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Cultural isolation of Yugoslavia 1944–1960 and its impact on the sphere of music: the case of Serbia *

Kulturna izolacija Jugoslavije med letoma 1944 in 1960 ter njen vpliv na področje glasbe: primer Srbije **

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

V desetletjih po koncu druge svetovne vojne in vzpostavitvi komunističnega režima v Jugoslaviji je kulturna osamitev Srbijo prizadela na podoben način kot preostalih pet federativnih republik. Članek raziskuje značilne vidike tega obdobja, kot so stopnja glasbene izmenjave s tujim, t. i. zahodnim svetom, ustvarjalne odzive srbskih skladateljev vseh generacij na povojna avantgardna gibanja, gostujoče koncerte tujih glasbenikov in ansamblov v Srbiji ter mednarodne turneje srbskih glasbenikov, koncertne repertoarje in operne programe ter zapuščino tega obdobja.

In the decades after the end of WW2 and the establishment of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, cultural isolation affected Serbia in more or less the same way as the other five federal republics. This article examines aspects typical of that period, such as the level of musical exchange with the foreign, i.e. Western world; the creative responses of Serbian composers of all generations to post-war avant-garde movements; guest concerts of foreign musicians and ensembles in Serbia and the international tours of Serbian musicians; repertoires on concert and opera programs; and the legacy of the period.

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** Članek je bil napisan v okviru projekta številka 177004, Srbske identitete znotraj lokalnih in globalnih okvirjev: Tradicije, spremembe in izzivi (*Serbian Identities within Local and Global Frameworks: Traditions, Changes, Challenges*), ki ga je financiralo Ministrstvo za šolstvo, znanost in tehnološki razvoj Republike Srbije.

Among the worst aspects of the Cold War was the very low circulation intensity of people, goods, and ideas in the sphere of culture, that being an effect of radical restriction of different forms of communication between countries of the confronting blocs. In order to stop massive migration, the authorities of the Eastern bloc imposed extremely hard conditions for their citizens to travel to the West, as well as similar difficulties for those who wished to visit them from abroad. Many people risked their lives attempting to escape to the West and many were killed in those attempts. Cultural goods, including books and journals, also had to surmount great obstacles in crossing the borders. The freedom of artistic creation, already damaged by the enforcement of socialist realism, was additionally threatened by the absence of information and normal circulation (import) of newly produced works, musical and others.

The situation was not the same in all countries East of the Iron Curtain. In the field of new music, Poland made an astonishing breakthrough with the “Warsaw Autumn” festival, held for the first time in 1956 (10-20 October), only four months after the workers’ insurrection in Poznań, started because of economic hardship, and followed by unrest in some other towns, like Bydgoszcz. The first Warsaw festival finished only three days before the bloody demonstrations exploded on the streets of Budapest (23 October-14 November), those events having been decisive for György Ligeti to leave Hungary after less than two months.

The first fifteen post-war years in Yugoslavia were marked by different conflicts between the newly established communist regime and its many adversaries. Those were hard times in many respects, but thanks to the political leaders’ positioning Yugoslavia as belonging neither to the Eastern nor to the Western bloc, the complicated internal problems, such as those linked to economics and nationalisms, managed to be kept under control, at least temporarily. So, taking advantage of Cold War polarisations, and creating tolerable political relations with both communist and capitalist countries, Yugoslavia became a special case among the communist states. During the first three or four post-WW2 years Yugoslavia was a typical communist country, busy building the new state according to the political, social and cultural model of USSR. After the 1948 Stalin–Tito split over the level of autonomous actions allowed to the satellite communist countries, the situation in the country first deteriorated seriously, so that even the troops of the Eastern bloc threatened to invade the country. Then after a certain time relations with the West began to improve, bringing a certain relaxation of the overall tensions, staying that way for some additional time after the Soviet leader’s death in 1953. In those years that brought rapprochement with the Western countries, there was also a renewal of relations with the Soviet Union after 1955, so that the revolutionary strivings and excesses were calmed a little, leading to a longer period of balance aiming at achieving and keeping an equidistance in relations with the two powerful blocs of countries.

The period under consideration in this article – between 1944 and 1960 – was marked by the cultural (and political) isolation of Yugoslavia, especially during the first years, typical of dictatorial regimes wishing to keep control over all political, economic, social and cultural processes in the country, especially in times of inner and international fragility and efforts towards consolidation. The isolation however, as will

be seen, was not as strict and impermeable as was that in most communist countries at the time. The year 1960 is given as symbolically marking the end of the period of cultural isolation, at least in its strict form, because already in the next year an event took place that proved to be of decisive importance for the improvement of cultural exchange with the outer world: the first Biennale of contemporary music, an international festival that exists to this day, was organised in Zagreb, capital of the republic of Croatia, opening many doors to the most recent developments going on both in the West and in the East. Its founder, the Croatian composer Milko Kelemen, living in Germany, proved to be very capable and certainly audacious in his undertaking. After having spent several years in Western countries, where he studied with Olivier Messiaen (1954) and became associated with the Darmstadt courses, he found that Croatian (and Yugoslav) music was very much behind the modern processes, which motivated him to create something similar to the “Warsaw Autumn” festival.

