

AFTER ZERO HOUR: STATES AS “CUSTODIANS OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN CULTURE,” OR “GUARDIANS OF ADVANCED ART”*

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of radically new, avant-garde movements in German music and throughout Western Europe after WW2 has often been seen as expressing a strivings to create on a *tabula rasa*, in order to create distance from the horrors of the recent past. In the countries of the communist bloc, the imposed ideology of socialist realism also created a sharp break, similar to that in the West, except that Zero Hour was conceived in quite a different fashion, as a move in the opposite direction from Western modernism. The case of post-war music in Yugoslavia is examined under the light of the fact that the country did not belong to either bloc.

KEYWORDS: Zero Hour, avant-garde music, socialist realism and music, Cold War, Iron Curtain, Serbian music, Yugoslav music

I

It is undeniable that the great majority of contemporary narratives on European music after 1945 are valid and well founded, although some new examination could offer a picture with more nuances and reliefs, thus highlighting all the complexity and contradictions of the musical tendencies and achievements of that period – specifically from the end of WW2 until 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down, symbolically marking the beginning of the fall of the state socialist regimes in the countries

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of the Warsaw Pact. It also announced the lifting of the Iron Curtain, which represented a strong metaphor, possessing at the same time a material reality, witnessed in the Berlin Wall itself and the borders between the two blocs made of barbed-wire fences, watch-towers and mine fields. In the course of the Cold War decades the Iron Curtain, like a giant membrane through which the osmosis of only small particles of restricted quantity and quality of goods was possible, presented a really very serious obstacle for the traffic of goods and also of people. However, sometimes it happened to be relatively porous and research into just such cases could provide the basis for new insight into the state of affairs during the Cold War. It should not be forgotten that the Iron Curtain was not always at the same level of impermeability and that such situations depended mostly on the actual political relations between the two blocs. It should be also remembered that although the member states of the Eastern bloc were obliged to act in accordance with general instructions, there were no totally identical attitudes towards acceptable levels of exchange with the countries of the other bloc. For that reason, and also because of different pre-war levels of musical development, the East European socialist state countries cannot be observed according to a single criterion, as a uniform group but, as much as possible, in a differentiated manner. This applies especially to Yugoslavia, which was not a member of the Warsaw Pact and which tried to find a balance (with greater or lesser success) between the two blocs. Accordingly, the second part of this article will be devoted to the case of Yugoslavia.

Seven decades after the end of WW2 a renewed interest has been shown in the so-called Zero Hour, known in Germany as “Nullpunkt” or “Stunde Null” – a metaphor for building new societies from ruins, for a radical new beginning in all areas of public life, from politics to the arts. In the words of Peter Sloterdijk, post-war Germans felt the necessity of distancing themselves completely from the catastrophic recent past, “to begin anew and almost *ex nihilo*,” to rid themselves of all tradition, because “since the year 1945 we have nothing but the indescribable behind our backs, and we are tattooed by unconditional horror” (Sloterdijk 1988: 47-48). Describing the Germans’ state of mind after the war, the philosopher Karl Jaspers suggested, “One simply does not want to suffer any more. One wants to escape the misery [and] to live, but does not wish to ponder. The mood is as if one expects to be compensated after the terrible suffering or at least to be comforted; but one does not want to be burdened with guilt” (Berghahn 1987: 185). Among the essential issues of the Germany of those times was the blame the younger generation placed on the older ones whom they rightly regarded as being responsible for the Nazi horrors. It is interesting to find a reference to that issue in the novel *Predeo slikan čajem* [*Landscape Painted With Tea* (1988)], by the Serbian writer Milorad Pavić, best known for another novel of his, *Hazarski rečnik* [*The Dictionary of the Khazars*]. A character in the *Landscape Painted With Tea* is advising a young Yugoslav who wants to flee the country after the war: “They’ll [the Germans] be looking for younger people, who bear no responsibility for the defeat; the generation of fathers has lost the game there; there it’s your generation’s move” (Pavić 1990/2: 41; Serbian edition: Pavić 1990/1: 48). We will bear these words in mind a little later, when observing the avant-garde ideas of post-war German (and some other) composers.

The concept of Zero Hour is closely linked with that of *tabula rasa*, a utopian socio-political project to build a new and (of course!) better world on a completely new basis after the massive destruction of populations and material goods. In the field of culture, German writers, artists and composers were the ones who put most effort into achieving a discontinuity with pre-1945 times (more precisely with the 12 years following the rise to power of Hitler's National-Socialist party). However, those strivings were considerably weaker than the "ostrich-like" behaviour (Brockmann 1997: 70), or behaviour "as if nothing had happened" (Fahrenbach 1992: 109–110). In German literature a break with the past was sought with the idea of a necessary politicization, or engagement, so that in it a stream (initially rather thin) of so-called "rubble literature" (Trümmerliteratur) could be detected. There were, however, strong voices warning that what was happening in Germany (meaning West Germany) was more a "restoration" than a "renewal" (Kogon 1964: 65) and also a view has been exposed that "The year 1945 was not the year zero. Even back then there was, despite all appearances to the contrary, no such thing as a *tabula rasa*" (Ibid.). There are those authors who claim that even if Zero Hour in German literature was more a myth than reality, it was a very important and useful idea to post-war Germans in the process of their coming to terms with their past (Ibid., 73–74). We shall see now how these opinions apply to the post-war *musical* scene.

