

FROM GREAT EXPECTATIONS TO GREAT
DISAPPOINTMENTS: PETAR KRSTIĆ'S
CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROCESS OF REFORMS OF
MUSIC EDUCATION IN INTERWAR YUGOSLAVIA
(1918–1921) *

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the activities of Petar Krstić in the domain of music education in the first years after the First World War and the constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. As a long-serving director of the Serbian Music School, Krstić initiated various processes in order to modernize it and transform it into institution of higher level of music education. For that purpose he focused on the school's internal reorganization and 'etatization'. As a result, Krstić prepared new school regulations and several drafts of legal texts and started negotiations with the authorities. Krstić's ideas, plans and his undertakings concerning the reforms during the rule over the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade will be discussed in detail together with their historical value.

KEYWORDS: Petar Krstić, Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, Kingdom of SCS, music education, Belgrade Conservatory

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As the newly founded state of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes [Kingdom of SCS], emerged in December 1918, a striving for rapid cultural progress of marginalized South Slavic peoples became relevant in various, ideologically and socially distinct intellectual circles. Understanding the prehistory of the Kingdom as a period of devastating political and economical exploitation of South Slavs as well as the systematic suppression of their cultural potentials, the post-Great War era seemed promising in that respect, giving reason to believe in the unprecedented social and cultural development of local nations. In the atmosphere of “great expectations”, music experts from all over the Kingdom felt that the time had come finally to solve some of the issues that were thought to compromise the expansion of the sphere of art music. Initiatives were almost simultaneously undertaken in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade in order to transform the domain of music education, which was thought to be of great significance for “musical progress”. Among other things, extensive negotiations between the management of some of the most influential music schools in the country and the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of SCS took place between 1919 and 1921 aiming at changing the economic basis of music education, its organization and goals. Parallel to “bureaucratic” struggles, a sort of public campaign was launched in the music press and dailies, which held opposing views on this topic. One of the first addresses to the public concerning the necessity of reforms of Yugoslav music education appeared as soon as July 1919 in Ljubljana, in *Cerkveni Glasbenik* [Church Musician]. At the time the director of the music school of Glasbena matica in Ljubljana and the newly founded Yugoslav Conservatory, Matej Hubad, explained the significance of the formation of a conservatory of music in the Kingdom of SCS finding it crucial for the proper development of Yugoslav art music. It included the cultivation of able instrumentalists, music teachers, *kapellmeisters*, choirmasters, orchestral musicians, operatic singers etc. (see Hubad 1919: 59). Similar thoughts were expressed by Miloje Milojević in July 1920 in *Prosvetni glasnik* [Educational Bulletin]. Milojević found it important to form a central, state funded conservatory in the country as “a real nursery of culture” (Milojević 1920: 22). Based on legislation and a detailed curriculum created by the commission of experts, it was intended to give broad theoretical and general knowledge to students and, at the same time, help the elevation of Yugoslav art music and culture to the higher levels (Cf. Milojević 1920: 22).

Although musicians from Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana shared views on reforms in music education, their struggle took separate paths. While trying to secure privileges for each leading music school of the regional centre, key music figures pushed common interests and possible joint projects to the margin.³ It is therefore not surprising that the initiatives they took had many particularities. Owing to that, in this paper we will focus on the activities of the Belgrade-based musicians engaged in the Serbian Music School. Of special interest will be

3 We will discuss this in the last chapter.

the work of Petar Krstić, composer, conductor and pedagogue, who left a deep imprint on the process of reforming music education. As a longstanding director of the Serbian Music School, Krstić⁴ thought it crucial to modernize the school's organization and curriculum in order to transform it gradually into a respectable and prestigious institution comparable to similar institutions of the developed Western and Central European countries. For that purpose, he took numerous steps from the end of the Great War until he resigned his post in May 1921. His initiative went in several directions including a change of the school's management structure and the 'etatization' of school. Since both directions had their own specificities we shall discuss them separately. In addition, special attention will be given to the opposing views on the school's reorganization and its 'conversion' into a conservatory that emerged among the employees. In this respect, of great significance is the split between Petar Krstić and Miloje Milojević which escalated in the mid-1920 and spread into the public domain. As we shall point out, it was the result of irreconcilable differences on the understanding of the nature and function of music education together with the social and cultural role of higher schools of music/conservatories.