It is necessary first to define in concrete terms what is understood by “cultural isolation” in the case of Serbia, bearing in mind that the situation was more or less the same in the other federal republics of the then Yugoslavia. Discussed aspects include the chances for composers and musicians to be informed about the most recent developments in the area of art music; their creative responses and opinions on post-war avant-garde; the possibility for musicians and composers to travel abroad, complete their education and have their music performed; the importance of guest concerts by foreign musicians and larger ensembles, performing both standard and new repertoires.

Creating in (not so splendid) isolation

During the whole period under discussion it was very difficult to travel abroad, to get passports and visas, especially for those who were not members of the Communist party and those who were regarded as enemies of the regime because of their political views, including known family or friendly relations with individuals from emigrant communities abroad. Very few young or not-so-young musicians who wished to complete their studies in other countries or attend special festivals, were able to accomplish that because the ruling policy was to allow as little contact with the foreign world as possible, out of fear of anti-regime activities. It was true indeed that after the Informburo crisis (1948) the country was threatened by invasion from the USSR and its allies and there was also a serious conflict over Trieste and the surrounding area. It is understandable that the government had too modest means for funding study travels and awarding financial aid for scholarship for students and other young musicians and composers. The situation was especially challenging for composers who had a natural curiosity for most recent developments in the outer (Western) world, including of course the avant-garde. It was almost impossible for them to know anything about contemporary trends, especially in the first post-war years, since only performing musicians had the chance to go on (rare) tours abroad at the time. So, in the period 1944-1950, when some young musicians in Cologne, Paris or Milano were busy studying mainly the works of pre-war “Modern Classics” – Stravinsky, Hindemith, Honegger and Bartók, some other

young people there being more intrigued by the possibilities of Schoenberg's and Webern's dodecaphony, Serbian composers who started their careers in the first post-war years (Vasilije Mokranjac, Enriko Josif, Vlastimir Peričić, Aleksandar Obradović, Dušan Radić, Dejan Despić, Vladan Radovanović) were mostly exposed to 18th- and 19th-century music, with the exception of the relatively frequently played music of Sergei Prokofiev. Bartók's and Stravinsky's works were neither performed at concerts nor heard on radio at that time, but scores of some of their compositions were, however, to be found in private possession and in certain bookshops. The then middle generation, composers who were in their thirties and forties at that time (Mihovil Logar, Mihailo Vukdragović, Dragutin Čolić, Ljubica Marić, Stanojlo Rajčić, Milan Ristić) had had the chance to study in Prague and other important European music centres before the war, so that they knew a lot about pre-war musical modernism and had also contributed to it with their works performed at international festivals and concerts during the inter-war period. Their radicalism had begun to loosen even before the war and after 1944 that process, influenced decisively by the imposition of Socialist Realism, resulted in their renouncing any kind of progressive musical thinking. Later, during the 1950s, they re-introduced some elements of their earlier bold styles based in Expressionism into their works and some of them managed to create a successful personal synthesis of old and new. After the war the oldest generation of Serbian composers, those born in the last decades of the 19th century (Petar Konjović, Stevan Hristić, Josip Slavenski who was a Croat living in Belgrade) did not trouble themselves with introducing anything novel into their works and they enjoyed high esteem of their contemporaries, mostly due to their earlier works.

As could be expected, the position of the youngest composers, some of them still students, was the most delicate of all. Two among them, Dušan Radić and Vladan Radovanović, were very much inclined to novelties, the former finding affinity with Stravinskian Neoclassicism, whereas the latter explored different paths, including dodecaphony and Neoclassicism. Both were students of Milenko Živković at the Music Academy, enjoying his open, though not too liberal, attitude towards new trends. Živković and his Croatian colleague Natko Devčić, were probably the first composers from Yugoslavia to attend a festival of modern music after WW2 – the ISCM festival held in Brussels in June 1950. It is very informative to read Živković's lengthy report about the music he heard there.³ The tone of the report is educational, so that it contains plenty of information on Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartók, who are "considered at the West as the three true founders of modern music"⁴, and also on a number of other relevant contemporary composers, so that a vast panorama of music of the three previous decades is presented. The text also gives an extensive survey of the pieces played at the festival with a part devoted to the relations between the ISCM and its Yugoslav section, which is particularly interesting because it throws light on the sense of exclusion felt by Serbian and Yugoslav composers during those years.

3 Milenko Živković, "Pogled na savremenu muziku Zapada - povodom XXIV festivala Međunarodnog društva za savremenu muziku u Briselu" [Glance at contemporary music of the West - a propos the XXIV Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Brussels], *Muzika* 5 (1951): 153–70.

