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MUSIC AS A MEDIATOR IN THE PROCESS OF
POLITICAL AND CULTURAL TRANSITION:
THE CREATION OF YUGOSLAV MUSIC IN RADIO
BELGRADE (1929–1941)*

ABSTRACT: In this paper I will analyze the role of the interwar Radio Belgrade (1929–1941) in the process of mediation of the Yugoslav idea focusing on the music program. Attention was given to the strategies that music editors and professionals, hired by the radio station management, used in order to create radio shows and repertoires that would contribute to the dominant understanding of Yugoslav national culture and art. Because of the fact that there was no public consensus on the concept of Yugoslav music, radio officials dedicated to music program faced many difficulties while trying to implement it in practice.

KEYWORDS: Interwar Radio Belgrade; Yugoslav idea; social mediation; Yugoslav music; radio shows

Introduction. The spread of Yugoslav idea in different artistic fields in the first decades of the twentieth century

The idea of the cultural and ethnic kinship of the South-Slavic groups living in the peripheral regions of the Ottoman empire and Habsburg monarchy had a long and unstable history before the twentieth century. Emerging as a part of the cultural programme of Croatian intellectual elite in the 1830s aiming at the political and cultural integration of South-Slavic people living under the Habsburg rule, it soon spread outside the Austrian monarchy border, going through series of transformations along with the shifts of political influence. An important breakthrough happened in the first decade of the twentieth century when a large number of younger intellectuals within the regions of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina started more aggressive campaigning for the cultural and political unification of the South-Slavs. Many groups of intellectuals promoted the concept of Yugoslavism both as a cultural and polit-

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ical solution to the emancipation of the nations settled in the Balkans and its neighbouring areas, focusing on different aspects of it and using diverse methods. Long before the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formally constituted and gained international recognition, numerous activities were initiated in order to ensure a better understanding between different Slavic people in the aforementioned regions, as well as their more profound cultural and political relations. Artistic and cultural activities had a crucial role in that process; many of those served as a cornerstone in the post-unification period (period after 1 December 1918) with the creation of the new Yugoslav society and culture. Among the artistic and intellectual circles dedicated to the promotion of the Yugoslav idea, a group of literary critics and writers gathered around the Young Bosnia movement deserves a closer look owing to the ampleness of their literary and cultural programme together with its prophetic nature.

One of its key figures, literary critic and poet Dimitrije Mitrinović and literary critic Vladimir Gaćinović, contributed immensely to the establishment of main goals in the literary and cultural field before the First World War. Since 1907, Mitrinović started to publish a series of articles in the influential literary journal *Bosanska vila* (*Bosnian fairy*), discussing in detail the definition and operationalization of the concept of Yugoslav art, literature and culture, thus anticipating many future theoretical and “empirical” attempts of the artistic and cultural circles in the aftermath of the political unification. Among other things, Mitrinović insisted on the importance of the integration of Serbian and Croatian literature which required mutual consent on the questions of language, publishing, literary history and literary criticism. He advocated the use of *ekavica* dialect, a more comprehensive coverage of both Croatian and Serbian writers in the distinguished journals in Belgrade and Zagreb, along with publishing of the Croatian writers in Serbia and vice versa. This was seen as a crucial step in the process of cultural rapprochement of the two most important South-Slavic literary traditions – Serbian and Croatian, which was, consequently, expected to create a fertile ground for the development of “truly” Yugoslav literature and culture. Merging the Serbian and Croatian traditions while, at the same time, embedding them onto the social-democratic ideas and values of that time constituted the basis of the modern, emancipated culture of the South-Slavs according to the leaders of the Young Bosnia literary circle.¹ Yugoslav literature and

