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## **Reger's Student Milenko Paunović: A lonely and silent voice from the 'musical periphery'<sup>1</sup>**

Marking the centenary of the death of Max Reger as an occasion for multiple (re)evaluations of the composer's work and its output to the music of the German-speaking world and beyond presents an opportunity to direct the focus onto some new aspects of the composer's and his environment's connections to the broader musical contexts of his time. My article is related to one of Reger's numerous students, the Serbian composer Milenko Paunović (1889–1924), who was almost unknown, even in local music and musicology, until recent times.

Some of my dozen studies about Paunović will be referred later in this text. I will present some data which, although small in number, is valuable to the investigation of Reger's and other Leipzig Conservatoire educator's work. However, my main aim is to discuss some of Paunović's works in order to stress his connection to German-based compositional practice, to which he has been tied from his Leipzig studies.

The given title of my paper also raises many questions related to the so-called peripheries of music, a complex issue that can be touched here only in several brief aspects. It is clear that each environment has its own peculiarities, as well as the fact that notions of the centre and the periphery denote neither monolithic nor mutually opposing categories. However, their relationship is constructed due to the idea of progress, which, in spite of numerous critical studies, is still present in the writings and the minds of many scholars.

My aim here is to stress only one case from Serbian music, allowing for a comparison with the experiences of other, to a greater or lesser extent, related musical contexts. At the same time, debatable opinions with regard to the practices of the periphery, viewed as delayed processes in relation to the developed musical centres of Europe, have been taken into consideration. With respect to Serbian music, such views could be legitimate, by virtue of many facts, such as the long-term lack of professional musical

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forces, the later establishment of music institutions in the fields of education, symphonic and operatic productions or even the physiognomy of the local creative work itself which, only from the beginning of the twentieth century, started to include some operatic, symphonic and other musical forms of a larger format. The very notion of delay, however, has limited research value as it merely suggests an anachronism according to which the periphery lives in some other time, even when it is concurrent with the regions that were regarded as central and, thus, further reinforces the stereotypes of a “narrower” Europe, confirming its superiority rather than indicating the very nature of the subject of the study.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, preferable to start from the viewpoint that the “development strategies” of one society depend on the context in which they operate and, as such, are orientated “towards the existing, not the assumed circumstances.”<sup>3</sup>

From the late nineteenth and early twentieth century onwards, the Serbian capital Belgrade was affected by a multitude of processes of modernisation and urbanisation. However, the complex political and socio-economic circumstances, characteristic of the whole of Serbia, continuously hindered the capital. Social stratification within the country was not rapid enough, the merging of entrepreneurs with large capital was negligible, and forms of civil association, which were branching rapidly from the second half of the nineteenth century, emerged only in a few urban areas and did not possess enough strength to restrict the power of the state so as to significantly affect the agrarian society. The state was the sole institution that could take significant action in terms of modernisation, which determined the character of the intellectual and economic elite, mostly tied to the civil service.<sup>4</sup>

In such circumstances, music was on the fringe of official cultural policy, with modest professional, organisational and material conditions structuring its physiognomy. The increasing number of composers who studied

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<sup>2</sup>This issue is discussed in: Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism”, in: *Slavic Review* 64/1 (2005), pp. 140–164.

<sup>3</sup>Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Socijalna istorija Srbije* [Social History of Serbia] (= Clio), Belgrade 2004, p. 429.

<sup>4</sup>Dubravka Stojanović, “Ulje na vodi: politika i društvo u modernoj istoriji Srbije” [Oil on the Water: Politics and Society in Modern History of Serbia], in: Ljubodrag Dimić, Miroslav Jovanović and Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija 1804–2004: tri viđenja ili poziv na dijalog* [Serbia 1804–2004: Three Points of View or Dialogue Invitation] (= Udruženje za društvenu istoriju), Belgrade 2009, pp. 115–148.

