

Vera's Music In My Life – Performance of the Original Choreographies of Vera Milanković's Music

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Summary

This text is a tribute to Vera Milanković on her 70th birthday and the 50th anniversary of her artistic and pedagogical career. This double jubilee became the leitmotif for the 26th Pedagogical Forum of Performing Arts held on October 20–22, 2023 in Belgrade, Serbia. I have decided to summarize my personal experiences related to Vera Milanković and her music, which is a tremendous inspiration for my music choreographies. Nine compositions by Vera Milanković are already visualized and they were performed both by children and young adults in the last several years. For this anniversary I have prepared four new music choreographies, which were performed by myself during the meeting.

Keywords: Vera Milanković, music choreography, movement, music expression, Dalcroze's method

Introduction

Vera Milanković is undoubtedly a talented composer, pianist, pedagogue, and artist with magnificent achievements in Serbian culture. She is also an amazing person and a wonderful friend. The first encounter between Vera and me took place in 2012 during the symposium “Music-Movement-Dance” organized by the Serbian Forum for the Research in Music Education in Belgrade, where I gave a lecture and ran a workshop on Dalcroze's Eurhythmics as the versatile method of music education. The event was the beginning of fruitful cooperation and friendship.

Vera Milanković's creative output greatly affected my artistic works. My music choreographies were inspired by piano pieces, songs with piano accompaniment, and even a flute duet. The pupils of the W. Lutosławski 1st Degree State Music School, with whom I prepared the movement choreographies, genuinely liked these compositions.

Despite the fact that music choreographies always begin with a formal analysis of music, as it is the musical form that defines the space in which the performers move, my intention wasn't to analyze the form and other musical elements of Vera Milanković's compositions but to highlight their artistic value, which was the decisive factor in selecting particular compositions for my own artistic interpretations.

Vera Milanković's works, which gained a new artistic dimension in my music choreographies, are characterized by simplicity of musical expression. They are based on the beautiful harmonies and a unique musical language that can be heard in songs for children from the collection of songs *Dan* (A Day), and three songs for voice and piano

(*Vetar/Wind*, *Kancona/Canzona* and *Valcer/Waltz*). The wealth of musical soundscape, and interesting solutions in the scope of shaping texture and form are the biggest assets of the 27 *Piano Preludes* series. The most fundamental feature of Milanković's artistic works is the strong emotional charge of her compositions. That was exactly the factor that I took into account while selecting her pieces for creating their visual movement illustrations in space.

I also have been promoting Vera Milanković's work in Poland and abroad, considering myself as the ambassador of Vera Milanković's music in particular and Serbian music in general. The pieces by Vera Milanković mentioned below acquired a new, spatial, and movement-based dimension in movement interpretations.

Songs for Children *Dan/A Day*

Five songs from the collection *Dan/A Day* (*Bath*, *Corners of the worlds*, *Body*, *School Anthem*, and *Good Evening*) by Vera Milanković were prepared for movement interpretations with pupils of grades 1–3 of The W. Lutosławski 1st Degree State Music School in Starogard Gdanski.¹ They were performed for the first time during the Christmas Concert at Starogard Cultural Center, in December 2017.²

In 2019 Vera Milanković visited The Music Academy in Gdansk within the Erasmus+ exchange program. During her visit to my Eurhythmics and Ear Training classes in the music school in Starogard Gdanski, pupils performed the above-mentioned children's songs in movement interpretation. Vera Milanković was enormously moved and truly impressed with the children's musicality, expressed in movement and singing. It was the first time that Vera Milanković had the opportunity to observe Eurhythmics lessons, as this subject is not taught at schools in Serbia (photo 1).



Photo 1. Practical lesson with pupils of the Witold Lutosławski State Music School.

¹ Link to DVD recording of movement interpretations of the songs *Bath*, *Corners of the worlds*, *School anthem* and *Good evening* could be seen at the following links: <https://youtu.be/mSjC6JtB84s>; <https://youtu.be/105ibkNA5Is>; <https://youtu.be/uWZvKQnJZfQ>; <https://youtu.be/XmIJnBMhWok>

² The movement interpretation for the song *Body* can be seen at the link <https://youtu.be/Tg0YajFnymw>.

Flute Duet and Piano Preludes

Music choreographies created with students of The Eurhythmics Faculty of Stanislaw Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdansk were: flute duet *Pošla Vanka po vodu*, and three piano preludes – No.11, 17 and 18.³ For the first time, these compositions were performed at the Second Baltic Festival of Eurhythmics Ensembles in Gdansk in 2018. The second time they were performed at Stanislaw Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdansk for Vera Milanković, on the occasion of her visit within the Erasmus+ program in 2019.

