

Melita Milin

THE RUSSIAN MUSICAL EMIGRATION IN YUGOSLAVIA AFTER 1917

Abstract: Around forty thousand Russian emigrants settled in Yugoslavia running away from the terror of the 1917 Revolution. A high percentage of them were writers, artists, musicians and ballet dancers. Their greatest contribution to Yugoslav musical culture consists in the important acceleration they brought to the development of the domestic scene. Especially valuable were the activities of opera singers and directors, ballet dancers and choreographers, scenery designers, conductors of church choirs and music pedagogues.

Key-Words: Russian emigration, Yugoslav music, Serbian music, Russian music, Russian ballet.

The topic of the Russian emigration was more or less a prohibited theme in USSR and the East-European countries during the communist rule. Since the beginning of the 1990's a noticeable increase of interest for researching the role of the Russian musical and other emigration in Yugoslavia in the period between the two world wars has been observed. Two congresses have been organized, their proceedings published, as well as many books and articles. Researches have been undertaken not only by historians of culture, arts and music, but also by individuals – amateurs, usually of Russian descent.

The terror and bloodshed of the Russian October revolution and the civil war that followed (1917–20) brought a considerable number of Russian emigrants into Yugoslavia, as well as to many other countries of Europe and America. Driven by fear and despair around 2 million Russians chose the uncertain emigrant fate hoping that their exile would not last long. Some 40000 of them¹ stayed in Yugoslavia, while a certain number of them stayed in the country only for a short time, on their way to Central and Western Europe. There were some Russian emigrants who arrived even before 1918, after South Russia had been evacuated. The biggest group, so-called "Crimea emigration" arrived later.²

¹ Cf. Miodrag Sibinović, *Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka – značaj, okviri i perspektive proučavanja*, in: *Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka*, ed. by M. Sibinović, I vol., Beograd, 1994, p. 5. and Miroslav Jovanović, *Doseljavanje ruskih izbeglica u Kraljevinu SHS 1919–1924*, Beograd, 1996, 163–186.

² Veroslava Petrović, *Ruski operski pevači i beogradska muzička kritika i publika*, in: *Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka* (op. cit.), II vol., p. 172

The majority of the Russians that decided to stay in Yugoslavia were educated people³ who were painfully lacking in Serbia after the terrible World War I in which 60% of the male population found death. As soon as the war was over (1918), a new state was founded, that united south Slav peoples: The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia). Compassion for the tragic fate of the Russian people for whom Serbs had always felt affection and closeness, was the main reason why most of the Russian emigrants found their new homes in the kingdom of the South Slavs. Rare instances of tension between the local population and the emigrants can be explained by social circumstances : those were hard postwar times and the young state was confronted with the task of harmonising different, often conflicting interests of the nations that constituted it.⁴ Serbs were aware that in the past foreigners had been more than once invited to help building cultural institutions and this time they especially appreciated that those foreigners were Russians.⁵ The languages were related, the orthodox religion influencing close relations particularly with the Serbs (Croats and Slovenes being catholics), so that the majority of those Russians settled in the eastern – Serbian – part of the country. Aleksandar I, king of Yugoslavia, was a great protector of Russian emigrants⁶ and was strongly opposed to creating diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union (Yugoslavia decided to exchange diplomats with the USSR as late as in 1940, six years after his death).

Russian musical emigration arrived in Yugoslavia at the time of the founding of the Yugoslav state. It was the time for the different constituting nations belonging to different traditions to get adapted to each others. The Russians fitted very well into the new multicultural surroundings and it could be assumed that they felt less foreigners there than in France or Czechoslovakia – the two other countries that were very hospitable to them. France was certainly a more engaging ambience for musicians than could be Yugoslavia but the latter country should not be underestimated as can be proved by numerous performing artists who were based in Yugoslavia but were often invited on tours abroad.

Migrations played an important role in Serbian history. Between the 15th century when the Serbs lost their state in the wars against the Turks, and

³ According to the 1922 polls, 75% of Russian emigrants had high school or university diplomas (M. Sibinović, op. cit., p. 6).

⁴ M. Sibinović, op. cit, pp. 8–9. See also: Sanja Topić, *Delovanje pozorišnih umetnika ruske emigracije u Narodnom pozorištu u Beogradu 1918–1941*, Beograd, 1992, p. 176 (m.a. thesis kept at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade), p.41.

⁵ Quoted according to: Mirka Pavlović, *Institucionalizovanje Opere (i Baleta) u Narodnom pozorištu u Beogradu i ruski umetnici*, in : *Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka* (op. cit.), II vol., p. 161.