When approaching the musical field specifically, we can notice that German musicology first took over the idea of "Zero Hour" from the sister disciplines of the history of art and the history of literature – without feeling the need to elaborate on it. So for instance, Ulrich Dibelius, in his book *Moderne Musik 1945–1965* (published in 1966), names its first chapter "1945 – das Jahr Null der modernen Musik." There have been different opinions in Germany and elsewhere regarding the validity of such a term when applied to the field of music. In an important volume on 20th century music, by Hermann Danuser (Danuser: 1984) the author does not even mention Zero Hour, and more recently Albrecht Riethmüller wrote about "the birth of 'Year Zero' from the spirit of suppression," discarding it as a problematic category (Riethmüller 2006: 7). There is research that confirms that continuities were maintained between the Nazi and post-war times with regard to the people who took part in musical life as composers, publishers, singers, players, music critics, etc. (Custodis and Geiger 2013: 11). Therefore, it is again possible to assume that "Zero Hour" – the desire of probably a minority of intellectuals and artists to make a decisive break with the past – could indeed be considered as being more myth than reality. Hence, it is not unexpected to hear claims that the Zero Hour project (if there was one on a broader basis) failed. I am inclined to consider that there was a coexistence of different strivings. Certain groups of composers and artists were indeed passionately following a project of distancing themselves most resolutely from the Nazi times by breaking all possible links with that past. On the other hand, there were many other composers of all generations who, while sharing anti-Nazi attitudes with the former, did not think that continuity with pre-war neoclassicism meant any non-critical view of the twelve years of state terrorism.

The example of Karlheinz Stockhausen first comes to mind when thinking of Zero Hour decisively influencing a composer's entire output. A prominent figure of the post-war avant-garde, he was a hurt young man, left without parents after the war, who ardently worked at making a break with the shameful national past and creating new artistic horizons. His avant-garde ideas were shared by many young composers of his generation who enthusiastically undertook to depart from the dominant neoclassical style and who came to Darmstadt and other festivals and seminars of modern music all over Europe in order to find artistic as well as political soul mates. There is no space here to discuss the biographies of other German composers in relation to Zero Hour, so I will only briefly mention the untypical case of Wolfgang Fortner (1907–1987), two decades older than Stockhausen, who was a neoclassicist in his early years, in the early 1930s, and criticized as a Kulturbolshevik and “undeutsch” composer. Then, a few years later he composed a Festive Cantata and similar works for various Nazi propagandistic occasions. He also criticized Schoenberg for being “rootless” and a “Nihilist,” but already in 1946 he was among the founders of the Darmstadt Summer courses, used Serialism in his works and would later hold the highest professional positions (Salmen 2005: 267–268).

Although Zero Hour is most often associated with the psychological climate and strivings in the defeated Germany, it could be claimed, though not apodictically and certainly with necessary adaptations to different local varieties, that it also applies to the other countries involved in the War. As regards the countries of the communist bloc, the imposed political ideology nominally demanded a sharp, revolutionary discontinuation with the past, a promotion of the “new socialist man” who would reconstruct society – a concept related to Zero Hour. Indeed, one could speak of a specific Zero Hour in communist countries whereby at first it was required that the communist socio-political revolution be followed by a similar turn in the areas of artistic expression. Zero Hour in communist countries was conceived in quite the opposite way, given that it was required that a move in an opposite direction to that of Western modernism be conducted. Therefore, we can observe two main post-war art utopias, a collective/anti-modernist and an individualistic/modernist one, both claiming historical laws and necessities as their basis.

In accordance with Marxist teachings regarding the development of society as a law-bound process based on a specific *historical necessity*, and the fight of the working class expressing *historical inevitability*, the ideological leadership of the communist countries viewed the development of the arts, including music, as lawful and as fulfilling a historical role.

On the other hand, Pierre Boulez, who was certainly not a Marxist and seems to have been mainly apolitical – together with some other advocates of the post-war avant-garde (such as René Leibowitz) and thinkers who were ambivalent towards the path the avant-garde had taken in the 1950s and 1960s (such as Theodor Adorno) wrote programmatic texts in which they often referred to notions such as the “historical necessity” of avant-garde explorations, “responsibility” towards history, “fulfilling the mandate of history,” the “demands of history,” “requirements of musical material on the subject,” “historical imperative,” “awareness,” “inevitability,” etc. Those

who, at the time, openly questioned the "historical necessity" of the ideas of Boulez, Schaeffer, Stockhausen and a number of other prominent avant-gardists, were not rare. However, Western countries seemed to believe that the only method for progress in the "free world" was that of the avant-garde, so they supported it financially, all the more so as it seemed to be very effective as a provocation for the communist bloc (Stonor Saunders 1999).

