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Orient and Occident Encounters in Dimitrije Buzarovski's Oratorio "Radomir's Psalms"

Srečanja med Vzhodom in Zahodom v oratoriju »Radomirjevi psalmi« Dimitrija Buzarovskega

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IZVLEČEK

Oratorij Radomirjevi psalmi op. 47 (1999) Dimitrija Buzarovskega povezuje pravoslavno liturgično petje in zahodnoevropsko tradicijo. Vzhodne modalne monodične speve, liturgične in ljudske, vključuje v zahodne večglasne duhovne in posvetne glasbene oblike. Delo je tudi primer vpliva kulturnega okolja na izoblikovanje glasbenih misli.

ABSTRACT

The oratorio Radomir's Psalms op. 47 (1999) by Dimitrije Buzarovski addresses Orthodox chant in a Western tradition, embedding Eastern modal monodic sacred and folk tradition into Western polyphonic sacred and secular tonal forms. The work is also an example of the influence of the cultural environment upon shaping of the musical ideas.

Dimitrije Buzarovski (born 1952) is undoubtedly one of the most prolific contemporary Macedonian composers. His opus contains four large groups of musical works: *original works* (63 opuses), *arrangements* (42 opuses), *theater and film music, signature tunes* (37 opuses), and *unclassified works* (10 opuses). The 63 opuses (the latest one being the *Trio Sonata* from 2013), could be further divided into five groups: 1) Symphonies and orchestral works (four symphonies, overture); 2) Oratorios and stage works (three oratorios, two ballets, two operas); 3) Concertos (seven concertos); 4) Song cycles and chamber music (ten song cycles, sonatas for different instruments

with piano accompaniment etc.) and 5) Piano works (three sonatas and sonatina, variations for two pianos, 13 nocturnes). This classification was developed by Buzarovski when he established *BuzAr* (Buzarovski Archive), which is

a digital collection of video, audio, photos, books, papers, scores and other artifacts related to Balkan Cultures and Traditions. The collection is based on Dimitrije Buzarovski's musical scores, performances, video and audio recordings, digitizing of cultural heritage, musicological and ethnomusicological works (Buzarovski Archive 2012).

Buzarovski Archive and particularly the part which is related to his musical opus, is an example of highly organized digital archive, where different artifacts (audio, video, MIDI, graphic materials – scores and photos, and text – articles, reviews etc.) are accompanied by diversified metadata for easy search and retrieval of the related artifacts. At the moment, *BuzAr* possesses almost two terabytes of digitized material, among them eight collections with folklore materials from the central Balkan region (see About *BuzAr*, 2012).

The oratorio *Radomir's Psalms*, marked as opus 47, is one of the three Buzarovski's oratorios (the other two are *Zhiveeme pametime*, 1984 and *Ohrid*, 1989). The lyrics of the oratorio are taken from the *Radomir's Book of Psalms*. This manuscript is considered part of the archaic group of the Old Testament religious songs with traces of Ss. Cyril and Methodius translation during their preparatory period for the Moravian mission in 863 AD (Makarijoska 1997, 5, 7). In fact, they selected *the Book of Psalms* for translation from Greek to Old Slavonic, as one of the “basic, and most used books, necessary for the regular Christian religious services” (ibid., 5). The linguistic analysis (paleographic, phonetic, orthographic, morphosyntactic and lexic characteristics) indicates that the *Radomir's Book of Psalms* originated from the central Macedonian region in the second half of the 13th century (ibid., 107).

The publishing of the integral version of the *Radomir's Book of Psalms* with word dividers from the fascimile manuscript (originally written in *scriptio continua*), accompanied by an extensive linguistic study by Liljana Makarijoska in 1997, very soon attracted Dimitrije Buzarovski's interest for this unique work. He was particularly enthusiastic with the additions to the psalms, i.e., the Troparions and Prayers, and the lavishly illuminated text on page 167:

Grjashni Radomir dijak pisa Da ashte i grenbo prostjate i pomjanjate mi otca Rada A i vas Bog da prosti. (Sinful Radomir, a deacon, wrote: Forgive my transgressions and remember my father Rado; And God bless you.)