⁶ Zinaida Gippius, "Letter on Yugoslavia", publ. in the Russian emigrants' newspaper in Warsaw: see. M. Sibinović, op. cit., pp.14–15.

the 19th century, when their new state was founded, the majority of Serbs lived in the frame of the Turkish empire. The Serbian population that inhabited the neighbouring Austrian Empire, more precisely its Hungarian part, grew constantly in number mostly because they had to flee brutal treatment of the Turk oppressors. Among several waves of those emigrations most notable were the so-called "Great migration" (1690) and the migration of 1740, both led by the patriarchs. For the cultural history of the Serb people those events proved to be of an enormous importance for the process of modernization/westernization in which they were engaged and which they transmitted little by little to fellow-Serbs that had stayed in the Turkish empire and also later to Serbs that founded an independent state south of the Danube (autonomy in 1830, independence in 1878). An instance of it was the assimilation by the Serb population in Austria of the domestic models of musical life and organisation, like choral societies associated to the church (the first such Serbian choral society was founded in Pančevo in 1838). That model was soon adopted by the young bourgeoisie in Serbia (The Belgrade Singing Society, 1853). The role of Czech musicians who were often *Kapelmester* (conductors and composers) and music teachers in such societies for the building of Serbian musical culture of the Western type cannot be underestimated. Czech musicians came to work in Serbia in the second half of the 19th century partly because they couldn't find a job in Austria-Hungary, partly driven by the spirit of Slav solidarity. The role of those Czechs could be compared – toute proportion gardée – with the role of Flemish composers who settled in Italy during the 16th century. The Czechs that came to Serbia were certainly not internationally renowned, but their solid musicianship was exactly what the Serbian musical culture needed at that early stage of its development when the European standards had to be reached quickly. Composers like Smetana or Dvořák would not have been able to do as much as those modest musicians because the gap between their aspirations and the needs of the environment would have been too deep.

Several decades later, in the 1920's, musicians from another Slav country gave one more vital impetus to the development of Serbian music. Yugoslavia became then a part of the "Russia outside its borders" (*zagranichnaya Rus*) and its 8 million inhabitants, its Church and Army (rests of the so-called White Guard), political, professional and artistic associations. In addition to that, Russian emigrants in Yugoslavia had a separate educational system.⁷ All that testifies not only to their strong wish and need to cultivate

⁷ See: Dr Ostoja Djurić, *Ruska literarna Srbija, 1920–1941*, Gornji Milanovac i Beograd, 1990 (especially chapter I); Ljubodrag Dimić, *Rusko školstvo u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* in: *Ruska muzička emigracija XX veka* (op. cit.) I, 38–50; Branislav Gligorić, *Ruska pravoslavna crkva u Jugoslaviji između dva rata*, *ibid*, 52–59; Uglješa Rajčević, *Ruski umetnici emigranti članovi i izlagači staleskih udruženja u Srbiji između dva rata*, *ibid*, 98–106.

their national traditions and ideas, but also to the hope they never abandoned that the bolsheviks' regime would be soon over and that they would be able to return to their homeland.⁸

As is well known, the beginning of the 20th century was a magnificent period of Russian art and music. Some authors even call the period 1903–15 "the most glittering period of Russian music. Though short-lived, it might still be termed a Third Russian Musical Renaissance, equal to the second which developed under the aegis of M. Balakirev, and the first in the times of the Novgorod and Moscow masters of the early seventeenth century."⁹

Many European metropolises had the opportunity to see and enjoy those masterpieces even before World War I and that fact made it easier to Russian emigrant artists to be accepted in Western countries, especially in France. The fate of I. Stravinski and S. Diaghilev's "Ballets Russes" are fine cases of evidence.

Russian writers, artists and musicians that settled in Yugoslavia – like their compatriots in other countries – wished to "show that here also, outside the borders of our Russian homeland, art still exists and that the source of inspiration has not dried out, but on the contrary, has become stronger due to sufferings and bitter tears."¹⁰

Russian musicians enriched musical life both in cities like Belgrade and Novi Sad and in the province where so-called Russian concerts were organised with piano playing, singing, balalaika orchestras, male choirs and folk dancing. The performers were soloists and ordinary members of ex-tsarist Russian operas and theatres, conservatories, ballet schools, even restaurants with gypsy music.¹¹

Only three names of composers belonging to the Russian emigration in Yugoslavia can be cited: Vladimir Nelidov, author of incidental music and a lost opera on a historico-legendary theme from the Serbian Middle Ages, *The Death of the Mother of the Jugovići*¹²; Oleg Grebenshchikov, composer

⁸ See for example: M. Jovanović, op. cit., 295–312.

⁹ Alfred J. Swan, *Russian Music and its sources in chant and folk-song*, London, 1973, 155; See also: Nadežda. Mosusova, *Russian Emigration – Tradition and Avantgarde*, in: *Russische Avantgarde. Musikavantgarde im Osten Europas, Dokumentation-Kongressbericht*, Heidelberg, 1992, p.175.

¹⁰ Magazine *Meduza*, Beograd, 1923, No.1 – quoted from : Aleksandar Arsenjev, *Ruska inteligencija u Vojvodini*, in : *Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka* (op. cit.), I vol., p. 80. The author designates the text from which this fragment is taken as "a kind of a manifest of Russian artists".

¹¹ A. Arsenjev, op. cit., p. 81.

