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The National Idea in Serbian Music of the 20th Century

If there was but one important issue to be highlighted concerning Serbian music of the 20th century, it would certainly be the question of musical nationalism. As in all other countries belonging to the so-called European periphery, composers in Serbia faced the problem of asserting both their belonging to the European musical community and specific differences. The former had to be displayed by their musical craftsmanship and creative individuality, while the latter were conveyed through the introduction of native folk elements as tokens of a specific identity. Stevan Mokranjac (1856–1914) was the key-figure among Serbian composers before World War I. On his numerous tours abroad (Thessaloniki, Budapest, Sofia, Istanbul, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Moscow), he received considerable appraisal for his choral works, which were primarily suites based on folk music (“rukoveti”). These outstanding works even surpassed early examples of Serbian musical nationalism composed by Kornelije Stanković which had been presented for the first time forty years earlier in Vienna.¹ The most important part of Stevan Mokranjac’s output are his “rukoveti” and church music, both composed for a cappella choir (Serbian church music is traditionally vocal a cappella music), but he also composed some works for voice and piano, for strings and incidental music.² Mokranjac was only two years younger than Leoš

¹Kornelije Stanković (1831–1865) studied at the Vienna conservatory where his professor of counterpoint was the famous Simon Sechter. Stanković gave concerts with piano and choral pieces based on Serbian folk melodies (mostly simple harmonisations) and church music - two liturgies - based on traditional Serbian church chant (the liturgies were performed in 1855 and 1861 in the Musikverein Hall in Vienna).

²During his studies in Munich and Leipzig Mokranjac was able to attend many operas and concerts of symphonic music. He wanted to attend the premiere of *Parsifal* (it is not sure whether he actually did) and he saw Brahms conducting his fourth symphony. Later in Belgrade he gave concerts with choral works by Brahms and Grieg. See Nadežda Mosusova, *Mesto Stevana Mokranjca*

Janáček, but the Czech master outlived him by 14 years. Both of them studied for a while in Leipzig, though not at the same time (Janáček in 1879, Mokranjac in 1885-87). There is, however, a great difference between their works, which is quite understandable when their native social and cultural milieus are taken into consideration. The overall Czech musical culture that gave birth to Czech musical nationalism, provided strong support for Janáček as a composer. His predecessors – Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák and a number of other Czech composers –, had successfully integrated their nationally orientated music into the European developments. During that time, Serbian musicians were still fighting to achieve European standards of music culture. If Mokranjac had written operas in his later years (around the turn of the century), they would certainly have been much closer to “The Bartered Bride” than to “Jenufa”, and his symphonies would have been more along the lines of the early symphonic poems of Smetana than the late symphonies of Dvořák. Russian composers are deliberately not mentioned in relation to Stevan Mokranjac because their music – apart from church music – was little known in Serbia before World War I. It was only the next generation of composers that came under the influence of Russian music, and that, via Prague.³ Some similarities in musical thinking between Mokranjac and the Russians could be explained by common characteristics in musical folklore as well as essentially similar ideological frameworks.⁴

Most distinguished among Mokranjac’s successors were Petar Konjović (1883–1970), Miloje Milojević (1884–1946) and Stevan Hristić (1885–1958). They managed to create a Serbian branch of musical nationalism. After studying with Mokranjac at the beginning of the century, they later strove to find new, original ways of contributing to modern musical nationalism. Their works are characterised by

među nacionalnim školama evropske muzike [“The Place of Stevan Mokranjac within the National Schools of European Music”], in: *Zbornik radova o Stevanu Mokranjcu* [“The Collection of Papers on Stevan Mokranjac”], Beograd 1971, p. 112-115.

³Ibid., p. 116-117.

⁴Ibid., p. 117.

late romantic features enriched by elements of impressionism and expressionism. These works form a middle ground between the so-called arrangements (Serb. “obrade”) and stylisations of folk melodies (usually for piano or for accompanied voice) on the one side and music dramas and large scale orchestral works on the other side.