The historiographical research presented in this paper was the result of investigation of materials from Petar Krstić's Legacy held in the Institute of Musicology SASA in Belgrade as well as the correspondence between the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of SCS, members of the Arts Department of the Ministry of Education of SCS, and the management of the Belgrade Choral Society preserved in the Archives of Yugoslavia and the Historical Archives of Belgrade. For the proper reconstruction of a 'timeline' of events, activities and circulation of ideas, of certain significance were the articles and reports published in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana periodicals and dailies in the early 1920s.

4 Petar Krstić spent seven years in the management of the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, and three years more as a professor. He was asked to take the post of director by Mokranjac who became very ill at the time (May 1914). For several months, Krstić was appointed an acting director of the school, but after Mokranjac passed away (September 1914) he became its director. During the Austrian-Hungarian occupation of Belgrade, Krstić tried to uphold the school's work. After it was closed for some time (1914, 1915), classes continued in 1916 and were uninterrupted until the end of the Great War. See Institute of Musicology SASA [IMSASA] – Archival Collection [AC], Petar Krstić's Legacy [PKL], Group I, A self-written biography and a list of works, s.a.

THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING OF THE SERBIAN MUSIC SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATION: PETAR KRSTIĆ AND HIS COLLEAGUES VERSUS THE BELGRADE CHORAL SOCIETY

According to Petar Krstić's written accounts,⁵ the necessity of change of the Serbian Music School's managerial structure and model of functioning became acute after the end of the War, although in some regards it was anticipated years before the military conflict began in Southeast Europe.⁶ The post-war political circumstances in Southeastern Europe led Yugoslav intellectuals, including Krstić, to believe that cultural, artistic and musical issues would hold a prominent place in the political elite's priority list, after decades of neglect. The long-awaited cultural and artistic emancipation of the South Slavs was expected to come about and only internally transformed and reorganized could the Serbian Music School contribute to it. The earlier type of school organization typical for Mokranjac's time was, in Krstić's opinion, outdated and not suitable for the ambitious and, at the same time, socially more complex post-war settings.⁷ The 'patriarchal model' by which Krstić probably understood a form of administration concentrated in the hands of director together with a familiar tone in communication with the authorities, did not represent a proper basis for the creation of a modern and stable institution with high potential for future development. Consequently, it is not surprising that the first moves Krstić made in his reformatory course incorporated the complete re-envisioning of the school's Statute (see illustration 1). One of the key modifications it promoted, beside the change of name to the Music School in Belgrade, was the separation of the school from the Belgrade Choral Society and its management as well as the division of the school administration into several bodies (director, school management [*uprava škole*], school council [*savet škole*]).⁸ One may conclude from the preserved draft of *The Decree of the Serbian Music School* (1914) (see Illustration 2) that was written in the first months of Krstić's rule as its acting director, the idea of the distan-

5 Cf. IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a. (this article was published in series in the journal *Beogradski dnevnik* [*Belgrade Daily*] in 1921 and 1922 [see Pejović 1999: 137]); Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade.

6 For instance, the idea of transforming the school into a state institution soon after Krstić became its acting director (the decision was confirmed by the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs on 18 May 1914). In the following months after his appointment, he created a draft of the *Decree of the Serbian Music School* based on the premise that the school ought to be completely materially supported by the state and under the control of the Ministry. See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, *The Decree of the Serbian Music School*, manuscript, s.a.

7 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 10.

8 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, *The Statute of the Music School in Belgrade*, manuscript, s.a.

cing from the Belgrade Choral Society was not new. Both the mentioned document and the Statute of the Music School, which was prepared in early 1919 and in February the same year presented to the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of SCS,⁹ treat the school as an autonomous unit, ruled by the Director, Management and Council and closely monitored by the Ministry of Education.