¹² A. Arsenjev, "Pokazaćemo da i ovde, daleko iza granica Otadžbine, živi moć stvaranja...", *Ruski umetnici u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji*, Zbornik Matice srpske za scenske umetnosti i muziku, 15, 1994, p.197. Slobodan Turlakov states that V. Nelidov was the

of incidental music (also a ballet dancer) and Yuri Arbatski, composer, organist and musicologist who was a choir master in Leskovac, a small town in south Serbia, and after 1935 organist at the Belgrade roman-catholic cathedral church. Arbatski composed several symphonies among other music and collected around 4000 folk melodies, mostly Albanian and Macedonian, but all of his phono recordings were destroyed in the bombardments of Belgrade during World War II.¹³ Unfortunately, we don't have any document on those composers. The absence of more composers among Russian emigrants in Yugoslavia can be explained easily: First of all they were not so numerous in the whole Russian emigrant body; second, it was natural that those few who left Russia would choose a country with much richer possibilities for their careers (cases of Stravinski, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov...).

On the other hand, performing artists among whom there were first-rate individuals (especially among ballet dancers and choreographers), came in considerable number. They appeared on the Belgrade stage first time in the season 1920–21. According to the statistics, in the next season the Belgrade Opera already had 12 Russian solo opera singers out of 29, 3 repetiteurs – all Russians, 3 Russian ballet dancers out of 6, 20 members of the Opera choir out of 41, and several among the 30 out of 41 foreigners who played in the orchestra. To sum up, foreigners (most of whom were Russians) were more numerous than Serbs.¹⁴

We shall examine now the presence and role of Russian emigrants in different branches of musical performing arts: opera singing, opera direction, conducting, ballet dancing, choreography, ballet training, opera and ballet scenery and costumes, church singing.

first artist among Russian emigrants who was engaged in the Belgrade National Theatre (as repetiteur). See: S. Turlakov, *Ruski umetnici u Beogradskoj operi*, Teatron, 84/85/86, 1994, p.125. Nelidov was born in St. Peterburg in 1887 and died in Paris in 1978. He stayed in Belgrade from 1920–29. On the occasion of the centenary of his birth an article about him was published in *Russkaya misl*, Paris, no. 3678, 19 June 1987. We owe A. Arsenjev gratefulness for drawing our attention to the latter article.

¹³ All the facts about those three composers are taken from: A. Arsenjev, "Pokazacemo...", p. 206.

¹⁴ Quoted according to: M. Pavlović, op. cit., 158. Cf. S. Topić, op. cit., p. 131, who states that "In 1922 the Opera had 126 members, the third of which were certainly artists belonging to the Russian emigration." S. Turlakov asserts that the Russians made at least a third of the Opera choir throughout that period (op. cit., p.12). Predrag Milošević believes that Russians made sometimes even a half of the Opera choir (*Rusi u Beogradskoj Operi*, in: Beograd u sećanjima 1919–1920, Beograd, 1980, p.139).

Opera singing

The Opera department of the Belgrade National Theatre, that had a very short history behind it¹⁵, would not have achieved its great successes in the 1920's and 1930's without the valuable contribution of Russian opera singers, directors and scenographers. The Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad obtained its own Opera department in 1920 thanks to the successful concerts given by Russian opera singers from Moscow, St. Peterburg, Kiev and Odessa who carried the whole repertoire afterwards.¹⁶ A relatively small number of Russian singers settled in Zagreb and Ljubljana, although Petar Konjović, the director of the Croatian National Theatre privileged the Russian opera repertoire.¹⁷

The first appearances of Russian singers on the Belgrade stage took place in June 1920: Evgeni Mariashets in the role of Prince Gremin in *Evgeni Onegin* and Ada Poliakova as Tatiana in *Evgeni Onegin* and Mimi in *La Bohème*. Among other singers should be mentioned also : Xenia Rogovska (later married Hristić), Sophia Drausalj, Elisaveta-Lisa Popova-Karakash, Georgi Yurenev, Pavel Holodkov, Vasili Shumski, and others.

There are no records of any conflict between domestic singers in the Belgrade National Theatre and the Russians whose professional skills were such that it was only natural that they should be given almost all the main roles in the opera productions. Russian singers were ready to teach their less experienced hosts how to solve great amount of problems arising in the course of opera production preparations.¹⁸ The results were soon evident, as witnessed the great Yugoslav singer Bahrija Nuri-Hadžić who sang on several important European opera stages: it was her opinion that whereas operas performed in Belgrade at the beginning of the 1920's had not yet been at the level of the Vienna Opera, several years later differences were almost non-existent.¹⁹

There were, however, some polemics in newspapers concerning the performing qualities of the Russian singers and the difficulties the Russians had in learning to sing in Serbian²⁰. Wishing to shed some light on those

¹⁵ Comic operas and operettas had been performed since the 1880's. The singers had not professional training and were just actors gifted with musicality. The first staged Serbian opera was performed in that theatre: Stanislav Binički's *Na uranku* (1903).

¹⁶ A. Arsenjev, op. cit., p. 81. In the article are given the names of those Russian soloists.