Like Stevan Mokranjac, the young generation of composers studied abroad, mostly in Germany⁵ during the first and second decades of 20th century. Consequently, they adopted a western (i. e. Central-European) stance in the evaluation of Mokranjac and other domestic composers. They called him the “Serbian Palestrina”.⁶ These composers highly valued Mokranjac’s ability to select what was typical in folklore and to create organic forms on the basis of folk music, and they particularly praised the way he stylized folk melodies.⁷ They were also aware that Mokranjac had succeeded in penetrating the “laws” of latent harmony hidden in folk melodies and thus fully displayed their magic.⁸ Works by these young composers convey “reverence” of his oeuvres as demonstrated, for example in the Symphony No. 1 and *Jadranski kapričo* (“Adriatic Capriccio”) by Petar Konjović who also dedicated his symphonic variations *Na selu* (“In the Country”) to Mokranjac. On the other hand, some members of the generations of composers following Mokranjac, criticized him directly or indirectly for the lack of a bolder, more elaborate approach to the use of folk melodies, for keeping to little more than simple harmonisations, and for restricting himself to choral a cappella music. In short, they were disappointed at his “lack of wide

⁵Stevan Hristić and Milenko Paunović studied in Leipzig; Milenko Živković in Leipzig and Paris; Stanislav Binički and Miloje Milojević in Munich; Kosta Manojlović in Munich and Oxford, Božidar Joksimović and Petar Konjović in Prague; Petar Krstić in Vienna; Isidor Bajić in Budapest; Sava Selesković in Stuttgart, Geneva and Paris; Josip Slavenski in Budapest and Prague; Marko Tajčević in Prague and Vienna.

⁶Miloje Milojević, *Umetnička ideologija Stevana St. Mokranjca* [“The Artistic Ideology of Stevan St. Mokranjac”], in: *Srpski književni glasnik* [“The Serbian Literary Messenger”] 53, No. 3 (1938), p. 201.

⁷See Petar Konjović, *Stevan St. Mokranjac*, Novi Sad 1984 (first edition: Beograd 1956), p. 44-47.

⁸Ibid, p. 44.

creative fantasy in all its freedom”.⁹ By that, they essentially meant that Mokranjac ought to have composed elaborate instrumental and vocal-instrumental works, and not just clung to choral music, despite his creative efforts. Mokranjac was respected as the father of Serbian national music, but when members of the young generation in the first decades of the century applied European criteria of evaluation, they found his music inferior to that of Bedřich Smetana, Alexander Borodin, Modest Mussorgsky and Antonin Dvořák. Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević and Stevan Hristić as Stevan Mokranjac’s most talented successors, knew that it was the historical task of their generation to attain international recognition of Serbian music by leaning on Mokranjac’s heritage – by using it as the basis for works that would explore wider formal conceptions and more modern forms of expression more closely resembling contemporary developments in European music. They regarded the works of Janáček, Sibelius and Bartók as models for the type of musical nationalism they strived to develop. We should note that Mokranjac’s orientation to choral music was probably due to his position as conductor of the renowned “Belgrade Singing Society” choir which gave the first performances of all his compositions. It could be concluded that he simply was not attracted to orchestral sounds, preferring instead, vocal expression. It is also possible that he was so impressed by Alessandro Parisotti’s lectures on vocal polyphony in Rome (1884–85) that he decided to devote his talent and skills to that genre. According to some scholars, Mokranjac produced the kind of music that the Serbian audience demanded and was receptive to.¹⁰ He was certainly able to compose for the orchestra with more skill and ingenuity than Davorin Jenko, his elder contemporary in Belgrade; however, it must be admitted that in his orchestral music for the theatre piece *Ivkova slava* (“Ivko’s Feast” by Stevan Sremac) he seems to have imposed rather modest

⁹Ibid, 48. See also Miloje Milojević, *Umetnička ličnost Stevana St. Mokranjca* [“The Artistic Personality of Stevan St. Mokranjac”], in: *Muzičke studije i članci* [“Musical Studies and Articles”], vol. 1, Beograd 1926, p. 9.