¹ A detailed and comprehensive research of the Young Bosnia literary circle was done by several literary historians, literary theorists and historians. See Dragomir Gajević, *Jugoslovenstvo između stvarnosti i iluzija: ideja jugoslovenstva u književnosti početkom XX veka* [Yugoslavism between reality and illusions: the idea of Yugoslavism in literature in early XX century] (Beograd: Prosveta, 1985); Predrag Palavestra, *Književnost Mlade Bosne* [The literature of Young Bosnia] (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 1994); Predrag Palavestra, “Young Bosnia: Literary Action 1908–1914”, *Balkanica*, XLI (2010), 154–84; Draga Mastilović, *Između srpstva i jugoslovenstva: srpska elita iz Bosne i Hercegovine i stvaranje Jugoslavije* [Between

culture should represent the specific mixture of spiritual uniqueness of the South-Slavs and modern European civilization, along with the departure from the nationalist Romanticism and its concepts of art and artistic production. Beside the improvements in the cooperation between writers and poets from different regions, the process of creation of Yugoslav culture and literature was to be accomplished through the implementation of the so-called small-scale work within the largest part of the South-Slavic population. It referred to the type of mass education projects similar to the popular universities known in Russia and some parts of Europe since the second half of the nineteenth century.

The echo of these ideas started to appear near the end of the First World War (in January 1918), especially in the work of Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian and Slovenian intellectuals gathered around the journal *Književni jug* (Literary South). During the two years of its continuous monthly release, literary critics, historians and scholars often discussed the problem of establishment of Yugoslav literature, focusing mostly on the language question, or, more precisely, on the establishment of the appropriate linguistic basis for majority of writers. Apart from that, there were initiatives for the revision of the existing literary history together with "uniting the forces", which required the cooperative work of writers, historians and critics from different parts of the future Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the newly founded or already existing literary journals.

Similar ideas and programmes were actualized throughout 1920s in other artistic disciplines with more or less elaborate and ambitious plans. An interesting project originated in the field of visual arts in 1920 initiated by Marko Murat which resembled in part Nadežda Petrović's idea on the creation of artistic colony in Sićevo that would gather visual artists from various region of the "Slavic south". Together with the representatives of the Dubrovnik municipality, Murat wrote a detailed proposal to the Ministry of Education asking for the establishment of Dubrovnik's prize for visual artists. According to Murat's views, this prize was to support artists both financially and creatively, motivating them to search for the authentic expression of their Yugoslav identity, leaving aside historical, cultural and ideological distinctions. Art, and especially visual art, was regarded as a sphere in which ethnic, religious and cultural differences of Yugoslav people could be surpassed easily and, hence, was conceived as a model for the integrative processes in other areas of social and cultural life. The amalgamation of local and regional peculiarities in order to create a coherent Yugoslav art and culture could be achieved, in Murat's opinion, by regular gatherings of visual artists on the island of Lokrum near Dubrovnik. Continuous contact of artists with natural beauties of the Adriatic

Serbianism and Yugoslavism: Serbian elite from Bosnia and Herzegovina and creation of Yugoslavia] (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 2012).

coast and Adriatic sea, combined with their mutual interaction, should bring to light the creative works of distinct quality as a result of symbiotic relation of artist and their "own soil". In this way, the artworks would represent the "expression of the spirit of Yugoslav people, the manifestation of their artistic abilities, and the product of the soil on which they were created".²

As in the field of literature and visual arts, there were many attempts of articulation of the idea of cultural rapprochement of Yugoslav people and the development of homogeneous Yugoslav music and culture in the field of music in the 1920s. The first serious steps towards the integration of Yugoslav musical life were taken at the end of that decade, in 1928, thanks to the establishment of several music journals (*Muzika /Music*, 1928–9, Belgrade/, *Glasnik Muzičkog društva "Stanković" /Gazette of the Music society "Stanković"*, 1928–30, 1931–4, 1938–41, Belgrade/, *Jugoslavenski autor /Yugoslav Author*, Zagreb, 1931–2, 1937/, *Zvuk /The Sound*, 1932–36, Belgrade/, etc.) which were publishing regular reports on music events from the three main cultural centres in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, as well as the articles on the achievements of composers from different Yugoslav regions. The foundation of several professional associations, such as Yugoslav section of the International Society for Contemporary Music (1926), *Savez muzičara Kraljevine SHS* (Musicians' Association of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) (1921/22), *Udruženje jugoslovenskih muzičkih autora* (The Society of Yugoslav Music Authors) (1929) also contributed to the development of closer ties between musicians from different parts of the Yugoslav state.