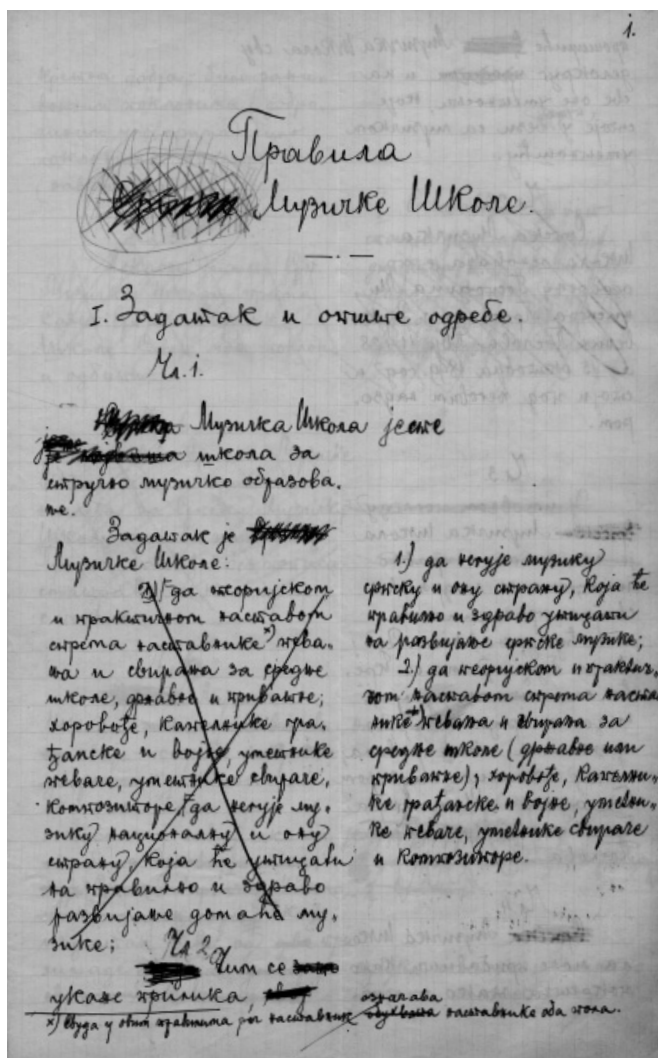


Illustration 1. *The Statute of the Music School in Belgrade*, IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, manuscript, s.a., front page and first page

⁹ See Archives of Yugoslavia [AY], Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia [66], 632-1044, The Main Educational Council's memo to the Minister of Education, Sbr. 78, 25 March 1919, Belgrade.

прошурито ~~музика~~ Музика школе свој
 дејство ~~представља~~ и на
 све оне уметности, које
 стоје у вези са музиком
 уметношћу.

М.2.

Српска Музика
 школа основана је по
 одобрењу Господина Мин
 истра Просвете и Црк.
 вених Послова Дбр 11428
 од 15 Октобра 1899. год. и
 стоји под његовим надзо
 ром.

М.3.

~~Музика~~ Музика школе
 је ~~самостално~~ право
 анга, она се уздржава
 својим приходима и
 помоћу државом. У
 своје буџету она се кре,
 ће ~~самостално~~, у гра,
 ницама средстава, по
 прописима ових закона,
 а под сталним надзором
 Господина Министра
 Просвете ~~и Црк. вених~~
 Послова.

М.4.

~~Музика~~ Музика шко.
 ла може прибавити како

IVANA VESIĆ

FROM GREAT EXPECTATIONS TO GREAT DISAPPOINTMENTS

Крешта годња: Било зами,
воштим потлозима (годро,
штим уговорима) било
потлозима послегве воше
(завешташима.)

Ка. 5.

Потлозне уписе Ср.
Шурикој Школи шима
Савеса Срске Шурике
Школе. Савеса моше потлози
и одбиту.

Ка. 6.

Савеса Срске Шурике
Школе моше се штимити
касета за Срску Шурику
Школу само с потлозом.
Пријем касета без потлоза
штампаће се као пријем
с потлозом.