¹⁰Such views were expressed by Petar Bingulac, *Stevan Mokranjac i njegove Rukoveti* [“Stevan Mokranjac and his Rukoveti”], in: *Napisi o muzici* [“Writings on Music”], Beograd 1988, p. 99-100 (first time printed in 1956).

aims upon himself as conveyed by the simple, rather conventional setting.¹¹

In their numerous articles and essays, Stevan Mokranjac's successors demonstrated their admiration of him, although they were sometimes ambivalent towards his legacy (this applies mostly to Miloje Milojević). In their writings they also expressed views on topics such as the relations between national and universal ("original") music, the position of folklorism in contrast to true, profound national music, the purity of folklore, and the like. In the following paragraphs, I will summarise their opinions and observations.

1) National vs. universal music. – National music was sometimes designated as nationalistic¹² or racial¹³, with positive connotations. Those terms may sound strange today, but we must bear in mind that they were used in texts written before World War II when their meanings were almost synonymous. By "universal" the authors referred to works that were "purely musical"¹⁴ and international in character and value. It is always implied that the national and the universal are not dichotomies, the former being contained in the latter (of course, this applies only to successful works). So, some authors expressed the opinion that nationally orientated works en-

¹¹Dušan Skovran, *Muzika za komad s pevanjem 'Ivkova slava' Stevana Sremca i Dragomira Brzaka*, ["The Music for the Theatrical Piece with Music 'Ivko's Feast' by Stevan Sremac and Dragomir Brzak"], in: *Zbornik radova o Stevanu Mokranjcu*, Beograd 1971, p. 145-153.

¹²For instance Miloje Milojević, *Muzički folklor. Njegova kulturno-umetnička važnost* ["Musical Folklore. Its Cultural-Artistic Importance"], in: *Muzičke studije i članci*, vol. 1, Beograd 1926, p. 137.

¹³For instance Miloje Milojević, *Moderna muzika kod Jugoslovena* ["Modern Music among Yugoslavs"], in: *Srpski književni glasnik* 47, No. 5 (1936), p. 350.

¹⁴See for instance Petar Konjović, *Razgovori o 'Koštani'* ["Conversations about 'Koštana'"], in: *Knjiga o muzici srpskoj i slavenskoj* ["The Book about Serbian and Slavic Music"], Novi Sad 1947, p. 109: "My 'Koštana' could testify that Balkan folklore is capable not only to evoke exoticism, but also to contribute intensively to purely musical, universal expression".

rich the body of universal works.¹⁵ It seems, however, that a certain dilemma regarding the artistic value of national music was not completely solved, as we may conclude from Miloje Milojević's statement. He believed that national musical values are secondary in relation to the universal when absolute musical criteria are applied.¹⁶ At any rate, national music is understood as not designed to exist within national boundaries, but, on the contrary, to become part of European mainstreams. On the other hand, it is taken as a fact that each nation has its own treasury of works to which not only nationally inspired works belong, but also those that are created in an "international spirit".¹⁷ In the words of Stevan Hristić: "For a work to be designated as national, the primary precondition should be to have an artistic value. Then, such a work does not need national content".¹⁸

2) Identities: Serbian, Yugoslav, Balkan, Slavic. – Mokranjac's direct successors began to compose and construct their musical and national identities at the start of the century. When Yugoslavia was founded in 1918 and Serbia became part of the new state, the leading political idea was directed towards the building of a common integral Yugoslav identity, since it was common to refer to one people with three names: Serbian, Croat and Slovene. The project of building a Yugoslav national style in music was formulated by certain composers,¹⁹ but in practice it only meant the widen-

¹⁵Petar Konjović, *Dve orijentacije u slavenskoj muzici* ["Two Orientations in Slavic Music"], *ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁶"There is no doubt that national musical values are of a secondary order when absolute musical criteria are used. It is so because they bear personal and collective artistic features and lack universal expression." – From Miloje Milojević, *O muzičkom nacionalizmu* ["On Musical Nationalism"], in: *Muzičke studije i članci*, vol. 2, Beograd 1933, p. 36.