Still, it was not until the beginning of 1928 that the problem of the actual ways and methods by which Yugoslav music should be created was put forward owing to the poll organized by the journal *Muzika (Music)*. The aim of the poll was to initiate a dialog among Yugoslav composers in order to address the problems and obstacles that stood in the creation of unified national music. Composers were expected to convey their views on the following questions: "1. What is, in your opinion, national style in music in general? 2. What are the elements on which Yugoslav music should be based? 3. Did the older generation have appropriate understanding of the national music and did they establish adequate foundation for further development of Yugoslav music? and 4. Could foreign influences help the establishment of national music?"³

The results of the poll showed the existence of plural, often mutually exclusive stances of Yugoslav composers, from the one of Božidar Joksimović who insisted on the idea of using only Serbian music folklore as a basis for the development of Yugoslav music, then the one of Josip Slavenski who saw his

² M. M. Vasić, "Dubrovačka nagrada. Slobodna kolonija naših umetnika", *Srpski književni glasnik*, I/6 (1920), 454–61.

³ "Anketa o nacionalnom muzičkom stilu", *Muzika*, 5&6 (1928), 152–59.

own music as an exemplary of authentic Yugoslav music because of the amalgamation of Western constructivist compositional methods with Eastern intuitive approach, or the one of Kosta Manojlović and Lujo Šafranek Kavić who opted for music nationalism grounded on authentic folklore material from various Yugoslav regions that bore no traces of foreign traditions. Although the published poll results included short answers from only nine Yugoslav composers, they not only revealed the diversity of conceptions of Yugoslav music, but also pointed to the problem of making consensus on its establishment as the product of integrated Yugoslav culture more than any other influential discussions and polemics initiated in the later period, for example those that appeared in the journal *Zvuk* in 1935 on the question of acceptability of composing national music with the exclusion of local music traditions.

It is important to note that the process of integration in the field of music in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Kingdom of Yugoslavia intensified after 1928, developing in many different directions and reaching the area of music production, music performance, music pedagogy, music publishing, music criticism, music research, etc. This was particularly instigated with the turn towards aggressive promotion of integral Yugoslavism in political and cultural fields after the proclamation of dictatorship by King Aleksandar Karađorđević (6 January 1929). Among other participants in the field of music, these circumstances put great pressure on the music editors in Radio Belgrade because of the fact that political and intellectual elite believed in the powerful role of this station in mediating the crucial political and cultural ideas to the wider public.⁴

Mass media such as a radio station which could reach tens of thousands of listeners in the Serbian part of the Kingdom was seen as an ideal tool for the extensive propaganda despite the fact that it was a private company. Radio Belgrade's management was expected to adjust the programme to the political and cultural platform of king Alexander which, besides integral Yugoslavism, included the promotion of the state-funded organization Soko Kraljevine Jugoslavije (Falcon Society of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) and its specific ideology, the political alliance called Mala Antanta (Little Entente), as well as the music and culture of friendly Slavic states such as Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria. The music programme editors were expected to mediate the content and aims of the mentioned platform through radio shows. Owing to that, one of their main goals was to operationalize the concept of Yugoslav music through radio programme and other activities that could, consequently, stimulate a more coherent integration of Yugoslav music.

⁴ Cf. Mirjana Nikolić, *Radio u Srbiji (1924–1941)* (Beograd: Zadužbina Andrejević, 2006).

