Article

Activist Musicology and Informal Multimedia Archives: The Case of YouTube Channel "Serbian Composers"

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Abstract: The YouTube channel "Serbian Composers" was founded in 2012 by four musicology students from Belgrade. As the first page dedicated to both art music and applied music of Serbian composers on this popular video-sharing website, over the past 11 years this channel has shown itself to be an excellent platform for the promotion, multi-media archiving, research, digitalization, and preservation of Serbian music. The founders of the channel—nowadays active researchers in the field—recognized the potential of YouTube for applied musicological work and worked diligently on making this channel the most reliable online source for anyone interested in Serbian composers and their works. In this article, we elaborate on what working on this channel throughout the years has entailed. We cover the realities of both the social media and internet presence of one such endeavor and situate the research in the domain of seeing YouTube as an informal multimedia archive. We also discuss the ongoing processes of collecting music and data, digitalization and preservation, selection and categorization, and the presentation of material on YouTube and other relevant social media platforms.

Keywords: applied musicology; activist musicology; digital musicology; YouTube; multimedia archives; online archive; informal archive; "Serbian Composers"

1. Introduction

The YouTube channel "Serbian Composers", which is a pioneering platform dedicated to the promotion of music written by composers from Serbia, was founded in 2012 by a group of four students, including the authors of this article, who at that time were undergraduate students at the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade: Bojana Radovanović, Ana Đorđević, Miloš Bralović, and Stefan Savić.[1] Studying at the leading institution for music education in Serbia, the four colleagues found themselves in an unenviable situation, considering the lack of sources, scores, and sound recordings of Serbian art music available to students and the general public. This was an outcome of the decades- and even centuries-old unfit archiving practices and negligence of the cultural and artistic heritage by accountable institutions within cultural and educational networks. Apart from the two largest cities and official and cultural centers of the country (Belgrade, which is the capital city of Serbia, and Novi Sad, which is the capital of its autonomous northern province Vojvodina), Serbian musicians, educators, and researchers have traditionally had very limited access to the materials necessary to teach, practice, and investigate local music.

At the time of the establishment of the "Serbian Composers" channel, major cultural, educational, and scientific institutions, such as the Composer's Association of Serbia, the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Radio-Television of Serbia, each with their own libraries, archives, and phonoarchives,[2] did not have any publicly visible digitization project or internet and social media presence, not excluding YouTube. Driven by the overall invisibility of Serbian music and a need for participation in a cultural virtual

space, and without the financial or material support of any institution, this channel was built *pro bono*, driven by the ideas and need for preservation, promotion, and greater visibility of Serbian art and, sometime later, applied music. As of 2023, none of its content has been monetized by the group.

In this article, we consider the channel "Serbian Composers" as a specific type of multimedia online archive that was created in the domain of applied musicology. We discuss the fabric and multimedia archival nature of this project through the prism of the applied knowledge in the field, combined with an activist impetus of this independent undertaking. In doing so, the questions of collecting, archiving, digitizing, conserving, curating, and promoting the material at hand are examined.

2. Applied/Activist Musicology and the User-Generated Internet Archives

The drive to propel the works of composers from Serbia into the realm of the internet can be viewed from the perspective of applied musicology, which is a freshly defined and emerging discipline.[3] Looking up to its sister discipline, namely, ethnomusicology, and the applied methodologies developed in that field, musicologists started to recognize many procedures and activities of their own that go beyond the usual academic context and, in some ways, "influence social interaction and direct the course of cultural change" (Medić 2022, p. 89). Interventions in social and cultural realities, such as various types of publishing and popular science (sheet music scores, essays on music, music critique), educational endeavors outside of academia, work in media and media appearances, participating in cultural events and manifestations in various ways, and many more, show that the applied (sub)discipline of musicology was just waiting to be discovered and "rebranded" as such. With that in mind, Ivana Medić lists six (non-exhaustive) fields of applied musicology: (1) media and new technologies, (2) organization of events, (3) artistic-theoretical work, (4) archival and curatorial work, (5) cultural policies and activism, and (6) educational activities (Medić 2022, pp. 90–91).