¹⁷See Jovan Bandur, *Kako sam doživeo češku muziku* ["How I experienced Czech Music"], in: *Muzički glasnik* ["The Musical Messenger"], No. 8/9 (1938), p. 170.

¹⁸Stevan Hristić, *O nacionalnoj muzici* ["On National Music"], in: *Zvezda* ["The Star"], No. 5 (1912), p. 316-317.

¹⁹For instance by Kosta Manojlović in his response to the questionnaire on musical nationalism in *Muzika* 1928, No. 5 and 6, p. 154-155; see also Miloje Milo-

ing of the then contemporary concept of musical nationalism in the sense that composers (not all of them and not always!) began to use folk music from the broader Yugoslav sphere in their works. To give but two examples: the Serb Petar Konjović (who spent most of his time between the two World Wars in the Croatian town of Zagreb) wrote several works based on folk melodies from all over Yugoslavia: *Moja zemlja* (“My Land”, 1905–25) – a collection of folk song arrangements close in conception to solo songs –, some songs from the collection *Lirika* (“Lyrics”, 1903–22), and *Jadranski kapričo* (“Adriatic Capriccio”) for violin and orchestra (1936). Another important name is that of Josip Slavenski, a Croat who lived in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, from 1925 until his death in 1955. He passionately searched not only for Yugoslav, but also Balkan musical expression in *Jugoslavenska svita* (“Yugoslav Suite”, 1921), *Balkanofonija* (1927), and *Četiri balkanske igre* (“Four Balkan Dances”, 1938). Even before the founding of the new state, when the Yugoslav idea was still in formation, there were other composers who found inspiration in the folk music of other southern Slavic peoples: Stevan Mokranjac, *Primorski napjevi* (“Coastal Songs”, 1893), Petar Konjović, *Zagorski pejzaži* (“Landscapes from Zagorje”, 1906–16), Josip Slavenski, *Sa Balkana* (“From the Balkans”, 1917). In those composers’ attempts to achieve a Yugoslav or Balkan national style, it was natural that they would wish to find it in an archaic folklore that would symbolize the common roots of the peoples settled there. Of course, they were also attracted to the beauty and specific expression of ancient folk song. The folklore of Macedonia²⁰ (south of Serbia) proved to be most interesting for composers, so we can find it in a stylized manner in many works of Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević, Josip Slavenski and others.²¹ Slavic music as a whole presented a wide framework

jević, *Gotovčeva opera ‘Morana’*, [“Gotovac’s Opera ‘Morana’”], in: *Muzičke studije i članci*, vol. 2, Beograd 1933, p. 88.

²⁰In the period between the World Wars I and II Macedonia was officially called “Southern Serbia”.

²¹See more on the topic of the “Balkan style” in music in Nadežda Mosusova, *Das balkanische Element in der südslawischen Kunstmusik*, in: *Balkanica* 8, Beograd 1977, p. 779-785.

that became attractive to Serbian and Yugoslav composers seeking to define their identity. Slavenski's name (his real one being Štolcer) is but one example of the spiritual climate of the times. Milojević asserted: "We, the Slavs, [have] still fresh and new sources that cannot dry up. We should give new impulses to the exhausted world".²² Konjović's several articles also demonstrate the belief that Slavic art and music were powerful sources of inspiration. In one of his important essays, Konjović distinguished two orientations among Slavic composers: the eastern and western, the former being characterized by more pronounced distance from leading western developments, through authenticity and primitivism²³ of expression, while the latter orientation was more closely related to western techniques and musical thinking. According to Konjović, the main representatives of the eastern orientation, which he regarded as superior, included

²²Miloje Milojević, *Muzički pregled. Za ideju umetnosti i umetničkog nacionalizma kod nas. Povodom koncerta Lisinskog, Opusa i Gusla* ["Musical Review. For the Idea of Music and Artistic Nationalism in our Country. On the Occasion of the Concerts of Lisinski, Opus and Gusle"], in: *Srpski književni glasnik* 45, No. 11 (1935), p. 66.