¹⁷ N. Mosusova, *Ruska umetnička emigracija i muzičko pozorište u Jugoslaviji između dva svetska rata*, Ruska emigracija u srpskoj kulturi XX veka (op. cit.), II, p.141.

¹⁸ P. Milošević, op. cit, p.144, 145.

¹⁹ See: M. Pavlović, op. cit., p. 162.

²⁰ See: P. Milošević, op. cit., p. 136.

discussions, Theophan Pavlovski, opera singer and director, wrote an article from which we shall quote some fragments: "The management of the Opera knows that we (i.e. the Russians) are the most suitable building material, at the same time experienced and cheap (...) and that the moment of self-defense (for Serbian singers) has not been reached yet."²¹ Pavlovski was certainly right: Russian singers were accepted basically as a temporary solution, to provide a firm ground for creating a strong domestic body of singers in the future. At the same time, most of the Russians also viewed their own position as a provisional one, hoping either to return to Russia or to move to some Western capital.

As to the quality of the Russian singers, judging by numerous accounts, it can be assumed that the majority of them belonged to a high class. Their reputation was repeatedly confirmed by their periodical tours abroad. Many of them left Yugoslavia at the end of the 1920's in order to try their chances abroad, like Yurenev who became member of the Russian Opera in Paris²² but they returned from time to time as guest soloists. Some important singers decided to stay, among whom were Pavel Holodkov, "the pillar of the Opera", and the young Olga Oldekop,²³ so that, although the number of Russians was constantly decreasing, opera performances without any Russian opera artist were rare during the whole period between the two world wars.²⁴ It is interesting that whereas the number of Russian singers decreased during the 1930's (either their careers were over or they left Yugoslavia), the number of Russian ballet dancers increased in the same period, due to the growing in age of a second generations in the ballet emigrant community.²⁵

Russian singers were sometimes reproached for giving priority to singing over acting, that being put into account on their "Italian-style" idea of the opera and that must have been true. It was also true that the Russians brought to Yugoslavia their Italian school of singing, different from the German school introduced by domestic singers that had been educated abroad.²⁶

²¹ Teofan Pavlovski, *Pitanja o razviću opere u Beogradu*, Gluma, no. 7, 1922, p.10.

²² See: N. Mosusova, *Operska i baletska "putujuća pozorišta" između dva svetska rata i Beogradska opera*, in: *Putujuće pozorišne družine u Srba do 1914. godine*, collection of papers, Beograd, 1993, 160. See also: S. Topić, op. cit., p. 176.

²³ See: N. Mosusova, *Ruska umetnička emigracija...*, op. cit., p. 145.

²⁴ S. Topić, p. 132. Commenting on such a situation, the composer Miloje Milojević, an important figure in Belgrade musical life of the times, wrote that "Thanks to the Russians, we have our opera and at the same time we don't have it." (*Rusi i "opersko pitanje" u nas*, Politika, no.4712, p.3).

²⁵ N. Mosusova, *Ruska umetnička emigracija...*, pp. 145, 148.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 144.

Among important events of the period between the two world wars in Yugoslavia should be counted the world premieres of the opera *Vanka the Keykeeper* (1933) by Nikolai Cherepnin in Belgrade. The composer lived as emigrant in Paris in close relations with Ana Pavlova and taught at the Russian Conservatory. During his stay in Belgrade he also conducted a ballet of his own, *The Secret of the Pyramid*. The ballet had had its Belgrade premiere a year before. In Ljubljana he was present at the representation of his ballet *The Enchanted Bird* (the choreography was by Peter Golovin).²⁷

Cherepnin's son Aleksandar, composer and pianist, joined his father and gave concerts of his own music in Belgrade and Zagreb.²⁸ In Ljubljana he was present at the Yugoslav premiere of his opera *Ol-Ol*²⁹ that was performed in the same evening with his father's ballet *The Enchanted Bird*.

Opera (Stage) Direction

In the first seasons after World War I opera performances were staged by Serbian and Russian opera singers, as there were no specially trained opera stage-directors. Evgeni Mariashets prepared several operas for the Belgrade National Theatre, but the first Russian opera in Belgrade – *Evgeni Onegin* – was staged by Michail Zatskoi (first performance on May 8, 1920). Zatskoi stayed only for a short time in Belgrade, but another Russian left a more durable imprint: Theophan Pavlovski who stayed in Belgrade from 1921–1928, and afterwards signed a contract with the Lithuanian State Opera in Kaunas. After he had finished his studies at the Moscow Conservatory and at the Law faculty, he was engaged by the Imperial Theatre and private theatres in Moscow for 14 years. When he arrived in Belgrade, he first sang the main roles in *Rigoletto* and *Onegin* but then decided to work exclusively as stage director. During his seven years in the Belgrade National Theatre he staged some 30 operas.³⁰ Some other Russians also tried their hands at opera stageing, among others: Margarita Froman (dancer and choreographer from Zagreb, member of the Belgrade National Theatre from 1928–31), Michail Karakash and Aleksandar Uluchanov (both singers). An important contribution to the development of the Belgrade Opera was given by Yuri Rakitin, who was primarily a spoken-drama stage-director, active in Belgrade from 1920–41 and 1945–47, afterwards in Novi Sad (1947–52). In

²⁷ S. Osterc, *Muzika u zemlji. Ljubljana*, Zvuk 1933, November, 1, 23–25.