abroad, mostly in the musical centres of central Europe, such as Prague, Vienna, Munich, and Leipzig, faced narrowed opportunities for concerts and other forms of self-presentation, so that many of their works remained unperformed or as unprinted manuscripts. Additionally, the local musical hierarchies and unequal access to the resources of creative presentation were also in starting to be formed. The circle of leading musical individuals originated from the Serbian Music School in Belgrade (1899), or was connected with it at a certain period in time. Together with Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856–1914), who was considered the “father” of national music, they represented the core of the emerging musical elite. Among them were Stanislav Binički (1872–1942) and Petar Krstić (1877–1957) as well as representatives of the younger generation, and among them Petar Konjović (1883–1970), Miloje Milojević (1884–1946), and Stevan Hristić (1885–1958) would perform a leading role music before, and especially after the First World War. Their dominant positions in the field of musical education, in the existing and the newly-institutionalised practices of performance, and in the domain of writing on music, enabled them to be the most influential figures in the regulation of the main aesthetic standards in a local musical context.

Some composers whose creative and aesthetic output was comparable to those of the dominant circle were, however, highly marginalised. Probably the most noticeable case was that of Milenko Paunović, who acted in many ways as a lonely and silent voice on the edge of dominant circle of the Serbian musical elite, not only as a marginal but also as a unique composer and writer. He was almost the sole representative who was inclined toward the German-based, Wagnerian and Nietzschean heritage in his surroundings. In that context, his two musical dramas (*Divina Tragedia*, 1912 and *Čengić-Aga*, 1923) and his two Yugoslav symphonies (1914–1920; 1924) were the most important works of his opus. These works referred also to his own stage dramas that were inspired by the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, especially his criticism of Christianity, the idea of the eternal recurrence of the same and the search for an alternative to repressive moral codes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Among my other texts about Paunović’s literary and musical works see the one published in German: Biljana Milanović, “Die schöpferische Identität des Komponisten und Schriftstellers Milenko Paunović im Beziehungskontext zur deutschen Tradition”, in: *Serben und Deutsche im 20. Jahrhundert – im Schatten offizieller Politik*, ed. by Gabriella Schubert, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2015, S. 209–218. For overviews

Paunović's main works were completely unknown in Belgrade during his lifetime, and the majority of them remained forgotten until recent times. Paunović's isolation had to do, firstly, with the fact that his short-lived career was intersected by his employment in the provinces of the then Austro-Hungary and Serbia, and his joining the Serbian army's withdrawal through Albania and his participation on the Thessaloniki front line. He spent only the last four years of his abruptly interrupted life in Belgrade, a period of time that was not long enough for him to incorporate himself into the main structures of Serbian musical culture.<sup>6</sup> The second reason for his isolation was related to his hypersensitive and also anarchic psychological character, which made him unable to adapt to a social and artistic ambience. This was an additional aggravating circumstance for Paunović to enter into the difficult to penetrate core of the dominant elite. Such a context was discernible from his correspondence and other archive material that provided information on his personality. Together with the analysis of his musical and literary works, this information enables the conclusion that his artistic creations represent an autobiography of sorts.<sup>7</sup>

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of opera and musical dramas and symphonies in Serbia in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as Paunović's unique place in the contexts of both genres see: Biljana Milanović, "Serbian Musical Theatre from the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century until World War II" and "Features of the Serbian Symphony in the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", in: *Serbian and Greek Art Music A Patch to Western Music History*, ed. by Katy Romanou (= Intellect Books & University of Chicago Press), Bristol/Chicago 2009, pp. 15–32 and pp. 55–67.

<sup>6</sup>Born in Šajkaš, near Novi Sad, Paunović attended the Serbian Orthodox Great Grammar School in Novi Sad (1900–1908), when he started his violin classes with Josip Čermak and Isidor Bajić. In 1908–1909, he was a final year student of violin at the Conservatoire in Prague, but he interrupted them to study composition with Max Reger in Leipzig (1909–1911), whilst also attending Hugo Riemann's lectures at the University. Paunović's short-term employment as a choir conductor in Ruma and Novi Sad (1913) and as a teacher of music in the Male Teaching College in Jagodina (1914; 1918–1920) preceded his positions in Belgrade, where he worked as an assistant conductor of the Royal Guard Orchestra (1921–1924), a professor of Harmony and History in the *Stanković* Music School (1921–1922) and a choir conductor of the Academic Choral Society *Obilić* (1923). He died on October 1 1924, from the effects of poisoning, in unclear circumstances.

