

ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION OF SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND
PIANO IN G MINOR BY VASILIJE MOKRANJAC

by

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(Under the Direction of Levon Ambartsumian)

ABSTRACT

Vasilije Mokranjac (1923-1984) was one of the most prominent Serbian composers of 20th century. The beginnings of Mokranjac's work fall in the period immediately after World War II and the socialist revolution in Yugoslavia. His early compositions adhered closely to the traditional romantic and post-romantic formal structures. Along with other Serbian composers of his generation, Mokranjac composed in the neo-romantic and neo-expressionist styles with strong elements of folklore. This presentation of his *Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor*, written in 1952, contains formal and melodic analyses, commentaries on the edition used for the study, and performance and stylistic suggestions. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate Mokranjac's profound and genuine understanding of music and his successful synthesis of tradition and folklore on the one side, and modernity and progressivism on the other. The first part of this presentation is dedicated to Mokranjac's biographical information, character and work. Also included is information on Duo Mihajlovic who premiered the piece in 1955 and to whom the sonata was dedicated.

INDEX WORDS: Vasilije Mokranjac, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Serbian music

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DEDICATION

To my parents Branimir and Angelina Ciric, their love and support

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INTRODUCTION

Vasilije Mokranjac (Va-si-li-ye Mo-krah-nyatz) was one of the most influential and prominent Serbian composers of the 20th century. His entire compositional output was created in post World War II era communist Yugoslavia, a period particularly characterized by its complex geo-political context. Mokranjac belonged to the first generation of Yugoslavian composers who were completely educated in the country's newly established educational system. His reputation was primarily built on his symphonic and piano works, as well as the music he wrote for theatrical plays and radio dramas. Although Mokranjac was widely acknowledged for his enormous and important contribution to Serbian musical culture, he often tried to stay out of the spotlight. He was entirely devoted to teaching composition and orchestration at the Belgrade Music Academy and composing music. Mokranjac's introverted nature led to his almost complete seclusion from public life. Reluctant to pursue any exact musical genre or trend, especially those popular during his time, Mokranjac developed a neo-impressionist style based on modal patterns and tonal shifts. This fusion was greatly enriched and enhanced by Mokranjac's masterful, yet subtle, use of folklore elements that demonstrated Mokranjac's genuine poetic understanding of music and dramatic lyricism. His premature death by suicide in 1984 came as an absolute surprise to all his colleagues at the Belgrade Music Academy, as well as to audiences across Yugoslavia.

BIOGRAPHY

Vasilije Mokranjac was born in Belgrade on September 11, 1923 into a musical family. His father, Jovan Mokranjac was a cellist and nephew of one of the greatest Serbian composers of all time, Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac (Steh-vahn Sto-ia-no-vich Mo-krah-nyatz)¹. Stevan Mokranjac is primarily attributed with introducing nationalist elements into Serbian music. Several other members of Vasilije's extended family were also musicians, including his mother Jelena who played the piano. Vasilije's musical talents were discovered early and he began learning to play the piano with the intention of becoming a concert pianist. He graduated with a degree in piano performance from the University of Belgrade Music Academy in 1948. There he had studied with the preeminent pedagogue, Professor Emil Hajek (Ha-yek). However, by the end of his piano studies, Mokranjac had become increasingly interested in the creative side of his music and began to take composition classes. Ultimately he channeled all his energy into composition, studying with Professor Stanojlo Rajacic (Sta-noy-lo Ra-ya-chich). In 1951 Mokranjac earned his second degree from the University of Belgrade Music Academy, this time in composition.

Mokranjac became an assistant professor of composition and orchestration at Belgrade Music Academy in 1956 and associate professor in 1965. His output includes five symphonies, three overtures, two piano concertos, five chamber works (one of them the Sonata for violin and piano in G minor), numerous piano compositions, three pieces for voice and piano, music for

¹ Serbian composer and educator b. 1856- d.1914. Founder of first independent music school in Serbia in 1899. His most famous pieces are the fifteen choir suites *Rukoveti* - a collection of songs based on motives of Serbian folk music from Balkan countries. He also wrote *The Divine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom* which is used in church services in Serbian Orthodox Church to this day.

theatrical plays and radio dramas, and music for two soundtracks. His compositions fall into three creative periods: the first period from 1947 to 1961 ending with of his 1st symphony; the second period from 1961 to 1972 concluding with his 4th symphony; and the third period from 1972 until his death in 1984.

Unfortunately very little is known about Vasilije Mokranjac's personal life. He lived quietly and alone. However, he was the recipient of many awards for his musical creativity as well as for his vast contribution to Serbian culture. His most important award came in 1976 when he was inducted into the *Serbian Academy of Science and Art*. There, he found himself in the company of such illustrious past members as the scientists Nikola Tesla and Mihailo Pupin, as well as international revolutionary figures such as Giuseppe Garibaldi and Nikolay Chernyshevsky. But for reasons unknown to the public he committed suicide in 1984 leaving many unfinished works behind. His last completed composition was the *Prelude for Clarinet Solo*, which he dedicated to one of his closest friends and colleagues, clarinetist Ernest Ackun (Atch-koon).

In years following Mokranjac's death there has been growing interest in his musical works in Serbia. This interest was generated primarily by Serbian pianists who began to recognize the importance and excellence of his compositions. Because so little was known of his personal life, Vasilije Mokranjac gradually developed an almost mythical status in Serbian culture. This will likely continue as more studies of his compositions bring to light the extraordinary world of this intriguing personality and one of the greatest figures of Serbian music. In the lack of world-wide interest in Vasilije Mokranjac's music, I hope that my research and presentation of his Sonata for Violin and Piano will initiate further study of his works.

COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Vasilije Mokranjac was a member of the first generation of Serbian composers who began their musical path right after World War II. This was a particularly difficult time for art in a war torn country that historically was always wedged between the West and the East. Socialist realism came as a natural progression from the communist ideology formed during WWII in the countries of the Eastern Bloc and their artistic establishments. Composers and other artists were facing strict demands in terms of their thematic, sociologic, political, and philosophical ideas. Even though “realist” art was supposed to depict life as it was, artists were often pressured into portraying the unreal utopian vision of their surroundings in order to help project the “Bright Future,” a term coined by the Yugoslav Communist Party.