As has already been mentioned, a great number of composers from both the East and the West aimed at being up to the task of *expressing historical necessity*, although they understood it in different or opposing ways. Put both very simply and evocatively, as has been done by Richard Taruskin, the essential debate during the majority of the 20th century (specifically during the first two thirds of the century) for all composers from both sides of the Iron Curtain, was "whether artists lived in history or in society" (Taruskin 2010: 221). Of course, metaphorically speaking, Taruskin wished to point to artists having to choose either to serve their art or their society. The communist ideologues, however, could not accept such an either/or dilemma, given that, for them, serving art and serving society was one and the same thing. As for the artists themselves in communist countries, it is well known how stressful solving such a dilemma could be for them. Serving society had, of course, different connotations in Western countries. Here, composers did not feel obliged to present in their works a positive (embellished, polished) image of their societies. Additionally, some of them, probably a majority in fact, wished to compose music that would be well received by their public, causing them to renounce any progressivist ideas typical of the avant-gardists that did not have the chance to be appreciated by a wider audience. As previously mentioned, it is a well-known fact today that the US worked hard to support American modern music in Europe, in order to help promote their and, more generally, Western superiority in creating progressive avant-garde music, free and autonomous by its very definition, but obviously in need of financial and propagandistic state support.

The ideological/artistic competition between the two blocs included the issue of *advanced art*, but again the ways of understanding this category were completely opposed. Whereas Soviet ideological leaders, Zhdanov in particular, boasted that their literature was the most *advanced* in the world (Demaitre 1966: 265), the American art critic Clement Greenberg claimed that after WW2 the United States had become the guardian of "advanced art." Obviously the term "advanced" had a different meaning for the two sides: engaged "functionally" for the communist cause, "socially/politically-aware," "accessible to the people," etc., versus the "avant-garde," innovative in ideas and techniques. As regards the question as to from whom advanced art had to be guarded, Greenberg certainly meant domestic, but also foreign forces who supported conservative art that appealed much more to the broader public. Soviet officials firmly held that it was erroneous to believe that the radicalism and complexity of Western contemporary musical technique were signs of progress, as real progress would have to result in making music simple and thus accessible to common people (Zhdanov 1950/2: 32).

No matter what the masses really wished, Andrei Zhdanov and other ideological leaders worked hard to enforce socialist realism, the concept of which was

created by the educated elite in the name of the masses (Groys 1992: 9). Those ideologues set themselves the task of promoting competitiveness with the West on all levels, including the cultural. They had no doubt that the Soviet Union was “the true custodian of the musical culture of mankind just as she is in all other fields, too, a bulwark of human of human civilisation and culture against bourgeois corruption and decay” (Zhdanov 1950/2: 33). Zhdanov insisted that the Bolsheviks did not reject cultural heritage: “On the contrary, we are critically assimilating the cultural heritage of all nations and all times in order to choose from it all that can inspire the working people of Soviet society to great exploits in labour, science, and culture” (Zhdanov 1950/1: 96). As “Custodians,” the musical cultures belonging to the Eastern bloc were expected to be respected because of the mission they took on, but in the eyes of the West they tended, of course, towards conservatism and, therefore – according to the especially sharp and controversial composer, Pierre Boulez – they belonged, like all such civilisations, to “a declining civilisation...”

Without fearing accusations of promoting conservatism, Zhdanov constantly insisted on using all that is good from the musical heritage of the whole world and particularly that from Russia, and at the same time “to develop it in the spirit of the new demands of our great epoch” (Zhdanov 1950/2: 34). It was decided from “above” that novelties in Soviet art should result from novelties in their socialist *content*, in contrast to “bourgeois” innovations in *form* (Groys 1992: 41). Marina Frolova-Walker has drawn attention to the reasons why “innovation, originality, and progress” were foreign to the art of socialist realism, which she found in the 1936 Soviet Constitution proclaiming that socialism had already been established in their country, so that the Soviet Union made a step outside the history of class-based societies and the changes that would later be brought by communism would be quantitative, not qualitative. Following this logic, as has been suggested by Marina Frolova-Walker, “in this state of ‘socialism outside of history,’ there could no longer be anything radically new, and so any striving for artistic innovation was now merely a strange, superfluous whim, symptomatic of unreformed individuals who had lapsed into pre-socialist consciousness” (Ibid, 41–42). Therefore, nobody dared ask “What after socialist realism?” as it seemed that socialist realism would be a long (or eternal?) period of “fluctuating stasis” (I do not wish to ironize here Leonard Meyer’s term, but it seems to me that it fits well with what Soviet ideologists expected to happen).