The possibilities for musicological work and the use of professional knowledge and experience beyond academic circles are, in theory, limitless. One peculiar type of such work appears to be necessary for contexts like the one described in the introduction of this article, where the institutions responsible for and overseeing some type of cultural and artistic field fail to fulfill their mission. The consequent absence of cultural, educational, and scientific institutions that conserve and archive art and applied and traditional music from the public dialogue is particularly dramatic in the age of global internet culture because it gives the impression of an incomplete picture and even an "undeveloped", "substandard", or a non-existent culture. These situations can occur due to many reasons: lack of funding and logistical support from the governing structures; decades of neglect; lack of professional staff; the practice of underpaying the staff; tone-deafness to the current and innovative models of archiving and curating; inertness in implementing more effective practices; and estrangement from the "outside world" due to poor communication and invisibility on the internet, social media, and other types of media platforms. To compensate for the absence of the official and authoritative voice of the institutions, one can defer to a specific type of activism in musicology and ethnomusicology and establish a non-official, parallel discourse.

When it comes to the cultures that can be designated as peripheral (such as Serbian, see Milin 2001; Veselinović-Hofman 2019; Radovanović 2021), which experienced this type of neglect in their cultural and art spheres, activist musicology strives toward righting injustices, taking up due space, and putting the achievements of the usually overlooked cultures on the global map. The vast space of the internet, which is a seemingly democratic forum for all the people of the world, turned out to be the right outlet for this kind of effort. And indeed, in recent decades, the indolence of the official institutions has been compensated for by unofficial and individual acts of activism in musicology and ethnomusicology, and especially within the premises of one of the largest and most important platforms for sharing user-generated video content, namely, YouTube.

Since the establishment of the platform in 2005, YouTube has grown to be one of the largest containers of video content, which has been challenged only in recent years by TikTok.[4] However, as a website that favors longer-form videos, YouTube has been considered through the prism of media studies and communication (Allan 2007; Snickars and Vonderau 2009; Arthurs et al. 2018), computer science (Cheng et al. 2008), science communication and education (Welbourne and Grant 2016; Maynard 2021; Shoufan and Mohamed 2022; Abubakar and Muhammed 2023), music and media (Vernallis 2013; Airoldi et al. 2016; Rogers et al. 2023), identity and social politics (Pietrobruno 2013; Wolf 2016; Bond and Miller 2021; Tay 2021; Tortajada et al. 2021), and many more.

When it comes to using YouTube to supplement or represent one's cultural or artistic heritage, in the early days of this platform, it became obvious that it could be used as an informal multimedia archive, whose benefits were recognized by institutions from the 2010s onward (see e.g., Pietrobruno 2013; Radovanović 2017). As Prelinger pointed out, in a matter of a couple of years, YouTube became regarded as the "world's default media archive", which irretrievably influenced classical libraries and (media) archives (Prelinger 2009, p. 272). Furthermore, giving voice to the individual users and "activist" groups, and not just official institutional profiles, has resulted in the establishment of multifaceted relations between official heritage and non-official archiving practices (Pietrobruno 2013, p. 1259). In other words, YouTube and similar user-generated websites allowed for the input of unofficial channels to play an important role in a cultural representation of the groups that they belonged to, and thus, challenge established dominant narratives. In this vein, examining YouTube as an informal archive for the intangible heritage (as defined by UNESCO), Pietrobruno notes that "from both within and beyond the borders of Western countries, the social archiving of heritage on YouTube has the potential to problematize dominant narratives in which national heritage privileges male practitioners" (Pietrobruno 2013, p. 1261). This example is just one of many, but it underlines how YouTube enabled the intervention into systems that are transnational, have a global influence and impact, and support and promote the heritage of many diverse groups.

