

Svetozar Gligorić

LIFE IS ALL WE HAVE

How did I survive the 20th century

Comments and explanations by the author

I was over-occupied as a journalist and publicist being my profession my whole working career and also with my activities as a Grandmaster of chess, taking part in many world-class competitions, until I turned 80. My deep affinity towards music, which I had since I was a child, was left behind due to the circumstances. It was limited to frequent listening to hundreds of radio and TV audio and video-records, with a lack of knowledge of theory of music and skill in playing musical instruments.

As if I knew that the time would come when wishes from my youth will be fulfilled; so during a half-century of my trips I was buying books about music in English, Russian, Italian and keeping them unopened in my private library- for the times to come. I even bought two small pianos.

Before it happened, I visited Hollywood for the first time in 1952. My dream was to have the “perfect” sound while I am listening to music at home so I accepted an advice of an expert in Los Angeles to buy the best “JBL” speakers, placed in two table-sized boxes, covered with a decorative lace. They cost me almost as much as a small car. Transporting them to Belgrade was a real accomplishment of mine. I had to hire an Italian company, which had a cargo flight for transportation over America and the Atlantic, and then, from Trieste, by a freight train, speakers arrived to Belgrade. I was overwhelmed. The everyday connection with music was a precious mental support for me over the years.

In the spring of 1994, I remained alone. In the autumn of the same year, I decided to learn playing piano. It was the first step in eliminating the paradox of my lifestyle, which lasted as an average human life. Since my earliest age, I was connected to music deeply and emotionally and I knew it would last forever. After my early successes in chess, the public influence turned my activity into a sports career. For 30 years, I was the head of the national team of Yugoslavia, which was considered to be the second strongest team after the Soviet Union. I had 13 Olympic team medals (gold, 6 silver ones, 6 bronze ones) and an individual gold medal (the best first board) at the Olympics in Munich in 1958- ahead of Botvinnik, the world

champion, who was heading the winning team of the Soviet Union. At the end of 1958 (no rating system existed then), the famous challenger of the World champion, David Bronstein (he drew the match with Botvinnik in 1951), publically said that, according to the class of play and my results at the time, I was the Grandmaster number Three in the World (behind Botvinnik and Smyslov). Later on, I also had the best result on the first board at the European Team Championship in Bath (England) in 1973, together with Spassky . I participated three times in Candidates tournaments, in 1953, 1959 and 1968. I am the creator of a very important Mar del Plata variation in King's Indian Defense and also of number of improvements in several systems in huge chess opening theory. I wrote over 20 books in English, German, Russian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Serbo-Croatian language. My book about "The match of the century" (Spassky-Fisher in Reykjavik in 1972) was a worldwide bestseller , translated from English into five other languages in 400000 copies. I was chosen to be the Sportsman of the Year in Yugoslavia in 1958. I received the Golden badge of honor of the city of Belgrade in 1973 and in 1975 - the biggest state award AVNOJ (Antifascist Congress of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) and then the Medal of Brotherhood and Unity with golden wreath. Later, in Serbia and Montenegro, I was given the highest state decoration of King Nemanja (1st order). Music had no part in these awards, but "privately" it helped me stay in proper condition.

I have retired long ago, but only in the early 21st century, I gave up playing chess. I have tried the same also in 1976, when I rejected invitations to nine international tournaments. I changed my mind the next year, in 1977, but could not restore my previous form..

With my life motto, "It is never too late" and with faith in my ability to feel true values of musical art, I was learning about music harmony during 2002 and 2003 and later, I learnt how to use a complicated PC program for music.

That gave me a tool for composing. Pop music, which I was listening to since forever, has its phases when it inspires you and periods when the lack of creativity has to be compensated with cheap effects. Once in 2004, longing to hear something melodic, I randomly hit the piano keys in arpeggio, C-major with a big seventh, and next - another four sounds of d-minor seven. I was pleasantly surprised.

A thought about my having the gift - not only for chess and written word, but also (unused) gift for music- encouraged new substance to my late years. When I find in music a good beginning, I can rather easily develop a

theme into a logical composition. This is what happened with my first composition, too. Later, I was driven with a friend of mine, a doctor, who told me in the car, without knowing my new activities, that scientists claim that the two chords are constantly buzzing in the universe. I was pleased that my first work, the “Talking sound”, includes in the similar way all white keys of the piano.

Slowly I was moving forward, towards my first album. Acquaintance with two professional musicians (I was twice their age), Branislav Pipović and Dragan Stupar, gave me the opportunity to obtain professional support of the first one, as a teacher and producer, and of the second one, as the arranger and organizer of recording. They helped me in finding soloists, male and female vocals and instrumentalists who raised the level of performing.

01. 'Machen Sie mir...' (4")

Composer as a "dictator"

When I started working in a studio, I tried to make the upcoming collaboration easy-going by using my friendly humor. So I said to Pipovic and Stupar "Machen Sie mir diese Muzik gross und verruckt", in translation "Make this music to me great and silly". This was my paraphrase of Hitler's wish during his one-day visit to Maribor in Slovenia, his only one to the territory of occupied Yugoslavia after the April war in 1941. Astonished by Marburg, Adolf said to his escort "Machen Sie mir diese Stadt Deutch", that is "Make this town German to me", with an ease of decision-making, typical for dictators.

The producer and the organizer both found it interesting to include my chance unimportant allusions from my experiences, into the album., They recorded my accidental words (without my knowing) and put it into the album, as well.