4 *Ibid.*, 155.

Namely, the composers' societies of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia (three among the six Yugoslav republics) had sent some works for the festivals in 1946 and 1948, but not one piece was accepted for public performance. In the paper he read during the festival, Živković posed the question of whether the works from Yugoslavia had been rejected because they were regarded by the jury as not belonging to contemporary music, at least in its wider meaning, and he concluded that, according to the officially proclaimed aims of ISCM, there should be no attempts at privileging one specific music direction over the others.⁵

The number of musicians who managed to travel abroad started to rise little by little after 1950 and it seems that they all felt it was their duty to write reviews and their impressions about the concerts, operas, and ballet performances they had attended, as a way of filling the gaps in the knowledge of their fellow countrymen who were not lucky enough to get opportunities for similar experiences.

Oskar Danon, a prominent figure as a conductor, but also one of the leading communist ideologues, was the first to have been given the chance to attend important festivals abroad. In the season 1949/50 he heard several concerts in England, Austria and Italy, telling later about his impressions during the meetings in the Union of Composers of Serbia.⁶ Nikola Hercigonja wrote about the 1953 Salzburg music festival, publishing six texts in as many consecutive issues of the journal *Savremeni akordi* [Contemporary Chords].⁷ Two years later the promising young composer and musicologist Dragutin Gostuški also wrote about the Salzburg festival, in his characteristically witty way.⁸ Other writers reported about the 1955 Edinburgh festival, musical life in London, Vienna and the United States⁹. Writers of those articles usually made comments on the modern music they heard abroad, contributing thereby to debates on the issue of modernization of Serbian music. Dodecaphony was seen as one of the greatest challenges, since that method, which was observed negatively or at least with reserve by the great majority of Serbian composers of all generations, was seen as a symbol of new and too radical musical trends. Writing about concert life in Paris in 1953/54, Dragutin Čolić, the pre-war avant-gardist, noted down (without comment) that Schoenberg's 12-tone music seemed to have taken deep roots on French soil, whereas in the pre-war times it was not widespread there at all.¹⁰ The need to understand dodecaphony better is seen in the decision of the editors of the main musical journal *Zvuk* to publish a translated article about the opinions of young French composers on that method.¹¹ Milutin Radenković, who was in his mid-thirties at the time, had had the chance to

5 Ibid., 167.

6 Roksanđa Pejović, *Istorijski pregled razvoja Udruženja kompozitora Srbije* [Historical development of the Union of Composers of Serbia], (Belgrade: Udruženje kompozitora Srbije, 1965), 23.

7 Nikola Hercigonja, "Salburške impresije" [Salzburg impressions] I, *Savremeni akordi* 1 (1. March 1954): 8; II, SA 2 (1 April 1954):12-13; III, SA 3 (15 April 1954): 26-27; IV, SA 4 (1 May 1954): 40; V, SA 5 (15 May 1954): 52; VI, SA 6 (1 June 1954): 66-67.

8 Dragutin Gostuški, "Međunarodni sajam muzičke industrije. Utisci sa Salzburškog festivala 1955" [The international fair of musical industry. Impressions from Salzburg festival 1955], *Zvuk* 4-5 (1955): 183-86.

9 Đura Jakšić, "Festival u Edinburgu", *Zvuk* 4-5 (1955): 187; Jelica Popović, "Muzički život Londona" [Musical life in London], same issue: 202; Vlastimir Peričić, "Iz muzičkog života Beča" [From the musical life of Vienna], *Zvuk* 6 (1956): 247; Stanojlo Rajičić, "Muzički život Amerike" [The musical life of America], *Zvuk* 7-8 (1956): 322-29.

10 Dragutin Čolić, "Koncertni život Pariza" [Concert life in Paris], *Savremeni akordi* 4 (1 May 1954): 32-3.

11 An, "Mladi francuski kompozitori o dodekafoniji" [Young French composers on dodecaphony], *Zvuk* 2-3 (1955): 113.

enjoy a three-month stay in Paris in 1955/56 and was able to listen to concerts given at the International rostrum of composers. He was far from attracted by the novelties he could hear in *Three Little Liturgies* by Olivier Messiaen which he found “outlandish and incomprehensible” and Henri Pousseur’s dodecaphonic Quintet dedicated to Anton Webern was for him “almost unbearable to listen to; too fragmented and harsh sounding, it did not compensate those defects by Webernian wit and subtlety”.¹² On the other hand, Stana Đurić-Klajn, a musicologist who had been among the promoters of Socialist Realism in the first post-war years, and was around 50 when she came to the first “Warsaw Autumn” festival in 1956, reacted positively to many radical novelties that could be heard at those concerts:

*If we came to that festival convinced that we would listen to works composed according to a uniform recipe as was prescribed in the countries behind the eastern border, even fearing that mass songs would be an important part of the program, then we were very, very pleasantly surprised not only by the progressiveness and originality in every aspect of Polish music, but also by the basic idea of the festival. I asked some composers how they were able to create such works under the conditions existing until then in their country. I received an almost unanimous answer that they worked and wrote according to their own views, inclinations and inner artistic impulses, independently from outside factors.*¹³

In the same issue of *Zvuk*, an article on the 11th Summer course in Darmstadt was published, informing readers about the presence of two young composers from Belgrade and Zagreb – Vlastimir Peričić, who was neither then nor later inclined to serialism, and Milko Kelemen, who would found the Music biennale of contemporary music in Zagreb five years later.¹⁴ It is a pity that Enriko Josif, who had the possibility to attend the festival of the ISCM held in Rome in 1959, did not write an article about what he had heard there, but we know that he gave a lecture on the concerts and played some music recorded on tapes he had brought home. The authors of those works were Pierre Boulez, Yoritsune Matsudaira, B.A Zimmermann, Petrassi, Henze, Messiaen¹⁵, who were representative enough for the main musical currents of the times, so that that presentation was very useful for the Serbian composers. Of course, it would have been much better if they had had the possibility to see and study the scores, but it was still quite difficult then to have them even abroad, as not many new works were published.

On rare occasions the Union of Composers of Serbia had the opportunity to host composers from abroad, which certainly contributed to improving contacts with the outside world. Germaine Tailleferre gave a lecture on contemporary French music (1953/54), Karel Salomon on Israeli music (1956), music critic Allen Hughes on American music (1957), and Zbigniew Wiśniewski from Poland on his own electronic works (1958). Everett Helm, an American composer and musicologist who was appointed

12 Milutin Radenković, “Tri meseca u muzičkom Parizu” [Three months in musical Paris], *Zvuk* 7–8 (1956): 333.

13 Stana Đurić-Klajn, “Dani muzike u Warszawii” [Music days in Warsaw], *Zvuk* 9–10 (1957): 403.

14 Janko Grilc, “Nova muzika u Darmstadtu” [New music in Darmstadt], *Zvuk* 9–10 (1957): 411–16.

15 Pejović, *Istorijski pregled*, 26.

Music Officer for the Music and Theater Branch of the U.S. Military Government in occupied Germany in 1948, came to Yugoslavia in 1959 and later, giving lectures and getting to know Yugoslav music. He published some articles on Yugoslav music in domestic and foreign periodicals.¹⁶

Changing views on modern music

Awareness that radical new events were occurring in the field of post-war avant-garde music grew steadily among Serbian composers during the 1950s, but scarce and selective information coming from abroad was not sufficient, of course. How unprepared the music professionals still were around the middle of that decade can be shown in the example of the reception of the chamber piece *Spisak* [The List], 1954, by Dušan Radić, then student of composition in the class of Milenko Živković. Stylistically close to pre-war Stravinskian Neoclassicism, the piece was first excessively praised for its boldness and freshness of expression, then sharply criticized in the musical press for its aggressive modernism. Luckily, all that eventually had a positive effect on the young composer's career and that same piece of his was selected by the Union of Serbian composers to be played at the 1956 ISCM festival in Stockholm. It is interesting that later Radić did not feel inclined towards adopting post-war avant-garde techniques, such as serialism or sound mass, although he had the opportunity to study with Milhaud and Messiaen in Paris in 1957/58 and to be in direct contact with the then most recent trends. Until the early 1960s, with the exception of Vladan Radovanović, three years Radić's junior, there were no Serbian composers ready to join the most radical movements within the avant-garde. Radovanović was a multi-talented young composer (b. 1932), passionately striving to contribute to new music, and certainly most severely handicapped by being isolated from contemporary developments in the world of music. Even before beginning his music studies at the Belgrade Music Academy, he wrote a String Quartet (1950) with one freely dodecaphonic movement. Later he produced works that resonated strangely, even coincided with the works of some famous composers abroad, about whose music he could only have had vague information. It cannot be denied that Radovanović could have heard colleagues' impressions about music they heard on their travels abroad, but nevertheless information like that cannot be a substitute for thorough knowledge about a technique or method. Two among his works demonstrate how his way of musical thinking was close to those in avant-garde circles. In 1955-56 he wrote *Chorals*, extremely short pieces for unspecified instruments, which demonstrate a radical minimalist reduction, and in 1960 he started to compose a complex radiophonic work *Sphaeroön* (finishing it in 1964), based on a serial method of his own which he had developed in the late 1950s. The auditive effect of that work is similar to that of sound mass music composed in those same years by Ligeti, Lutosławski, and Penderecki among others, but the methods of obtaining those results differ in certain

¹⁶ Everett Helm, "Yugoslavia, new musical world", *Musical America* (February 1960): 32, 172; E. Helm, "Yugoslavia meets the Moderns", *Daily Telegraph* (3 June 1961). Dragutin Gostuški wrote a short text involving Helm in: "Neposluženi gost" [The unserved guest], *Zvuk* 30 (1959): 527-28.

important points.¹⁷ So, we could only imagine what course Radovanović's career would have taken if he had been able to have his music performed in Darmstadt or Paris during the 1950s. It is true that the foreign musicians could hear his works at the Zagreb biennale, starting from the early 1960s, but the situation was already different then and many other composers had by then produced various sound mass works.