<sup>7</sup>About Paunović's correspondence and other written sources that were kept in the Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA and in the Archive of Serbia, and the autobiographical base of his opus see: Biljana Milanović, "Značaj i uloga prepiske u osvetljavanju ličnosti i stvaralaštva Milenka Paunovića" [The Importance and Role of Correspondence in Researching the Personality and Work of Milenko Paunović], in: *Muzikologija* 2 (2002), pp. 27–55.

It seems that the complicated and barely adaptable personality of Paunović had an effect on his studies as well. Although information regarding his Leipzig years is sparse, there is written evidence that Paunović was in a very friendly relationship with Reger at the beginning of his stay in the German musical centre.<sup>8</sup> Having recognised the talent of Paunović, Reger used to call him to his house, where they would perform additional work. However, they gradually drifted apart and, in the end, Reger refused to evaluate the work of his student.<sup>9</sup> In the official testimony, which confirms Paunović's two-years attendance of studies at the Conservatoire, Reger wrote: "The compositional craft of Mr. Paunović derogates so much from what I mean by music that I consider I do not have the right to evaluate his compositions."<sup>10</sup>

It is known that Reger was a distinguished pedagogue and a complex person as well. His lectures were individual, but all his students attended them as passive listeners. He requested diligence and also criticised those who did not behave according to his demands. Reger especially insisted on exercises in traditional musical forms and the technique of polyphony, and a student could receive his permission to compose independently only after careful training.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Paunović displayed a kind of autonomy that did not fit Reger's strict educational standards. In that time he had already finished his operas *Hajduk Veljko* [Haiduk Veljko] and *Smrt Majke Jugovića* [Death of the Jugović's Mother] and started to compose his musical drama *Divina tragoedia*. Additionally, if he was free to treat traditional forms in the manner of his nonstandard *Fugue* for piano, which probably dated from

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<sup>8</sup>Jelena Paunović, *A life story of the family Paunović*, manuscript, Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA, An 849. This extensive manuscript was written by Paunović's younger sister, a pianist, who studied at the Conservatoire in Prague, in the Meisterklasse of Karel Hoffmeister. Some sources mentioned Paunović's attendance of Hugo Riemann's lectures at the University as well (see, for example, Hansachim Schiller, "Zur internationalen Ausstrahlung des Leipziger Konservatoriums", in: *Hochschule für Musik Leipzig gegründet als Conservatorium der Musik (1843–1968)*, ed. by Martin Wehnert, Johannes Forner, Hansachim Schiller, Leipzig: Selbstverlag der Hochschule 1968, p. 98), but there was any information on his contacts with Riemann.

<sup>9</sup>Paunović, *A life story of the family Paunović* (see note 8).

<sup>10</sup>"Lehrer-Zeugnis für Milenko Paunović, Königliches Konservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig, 20. Juli 1911.", Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA, An 858. (See enclosure.)

<sup>11</sup>Irene und Gunter Hempel, *Musikstadt Leipzig*, Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik 1979, pp. 101–102.

his student years, it becomes clear that his independence would not have met with the approval of his professor.

Paunović also proved himself to be an undisciplined student when it came to instrumentation lessons. It seems that he was not satisfied with what he could learn from R. Hofmann, since the mentioned Conservatoire testimony shows that he only attended his classes irregularly. However, judging by the same document, Paunović could more easily accept Stephan Krehl's lessons of counterpoint and fugue, who remarked on his talent and individuality but also his ability "to adjust to regular procedure of learning", and concluded that Paunović "with his great diligence adopted a good counterpoint method of writing."<sup>12</sup>

The technique of variation and the creative focus on the potentials of variability of musical material were already present in some of Paunović's student compositions, and might have been motivated by Reger's lessons and his own music. Paunović's early works for symphonic orchestra, such as the *Romance* and the *Serenada* [Serenade], as well as the introductory music of his musical drama *Divina tragoedia*, showed a tendency to the blurring of the main melodic material by other instrumental lines (often deriving from the main one). However, in his engagement in the creation of rich musical texture, Paunović shared neither Reger's wide range of methods of polyphony nor his inspiration from the techniques and forms of baroque music. Being closer to music of Gustav Mahler, he preferred to use free imitation, to build a musical tissue on a simultaneous flow of different variants of thematic material, and to make great thematic transformations. At the same time, he paid tribute to Wagner as the model for his creative search of musical drama.