²³The term "primitivism" was in common use at the time. It designated a stylistic expression that insisted on simplicity, modality, archaicism, that were deliberately opposed to the chromatic refinements and impressionistic colouring typical of western music of the time. It was applied to Jakov Gotovac's works by Miloje Milojević, *Gotovčeva opera 'Morana'* (see note 19), p. 89. In the same article (p. 91), Milojević exposes his view that primitivism is a two-fold phenomenon. One aspect pertains to a composer's creative impotence, while the other states that when a highly talented composer adopts "primitivistic style", the result is outstanding and fully artistic. – Linked to that term is "naturalism", applied for instance to Slavenski's works: Kosta Manojlović speaks of Slavenski's "naturalistic capacities" in *Josip Slavenski*, in: *Glasnik muzičkog društva 'Stanković'* ["The Messenger of the Musical Society 'Stanković'"], No. 7 (1930), p. 127; Miloje Milojević, *O srpskoj umetničkoj muzici sa osobitim pogledom na moderne struje* ["On Serbian Art Music with a Special Look at Modern Streams"], in: *Srpski književni glasnik* 48, No. 7 (1936), p. 509, writes that "the national idea has become quite mature and it inclines increasingly to naturalism. That naturalism is sometimes wildly leftist, sometimes quieter, more stylised and even applied in folk song arrangements (Konjović, Milojević, Manojlović, Živković, Bingulac, Pašćan)."

Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin and Leoš Janáček, while a western orientation was present in the works of Bedrich Smetana, Antonin Dvořák and Karol Szymanowski among others.²⁴

3) National music vs. folklorism. – In Serbian writing on music folklorism was often contrasted with true, profound national expression. By “folklorism”, authors understood stereotyped arrangements of folk melodies, which demonstrated a lack of intuitive and inventive devices as well as a lack of feeling for the latent harmonic structures of melodies.²⁵ Folkloristic works were also criticized for being too descriptive, picturesque and colourful, instead of being psychologically elaborated and marked by individualism.²⁶ In the eyes of Milojević, folklorism was of “a very low type”²⁷, and he identified it as a simplified, almost dilettantish “Liedertafel style”, even as “national destruction”.²⁸ Mokranjac’s predecessors were usually designated as folklorists, along with some of his minor successors, – and strangely enough, though only exceptionally, so was Mokranjac himself.²⁹ The reason for the latter stemmed from the ambivalence regarding the evaluation of Mokranjac’s choral suites either as a series of harmonized folk songs or as “real”, fully artistic compositions. The dominant view today is that Mokranjac was an exquisite composer who devoted his talent to a modest medium, but who knew how to compose works characterized by the use of refined harmonies, formal

²⁴Konjović, *Dve orijentacije u slavenskoj muzici* (see note 15), p. 117-126.

²⁵See Petar Konjović, *Medjusobni uticaj narodne i crkvene muzike* [“Mutual Influences between Folk and Church Music”], in: *Knjiga o muzici* (see note 14), p. 36.

²⁶Stevan Hristić made a distinction between descriptive and psychological nationalism in *O nacionalnoj muzici* (see note 18), p. 316-317, and Miloje Milojević wrote about subjectivistic and folkloristic trends in national music in *Umetnička ideologija Stevana St. Mokranjca* (see note 6), p. 192-201.

²⁷Milojević, *ibid.*

²⁸Miloje Milojević, *Muzički pregled* (see note 22), p. 63-64.