In fact, according to Soviet officials, socialist realism was constantly acquiring new forms and stylistic expressions; it was being born anew again and again while preserving its unity and basic principles. According to them, Socialist Realism was undergoing a development which was passing through different stages, its concept being “inseparably linked to that of artistic progress” (Socialist Realism 1979). These were all, of course, what one could describe as verbal smokescreen statements designed to try and hide the nonsense of the socialist realist project. By imagining their regime to be an “authentic custodian of universal human culture,” obviously referring to the *art* musical culture, Soviet ideologues seemed to imply – although their rhetoric was different – that they did not expect art in general and specifically music to develop further, but that various syntheses of pre-revolutionary styles should be achieved.

So, while on the one hand it is possible to observe music and the arts in the West after 1945 as a creative way of fighting for autonomy and the freedom of individuals by participating in radical avant-garde movements (the artist is ideally an Explorer/Pioneer in the state that "guards advanced art"), on the other hand regimes in countries of state socialism behaved as if freedom had already been achieved (it is of no importance for us to know if they really believed in their own proclamations) and that only minor "improvements" in the quality of works as regards their harmonization with socialist realist content were needed (the artist is imagined as a contributor to the project of the state as the "custodian of universal human culture"). So, instead of development, a long period of stasis, without substantial changes, seems to have been the abiding concept. It could be suggested that communist ideology regarded music and other arts of the socialist realist period as self-perfecting in the sense of fulfilling all the tasks put before them, and at the same time existing *outside history*, as has been pointed out by Marina Frolova-Walker (Frolova-Walker 2004: 108) or even in post-history, with "history" being the time frame for bourgeois art and culture (Groys 1992: 41, 48–49, 114). For an "Artist in a State as Custodian" the present must have seemed never-ending, without any major developments in music, so that any kind of competition with the West in that sphere was out of the question. A more distant future was not discussed: the argument often used by modernists that their ideas could not be understood by their contemporaries because they were too innovative, but that they would only be fully appreciated by people who would live in fifty or a hundred years time was sharply criticized as it implied that they – the modernists – were ahead of their time whereas the "custodians" were very much lagging behind. Zhdanov was especially negative concerning certain Soviet composers who backed such ideas, commenting on such thinking as "really terrifying. To become accustomed to such an attitude is extremely dangerous. Such a theory indicates an estrangement from the people" (Zhdanov 1950/2: 26).

During the Cold War there were certain intellectuals and artists, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, who did not encounter problems when crossing the Iron Curtain, the term probably having been used for the first time in Winston Churchill's speech given in the USA in March 1946 in which he, among other important messages, named communism as "a growing challenge and peril of Christian civilisation,"² alluding to its official atheism and designating it, therefore, as barbarism. The Iron Curtain, as it has been imaginatively depicted by György Peteri, would soften into the Nylon Curtain in the times of the "thaw" and an increased openness between the countries of both sides of the divide, and there were indeed some periods of the kind during the Cold War (Peteri 2004). In his important article, Peteri made allusions not only to nylon as a metaphor for the consumer society of the Western countries which fuelled the desire for higher living standards in the countries on the other side of the divide, but also to the greater permeability of nylon in contrast to iron which allowed certain cultural interactions between the East and the West. By virtue of his

2 Churchill's speech can be found in many places on the Internet. I have accessed it on the site <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace> on 22 August 2015.

visits to the “second world countries,” Jean-Paul Sartre contributed to the easing of the somewhat “defensive self-isolation” (Peteri) of the Communist bloc countries. Among the rare such demonstrations of good will to relax the Cold War atmosphere was Stravinsky’s three-week visit to the Soviet Union in 1962, 48 years after he had left Russia. There were also a number of exchange tours by renowned musicians and ensembles, performing great music from the past, as well as many wonderful art exhibitions. However, when it came to *contemporary music* and art in general, things were always much more sensitive.

Let it be said here only that regarding the output of Soviet avant-garde composers of the mid-1960s and later years, such as Edison Denisov, Valentin Silvestrov, Andrey Volkonsky, Alfred Schnittke and some others, they received a mixed reception in the West. Some of them, which were performed in Darmstadt, “caused a certain sensation,” in the words of Levon Hakobian, but Western critics “frequently commented on their oeuvre in a rather condescending manner; it was treated as something not devoid of interest, but nevertheless second-rate – indeed, as a largely imitative and stylistically ‘impure’ offshoot of the great international Avant-garde” (Hakobian 2012: 132).