Murky concept of Yugoslav music and its possible mediations: the approaches of music editors of the interwar Radio Belgrade

Music editors faced many restrictions in the creation of radio programme, starting with the lack of financial, technical and human resources. Additionally, their decision making process was constantly influenced by the preferences of consumers and the financial planning of the radio owners. Torn between the expectations of the station's management on the one side and the expectations of the consumers on the other side, editors were forced to seek solutions that were often in contradiction with their own beliefs and aesthetic ideals.⁵ The fact that there was no consensus between Yugoslav musicians on the question of production of Yugoslav music and the fact that there was much ambiguity in the discussion of possible paths of integration in the field of music certainly complicated the editors' endeavours.

The analysis of the Radio Belgrade music programme available in its published weekly (*Radio Beograd /Radio Belgrade/*, 1929–41, Belgrade), as well as the archival documents from the Petar Krstić's collection,⁶ points to certain tendencies in the process of music programme creation and, more specifically, of the creation of programme dedicated to Yugoslav music. It should be noticed that the efforts of editors in the establishment of Yugoslav music took several directions: 1. presentation of art, salon and folk music from different regions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 2. production of particular shows dedicated solely to different genres and types of Yugoslav music, 3. production of shows dedicated to individual Yugoslav composers, 4. broadcasting lectures on Yugoslav composers, country's music history and musical life, 5. international presentation of Yugoslav music through cooperation with radio stations from abroad, 6. publishing articles on Yugoslav art and folk music, composers, performers and institutions in the radio's weekly, 7. organizing competitions for Yugoslav composers.

The first twelve years of the Radio Belgrade broadcasting were marked by the diligent and ambitious work in the presentation of Yugoslav folk music which occupied the largest part of the radio programme. The prominence of this type of music in the programme was a result of political circumstances, radio management's social and financial aims, and listeners' music preferences. The ideology of integral Yugoslavism was based profoundly on the belief of the

⁵ Cf. Ivana Vesić, "Radio Belgrade in the Proces of Creating Symbolic Boundaries: The Case of Folk Music Programme Between the Two World Wars (1929–1940)", *Музикологија/Musicology*, 14 (2013), 31–55.

⁶ Part of the collection that consist of correspondence, manuscripts of articles, public speeches, radio scenarios and preliminary versions of several laws is systematized and catalogued, and is kept at the Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA in Belgrade. Cf. Ivana Vesić, *Katalog rukopisne zaostavštine Petra Krstića*, <http://www.music.sanu.ac.rs/Dokumenta/ZastavstinaPetraKrstica.pdf>

importance of folk cultural heritage as a cornerstone in the constitution of unified and integrated Yugoslav culture. Therefore, it is no surprise that the radio owners and their employees saw Yugoslav folk music and its broadcast as ideal means to conform to the goals of the political elite perceiving folk songs and dances from different regions of Yugoslavia as authentic artifacts that embedded, in peculiar ways, the various qualities of Yugoslav spirit. Besides, folk music program constantly draw lot of attention from radio subscribers which was a significant fact for the radio management since they strove to increase profits of the station.

The centrality of folk music in the Radio Belgrade programme put a great pressure on music editors who had to work diligently on diversification of shows, and to regularly improve the quality of performances. Accordingly, editors made great efforts in the foundation of radio's own folk orchestras along with finding talented singers and instrumentalists, and introducing social, cultural and aesthetic characteristics of folk music practices from different Yugoslav regions to the listeners.⁷ Despite their willingness to struggle with financial obstacles and coercion from the "above", together with the determination to emancipate the music taste of the larger population, music specialists from Radio Belgrade had to confront harsh public criticism from the music professionals and intellectuals. Critical edge was pointed to the selection of ensembles, singers and instrumentalists including the genres and forms of folk music represented in the repertoire, and it persisted until the outbreak of Second World War.⁸ While condemning the inclusion of "commercialized" folk music on the programme and the possible pernicious effect it could have on the preservation of authentic Yugoslav folk practices, critics ignored the various positive aspects that characterized radio broadcasts. Among other things, it is important to mention the didactic function of Radio Belgrade's folk music programme, which reflected in the spoken parts of the broadcasts, as well as the articles published regularly in the radio's weekly. For example, the short essays of Branislav Čobanić that appeared repeatedly throughout 1938 and 1939 in the *Radio Beograd* weekly accustomed the wider public to the aesthetic, formal, textual or social qualities of folk songs and dances. The spoken sections of folk music shows probably played the same role. This can be assumed on the basis of one of the preserved scripts for the show dedicated to the presentation of folk music