²⁸ Al. Cherepnin got affirmative critiques from Emil Hajek, a distinguished piano pedagogue of Czech origin. Hajek wrote an appreciative critique of his concert in Belgrade (Zvuk, Nov. 1, 1933, 18), and Marko Tajčević wrote another critique of his concert in Zagreb (same journal, pp. 18–23).

²⁹ S. Osterc, Zvuk 1933, Nov. 1, 23–25.

³⁰ The facts about Th. Pavlovski were gathered by Sanja Topić. See op. cit, p. 172.

Russia he was known as a gifted actor, pupil of Stanislavski and very much appreciated by him, also active as stage director in imperial theatres in St. Peterburg.³¹

Although there were articles in the Belgrade press where views were exposed that Russians were too traditionally orientated, their ideas stereotyped, that the repertory was at least 30 years lagging behind the European³², the reception of Russian artists was very positive in general. Some of those attacks were aimed in fact at Stevan Hristić, the director of the Opera, so they were a part of intrigues that are not rare in the opera milieu. Today it is taken as a firm fact that Russian emigrants that staged operas gave vital impetus to opera performances in Belgrade because they came from Russia with a rich and multifarious experience. They were reproached by Serbian historians that they lacked a special opera-staging training, but it is a fact that there were no such educational institutions at the time.

Conducting

When the Belgrade Opera engaged the Russian emigrant Ilia Slatin as conductor, Stevan Hristić who had been the sole conductor and director of the Opera was happy to be able to share his duties with him. The orchestra itself improved its quality of playing by employing a number of Russians, but also other foreigners (Czechs, Austrians, Germans)³³. It is also worth mentioning that Slatin who played the piano and his brothers Vladimir (viol) and Aleksandar (violoncello) founded the *Russian Trio*, later also the quartet *Zorko-Slatin*, engaging thus in rich concert activities.

Ballet dancing

The "invasion of Russian emigrants", as was put by Milan Grol³⁴, the director of the National Theatre in Belgrade – whose merit it was that the emigrants were invited to that theatre – had an especially beneficial effect on the domestic art of ballet, that was at its beginnings in Serbia after World War I. It was paradoxical that modern dance – the so-called plastic ballet – had been introduced in Serbia prior to classical ballet. It was propagated since the 1910's by Magdalena-Maga Magazinović, who had previously followed the courses of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze and Mary Wigman in Germany. Among the Russian emigrants Klavdia Isachenko was the only

³¹ The facts about Y. Rakitin were taken from the work of S. Topić, op. cit, p. 117.

³² M. Pavlović, op. cit., p.162.

³³ See: S. Topić, op. cit, p.181.

³⁴ Milan Grol, *Iz pozorišta predratne Srbije*, Beograd, 1952, 258.

one who was an adherent of "plastic ballet". After having spent five years in Belgrade as dancer and pedagogue (1918–23) she left, probably because she was aware that in Belgrade there was much more interest in classic than in plastic ballet.³⁵ It is worth mentioning that together with Yelena Poliakova she choreographed an experimental ballet-grotesque – *Le balais du valet* (1923), on the music by Miloje Milojević.

The first Russian name we encounter on the programmes of the National Theatre in Belgrade in the season 1919/20 was that of Maria Bologovska. Ballet numbers were first danced in opera performances, later in ballet divertissements. Already in 1920 ballet courses in the National Theatre were organised with Russian ballet dancers as teachers. Those efforts bore fruit very soon: In 1922 there already existed a nucleus of a ballet ensemble with one ballet stage director and 6 ballet dancers.³⁶ The most important figures in this early stage of the development of Serbian ballet was Yelena Poliakova who had been a distinguished ballet dancer in the Mariinski Theatre in St. Petersburg. Before settling in Belgrade in 1922 she had spent some time in Ljubljana as first dancer and choreographer of the National Theatre and teacher of choreography, mime and plastic ballet at the Conservatory.³⁷ In Belgrade she taught ballet at the School of Acting and Ballet. Another important personality was Aleksandar Fortunato, who came from Lvov via Bucharest, and staged and choreographed the first evening-long ballet in Belgrade: *Coppelia* (June 11, 1924). Fortunato was the first director of the Belgrade Ballet and its first dancer from 1923–26.

Another important personality among the Russian emigrants was Nina Kirsanova, first dancer (1923–26), stage director (1931–34) and pedagogue. She was engaged by the Opera Colon in Buenos Aires (1927), then by Ana Pavlova (1926–31). Afterwards she became dancer and choreographer in the Opera of Monte Carlo (1935–37) and in the National Theatre in Kaunas (1937–38). She returned to Yugoslavia, her "second fatherland" at the first announcements of World War II.³⁸ The activities of Anatoli Zhukovski, dancer and choreographer, also deserve mentioning. He was a *danceur noble* of the Belgrade Ballet and choreographer who continued Fortunato's research of folk dancing traditions in the Balkans.