Ка. 5

~~Шурике~~ Шурике
Школа моше подавати надала
за своје потлозе ~~потлоза~~
годња и Куровином, али
ово моше бити само ис
потлози и потлози, ако ~~да~~ је има
све било. ~~уговорима~~
~~и Срске Шурике Школе.~~ ~~Шурике~~
школа директорија. Ако је
издавак бити од ~~оде~~ штим
шимаге шимага, ~~уговор~~ је одлика савеска извешта је

7 О надалама до рех
савеска шимага одлика
директор, до две шимаге
шимага Урџаба, а до штим
шимаге шимага Савеса
~~Шурике Школе.~~

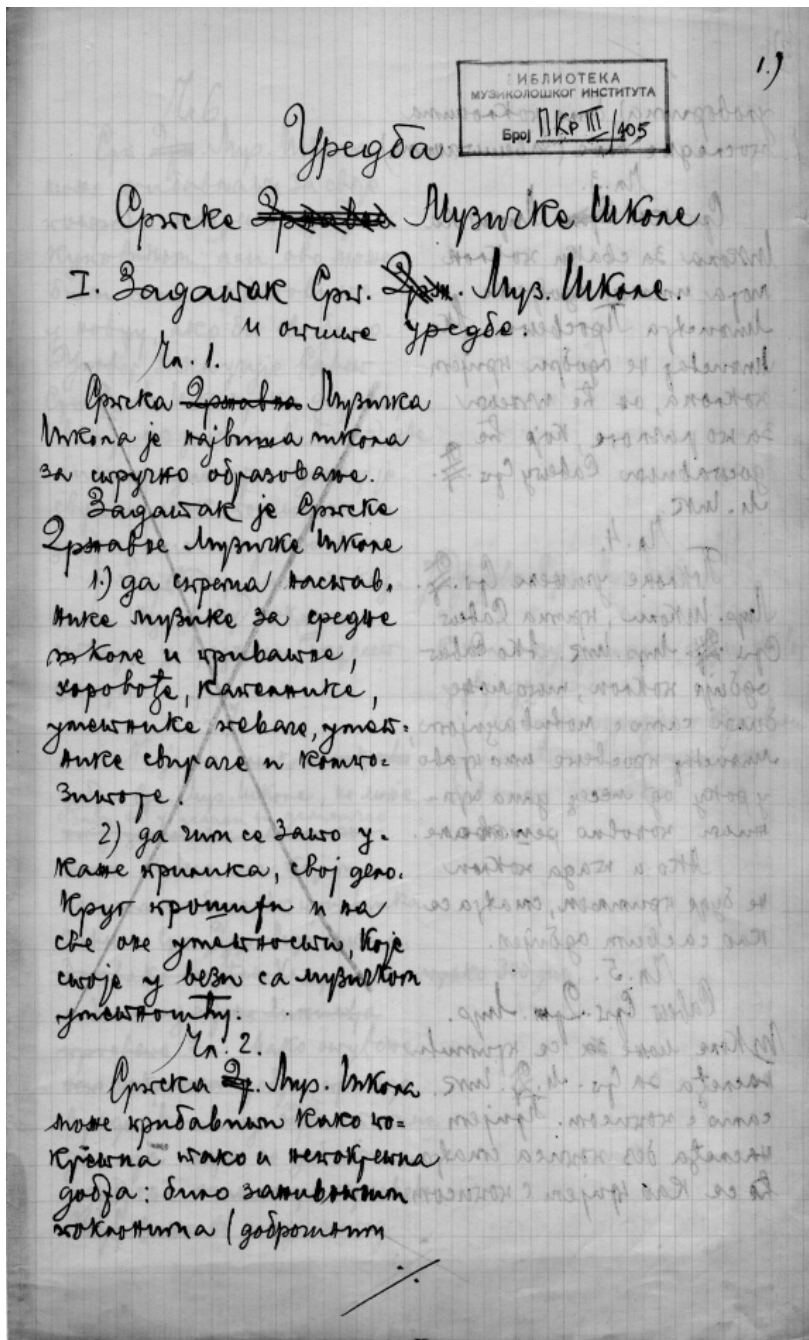


Illustration 2. The Decree of the Serbian Music School, IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational work, manuscript, s.a., front page.

