

Boris Papandopulo

Nedjeljko Fabrio



Had Maestro Boris Papandopulo lived longer for just a few dozens of hours, he would have witnessed the second staging of his *Sunèanica* (Sun maiden) in the last fifty years (Concert Hall 'Vatroslav Lisinski', 19th October 1991). And he wanted to see it so badly that, two days before his death, he had made a deal with his daughter that he would have eaten something if she would take him to concert performing the work he had created as a young composer!

For this very reason, *Sunèanica*, romantic opera in three acts by Boris Papandopulo, commenced with a minute of silence in commemoration of this great personality of the Croatian music, the third tip of the epochal triangle of the Croatian 20th century music (Gotovac - Šulek - Papandopulo), regretfully we lost this triangle without equal during the short period of the last nine years. As American epigrammatist Johan Shedd aptly said: *"All men are dust, but some are golden dust!"* Performance was celebratory despite the prevailing atmosphere of the surrounding war, which drastically decreased number of Zagreb theatre and concertgoers, the latter ones even more so.

The wish of the deceased was to be accompanied on his voyage from this world in utter silence and solitude of his coffin; we will also respect his last wish, and will write here no obituary. However, I will quote the remark of the previous director of *Sunèanica*, Branko Gavella that he made on the press conference a week before the first opening. Even nowadays this remark fascinates us by its vision and accurate assessment of Papandopulo's role in our music and culture: *"Papandopulo's proliferation is (considering the number of works he wrote in relation to the number of years he lived) almost unique in our music. One could say that there had been other musicians in our musical history who wrote fast and well. However, Papandopulo's opus is characterized by broader scope and imposes serious artistic challenges, so that his proliferation cannot be explained ad hoc - as creation aided by exploit of standardised effects or ready prescriptions in composing, which generate what the Germans so correctly call 'gemachte Musik'. Papandopulo's creative productivity can be explained only by a permanent need of his spirit to mould the sound conceived within into a musical form that can be expressed. The excellent technical competence, which enables him to avoid the struggle with the musical material, and thus, saving time, is here, of course, exceedingly helpful!"* (Several Notes on Boris Papandopulo, Hrvatska pozornica, Zagreb, 7th June 1942)

Indeed, the author was 29 years of age at the point of composing the *Sunèanica* (which was back in 1934/35). However, the opera saw its first opening as late as seven years after it had been written, thus, both performances of *Sunèanica* occurred when Croatia was in war!