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Em Homenagem a Ivan Moody (1964-2024)

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Thematic Dossier

In Honour to Ivan Moody (1964-2024)

Svetlana Poliakova

This dossier is an offering by friends and colleagues to the memory of the composer, musicologist, publicist, editor, conductor, teacher, and priest Ivan Moody. His passing on 18 January 2024 evoked a response that was at once sorrowful and luminous, reflected in obituaries, podcasts, and concerts across the world.¹ From these tributes emerges the portrait of a musician of extraordinarily wide-ranging interests—spanning Western and Eastern cultures, from the Middle Ages to modernism—and of rare inner integrity: all strands of his activity invariably converged upon the manifestation of spirituality.

British by origin, Orthodox Christian by faith, and cosmopolitan in worldview (as one contributor to this volume, Ivana Medić, observes), Ivan Moody chose Portugal as his home in 1990. This was very much a deliberate choice. I had the good fortune to be his friend from the first year of his stay in this country, and on many occasions, I heard him speak of how much he loved returning, after international tours, to the circle of his family in Estoril, and how he would not have exchanged Portugal for any other country. It was here that he composed the greater part of his music, and it was also here that his service—first as a church singer and later as a priest—unfolded. For twenty-one years he worked at CESEM (Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical)² as a musicologist, editor of the *Portuguese Journal of Musicology*, translator, coordinator of the Contemporary Music Research Group, and member of CESEM's Executive Board. With the support of CESEM, its director, and his friend Manuel Pedro Ferreira, Ivan Moody carried out several postdoctoral research projects funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).³

1 The compositional, musicological, performing, and pedagogical activity of Father Ivan in its relation to the musical traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church is examined in the most comprehensive published article to date devoted to Ivan Moody, by Alexander Lingas: 'In Memoriam Protopresbyter Ivan Moody (11 June 1964–18 January 2024)', *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music*, 8/1 (2024), Section III: Obituaries, pp. 84–92.

2 Research institution in Musicology, funded through competitive calls, founded in 1997 at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Its siglum remains the same ever since, but the name was recently changed to the more comprehensive *Centro de Estudos em Música* (see <https://cesem.fcsh.unl.pt/en/home/>>).

3 A detailed account of these projects is provided in the article by Manuel Pedro Ferreira included in this dossier.

Among the projects carried out at CESEM was one proposed by Ivan Moody and directed jointly by him and myself: 'Christian Orthodox Chant in Portugal', which sought to create an overview of the expressions of Orthodox chant in Portugal across a plurality of contexts. Thanks to the scholarly and human sensitivity of Manuel Pedro Ferreira, the project was supported by CESEM without the need for a formal funding application. This granted us the freedom, over several years, to pursue a 'laboratory' form of academic and performative activity. The project's field of interest became, in effect, a projection onto Portuguese soil of the international initiative founded by Fr Ivan, the ISOCM (International Society for Orthodox Church Music).⁴

As part of the project, we organised two international conferences.⁵ A third conference was scheduled for the summer of 2024. At the same time, outside the framework of the project, Ivan Moody planned to take part in the Fourteenth ZêzereArts Festival in the Portuguese town of Tomar, where he had been invited to conduct choral concerts.

However, neither initiative came to fruition owing to Father Moody's unexpected passing. His place as conductor at the festival was taken by one of his closest friends and colleagues, Bogdan Đaković, who conducted a programme that included several of Moody's choral works. On the day following the concert, which marked six months since Ivan Moody's death, friends and colleagues from Portugal, Serbia, England, Armenia, and Russia met both in person and online at the concert hall of the Tomar Library to discuss his work as a composer, musicologist, and performer. This gathering became the third and final scholarly conference of the project 'Christian Orthodox Chant in Portugal' and was thereby dedicated to the memory of its founder.⁶

Shortly after the conference, Manuel Pedro Ferreira, who had taken part in it, suggested publishing the proceedings in the *Portuguese Journal of Musicology*, thereby providing the inspiration for the present dossier. The Journal's editorial team responded positively to the proposal for a memorial issue dedicated to a colleague who had served as its editor for eight years, and suggested expanding the initiative through a call for peer-reviewed papers. For practical reasons, the dossier will be published in two instalments, corresponding to successive issues of the journal.

Before turning to an overview of its contents, it is worth emphasising the dossier's distinctive character. From a typological perspective, this is not, strictly speaking, a collection of contributions by authors writing on their respective specialist topics. Rather, these are, for the most part, first studies devoted to Ivan Moody's own music or musicological writings. Two articles (by Haig Utidjian and

4 Among the first members of the ISOCM Board were Bogdan Đaković, one of the contributors to the present dossier, and myself.