This text was used later as an identifier for this manuscript which was accordingly named the *Radomir's Book of Psalms*.

Buzarovski's interest in this edition as a possible lyrics basis was also initiated to the 50th Anniversary of UKIM – Univerzitet “Sv. Kiril i Metodij” (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University) on May 24, 1999, where usually a large musical composition was premiered. Previously, Buzarovski had already won the first prize for the 1989 celebra-

tion for his oratorio *Ohrid*. However, due to the wars in the region in the turbulent 1990s the UKIM University Council was not able to make any definitive plans for the event. Nevertheless, during the summer of 1998, Buzarovski made a decision to write an oratorio which could be used for the celebration of the UKIM anniversary.¹ By that time he already had an experience in writing large-scale vocal and instrumental forms (three symphonies, two oratorios, two ballets, two operas, several concertos, sonatas and song cycles) so he could aptly make use of his expertise in the creation of the oratorio *Radomir's Psalms*.

During the summer 1998 the plot of the oratorio was created through the selection of psalms and other texts from the *Radomir's Book of Psalms* in the following order: (1) opening text (I, sinful Radomir), (2) 151 psalm referring to the David's victory over the Philistines, (3) 32 psalm *Rejoyce in the Lord*, (4) Troparion (prayer), (5) 51 psalm *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief*, (6) 84 psalm *Mercy and truth are met together*, and (7) 150 psalm *Praise ye the Lord*. Although at the time when the selection was made, one could hardly believe that another war was looming in the region, this plot reflected the atmosphere of the conflicts in 1999 and 2001 in, and around Macedonia.

Buzarovski started writing the music in the summer of 1998. At that time the ideological restrictions which limited the composers to write music with religious content were already forgotten. After the World War Two, the new socialist regime in Yugoslavia, i.e., Macedonia, created a very unfriendly environment for religious music. There were no composers who wrote liturgies, despite the fact that the first Macedonian contemporary composer Atanas Badev (1860–1908) wrote *The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (first published in Leipzig in 1898) (Ortakov 1982, 62, Ortakov 1986, 150–151) and the first generation of Macedonian composers (Gajdov, Firfov, Prokopiev, Skalovski) wrote church music and conducted church chorus until 1943 (Jordanoska and Buzarovski, 2012). The renewed interest began in 1963 when Tomislav Zografski (1934–2000) used Orthodox chant in a Western tradition for his *Zapisi* op. 39 for bass and piano. Later on, Tomislav Zografski (Dimitrije Buzarovski was his first student of composition) wrote the oratorio *Pohvala Kirilu i Metodiju* op. 62 (1969), which was awarded by UKIM for its 1969 anniversary and got the state award “11 October” in 1969.

Zografski's compositions are a clear example of a successful combination of Eastern Orthodox chant tradition with Western religious and secular music forms. Because Orthodox Church bans the use of instruments inside the church, instruments are used only in the church courtyard, particularly at celebrations of certain saint days with festivities including folk and popular music. These two Zografski's compositions are the first examples of intertwining religious and secular tradition in a vocal/instrumental form in Macedonian music (Buzarovski 1989).

During the studies with Zografski in the late 1960s, Buzarovski had composed several short choral works with Old Slavonic lyrics in Old Slavonic Cyrillic alphabet, but these compositions were never performed and later the manuscripts were lost. The first composition which incorporates Slavonic scriptures and Orthodox chant is the third movement of Buzarovski's oratorio *Ohrid* op. 28 (1988) written for soprano, alto,

1 The data were obtained through conversation with Dimitrije Buzarovski in the spring 2013.

tenor, baritone, mixed chorus, symphony orchestra and a synthesizer. Meanwhile, as a pianist, Buzarovski often performed Zografski's *Zapisi* with the baritone Milan Firfov (1943–2012), and in 1983 he did the TV visualization of Zografski's oratorio *Pohvala Kirilu i Metodiju*.