In the case of the "Serbian Composers" channel, the efforts of the group of musicology students were aimed at standing in for the missing dominant narrative, as well as supplementing and diversifying the idea of Serbian art and incidental music for the foreign public. Moreover, in the Serbian context, the foundation and development of this kind of informal multimedia archive meant increased availability of this type of music to all interested parties, particularly students and professors of music coming from smaller towns and isolated communities. As a "work in progress" project from the very beginning, the channel offered a more detailed picture of what was hiding on the shelves behind the institutional walls in the largest cities of the country. That way, the knowledge about the history and contemporaneity of Serbian music was no longer restricted to the places of higher music education and a few media and scientific organizations; it was perhaps one of the most important achievements of activist musicology in the context of internet platforms and new media in Serbia.

However, although generated and constantly "fed" by the users' content, YouTube is a private company owned by Google, and the users cannot be guaranteed that any videos or whole channels are safe from copyright claims or any other terms violations, or that they can be protected, conserved, and available in the future. Furthermore, all users should abide by the logistics and structure determined by the platform, which limits the ways in which the content can be presented.

Already in the early years of YouTube, Frank Kessler and Mirko Tobias Schäfer expressed their skepticism toward designating this website as an archive or a library, striving to see it primarily as a repository or even as a database (Kessler and Schäfer 2009). Leaning on Leo Enticknap's note that YouTube is not showing any initiative to "undertake long-term preservation of any material it hosts" and that it is "essentially an infrastructure for the distribution of video content for end-user viewing"[5]; these authors examine the website as a site for "hybrid interaction" between humans and machines, which provides heterogeneous

datasets that include video and audio material, complementary descriptions, statistical information, recursive links, etc. (Kessler and Schäfer 2009, p. 279). However, for this venture we have undertaken with the "Serbian Composers" channel, the reconstruction of an entire picture around one audio-visual post on YouTube can be seen through the lens of an (as previously underlined, informal) open and multimedia archive. To reinforce our position, we now examine what an archive can mean today and how we can navigate the definitions to include manifold contemporary curatorial and archival-like online practices.

In their article "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory", Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook offer an insightful interpretation of several issues that are shown to be of great importance when it comes to archives (Schwartz and Cook 2002). In particular, driven by the poststructuralist viewpoints of Derrida and Foucault that strive toward demythologization of "pure science", scientific objectivity and neutral position, and "Truth" (Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 9), these authors suggest that even though archives are in general seen by academics, other users, and society as "passive resources to be exploited for various historical and cultural purposes", they stand for much more complex relations of power (Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 1). Therefore, supposedly "neutral, objective, and impartial" archives and archivists should be held responsible and seen as figures in power: they control the past in order to shape and impact the knowledge of the future. Their influence in the scope of preserving administrative, legal, and fiscal documents of governments, corporations, and individuals, as well as their often prominent role in debates around issues that include a general right to knowledge, freedom of information, privacy, copyright, and intellectual property policies, show that archives, as institutions and records, "wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity" (Schwartz and Cook 2002, p. 2). This leads to a question that was raised a couple of paragraphs earlier—the question of situated knowledge and the power of archives to privilege or marginalize certain documents and historical records, and thus, being the weapons of hegemony or resistance, reflecting and constituting the power relations.

In the age of transition from the "classical" archive toward "the audio-visual" (Ernst 2006), we are, however, not only given enough flexibility to enrich the definition of an archive to include not only the websites, institutionalized profiles, and spaces that represent the "real" archives in the virtual space but also to include liminal internet practices of user- and industry-driven platforms such as YouTube. In this sense, new media, digital technologies, and virtual space reveal viable paths and possibilities for the future of archival work.

The "archival effect" or the "archival metaphor", as Marlene Manoff (2010) dubs it, provides a theoretical frame for examining the ways in which the internet and digital databases actively "bring the past into the present" (Manoff 2010, p. 386). In fact, the accumulation of information in cyberspace that is generated in hardware–software interaction of living, human beings, and digital space vividly resembles existing archival practices. This implies the transposition and imitation of the archival process of discovering, selecting, storing, categorizing, curating, and presenting the material in a new context of the internet and social media. Thus, cyberspace swarms with archive-like, museum-like, gallery-like profiles and pages that are carefully "curated". Every individual or institutional representation on the internet can, in a way, be regarded as more or less thought-out archives of selected and shared pieces of information contributing to global and personal history-making.