⁷ Cf. Ivana Vesić, "Radio Belgrade in the Proces of Creating....", op. cit.; Marija Dumnić, "The Creation of Folk Music Programme on Radio Belgrade Before World War Two: Editorial Policies and Performing Ensembles", *Музикологизал Musicology*, 14 (2013), 9–29.

⁸ Cf. Ivana Vesić, "Radio Belgrade in the Proces of Creating....", op. cit.; Ivana Vesić, "Muzički program Radio Beograda između dva svetska rata i fenomen nacionalne i kulturne 'pedagogije'", in: *Radio kao stub razvoja srpske i jugoslovenske muzičke kulture i umetnosti muzike*, ed. by Ivana Medić (Beograd: Muzikološki institut SANU, 2015), in print.

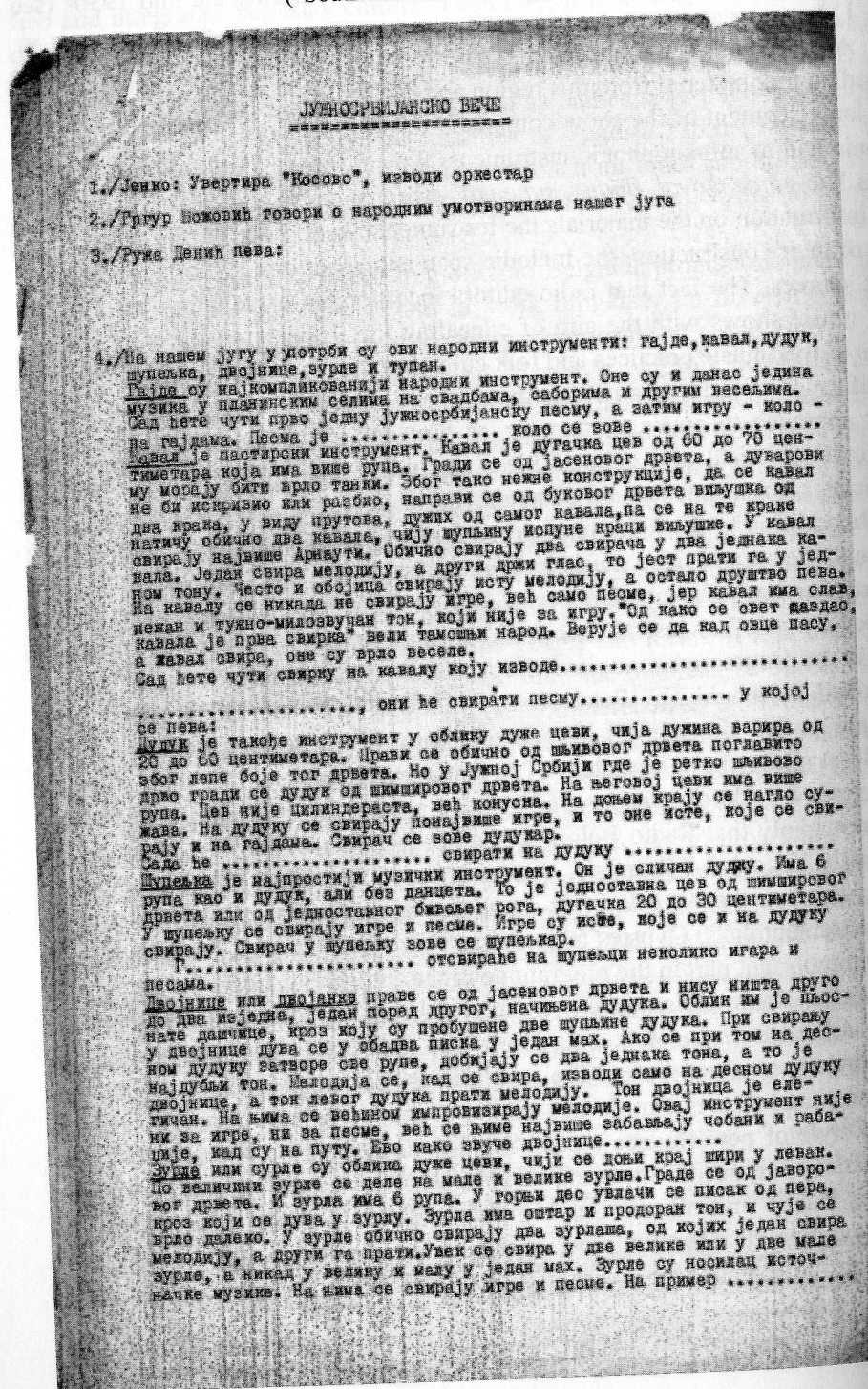
from the region of South Serbia, as well as art music inspired by local musical heritage which was broadcasted on Radio Belgrade during the mid 1930s (see Ex. 1).⁹