²⁹Miloje Milojević, *O nacionalizmu u muzičkoj umetnosti* [“On Nationalism in Musical Art”], in: *Slavenska muzika* [“Slavic Music”], 1940, No. 3, p. 17.

perfection, and a balanced use of homophony and counterpoint.³⁰ After World War II the term “folklorism” became less common. The problem of folklorism was closely linked to the much debated problem of harmonizing folk melodies “adequately”. Petar Krstić, a conservative composer some twenty years younger than Mokranjac, admired his great predecessor’s ability to harmonize folk tunes according to their latent harmonies. Referring to contemporary European trends in the modernization of harmony, he was opposed to “putting European coats on those melodies”, through which, he felt, they lost their national characteristics.³¹ Krstić also wrote about the possibility of harmonizing melodies that end on the “second degree”, as characteristic of Serbian folk music. In his view, such melodies could be harmonized as if they belonged to a Dorian (not Yonian) scale, but in this case they would lack a true folk character.³² The augmented second was most often understood as resulting from the augmented fourth degree of the minor scale and was most often harmonized as a four-three chord.³³ Elements of modality are also present in Mokranjac’s works, but less than in the works of younger composers.³⁴ Konjović,

³⁰See for instance Bingulac, *Stevan Mokranjac i njegove rukoveti* (see note 10), p. 94-122; Nadežda Mosusova, *Mesto Stevana Mokranjca* (see note 2); Vlastimir Peričić, *Stevan Mokranjac*, in: *Sabrana dela Stevana Mokranjca* [“The Collected Works of Stevan Mokranjac”], vol. 1, Beograd 1992, p. XV-XXIII; Dejan Despić, *Harmonski jezik i horska faktura u Mokranjčevim delima* [“The Harmonic Language and the Choral Texture in Mokranjac’s Works”], *ibid.*, vol. 10, Beograd 1999, p. 141-200.

³¹Petar Krstić, *O harmoniziranju narodnih melodija* [“On Harmonization of Folk Melodies”], in: *Muzički glasnik*, 1922, No. 5, p. 2.

³²*Ibid.* On the topic of harmonizing the ending on the 2nd degree see also Konstantin Babić, *Mokranjčeve kvinte* [“Mokranjac’s Fifths”], in: *Zbornik radova o Stevanu Mokranjcu*, Beograd 1971, p. 153-157.

³³Cf. Nadežda Mosusova, *Uticao folklornih elemenata na strukturu romantizma u srpskoj muzici* [“The Influence of Folk Elements on the Structure of Romanticism in Serbian Music”], doctoral dissertation, manuscript, Ljubljana 1971, p. 79-81, and *id.*, *Das balkanische Element* (see note 21), p. 779-785; Despić, *Harmonski jezik* (see note 30), p. 161-166.

³⁴Nadežda Mosusova, *Die modale Harmonik in den Werken jugoslawischer Komponisten*, in: *Colloquium Probleme der Modalität. Leoš Janáček heute und morgen. Brno 1988*, Brno 1994, p. 95-99.

Milojević, Hristić, Tajčević and others based their techniques of harmonizing folk melodies on Mokranjac's, but they introduced harsher dissonances in accordance with the evolution of musical thinking in Europe.³⁵ Josip Slavenski went a step further with his use of polytonality sometimes approaching atonality. If Konjović is often rightly compared to Janáček, parallels can be drawn between Josip Slavenski's music and that of Bartók.

4) Purity of folklore. – Serbian composers active in the first decades of the century often stressed the importance of founding a national musical style based on typically Serbian folk music, which remained free from foreign influences. The several centuries of occupation under Ottoman rule had led to the penetration of some oriental - Turkish but also Gypsy elements into Serbian folk music, leaving only rural areas untouched. Therefore pure folklore was sought from rural areas that had conserved archaic and authentic features.³⁶ Petar Konjović believed that folk music was not equal in purity and value and that composers had to be able to identify what was a “supplement” (Serb. “nanos”) that distorted and falsified music whose kernel was healthy and original.³⁷ It was generally assumed that Stevan Mokranjac knew how to choose genuine folk melodies, the best example being his tenth “rukovet”,³⁸ but it is noteworthy that two among the tunes from that work, *Biljana* (a female name) and *Pušči me* (“Let me go”) belong to Mokranjac's own invention. In some stage-works involving Serbs and Turks as main characters – such as the ballet *Ohridska legenda* (“The Legend of Ohrid”) and

³⁵See more about Milojević's techniques of harmonizing folk songs in Nadežda Mosusova, *Milojevićev tretman folkloru u poznom opusu* [“Milojević's Treatment of Folklore in his Late Oeuvre”], in: *Kompozitorsko stvaralaštvo Miloja Milojevića* [“The Compositions of Miloje Milojević”], Beograd 1998, p. 178-193.