Setting aside the individual, personal profiles and pages (which can also be seen through the prism of curatorial practices and branding, see Zhao et al. 2013; Brems et al. 2017; etc.), at the moment, we are focusing on the institutional (or institutional-like) spaces, profiles, pages, or channels that offer content that can be found in their libraries and archives and have been transposed into new media objects, that is, if needed, digitalized and set in formats corresponding with the requirements of the digital cyberspace. Educational and cultural institutions, i.e., archives and libraries, can choose to make the digitized material they store in their physical spaces available online in part or completely, and make it

free or offer it in exchange for money. What is more, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many cultural and educational institutions were confined to the online space, leading to advancements and refinements in online archival and curatorial practices (Jokanović 2022).

To connect the "archival effect" or metaphor with the case study we are presenting here, it is therefore important to notice that YouTube cannot represent an archive in its "true sense" but can be—and it already has been—recognized as one of the crucial actors in the contemporary internet culture that realizes said metaphor. Furthermore, in her writings, Manoff points to the "omnipresence of older artifacts" in the digital world, including not only historical material, such as books, scripts, and other "old media", but also examples of media such as historical films, images, and music (Manoff 2010, p. 388). In this light and with the possibility to accommodate a myriad of voices and supplement dominant narratives, YouTube becomes an (almost) ideal open space for collecting and presenting multimedia data. In the ensuing part of the text, we show how this functioned in a specific case of the "Serbian Composers" channel, focusing on the various aspects of applied and activist musicology: from collecting, retrieving, and digitizing music and complementary data from various types of music carriers; supplementing it with photographs and information on the compositional process, piece structure, and other details; premiere performances and the performers on a specific recording; to uploading and promoting it on YouTube and other social media platforms; and creating a network of trusted collaborators with contemporary composers, performers, and institutions.

3. Serbian Composers YouTube Channel: Filling the Gap?

Compared with other channels with similar content at that time, e.g., the ones created by the discographic houses and institutions, such as Deutsche Grammophon, London Symphony Orchestra, or Mariinsky Theater project, the channel "Serbian Composers" was not institutionally bound to any existing archive, orchestra, or association. Even though the channel features the music of Serbs, as well as composers of other ethnicities who, at some point in (music) history, gave their contribution to Serbian art and applied music scenes, the name "Serbian Composers" was chosen with the idea of distinguishing this project from other institutions, such as the Composer's Association of Serbia.[6] After five years of working together and obtaining MA degrees from the Faculty of Music, in 2017, the group established the Association for Preservation, Research and Promotion of Music "Serbian Composers" (Udruženje za prezervaciju, istraživanje i promociju muzike "Srpski kompozitori").

As students of musicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade, then in our early 20s, we noticed the lack of necessary primary sources for studying Serbian music, such as sheet music scores and recordings. Thus, we initially created the YouTube channel "Serbian Composers" to help ourselves by publishing recordings of pieces that we had to study, but also to help future generations of students. Soon, these recordings started to be used by teachers and professors since they were accessible via the YouTube platform, which we learned through user comments and messages. The community—as measured by the number of subscribers—steadily grew, gathering classical music lovers, students, teachers, vocal and instrumental performers, conductors, composers, and musicologists, both from Serbia and abroad.