Apart from the announcements of performances of folk songs and art music based on folk material from this region and a short lecture on the local proverbs, the large segment of the show comprised of the brief presentation of the aerophonic and membranophonic instruments typical for the local folk music practices like *gajde*, *kaval*, *duduk*, *šupeljka*, *dvojnice*, *zurle* and *tupan*. It included the information on the materials the instruments were made of, the characteristics of their construction, the melodic span and repertoire taken from the relevant sources. The fact that radio editors incorporated explanatory parts in the folk music shows with the aim of educating the listeners on different dimensions of folk music practices and folk culture practices proves their belief in the significance of radio as an emancipatory tool. Furthermore, it points in part to their approach to music programme as a means in the process of conveying dominant political and cultural ideas, including the promotion of Yugoslav music as a homogeneous and coherent whole.

In addition to the folk music programme, music editors gave some prominence to the art and salon music in this process, especially in the first five years of broadcasting. During that period, the show titled "The great concert of Yugoslav music" or just "Concert of Yugoslav music" started to appear regularly in the programme, once or twice a month. The reasons of its initiation was explained thoroughly by Petar Krstić who was in charge of the music programme at that time. In an introductory note he wrote and read in the first broadcast of the show, he stated: "The management of Radio Belgrade decided to prepare a cycle of concerts of Yugoslav art music for its subscribers. That does not imply that Radio Belgrade has not promoted Yugoslav music so far, especially Yugoslav folk music. You have very often had a chance to hear on our programme the Yugoslav folk songs and dances performed by folk singers and instrumentalists, Gypsies and others. That type of music will continue to play an important part in the programme in the future. But, apart from Yugoslav folk music, Radio Belgrade is willing to present to you Yugoslav art music which differs from the folk one due to the fact that it has been created by Yugoslav artists – composers. The repertoire of Yugoslav concerts will include folk songs and dances that do not belong to the (so called) improvised genre, i.e. the style of performance typical for folk singers and instrumentalists, but are artistically stylized in the manner of Yugoslav composers such as Mokranjac, Žganec, Hubad and others (...). My duty will be to make the repertoire of Yugoslav concerts appealing and, at the same time, on the appropriate level, including the selection of pieces and quality of performance. Radio Belgrade

⁹ "Južnosrbijansko veče", Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA, Rukopisna zaostavština Petra Krstića, PK 221–2/III.