Mokranjac’s first works were composed during his studies at the University of Belgrade Music Academy. During this time his compositions were influenced by his mentor and teacher Prof. Rajacic whose style can primarily be described as romantic. Most of Mokranjac’s compositions from the period from 1947 to 1951 came as a result of his degree requirements. Given the circumstances of Yugoslavia’s newly established educational system, these requirements were very strict and based on the principles of a strong musical and historical foundation and traditional approach to the “proper” means of composing. As such, students were required to write within specific formal, structural and harmonic boundaries. The primary forms of romantic music, such as the sonata form and theme and variations, were strongly emphasized and studied. Within these strictures there was little room for individual expression. With his strong personality and enormous talent, Mokranjac successfully managed to find the space

within and develop his own style. These early compositions are characterized by strong elements of neo-romanticisms and nationalism with the use of folkloric elements.

The time in which Mokranjac completed his 1st Symphony (1961) was quite different than the post-war period. In the sixteen year period from the end of the War the profile of the Serbian music scene had drastically changed. The new socio-political context allowed more freedom and encouraged abandonment of the dogmas by the proponents of social realism along with abandonment of romanticism of “transparent” nationalistic palette. Mokranjac fully appreciated this new wave of hope and began to explore expressionism and bi-tonality with elements of atonality. His works from this period show strong influences of Stravinsky and Prokofiev. Interestingly, he did not write a single piano composition during this creative phase.

With the completion of his 4th Symphony in 1972, Mokranjac stepped forward into what would be, regrettably, his last compositional period. During this time, and up until his death in 1984, he was writing twelve-tone and serial music with strong characteristics of the minimalist approach. His musical language was concise and defined. He also rediscovered piano somewhat as his musical medium; however, his strongest pieces remained his symphonic works.

It seems that Mokranjac followed a course of standard musical progression even though he was about ten years behind the rest of the musical world. However, there is little doubt that he was pursuing the ideals of a modern composer caged in the bigoted and somewhat limited surrounding of socialist Yugoslavia. His talent was far beyond his environment and one can only wonder how this genuinely musical mind would have developed if circumstances were different and he was allowed to pursue a path characterized by full exposure to the outside world and its influences.

STYLISTIC DETERMINATIONS OF MOKRANJAC'S MUSICAL LANGUAGE FROM 1947 TO 1961

For the comparison and better understanding of his compositional style in the period from 1947 (the beginning of his studies of composition) to 1961 (the beginning of his second compositional period and publishing of his 1st Symphony), the following is a chronological and categorical listing of the compositions Mokranjac wrote during this time, with the exception of music for theatrical plays and radio dramas:

Piano Works:

- Sonata in F-sharp Minor (1947)
- Theme and Variations (1947)
- *Preludium, dance and march* (1950)
- 7 Etudes (1951-1952)
- 2 Sonatinas (1953-1954)
- *Fragments* (1956)
- 6 Dances (1957)
- *Concertino for piano, strings and two harps* (1958)

Chamber works:

- 3 songs for voice and piano (1948)
- *String Quartet* (1949)

- *Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Minor* (1952)
- *Old Song for Cello and Piano* (1953)

Solo works:

- *Minuet for Harp in C Major* (1949)

Symphonic works:

- *Dramatic Overture* (1950)

Serbian composer and musicologist Vlastimir Pericic² (Vla-stee-mir Peh-ree-tchich) supports a thesis of generalization in Mokranjac's works by separating his compositions in two groups: symphonic and pianistic. Pericic goes further, arguing that Mokranjac's symphonic music is a battlefield of his dramatic conflicts and fatalistic resolutions, as opposed to his piano music which reveals the lyrical and poetical side of his temperament. It is evident that most of Mokranjac's compositions in his early period were devoted to the piano, his "natural habitat." All of these pieces share a common atmosphere and deep introspection. Neo-romantic influences can be seen in all the compositional aspects of these pieces – formally and harmonically. Additional consistent features of his piano pieces, as well as his chamber works, are the use of distinctive folklore elements and the occasional quotations of melodies of ethnic origin.

Mokranjac had the ability to compose an original melody that would possess all the characteristics of a traditional tune. He also borrowed melodies from collections of folk tunes set for a choir such as, *Rukoveti* (Roo-koh-veh-ti) by Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac, which he would then alter rhythmically or harmonically. These distinctive features and the use of occasional

² One of the most prominent Serbian music theorists, 1927-2000. He wrote many books on harmony, counterpoint, and Serbian composers and their works. He is also the author of numerous critical articles and several dictionaries of musical terms.

citations are present in his piano etudes (4, 5 and 6), *Preludium, dance and march*, and the Sonata for Violin and Piano. All of these pieces were written between 1950 and 1952.

Vasilije Mokranjac's harmonic language of in the early 1950s was very rich, characterized by expansiveness as well as all the characteristics of the post-romantic and expressionist style. The use of bi-tonality (for coloristic purposes with no intention of actual application), non-harmonic tones in intervals of half and whole steps, and fourths, ninth chords and eleventh chords with the omission of their vital thirds and sevenths, and the use of modality are his main compositional tools. Mokranjac also used an alternating progression between tonic and Neapolitan sixth chords which, in succession, weakened the N6 and emphasized its coloristic qualities. The same was true for the VII6 chord. A pedal is present in more than a few compositions along with a *toccata*-type of setting in accompaniment to the melodic line. Additionally, he used some impressionistic elements along with some jazz and blues influences. The latter two certainly suggest Mokranjac's ability to improvise – an element evident in his treatment of the melodic development and embellishment of the previously stated material.

Modality is one of the most important aspects of Mokranjac's music. He used the Phrygian and the Mixolydian modes and their variants extensively. Mokranjac also incorporated tritons and some plagal chord progressions to emphasize the folk character in his melodies. Combining all these elements led him to the development of a particular scale of alternating whole and half-steps that became his compositional signature. However, the use of this scale was most likely not his original idea since this "alternating" scale was employed by more than few composers in the past, most notably examples by Scriabin and Messiaen. Furthermore, many

theorists call this scale Istrian³. However, this term could be misleading in the case of Mokranjac since he was not utilizing *melos*⁴ of Istria in any of his pieces and the primary harmonic characteristics of music from those geographic regions are not close to Mokranjac's "ear". Moreover, his influences were, not surprisingly, coming from the music of Scriabin in formal and harmonic aspects. Hints of Prokofiev are also present especially in dance type melodies. This is most evident in Mokranjac's etudes as well as his treatment of the piano part in the Sonata for Violin and Piano.