The next major step in Buzarovski's opus, where religious and profane are skilfully mixed, is the song cycle *Spiritual songs* op. 36 (1991) for soprano, baritone, children's chorus and synthesizers. This work combined folk lyrics with religious content in a manner which Buzarovski defines as *multistylistic* and *multigenre*. The impressive lyrics of these folk balads re-compose Bible elements introducing local folk mythology (e.g. dragons). As the original tune had been lost and only the lyrics were preserved, Buzarovski's interval/melodic basis is once again a mixture of the local folk tradition and Western tonal tradition. This content is accompanied by synthesizers and pop music rhythms (from the 1980s and early 1990s) performed by a drum machine. The multistylistic approach is evident through the use of tonal harmonies in the Baroque–Romanticism range.

The *Spiritual songs* as well as the oratorio *Radomir's Psalms* illustrate Buzarovski's "adoption of Benjamin Britten's principle to write for certain performer(s), audience, place and time."² Therefore, the oratorio *Radomir's Psalms* was composed to be performed with the orchestra, chorus and soloists of UKIM School of Music. During the previous years, as Dean of UKIM School of Music (1995–1999), Buzarovski put a lot of personal energy into developing the school orchestra and chorus by raising funds for purchasing the necessary instruments (contrabassoon, tuba, English horn, bass trombone, bass clarinet and percussions); he also organized concerts of the UKIM SM International Student Orchestra, where foreign conductors and students from Europe and the US premiered complex orchestral pieces (for instance, Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, works by Prokofiev, Dvořák, Wagner, etc) (Frangovska 1999, 54, 55). In addition, UKIM SM students received grants to attend different European summer schools and orchestras (Altenburger Musikfestival, Festival junger Künstler Bayreuth, Dartington International Summer School). As a result, in 1999 the School already had an experienced orchestra and chorus so the traditional concert of the international student orchestra was planned for April 1999 in Skopje, with the participation of Conservatoire Jean-Philippe Rameau (Le conservatoire à rayonnement régional de Dijon). The planned program consisted of works by Macedonian and French authors (Buzarovski, Debussy and Ravel).

Because of the lack of experienced altos among UKIM SM students, Buzarovski decided to use a second soprano instead. Buzarovski's long-term cooperation with the "Piccolo" chorus (*Spiritual songs* op. 36 and *Wedding songs* op. 45 in addition to numerous arrangements of the classical vocal repertoire) resulted in the final selection of the performing ensemble.

The musicological analysis of the oratorio clearly demonstrates that it is undoubtedly a work by a mature and experienced composer who has fully mastered the compositional technique: formal structure, harmony, polyphony and orchestration. The

2 Notes from the conversation with Buzarovski.

composer's skill to embed Eastern modal monodic sacred and folk tradition into Western polyphonic sacred and secular tonal forms contributes to the unique musical value of this composition.

The oratorio starts with an opening that resembles Mozart's *Requiem*, but the chromatic thirds connections in the harmony soon introduce the dominant neoromantic harmonic approach of the work.

The second movement Psalm 151, is an illustration of Buzarovski's powerful governing of the form development. It starts with the flutes/clarinets motives based on the local folk instrumental (kaval's ezgija) and vocal tradition (polyphonic singing) (Example 1).



Example 1: Psalm 151, measures 1-6.

The drone and the interweaving minor and major seconds are used to produce a colourful pedal for the diatonic solo of the tenor, doubled in unison with the solo cello. The next phrase introduces an organ pedal by the brass section. The rest of the movement rises gradually through addition of new orchestral layers, the transfer of the support of the tenor melodic line in the strings section, and cutting the rhythm through smaller note values and faster tempo. The culmination of the movement comes with the words *But I beheaded him with his own sword*, followed by the calming *I removed the disgrace from the people of Israel*. This powerful tenor aria exploits the full potential of the voice, and illustrates Buzarovski's profound knowledge of the vocal techniques.