Wagner as a phenomenon had not skipped Serbian music before Paunović's time. In spite of the very late first integral performance of one of his musical dramas in the National Theatre in Belgrade (*Der fliegende Holländer*, 1923), various parts of his works have been present in concert programmes from the second half of the nineteenth century. There have also been a variety of written comments on his opus, with probably the best known among these being that which came from Stevan Mokranjac in 1882, who highly appreciated the 'great master' and was especially impressed by

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<sup>12</sup>"Lehrer-Zeugnis für Milenko Paunović" (see note 10).

his innovative harmonic language.<sup>13</sup> While the German-based education of Mokranjac certainly affected his musical preferences, there was much ambivalence in this respect among younger Serbian composers of Paunović's generation.<sup>14</sup> They had a shared aim in searching for a highly individual and Modernist expression that would be rooted in folk music and/or local speech idioms, which was a common core of the different aesthetical approaches of many composers around the more or less 'peripheral' musical Europe, such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Szimanowsky, Enescu or Kalomiris.<sup>15</sup> The relationships of Serbian composers to Wagner in that context have been controversial, ranging from admiration of his output to the critique of German cultural chauvinism and imperialism regarding the superiority of the German nation in constructing an image of universal music.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>On Mokranjac's relation to Wagner as well as his plans to attend the premiere of *Parsifal* in Bayreuth in 1882 see: Kosta P. Manojlović, *Stevan St. Mokranjac i njegove muzičke studije u Minhenu* [Stevan St. Mokranjac and his Musical Studies in Munich], Belgrade 1923, pp. 22–24; K. P. Manojlović, "Stevan Mokranjac o Vagneru i Parsifalu" [Stevan Mokranjac on Wagner and Parsifal], in: *Zvuk* 4 (1933), 1932–1936; Stana Đurić-Klajn, *Mladi dani Stevana Mokranjca* [Youthful Days of Stevan Mokranjac] (= Mokranjac's Days), Negotin 1981, pp. 30–32.

<sup>14</sup>Mokranjac studied in Munich (1879–1883), Rome (1884) and Leipzig (1885–1887). Among younger composers, Hristić was educated in Leipzig as well. He studied with Krehl and Hofmann at the Conservatoire and received instructions in conducting from Arthur Nikisch (1904–1908), but he has never been close to German but rather French, Italian and Russian music.

<sup>15</sup>The former dominant observations on such 'peripheral' composers were highly exclusivist (e. g. in Arnold Schoenberg's or Theodor Adorno's writings). Past views are deconstructed in recent studies, relating to many 'peripheral' composers's output as an integral part of European Modernisms. See, for example: Melita Milin, "Musical Modernism in the 'Agrarian countries of South Eastern Europe': the Changed Function of Folk Music in the Twentieth Century", in: *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, ed. by Dejan Despić and Melita Milin (= Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Institute of Musicology), Belgrade 2008, pp. 121–130. For an comprehensive insight in aesthetical ideas of Serbian composers of that time see: Katarina Tomašević, *Na raskršću Istoka i Zapada. O dijalogu tradicionalnog i modernog u srpskoj muzici (1918–1941)* [At the Crossroads of the East and the West. On the Dialogue Between the Traditional and the Modern in Serbian Music (1918–1941)] (= Muzikološki institut and Matica srpska), Belgrade 2009. For a wider insight in regional context see: Jim Samson, *Music in the Balkans Balkan* (= Studies Library, 8), Brill 2013.