Radovanović's strivings towards novel thinking not only in the field of music, but also in literature, visual arts and multimedia, were regarded as bizarre during his beginnings in the 1950s and he had very few possibilities to have his music performed. Composers who were several years older, such as Dragutin Gostuški and Dušan Kostić, well-known also as music critics, always wrote negatively and/or ironically about the new tendencies.¹⁸ In a typical text of that kind Gostuški stated that

*dodecaphony is beginning to appear in our country, either as a natural aspiration towards enrichment of musical expression (as some think) or as an attempt towards forced solving of inner creative crisis (as I think). Be it as it is, electronic (or concrete) music in our country is indirectly forbidden because practically there are no conditions for its creating. If dodecaphony is one step towards the contemporary, electronic music is at least two steps, and it seems so, it has bigger perspectives and more useful applications. If music has to be mechanised, it is really better then that it becomes mechanical at once. [...] Better on time, as long as there is still time.*¹⁹

The modernity level of Serbian, as well as of that of Yugoslav music as a whole, was debated on a number of occasions during the 1950s. It should not surprise us that around 1955 there were still composers who tried to avoid any real confrontation with modern or avant-garde currents and who were strictly opposed to introducing new techniques. Basically, they believed that tonal music still offered many possibilities to be explored. In those years one could still hear calls for continuing the production of "mass songs" (sung on many occasions) because "not all means for making them become popular, which is very much in demand nowadays, have been tried."²⁰ Although modernising music was seen as a positive aim, warnings could still be heard that "the technically new" should not become "an aim for itself"²¹, meaning that "technique", i.e. dodecaphony, serialism, composing with clusters, etc. ought to be combined with traditional techniques, in order to preserve "human content". In an account of the creative results in the field of composition at the end of the first post-war decade, the composer Mihovil Logar and his former student Aleksandar Obradović praised the freedom of artistic creation, reminding readers however that the new tendencies "can sometimes contain germs of its negation".²² Argumentation of those who opted for

17 See more in: Melita Milin, "Vokalnoinstrumentalna muzika Vladana Radovanovića" [Vladan Radovanović's vocal-instrumental music], in *Stvaralaštvo Vladana Radovanovića*, ed. Vladan Radovanović (Belgrade: Univerzitet umetnosti, 2013), 11–22.

18 See for instance: Dragutin Gostuški, "Šta sam video u Poljskoj" [What I saw in Poland], *Zvuk* 21–23 (1958): 51–62.

19 Dragutin Gostuški, "Zašto da nemamo?" [Why not to have it?], *Zvuk* 26–27 (1959): 297–8.

20 "Posleratno muzičko stvaralaštvo u Jugoslaviji. Materijal sa Konferencije Saveza kompozitora Jugoslavije, održane na Bledu 26–28 decembra 1956" [The post-war music in Yugoslavia. Papers from the Conference of the Union of composers of Yugoslavia, held in Bled 26–28 December 1956], *Zvuk* 11–12 (1957): 3.

21 *Ibid.*, 13.

22 *Ibid.*

modernisation was based on observation on the “invisible stimulating value of avant-garde as a whole”²³, and on the necessity of building relations with the music of other countries “because our country is not an isolated one that could create something completely of its own, organically unrelated to music of other countries [...]”.²⁴ Voices could also be heard that drew attention to the fact that the repertoires of symphonic and chamber music in Serbia, for instance, were not large enough, and that under such circumstances it was more important for our musical culture to promote works that were technically well written, that were composed professionally in all aspects, no matter how modern they were: according to those musicians, quality was to be valued higher than language, i.e. style.²⁵ The issue of dilettantism was indeed something that still demanded discussion and it did throw a different light on the debates on modernisation of Serbian music. It was a fact, however, that there were several young composers, born around 1930, who were very gifted, excellent professionals and curious to explore new spaces of sound, and it was them who after 1960 managed to achieve a level of modernity equal to that in the West.