The next movement Psalm 32 *Rejoice in the Lord* fully supports the joy of the *righteous*. The simple C major triad at the beginning played by the woodwind and brass section makes a short introduction for the chorus section with clear recitative motives resembling Russian orthodox tradition, and Prokofiev's neoclassical approach (Example 2). In the conversation with Buzarovski, he pointed out that

the power of nowadays composers is in the collaging of different motives from the previous music traditions as a basis for new combined development. At the moment any music surface is fully explored and there is no possibility to invent anything new at a motive or theme level, no matter whether it is an electronic, acoustic, or combined instruments composition. The originality comes in the deeper levels, i.e., the further use of these music materials in larger temporal structures.

Vivo $\text{♩} = 85$

Piccolo

Flutes I & II

Oboes I & II

Cor Anglais

Clarinets in B \flat I & II

Bass Clarinet in B \flat

Bassoons I & II

Contrabassoon

Horns in F I & II, III & IV

Trumpets in B \flat I & II

Trombones I & II

Bass Trombone & Tuba

Bass Drum

Choir
SA
TB

f Ra-dui-te sen pra-ved-ni ot Gos-po-di pra-ved-ni

Example 2: Psalm 32, measures 1–3.

On the other hand, quoting Stravinsky, Buzarovski considers that it is impossible to create a replica of other composer's work due to the uniqueness of the individual's sensibility.

The homophonic beginning is soon transferred into a fugato with a motive in a specific interval line (a flat, g, d – downward and then upward – d, e, f, g, a, b) (Example 3).

Alto

Tenors

Basses

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Lyrics (Basses): Is-po-va-daj-te... sen Go-spo-do-vi v'-gon-sleh v'-gon-sleh De - sen - to... v'psal - ti - ri pja - s'n...

Lyrics (Tenors): De-sen - to-stru - n' - nja v'psal ti - ri... poj - te - je - mu pja - s'n...

Lyrics (Alto): v'spoj te je mu... pja - s'n...

Example 3: Psalm 32, measures 29–34.

The fugato is based on complex chromatic progressions, very often passing through polar tonalities. In general, Buzarovski prefers the use of polyphonic structures over homophony. His opus from all periods abounds in complex polyphonic forms (for instance, a double theme chromatic fugue in the Baroque suite from *All That Dance* op. 39 cycle of variations). The movement further develops through changes between the homophonic and polyphonic sections, ending with the powerful culmination of the chorus in unison.

The fourth movement Troparion is probably the most emotionally-charged and beautiful. The somber and sad lyrics of the prayer fully match the soprano melodic line. The form is built in two parts A and A1; overlaying the second soprano and changing the orchestration in A1 (there are no examples of literal repetitions in Buzarovski's opus). The tubular bells at the beginning of the movement are a direct allusion to the sacral content of the composition. The dark trills in the deep cellos and basses makes the fundament for the seventh chords progressions (major, minor, and particularly half-diminished seventh chords) (mm. 5, 6). The late romantic approach (Bruckner, Mahler) is evident in the chromaticism of the extremely complex harmonic progressions. The melodic line of the soprano part is an excellent example of building a powerful culmination through a gradual zigzag upward moving (Example 4) coming to the highest note – D6 in the first soprano at the end of the movement.

Adagio ♩ = 48

Soprano I

na-sto - jon- shta go pro - she-ni - ja iz - ba - vi-ti sen_ nam po-mi - sl o - brash

-te-ni-ja da-ro-va-ti nam da sla-vim ten na-dja-ja - ni-je na-she na-dja - ja - ni-je v-se-go mi-ra

Gos-po-di po-mi-lui Gos - po-di po-mi-lui Gos-po-di po - mi - lui

Lyrics (Soprano I): na-sto - jon- shta go pro - she-ni - ja iz - ba - vi-ti sen_ nam po-mi - sl o - brash

Lyrics (Soprano II): -te-ni-ja da-ro-va-ti nam da sla-vim ten na-dja-ja - ni-je na-she na-dja - ja - ni-je v-se-go mi-ra

Lyrics (Chorus): Gos-po-di po-mi-lui Gos - po-di po-mi-lui Gos-po-di po - mi - lui

Example 4: Troparion, measures 33–57.