<sup>16</sup>The ambivalence related to Wagner was particularly complex in the case of Konjović. See: Katarina Tomašević, "Petar Konjović pro et contra Vagner. Prilog proučavanju istorije nacionalne muzičke drame" [Petar Konjović pro et contra Wagner. A Contribution to the Study of the History of National Music Drama], in: *Vagnerov spis*

This ambivalence was stronger in the years around the First World War, when Paunović created all of his works. He did not have a problem being in a close dialogue with the German legacy, since he was the only Serbian composer of the time who directly relied on Wagnerian musical drama. However, it is not difficult to notice his changeable relationship to the Serbian context and his increasing endeavours to take part in it.

It seems that during and immediately after his studies, Paunović was not familiar with or did not care about the various limited factors of Serbian musical culture. By composing his *Divina tragoedia*, which was historically the first example of the genre in Serbian music, he marked a creative leap compared to the previous operatic practice. Thus, he omitted choruses, set numbers and ensembles, used dialogues and monologues, constructed in a leitmotiv-based and densely textured way, written for a predominantly quadruple woodwind symphonic orchestra. He also went a step further from a youthful identification with Wagner, when he atomised his leitmotiv material and simultaneously incorporated it in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the score, in a similar way to Mahler, Strauss and other post-Wagnerian composers, who were seeking the paths of their own modernism.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the libretto that he based on his own drama shared some Wagnerian ideas, but it was strongly touched by Nietzschean critique, presenting a controversial, blasphemous theme about Christ's resurrection perverted into fraud. Nevertheless, the whole project, that could have found a wider European context, could not be presented in the Serbian setting of the time, because of a lack of technical and performance facilities.<sup>18</sup>

From the years of the First World War onwards, Paunović broadened his literary themes with those connected to Serbian history and also started to use folk music idioms that were not present in his previous musical works.

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*“Opera i drama” danas* [Wagner's Work “Opera and Drama” Today], ed. by Sonja Marinković (= Matica srpska), Novi Sad 2006, pp. 119–135.

<sup>17</sup>Here I refer to Walter Frisch's views on 'modernisms' (e. g. integral, ironic, historicist and regressive modernism) in music of the German-speaking sphere around 1900, or roughly from the death of Wagner until the end of World War I. Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2005.

<sup>18</sup>See: Biljana Milanović, “Kontekstualizacija ranog modernizma u srpskoj muzici na primeru dva ostvarenja iz 1912. godine” [Contextualisation of Early Modernism in Serbian Music: Case Studies of Two Works from 1912], in: *Muzikologija* 6 (2006), pp. 251–266.

The pressure of the dominant narratives of modern national music in both Serbian and Yugoslav terms, which had their new political significance in the first Yugoslav state (1918–1941), influenced his artistic endeavours but did not affect the essential change in his poetics. Moreover, his understanding of folk music fitted well with his Nietzschean thoughts. Serbian folk idioms were observed by him as a hybrid form of ethnic crossover into the territory of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire. Although he found in it the dominant “Slavic spirit”, it had been touched, according to him, by the “Turkish-Greek-Romanian-Aromanian-German-Hungarian” admixture. This high hybridisation was felt by Paunović as a precious quality of local context and as “the only way of saving human kind from degeneration”, not only in music, but in other spheres of culture.<sup>19</sup> Such opinion presented an alternative to the dominant ones in Serbian music about the ‘folk purity’ of rural areas, where archaic and ‘authentic’ features are conserved, being untouched by foreign, especially ‘oriental’, Turkish and Roma influences.<sup>20</sup>

Paunović’s creative incorporation of folk idioms can be observed in the example of his First Yugoslav Symphony, which in some aspects, such as the programme settings, the autobiographical dimension, the treatment of illustrative musical elements and the distance to the musical citation, evoke the world of Mahler’s symphonies. This work has a special place in his opus as the only of his wider creative forms to have had a concert presentation. However, there was some hesitation and postponement of its Belgrade production, which was eventually realised immediately after the composer’s death. While waiting, Paunović was trying to perform the work elsewhere, first in Prag with Václav Talich, and then in Ljubljana, where his symphony had its premiere performance under the conductor Josip Čerin.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Incognitus [Milenko Paunović], “Budućnost naše muzike” [Future of Our Music], in: *Nova svetlost*, October 1 1921, pp. 28–32.

