

PRESS & PLAY

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Nenad Georgievski

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At the end, I can only conclude that Nenad Georgievski has given us a gem of a book, a testament to our times that music critics, historians and casual readers shall turn to in the future as a reference of these our times. Ultimately, the judgment of the worth of a book lies at the hands of the reader. Which is why I invite you to take this book in your hands and get better acquainted with the riches it has to offer to you. Enjoy!

Milan Damjanoski,
Editor

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time, such as Foltin and Ljuboyana. Another quality of this collection is that it includes musicians that are from this region, but have mostly worked abroad, such as Vasil Hadzimanov and Nikola Kodzobashija, showing their inextricable link to our heritage and tradition, as well as their collaboration with the domestic artists.

Press and Play, through its chapter dedicated to the reports of live events, also provides us with a link to the main music events which have helped foster our music scene, such as the Skopje Jazz Festival and Offest. They have been the lifeline of Skopje to the world, allowing us through the decades to see the best and the brightest from the jazz and world music universe. They have also been the hothouse where the talents of our musicians have been able to prosper, both through their exposure to the music and musicianship of the best artists, but also by providing them with a venue to represent themselves before a wider audience. Nenad Georgievski through his reporting has also helped show that Skopje and Macedonia have always been part of the civilized world and the modern music sphere.

What shines throughout is the erudition and the discerning taste of Nenad Georgievski when it comes to art and music. He is not just a mere cataloguer of events and names, but a dedicated critic who is not afraid to point out the true values and faults of the artist and their works. He writes with a rich style that utilizes his knowledge of music to illustrate and paint the portrait of the artist and each specific album. In the more than 70 reviews and texts in this book, he weaves a rich tapestry full of color and detail that best represents the events and the heroes of this period in Macedonian culture and music.

What sets Georgievski's work apart is that this book is not only intended for the Macedonian public, but because it is in English it serves as a document that is also aimed at an international audience. This book can serve as an introduction to Macedonian modern music and its best representatives to any music aficionado throughout the world. It can serve as both as document, as well as a passport with which we can represent ourselves unabashedly in front of the world. It shall also be a memento of this period in time, one that shows that Macedonia has remained a fountain of music, a place of culture and civilization.

Foreword

Music is timeless and it transcends boundaries and languages. Yet, it has also been a perennial truth that in order for music to be heard or survive, it needs the support of the written word and the printed page. Without the survival of sheet music, we would have lost the masterpieces of classical music or we would have received only versions transformed by countless nameless musicians, like the popular folk songs and dances of yore. Ultimately, we would have only guessed what they may have sounded, like the lost Seven Wonders of the World or some long lost ancient recipe. The 20th century, with the onset of electricity and new recording technologies, brought new forms and genres that were transmitted by the new media (radio, TV), yet their fast rise to popularity would not have been possible without the help of the new breed of music journalists that were made famous by their work in such magazines as Rolling Stone, Billboard, NME and others. The 21st century has brought the internet and with its new forms of reproduction, consumption, as well as of promotion of music. Music journalism also had to adapt to the information age, so new music websites, portals and blogs started to crop up on the world wide web, helping the spread of new music and talent, but also helping preserve the popularity of traditional and already established music genres.

One of them is jazz, a music that started in the melting pot that is New Orleans and the USA and spread all around the world in the 20th century, from the clubs to the great concert halls and festival, as well as being taken seriously in the hallowed halls of academia. The pre-eminent website during all this period has without a doubt been All About Jazz (allaboutjazz.com). Testament to this is the fact that the Jazz Journalists Association voted All About Jazz *Best Website Covering Jazz* for thirteen consecutive years between 2003 and 2015 when the category was retired. It has been the go-to place for all jazz aficionados

to discover and learn about the latest trends and the best new music, which is why it is important for any musician or scene to be presented there. Fortunately, Macedonia has found its place there, its music and artists have been showcased and presented there since 2004, thanks to the tireless work of music journalist Nenad Georgievski, the author of this book.

Nenad Georgievski, first and foremost, is a fan of music in all its incarnations. I can personally attest to this, having known him for the past 25 years and there hasn't been a day in that period that his life was not connected to or affected by music. Though not a journalist or musician by education (he is an English major), he has an extensive and profound knowledge of the history of 20th century music, through his avid collection of albums in all the various media formats that the industry has produced during the past 40 years. Furthermore, he has been a witness to the development of the contemporary Macedonian music scene and active participant in the cultural life of Skopje and Macedonia. All of this has prepared him for the task he undertook by becoming a freelance writer, working with numerous magazines, newspapers in Macedonia and the Balkans. However, the most notable part of his resume as a journalist is his collaboration with All About Jazz, which started in the beginning of the 20th century. Throughout the past 15 years, he has been one of their most productive contributors, providing reviews, interviews and concert and festival reports, with more than 130,000 views of his articles. Of course, he has written primarily about jazz, but his interest and curiosity have allowed him to also write about world music, contemporary classic music, rock, electronica, etc. His output has been so prodigious, that it has already filled out the pages of two books of interviews (*Music and Musings*, *Even More Music and Musings*), with a third one already on the way to the printing press.

However, there is another aspect of his work that has brought us here, at the end of a long process which has culminated with the book you have in your hands, *Press and Play*. That is his lifelong passion and dedication to Macedonian music and its inexhaustible well of inspiration, which has never ceased to produce ingenious music and musicians, alike. Nenad Georgievski has been a follower, but also a

reviewer and chronicler of its growth and development, its various ebbs and flows, its flourishes and offshoots in various musical directions, of its unique, talented and creative bands and artists in the 21st century. Ultimately, he has taken on the task to introduce and promote it before a wider international audience, the one afforded to him by the global reach of All About Jazz platform. This book is a testament to his hard work, focus, determination and ultimately knowledge of Macedonian music.

There are several reasons why this book, *Press and Play*, represents a touchstone in Macedonian music journalists. He joins the ranks of other historians and chroniclers of the contemporary Macedonian scene, such as Dragan B. Kostic, Tina Ivanova, and especially Toshio Filipovski with his rock encyclopedias in their efforts to document, assess and archive the recent music history of Macedonia. Georgievski has focused on covering a section of the local scene whose work does not always receive the deserved attention, such as the thriving jazz scene and the composers of contemporary classical music. Yes, here we have such notable names such as Vlatko Stefanovski, Kiril Dzajkovski and bands like Foltin that have received great critical acclaim, but also avant-garde artists such as Aleksandar Pejovski and Nikola Kodzobashija whose work is known mostly by connoisseurs of high-quality music, and there aren't too many of them these days.

Furthermore, *Press and Play* captures a period in time in recent Macedonian history when a group of extremely talented musician such as Oliver Josifovski, Dzijan Emin, Goce Stefkovski and others formed the core of a very boisterous and creative jazz scene mostly in Skopje. What sets this period apart is the remarkable number of excellent projects, bands and highly memorable albums and songs that were the fruit of their incessant exploration, collaboration and just plain everyday playing. There have been thousands of gigs and concert in poorly lit night clubs that have disappeared into the oblivion of the Skopje nights, but the albums they have recorded are a testament to the mark they have left on Macedonian music and art. Through the reviews of the albums included in the book, we can follow the whole lifespan of such projects as Project Zhlust and DNO, as well as the rich and varied production of bands that still go strong after all this