatly contrasts the simplistic perfection of the digital trumpets in the first movement. Amidst the digital chimes and swells, the two trumpets perform in imitation of each other. It is immediately apparent that the style of the first movement has faded away because the rhythms and tonalities heavily indicate Balkan themes.

The title of this movement implies a chase or hunt. Musically, a *caccia* involves two voices in canon above a tenor with longer note values. This was an Italian vocal genre of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵⁵ This movement fits this style. The composer writes the two acoustic trumpets, as well as paired electronic trumpets, as a canon. To fit in with the idea of a

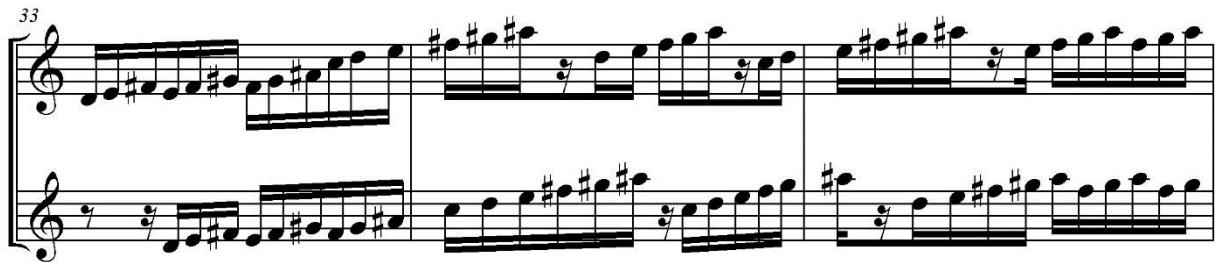
⁵³ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 7th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 256.

⁵⁴ "Sarabande and Chaconne for Orchestra," accessed April 5, 2014, http://nikolaresanovic.com/Sarabande_Chaconne-index.html.

⁵⁵ Jeremy Montagu. "Caccia," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed April 5, 2014, *Oxford Music Online*.

slower tenor, the electronic accompaniment provides extremely long drones under the near constant lines of pulse-driven lines of the trumpets.

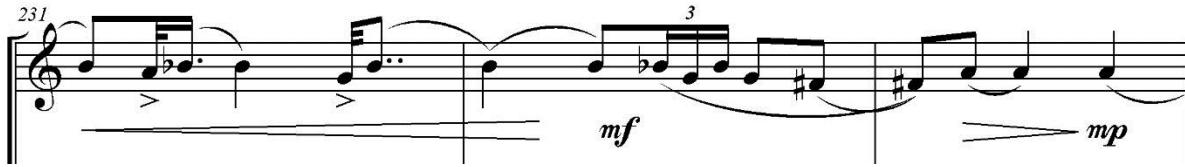
The rhythmic structure of this movement is very similar to the outer movements of the Sonata for Trumpet and Piano. The permutations of the 2+3 beat patterns are ubiquitous in this movement. The main difference here is the addition of the second trumpet player. The two trumpets and the digital track, create a wash of sound through the nearly constant stream of sixteenth notes in all voices.



Example 9: Nikola Resanovic, *A Blast from the Past*, “Caccia,” mm. 33-35.⁵⁶

The tonalities invoked help to create the narrative in this movement. As indicated by the title *Blast from the Past*, there is a decided nod towards early music. Resanovic takes it literally in this composition with entire sections of offset whole-tone scales, as in Example 9. The image invoked is almost certainly of the “flashback” trope seen in movies and television. This is the visual effect where the screen becomes wavy during a dissolve transition, often accompanied by the whole-tone scale played on a harp.

⁵⁶ Nikola Resanovic, *A Blast from the Past: For Two Trumpets and Tape* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 1989).



Example 10: Resanovic, *A Blast from the Past*, “Caccia,” mm. 231-233.⁵⁷

Once again, Resanovic utilized modes and altered ethnic “scales” in this piece. In particular there is a recurring instance of a theme with exotic implications. This is the “Slavic” or harmonic minor scale, and Southern Slavic melodies.⁵⁸ In the case of Example 10, it is in G harmonic minor, but descending in a way to emphasize the leading tone (F#). This type of scale has historical ties to Arabs, Turks, and the Far East.⁵⁹

Blast from the Past reflects particular stylistic direction of the composer. This is an earlier work written only eight years after Resanovic completed his education. At this point in his career, he cultivated a more eclectic style that combined tonal and atonal idioms.⁶⁰ This particular work features a combination of Medieval, Renaissance, ethnic, and contemporary electronic ideas and sounds.

The Signal Tree

This single movement work is unique among Resanovic’s compositional output. It began life as the second movement of the composer’s Sonata for French Horn and Piano (2002). University of Akron horn professor, William Hoyt, and pianist, Laura Silverman, premiered the

⁵⁷ Nikola Resanovic, *A Blast*.