Although one could assume that by 1960 spirits had calmed down concerning the use of dodecaphony and different serial methods, it was not really the case, at least in the circles of traditionally oriented composers. Dodecaphony was thus the central and most vehemently discussed issue at the II meeting of the Union of composers of Yugoslavia, held on 24-26 June 1960 in Belgrade. Those who like M. Vukdragović opposed dodecaphony claimed that it had become unavoidable when our music is discussed in the Western context – a dogma really.²⁶ At the same meeting Milko Kelemen, who by that time had certainly got permission to organise the Zagreb Biennale of contemporary music (which was to be held less than a year later), gave a passionate speech in favour of dodecaphony and serialism. According to him, our (i.e. Yugoslav) composers had too many prejudices concerning dodecaphony and fear that their works based on that method would not get to be performed.²⁷ It should be accepted, Kelemen also claimed, that the appearance of dodecaphony was as necessary from the historical and dialectical point of view, as had been the transition from Slavery to Feudalism. He also thought it useful to stress that although many were convinced that there were no specific national features in serial works, it was his strong belief that there were such characteristics in the works such as Luigi Nono’s *Canto sospeso* and Stockhausen’s *Gruppen*.²⁸

Repertoires and cultural exchange

In the first post-war years, until the break with the Soviet Union, an important place on concert and opera repertoires was held by Russian and Soviet music, and to a lesser

23 Ibid., 82 (words of Enriko Josif during the discussion).

24 Ibid., 80 (words of Dragotin Cvetko during the discussion).

25 Ibid., 88–89 (words of Stanojlo Rajičić).

26 “Sa II diskusionog sastanka Saveza kompozitora Jugoslavije. Kompozitori o stvaralačkim problemima” [From the II meeting of the Union of composers of Yugoslavia. Composers on creative problems], *Zvuk* 39–40 (1960): 469.

27 Ibid., 470.

28 Ibid., 471.

degree by works of composers from other East-European countries. That orientation having been discontinued rather abruptly after 1948, concert programmes acquired features of standard type, with a strong prevalence of 19th-century works, and rare performances of works composed after WW1. Guest concerts and opera performances from other Yugoslav cities, Zagreb and Ljubljana, added diversity to the musical life of Belgrade, but the pieces that were brought also belonged mostly to standard repertoires. For that reason it is worth mentioning at least a few of those that were composed in more recent times and that could be seen and heard in those years, such as the opera *The Consul* by Gian Carlo Menotti (repertoire of the National Theatre Belgrade, premiered in 1953), Stravinsky's ballet *Orpheus* (NTB, 1953), and Bartók's ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* (NTB, 1957). The situation was similar with the other genres: works such as Paul Hindemith's *Canticle of Hope* (Belgrade Philharmonic, 1954) and Arthur Honegger's *King David* (Belgrade Philharmonic, 1954) and *Jeanne d'Arc au bucher* (Belgrade Philharmonic, 1956), Stravinsky's *Wedding* (Radio Belgrade chamber orchestra and choir, 1957) were the most modern works performed before 1960. It should be born in mind that the reasons for the absence of more modern music at concerts and on opera stages was not only to be found in the dominant conservative taste of the cultural officials and their fear of extravagant novelties coming from the West, but probably also in the high prices required for hiring the score materials. It could be probably assumed that the domestic concert public was not particularly interested in most modern music, so that it seems that there were no special pressure put on the organizers of musical life to provide such works. It was different with the composers, at least some of them, which has already been discussed.

As if to counterbalance such scarcity of contemporary and novel music in concert halls and opera houses, the organizers of musical life in Belgrade did their best to get outstanding international musicians as guests. Among these great personalities were the cellist Enrico Mainardi (1949), the pianist Paul Baumgartner (1950); the violinist Váša Příhoda (1952), the pianist Nikolai Orlov (1952); the cellist Pierre Fournier (1953), chamber orchestra *Virtuosi di Roma* (1955); the pianist Aldo Ciccolini (1955); the violinists Yehudi Menuhin and Henryk Szeryng, the pianist Claudio Arrau, the tenor Peter Pears with Benjamin Britten at the piano (1956); the violinist David Oistrakh (1958)...

Among the most memorable guest events was the performance of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* in Belgrade (also in Zagreb) in 1954. The three-month tour of the Blevin Davis and Robert Breen production, with Leontyne Price and Wiliam Warfield, projected as a tool of cultural diplomacy, under the auspices of Eisenhower's Emergency Fund, took the performance also to Egypt, Israel, Italy, Greece, Morocco and Spain.²⁹ According to writers such as Frances Stonor Saunders, guest concerts by Afro-Americans, including jazz musicians, were organised with the main aim of proving that they were a respected part of the American culture. "The great black folk opera" *Porgy and Bess* made long tours that lasted more than a decade.³⁰ It could be added here that jazz

29 Naima Prevots, "Dance and the Cold War Exports to Latin America", *ReVista, Harvard Review of Latin America*, Fall 2007. <http://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/dance-and-cold-war>

30 Frances Stonor Saunders, *Hladni rat u kulturi. CIA u svetu umetnosti i književnosti [Frances Stonor Saunders, Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, New York: Granta 1999), (Belgrade: Dosije Studio 2013), 248–49.

music had been very popular in Serbia since pre-war times and that the communist cultural politicians were very negative towards it, but decided eventually to tolerate it. Jazz music was given relatively much time on Radio programs, which was observed with surprise by the CIA.³¹ There were crowds at the concert of the Glenn Miller orchestra in Belgrade in 1957 and the same happened at all following jazz concerts.