Example 1. First page of the script for the show "Južnosrbijansko veče"
 ("South-Serbian Evening")



will be pleased to receive written comments, suggestions and proposals from the listeners."¹⁰

Typical structure of the show included a note written and presented by Petar Krstić, consisting of a brief review of the composers' biography together with formal and stylistic analysis of the performed works. After Krstić's announcement, domestic and Russian artists or ensembles normally performed works from diverse genres and periods of Yugoslav music history. The solo-song genre dominated the programme along with orchestral preludes, piano lyrical pieces and choral music (both secular and sacred). During the first twelve broadcasts of the show, radio listeners were introduced, among others, to the works by Stevan Mokranjac, (Rukoveti /Garlands/ for choir, music for the theatre piece *Ivkova slava*, excerpts from Opelo /Requiem/ for choir), Petar Krstić (fragments from the opera *Zulumčar*, music for the theatre pieces *Koštana* and *Dorčolska posla*, Srpske igre /Serbian Dances/ for orchestra, solo-songs, piano pieces, etc.), Josip Slavenski (Jugoslovenska pesma i igra /Yugoslav song and dance/, Violin Sonata, choral pieces and solo-songs), Miloje Milojević (cycle *Muzika za klavir* /Pieces for the piano/, solo-songs), Petar Konjović (Legenda /Legend/ for piano solo, solo-songs), Mihovil Logar (cycles for piano *Musique à mon bébé*, Album za mladež /Album for the young/, pieces for piano solo), Jakov Gotovac (Koleda, folk ritual for choir and orchestra, solo-songs, symphonic *kolo* *Jadovanka za teletom* /A Lament for the Calf/), Stevan Hristić (Dubrovački rekvijem /Dubrovnik Requiem/ for soloist and choir, overture from the oratorio *Vaskrsenje* /Resurrection/), Ivan Zajc, Stanislav Binički, Lucijan Škerjanc and others. The performances of works by Petar Krstić had a prominent role in the programme – for example, one of the shows was entirely dedicated to his music.

This show gradually disappeared from the programme of Radio Belgrade, being replaced by the less ambitious productions and more popular music forms and genres. In 1931, Radio Belgrade started to broadcast the "Yugoslav concert" show disguised in diverse titles such as "Afternoon concert of Radio Orchestra" from 1934 to 1937 and "Entertaining concert of Radio Orchestra" from 1938 to 1941. It continued to air until the Second World War. It usually embraced orchestral music, including marches, stylized dances and potpourris of famous Yugoslav composers of salon, military, and art music. Many pieces were reappearing in the programme for many years like Milenko Paunović's *Svadbeni marš* (Wedding March), Davorin Jenko's overture *Kosovo*, Stanislav Binički's march *Na Drinu* (On Drina), Jovan Urban's *Srpsko potpuri* (Serbian Potpourri), Ivan Dominis's *Gusle potpuri* (The Gusle Potpourri), Mokranjac's orchestral version of *Rukoveti* (Garlands), etc. This show's main characteristic was the prominence given to the popular pieces of Yugoslav composers that,

¹⁰ "Prvi jugoslovenski koncert" [The first Yugoslav concert], Archive of the Institute of Musicology SASA, Rukopisna zaostavština Petra Krstića, PK 221-2/IV.

beside the alluring sound engendered from the vivacious and captivating rhythms and melodies, also bore a patriotic stamp and symbolics. The combination of both appealing sound and apparent political meaning probably contributed to the endurance of the show's original form for almost six years (1937)¹¹ unlike the first cycle of Yugoslav music. Although, there is a lack of proper data, it can be assumed that the listeners' preferences played a certain role in this process.

In parallel with the appearance of the programme focused on the Yugoslav orchestral music of salon or popular type, the radio station's music experts decided to launch the show dedicated to the introduction of works by individual Yugoslav composers of art music in 1932. This probably resulted from the realization that this type of music had been underrepresented in the programme for almost two years and the intention to continue with the endeavours to develop the idea of Yugoslav music in practice. In the first several months after the cycle of concerts was initiated, listeners had the opportunity to learn more about the music of Mihovil Logar, Milenko Paunović, Svetomir Nastasijević, Juro Tkalčić, Božidar Joksimović and other Yugoslav composers. Soon after that, the cycle was less frequently featured in the programme, when, finally, in 1938 its airing practically ended.