As of May 2023, the YouTube channel "Serbian Composers", founded on 13 October 2012, has 5970 subscribers and 733 published videos of classical and incidental music by composers who have lived and worked in Serbia.[7] The video with the most views is the recording of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac's *Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (1894/5), performed by the Mixed Choir of Radio Television Belgrade and conducted by Mladen Jagušt in 1982, which has 248,252 views and 95 comments. The channel has received a total of 2.6 million views. Prior to forming the Association for Preservation, Research, and Promotion of Music "Serbian Composers" in 2017, we created a Facebook page (with almost 2000 followers now),[8] an Instagram account (today with about 930 followers),[9] website, and Patreon account (currently with 4 patrons).[10]

3.1. Sources

Our primary source of information was the Library of the Faculty of Music, not only for the recordings but also for sheet music scores. A vast majority of recordings that we were able to find were "homemade" copies on audio CDs. The recordings, however, were digitized from the reel tape collection of Radio Belgrade. Those recordings were made (and subsequently digitized) for radio broadcasts, but they were never published. At the time, there were stricter policies regarding the taking down of copyrighted content on YouTube,[11] yet the online algorithms could not recognize the music as copyrighted since it was never released by any official record house.

Other sources included unpublished studio recordings that we were able to obtain through contact with our contemporary composers and, sporadically, performers. Among the most generous composers was Vlastimir Trajković (1947–2017), who entrusted us with his entire recorded opus at the time.[12]

Finally, a significant number of recordings came from at-home digitalized LP records and cassette tapes or recorded radio broadcasts. Regarding the LP records and cassette tapes published by PGP-RTB[13] and YouTube copyright policies, it is worth noting that most of the published recordings (also from the Radio Belgrade reel tape archives) on analog media are not recognized by YouTube algorithms. The same thing cannot be said for recordings published by Jugoton (nowadays Croatia Records) from Zagreb,[14] whose online database of digitalized recordings is more complete, and thus, recognizable by online algorithms.[15]

The at-home digitalization process started with collecting LPs and cassette tapes, as some sort of "forgotten" discography that never made its way into digital space. All the equipment for the digitalization process was bought with our own money, namely, the computers and software, additional connecting cables, record players, cassette players, stereo amplifiers, etc. Just as with all the other work regarding the YouTube channel "Serbian Composers", digitalization was done during our spare time, among the other tasks demanded by our day jobs and personal lives. The audio files were recorded as 41.1 kHz, 24-bit FLAC files, which was found to be the best for personal archiving of the recordings on external drives. Each recording was edited as a video with the photo of a composer unless the photo was unavailable. In such cases, we used the cover photo designed for our Facebook account.

3.2. Copyright

Regarding the copyright issues, we had several videos taken down from our channel (the videos contained music ripped from published CDs). The demands were made by third-party companies that controlled the presence of copyrighted content online. Due to the policy change between the third-party companies and YouTube that has taken place in recent years, the videos in question were made accessible, but the channel owner does not have the right to monetize them. Monetization is automatically done by the third-party companies that distribute the money made from views to copyright owners. This is visible in the video cited in endnote 15.

In 2015, there was a curious case regarding the copyrighted material on our channel. In 2014, we uploaded an unpublished recording of Stevan Hristić's ballet *Ohridska legenda*. This was a recording of a concert performance by Radio Television Belgrade Symphony Orchestra and Mixed Choir, conducted by Bojan Suđić. The recording was made in 2008. The conductor Suđić, at the time the director of Music Production of Radio Television Serbia, gladly gave us written permission to use the new unpublished recordings of the choir and orchestra, with him as a conductor in 2014. However, in 2015, Radio Television Serbia decided to publish the recording of *Ohridska legenda*. We were then contacted by the management of the Music Production to remove the recording from the channel prior to the publishing of the CD, and we duly obliged. The story ended here and the video remained private for the next few years. Nowadays, the recording is public, yet a third-party company, namely, Videomite Music, tagged the video and monetized it on behalf

of Radio Television Serbia. Thus, the question emerging from this case is: who owns the copyright to the recording if it was first published to YouTube by one party, and a year later, on a CD by another party? In this case, apparently the latter.