Energico $\text{♩} = 140$

The musical score for Example 5, Psalm 51, measures 1-3, is written for a large orchestra. The tempo is marked 'Energico' with a quarter note equal to 140 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 9/8. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes I & II, Oboes I & II, Cor Anglais, Clarinets in Bb I & II, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Horns in F I & II, III & IV, Trumpets in Bb I & II, Bass Trombone & Tuba, Timpani, Tam-tam, Cymbals, Bass Drum, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The woodwinds and strings play a complex, chromatic, and highly tensed passage marked 'f' (forte). The brass instruments play sustained chords marked 'f'.

Example 5: Psalm 51, measures 1-3.

The fifth movement starts with the chromatic chaos (Example 5) in *ff* dynamic, while the male chorus presents a motive structured in minor seconds (g-flat, f, e, d – downward). The alterations of the thematic materials combine the minor seconds with augmented seconds, once again suggesting a link with the local folk traditions. This highly tensed and aggressive movement support the accusatory character of the lyrics *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief... Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor; working deceitfully...* According to Buzarovski he chose this psalm to refer to the manipulating power of the mass media coverage of modern conflicts.

In terms of composition structure, both fourth, fifth and sixth movement are very close to his *Songs of Peace and War* op. 38a, with obvious resemblances in stylistic

approach, motives, harmonic progressions and the use of polyphony (fourth to the “Peace,” fifth to the “War,” and sixth to the “Soft Rains”). In addition, the creation of the *Songs of Peace and War* for soprano, mezzo-soprano and synthesizers was Buzarovski’s reaction to the devastating war in 1992 in former Yugoslavia, while *Radomir’s Psalms* anticipated the military conflicts in 1999 and 2001.

The sixth movement starts with the diabolic and extremely impressive solo motif performed by the English horn (Example 6). The soft transition in the flutes/piccolo group is presented through diatonic triads as a further preparation for the movement sung by the children’s chorus. This movement is entirely composed in a Verdian manner, both in its melodic and harmonic structure, and particularly at the end of the movement where the soloists and the chorus support the leading line of the children’s chorus (Example 7).



Example 6: Psalm 51, measures 83–89.

Gracile ♩ = 58

Children's choir

Soprano I & II
Tenor & Bass

Choir
SA
TB

Example 7: Psalm 84, measures 66–73.

We have already pointed out the connection of this movement with the last movement of the *Songs of Peace and War*. According to Buzarovski, these two movements are unique examples where he composed a whole piece in only one trial. He directly improvised the song, by singing and playing the piece on a synthesizer, and doing a parallel MIDI recording. Several weeks later he listened to the MIDI recording and - contrary to his principle to re-work the compositions several times before the final release - he realized that the integrity of the both pieces did not allow any further interventions. He even reconsidered taking out this movement from the oratorio, but at the end he left it unchanged due to its role in the overall development of the form.

In fact, similar to his other works, Buzarovski pays special attention to the structure of the form, both on micro and macro level. Although all movements have closed, encircled development of their forms, there is a general line which unifies the composition through the use of the thematic materials, the change of the tonal centres, meter and rhythm, the orchestration (the change of soloists and choral parts), tempo, dynamics and articulation. The integrity of the work is also evident in the *attacca* connection of all seven movements.

Ad libitum

Chorus
SA
TB

solo

Hva-li-te bo-ga v'sven-tih je - go

tutti

Hva-li-te bo-ga v'sven-tih je - go

solo

Hva li-te je - gov'u tvr zhde ni-e sil je go

tutti

Hva li-te je - gov'u tvr zhde ni-e sil je go

Example 8: Psalm 150, measures 1-4.

The last movement opens with the allusion to the responsorial singing from the Orthodox liturgies from Russian origin, (particularly evident in the diatonic triads in the choral recitatives) (Example 8). The next section uses an interval/melodic line which is much closer to the Byzantine-Slavonic Ochoic, but contrary to the monodic structure of the archaic models, it is presented through a fugato, which is another argument for the blend of the Eastern/Western and religious/profane elements in this musical piece. The structure of the movement goes through the recitative/fugato/recitative/fugato/coda phases. The fugato sections (contrasted with homophonic parts inside the section) are again rich in chromatic harmonic progressions.