Along with the presentations of individual Yugoslav composers, radio editors strove to enrich this segment of programme with the lectures on history of Yugoslav music, its main figures, tendencies, genres, etc. The most ambitious work in that process was certainly the organization and preparation of the concerts of Yugoslav music for international broadcasting which took place in the 1930s. Apart from the collaboration with individual radio stations, such as Radio Vienna or Radio Prague, which resulted from the idea to develop intercultural connections, Radio Belgrade and its experts also participated in the project of European concerts (*Concerts européens*) along with World concerts (*Concerts mondiaux*), initiated by the International Broadcasting Union in order to both stimulate the rapprochement of diverse European nations and globally promote European values.¹² Unlike the concerts broadcasted in Radio Vienna and Prague that gave editors lot of freedom in the selection of repertoire and types of performances, European concerts were based on rigid policies concerning the choice of genres, length of individual pieces, as well as the instrumentation. Despite technical, aesthetic and formal restrictions that stood in the way of international presentation of Yugoslav music, radio editors made efforts to demonstrate its diversity and uniqueness, focusing not only on art music, but also on local folk music traditions. The amalgamation of regional folk musics

¹¹ This show was transformed in 1937 owing to the inclusion of music by foreign composers of art and salon orchestral music.

¹² See Suzzane Lommers, *Europe – On Air. Interwar Projects for Radio Broadcasting* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

and artistic pieces by Yugoslav composers was possibly thought of as an adequate operationalization of the Yugoslav idea and, consequently, of the concept of Yugoslav music.

Concluding remarks

Although the preoccupation of Radio Belgrade's music editors with folk music programme, especially since 1934, is evident from the available archives, it does not put into question the radio's impact on the process of institutionalization of other music practices. Selection of works and composers of salon and art music for the radio shows in the longer period together with notes, lectures and articles devoted to the explanation of their characteristics and significance contributed to the development of certain beliefs and assumptions about Yugoslav music, its diversity, boundaries, scopes among listeners and wider public. Systematic and serious approach taken by radio editors, which consisted of diligent work not only on music performances in the shows, but also on the notes, scripts and lectures, as well as the reputation of radio as an important cultural agent, puts it in an authoritative position on the question of Yugoslav music – what it is and what it represents. It was particularly significant in the case of folk music which was being represented to the wider audiences not only as an entertaining product, but also as an aesthetic and ethical object.

The fact that radio introduced Yugoslav music to the much wider population than any other music institution of the interwar period confirms its importance in the process of canon formation, especially in the sphere of folk music, but also in the spheres of art and salon music. It also contributed to the setting of boundaries between different musical practices and their continuities and transitions.

SUMMARY

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy at the end of the First World War, the newly founded states in the Central and South-Eastern Europe faced thorough transformations in the spheres of politics, culture, economy, etc. Sociocultural and political transition in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes represented a slow and complicated process marked with struggles and instabilities. Yugoslav political elite aimed at stimulating political and social integration of the different parts of new state using various methods. They were partly focused on culture which, among other things, included the use of new media (radio) in deepening the sociocultural and sociopolitical bonding of distinct Yugoslav regions. The foundation of Radio Belgrade in March 1929 had an important role in that process. Radio Belgrade continuously broadcasted shows that were embedded in the concept of Yugoslav music, both art and folk music. For example, during the twelve years of its existence before the German occupation, there were numerous shows featuring orchestral, instrumental and vocal music of the Yugoslav composers, as well as folk music from different parts of Yugoslavia.

Additionally, radio officials stimulated the production of Yugoslav art music by the public competitions and organized many events that supported the idea of cultural unity of Yugoslavia. I will analyse in detail the possible effects of these activities, focusing primarily on the problem of music as a mediator in dominant political and cultural processes. The main aim is to show how much power music bore in the eyes of the Yugoslav political elite which viewed it as an integrating force in the newly formed Yugoslav society.