3.3. Playlists

As our community grew over the years, a need to organize our published videos came about. Thus, we began to organize our videos in playlists. First, we separated videos by composers, and later on by genre or type of ensemble (symphonic music, chamber music, music for strings, music for winds, piano music, etc.), followed by separating works of the same genre by a single composer (e.g., Milan Ristić—Symphonies, Vasilije Mokranjac—Symphonies, etc.), and finally by performers (orchestras and conductors, see Table 1). Subsequently, other YouTube users made their own playlists using our videos. At some point, we started taking requests for posting videos: within the community, there is a significant number of enthusiasts who like to collect and listen to rare recordings, and who ask for the recordings that they want to hear to be uploaded on our channel.

3.4. The Community

Regarding the statistics, most of the views come from unsubscribed users (88.3%).[16] The top three countries in which the YouTube channel "Serbian Composers" has the most views are Serbia (61.9%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.1%), and the USA (3.4%). Gender-wise, the demographics are almost balanced: 54,1% male and 45.9% female listeners. The top three age groups are 18–24 (30.7%), 25–34 (28.4%), and 35–44 years (17.3%). The statistics show that the major impact of the channel is on a national level, and we assume that it is because the majority of our videos are used for educational purposes within the general music education courses in primary and secondary schools, and the national history of music courses in specialized secondary music schools and faculties of music in Serbia. Other than that, and this is another assumption, our audience consists of music professionals and music lovers from Serbia and all over the world—possibly including members of the Serbian diaspora. Alongside the creation of the archive of Serbian art music, our role in society is educational because we reveal the hitherto hidden treasuries of Serbian art music to the general (mostly Serbian-speaking) public.

Table 1. Serbian Composers YouTube channel playlists (in the order of the last update).

Categories	Composers	Genre/Instrumentation	Composer:Cycle/Genre	Performers
	Ludmila Frajt (1919–1999)	Muzika za duvačke instrumente (Music for wind instruments)	Zoran Erić—Slike Haosa (Images of Chaos)	Borivoje Simić conducting Serbian composers
	Mihovil Logar (1902–1998)	Muzika za gudačke instrumente (Music for strings)	Marko Tajčević—Duhovni stihovi (Spiritual Verses)	Dušan Trbojević (piano) performing Serbian Composers
	Isidora Žebeljan (1967–2020)	Gudački kvarteti (String quartets)	Stevan St. Mokranjac—Rukoveti (M. Jagušt)	Olga Jovanović (piano) playing Serbian composers
	Vuk Kulenović (1946–2017)	Baleti (Ballets)	Milan Ristić—Simfonije (Symphonies)	Belgrade Philharmonic playing Serbian composers
	Enriko Josif (1924–2003)	Opere (Operas)	Miloje Milojević—Melodije i ritmovi sa Balkana op. 69 (Balkan melodies and rhythms, Op. 69)	Samo Hubad conducting Serbian Composers
	Milan Mihajlović (1945)	Simfonije (Symphonies)	Vasilije Mokranjac—Simfonije (Symphonies)	Milan Horvat and Zagreb Philharmonic playing Serbian composers
Playlists	Milan Ristić (1908–1982)	Filmska i pozorišna muzika (Music for film and theatre)	Kornelije Stanković—Osmoglasnik (Octoechos)	Živojin Zdravković conducting Serbian composers
	Aleksandar Obradović (1927–2003)	Duhovna muzika (Sacred Music)	Miloje Milojević—Minijature op. 2 (Miniatures Op. 2)	Bojan Suđić conducting Serbian composers
	Rajko Maksimović (1935)	Vokalno-instrumentalna muzika (Vocal-instrumental music)	Miloje Milojević—Kameje op. 51 (Cameos Op. 51)	Aleksandar Pavlović conducting Serbian composers
	Stanojlo Rajičić (1910–2000)	Koncerti (Concertos)		Mladen Jagušt conducting Serbian composers
	Stevan Hristić (1885–1958)	Kamerna muzika (Chamber music)		
	Vladimir Tošić (1949)	Orkestarska muzika (Orchestral music)		
	Dušan Radić (1929–2010)	Klavirska muzika (Piano music)		
	Svetislav Božić (1954)	Horska muzika (Choral music)		
	Vlastimir Trajković (1947–2017)	Solo pesme (Songs)		
	Stanislav Binički (1872–1942)			