The culmination of whole piece is a few measures before the end, provoking the audience to a spontaneous applause. It is immediately broken by the last measures with the lyrics *Glory Hallelujah* (again – e, f, e, d sharp, e – motive in *p* and *diminuendo* of a C major triad). In accordance with Buzarovski's idea, this is a liturgy, which should not be followed by applause of the audience at the end. (The audience rewarded the performance with applause after the third movement, too.)

The musicological analysis of the piece could not be accomplished without taking into consideration the extraneous events. The psychological pressure of the potential NATO intervention (which happened on March 24, 1999) undoubtedly shaped Buzarovski's mood during the preparation of the work, which was finalized in January 1999. The oratorio is saturated with very strong emotions conveyed both to the performers and the audience.

Although Macedonia was not directly involved in the conflict, NATO planes flew over Macedonia, explosions were clearly heard and thousands of refugees fled to Macedonia. The planned concert with Dijon Conservatory was cancelled (Tasev, 1999), and most of the students stopped attending the classes at UKIM. At this critical moment, Buzarovski decided to start the rehearsals and perform the work during the Easter week, on April 7. (Psalms are regular part of the church service during this week.) During the very beginning of the choral rehearsals, a very loud explosion was heard which frightened the students. But under Buzarovski's strong leadership the students were mobilized and motivated for further preparations. Although the participation in the performance was entirely on a voluntary basis, there was an enormous interest for the concert, so more than 200 students participated in the performance of the chorus and the orchestra (*ibid.*) (Example 9).



Example 9: Premiere performance of the oratorio "Radomir's Psalms" op. 47 by Dimitrije Buzarovski, April 7, 1999, The Foyer of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet, UKIM School of Music Choir and Symphony Orchestra, Children's Choir "Piccolo", Soloists: Ana Stamenkowska (Durlovski) – soprano, Nadezhda Petrovska – soprano, Marjan Nikolovski – tenor, Igor Durlovski – bass, Dimitrije Buzarovski – conductor. Source: BuzAr, © BuzAr, 2012.

Another fascinating feature was that the children's chorus learned by heart the sopranos and altos choral part, and most of the chorus sung without the scores, too. The

whole performance was prepared in less than three weeks and Buzarovski decided to use the large foyer of the building of Macedonian Opera and Ballet for the first performance. Apart from several rows of chairs for the elderly, the audience listened to the oratorio standing, similar to the liturgy in churches. Although the event had been announced and organized on a very short notice, more than 2,000 people attended the concert. The music provoked a great emotional response from the listeners who, with tears in their eyes, showed their appreciation with numerous standing ovations, which is evident in the TV recording. As one of the reviewers writes

... The impressive performance gives credit to the reputation of the chorus and the orchestra of UKIM SM with creative spirit which achieved beautiful articulation of all elements of the musical structures. This was a challenge for the young performers, inspiration and adventure, and as a result, they realized the creative vision of the composer and conductor, Dimitije Buzarovski which was evident in the reception of the audience. (Kostadinovski 1999, 12).

The oratorio was performed once again at the event of the anniversary of UKIM, May 24, 1999. The planned third performance for the opening of the Ohrid Summer Festival 1999 was cancelled by Buzarovski as a protest against the appointment of an incompetent person for the manager of this renown festival (whose first activity was to cancel the patronage of the President of the Republic of Macedonia) (Večer 1999, 17). Very soon the manager was replaced, and the patronage of the President of the Republic of Macedonia established, but the oratorio has not performed since.

In 2003, the Dean of the School of Performing Arts at Louisiana Tech University, Kenneth Robbins, on behalf of the LTU nominated the oratorio *Radomir's Psalms* for the composer's global award, The Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition.