02. Talking sound (4'28")

When both musicians told me that it would be better to add a vocal to my first, ever written, composition (in 2005), I remembered an episode from recent past. Curious for anything that has to do with music, I asked an acquaintance of mine, a Music Academy professor, which is the most subtle musical instrument and the answer surprised me: "Human voice!" I realized the importance of the vocals.

After their suggestions, I started adding lyrics to my compositions (more often in English than in Serbo-Croatian). Back in 1972, a little known Swedish bend "ABBA" might not have won first prize on the Eurovision Song Contest if sung in language other than English, which is popular among the biggest part of international audience.

In twelve compositions of this album only two are without vocals. Fortunately, we met a soloist, Jelena Falatov (today Falatov-Martincevic). Beside the wide music education and resourcefulness in the studio, Jelena also has an extraordinary voice. Because of that, beside this one, she sings four other compositions in the album. She asked me what the title "Talking sound" means. I explained: "Music is, symbolically, a living creature talking to its loyal listener". Her singing and creativity gave special virtues to my songs.

03. Blues everywhere (4'57")

Of all the types of so-called pop-music, blues offers special pleasures. It is a kind of music where the repetition of themes is not tiring whenever special rules of blues are applied. The joy of listening is caused by the abundance of rhythmic accompaniment and the mold-free vocal melody line.

Blues emerged in terms of mental suffering of black people, due to the imposed slavery in the past, when they were forcibly transported across the Ocean from Africa to plantations of the American South. Much later, as citizens, they drew attention by their distinctive gift for an attractive kind of music, unknown before.

Rhythm is the condition for organized movement of celestial bodies in the universe. Symbolically, it has a similar importance in blues. Chords in a scale - dominants and subdominants - have the most natural order exactly in blues, of all the styles.

In blues, the singer usually sings about personal troubles but while listening to himself, the sound affects him that melancholy, through music, turns into a better mood. Blues unites sadness and joy, misery and cheerful feelings. As John Lee Hooker says in a song: "Blues is the healer" meaning - blues is curative, it heals from hopelessness.

During the first public performance, the audience evidently liked the rhythm of the composition "Blues is everywhere". Credit for that goes to the very fine interpretation of the female vocal.

04.' These tones remind me of past gone...' (49")

05. Looking for a melody (3'48")

“Looking for a melody” is a song with an autobiographical content. As a child, without help of my parents, I was easily managing to handle an ancient phonograph. That is the reason why the beginning and the ending of this song sound as an old phonograph.

When I grew up a bit, I loved “Aida” and “The Barber of Seville”. In the late thirties of the last century, as a high school student near his graduation, I was waiting for every New Year’s Eve with big excitement because each year, a new Hollywood musical from “Broadway Melody” series was arriving in Belgrade cinemas. “The dream factory” presented a world of goodness, where innocent plots were giving material for the latest “evergreen” hits, highly appreciated even today. As a boy, I wrote down 100 hits into my notebook; the music I knew.

Hitler’s conquests began in Europe, which will turn into a catastrophe of World War II, when the last movie of that kind was shown here, for the New Year’s Eve in 1940. It was the one where Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell step dance in the best music performance in the history of cinematography, accompanied by the composition “Begin the Beguine” of Cole Porter. (A decade after the war, on the prize giving ceremony of the American Film Institute, organized for Astaire and his award for Lifetime Achievement, Eleanor in her mature age, finished her speech in a funny way: “Fred, you are a beast. You made me train 14 hours for 14 days, for a 10-minute act.”). This “Paradise on Earth” on screen and the closeness of the actual reality that was about to hit us, was a unique experience of collision of adolescent dreams and radically different reality.

Memories of what took away six years of my youth were the inspiration for this song. When the producer suggested me to sing it myself, I could not believe my ears. For half a century, I never even sang inside my house because I knew that I do not have the same modest voice which I had while I was singing in the school choir. I accepted to try, just to discourage such a plan. I did not count on what a modern studio offers. It turned out that I sang correctly, so here I am, 86 years old; brave, ready to sing, besides being the composer and text writer. I appreciate life for offering possibilities for a good joke, as an extra contribution to the beauty of existence.

The composition starts with a sequence from the mentioned American movie hit, while I am singing: “These tones remind me of the past gone, these tones of joy and happiness, these tones of a beautiful romance, these tones of a cheerful dance...” What follows is my explanation about what the listener just heard, that it is a segment from a musical and then, it is being followed by my original composition in F-major, where I am making comments (again in English) like:”Am I seeking my young self when I am searching for music stronger than words...”.

In the studio, they asked me to write the lyrics for the group singing of chorus. I immediately found a new point: “I don’t care for past, life is going fast...”

06. RAP style (3'31")

(Sometimes I like to be alone, sometimes I like that I am alone...)

For the content to be colorful, the album contains this song, performed by our popular rap singers. The term “Rap” comes from the initials of the expression “Rhythm And Poetry”; instead of singing, interpreters are telling words in their own, different ways and finding personal solutions for some parts of lyrics. Immediacy of such artistic expression has many fans, mostly among younger people.

“Light” music and lyrics, I wrote while I was in the mood to make fun of myself. However, evaluated from “above”, they saw in the composition a good opportunity to make RAP and they invited two popular performers, Nigor and Voodoo Popeye, who were supposed to transform the composition using their own, charming style. The big guys added their words to my lyrics, imitating the author and cutely kidding about him, increasing the general joy in the unpretentious song. The producer and the arranger trusted me and allowed me to stay in the qualified company, due to my part of lyrics which I had to sing. .

06a ”Clumsy” headphones

Musicians in the studio were laughing at me when the big headphones, which Stupar put on my head in the “deaf room”, fell on my nose. They recorded my spontaneous reaction - as a proof to the listener that making music album is not an “easy job”.