⁵⁸ Risto Pekka Pennanen, “Lost in Scales: Balkan Folk Music Research and the Ottoman Legacy,” *Muzikologija*, no. 8 (2008): 131, accessed March 26, 2014.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁶⁰ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2014.

work in 2003. The inspiration of the original Horn Sonata was the landscape of the Cuyahoga River Valley and the Western Reserve in Ohio.⁶¹ The second movement, *The Signal Tree*, is based upon an oddly-formed Bur oak, located in the Cascade Valley Metro Park.⁶²

Resanovic transcribed the second and third movements of the Sonata for wind ensemble in the fall of 2003. The first movement, *The Tow Path*, followed in 2004, to complete the “new” composition, *Three Pieces for Symphonic Band*. The University of Akron Symphonic Band, under the direction of Robert Jorgensen at the North Central CBDNA (College Band Directors National Association) Division Conference in 2004, premiered the band version of *The Signal Tree*, along with the third movement, *The Crooked River*.⁶³

The composer has since transcribed *The Signal Tree* for trumpet, trombone, and euphonium. The composer has rewritten this work for more instruments and ensembles than any other. This is an example of a composition by Resanovic that, although does not indicate any thematic ties to Serbian folk music, still carries some of the ideas seen in ethnic music.

In the transcription of *The Signal Tree*, Resanovic adjusted the music for the difference in instrumental key between the French horn and the C trumpet. The majority of the work features the solo trumpet melody set against open fifths in the piano. The tonality in the left hand of the piano shifts between (C-G) and (B_b-F) intervals for the majority of the piece. The trumpet melody also strongly implies the mode of C Mixolydian.

The use of a melodic voice, over, or in conjunction with a drone, presents itself in Serbian folk music. Both single-voice and two-part singing exist, with the latter being the

⁶¹ “Sonata for Horn and Piano,” accessed March 27, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Horn-sonata.index.html>.

⁶² “The Signal Tree | History of Akron & Summit County,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.akronhistory.org/blog/landmark/the-signal-tree/>.

⁶³ “Three Pieces for Symphonic Band,” accessed March 26, 2014, <http://www.nikolaresanovic.com/Band-index.html>.

dominant form. There are several sub-styles of two-part Serbian folk singing. The most frequent type is heterophonic singing.

Heterophony occurs when multiple voices simultaneously provide individual variation to a melody. The two-voice type of singing varies in terms of the sophistication of the accompanying parts. This ranges from random, melodic disagreements between the two voices to thought-out, traditional ornamentation.⁶⁴

The other type of two-voice singing in traditional Serbian culture is the “bourdon” or drone bass style. This variety of folk singing involves one voice performing the melody, while the second voice holds a steady pitch.⁶⁵ Apart from the unison, the most frequently used interval in this ancient style of singing is in the second, which was not considered to be a dissonance.⁶⁶ It can also be combined into a type of “heterophony-bourdon.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Dimitrije O. Golemović and Katarina Knežević, Liner Notes, *Serbia : An Anthology of Serbian Folk Music*, VDE CD-993, 2006, compact disc.

⁶⁵ Milena Petrović and Nenad Ljubinkovic, “Imitation of Animal Sound Patterns in Serbian Folk Music,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 108, accessed March 26, 2014.

⁶⁶ “Multipart Singing in Serbia,” accessed March 26, 2014,
http://www.mdw.ac.at/ive/emm/_VERSION_1-serbia.htm.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

The musical score shows two staves. The top staff is for the C Tpt. (Trumpet), which begins with a dynamic 'p' and plays eighth-note patterns. The bottom staff is for the Piano, featuring sustained notes and chords. Measure numbers 8 and 9 are indicated above the staves.

Example 11: Nikola Resanovic, *The Signal Tree*, mm. 8-13.⁶⁸

The Signal Tree, embodies some of these folk attributes. Resanovic's melody in the trumpet creates several instances of octaves in Example 11. In mm. 11-12 there is the octave to second dissonance created between the (C-B-C) in the trumpet melody, over the open fifth groupings in the piano. While not nearly as dissonant as actual drone-based Serbian folk music, the concept of melody over a droning lower voice is apparent in this piece.

Conclusion

Nikola Resanovic writes expertly designed music for trumpet. It is apparent through this study that the composer's music exhibits a strong connection with Serbian folk music. His writing introduces the trumpet community to an aspect of its instrument that has been largely ignored. The unique nature of his music will hopefully be expanded upon in the future through new commissions.

⁶⁸ Nikola Resanovic, *The Signal Tree* (Akron, OH: Nikola Resanovic, 2002).

Resanovic's eclectic approach to his composition again sets him apart from many other modern composers. His influences outside of the traditional classical vein include: Balkan folk music, as well as jazz, rock, and pop styles. His writing continues to evolve, and combines both tonal and atonal idioms.⁶⁹ The few compositions in the electro-acoustic style show the composer's proficiency at creating electronic music. Most importantly, performers will inevitably introduce his compositions to a wider audience as the works become better known.

⁶⁹ Nikola Resanovic, e-mail message to author, April 2, 2014.

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