The excellent Russian ballet school showed its outstanding results very soon. The ballet ensemble and the soloists of the Belgrade National Theatre were able to perform great ballets from the international and domestic

³⁵ A certain rivalry between M. Magazinović and K. Isačenko was the cause of a conflict described in: Maga Magazinović, *Moj život* (ed. by Jelena Šantić), Beograd, 2000, 374–379.

³⁶ See: S. Topić, op. cit., p. 186.

³⁷ See: S. Topić, op. cit., p. 206.

³⁸ See: S. Topić, op. cit., p. 206.

repertoires. Until the breakout of World War II in Yugoslavia (April 1941), 43 ballets from the international repertoire were staged and 5 ballets by domestic composers. Especially valuable were the efforts of the Russians to stage Diaghilev's ballets in Belgrade (Poliakova, Froman)³⁹ as well as the staging of the ballet *Man and Fate* on the music of Chaikovski's V Symphony (1934) only one year after the Monte Carlo premiere of Massine's ballet *Les Présages* that inspired it.⁴⁰ Among important events in the history of Yugoslav ballet should be mentioned the staging of Chaikovski's *Sleeping Beauty* (1927) by Fiodor Vasiliev who came from Paris, and the staging of three short ballets (*Tamara, The Ballerina and Bandits, Bolero*, 1939) by Boris Romanov who had danced in Diaghilev's troop, then was director of The Russian Romantic Ballet in Berlin and danced for some time in Ana Pavlova's troop.⁴¹

The Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb also benefited a lot from the Russian emigration. Margarita Froman was the star of that Theatre from 1921 on, active as first dancer, choreographer, ballet and opera stage director and pedagogue. She was educated at the Ballet Department of the Imperial theatrical school, then became member of the corps de ballet of the Bolshoi Theatre (before 1913 and 1917–19) and in 1913 she was engaged by Diaghilev for his "Ballets Russes" company. For a certain time she danced also in Ana Pavlova's troupe. Two of her brothers, Maksimilian and Valentin, were dancers too, while the third brother, Pavel, was a scenographer and their sister Olga was a pianist. Margarita Froman arrived in Zagreb with her own troupe that simply continued to work under the roof of the Croatian National Theatre.

Among the most important Russian contributions to the Yugoslav ballet stage should be counted their efforts to produce folk ballets, that is to create choreographies that would include elements found in traditional folk dances. In order to achieve that, they either relied on their previous knowledge and intuition, like Margarita Froman (in Krešimir Baranović's *Gingerbread Heart*, Zagreb, 1924; also in dance numbers in Petar Konjović's operas *The Prince of Zeta* and *Koštana*, Belgrade, 1929 and 1931 resp.) or they undertook serious research in villages, like Aleksandar Fortunato (Kosovo and South Serbia, 1924) and Anatoli Zhukovski (South Serbia and especially the region of Ohrid, for several years).⁴² Fortunato inspired Stevan Hristić to create *The Legend of Ohrid* (1933, 1947), the first Serbian evening-length

³⁹ N. Mosusova, op. cit., p. 146.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 148.

⁴¹ N. Mosusova, *Operska i baletska "putujuća pozorišta" između dva svetska rata...*, p. 160.

⁴² See: N. Mosusova, *Are Folkloric Ballets an Anachronism Today?* in: *Dance as Intangible Heritage*, ed. by Alkis Raffis, Corfu, 2002, 111.

ballet.⁴³ The choreographer was Nina Kirsanova who was generously helped by Anatoli Zhukovski.

Russian emigrants continued their rich activities after World War II. Maria Olenina is considered to be the founder of the ballet company in Novi Sad in 1949.

Scenery and costume design

In the first seasons after WW I an outstanding Serbian painter, Jovan Bijelić, was the sole scenery and costume designer in the National Theatre in Belgrade. His responsibilities were reduced with the arrival of two Russian emigrants, the married couple Leonid and Rimena-Rima Brailovski who stayed in Belgrade 3 years (1921–24). Leonid Brailovski, who had worked in Russian imperial theatres, was one of the pleyade of great Russian scene and costume designers whose fame had begun before the war: Bakst, Benois...⁴⁴. He and his wife worked in all three departments of the National Theatre: Drama, Opera and Ballet. Their work did not receive unanimous praise, the critics sometimes reacting negatively to "a somewhat banal disposition for parade and colourfulness"⁴⁵ or to "overcrowded stages".⁴⁶ Among other Russian artists some other deserve to be mentioned: Anani Verbitski, pupil of Roerich, Bilibin and Sudeikin in St. Peterburg, Vladimir Zagorodnyuk who had studied in Odessa and Paris, Vladimir Zhedrinski and Pavel Froman (1921–23 in Zagreb, then 1924–29 in Belgrade).⁴⁷

In recent times opinions can be heard that it was a pity that only exponents of the "World of Art" linked to Diaghilev's "Ballets Russes" came to Yugoslavia and no Russian avantgarde artists.⁴⁸ But it should be born in mind that from the historical point of view the Brailovski couple and the other Russian artists in Yugoslavia, who no doubt belonged to a high international class, advanced domestic theatrical performances in a fascinating way. It is also questionable whether the Serbian and Yugoslav audience

⁴³ N. Mosusova, *Izvori inspiracije "Ohridske legende" Stevana Hristića*, Muzikološki zbornik XXV, Ljubljana, 1989.