5 'O Português: língua cristã ortodoxa', *First International Conference Within the Scope of the 'Christian Orthodox Chant in Portugal' Project*, Lisbon, CESEM, 28 June, 2022; 'Sounds of the East in the West of Europe: Tracing the Paths of Orthodox Church Music in Portugal', *Second International Conference within the scope of the 'Christian Orthodox Chant in Portugal' Project*, 6 July, 2023; Haig Utidjian, a contributor to this Dossier, took part in the second conference.

6 'In memory of Ivan Moody: composer, conductor, musicologist', *Third International Conference within the scope of the 'Christian Orthodox Chant in Portugal' Project*. CESEM, with the collaboration of the ZêzereArts, Tomar, 18 July, 2024.

Bernadette Nelson), while not directly addressing the results of Ivan Moody's work, nevertheless engage—both thematically and in their commentary—with his scholarly interests and his involvement in research in these fields.

As might be expected of researchers dealing with such a multifaceted artistic figure as Ivan Moody, the authors of the articles are highly competent across several fields simultaneously:⁷ musicology and performance; in two cases, also composition; the traditions of ancient Western and Eastern liturgical music; contemporary musical culture across a broad geographical spectrum; the textology of scores from different historical layers; and the methodologies of musical analysis and the humanities. Another characteristic shared by most of the articles is the inclusion of survey sections which, in addition to their contextualising function, assemble or publish for the first time important information concerning Ivan Moody's activities. It should also be noted that each article clearly formulates its object of scholarly inquiry, thus conforming to the profile of peer-reviewed research articles, while at the same time departing from that profile insofar as the authors do not conceal their personal response to the loss of a close friend and colleague.

The dossier thus comprises nine contributions: seven articles are revised versions of papers presented at the conference in Tomar, while two resulted from the call for papers. They are distributed across two issues of *RPM*, where they form separate sections. Each section contains an analysis of Ivan Moody's music: in the first instalment his choral works are examined, and in the second, the piano cycle and the piano quintet. His musicological activity across different fields is considered in both volumes. In addition, each volume includes an article dedicated to one of Ivan Moody's principal professional interests.

Ivan Moody's a cappella choral music is examined by three authors. Bogdan Đaković, a conductor who gave the first performances of a number of Ivan Moody's works, explores the composer's love of Serbian liturgical music, its history, saints, hymnography, and his interest in the transmission of Serbian music through manuscripts and printed sources.⁸ Examining the choral cycle *Seven Hymns in Honour of St Sava* (2006), Đaković demonstrates Fr Ivan Moody's deeply personal engagement with Serbian monody and poetry within an original compositional idiom. The article also presents information on seven individual choral works composed for Serbian academic and cultural institutions between 2003 and 2013.

Manuel Pedro Ferreira examines Ivan Moody's approaches to text setting in two markedly different choral works—the harmonisation of the Russian Lenten chant *Večeri Tvoeja* (2001) and the four-part composition on a poem by Camões, *Ao desconcerto do mundo* (2019). By comparing polyphonic styles that may have influenced Ivan Moody—from Western medieval and Renaissance polyphony and Russian *troestochiye* to Stravinsky—Manuel Pedro Ferreira draws conclusions concerning Ivan Moody's compositional style. It is noteworthy that these conclusions appear to hold true across the entire twenty-year period separating the works under analysis. In its introductory section, the article provides a detailed overview of Fr Ivan Moody's compositional, publishing, musicological, and performance activities in Portugal.

⁷ For most of them, biographical notes are included in the abstract book of the above-mentioned conference in Tomar: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13993416> (accessed 28 May 2026).

⁸ I would like to thank the student of the Musicology Department at FCSH, Miguel Diogo Rodrigues, for his assistance in editing the musical examples in the article.

In the same year as the miniature on a poem by Camões dedicated to Manuel Pedro Ferreira, *Transfiguration*, one of Fr Ivan Moody's last major choral works, was also composed. Written for joint performance by the ensembles Intrada and VOCES8, it was first performed in Moscow in 2020 under the direction of Ekaterina Antonenko, the author of the article devoted to this work in the first instalment. I remember that, following the premiere and upon returning from Moscow, Ivan Moody told me in conversation that he had originally intended to conduct the work himself; however, having heard the rehearsal, he felt that Ekaterina Antonenko had understood the piece so deeply that she ought to be the one on the podium, while he himself would simply enjoy the performance. In her article, Antonenko also highlights two further aspects of Ivan Moody's activity—his work as an editor, in connection with his preparation of Schnittke's *Penitential Verses* for publication, and his musicological work within the framework of a lecture delivered in 2014 at a conference in Moscow in memory of his teacher, John Tavener. Referring to that conference, Ekaterina Antonenko comments on Fr Ivan Moody's meeting with the event's co-organiser, Peter Phillips, with whom the composer had long been associated through friendship and collaboration.