³ Istria is the peninsula located at the head of the Adriatic between the Gulf of Trieste and the Bay of Kvarner. It is shared by three countries: Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy. It was part of the former Yugoslavia.

⁴ Ancient Greek term meaning a tune, a melody, or a lyric poem intended for singing. In ancient Greek music theory "melos" meant the melodic basis of music. The teaching of harmonics and melopoeia was associated with melos.

COMMENTARY ON MOKRANJAC'S DEDICATION OF SONATA

Mokranjac wrote his Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor in 1952. He dedicated the piece to the celebrated violin/piano duo of sisters Marija and Olga Mihajlovic and they premiered the piece on January 10, 1955.

The duo performed classical masterpieces with great success in the former Yugoslavia and countries in the Eastern Bloc as well as in all the cultural centers of Western Europe. Both sisters had exceptional educations as they both had a chance to study in Paris. Marija studied with famous violinist Jacques Thibaud⁵ and Olga studied with equally famous Alfred Cortot⁶ at the Paris Conservatory. Prior to World War II the duo was concertizing in Brussels, Vienna, and Paris, and promoting the music of young composers from Serbia who at the time were studying composition, most of them at Prague Conservatory.

Marija and Olga Mihajlovic were both founders of the Belgrade Music Academy in 1939 and both had very long, illustrious, and successful teaching careers. During the war they lived in Belgrade and refused to perform any concerts or radio broadcasts in protest to the Nazi regime. Immediately after the end of WWII they were some of the first artists that to emerge on the scene. They performed regularly for radio broadcasts and encouraged other musicians to join and help the process of healing post-war Yugoslavia. Their popularity and exposure to the public

⁵ Famous French violinist (1880 –1953). Thibaud was friend of the great Eugene Ysaye to whom Ysaye dedicated one of his sonatas for solo violin (No.2 “*Obsession*”). Thibaud formed one of the most celebrated piano trios in history of classical music with pianist Alfred Cortot and cellist Pablo Casals. He died in the crash of a French airliner in 1953

⁶ Famous Franco-Swiss pianist and conductor (1877-)1962 known for superb renditions of Chopin pieces. He thought at Paris Conservatory. Famous students include Clara Haskil, Dinu Lippati. He was a founding member of a piano trio with Thibaud and Casals

eye enabled them to form very close relationships with young and promising composers who were seeking recognition and support for their further development. One of them was Vasilije Mokranjac. Another famous young composer at the time, Ljubica Maric⁷, also dedicated her violin/piano sonata to Duo Mihajlovic.

The Mihajlovic Duo made a recording of the Mokranjac sonata for the Belgrade Radio Station, possibly in 1956, but to this day it has not been located in any of the music libraries in Serbia, nor in the vaults of the Radio Station where all recordings of this nature are preserved.

Marija and Olga Mihajlovic were Yugoslavian pioneers in promoting young composers looking for affirmation and exposure to wider audiences. They also performed compositions of well known and established composers like Stanojlo Rajacic, Josip Slavenski, and others. Their contribution to the musical community in former Yugoslavia was enormous. They were recognized as valuable assets of the artistic community and received many awards for their work. They retired from public performance in the early 1970s but continued their educational work at University of Belgrade Music Academy until 1978-79.

⁷ One of the most original Serbian composers of 20th century (1909-d2003). The first Serbian composer to graduate from Prague Conservatory in 1929 and member of Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences.

STYLISTIC, FORMAL AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS OF SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO IN G MINOR

The Sonata for Violin and Piano is the only *sonata*-type piece, other than his piano sonata and sonatinas, in his entire compositional output. It is about 24 minutes long and is written in a standard four-movement form with all the typical characteristics of a neo-romantic sonata. Stylistically it falls between his piano etudes and sonatinas. Vlastimir Pericic described the Sonata as being composed with “intensive lyrical pathos and searching for expression of nationalism [in music]⁸”. All characteristics of Mokranjac’s early compositional period are present, and in certain ways emphasized, throughout the entire piece.

Movement I: *Allegro* approx. 9:45

“Lyrical pathos” is a very accurate description of the prevailing atmosphere especially in the first and third movements of the Sonata. The ominous and tormented opening in the piano *Adagio, grave* quarter note = 48 (m. 1-15) sets the mood for the entire first movement, composed in the standard sonata form. It indicates the beginning of a struggle and emotional stress deep inside the composers mind and soul. A two measure long accompaniment in the piano introduces the exposition marked *Allegro* quarter note = 104. The violin states the main theme, which is 10 measures long and initiates the first subject group (letter **A**; Ex. 1):

⁸ Vlastimir Pericic, *Muzicki stvaraoци u Srbiji*, Beograd, Prosveta 1967

Example 1: Movement I – beginning to 12 measures after letter A



The main theme is in G minor with raised fourth scale degree, forming a tritone – one of the Mokranjac’s favorite tools for creating a sense of intensity and suspense. The augmented second C sharp – B flat also brings an element of folk-like melody because it suggests a scale common in Balkan folk music. Mokranjac asks for resolute and full-bodied sound by underwriting the theme with the word “robusto.” The theme itself starts and ends with the note “D” and could be harmonized in D minor. However, Mokranjac achieved modal setting of the tune and “coloristic” approach of the harmonic support through a harmonic progression of three chords in the accompaniment-G major, B major, and G minor which are arpeggiated throughout the course of one measure. The melody is set in Phrygian mode (from D or Hypophrygian) with raised and lowered sevenths, and harmonized in G major (Ex. 2):

Example 2: Phrygian mode form note D

D - E flat - F - G - A - B flat - C - C sharp - D

The opening ascending interval of an octave followed by a descending half step becomes a motive that can be traced in different forms throughout the course of the sonata giving, a strong sense of cyclic form. After a fragmentary section of ten measures and a “false” modulation, the first subject group progresses further through the side theme that is a derivative of the main theme (letter **B**). This ascending melody has the same general feeling of stress and tension that runs throughout the movement. It starts on the note G and is harmonized in G minor. In the next sixteen measures the melody ascends to the note D (letter **C**) keeping the G minor harmonization. In the following eight measures it descends towards a deceptive closure. Eight measures after letter **C**, Mokranjac adds another performance suggestion (*espressivo*) in the next ten measures, which brings us to a strong cadential statement.

The piano takes over in the next ten-measure transition, fragmenting the material and modulating to prepare the appearance of the second subject group. The violin joins in a soft dynamic and continues decrescendos to *pianissimo*. The piano completes the modulation and after another two-measure introduction the violin presents the contrasting second theme marked *Meno mosso* quarter note=92 (letter **D**). The second theme (Ex. 3), a period of twelve measures in length, is lyrical and tender (marked *dolce*) and brings a new and serene atmosphere.

Example 3: Movement I – second theme, one measure after letter D to 16 measures after letter D

The tonal center moves from G Minor and has a bi-tonal character. Again Mokranjac keeps his listeners unsettled and in doubt. Even though it is not complete in the first statement of the second theme (no D or D sharp), Phrygian mode seems to be the ever present element throughout the entire movement. The starting point is the note E (Ex. 4):

Example 4: Phrygian mode from note E (passing notes in brackets)

E - F - G - [G sharp] - A - B - C - D - [D sharp] - E

The harmonization of the melodic line moves from A major⁹ to A minor⁹. Further development of the thematic material is similar to the development of the first theme in the first subject group. This process seems to resemble an improvisational style embellishment and expansion of the second theme by stretching or condensing the melody through use of triplets and a cell of sixteenth notes. Forty measures after letter **D** the action slows down. After a fermata and three measures of complete calm, marked *morendo* in the piano, the tempo quickly moves to quarter note=100, which begins an emotional and unnerving section borrowing elements of the second theme (letter **E**). The music slows down again and in the fourteenth measure after **E** the violin arpeggiates *ad libitum* for one measure and brings an end to this statement. The following five measures are an extension of the previous thought that carries us to another change of tempo quarter note=92. This tempo marking suggests a return of the second theme (in reduced form), which takes place seven measures later but in the new key of C sharp

minor acting as a *codetta*. Everything comes to a halt with a long fermata over the ending note of the section.

The sudden motion in the piano in octaves, marked *robusto*, initiates the intense and passionate development section. The tempo moves up to quarter note=100 at letter **G**. The material is fragmented and improvisational in nature, using rhythmic patterns from the first subject group. In the sixteenth measure of **G** the shortened second theme appears unannounced in the key of G sharp minor. Seven measures later the tempo is pushed up a notch to quarter note=104 signifying further commotion. Letter **H** marked with another change of tempo to quarter note=108 and additional condensation of material. Throughout this section the struggle escalates and develops into a conflict between the violin and piano, where each instrument is wrestling to overcome the other. In contrast to this divergence the instruments in certain sections find a way to communicate and support each other but with the ever-present intensity that is boiling inside the core of the piece. *Robusto* is marked at several places in the music emphasizing and reinforcing the “roughness” of Mokranjac’s musical ideas. This apparent build up in energy and dynamic brings us to the climatic point of the whole movement.

Two measures before letter **I**, after a *crescendo molto*, high F sharp and E half notes in the violin and strong *ff* rhythmical figure in chords in the piano part are followed by *ritenuto molto* eight note=quarter note. The climax comes at letter **I** with a massive chord on the downbeat followed by a huge leap in the violin into extreme registers—a loud shriek and cry, almost liberating in nature but without any genuine sense of hope or peace (Ex. 5). It is a definite end of the development section and, after a brief respite, a *ff* pick-up in the violin marked *con gracie espressione* begins the recapitulation with a brief appearance of an abbreviated first theme. The tempo falls to quarter note=100.

Example 5: Movement I-letter I to 6 measures after I

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 5, Movement I, letter I, measures 1 to 6. The score is written on two systems of three staves each. The first system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a time signature of 7/8. The music features a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. The second system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a time signature of 7/8. The music continues with a melodic line in the upper staff and a bass line in the lower staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like "ff (possibile) largamente" and "ff".

The recapitulation is not written in a condensation of the standard *sonata* form recapitulation. It is very short in length, particularly when compared to the size of exposition and development sections. All formal and harmonic elements are present but diminutive and abbreviated. The statement of the first theme is basically four measures long and in the tonic key but slightly slower than in the exposition (quarter note=100). It suggests an attempt to further ritardando the musical idea. After a four measure interlude and modulation in the piano, the

second theme enters, now in tonic with the same type of “bi-tonal” harmonization of G9 -g9. The *coda* (marked in the score by the composer) is only five measures long and marked *espressivo*. The last two measures decrescendo to disappear into silence.

Movement II: Scherzo, presto approx. 3:20

The second movement is a scherzo in the key of A minor in compound ternary form **ABA'**. It is written in 3/8 meter and based on a folk tune of very narrow range. The tempo marking is *Presto* with quarter note=116-120. The first **A** section is a rounded-binary song, **aba'**, with an eight-measure introduction played by the piano solo. The violin states the melody which is light and energetic in character (Ex. 6):

Example 6: Movement II-beginning to 20 measures after A

The image shows a musical score for a Scherzo in A minor, 3/8 time, marked *presto*. The tempo is indicated as M.M. 116-120. The score is written for violin and piano. The violin part begins with an eight-measure introduction (marked with an '8' above the staff) and then enters with a melody. The piano part provides accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mp* and *mf*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/8. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system containing measures 1-8 and the second system containing measures 9-20.

The nucleus of the theme is four measures long. Mokranjac is using one of his favorite modal patterns of alternating half and whole steps that further develop into a full Phrygian mode. It is the same Phrygian mode that is found in the second theme of the first movement with G sharp harmonically belonging to A minor and D sharp as a passing note (Ex. 7):

Example 7: Phrygian mode (brackets for passing notes)

E - F - G – [G sharp] - A - B - C - D - [D sharp] - E

Letter **B** in the score marks a repeated occurrence of the theme that, after ten measures, descends towards the conclusion of the repeated **a** section. Cadential sequence is achieved through seven measures of cascading descending natural A minor with omission of B natural. C sharp and D sharp are nonharmonic passing notes.

Section **b** begins at the repeat sign at letter **C** in the score. It has a fragmentary nature and uses a rhythmic and modal pattern similar to the opening theme. It is a dialog between the violin and piano consisting of repeated four-measure phrases. Mokranjac is literally sequencing these phrases around in different registers, thus creating a sense of improvisation.

Letter **E** marks the return of the **a** section and is a literal repetition of the first **a** with a change of register of the previous mentioned cascading seven measures of cadential function. A repeat sign takes us back to letter **C**. After a repeat, the second ending concludes the **A** section of a rounded-binary form and modulates towards a serene and peaceful *Trio*.

The *Trio* is written in F sharp minor and in 2/4 meter. It is titled *Meno mosso* with tempo marking of half note=84.. The primary melody is in the upper voice of the piano's right hand and has folk origins. The violin accompanies the theme with counter melody of a vocal character in stepwise motion (Ex.8). This dialog continues throughout the whole *Trio* and gradually picks up in speed.

Example 8: Movement II – *Trio* (letter F to 10 measures after letter F)

The image shows a musical score for a Trio section. It begins with a boxed letter 'F' in the top left corner. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first system consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part has a chromatic ascending line in the right hand and a bass line. Dynamics include 'espressivo' and 'ppp'. The second system continues the piano accompaniment.

The dynamics are increasing in volume and harmonic progression is ascending chromatically along with *poco a poco accelerando* which gradually becomes *accelerando molto*. It gradually modulates towards A minor, preparing for the reinstatement of the **A** section. Letter **G** in the score marks the return of the **A** section of rounded-binary form but in abbreviated shape and without section **b** of the form. The movement ends with an energetic conclusion in the piano.

Movement III: *Adagio* approx. 6: 35

The third movement is very lyrical with strong vocal character and a fragmentary configuration, although we can recognize a three part structure of **ABA'**. It is in G sharp minor

and the marked tempo is quarter note=54. The piano begins the movement with a motive that will be present throughout the whole first section of **A**. The violin repeats the motive and, after a long fermata, the theme in its entirety appears for the first time at measure nine (Ex. 9):

Example 9: Movement III-first theme (beginning to 11 measures after A)

The melody contains ever-present folk influences and is vocal and flowing in character. It resembles an archaic song-lament but it is not a literal quotation. An interesting feature of this tune, and all the phrases that are derivative, is the emphasis on triplet motion. The opening of the beginning theme contains the same opening motive that is first heard in the introduction played by the piano. The triplet motion turns out to be almost a sigh motive throughout the movement and is present in different step-wise motions as a neighboring (above and under) tone, a passing tone, or an escape-type figure. However, it has more than an ornamental purpose. It brings with it the feeling of a spoken word and certain breathiness to the melody. The triplet is always marked with portamento articulation (dashes above the triplet notes) and appears solely in the violin part.

In the second measure of letter **B** in the score (marked *espressivo*), Mokranjac develops the opening theme into a new phrase (secondary motive) of four measures with the triplet becoming a pick-up. The tempo is increased and the phrase is marked *poco animato*. The idea is stated first in G sharp minor and is followed by a slightly altered repetition of the same phrase,

but in C minor through direct modulation. It develops through a four measure extension of the phrase followed by another four measure idea in B flat minor. The climax of section **A** comes fourteen measures before letter **C** as a high A flat in the violin descends over succeeding triplets towards another appearance of the secondary motive. The section is closed in G sharp minor seven measures after letter **C**, after the restatement of the opening of the movement with the main motive exchanged as an echo effect between the violin and piano. This short return of the opening motive gives an impression of the ternary structure of the large section **A**. It bears a similarity to the structure of the first movement. It seems that the scope of recapitulation/return of the main material in this sonata always comes back in a much smaller size and contains only the most significant and essential parts of the melody.

At letter **D** in the score, a tempo change of quarter note=80 is marked *con grande espressione*. The key alters to B flat minor. A significant change in tempo brings along new contrasting material. Consequently, this marks the beginning of the **B** section of the movement. The melody is familiar; it resembles the tune played by the piano in the *Trio* section of the scherzo with a slight rhythmic variation but the same modal character (Ex. 10):

Example 10: Movement III-letter D to 13 measures after letter D

The melody develops through the same compositional method of improvisatory like embellishment that Mokranjac exploits throughout the course of the whole sonata. In this case it presents a more declamatory quality with a repetition of the same notes as if a text is attached to the melody. Interestingly, we can observe an occurrence of the main motive of the first theme of the first movement (measure 16-18 after letter **D**) incorporated into the phrase of a different character than the opening movement. The sense of cyclic form seems continuously present as if the third movement is the place of gathering for all the motivic content previously used.

Letter **E** is the point of another key change, now to C sharp minor. The melody is from the beginning of the **B** section (letter **D**). The transposition is almost literal with slight rhythmic and register changes. The phrase is developed further and we find yet another instance of a previously used motive incorporated into a new phrase of different character: exactly sixteen measures after letter **E** (as previous in letter **D**) Mokranjac is now using a literal quotation from the second theme of the first movement!

This motive develops into an emotional build up towards the climax of the whole movement that is at the same time a return to the abbreviated **A** section (letter **F**). The key changes back to the opening G sharp minor and the violin (in the high register) and piano are in unison with a *fff* re-statement of the opening theme from letter **A**. The melody descends in range, preserving the melodic content. The movement comes to an end with an *ad libitum* scale-like ascending passage in the violin acting as *coda*.



IV Movement: *Allegro (quasi toccata)* approx. 4 min

The fourth movement is in the key of G major and is a small rondo with two themes and the formal structure of **A B A1 B1 A2 Coda**. The term *quasi toccata* refers to the opening and general motion of accompaniment sections of the first theme in the piano in which we can observe elements of the *toccata* – repeated notes in rapid succession and repetitive arpeggiation. Tempo marking is found in the violin part where half note=112 and is probably suggested by the author of the violin edition, Maria Mihajlovic, since all the other movements have tempo markings in the score.

The piano begins the movement with a twelve-measure introduction. The violin presents the folk-inspired theme with a dance character (**a**) in duple meter that presents the first appearance of the **A** ritornello which consists of three phrases in an **aba** structure (Ex. 11). The motive in the first two measures is the driving force of the whole movement. It is a masterfully created original melody with a distinctive character and a captivating rhythmic expression.