II

In this part of my article I wish to address the issue of Yugoslav music in the state socialism period. I believe that the examination of some crucial problems within this wide topic could shed more light on the overall post-war musical scene in Europe. Yugoslavia was an exceptional case in Europe during the Cold War, as it did not regard itself either as a “custodian of universal human culture,” or as a “guardian of advanced art.” As is known, the capital city of Serbia was the capital city of Yugoslavia for almost seven decades. During WW2, two simultaneous wars took place in the fragmented country occupied by different enemies – an anti-fascist/anti-Nazi war and a civil, inter-ethnic war, resulting in a revolutionary break with the pre-war monarchy. The country became part of the communist bloc, finding itself in a Zero Hour very similar to that of the other satellite Soviet states. Due to the Yugoslav communist president Josip Broz Tito having split with Stalin in 1948, the times that followed during the Cold War years were not as cold in Yugoslavia as elsewhere in the East. The country was offered both political and economic support from the West, but specific demands were included in the contract, as was natural and could have been expected. So, one could speak of a “soft dictatorship” in Yugoslavia, also of totalitarianism at times, especially in the first few years.³ In a report which the American embassy in Belgrade sent

3 Concerning the latter claim, one could agree with most of the theses expressed in an article published in a respectable international journal, whose authors are two Slovenian sociologists; for instance that “it seems that Yugoslavia only came close to being a totalitarian regime in its first phase, that is in the period from 1945 to 1953 (...)” (Flere, Klanjšek 2014). Perhaps one could be stricter and claim that Yugoslavia had a true totalitarian regime in those years, not just that it came close to it. Later, although elements of totalitarian regime persisted until the dissolution of the country in 1991, Yugoslavia was gradually developing towards democracy and becoming more and more Western-orientated.

to the State Department in January 1955 there was one sentence that could be quoted here: "In this country of paradoxes, the regime succeeded in realising a key paradox – a position of moderate totalitarianism" (Pavlović 2009: 108).

Although every communist country had specific socialist realist features, in the case of Yugoslavia these were even more specific, for two main reasons: 1. the period of the imposition of socialist realism upon artists was much shorter, and 2. Yugoslavia was a complex multinational federal state that united peoples of very different cultural traditions. The first 4-5 post-war years were, in fact, very much the same as in the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, since the cultural, as well as political and other strategies to enforce the new regime and make it function as planned, had been very thoroughly prepared by the national communist parties in coordination with the centre in Moscow.

Socialist realism in Yugoslav music was at its height until roughly 1950, after which it continued to decrescendo until the end of the 1950s. The application of that doctrine differed between the different constitutive Yugoslav nations. On the one side, although the general musical landscape in pre-war Yugoslavia had been mostly conservative in relation to modernist currents in Europe, there were certain Serbian and Slovenian composers born during the first decade of the 20th century who had been avant-garde-orientated in the inter-war period and who, at first, felt confused and/or frustrated by the new demands that radically challenged their earlier aspirations. On the other side, the communist regime proclaimed some new nationalities in the country, whereas in the pre-war Yugoslav monarchy there had been only three (the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians). These new nationalities – the Macedonians and the Montenegrins, later also the Muslims/Bosniaks) – found themselves in a real *Zero Hour* after the war! This situation was, in certain ways, analogous to that in the Soviet Union when efforts were made to help build the national musical cultures of the numerous non-Russian peoples who had no Western-type art music traditions.

As was mentioned earlier, before the war there were groups of Yugoslav composers who displayed a pronounced affinity for avant-garde music, mostly of Schoenbergian-Hindemithian types. The majority of them had studied in Prague, mainly in the class of Alois Hába. Some of them had achieved a certain success at international festivals of new music during the 1930s. The radical turn of events in 1945, although totally unexpected, did not bring, however, any strong resistance on their part, probably because some of them had sympathies for the leftist cause or were even communists. Composers belonging to older generations were the least moved, if at all, by the Yugoslav-styled *Zero Hour* since they did not have to change their musical technique and style which often coincided with the requirements of the new dogma (as in the case of Stevan Hristić's very successful romantic folkloric ballet *Ohridska legenda* [*The Legend of Ohrid*]). The youngest generation of composers, who had just started studying composition after 1945, had no choice but to follow the older generation, who were usually their professors. Among them were those who would, only several years later during the early 1950s, begin to explore the world of contemporary modern European music.

From after the split with the Soviet Union in 1948, the regime wished to represent itself as still “true and correct” to communist ideals, contrary to accusations coming from Moscow. It continued its earlier socialist realist rhetoric for some years, and many mass songs and other works dedicated to the Revolution were still commissioned, composed and performed on occasions such as celebrations of the newly introduced state holidays and commemorations of important events from WW2. However, at the same time, some of the youngest, and after a while also some of those belonging to the middle generations, felt that the less rigid atmosphere around 1950 was a tacit statement of tolerance for modernizing their styles. The path seemed half-open at least, but it soon became apparent that many obstacles were still in their way. Suffice it to say that around the middle of the century Stravinsky’s neoclassicist and Schoenberg’s dodecaphonic and pre-dodecaphonic works were generally regarded as the most radical modern music. These works were little known, in fact, except to a few pre-war modernists. The post-war generations had very few opportunities to hear anything from the pre- and post-modern repertoire. One way was to gather together in a flat and listen to records borrowed from the American library, mostly works by Stravinsky and Bartók (Radić 2007: 30).