Table 1. *Cont.*

Categories	Composers	Genre/ Instrumentation	Composer: Cycle/Genre	Performers
Playlists	Davorin Jenko (1835–1914)			
	Josif Marinković (1851–1931)			
	Josip Slavenski (1896–1955)			
	Jovan Paču (1874–1902)			
	Petar Konjović (1883–1970)			
	Dejan Despić (1930)			
	Vlastimir Peričić (1927–2000)			
	Mirjana Živković (1935–2020)			
	Miroljub Aranđelović Rasinski (1957)			
	Kornelije Stanković (1831–1865)			
	Konstantin Babić (1927–2009)			
	Vasilije Mokranjac (1923–1984)			
	Dragutin Gostuški (1923–1998)			
	Miloje Milojević (1884–1946)			
	Marko Tajčević (1900–1984)			
	Ljubica Marić (1909–2003)			
	Stevan St. Mokranjac (1856–1914)			

4. Conclusions

In this article, we show one specific example of work in the domain of applied musicology, or, more precisely, the intersection of activist musicology and archival and curatorial work. The direct incentive for the foundation of the YouTube channel "Serbian Composers" came from the overall state of neglect, lack of online presence, and non-communicativeness of Serbian cultural, educational, and scientific institutions with the public. And not only that, as we experienced during our studies of musicology, even the students of music at the highest level of education had trouble finding the necessary material for studying and learning about Serbian art music.

During more than 10 years of working in the domain of making Serbian art and incidental music available to different types of audiences, the group that is now officially an association has developed its own channels of communication via YouTube, social media, website, public lectures and presentations, publications, and documentary film. Given that practically all this work has been done voluntarily, the applied and activist features of this work stem from making an intervention in the local and global society in virtual and physical reality using our own financial means and acquired knowledge.

Speaking more specifically about YouTube as an informal archive, our work has encompassed collecting materials from various sources (libraries, archives, private collections, composers' and performers' collections); in the cases of old and rare recordings, it often included digitization at home; storing the materials on private virtual and physical storage units; active communication with composers, performers, institutions, and copyright holders; active daily communication with the community that sees the "Serbian Composers" channel as the authority and some sort of musical-informative center, regarding the recordings, scores, additional information, etc; and promotion of the new and old videos on other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Following in the footsteps of the "Serbian Composers" channel, several Serbian institutions started developing their own internet and YouTube presence. Most notably, in November 2014 and in March 2018, Radio-Television Serbia established YouTube channels *RTS Classic—Official Channel* (RTS Klasika—Zvanični kanal)[17] and *RTS Music—Official Channel* (RTS Muzika—Zvanični kanal), respectively.[18] Here, one can find recent recordings of classical music concerts on the first channel, and officially released music albums, concerts, music shows, and festival recordings, primarily of folk and popular music, on the other. However, as these channels publish mostly officially released music or recent recordings, they still do not include a large number of compositions, shows, and other music testimonies made during the long history of Radio Belgrade.

In recent years, study programs on applied musicology have started to appear, such as the one-year master's academic program of the Faculty of Music entitled "Applied Research of Music".[19] Furthermore, these tendencies are also given more force and a strong platform for further work within projects such as Applied Musicology and Ethnomusicology in Serbia: Making a Difference in Contemporary Society (APPMES) within which the authors of this paper continue to broaden their expertise and contribute to the conception of this field of musicology within the Institute of Musicology SASA.

In this sense, the channel "Serbian Composers" still holds the position of authority on Serbian music on YouTube. How long this will be the case, we do not know, and, in the grand scheme of things, it is not that important. It was, however, of crucial importance to propel the entrance of Serbian music heritage on the global stage of the internet via one of the biggest video-sharing channels in history. For the future, we can, on the one hand, hope to continue to contribute to the global narrative on music, on YouTube or any other social media or internet platform, and on the other, work with official institutions on guarding, preserving, promoting, and studying Serbian art music and incidental music heritage.