³⁶Božidar Joksimović wrote about “fatal foreign influence”. See Roksanda Pejović, *Muzička kritika i esejistika u Beogradu 1919–1941* [“Music Critiques and Essays in Belgrade 1919–1941”], Beograd 1999, p. 65.

³⁷Konjović, *Medjusobni uticaj narodne i crkvene muzike* (see note 25), p. 30.

³⁸According to Konjović, *ibid.*, p. 35, Mokranjac's tenth “rukovet” was an “ideal of purity” of the folk music type.

the operas *Na uranku* (“At Dawn”) by Stanislav Binički and *Knez Ivo od Semberije* (“Prince Ivo of Semberija”) by Isidor Bajić – the two types of folk music are sharply contrasted. Although the purity of folk music was highly appreciated, not only for its capacity to express specific national features but also for its purely musical qualities, composers were also attracted by orientalised folklore when they wished to express a specific poetic atmosphere or characterize a certain ambience. Petar Konjović was a master of solo songs in the manner of “sevdalinka” (which he called “Balkan chanson in which short and precise Slavic motives are combined with oriental motives that are decorative and nostalgic”³⁹). Konjović also demonstrated great talent in his interpretation of orientalised folk music in his opera *Koštana* (a female name) whose main character is a young Gypsy girl and which is set in a southern Serbian small town in which folk music drew heavily from Turkish elements.

5) Citations vs. composing “in the spirit of folk music”. – For Stevan Mokranjac and his predecessors, it was common practice to introduce authentic folk tunes, more or less modified, into their works, but sometimes they wrote tunes that, while being their own, had a folk-like character (for instance *Biljana* and *Pušči me* in Mokranjac’s tenth “rukovet”). Many composers built their own collections of folk music that they brought from villages. This method was seen as a problem by composers of the following generation who became aware that under the influence of Smetana’s works, a certain transposition or composing “in the spirit of folk music” (Czech “padelany”) was more appreciated than the use of citations. It was thought that folk tunes had to be “pre-fabricated” in order to be able to “function” in western musical forms. Also, the prevalent idea held that a composer demonstrates his creativity if he is able to compose something similar to folk music (“folklore imaginaire”), not just using something given. Petar Konjović wrote that Smetana’s conception of “padelany” had “obsessed” him for a long time before he came to know the “Russian school”. It was above all the work of Mussorgsky, he wrote further, that liberated him from those ties he

³⁹Konjović, *Razgovori o ‘Koštani’* (see note 14), p. 103.

had instinctively resisted, thus confirming his belief in the “right of an artist to cite”.⁴⁰ Stevan Hristić, on the other hand, pointed to the fact that he was able to compose music that had a marked national character although the themes he used were not taken directly from the folk music heritage.⁴¹

The generation of Serbian composers that made its appearance on the musical scene during the 1930s was strongly opposed to musical nationalism. Instead, they promoted the modernist ideas they came into contact with in Prague and other important musical capitals of the time. Their rejection of folk elements was a part of their general opposition to anything traditional. There were also opinions that musical nationalism “could be dangerous” and functioned to promote “reactionary trends that [were] ruling in the world”.⁴²

The end of World War II saw the instauration of the communist regime in Yugoslavia and the imposition of socialist realism in music. Although this period lasted only several years, the inflicted damage lasted much longer.⁴³ The use of folk music was reactualized, often regressing to simplifications and superficiality. However, starting in the middle of the 1950s, a number of works of lasting value were created that used some elements of folk and church music with great refinement. In these works, stylistic features of Stravinsky, Bartók and Slavenski were synthesized in personal and impressive interpretations. Ljubica Marić composed some of the most important of these works: *Pesme prostora* (“The Songs of Space”), *Passacaglia*, *Muzika Oktoiha* (“Music of the Octoechos”). After 1965, avantgarde ideas

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 108.