<sup>20</sup>I have written on such narratives in the context of the critique of Orientalism and Balkanism. See: Biljana Milanović, “The Balkans as a Cultural Symbol in the Serbian Music of the First Half of the Twentieth Century”, in: *Muzikologija* 8 (2008), pp. 17–26, and “Orientalism, Balkanism and Modernism in Serbian Music of the First Half of the Twentieth Century”, in: *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, pp. 103–114.

<sup>21</sup>The Symphony was played by the Orchestra of the Drava Division in Ljubljana on March 17 1924. The first performance in Belgrade took place on March 24 1925, by Stevan Hristić and the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra.

The First Yugoslav Symphony holds the title *Na Liparu* [On Lipar], indicating the connection to Đura Jakšić's poem of the same name. However, Jakšić's poetry inspired moments of his own introspection and the programme of the symphony is actually closely connected to some of Paunović's literary works, especially to his drama *Primorci* [Coastal People] and the short story *Dr Vrač* [Dr Witch], alluding to some reflective preoccupations and topics that he kept returning to – thoughts about destiny, love and alienation, as well as the identification with a passenger looking for the truth and aspiring to return to nature.<sup>22</sup>

A more detailed insight into the symphony can point to the author's idea on the construction of a parallel autoreflexive sound world of sorts, where the musical structure is conceived as an active representative of the programme setting. This is the source of the procedures in the condensing of the cycle, non-standard approaches to movements, the idea that characteristic thematic materials, not whole movements, be the carriers of a certain tempo and character, the importance of monothematism and a cyclic principle as the foundation of the musical dramaturgy, but also the active role of all musical parameters in the building of a structure which testifies to the firm sound unity of the whole symphony.

Within the commentary on the Ljubljana performance of the work, Paunović said that the motifs of the first two movements were "original", and that the initial material of the finale was "quite Serbian", whereas the introductory motif that occurred in many variants during the symphony was

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<sup>22</sup>The programme written by the composer is as follows:

*Part one* – An evening on Lipar, just before sunset. A cuckoo, an ominous bird that can never rest, follows the traveller around all the time. What is that strange bird saying to him? Is it greeting the strange guest or is it upset because the man is disturbing its infinite kingdom? Or does it suspect...?

*Part two* – Midnight visions. Ghosts, fairies, witches, bogeymen, all mixed up, run and rush around the forest. When they all get tired the cuckoo can be heard again. At the sound of its voice all rise again and start another witches' brew. At its height it all stops like it was cut off. All stand still. A cold wind blows and ghostly shadows sway, and get lost in the distance... .

*Part three* – Morning. One wandering shadow, it looks like it had no time to disappear. Where does, oh God, this shadow wander? An eternal traveller follows it but the shadow keeps escaping like it is afraid of living creatures. And when the sun starts rising, it fades away and disappears in its rays. A cuckoo wails for it and so does the eternal traveller. Whose shadow, oh God, was it...?

Milenko Paunović, *Prva Jugoslovenska simfonija – Na Liparu* [First Yugoslav Symphony – On Lipar], orchestral score prepared by Biljana Milanović (= Matica srpska), Novi Sad 2009, p. XVI.

described as “fateful”.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, in his score, Paunović suggested the possibility of using a special or folk instrument, the ocarina, to produce a “voice of the cuckoo”.<sup>24</sup> However, these very different sound materials are appropriated by him in order to create distance from them. His special dedication to establishing a unity between folk-like and non-folk-like substance is directed by the programme and culminates in the final movement. Paunović varies and transforms the dancing theme of the citation in several stages, gradually reduces its characteristic folklore features, modifies it into a distinctly dramatic material and finally equates it with the character of the motif of fate. This “fateful” motif is also the most significant cyclic material of the work and originates, like all the main ideas of the symphony, in the interval of the minor third – an illustrative element that symbolises the “voice of the cuckoo” in Paunović’s programme concept. Thus, his programme application, just like the meaning of the mentioned folk theme, is directly included in the structure of the symphony and becomes the source of its dramaturgy.