Notes

[1] Since the foundation of the YouTube channel, the group has completed many other projects, such as the documentary film *Enough for* Immortality (2016) about Serbian composer Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856–1914); numerous public presentations, conference participations, and publications (e.g., Đorđević et al. 2016; Bralović et al. 2017); several projects concerning the promotion, performance and publishing of Serbian art music in collaboration with esteemed performers and young Serbian composers; and a website that, among other things, contains interviews with Serbian composers, blogs that promote writings of young Serbian musicologists and introduce seminal musicological papers, books, and other scientific works on Serbian art music. As of 2023, three members of the group (Bralović, Radovanović, and Savić) are employed by the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, while Đorđević lives and works in the Republic of Ireland. For more information, see http://www.serbiancomposers.org/ (accessed on 15 May 2023).

[2] For more information on the archival practices, digitization projects, and the stepping out on the internet of these institutions, see (Tomašević 2003; Vasić 2010; Milanović 2010; Dumnić 2010; Lajić Mihajlović 2010; Peno 2010; Ercegovac 2015; Milinković 2017; Dumnić Vilotijević 2019).

[3] For one of the most recent articles that go into depth on applied musicology, its influences, competencies, and social responsibilities, see (Medić 2022). Likewise, in February 2023, the Austrian Society for Musicology (ÖGMW) published the call for papers for a conference with the theme "Applied (Ethno-)Musicologies": https://www.musicologie.org/23/annual_conference_of_the_Austrian_society_for_musicology.html (accessed on 15 May 2023).

[4] For one of the most recent overviews and comparison of both platforms' features, see https://cybercrew.uk/software/youtube-vs-tiktok/ (accessed on 14 May 2023). For a more detailed overview of the specifics of TikTok's influence on creating, promoting, distributing, and listening to music, see (Radovanović 2022).

[5] Quote from a post Enticknap made on the discussion list of the Association of Moving Image Activists (AMIA) (Kessler and Schäfer 2009, p. 276).

[6] Our name is, however, still sometimes mistakenly attributed to this distinguished association of professional composers.

[7] There are, of course, a lot of composers of different ethnicities who lived and worked in Serbia (mostly Slovenian and Croatian, but also Czech, Slovak, Russian, etc.), who have greatly contributed to the musical life in Serbia, and thus, constitute a rightful part of the channel.

[8] https://www.facebook.com/SerbianComposers (accessed on 14 May 2023).

[9] https://www.instagram.com/srpski_kompozitori/ (accessed on 14 May 2023).

[10] https://www.patreon.com/serbiancomposers (accessed on 14 May 2023).

[11] About the history of the treatment of copyrighted content on YouTube, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube_copyright_issues#Content_ID, accessed on 13 May 2023.

[12] Vlastimir Trajković agreed to collaborate with us on publishing his music on our channel via email messages from 14 April 2013, and a series of messages from 16 to 18 May 2013. After the first exchange, we invited Trajković to be a guest in our documentary film *Enough for Immortality*, which is another glimpse of our collaboration with this composer that we covered in our latest joint publication (see Đorđević et al. 2016; Bralović et al. 2017; Radovanović et al. 2023).

13   For more information about PGP-RTB/PGP-RTS, see (Maglov 2016, 2022; Milanović and Maglov 2019).

14   Jugoton published many works of Serbian composers during the post-World War II period, up to the dissolution of the SFR Yugoslavia.

15   See, for example, the recording of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac's *Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, performed by Academic Choir Ivan Goran Kovačić, conductor Vladimir Kranjčević, published in 1976: https://youtu.be/m5JVQ9jP1UI (accessed on 13 May 2023).

16   All the data refers to "Serbian Composers" channel analytics as of the time of writing the article.

17   https://www.youtube.com/@RTS.Klasika (accessed on 15 May 2023).

18   https://www.youtube.com/@RTSMuzika (accessed on 15 May 2023).

19   https://www.fmu.bg.ac.rs/studies/applied-research-of-music/ (accessed on 15 May 2023).

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