Flute duet named *Pošla Vanka po vodu* by Vera Milanković I performed together with Nadica Spasojević, the first Serbian student who studied at the Gdansk Music Academy, in front of the composer at the *Spring Concert* (photo 2).⁴



Photo 2. Vera Milanković's Flute duet *Pošla Vanka po vodu* performed by Anna Galikowska-Gajewska and Nadica Spasojević at the Spring Concert for Children in 2019.

A flute duet was also performed at the concert for the residents of Community Social Care Homes in Starogard Gdanski.⁵

Presentations on Vera Milanković's Music

My music choreographies created to Vera's music were presented at The ARTlink festival in September 2018 in Belgrade. The results of artistic works created for Vera Milanković's music were the topic of the author's speeches – presentations made at international artistic and scientific events. The most important of them are:

³ Music choreographies for three piano preludes can be found at the following links: <https://youtu.be/rJY1j3JDOzU> (Prelude No.11), <https://youtu.be/mgTPsFQW3Ss> (Prelude No. 17) and <https://youtu.be/bOQY8cJwL0s> (Prelude No. 18).

⁴ Music choreography for the Flute duet can be seen at the link <https://youtu.be/0HJu405yJnc>

⁵ Music choreography for the Flute duet can be seen at the link https://youtu.be/kSYrEr_s0qQ

- Shaping the music by Vera Milankovic through movement, presented at the 3rd International Scholarly Conference – *Eurhythmics in the Education of Musicians, actors, dancers and in Rehabilitation* (Conference PLASTIQUE ANIMME, Lodz, 16-17 March, 2017);
- Vera Milanković and her music in original choreographies of music by Anna Galikowska-Gajewska. Mobility within Erasmus+ program, Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Vienna, May 2018;
- For the 26th Pedagogical Forum of Performing Arts and the composer's double anniversary, I created five music choreographies for the following pieces: *Vetar/Wind*, *Canzona*, *Valcer/Waltz* (vocal and instrumental compositions for girls' choir and piano), *Piano Prelude No. 7* from the series of 27 Piano Preludes and *Sonatina for cello and piano III*.

At the 26th Forum, the performers of music choreography were students and interns Shengyi Huang, Dominika Massloch, and myself (photo 3). The piece entitled *Vetar/Wind* by Vera Milanković I heard during my first visit to Serbia. I fell in love with this composition on a first listen. That is why I decided to make a music choreography inspired by this song as a gift to Vera Milanković. The song got a new, original shape in movement and space, dictated by its emotional charge, soundscape, and simplicity of musical narration. The narration in the case of those three vocal and instrumental compositions radiates with unparalleled lyrical potential, expressed with a beautiful melodic line, enriched with wonderful harmony.⁶



Photo 3. Vera Milanković and the performers at the 26th Pedagogical Forum of Performing Arts in Belgrade.

⁶ Music choreographies could be seen at the following links: https://youtu.be/Px_y9Kp6wrA; <https://youtu.be/jjjaLm5ruhQ>; <https://youtu.be/FnQMD43BuDw>; https://youtu.be/KMC_bAa9kzg; https://youtu.be/Djqqu-MW_w0.

Conclusion

I wish Vera a never-ending creative inspiration, new ideas, good health and optimism, the joy of life, and next beautiful anniversaries, celebrated in the circle of friends. Vera – thank you for being in my life, thank you for your wonderful music and I am waiting for more! I can also promise that I will take your music with me to the remote corners of the world – China, where in 2023 I started my new work assignment and my artistic adventure.

ВЕРИНА МУЗИКА У МОМ ЖИВОТУ – ИЗВОЂЕЊЕ ОРИГИНАЛНИХ КОРЕОГРАФИЈА НА МУЗИКУ ВЕРЕ МИЛАНКОВИЋ

Текст је посвећен Вери Миланковић поводом њеног 70. рођендана и пола века њене уметничке и педагошке каријере. Овај двоструки јубилеј јесте лајтомитв 26. Педагошког форума сценских уметности који је одржан од 20. до 22. октобра 2023. године у Београду. У раду сам објединила лична искуства везана за Веру Миланковић и њену музику која ме је веома инспирисала да на њу сачиним кореографије. До сада сам визуализовала девет њених композиција које су извела деца и млађи ученици током протеклих година. На овом скупу представила сам још четири нове музичке кореографије које сам извела уз помоћ мојих студенткиња.

Кључне речи: Вера Миланковић, музичка кореографија, покрет, музички израз, Далкрозов метод