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POVZETEK

Oratorij *Radomirjevi psalmi*, op. 47 (1999) Dimitrija Buzarovskega je eno redkih del makedonskih skladateljev, v katerih je pravoslavno liturgično petje uporabljeno na način zahodnoevropske tradicije. Njegova prizadevanja so *nadaljevanje* bila nadaljevanje delovanja njegovega profesorja, Tomislava Zografskega (1934-2000), ki je želel v času pritiska socialistične ideologije oživiti tradicijo duhovne glasbe. Pred *Radomirjevi psalmi* se podobna prizadevanja kažejo že v oratoriju *Ohrid*, op. 28 (1988), v katerem je uporabil starocerkvenoslovanske odlomke Svetega pisma in pravoslavno liturgično petje, ter v *Duhovnih pesmih*, op. 36 (1991) z ljudskimi pesmimi z duhovno vsebino. Oratorij *Radomirjevi psalmi* predstavlja naslednji korak v ustvarjalnem razvoju Buzarovskega, v katerem je povezal vse svoje izkušnje z ustvarjanjem vokalno-instrumentalnih skladb velikega formata. Muzikološka analiza oratorija potrjuje, da je delo zrelega skladatelja, ki popolnoma obvladuje vse prvine kompozicijske tehnike: oblikovno strukturo, harmonijo, polifonijo in orkestracijo. Skladateljeva sposobnost, da vpenja monodično modalno tradicijo vzhodnega liturgičnega in ljudskega petja v zahodnoevropske tonalne polifone oblike daje skladbi edinstven glasbeni pomen.

Delo temelji na Radomirjevi knjigi psalmov, ki je verjetno eden zadnjih starocerkvenoslovanskih prevodov iz 13. st., nastalih v tradiciji sv. Cirila in Metoda. Vsebina je razdeljena na sedem stavkov: Prolog, Psalm 151, Psalm 32, Troparion, Psalm 51, Psalm 84 in Psalm 150. Skladateljeva zasnova je *multistilistična* (pojem je uporabljal Buzarovski), s širokim razponom kompozicijskih sredstev, od baročnih do neoklasicističnih. Motivi in

drugo tematsko gradivo, v katerih so povezani ljudska tradicija, pravoslavno liturgično petje in poznoromantični zgledi, spremljajo izredno zapletene harmosne zveze in kromatika. Pogosto izmenjevanje homofonije s polifonijo se odraža v odsekih z zborovskim fugatom in bogato orkestracijo. Čeprav so vsi odseki zasnovani v zaokroženih glasbenih oblikah, zagotavljajo notranjo povezanost skladbe *attacca* nadaljevanja, tematske sorodnosti, izmenjevanje tonalnih središč, metrike in ritmike, zasedbe (izmenjavanje solističnih in zborovskih odsekov), tempa, dinamike in artikulacije.

Radomirjevi psalmi so nastali za zbor in simfonični orkester Glasbene šole Univerze sv. Cirila in Metoda, štiri soliste (dva soprana, tenor in bas) in otroški zbor Piccolo. Skladba naj bi bila prvič izvedena ob sodelovanju konservatorija iz Dijona v aprilu 1999 ter nekoliko kasneje ob praznovanju 50-letnice Univerze sv. Cirila in Metoda (24. maja 1999).

Muzikološka analiza se osredotoča tudi na zunanje dejavnike, ki so vplivali na nastanek in izvedbo dela. Psihološke posledice vojn in sporov, ki so pretresale območje, so močno vplivale na način, kako Buzarovski, pa tudi občinstvo doživlja glasbo. Ko je bila načrtovana prva izvedba odpovedana zaradi NATO-vega posredovanja na Kosovu in v Srbiji, se je Buzarovski odločil delo prvič izvesti med velikim tednom v velikem predddverju Makedonske opere in baleta. Prišlo je več kot 2000 poslušalcev, katerih od solza stopnjevan čustveni odziv je lepo viden na televizijskem posnetku.

Leta 2003 je bil oratorij nominiran za Grawemeyerjevo nagrado za skladbo na Šoli za izvajalske umetnosti Tehnične univerze v Louisiani.

Prevod naslova, izvlečka in povzetka Aleš Nagode