⁴⁴ Olga Milanović, *Beogradska scenografija i kostimografija 1868–1941*, Beograd, 1983, p. 195.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 201.

⁴⁶ Quoted from an article by Stanislav Vinaver. See: O. Milanović, op.cit, p. 205. See more about Russian scenery design on Yugoslav stages in: N. Mosusova, *Srpska muzička scena (125 godina Narodnog pozorišta)*, in: Srpska muzička scena, Beograd 1995, 16–17, and the article *Delo Brailovskih i srpska međuratna scena u ogledalu kritike*, published in the present volume.

⁴⁷ See more in: O. Milanović, op. cit., 207 ff

⁴⁸ Cf. N. Mosusova, *Ruska umetnička emigracija...*, p. 144.

would have welcomed scenery and costume designs as could have been imagined by avantgarde artists.

Music pedagogues, concert managers

We shall probably never know the exact number of Russian pedagogues in the fields of opera singing and stage-direction, ballet dancing and choreography, scenery and costume design, playing piano and other instruments. Yugoslav music culture owes them a great deal because all those professions had been very modestly represented at the time the Russian emigrants arrived, not only in the province, but also in bigger towns.⁴⁹

A Russian emigrant, Evgeni Zhukov, had the merit of creating the first Yugoslav concert agency, "Yugokonzert". Thanks to his personal acquaintances among Russian emigrant artists throughout the world, Belgrade and other cities had the chance to see on their stages great artists of the times: Fedor Shaliapin (1935), Arthur Rubinstein, Alfred Corteau, Nikolai Orlov, Serghei Prokofiev.⁵⁰ It should be added that other Russian emigrants, especially those active in the field of ballet, also helped organizing guest performances, exclusively of internationally renowned Russian artists like Ana Pavlova (1927), Tamara Karsavina (1928), Clotilde and Aleksandar Sacharov (1930, 1937, 1940).

Church music

The Russian church in Yugoslavia had a high rank: there was a Metropolitan diocese in the old little town Sremski Karlovci near Novi Sad. Some theologians of world renown taught at the Theological school in the southern town of Bitolj (Ivan/Johannes von Gardner, Jovan Maksimović⁵¹). The number of Russian emigrants engaged as choir masters in churches and choral societies in Yugoslavia is not known, but it is assumed that there were a lot of them. Novi Sad offered hospitality to some 2500 Russians and such a large community was given a chapel in the Bishop's palace. Already in 1922 a male choir called "Russian singing society Vasili Grigorin and Kuzma Peregruda" was founded and existed until the late 1950's. Two more choirs were later founded in the same city.⁵² All those choral societies were

⁴⁹ See: N. Mosusova, *ibid*, p. 140.

⁵⁰ See more about Zhukov in: A. Arsenjev, "*Pokazaćemo...*", p. 207.

⁵¹ See: Miloš M. Vesin, *Sveti Jovan Maksimović, svetilo sa istoka – apostol zapada*, in: *Spomenica Episkopu Šumadijskom Savi*, ed. Danica Petrović, Beograd, 2002, pp. 55–68.

⁵² Bogdan Djaković, text in the booklet accompanying the CD *Russian Church Music in Novi Sad*, Novi Sad, 1996.

enthusiastically received by the citizens of Novi Sad. The Russian choir at the Royal Court in Belgrade also deserves to be mentioned.

On the average those choir masters did not possess professional musical education, but they managed to be up to their tasks. Many of them were intellectuals of different professions, members of Kozak units or students of military schools.⁵³ The names of those amateur musicians should not be forgotten, for instance that of Serghei Muratov, the conductor of the Kozak Choir in the Military School (of the "White Guard") in Sremski Karlovci, who also conducted the choir of the elite Gymnasium in the same town.⁵⁴ Pavel Figurovski, who had been lieutenant of the Russian Imperial army, was one of the most distinguished choir conductor in Novi Sad.⁵⁵ Russian emigrants liked singing in church choirs, not only in Russian ones, but also in Serbian orthodox churches.

The greatest contribution of the Russian musical emigration to Yugoslav musical culture consists in the important acceleration they brought to the development of the domestic musical scene. Russians came in the most appropriate moment, when their knowledge and experience could be readily and easily assimilated. Had they come several decades earlier, the level of the Serbian musical development would not have been able to absorb what they could offer. Two cultures and two traditions that had common roots met and the fruits were rich and abundant because both parts – the more developed newcomers and the residents – were ready and happy to work together. Thanks for the great part to the Russians, Yugoslavia got its place on the musical map of Europe of the times.