Bernadette Nelson, in the introductory section of her article (included in the second instalment), writes about Ivan Moody's artistic collaboration with the ensemble The Tallis Scholars, directed by Peter Phillips, as well as with several other distinguished performing groups, this time in the context of the performance of early European music, including Portuguese repertoire. Her account presents to the reader Fr Ivan Moody's long-standing involvement with early music repertoires as an editor, musicologist, and conductor. The central topic of her study—Portuguese polyphonic requiems before c. 1650—was chosen as a tribute to his interests and to his significant contribution to the preparation of performing editions of Iberian polyphonic music.

The range of Ivan Moody's musicological, liturgical, and compositional interests is likewise reflected in the topic chosen by his colleague, the musicologist and fellow clergyman, Senior Deacon of the Armenian Church Haig Utidjian (see the inaugural instalment). His article, dedicated to the musical tradition of the Armenian liturgy, offers a comparative analysis of repertoire found in manuscripts and publications spanning the period from the twelfth to the twentieth century. The impetus for the choice of topic was a discussion between the two colleagues concerning a forthcoming review by Ivan Moody, for *Gramophone* magazine, of a CD featuring an arrangement of music from the Armenian Divine Liturgy.

Returning to the articles primarily devoted to Ivan Moody's music, we may consider three further contributions included in the second section of the dossier, focusing on piano music and music for ensembles with piano.

Ana Telles and César Viana, from different methodological perspectives, analyse the piano cycle of seventeen pieces written in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown. Each piece was dedicated by Ivan Moody to one of his pianist friends around the world, with the intention of offering them 'something that in some way reflected their character as musicians'.⁹

⁹ Ivan Moody, *Piano Book* (Lewis, Vanderbeek and Imrie Ltd., 2020), p. 2

Ana Telles—a pianist and musicologist towards whom, judging from my conversations with Ivan, he felt deep sympathy, and herself the dedicatee of one of the pieces—examines the cycle using theoretical frameworks developed within the field of titology as applied to literary and artistic works. A thorough analysis of the titles, an attentive reading of the textual elements added by the composer to the printed score, both complemented by the musical analysis of several pieces, enabled the author of the article to identify a significant number of thematic references and associations. Her article reveals to us the figure of the composer as lyricist: one capable of looking with loving attention into the essential depths of the human being and of finding musical expression for what he perceives there through allusions to poetry, mythology, spirituality, nature, and folk culture. In the opening section of the article, Ana Telles also offers a general overview of Moody's creative output as a composer and performer.

Referring to the same *Piano Book* as an extensive collection of short pieces diverse in style and technique, César Viana sets himself the task of identifying the key to the distinctive stylistic character of Ivan Moody's harmonic language. Drawing on trends in harmonic and formal analysis from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as well as on his own compositional experience, he investigates questions concerning the manifestation of modality in its expanded sense; the relationship between modality and traditionally understood functional harmony; the construction of different types of texture and the textural modelling of harmony; and methods of modifying vertical structures and musical syntax.

Among the pianists who received dedications in Ivan Moody's piano cycle is another contributor to this dossier, Taíssa Marchese, a close friend of the Moody family, Father Ivan Moody's spiritual daughter, and a doctoral student of both him and Ana Telles. She examines the piano quintet *Nocturne of Light*, inspired by the Orthodox icon of the Harrowing of Hell. The study is conducted through the lens of topic theory and, by identifying the structural principles of the topoi of sacred monodic chant and the bell-ringing of the Russian *zvon* tradition, establishes allusions to the icon's narrative while proposing the most appropriate interpretative approaches for performance.

At the conclusion of our review, we turn to an article that once again addresses Fr Ivan Moody's professional and personal ties with Serbia. Whereas the previously discussed article focused on church and sacred music, the contribution by the Serbian musicologist Ivana Medić—who collaborated with Ivan Moody for approximately fifteen years—introduces us to his musicological interests in the fields of musical modernism and spirituality within the traditions of the post-Byzantine pan-Mediterranean cultural space, including Serbia. The development of this line of research, which may be regarded as central to Ivan Moody's scholarly activity in the final years of his life, took place in collaboration between CESEM and the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA). The article discusses the innovative character of Ivan Moody's idea, namely the search for possibilities for the formation of a shared supranational South European cultural identity and for points of contact between cultures divided by confessional and linguistic barriers.

The nine articles in the volume, differing in narrative style, subject matter, and methodology, are united by a common aim: to view Ivan Moody's artistic personality in all its multifaceted richness. Together, they reveal far more about him than most readers of this thematic dossier—whether personally

acquainted with him or familiar only with the fruits of his work—might have expected. And yet this portrait remains far from complete. Much more could still be said about many aspects of his work and range of interests—including the almost entirely unaddressed area of his teaching—by colleagues and friends in Finland, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Italy, and many other countries. It is to be hoped that the research initiated in this thematic dossier will continue, not only as a tribute to the memory of Ivan Moody, but also as a continuation of the vast creative potential that he so generously left behind.