Among especially important musical events of those years should be mentioned the concert of the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein. It took place in the largest hall in Belgrade at the time, Dom sindikata, on 23 September 1959. Three American works were performed in the first part of the concert – Samuel Barber's *Second Essay* for orchestra, Charles Ives' *Unanswered question*, and Bernstein's Second Symphony for piano and orchestra ("The Age of Anxiety"), and after the break fragments from Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*.³² The concert was a part of a big European tour that included the USSR, Finland, Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain and some other countries. The tour had great success and certainly contributed to spreading American influence in that part of the world. It is a known fact today that after the success of the *Porgy and Bess* international tour in 1952, the American president Eisenhower initiated the Emergency Fund for International Affairs, which provided great amounts of money to support similar tours for around sixty individuals and musical ensembles, the New York Philharmonic with Leonard Bernstein being one of them.³³

If we turn our eyes to Serbian musical ensembles and individual musicians going on tours abroad during those same years, we shall notice that before 1950 those tours were very rare and, with few exceptions, held only in East-European countries. Apart from the tour of the Radio Belgrade Choir in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (1947) and some tours of folklore ensembles, all the other performers were individual musicians, singers, conductors and instrumentalists.³⁴ Both the quantity and quality of the performers began to rise later, the quantity never to achieve a really significant number.

The first post-war tour of the Belgrade Ballet (belonging to the National Theatre) took place as early as in May 1946. Together with the Choir and Folk sections of the Yugoslav Army Ensemble, it gave performances in France, Belgium and Switzerland. The ballet dancer Vera Kostić recalls that the program consisted of folk dances and probably also stylised folk dance numbers in the opera *Ero s onoga svijeta* by the Croatian composer Jakov Gotovac.³⁵ Although there were – of course – people accompanying the ensembles who were responsible for discipline, good behaviour and preventing the artists from staying in the West, two young colleagues managed to escape: Nada Arandžević and Milorad Mišković, who later made a very successful career in France.³⁶

31 Momčilo Pavlović, ed., *Dokumenta CIA o Jugoslaviji 1948-1983* [CIA Documents about Yugoslavia 1948-1983], (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Fakultet bezbednosti and Službeni glasnik, 2009), 113.

32 The New York Philharmonic gave also a concert in Zagreb on the next day, with only one American work on the program (Walter Piston's Concerto for orchestra).

33 David G. Tompkins, "Music", in: Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War* (Santa Barbara CA: ABC-CLIO/Greenwood, 2007), 607.

34 "Hronika muzičkog života. Naši umetnici u inostranstvu" [Chronicle of musical life. Our artists abroad], *Muzika* 1 (1948): 162-63.

35 Vera Kostić, *Senke koje sjaje* [Shining Shadows], (Belgrade: Muzej pozorišne umetnosti, 1998), 149.

36 Ibid.

Also successful, but much shorter was the international career of Serbian tenor Lazar Jovanović who decided to stay in the West (Zurich) during a tour, later moving to Italy.³⁷ In his Belgrade period he had accidentally been involved in a political scandal that seems quite bizarre, even for the years under discussion, but had been saved from oblivion by an eyewitness, Vinko Šale.³⁸

In those first post-war years the tours of folk ensembles were almost the only artistic “export” from Serbia. The risk of political incidents was always present, which was expressed for instance in a report sent to the Ministry of culture of Serbia after the tour of the State ensemble of folk dances of Serbia in Switzerland in 1950. There one can read that “the discipline of the Ensemble was exemplary and (that) the members (of the Ensemble) reacted correctly to certain provocations of political emigrants.”³⁹ In the mid-fifties more ambitious international tours were organised: the Belgrade Opera, Ballet and the Belgrade Philharmonic were eager to present their best achievements to Western audiences. In 1954 the Opera’s concert performances of *Boris Godunov* had been very well received by both the public and critics in Basel, Zurich and Geneva.⁴⁰ The next year the Belgrade Opera gave complete, stage performances of that same opera, also of *Hovanshchina* and *Prince Igor* in Wiesbaden, then in Paris, etc.⁴¹ The success of the Ballet ensemble of the National Theatre in Belgrade was maybe even more valuable, as it performed a Serbian ballet, *The Legend of Ohrid* by Stevan Hristić (still alive at the time) on its tours to Edinburgh (1951), Athens (1952), Wiesbaden, Geneva, Zurich, Salzburg (1953), and so on.⁴²

Although the cultural isolation in post-war Serbia / Yugoslavia did not last very long, it affected the development of music as art and as social practice, mainly by delaying the confrontation with contemporary processes in international music centres for more than a decade. Before WW2 Serbian composers had, for more than a century, ambitiously worked on becoming part of the main European developments, achieving in the course some valuable artistic results. The discontinuation caused by WW2 and the ensuing imposition of the communist system brought a setback that needed fifteen years and more to normalise. There were, however, some positive effects of that situation, which should be looked for in the orientation among composers to improving their compositional skills and in the heightened importance of music in society. As regards the former, it should not be forgotten that Belgrade, capital of Serbia and Yugoslavia, founded its first Academy of Music as late as in 1937, so that all young people wishing to study music had to go abroad, usually to Czech and German cities.