That Stravinsky had long been considered a decadent was confirmed by a scandal that broke in Belgrade on 17 March 1954, when some critics and a part of the audience were shocked by the Stravinskyan neoclassicism of some of the works of two composers (Dušan Radić and Enriko Josif), both still students at the time. The ambivalence of the composers who held important positions in the Union of Composers of Serbia at that time and who made decisions regarding the position to be taken in such situation, was apparent from them first praising the works played at the concert – especially Radić’s *Spisak* [*The List*] – for their boldness and freshness of invention, then soon after sharply criticizing them and finally – two years later – sending *The List* to represent Yugoslav music at the ISCM festival in Stockholm in 1956!

In order to gain the correct perspective on those events and the frustrations composers had to suffer, one should take into account the fact that Dušan Radić (b.1929) was more or less the same age as the most radical avant-gardists of the times – Stockhausen (1928), Boulez (1925) and Nono (1924). Whilst these leading Western avant-garde composers had had the opportunity to listen to, study and discuss numerous important modernist pieces written since the end of WWI and to follow the development in diverse directions, this was completely inconceivable for Radić and his Serbian/Yugoslav contemporaries. It is true, however, that starting from the mid-1950s Radić and a number of other Serbian/Yugoslav composers were given the opportunity to stay for several weeks and months in Western countries; but, those opportunities were rare and lasted too short a time.

During the 1950s it could be seen that neoclassicism was becoming more warmly accepted probably because an awareness was growing of what was happening in avant-garde circles in Darmstadt and elsewhere. The main point of discussion became dodecaphony, the term being also used for serialism. At the beginning there were very few composers who did not oppose that technique and it is also important to stress that there were no longer any political overtones influencing such discussions. Up until

the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, there were no more political pressures of any kind for composers; only sacred Orthodox music continued to be labelled as unacceptable and potentially dangerous (Milin 2015). On the other hand, literature and film were areas in which there were constant problems in the relationship between the state and the authors, sometimes resulting in the banning of certain works on account of their anti-socialist and/or nationalistic features.

In order to introduce dodecaphony to a wider audience, the most important post-war Yugoslav musical journal *Zvuk* published, in 1955, an article that was a translation from a French original, entitled "Young French Composers on Dodecaphony" (Anon. 1955: 113), in which a wide range of opinions was presented. Several years later, fragments from an interview with Paul Hindemith were published in which he also gave his views on dodecaphony. The old master remarked that dodecaphonic music enjoyed great support from festivals and radio stations and that it was well subsidized. The author of that short article, Dragutin Gostuški, added that, "The question is not: 'Who is paying?'; but 'Why is he paying?'" There is no right answer to that, probably because it would not be paid well enough" (G-i 1959: 530).

That dodecaphony was rather foreign to the musical minds of Serbian/Yugoslav composers in their thirties at the time is demonstrated by articles written by one of the leading critics, the previously mentioned composer and musicologist Dragutin Gostuški, and some of his colleagues. He wrote in 1959: "One cannot object to young people exploring new paths and new possibilities to express themselves; in fact, one should congratulate them on that. But it is strangely arrogant to expect others to follow them without reserve in all the curves of their tortuous way! (...). It should not be forgotten that Boulez's fans are not poor and that they spend a lot of money for their purposes. Under those circumstances I have to consider as really bold only one thing: to resist that unhealthy and tyrannically ambitious art carnival" (G-i 1959: 427-428).

Although, as was briefly shown a little earlier, there were opportunities for (a restricted number of) Serbian composers to gain first-hand knowledge of most of the achievements of the avant-garde, not one of them later achieved any significant international career. There were, however, several Croatian and Slovenian (Kelemen, Malec, Globokar) composers who did manage to build a reputation outside Yugoslavia. One can only suppose that if some other young composers other than those who stayed abroad for some time, for instance Vladan Radovanović (b. 1932), who was a lonely, passionate and imaginative explorer in the fields of music and other arts, as well as in multimedia, had had the chance to stay longer in an important foreign avant-garde centre, he would possibly have had success comparable to that of György Ligeti or Yannis Xenakis. Chances to make such a breakthrough were very limited of course, given the numerous young people from around the world wishing to achieve the same who had much better financial support as well as the necessary personal contacts to do so.

The reaction of Serbian/Yugoslav composers to the freedom offered to them by Party officials to modernize their styles (although it must be said that it was not so much the result of their good will, but more of indifference, because it did not seem to be of

the highest importance or threatening in any way) could not be translated quickly into their works. Regarding their verbal statements, there is one source that is most valuable for researchers -- the transcript of the main speeches devoted to the analysis of musical development in all Yugoslav republics since the end of the war, and those of all the discussions recorded at the Conference of the Union of Composers of Yugoslavia that took place in Bled (Slovenia) in late December 1956 (Logar and Obradović 1957: 3–14). The main report about the situation in Serbia was presented by Mihovil Logar and his student Aleksandar Obradović, who was only 29 then, and known to be an influential, “vigilant” Party figure. It is obvious that they tried hard to make the report both affirmative for the modest legacy of socialist realism, which was already *passé* by then, and at the same time tolerant of modernist tendencies, because the official Party line had changed several years earlier. One can, however, notice hidden warnings against “technical novelties” in modernist works becoming “an aim *per se*”, and against superficial effects, “interesting titles at any price”, and other such things (Ibid, 13).

During the discussion, certain composers, such as the Croat Milko Kelemen -- who had by that time already studied in Paris with Olivier Messiaen (1954/5), visited important festivals of contemporary music (Siena, Darmstadt), and later studied with Wolfgang Fortner in Freiburg – drew attention to the fact that it was encouraging that Yugoslav composers had finally begun to find inspiration in the music of Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith, Schoenberg and Prokofiev, but that their music essentially belonged to the first half of the century and they were, therefore, lagging noticeably behind contemporary progressive European music. Hence, he appealed especially to the youngest composers interested in post-war trends to find there a basis for their novel and original works. He added that “the outdated neobaroque, orthodox dodecaphony and other academicisms” would not lead to positive results (Ibid, 83–84). Such a discourse by Kelemen felt like pressure on some composers to compose in a modern way that was foreign to them – very different from socialist realism, but pressure all the same (Ibid 88–89; discussion of Stanojlo Rajičić). One more opinion should be quoted here, although it was expressed at the next congress of composers, held in Skopje a year later. The composer Mihailo Vukdragović, one of the most powerful Party officials, said then that Yugoslav music should not be a copy either of the music of the other socialist states, or of that of the West (Vukdragović 1958: 236). I quote this sentence because such opinions were part of the common ground that encapsulated the basic aspirations of Serbian/Yugoslav peoples from different social and political levels, to produce specific achievements which would stand out as important, but also as recognisably different from both Eastern and Western types of approach. On the political level, such a tendency/feature was seen in Tito’s Yugoslavia, being a co-founder of the Non-Aligned movement. The first conference of Non-Aligned heads of state or government was convened in Belgrade in September 1961.

However, the pro-Western tendencies in culture could not be weakened. The first edition of the Zagreb Biennale festival of contemporary music (1961) initiated and founded by the aforementioned Milko Kelemen, who had forged strong ties with international avant-garde circles, was an event of great importance for the entire Yugoslav contemporary music scene. It was a successful transplantation (transfer) of

the concept of the already well-established Warsaw Autumn festival. The great majority of Serbian/Yugoslav composers were shocked by the works heard at this and the next Biennale festival, most notably those of Cage and Stockhausen. Although, as a consequence of such impulses, the domestic musical scene became more vibrant and modern, Yugoslav pieces performed at the Biennale did not seem to impress Ulrich Dibelius who wrote that, in comparison to Polish contemporary music, ours "was not notable enough," maybe because the "potentiality of true talents was smaller" (Dibelius 1966:293). This is neither the place nor the time to discuss such a thesis. One should only draw attention to the words of Ivo Malec (b. 1925, one year after Kelemen), another Yugoslav (Croatian) composer who made his career abroad, in France. At the 1964 festival of contemporary Yugoslav music in Opatija he spoke of the reasons for the slow modernization of domestic music, naming first the post-war isolation of the country, but also blaming the older composers who had been in their mature years before the war and who should have adopted the main ideas of the then avant-garde, in order to be able to transmit that knowledge as a "relay" to the younger generation after the war (Malec 1972: 138), so as to be ready and able to join the post-war trends.

Yugoslav music of the Cold War period will be left there, in the 1960s, when all the main techniques of the post-war international avant-garde were being adopted and applied according to individual poetics and knowledge, and some original contributions were also made. The process of overcoming the lag behind the most progressive world currents was completed, though without too many proponents, leaving the stage well prepared for the paradigm shift from modernism to postmodernism. Since there is no space for further elaboration, let it only be mentioned here that the 1970s and 1980s – still years of state socialism – saw the appearance of a variety of fresh, imaginative and variegated composing in Yugoslavia, completely in harmony with contemporary musical thinking in the world.

This was a very brief narrative of the Zero Hour in Yugoslav music that had many traits in common with those in other socialist state countries. Whilst the same could also be said of the consequences of Zero Hour in the sphere of musical creativity and musical life in general, the crucial difference was the much shorter period of state-imposed socialist realism in Yugoslavia. We have seen how the political break of Belgrade with Moscow in 1948 brought about a gradual, but relatively quick emancipation from socialist realism and an initially hesitant, then more self-assured turn towards modernism and the avant-garde.