07. East, West, Home's Best (3'10")

From all the themes in the album, this song is the only one relying on an old folk saying. The reason to quote the popular saying, I found in my trips all around the world. They lasted for over half a century. I was looking forward to the trips but I also remembered that every time I returned home, I was twice as happy. This experience has its confirmation in the title of the song. A proverb, as a result of folk wisdom, was repeated many times as a concise lesson in lives of our people. For fluent pronunciation, two even and two odd words are perfectly rhymed.

Jelena, singing the backup vocals in certain segments, rewards the listeners with a richer expression. Similar credit goes to a trumpet soloist.

08. Life is all we have (3'37")

This composition has a particularly significant title - "Life is all we have". What I want to say is that words in this composition reflect my basic philosophy (expressed in all 12 compositions in various ways) - that our life is the only valuable thing we have. One of my American friends said that it is like a reminder to Zen Buddhism. Although I am not familiar with details of that teaching, I recall that Buddhism preaches pure respect for life, so it is a sin to even trample down an insect.

I consider this composition to be the "central one" of my album, both because of philosophy of rhymed verses and melody which effectively follows the minor chords in their harmonious "descending".

08a Bunch of autobiography - because of a title of five words

One incidental sentence of mine on the disc is - If I would write memoirs, the title would be "How did I survive the 20th century". Later, it was chosen as a suitable title for my entire first album.

It was necessary for my late years to come - to get rid of the prejudice that my life was monotonous. For too long I had on my mind the youth spent in misery and frustration because of the upcoming World War II, and - during peaceful times - in imposed obligations I had as the member of the national team and, also as a journalist and a publicist, I had to stay within the circle from which I could not get out. While I was writing small comments for my compositions, I noticed that lucky circumstances were saving my bare life rather often, for decades actually. Remembering those situations made me pay attention to the new description of my existence, which, in fact (I see that now) was not ordinary at all.

My mother Ljubica (Rakić- before marriage), was a pretty, smart uneducated girl, living in her village Brankovina. When she was 19, during her pregnancy, she persuaded my father Dragoje to quit his job in the province, and find a new one in Belgrade. That way, she achieved her goal to give birth in the capital, where I could go to the best schools: "King Peter I" elementary, near the Cathedral, and eight grades of the eldest First high school for boys.

When I was nine, my father unexpectedly died due to a heavy infection, after a harmless operation. My mother passed away eight years later. She was a Post office employee, where she was exposed to harmful chemicals for too long.

As a minor, without means for living, yet already a well-known name in chess, I had three offers, in order to support myself until my graduation. I was willing to accept a friendly invitation of Vasilije Medan, writer and a well-known journalist of daily "Politika", who played chess in a rank of master candidate. However, my respect for the University professor, Dr. Niko Miljanic, also a chess fan, made me change my intentions, and I joined the big family of the respected surgeon (today the Anatomical Institute of Belgrade University bears his name). He accepted me as if I was his fourth son.

This saved my life. Medan was executed after Germans occupied Belgrade. Dr. Niko felt what was about to happen; on the very day of the demonstrations "Better war than pact" in Belgrade, on 27th of March, he took all of us, ten members of the family "collective", to Vrnjacka Banja where he had the appointment to be the chief of military hospital in case of war. Thus, we escaped bombing on April 6. Beside the Miljanic family, Geca Kon, the owner of a well-known bookstore in the center of Belgrade, with a bunch of his relatives, also moved into this private mansion, where we were in Vrnjacka Banja. The surprise of bombardment created tension; people did not know what to do. After having lunch in the dining room of a mansion, Dr. Miljanic moved to Geca Kon's table. I was sitting alone at our dining table, and witnessed their conversation. As a big humanitarian, Niko was suggesting Kon to join us and escape from the Nazis on time, to the south. Being Jew, Geca Kon replied, nevertheless, that he is going back to Belgrade and explained: "Professor, I have enough money to redeem myself". This mistaken notion of the famous publisher, led to his fatal end.

Niko's big family gathering (mother Darinka, widow of the Minister of Health, who was working for King Nikola, older brother Pavle, also a famous Technical College professor, with his wife and son, Dr. Niko with his wife and three sons, and me with them - happened in the end of April, on the day when Yugoslavia capitulated, to be in Niksic. In Montenegro under Italians, it was easy for us to move to Risan, afterwards in Perast and in 1942, sneaking, from Boka to Banjane, home soil of Miljanic brotherhood. An isolated plateau in the range of around 20 km, near the border with Herzegovina, had neither power nor water, and no roads - and this made it a better shelter in war times than Boka Kotorska.

I joined Partisans on my own initiative, as soon as I got the opportunity in Montenegro in 1943. I had my first battle experience when my unit occupied the top of a small hill, and the enemy was on the opposite hill. We were protected by a natural earthen shield. The commander, surrounded

with fighters, asked a volunteer among us to install the iron base of the heavy machine gun on the unprotected outside. I was surprised by the general silence, so I raised my hand.

I was wearing my thick winter coat that I brought from Belgrade, and its blue color could be seen kilometers away. I finished with my task rapidly and climbed back to the shelter. At that moment, a young soldier on my right, two meters from me, lifted up his head to see what is going on and a bullet, meant for me by the sniper with delay of seconds, hit him in the forehead. One could see that my unlucky neighbor was dead at the spot due to the green color, which covered his face.

As an educated intellectual, able to understand the aiming devices, I was soon assigned to command two small groups of soldiers that were operating with a heavy mortar and a machine gun. The Fifth Montenegrin Brigade was controlling region of Kuche, near Podgorica, where German forces were located. The headquarter got an information from our informers that Germans were preparing the evacuation of their tanks to the north, and I got an order to try, with the mule, seized from the Italians, that was carrying the mortar and other equipment, and 5-6 obedient fighters, to go few kilometers in front of our brigade and disturb the Germans. With no personal weapons, the only trump card of my unit was the 81 mm caliber mine.

Even now, I am amazed by my skill to find a sheltered clearing that day, with a view of the mountain road, deep under. And really, soon the tanks appeared, moving slowly, one by one, towards us. Through binoculars, I counted 15 of them, with no infantry escort. I estimated that they were about 2 kilometers away and I told to my buddies how many small gunpowder bags to attach to the mine. I took the mine and pushed it down into the barrel, and that mine did not fly up after it fell on the needle at the bottom of the barrel, but instead, it was powerlessly spit out onto the ground, next to our feet. If it had exploded, nobody would remain alive. Surprised as I was, I picked up the mine and saw that those were not gunpowder bags but identical bags filled with pellets for sporting guns, kept by the Italian officers for their favorite hunting game, even during the war.

I ordered immediately to throw away that silly collection. I attached the actual gunpowder bags to the mine and changed the detonator, which just slightly dented during the fall. The mine hit the sky and I was watching through binoculars with a big interest, wondering where it would fall.

A miracle happened. Unlike the anti-tank cannon, that sends the grenade directly to the target (and Germans knew that we do not have any cannons), the mortar is less precise because the mine's course makes a hyperbole in order to fall from above on the enemy's heads in the trench. After a while, I saw an explosion that made a cloud of dust on the road, about 50 meters in front of the first tank - success like having found a needle in a haystack. All the tanks have stopped and it lasted for about five minutes. I felt a huge relief when they turned to go back. If they had continued and found out where we were hidden - these small German mountain tanks (their famous big "Tigers" would not be able to move on this steep ground) had both, cannons and machine guns, and they would easily destroy us.

The next half century, during peace time, I would sometimes boast myself when in private company, about how intimidated Germans were. However, in the 21st century, a young man, who served the army, came to my house to fix something for me. After I told him my story, he asked me if I knew how destructive the power of my mine is. When I said "I don't know", he said that it is huge. I had to describe him how the road was narrowly carved into a sharp slope and he concluded that, where the mine fell, probably a part of a road rolled down and this made it risky, or even impossible for the tanks to pass through there. Since then on, I stopped describing how I scared the hell out of Hitler's tankers.

Like me, the young volunteers among partisans usually did not pass the appropriate training in the barracks so they had to learn how to operate the weapons in a day or two. Once I talked to a colleague sergeant in a big living room of a farmhouse. Our table was on some wooden stage next to the wall. A meter below us, there was another table where a young partisan was cleaning his revolver without knowing that it is not empty. We were deafened by a loud "bang". We realized that the bullet passed between our heads and killed nobody because it made a hole in the middle of a big metal ladle that was hanging on the wall on the other side of our table (like a skillful movie effect). We said nothing to the soldier and the only thing that can explain our indifference was the state of mind in the war, and the fact that we had no time to get scared.

There were many kinds of situations when a man is unable to react. Once we were stuck in a kilometers long gully. We could see by the flashes from the edge of that abyss in-between two hills, that there was a German cannon looking for us, but they could not guess where we exactly were. Every few minutes, a grenade would wheeze and flew over our heads and exploded rather far away behind us. We were hiding in bushes until the terror of their gunner stopped, luckily for us, without consequences.

Another time - we were running uphill to hide, while a new type of a German machine gun, called by us the “skewbald horse”, fired at us producing noise like thousands of bumble-bees, put together. For comparison, unlike the Italian “Breda” old-fashioned machine gun used by my troop, which had clips of 20 unnecessarily big bullets (firing one every three seconds), the “skewbald horse” was firing hundreds of bullets per minute and required a crew twice as big. One was holding his hand on a trigger while the other German would constantly pour water keeping the barrel wet because it was in danger to become red-hot and to simply melt. Who finds himself near those fanlike groups of bullets; there is no chance for him not to be shot. We reached luckily the top safe and sound.

During my long stay in the brigade in the front-line, Dr. Niko Miljanic- who was not a politician but supported the leadership of the rebellion and the resistance to the occupier- was elected for the president of CASNO (Montenegrin Antifascist Assembly of People’s Liberation) , due to his popularity among Montenegrin people. When he came to such a responsible position, the first thing he did was to persuade the general Peko Dapcevic, commander of the Second Corps, to move me from the front line and let me do something less dangerous. When I heard it, I refused to go because I was useful in the unit of light infantry.

Dr.Niko was decided to save my life. Few months later, due to the lack of communication possibilities during the war, a strict reorder arrived, signed by Peko, a national hero, and by the commissar of the Corps, Mitar Bakic, and they asked me to visit the first Congress in Kolasin to represent the junior forces of the Fifth Montenegrin Brigade. Afterwards, they sent me to Niksic to be a newsletter editor for the young and, at the same time a member of the partisan theater. I think that in reality there is no order that comes from the highest military rank and has to do with an individual on the bottom of the military hierarchy, as it happened to me. My involvement in NOB (National Liberation Fight), from 1943 to 1945, ended with me becoming a captain with two war medals.

Once I made a statement that chess indirectly saved my life three times. The first time was when dr.Niko Miljanic“adopted” me in the beginning of November in 1940, and the second time was this “wartime relocation”. After I was moved from the front lines, the Fifth Montenegrin Brigade had a rough conflict with the German units while trying to block their way through Sandzak . Both sides suffered human losses. Before the war, when I still was the young high school student, chess made me popular among respectful intellectuals, who knew how to appreciate the game, which is ,

according to Botvinnik ,”the best illustration of beauty of human logic”. In the autumn of 1944, in front of the District Committee building in Niksic, I met the officer of very high rank, Veljko Micunovic, who was the chief of OZN (after the war he was the Yugoslav ambassador in the most important places, twice in Moscow and once in Washington). He recognized me; while he was a student in Belgrade and a chess fan, he was watching me playing, the youngest chess master, in chess tournaments. He asked me what I am doing in Niksic and I replied that I applied for going to the Srem Front, as an officer in the newly formed units. Veljko told me to wait and after ten minutes he came back with words:”You are coming with me”. Aware or not aware, but that was my third “salvation”. He “took away” the Srem Front from me, but who knows what could have happened there because as a Partisan, I was not used to fight on lowlands.

When Tito moved Micunovic to Belgrade in the beginning of 1945, Veljko took me with him, as his only escort. I arrived to my hometown by a Russian warplane from Tirana (the only airport at our disposal), after four years of absence.

It should be mentioned - I was also a close friend with a national hero, Dragisa Ivanovic (The head of the University of Belgrade after the war). Before the war, both of us - me, a high school student and him, an electrical engineer soon-to-be - were taking part on speed chess tournaments in the “Belgrade chess club”. As the Fifth brigade commissar in 1943, he suggested me to stay in his headquarters, but I chose to join the risky First troop of the Third Battalion. Dragisa respected my wish.

The peace time did not bring an end to occasional temptations of similar nature for my life - due to the my inevitable, under other conditions, frequent flights around the Globe.

In December of 1947, Dr Petar Trifunovic and I were coming back to Belgrade by airplane (with only two propeller engines) from the international tournament in Moscow (Chigorin memorial). One engine failed on halfway back and we were forced to land to the airport in Lvov. We spent the night there while waiting the aircraft to be repaired. We arrived home by the same airplane, with one-day delay.

In 1966, a Cuban airplane, made in England, flew from Prague to Havana. It was the Bristol-Britain type, the last model with propellers in the international air space, in the new era of jet planes. Castro’s Cuba, under embargo, did not have a better choice for its air transport. Many European teams, led by the USSR and Yugoslavia, boarded on the plane, representing

the elite of World Chess. All of us were going to the 17th Chess Olympic Games in Havana. Our first stop was Shannon, Ireland, where we filled up and flew over the Atlantic, towards Gander in Canada. We should have landed there to fill up for the second time and be able to finish the rest of the journey to Havana.

It was dark and most of the chess players in the aircraft were sleeping, when we were after three and a half hours of flight halfway over the ocean, on the edge of the Polar Circle. At that moment, the stewardess suddenly announced, first in Spanish and then in English (I was awake, I knew both languages), that we are returning to the Irish airport due to the failure of one of the four engines. I looked through the window and noticed that the closest propeller was not turning with its normal high speed, but very slowly, with the help of the wind. Ciric, a member of our Olympic team, moved in front to sit next to me asking me if I know to swim. I realized that he is a non-swimmer and that his curiosity was a product of a childish illusion that there is hope even if we crash into the endless, freezing water. I did not respond in order not to depress him even more, so I covered my head with a blanket and fell asleep. With one engine less, the flight back lasted much longer- for five hours. When we arrived, before disembarking the plane, the awoken Grandmaster Bondarevsky, who was the captain of the Soviet team, asked me if we arrived in Gander. I answered "No, in Shannon" and he responded with "Dont you make stupid jokes with me."

All the passengers left the plane and, it flew with its crew only, to London, where it could be repaired. Two days later, the same airplane came back to get us, and our second flight to Cuba passed this time without any trouble. As soon as we arrived to the former Hilton hotel (built by the American funds in Florida), which changed its name under Castro into "Havana Libre", I rushed to the luxurious pool outside to relax. The point of this story is that Ciric was standing with the grandmaster Ivkov next to the pool and told him: "Look how well Gligoric swims and he was hiding it from me in the airplane".

The next year, in 1967, a different but equally dangerous incident happened with a jet plane. All four of the grandmasters, Matanovic, Ivkov, Matulovic and myself, with our seconds, arrived from Belgrade to Rome and boarded together with other participants from different countries the other plane for Tunis, where the Interzonal Tournament for the world championship was to be held in Sousse. As soon as the Tunisian airplane started taking off, one of the engines burst into flames and the aircraft immediately turned back to try to land. From up, through the windows, we were able to see the big ambulance and the police car rushing towards the runway to help us, if

possible. Down there, without being injured, we left the defective aircraft rapidly and after few hours in the waiting-lounge, we were given another company's airplane. When we arrived in Tunis, Matulovic, who is obsessed with statistics, said to his colleagues: "I will not share a plane with Gligoric ever again. Of all of us, he flew the most, so the plane he is on has the biggest possibility to crash."

His wittiness did not seem only as a good joke. On the airport in Tunis, I found out that my big leather suitcase, of all the other suitcases, with my best clothes in it, had been stolen on the airport in Rome, during the unplanned transfer of luggage to the other plane. During the big FIDE tournament, I was the only undefeated participant so the American Grandmaster, Robert Bern, told me: "You play best when you have nothing to wear. "

Between 1968 and 1977, I flew four times to Philippines. Once, a strange incident happened. During the last stage between Bangkok and Manila, our modern Jumbo Jet bumped into an "air hole", space without air, as it is in cosmos. Engines just stopped working and the plane abruptly was 1,5 km lower. I had my seatbelt on, but many of the passengers did not and I saw them being catapulted from their seats up in the air and hitting the ceiling with their heads and then falling back to where they were sitting. At the same time, all the things from the seats pockets fell out and made a mess. The airplane, in its unexpected descending reached the air quickly, the engines became loud and the flying normalized, without serious consequences.

The last, but not the least important "adventure", I had in 1974. On the L.A. airport, I was waiting to board a Lockheed plane, built with an abnormally long fuselage in order to receive much more passengers. My destination was Montreal, Canada, on the opposite, Atlantic side of the American continent. However, the microphone never called for boarding, substituting it with the apologies of air company for the delay, and it was repeated for eight hours, because some aircraft repair had to be done. Finally, we were heading to our destination. It was a direct flight, with no extra stops.

However, when we reached Toronto, the ceiling started shaking, as if engines were losing power. We landed somehow and all the passengers left the plane, which was soon out of traffic. There were many passengers, and we got soon several airplanes to continue our trips.

There is an opinion that it is safer to travel by plane than by car. If one bears in mind that I had "only" five critical moments in 50 years of flying,

maybe this claim could be correct. True, there was one more incident, the sixth one, in the late sixties of the 20th century, but I do not count it because it was my destiny not to be in that aircraft-during my stay in Cuba on the Capablanca memorial –when it crashed after taking off from the Gander airport. I came to Cuba by that plane and I was supposed to fly back to Europe with it when the international tournament in Havana finishes. The catastrophe of “my” plane happened two weeks before my return to Europe.

Although it was not my “official” profession, chess had the most important role in my career. When I was eight, me and my mother moved in the attic of the Serbian Medical Association building, on Zeleni Venac Next door, near the Prizren Street, there was a coffee-shop window from where I could see the table with a colorful board on it. Young and fascinated with what I see, I would stick my nose to the glass, trying to reveal the secret of the board and pieces - and to find out what were the two patrons doing while sitting there occasionally.

After three years of looking through the window, finally appeared someone willing to explain me the rules of the game. After playing soccer with a rag-ball on a field below the market place, I would meet the snack bar owner’s son and play chess with him at the very beginning of Lomina Street. I was thirteen when this friend of mine took me to the Belgrade Chess Club, which was in the basement of Kolarac University. As a newcomer, I did not pass through the finals, but I remained unspeakably fascinated by the marble chess-tables and the atmosphere of the tournament (It was the Belgrade Junior Championship in 1936).

Autodidact by nature, I started cutting out all the news about chess from the chess column of Ozren Nedeljkovic in “Politika”. I had no money for a real chess set so I used a razor to cut chess pieces out of cork. I colored the black ones with my school ink and the same thing I did with certain squares of the board on the bottom of an old candy box. My initial, fanatic bond to chess lasted for two years. Once when I was ill, I dreamt that chess pieces were human beings. I was progressing rapidly, so that in 1937 I became the junior champion of Belgrade under 14, and one year later- champion under 18.

At these pre-war times, in accordance with school rules, students were forbidden to be members of any club. Nevertheless, I was visiting the Belgrade Chess Club every evening - it was the sanctuary for me. Control over the rear entrance into the building of Kolarac University had the doorman, Desimir (after the war he was the doorman in the building of

“Politika”), a two meters giant from Lika. He liked me, so when he would notice me, small as I was, grabbing the heavy door handle, he would turn his back and pretending to read newspapers, while I rushed inside. I've always played speed chess tournaments and some of the well- to-do club members wanted to play with me, for a two dinars bet. I was saying "No, no, I will win" but it was of no use; they were persistent, so in the end, I would be the one having money for buying kebabs at “Janicije”, across the street on the Student square. Before my chess career started, I had the same habit: after ice-skating on Kalemegdan, I, a 12 year old boy, would go to a small bar called “Albania”. It was a low, old-fashioned house in the very downtown on Terazije (today, there is an equally called palace) and I would order a dinner with my mother’s money, and the waiter would receive my order as if I was an adult guest.

In the beginning of 1939, I became a senior champion of the “Belgrade chess club”, the best chess club in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Club delivered an official certificate of me being poor, so that the organizers of the amateur championship of Yugoslavia in Zagreb the same summer made it possible for me to participate by paying for my accommodation. I was 16, when I won the national chess master title, without my mother ever even pronouncing the word “chess”. For her, the only thing that mattered was my success at school. Her complete lack of interest about what I am doing beside the school - has remained a riddle for me.

When the war was over, I began to play chess again in 1945. Chess was not recognized as a profession. Journalism, due to its nature, was a profession that could be combined with travelling to tournaments. This made me accept – instead of my wrong intention to study engineering - the offered job, during the next nine years, as a journalist of “Borba”. Afterwards, I was a foreign-policy commentator of NIN, weekly newspapers, and in the end, a journalist of Radio-Belgrade for almost two decades where in 1972 I got a special award - the Golden Microphone.

Surprisingly, my activities as a Grandmaster of chess were much bigger. From the middle of the last, 20th century, I was several times among grandmasters who played the biggest number of games per annum. For example, on the traditional New Year tournament in Hastings, I participated 15 times, which is an unachievable specific number in careers of any grandmaster outside Great Britain.

When Queen Elisabeth, in a company of Prince Philip and their daughter, Princess Ann, visited Yugoslavia in 1972, I was one of about hundred invited people at a big reception in the British ambassador’s residence in

Belgrade. Queen Elisabeth was the first one, together with President Tito, to pass through a long line of Yugoslav citizens. When she came close to me, although I was hidden behind two groups of our ladies, she told me that, because of my frequent visits to England, I could become even a British citizen. I overcame my being surprised and kindly thanked for the compliments of Her Highness. The next small group arrived, with the Queen's husband and the young princess. For me, it was a new "temptation" when Prince Philip also stood next to me. Knowing for my book about "the match of the century", published in London not so long ago, he asked me what was my impression about Spassky and Fischer meeting in Reykjavik. Luckily for our actor standing next to me, Guta Dobricanin, who was already worried for me, I found my way out and, instantly said that "it was a big fight, but, unlike in the Shakespeare plays, here everyone remained alive. "

My chess career provided me with possibilities to randomly meet important people from all segments of public life: I met three times with Tito; once with the president of Argentina, Peron; president of Philippines Marcos; president of Cuba Prio Socaras (just before him being thrown out from his post by a military "coup d'etat" of Batista); with the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro (who threw off Batista by organizing a rebellion), his minister Che Guevara; with the leader of opposition in England, Bevan, etc. Among big names in music I met the composers Khachaturian, Sostakovic, violinist David Oistrach; in the film industry I met - James Mason, Charlton Heston, Stuart Granger, Raf Valone (he told me that he also writes plays for theater), Sophia Loren (she gave me a big photo of her signed with: "A Gliga sinceramente"), Debbie Reynolds (Gene Kelly's partner in the great musical "Singing in the rain"), etc.

In December of 1957, I shared the first place in the great tournament in Dallas and won my biggest prize of almost 2000 dollars (a decade or two later, this kind of success was bringing ten times as much) and in 1958, I bought my first car - Volkswagen. I became a very good driver so I was also offered to take part in races but I was smart enough to say no to that. I changed old "VW Herby" for new ones, 3 or 4 times later on. However, I was twice in a big danger because of vanity of foreign drivers in luxurious cars, who were accelerating in sharp curves when they noticed my small car passing them by from the left. My courage and driving skill made it possible to change the lane at the very last moment. I spent all my savings in 1968 - when I bought an Alpha Romeo and during next 30 years I traveled safely around Europe.

After all details mentioned above - I realized that my life was not a straight line, as I was thinking about it, but a twisting zigzag line with happy endings. One of the strangest “curves” was the weird way of me getting married.

In the spring of 1945, I was living modestly, completing my new social duties in Belgrade. I can remember the three of us sitting on the edge of the sidewalk near the Kalenic street market, cutting and sharing the watermelon that we bought. Miro Radojicic was there (we became friends in the Belgrade chess club before the war and four years after I returned, we continued our friendship), and to me by unclear accident, Danica also, the younger sister of Dusko Savkovic, writer and journalist (eight years classmate of mine). I was a frequent guest of the Savkovic family so I knew Danica since she was a sweet child. None of us from this innocent group could imagine what was about to happen, two years later.

In the spring of 1947, my friend Djura Ludajic, a young chess magazine editor, persuaded me to visit his hometown Senta in order to introduce me to “the most beautiful girl in the city”. This encounter left both of us, the girl and me, indifferent. On my way back to Belgrade, I was walking down the Kolarac Street and in front of Yugoexport, I ran into Dana. I greeted her, and Inexplicably to me, I asked her: “Will you marry me?” Being surprised, she told me: “Give me a day to think it over”, and I responded: “Ok, let us meet here tomorrow; at the same time”. As soon as she arrived home, she told her mother about me proposing to her. Seeing her daughter’s indecision, her worried mother slapped her twice on both cheeks lightly and said: “You must marry Gliga!”. Ljubica, good-hearted Dana’s mother, had known me for years as a friend of her son (Dana’s six years older brother Dusko) and she loved me very much. I was pleasantly surprised by Dana’s “yes” the next day. I like the “healthy” humor, so years later, when Dana was present, I was joking about not expecting her “yes”, but because I was a “man of a word”, I did what I promised. Our marriage lasted for 47 years, as a harmonious community of special beauty. Danica died at the age of 65.

09. 'If I would write my Memoirs...' (5'')

10. Jackal's blues (4:20)

For “Jackal’s blues” I wrote lyrics for the vocal, which explain jackal's good mood and his ululating on the edge of desert, feeling his unrivaled superiority in the hot place. Accompanied by trombone and flute, which recall jackal's voice the vocal was supposed to describe with words the joy of a wolf, which becomes complete when he hears his female on the other side of the desert, where they will meet.

Later, I accepted another suggestion - that it would be better to replace the vocalist with a trumpet soloist. Here the listener has this other version of the same blues, where the powerful sound of one instrument (the lonely trumpet) dominates.

11. Melancholy in disguise (4'04")

As it usually happens to me, I think first of a music theme and then if I like it, I start to develop it quickly, because if I do not use the offered moment, it may disappear forever from my mind in a split of a second. In this composition I was attracted by silent beauty of the tune and its romance.

Mostly young people have this kind of feeling. This helped me to imagine a teen party in a big hall, a kind of a party I longed upon a time, but I never had the opportunity to see one. Those years of mine were wasted in the World War II. American pop singer, Bruce Springsteen, explains the foolishness of humanity in his song by saying: "War? What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!" If we continue developing this thought, maybe we would arrive to a conclusion that the human tendency for destroying our own lives, despite the progress in science, technology and art, is caused by the necessity of balance between the big intellectual superiority of the human kind over fauna and flora on Earth.

When it comes to this composition of mine, I have to say that the idea for lyrics I found in my intention to help the listener experience the music in its real meaning. At the party, a boy falls in love at first sight with a girl he never met before, but he realizes soon that she is not alone and that he has to back up. In order his deep disappointment not to be noticed, he joins the common laughing. This is why this song has the title "Melancholy in disguise".

To describe this specific situation, what was needed was a young female voice, fitting into the environment where these events were taking place. We hit the jackpot with Valentina-Tina Stupar. She was musically educated and the listeners could notice this in her touching performance. Lyrics emphasized the need for positive attitude towards life - the motive, noticeable in the whole album.

This imagined situation in the song seems to me as if it is the twin of a psychological atmosphere of an actual event, which I experienced as a high school student. Together with Radivoje-Lola Djukic (after the war he was the author of the most popular satirical television serial) from the same class, as best students we were assigned in the year 1937 to be the representatives of the First Male High School at the celebration of the throne heir's 14th birthday, Peter the Second. It happened in the palace next to the Pioneer park, where the Town building is today. For the entertaining part of the program, a big hall was rented (today a restaurant for the city emissaries). Beside the magician, there were also the Jazz orchestra black

members from the US, dressed very formally for the occasion, wearing light gray tailcoats and equally gray gloves on their hands.

This event remained engraved in my memory forever. My classmates were very nicely dressed, while I was wearing my only jacket with patches on the sleeves. To hide it, I sat in the luxurious stylish chair and firmly pressed my elbows against the soft armrests. While the others were dancing and having fun, I remained in the same position for more than two hours. At one moment, the orchestra started playing a melody, which touched my heart. I heard it for the first time and I memorized it forever. I was humming it to myself even when I was in Partisans. This emotional memory continued to exist in me also after the war.

Years later, while I was visiting an acquaintance of mine. I chose one of his records and put it to play. I hopped in my excitement when I heard exactly the same tune, performed by Dinah Washington. The title of this to me unknown song was „Alone“ - surprisingly concise description of my old experience.

12. An association about Fischer, due to the words “booze” and “blues” (44”)

Words „booze“ and „blues“ rhyme and this gave me the inspiration for my pronounced (for the fourth time), occasional „sentences” during recording.

13. Blues and the rest... (3'28") (...Blues is the best...)

The humorous lyrics and the provocative rhythm of this song are suitable to express the power of blues to initiate joyful mood. All the personal troubles are being forgotten and man gets the stimulus for wild jumping. Here the leading female vocal always supports the atmosphere of euphoria. In the final part of the composition, Jelena gets inspiration for her spontaneous, inspired singing sequence - as a personal contribution to the conclusion of a beautiful experience.

14. Dream Blues (3'20")

I do not remember how it was before, but in my late years, dreams were not visiting me often. However, few years ago, I had a short dream that I cannot explain differently but that there was a hidden spark squatting inside of me for over 60 years and it lit - a vivid description - when even a dead man would not expect it.

An unknown girl was standing 10 meters away from me and looking at somewhere. This dream did not show her look; through some symbolism, I experienced her incomparable beauty saying nothing. Thunderstruck by emotions, I immediately confessed (There is no hesitating in dreams): "I love thee.". She responded: "I love you, too", exactly what I wanted to hear with all my heart. In the next second, naturally, I was awake.

Tiny, strange dream at the dawn, never repeated itself, like it did not exist before. But I was given a gift in a form of an idea for "Dream blues".

I was flattered by the fact that the producer liked my music and lyrics that he wanted to sing it himself. Brane (nickname of Branislav) added some depth to his singing, with some rearranging the order of words as his contribution to the spirit of the composition. I found it very important, while writing the lyrics, for this occasion, to use the significant, old biblical phrase "Thee", instead of "you".

15. The cheerful song of Russian aviators of the Red Army (15")

This was the fifth time during working in the music studio that I made an unplanned comment, quoting some verses in Russian, which I heard during the World War II. Translated and in their whole version, they go like: "We are pilots, the sky is our sweet home, the planes are our first concern, and the girls - the girls afterwards,,,"

16. October song (2'35")

Our characters are not used to like October - as an announcement of the upcoming long-lasting ugly weather after the blessed summer. In the beginning of the 21st century, climate is changing (maybe under the influence of human factor). October ("with pleasant days and nights") can be nicer than the previous September or the unreliable summer, as well.. It gave me a reason, in finding a theme for one of the tunes, to write the „October song“, in favor of the unfairly underestimated part of the year.

The music is mostly composed of quavers which led to a torn up treble line and an impression of sharp, curt rhythm, different from routine. The producer found the singer whom he heard singing in a bar near his apartment and it showed that this one had an unusual style of vocal expression, with a distinct accent on sharply cut tones, as the guy was expected to do, so the producer offered him the "meteorological" composition.

Joining this kind of a composition with a, stylewise, rarely similar performer, made the recording team particularly satisfied with the contribution of this track to the entire album.

17. 'The lifetime of human being should be...' (8'')

18. Talking sound (4'44'')
(Original Instrumental Version)

Sentimentality towards my first ever written composition (while I was new in that business, I was composing only for instruments), explains why I used the same theme at the end of the album. The exquisite vocals and somewhat modified arrangement gave a special quality to this composition so it got the right to be the opening song. However, while the album was being recorded, I frequently listened to my first, instrumental version at home and was polishing it. I came to a conclusion that the original version also has value but of the other kind.

Why not to keep and demonstrate both versions? To my satisfaction, the experts finally agreed and joined the opinion that my offer is good. They said that my instrumental version sounds good and will have a soothing effect on the listener what could be desirable for the end of an album.