Russian emigrants brought concepts of opera and ballet performances that were dominant in Europe and Russia. It was important that they were interested to introduce new ideas, not just stick to the old and established. Their professionalism was the best example they could offer to their young domestic colleagues and it enabled the achievement of high performing standards that inspired domestic composers to write elaborate opera and ballet scores.

The rise of professionalism on Yugoslav stages in which the Russian emigrants played an outstanding role, inspired domestic composers to create some important operas and ballets, such as the ballets *The Legend of Ohrid*

⁵³ A. Arsenjev, "Pokazaćemo...", p. 197.

⁵⁴ The informations was kindly given to the author by Prof. Dejan Medaković.

⁵⁵ Boris Arsenjev, himself a distinguished choir conductor in Novi Sad, wrote down a list of Russian choir conductors in Belgrade, Zemun and Novi Sad. Arsenjev's manuscripts are kept in the Institute of Musicology in Belgrade.

(Stevan Hristić), *The Gingerbread Heart* and *Imbrek with the Nose* (Krešimir Baranović), and the operas *Twilight* (Stevan Hristić), *Prince of Zeta* and *Koštana* (Petar Konjović). In that way, Russian artists indirectly contributed also to the work of Yugoslav composers.

It is painful that after World War II, when Yugoslavia became a communist country, Russian emigrants and among them some artists and musicians who still owned Russian pre-communist citizenship, had to leave their "second homeland" and start a new life elsewhere (like Zagorodnyuk who went to Australia, Poliakova to Chile, Zhukovski to the USA, Zhedrin-ski first to Morocco, then France).⁵⁶ The contribution of them all – of those who stayed for a long or short time in Yugoslavia and those who went further becoming emigrants for the second time in their lives – is not forgotten.

This paper was presented at the 17th IMS Congress in Leuven in August 2002.

Мелиџа Милин

РУСКА МУЗИЧКА ЕМИГРАЦИЈА У ЈУГОСЛАВИЈИ ПОСЛЕ 1917. ГОДИНЕ

(Резиме)

У бекству од терора Октобарске револуције велики број Руса се упутио у Европу са илузијом да ће њихово одсуство из домовине бити само привремено. У Југославији, у којој су били срдечно дочекани, задржало их се око четрдесет хиљада, углавном у источном делу земље. Међу њима је био знатан број писаца, сликара, музичара и балетских уметника који су битно обогатили уметнички живот земље. Руска музичка емиграција је знатно убрзала развој музичке – посебно музичко-сценске – уметности у Србији и Југославији.

Док је композитора било мало (Владимир Нелидов, Олег Гребеншчиков, Јуриј Арбатски), репродуктивни уметници, посебно балетски играчи и оперски певачи, били су присутни у значајном броју: 1922. године, на пример, Руси су чинили једну трећину од укупног броја оперских солиста и хора београдског Народног позоришта. Да није било руских певача (Ада Пољакова, Ксенија Роговска, Софија Драусал, Лиза Попова, Василиј Шумски, Георгиј Јурењев, Павел Холодков и други), не би били остварени велики успеси београдске Опере између два светска рата. Као оперски редитељи истакли су се Теофан Павловски и Јуриј Ракитин, а као оперски диригент Илија Слатин.

⁵⁶ Among the rare individuals who decided to return to Russia (USSR) were Elisaveta-Lisa Popova (in 1948) and the brothers Oleg and Igor Grebenshchikov.

Захваљујући Русима, већ 1922. године је било оформљено језгро балетског ансамбла у београдском Народном позоришту – шест играча и један редитељ. Највећи играчи међу њима били су Јелена Пољакова (раније успешна у петроградском Маријинском театру), Нина Кирсанова и Анатолиј Жуковски. До избијања Другог светског рата ансамбл је успео да постави на сцену четрдесет три балета из интернационалног репертоара и пет домаћих. Александар Фортунато, Анатолиј Жуковски и Нина Кирсанова у Београду, а Маргарита Фроман у Загребу, имали су запажене успехе у стилизацији (балетизацији) народних игара (*Лишњарско срце* Крешимира Барановића, *Охридска леџенда* Стевана Христића и други). Као оперски и балетски сценографи истакли су се Леонид и Рима Браилловски.

Својом истакнутом улогом у уздизању извођачког нивоа на југословенским сценама, руски уметници су индиректно утицали на настанак неколико значајних балетских и оперских остварења, као што су *Охридска леџенда* (Христић), *Лишњарско срце* и *Имбрек з носом* (Барановић), *Сутон* (Христић), *Кнез од Зејте* и *Кошћана* (Коњовић).

Великог трага су Руси оставили и на подручју музичке педагогије и црквеног хорског певања (као диригенти).

UDK : 78.071.2 (=82:497.1) "1917-"