One could ask whether the work would have been performed in Belgrade had the composer not suddenly died. A precise answer is not possible, but a comparison of the critiques of the Ljubljana and Belgrade premiers leads to the conclusion that the former was more positively received than the second.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting that some reviews from Ljubljana commented that “in comparison with opuses of other Yugoslav composers” Paunović’s symphony was “among the most mature and most modern works.”<sup>26</sup> How-

<sup>23</sup>Quoted in: Boris Papandopulo, “Milenko Paunović i njegova ‘Jugoslovenska simfonija’” [M. P. und seine “Jugoslawische Sinfonie”], in: *Zvuk* 3 (1936), pp. 10–18. The same source cites verses of a folk song “Last night I went”, whose melody Paunović used in the final movement, a citation which was probably taken from a choir composition *Iz srpske gradine* [From Serbian Gardens] by Isidor Bajić.

<sup>24</sup>On the last page of the finale, Paunović made the remark: “Cuckoo should be performed on a special instrument or on ocarina. In case that is not available, then on flute or on clarinet, always in *es'' – c'' (dis'' – his 2'')*.”

<sup>25</sup>See: Biljana Milanović, “Recepcija Prve jugoslovenske simfonije Milenka Paunovića (1889–1924)” [The Reception of the First Yugoslav Symphony of Milenko Paunović] in: *Istorija i misterija muzike: u čast Roksande Pejović* [History and Mystery of Music: in Honor of Roksanda Pejović], ed. by Ivana Perković Radak, Dragana Stojanović-Novičić, Danka Lajić-Mihačević (= Fakultet muzičke umetnosti), Belgrade 2006, pp. 337–346.

<sup>26</sup>Anon., “Glasbeni vestnik. – Simfonični koncert Muzike dravske divizijske oblasti” [Musical Herald. – Symphonic Concert of the Music of the Drava Division], in: *Slovenski narod*, March 19 1924, p. 3.

ever, Paunović represented one lonely and silent compositional line and his works had a creative reception neither in Serbian nor Yugoslav contexts.

Inscript. Nr. 10625. Abschrift

**Königliches Konservatorium der Musik zu Leipzig.**

**Lehrer-Zeugnis**

für Jovana Milenko Paunović aus Sakska Krentiran  
 geboren in Sakska am 29. November 1889 Organ  
 aufgenommen in das Konservatorium am 1. Oktober 1909 abgegangen am 20. Juli 1911

Theorie der Musik und Komposition. (Hauptfach) Herr Paunović führte bei  
 mir Kontrapunkt und Fuge. Nur langsam, seiner mühsamen  
 eifriger Begabung ließ ich mich anfangs zu sehr rigoren Wege  
 gehen. Er sah es aber verstanden, sich in den gewöhnlichen  
 Harmonisier. Vorgehen ruhig zu setzen und beharrliche Ausdauer zu  
 zeigen. Mit großem Fleiß sah er sich eine gute kontra-  
 punktische Weisheit zu eigen gemacht.  
 Stephan Wehl.

Organ. Herr Paunović' Kompositionweise war ich so ganz von ihm  
 Diatoni. ab, was ich unter Weisheit verstand, daß ich mich nicht für  
 Diatonellspiel besorgte, falls ich ein Zeugnis über seine Komposi-  
 tionen ausstellen. Dr. Max Reger.

Organ. Herr Paunović beherrschte sich ziemlich ungehindert an  
 sein Instrumentationsstunden. Dr. Hofmann.

Harmonisier. Herr Paunović war Klavier-Virtuose und gab mir in  
 Orgel. seinen Lehrern Herrn Prof. A. Rockendorf in  
 der Zeit von Michaelis 1909 bis zum März 1911.  
 Das Direktorium.

Leipzig, am 20. Juli 1911.

Das Direktorium  
 des Königl. Konservatoriums der Musik  
 Dr. Hartrock

Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig