

Iza uma [AE×AT≥H2×(1--(V^2/C^2))]1]



An Ambient Approach to Mak

Nenad Rizvanović, Oslobođenje 15/08/2024

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Belma Bešlić wants us to immerse ourselves in today's world, especially in a place like Radimlja, and in an ultra-modern context that also suits Mak Dizdar.

The intermedia musical performance “Beyond the Mind, [ΔE×Δt≥ħ2×(1-(v^2/c^2))x∞]” by Belma Bešlić Gal, which opened this year's Slovo Gorčina on July 26, could easily be mistaken for a convoluted and hermetic art project. However, the title alone suggests that it has other artistic intentions. While it is true that Belma Bešlić Gal has created an effective, cutting-edge art concept inspired by various conceptual and avant-garde traditions, she is not fundamentally a hermetic artist who aims to intellectualize, provoke, or exhaust herself with difficult-to-understand artistic codes, riddles, or intermedia references. Her visual-musical concept—the performance—is only the beginning and not merely a formality, because she is also invested in content, as we shall see.

INTERVENTIONS IN SPACE

The Slovo Gorčina program booklet states that the project is inspired by the poetry of Mak Dizdar, a claim that perhaps needs clarification. Apart from the fact that the term “inspiration” is somewhat overused and imprecise, it is more important to understand that Belma Bešlić Gal's performance does not attempt to interpret, reinterpret, or even comment on Mak Dizdar's poetry, let alone directly engage with it. Her artistic approach is, perhaps surprisingly, simple and unpretentious.

Modernist interventions in space have always searched for references; they have explored, discovered, or failed to find commonalities. Belma Bešlić wants us to fully immerse ourselves in today's world, especially in a place like Radimlja, by creating an ultra-modern context that aligns with Mak Dizdar, who was himself a modernist author. For Belma, his work is an open book, and she is an artist of ambience—an articulate and confident

figure—which is especially important given that she is also an excellent composer. This alone is enough to convince us that ambient experience can be one of the possible paths to Mak Dizdar's poetics. Belma Bešlić simply has the talent to penetrate the unconscious and the dreamlike realms to find points of kinship with Mak Dizdar's work. Thus, it is entirely possible that her interpretation of Mak Dizdar—or Mak in her performance—is not loud or forceful (as might have been the case with Vojin Komadina and Jan Beran), but instead is reduced to a soft whisper or even a murmur—almost to silence—which, as demonstrated in Radimlja, is a profoundly meaningful idea.

As an artist of the wave beyond postmodernism, Belma Bešlić and her collaborators have created an effective visual, almost spectacular, context that naturally encompasses Mak Dizdar's poetry. This environment allows the audience to bypass rational barriers (to move “beyond the mind”) and discover the mysterious layers of Stone Sleeper.

She does not overuse her artistic skills or erudition; instead, she draws the audience into her minimalist concept and a handful of authentic emotions that are extremely important to her. In doing so, she easily involves the audience in her project because she is neither typical nor conventional: she wants to hear what Mak's poetry tells us in this particular setting. This collaborative artistic experience is crucial because each viewer/listener can construct or produce their own artistic encounter. My associations, for example, drifted from Laurie Anderson and Brian Eno to Arvo Pärt, Gavin Bryars, Eleni Karaindrou, and other renowned ECM artists. Meanwhile, someone else may have had entirely different associations with Radimlja, perhaps unknown to me. This is equally significant

because, in an open format, everyone is invited to help create something meaningful and artistic. This is possible because Belma Bešlić Gal is the kind of artist who opens up content rather than closing it off, who stimulates rather than interprets, who suggests rather than explains.

HOPE AND CONSOLATION

Mak Dizdar, of course, never had the opportunity to hear of Laurie Anderson or Arvo Pärt, but Belma Bešlić is here to recognize, connect, and unite such different yet related aesthetic experiences and create a new artistic world that is neither innocuous nor alarming. It does not frighten or torment the viewer and listener, but provides a space to wander, to gather impressions, to enjoy, and even to acknowledge insecurities and fears, just as a modernist concept can still permit—or open up—today. The artist does not want to speak on our behalf or establish a private agenda; instead, she lets us speak, brought together around an artistic minimalism that sets sail toward the dreamlike and the irrational in a manner that is not provocative or pretentious, but fundamentally bold and direct.

Belma wants us to converse with ourselves at Radimlja about our lives—our coexistence with technology, our new imagination, and our artistic experiences—especially in a place that for her is inextricably linked to Mak's poetics. This artistic concept functions so well at Radimlja because it encourages viewers to reflect, if only briefly (or for as long as Belma's performance lasts), before they pick up their cell phones and move on to something entirely different. Belma Bešlić offers no particular hope or consolation, of course; she even avoids some obvious questions, because her main aim is to invite the audience to confront themselves and their own experiences in a very specific setting. And she succeeds, perhaps more fully and effectively than she herself had hoped.

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