Example 11: Movement IV – beginning to 21 measures after beginning

A *Allegro, (quasi toccata)* $\text{♩} = 112$
12
mf (gaio)

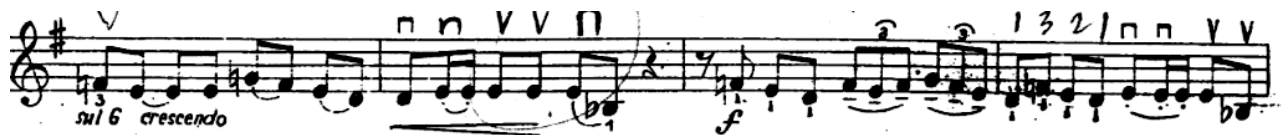
The **b** section is almost a literal quotation from Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac's *Rukovet II* song "Jesam li ti jelane..." (Ex. 12). The rhythm is altered and the figure  is changed to . Another slight change is turning a fifth eighth note in the melody in to pair of sixteen notes to achieve a dance like character with a virtuosic component. A last alteration by Vasilije Mokranjac is the change of the ending interval from a perfect fifth to his favorite triton (Ex. 13).

Example 12: Stevan St. Mokranjac *Rukovet II* "Jesam li ti jelane..."



mf Je - сам ли ти, је - ла - не, го - во - ри - о, див - на је - ло, је - сам ли ти,
Je - sam li ti, je - la - ne, go - vo - ri - o, div - na je - lo, je - sam li ti,

Example 13: Movement IV-8 measures before letter B to four measures before letter B



sul 6 *crescendo* *f*

The return of section **a** (letter **B** in the score) is different and after the first two measures of the characteristic motive, the structure is fragmented by way of repetition of the motivic content in different registers in the violin. The shift to the key of the second theme begins nine measures after letter **B**. A ten-measure bridge modulates to the key of B minor in which the second theme is presented (Ex. 14). It is a broad and gentle melody with a folk character and resembles the violin counter melody from the *Trio* of the second movement (Ex. 15).

Example 14: Movement IV-second theme (letter C to 13 measures after letter C)



Example 15: Movement II-Trio (letter F to 13 measures after letter F)



The **B** theme is periodic in structure and modulates from E minor⁹ to F sharp minor⁹. The tonal shift continues through the next section of eight measures and accelerates in tempo. At letter **D** in the score we find a return of **A** in the same original G major key but now changed rhythmically and melodically. Here, Mokranjac takes advantage of his trademark bi-tonal treatment of the melody. Instead of literally repeating **A**, he transposes the phrase to begin the melody from the note G with augmented note values. Nevertheless, the motive of the first theme is very distinctive and it has an obvious similarity to this new version of **A** (Ex. 16).

Example 16: Movement IV-letter D to four measures after letter D



The **b** section of the new **A** theme is in the key of B flat minor with very few and slight changes compared to the previous occurrences of the same material. It is eight measures long and shifts abruptly to A minor in which the **A** theme is stated. At letter **G** in the score we arrive at the second appearance of the **B** theme, which is now in the key of C minor⁹. A sudden return of the **b** section of the **A** theme has surprising effect. It is marked *robusto e ritmico* and is in the key of F minor (letter **H** in the score). At this point the culmination of the whole sonata starts with an ascent through a series of repeated half-step suspensions and anticipations in rapid exchange between the violin and piano. After four measures of quarter notes in the violin part with *ritenuto sempre piu* marking, followed by two distinctive half notes, we arrive at the peak point (letter **I**). A marking of *Quasi adagio* half note=69 signifies the importance of the moment in which Mokranjac literally repeats the climax of the first movement with a distinctive leap to the extreme register of the violin but this time does not make the descent. Rather, the music stays suspended in space with a sustained B flat in the violin, almost gasping for air. It is the final example of the cyclic form and structure of Mokranjac's Sonata (Ex. 17)

Example 17: Movement IV-letter I to 5 measures after letter I

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The first staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'I' and the tempo 'Quasi Adagio d = 69'. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of several measures, including a triplet of eighth notes and a sixteenth-note triplet. Dynamics include *ff* and *fff*. The second staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'K' and the tempo 'Tempo I. (d = 112)'. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music continues with various notes and rests, including a triplet of eighth notes. Dynamics include *ff* and *mf*. There are also some markings above the notes, possibly indicating fingerings or articulation.

After five measures from letter **I**, *Tempo I* half note=112 brings back the last appearance of the **A** theme, now in its original key. Both **a** and **b** sections are literally repeated and the change comes in the four measure long bridge towards the *Coda*. The material of the *coda* is actually a section of the **A** theme in G major, a variant similar to the version at letter **D** of this movement. Three measures of *accelerando* are the last push towards the ending which is marked *Adagio and ff* for the last four measures, ending with a final chord in G major⁹. An interesting detail is the lack of a top note G in the violin part that is usually present in the final chords of the larger structures. The chord in the piano part is full and in the root position with note A on the top of the chord.

**COMMENTARY ON EDITION USED IN PERFORMANCE AND
PREPARATION OF SONATA PRESENTATION;
PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS**

The first edition of the Mokranjac Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor was published by *Udruzenje Kompozitora Jugoslavije, Beograd* under publishing number 14 in 1956. It is not known which set of parts was used in the premier of the piece a year prior. The violin part was edited by prof. Marija Mihajlovic. A closer look and comparison between the piano score and the violin part reveals no particular differences. Since the original part is not in circulation, it is not possible to conclusively determine if the manuscript contained as many ligature and articulation markings. Therefore, this discussion necessarily limits itself to comparison between the published set of parts.

All movements in the violin part are full of bowing suggestions, and articulation markings as well as fingerings. In the first movement Mihajlovic's interventions are limited to only "directional" determinations of bowing (up or down) but not a single ligature is changed. With fingering suggestions we can conclude that the editor had a very keen sense of preserving the color and timbre of the phrase as well as to find the best possible range (choosing the right string) for achieving a maximum of volume control, since the piano part occasionally overpowers the violin with the density of its texture.

There are several technical challenges and ensemble issues in the first movement that are important to point out:

- Careful managing of the dynamics, in terms of pacing crescendos, is extremely important in this movement. The music is intense and therefore it is very easy to slip into playing every phrase loud”. Eventually this would lead to a loss of the momentum needed for points of climax
- Ensemble concern: 16-17 measures after the letter **C** – the violin should take time on the quintuplets and briefly pause to gather forces with the piano for the downbeat of measure 17 (unison)
- Change of color and tempo in the letter **D**–the phrase should feel relaxed and resonant
- The culmination at letter **I** should be treated with attention to complementary rhythm between the parts

In the second movement *Scherzo* the editor’s suggestions are more extensive. The reason for applying a large number of markings is of a technical nature. The *Scherzo* requires a great deal of control in the bow arm especially in terms of control of the off-string *staccato* notes. Prof. Mihajlovic’s suggestion is to play as many up-bow eighth notes as possible. I find this very suitable in terms of preserving the articulation as well as the precision of the stroke. The tempo should also be taken into careful consideration in combination with bow agility in order to get the *ricochet* sixteenth notes to speak out clearly. Finding the right balance between speed and accuracy is a matter of personal preference.

The third movement presents challenges in terms of maintaining the color and timbre of each phrase. Prof. Mihajlovic paid careful attention to this detail. Fingerings are very well planned and marked with the purpose of achieving this task. Bowings do not differ from ligatures

marked in the violin part in the score. The use of vibrato is extremely important in this movement. Wider and broader vibrato should be ideal for more expressive shading of this lush lyrical movement.

The fourth movement presents similar technical challenges as the second movement—articulation of the *ricochet* sixteenth notes and consequently the choice of tempo. The rapid exchange between on and off-string notes is always an aspect of playing that should be considered carefully. Based on the editor's suggestion, as in the second movement, *ricochet* sixteenth notes followed by consecutive eighth notes are performed better with an up-bow. Prof. Mihajlovic made one small change from the piano score by adding a mordent on the second half note in the fourth measure of the **A** theme. It is applied to every occurrence of the same melody. My suggestion is to perform a trill for the full length to achieve even more of a folk-dance character and apply it on every appearance of the theme. The climax of the movement that occurs in letter **I** should be treated with the same care as the climax of the first movement at letter **I**. The only difference is in the fact that the violin and piano are completely in unison in the fourth movement climax. This presents the ensemble with the challenge of performing every note of this section precisely together. Otherwise, this extremely powerful moment will lose its amazing impact. The last point to bring out is the *accelerando* that begins six measures before the end. It should be timed correctly and, as a result, all of the energy that is gathered through acceleration will be released in the last chord of the piece.

CONCLUSION

The Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor is one of the best examples of Vasilije Mokranjac's enormous talent and his ability to fuse modern and traditional influences into one compact entity. In addition, he was more than capable of threading the folk *melos* of Eastern Europe, and Serbia in particular, through every melodic and rhythmic aspect of the piece giving this sonata a special quality that should not be neglected. The result of this genius is that this piece can be paired in a program with any mainstream sonata for violin and piano and still be a standout due to its effectiveness and burst of energy. Superb treatment of the technical possibilities of both instruments gives opportunities for the players to effectively express themselves and show full range of emotions combined with intense virtuosity.

Vasilije Mokranjac is definitely a name that should be more frequently present on the programs in concert halls across the globe. His writing is of the highest order as is his inventiveness and ingenuity. Mokranjac's music is intense and direct and has the power to move audiences with its profound lyrical pathos. It is hard to find a better representative of one musical era in Serbian history that would be able to show how imagination and resilience can overshadow all the negative influences of modern society. I sincerely hope that this little contribution to the presentation of the life, character and work of Vasilije Mokranjac will initiate further research and exploration of the compositional output of this great composer and shine a light on his almost forgotten work.

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APPENDIX

SCRIPT

For lecture/recital titled:

**Analysis and Performance Presentation of Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor
by Vasilije Mokranjac**

POWER POINT (slide 1):

- Title of the document and Photo of Vasilije Mokranjac
- Music in the background II movement of Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor
by Vasilije Mokranjac

Vasilije Mokranjac (Va-si-li-ye Mo-krah-nyatz) was one of the most influential and prominent Serbian composers of the 20th century. His entire compositional output was created in post World War II era communist Yugoslavia, a period particularly characterized by its complex geo-political context. Mokranjac belonged to the first generation of Yugoslavian composers who were completely educated in the country's newly established educational system. His reputation was primarily built on his symphonic and piano works, as well as the music he wrote for theatrical plays and radio dramas. Although Mokranjac was widely acknowledged for his enormous and important contribution to Serbian musical culture, he often tried to stay out of the spotlight. He was entirely devoted to teaching composition and orchestration at the Belgrade Music Academy and composing music. Mokranjac's introverted nature led to his almost complete seclusion from public life. Reluctant to pursue any exact musical genre or trend, especially those popular during his time, Mokranjac developed a neo-impressionist style based on modal patterns and tonal shifts. This fusion was greatly enriched and enhanced by Mokranjac's masterful, yet subtle, use of folklore elements that demonstrated Mokranjac's genuine poetic understanding of music and dramatic lyricism. His premature death by suicide in 1984 came as an absolute surprise to all his colleagues at the Belgrade Music Academy, as well as to audiences across Yugoslavia.

Mokranjac wrote his only composition for violin and piano in 1952. He dedicated the piece to the celebrated Serbian violin/piano duo of sisters Marija (Maria) and Olga (Olga) Mihajlovic (Mee-hai-lo-vich). They premiered the piece in concert on January 10, 1955 in Belgrade and soon after performed it again for a radio broadcast.

The Sonata for Violin and Piano is the only *sonata*-type piece, other than Mokranjac's piano sonata and sonatinas, in his entire output. It is about 24 minutes long and is written in a

standard four-movement form with all the typical characteristics of a neo-romantic sonata. Vlastimir Pericic, prominent Serbian musicologist, described the Sonata as being composed with “intensive lyrical pathos and searching for expression of nationalism [in music]”.

In this presentation I will primarily focus on Mokranjac’s utilization of folkloric elements and their origins in his music.

Mokranjac had the ability to compose an original melody that would possess all the characteristics of a traditional tune. He extensively used Phrygian mode as well as Mixolydian modes and their variants. He also incorporated tritons and some plagal chord progressions to emphasize folk character in his melodies. Combining all these elements led him to the development of a particular scale of alternating whole and half-steps that became his compositional signature.

The following are the examples of Mokranjac’s use of previously mentioned compositional features.

POWER POINT (slide 2):

- Example 1 and Example 2 (first theme and Phrygian mode from D)

This example is from the first movement of the Sonata. After ominous and tormented opening in the piano the violin states the main theme, which is 10 measures long and in key of G minor.