⁴¹Ž., *G. Stevan K. Hristić o sebi* [“Mr Stevan K. Hristić about Himself”], in: *Muzički glasnik*, 1933, No. 4, p. 78-80. On Milojević’s citations of folk melodies see Mosusova, *Milojevićev tretman folklora* (see note 35), p. 182-183 and 186.

⁴²Stana Đurić-Klajn, *Putevi naše moderne* [“The Paths of Our Modern Music”], in: *Muzički glasnik*, 1938. No. 1, p. 7-8.

⁴³See more in Melita Milin, *Primena folklora u srpskoj muzici posle Drugog svetskog rata* [“The Usages of Folklore in Serbian Music after World War II”], in: *Folklor i njegova umetnička transpozicija* [“Folklore and its Artistic Transposition”], Beograd 1987, p. 205-218, and id., *Tradicionalno i novo u srpskoj muzici posle Drugog svetskog rata (1945–1965)* [“The Traditional and the New in Serbian Music after World War II”], Beograd 1998.

proved to be attractive for the majority of young composers, but works incorporating elements of folk music were never totally abandoned. It was no more a matter of musical nationalism, but of using folk fragments as well as fragments of other music in postmodern works.

Seen as a whole, Serbian musical nationalism, lasting almost a century from the mid-19th to mid-20th century, produced a valuable body of works, some of which number among the best composed in Serbia and Yugoslavia. However, they are little known abroad and the composers' names are almost unknown as well. This can be attributed to the very rare performances of their music abroad and the lack of a sensitive cultural politics.

The question of whether a specific Serbian national expression has been achieved is hard to answer. Many articles have been written on Czechness or Russianess (also Frenchness etc.) in music but the conclusions are rarely persuasive. The time of musical nationalism is probably over, at least for some time. There is a tendency today to view the option for musical nationalism as a decision to consign oneself to a ghetto. Stravinsky was opposed to thinking about Russian music "in terms of its Russianess rather than simply in terms of music. [It is so] because it is always the picturesque, the strange rhythms, the timbres of the orchestra, the orientalism – in short, the local color, that is seized upon; because people are interested in everything that goes to make up the Russian, or supposedly Russian, setting: *troika*, *vodka*, *isba*, *balalaika*, *pope*, *boyar*, *samovar*, *nitchevo*, and even bolshevism..."⁴⁴ Similarly, Richard Taruskin writes: "Whether invoked in praise or in blame, the arbitrarily defined or proclaimed Russianess of Russian music is a normative criterion, and ineluctably an invidious one. If 'How Russian is it?' is your critical question, then however the question is asked, and however the answer is valued, you have consigned Russian composers to a ghetto."⁴⁵ I believe that the same applies to Serbian music, which

⁴⁴Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1975, p. 93.

⁴⁵Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically. Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*, Princeton, New Jersey 1997, p. XVII. A certain fear of ghettoisation

should not be judged according to the question ‘How Serbian is it?’. Because, despite its important achievements in the realm of national orientation, mainly during the first four decades of the 20th century, Serbian music contains a large corpus of valuable works that do not indicate any ethnic origin.

could be also detected in an article by Pavle Stefanović published before World War II (quoted from Pejović, *Muzička kritika* (see note 36), p. 312): “The English advise small peoples to stay as they are, specifically national, but in that way that they are leaving them aside from the rational culture, scientific thoughts and real understanding of the world today [...]. If national style were to be built starting from a cult of original Balkan art, it would put us in the same range as those coloured peoples that live in the far away countries of the British empire.”