37 See: Nadežda Mosusova, “Giuseppe Verdi among the Serbs: Slav Soul and Italian Blood”, in *Verdi Reception*, eds. Lorenzo Frassa and Michela Niccolai (Brepols: Turnhout, 2013), 91.

38 Vinko Šale, *Smejsje, bajaco* [Ridi, baiazzo], (Belgrade: Litera, 1990), 39-40. According to Šale, opera fans having applauded much louder and longer Lazar Jovanović than the famous Zinka Kunc Milanov at a performance of Tosca in the Belgrade National Theatre in 1947, they were seen as anti-regime protesters (because Kunc-Milanov’s husband was a high-ranking official) and as such sent into prison.

39 Archives of Serbia, Belgrade: G 187, f. 1.

40 Vladimir Jovanović, *Opera Narodnog pozorišta u Beogradu. Inostrana gostovanja u XX veku* [Opera of the National Theatre in Belgrade. International tours in the XXth century], (Belgrade: Altera, 2010), 36-46.

41 Ibid.

42 Anika Radošević, *O scenskim izvođenjima Ohridske legende* [On stage performances of The Legend of Ohrid], typescript text, Institute of Musicology, Belgrade, 1986, 12.

Some of those students having had the possibility to learn composition rather liberally, favouring the most modern directions – such as the composers of the so-called “Prague group” in the interwar period. After the war, when they were expected to compose in a more traditional way, they realised that they lacked certain knowledge, so they began to study the music of the past in more depth. Works that were composed with such new experiences evidently grew in quality, to which should be added positive effects on the teaching level at the compositional classes at the Music Academy, students being the beneficiaries. The then youngest generation of composers was also the one that suffered the most from lack of exchange with the Western countries. If we turn to the issue of propagating and supporting art music, its institutions, concert, opera and ballet performances, the first post-war decades were really successful as regards both the quantity and quality of the results. Like all the other state socialist countries, Yugoslavia invested comparatively high sums of money into spreading music and other arts, at the same time keeping control over all the included activities.

After 1960 the country was steadily becoming more open and more exposed to foreign influences. The fields of literature, theatre and film production being in the sphere of interest of relatively large publics, and therefore potentially dangerous for the regime when they thematised sensitive social and political problems, they continued to be supervised by cultural officials. On the other hand, composers and performers of (art) music could work without being disturbed, even when they started producing works of avant-garde character, because they never ventured into the area of political subversion, so there are no records of any problems having existed between composers and musicians with the officials. Among the musical works created by Serbian composers of the post-1960 period there have been a considerable number of remarkable achievements, easily comparable with those produced by well-known composers and performed at international festivals of contemporary music. The previous period 1944-1960 was certainly less fruitful but nevertheless it did contribute to the national treasure of masterworks, providing a much-needed continuity with the pre-war times.

POVZETEK

Kulturna osamitev v povojni Srbiji/Jugoslaviji ni trajala zelo dolgo, vendar je kljub temu vplivala na razvoj glasbe kot umetnosti in družbene prakse, predvsem tako, da je za več kot desetletje odložila srečanje s sodobnimi tokovi v mednarodnih glasbenih centrih. Kulturna osamitev Jugoslavije se je začela leta 1944 kot posledica vzpostavitve komunističnega režima. Do leta 1948 je bila železna zavesa nepropustna, tako kot v drugih državah komunističnega bloka, toda razdor Stalina in Tita je poleg resne politične krize prinesel tudi obete postopnega odpiranja proti Zahodu. Izbira letnice 1960, ki tu predstavlja

simboličen konec obdobja kulturne osamitve vsaj v njeni najstrožji obliki, bi lahko bila sporna. Razloge za to najdemo v dogodku, ki se je zgodil naslednjega leta in je odločilno vplival na izboljšanje kulturne izmenjave z zunanjim svetom: prvi Bienale sodobne glasbe v Zagrebu, ki je odprl mnoga vrata novostim z Zahoda in Vzhoda. Članek proučuje ustvarjalne odzive srbskih skladateljev vseh generacij na izzive modernizacije v izbranem časovnem obdobju, prav tako pa se posveča tudi repertoarjem, s katerimi so se srečali glasbeniki in širša publika, tudi tistim, ki so bili predstavljeni na gostujočih koncertih ter opernih in baletnih predstavah pomembnih tujih glasbenikov in ansamblov.