- Play opening of Movement I for approx. 1 min

The main theme is in G minor with raised 4th scale degree, forming a triton-one of the Mokranjac's favorite tools for creating a sense of intensity and suspense. The augmented second C sharp- B flat also brings an element of folk-like melody because it suggests a scale common in Balkan folk music . The theme itself starts and ends with the note "D" and could be harmonized in D minor. However, Mokranjac achieved modal setting of the tune and "coloristic" approach of the harmonic support through a harmonic progression of three chords in the accompaniment-G major, B major and G minor, which are arpeggiated throughout the course of one measure. The melody is set in Phrygian mode with raised and lowered sevenths:

D – E flat - F - G - A - B flat - C – C sharp – D

- Demonstrate mode on violin

The opening ascending interval of an octave followed by a descending half step becomes a motive that can be traced in different forms throughout the course of the sonata, giving a strong sense of cyclic form.

POWER POINT (slide 3):

- Second theme Movement I and Phrygian mode from E

Contrasting second theme *Meno mosso* $q=92$ (letter **D**) is a period of twelve measures in length. It is lyrical and tender (marked *dolce*) and brings a new and serene atmosphere.

- Play second theme approx. 1min

Even though it is not complete in the first statement of the second theme (no D or D sharp), the Phrygian mode seems to be the ever present element throughout the entire movement. The starting point is the note E –. G sharp and D sharp are passing tones.

E - F - G - [G sharp] - A - B - C - D - [D sharp]- E

- Demonstrate the mode on the violin

POWER POINT (slide 4):

- Opening of second movement and Phrygian mode from E
- Play opening of II mov approx. 30sec

The second movement is a scherzo in the key of A minor. The violin states the melody which has a light and energetic character.

The nucleus of the theme is four measures long. Mokranjac is using one of his favorite modal patterns of alternating half and whole-steps that further develop into a full Phrygian mode. It is the exact same Phrygian mode that is found in the second theme of the first movement with G sharp harmonically belonging to A minor and D sharp as a passing note.

- Demonstrate on the violin: mode, second theme and opening theme of II mov

POWER POINT (slide 5):

- Movement II - Trio

The *Trio* is written in F sharp minor and in 2/4 meter. It is titled *Meno mosso* with tempo marking of half note=84. The primary melody is in the upper voice of the piano's right hand and has folk origins. The violin accompanies the theme with counter melody of a vocal character in stepwise motion. This dialog continues throughout the whole *Trio* and gradually picks up in speed.

- Play Trio of II mov approx. 1min (piano only, then tutti)

A section of rounded binary form comes back but in abbreviated shape. The movement ends with an energetic conclusion in the piano.

POWER POINT (slide 6):

- Opening of third movemet

- Play opening of III mov approx. 1min

The third movement is very lyrical with strong vocal character and a fragmentary configuration. The melody contains ever-present folk influences and is vocal and flowing in character. It resembles an archaic song-lament but it is not a literal quotation. An interesting feature of this tune, and all the phrases that are derivative, is the emphasis on triplet motion. The

opening of the theme contains the same motive that is first heard in the introduction played by the piano. The triplet motion turns out to be almost a sigh motive throughout the movement and is present in different step-wise motions as a neighboring (above and under) tone, a passing tone, or an escape-type figure. However, it has more than an ornamental purpose. It brings with it the feeling of a spoken word and certain breathiness to the melody. The triplet is always marked with portamento (dashes above the triplet notes) articulation and appears solely in the violin part.

POWER POINT (slide 7):

- Movement III from letter D for 12 measures after letter D and opening of Trio of Movement II
- Play Movement III letter D for approx. 1min (together)

The melody of middle section of third movement is familiar – it resembles the tune played by the piano from the *Trio* section of the scherzo with rhythmical variation but the same modal character:

- Piano plays opening of Trio of second movement

In our later performance I would like to draw your attention to this movement for several examples of cyclic form. You can observe an occurrence of the main motive of the first theme of the first movement incorporated into the phrase of a different character than the opening movement.

- Demonstrate on violin: first theme of the I mov (point out the similarity)

In another instance we can observe how Mokranjac is now using a literal quotation from the second theme of the first movement!

- Demonstrate on violin: play second theme of the I mov (point out the similarity)

The sense of cyclic form seems continuously present as if the third movement is the place of gathering for all the motivic content previously used.

POWER POINT (slide 8):



- Movement IV - opening to 21 measure after opening

- Play opening of the IV mov approx. 1min

The fourth movement is in the key of G major and is a small rondo with two themes. The piano begins the movement with twelve measures of the introduction. The violin presents the folk inspired theme of a dance character. The motive in the first two measures is the driving force of the whole movement. It is a masterfully created original melody with a distinctive character and a captivating rhythmic expression.

POWER POINT:

- Excerpt from *Rukovet II* song “*Jesam li ti jelane...*” and violin part excerpt from sonata 8 measures before letter B to four measures before letter B

In the side theme of this rondo Vasilije Mokranjac uses almost a literal quotation from Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac who was one of the greatest Serbian composers of all time. Stevan is primarily known for his choral works and collection of folk tunes set for choir titled “Rukoveti. Vasilije, who is Stevan’s direct heir, borrowed a melody from *II Rukovet* song “*Jesam li ti jelane...*” The rhythm is altered and the figure  is changed to . Another slight change is turning a fifth eighth note in the melody in to a pair of sixteenth notes to achieve a dance like character with a virtuosic component. A last alteration by Vasilije Mokranjac is the change of the ending interval from a perfect fifth to his favorite tritone.

- Play a side theme of Movement IV

- Play music from CD: fragment from Stevan Mokranjac *Rukovet II* approx. 1min

The Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor is one of the best examples of Vasilije Mokranjac’s enormous talent and his ability to fuse modern and traditional influences into one compact entity. In addition, he was more than capable of threading the folk *melos* of Eastern Europe, and Serbia in particular, through every melodic and rhythmic aspect of the piece giving this sonata a special quality that should not be neglected. The result of this genius is that this piece can be paired in a program with any mainstream sonata for violin and piano and still be a

standout due to its effectiveness and burst of energy. Superb treatment of the technical possibilities of both instruments gives opportunities for the players to effectively express themselves and show full range of emotions combined with intense virtuosity.

Vasilije Mokranjac is definitely a name that should be more frequently present on the programs in concert halls across the globe. His writing is of the highest order as is his inventiveness and ingenuity. Mokranjac's music is intense and direct and has the power to move audiences with its profound lyrical pathos. It is hard to find a better representative of one musical era in Serbian history that would be able to show how imagination and resilience can overshadow all the negative influences of modern society. I sincerely hope that this little contribution to the presentation of the life, character and work of Vasilije Mokranjac will initiate further research and exploration of the compositional output of this great composer and shine a light on his almost forgotten work.