At the end of the first part of this article I mentioned that Soviet avant-garde composers were usually treated as second-rate and derivative by Western critics. That was also the fate, more or less, of Yugoslav avant-garde music that, even today, remains undeservedly relatively unknown despite it possessing a number of works of real value. When speaking of the highest achievements of Yugoslav music in the post-war period, one should also take into account works that were neither socialist realist, nor avant-garde orientated, such as the cantata *Pesme prostora* [*Songs of Space*] (1956) by Ljubica Marić – an outstanding work, although largely based on the Stravinsky legacy of the first decades of the 20th century.

In this article it was my wish to contextualize Yugoslav music of the Cold War period, primarily with regard to the specific position of Yugoslavia as the first country in which the Iron Curtain started to show “cracks” and to lose its impermeability. At the same time, the borders between Yugoslavia and the formerly allied countries of the Eastern bloc became a kind of Iron Curtain themselves, so that Yugoslavia found itself temporarily in something of a middle position, as a special case: even having, indeed, two Iron Curtains – one to the East and one to the West. Already in the mid-fifties both began to fade, allowing for a significant improvement in the level of cultural exchange both with East and West European countries. The great majority of Yugoslav composers chose then to follow the path of the “guardians of advanced art” in Western countries, thus formulating a clear political message. But by that time art music in Yugoslavia had ceased to be considered a potential threat to the communist regime, the real dangers being rightly observed in the fields of literature, theatre and film.

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ПОСЛЕ НУЛТЕ ГОДИНЕ: ДРЖАВЕ КАО „ЧУВАРИ УНИВЕРЗАЛНЕ КУЛТУРЕ ЧОВЕЧАНСТВА” ИЛИ „ЧУВАРИ НАПРЕДНЕ УМЕТНОСТИ”

(САЖЕТАК)

Више од седам деценија после краја Другог светског рата обновљено је интересовање за такозвану *Нулиу ѿодину*, која је метафора за стварање нових друштава на згариштима, за нове почетке у свим областима јавног живота, од политике до уметности. Мада се Нулта година најчешће повезује са психолошком климом и тежњама у пораженој Немачкој, може се применити и на друге земље, мада с неопходним адаптацијама на локалне варијанте. После Другог светског рата радикално нови, авангардни покрети у Савезној Републици Немачкој и у целој западној Европи сагледавани су као израз одлучности да се пође од стања *tabula rasa*, с циљем дистанцирања од катастрофалне скорашње прошлости. У земљама комунистичког блока наметнута идеологија социјалистичког реализма произвела је такође оштар прелом, сличан ономе на Западу, само што је Нулта година замишљена сасвим опозитно, као кретање у супротном правцу у односу на модернизам. Тако се уочавају две главне после ратне утопије, једна индивидуалистичка/модернистичка и друга колективистичка/антимодернистичка, обе тврдећи да су засноване на историјским законима и нужностима. Жданов није сумњао у то да је СССР „истински чувар универзалне културе човечанства”, „бастион цивилизације и културе које брани од буржоаске декаденције и пропадања културе”. За разлику од њега, САД и друге западне земље гледале су на себе као на „чуваре напредне уметности” (Гринберг), заштитнике уметника од притисака који су долазили с конзервативних страна; другим речима, од уметника се очекивало да преузму улогу „истраживача” – трагалаца за новим изразима, као и да афирмишу идеје индивидуалне слободе и аутономије стваралаштва.

Последице таквих идеја у сфери музике у време државног социјализма у Југославији, која није припадала ни западном ни источном блоку земаља, представљене су у другом делу овог чланка. Начињен је покушај контекстуализације југословенске музике периода Хладног рата, првенствено с обзиром на специфични положај Југославије као прве земље у којој су се појавиле пукотине на Гвозденој завеси према Западу. Међутим, услед политичког раскида са земљама Варшавског пакта, и према њима се оформила Гвоздена завеса посебне врсте: после 1948. године постојале су обе истовремено, да би убрзо она према Западу постала пропуснија. Такво стање је трајало до средине педесетих година, када је ситуација почела да се мења набоље према обема странама, тако да је културна размена постепено јачала и са Западом и са Истоком. Већина српских и југословенских композитора,

посебно млађих, изабрала је тада да следи пут „чувара напредне уметности” који је доминирао у западним земљама, што је имало јасну политичку поруку. То је било и време када је уметничка музика у Југославији престала да се сматра потенцијалном опасношћу за владајући социјалистички режим, док је права опасност – с правом – уочавана у пољима књижевног, позоришног и филмског стваралаштва.

Кључне речи: Нулта година, авангардна музика, социјалистички реализам и музика, хладни рат, гвоздена завеса, српска музика, југословенска музика