The separation of school from choral society was, in Krstić's words, motivated by several reasons. First of all, the functioning of those institutions was based on distinct interests and they had nothing in common.¹⁰ Because of that, teachers and members of the various bodies of the Serbian Music School were consistent in insisting upon the fact that the Belgrade Choral Society was not competent for the evaluation of the school's new Statute. Moreover, the Statute's preparation and adoption was meant to confirm the independent status of the school including its autonomy in the creation of curricula, lecturing, examination of students, the use of funds, etc. Secondly, the model of functioning of the school that was proposed in the first Statute in force since 1899 was considered out-dated, and, therefore, improper for the challenges faced in the post-war period.¹¹

While Petar Krstić and his co-workers explicitly opposed any possible interference of the management of Belgrade Choral Society even if such action was ordered "by the King himself", the Society's leaders advocated a return to the original type of organization and, simultaneously, protested against the "violation of the valid acts" and "tyranny" of the Teachers' Council and the director of the Serbian Music School.¹² In order to confront the school's "schism", they approached the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of SCS, asking him to force the school's management to obey the established rules and hierarchy.¹³ After a series of memos exchanged between the Ministry of Education, the Main Educational Council, and the managements of the Belgrade Choral Society and the Serbian Music School, a meeting was scheduled with the purpose of gathering the delegates from the opposing parties and discuss the school's new Statute.¹⁴

On 5 June 1919, delegates from the Belgrade Choral Society (Rista Odavić, Božidar Lukić, Vojislav Janjić, Vladimir Stevanović and Vlastimir Glišić), Serbian Music School (Petar Krstić, Jovan Zorko, Ivanka Milojević) and the Belgrade City Government assembled in the National Theatre following the directives of the Minister of Education (Pbr. 9842 from 20 May 1919). Though it was not explicitly stated, it was expected that the meeting would result in the cooperation of two groups and, accordingly, would ensure both the legitimacy of the new Statute and the school's management and their building on valid rules and documents. However, as the discussion progressed, it became clear that the representatives from the once unified institution were holding to mutually exclusive positions, contesting each other's right to

10 See AY-66-632-1044, The minute book of the Council of the Serbian Music School's meeting held in Belgrade on June 5th, 1919, a copy, Belgrade Choral Society, no. 35, 5 June 1919.

11 Cf. *Ibid.*

12 See AY-66-632-1044, A memo of the Belgrade Choral Society to the Minister of Education, no. 7, 23 February 1919, 10; AY-66-632-1044, A memo of the Belgrade Choral Society to the Minister of Education, no. 18, 1 April 1919.

13 *Ibid.*

14 See AY-66-632-1044, The Belgrade Choral Society to the Serbian Music School, no. 33, 4 June 1919, Belgrade.

participate in the school's administration. Although the members of the Belgrade Choral Society claimed that they were willing to collaborate with the school representatives following the history of their close and warm relations, they did not hesitate to criticize bitterly the school's Teachers' Council for "taking [the wrong] direction" and its director whom they accused of having gained certain rights on account of the approval of occupational forces for the opening of the *Belgrader Musikschule*.¹⁵ Unlike the Society's representatives who tried to leave an impression of benevolence, the delegates from the school openly expressed their reluctance to give legitimacy to any "provisory body" that would include individuals outside the school's collective.¹⁶ The only motive behind the decision to attend the meeting was to participate in an "exchange of thoughts". As Krstić pointed out, the school's management did not intend to be present in any other similar meeting or meetings in the future.¹⁷

Since this event confirmed the impossibility of reaching a compromise between the aforementioned institutions and the determination of the members of the school collective to follow the provisions of the new Statute, disregarding the previous, at the time still formally valid, Statute which, according to research published in 1924 (see Manojlović 1924), was ineffective for more than a decade and was planned to be withdrawn during Mokranjac's rule,¹⁸ the Minister of Education suggested the division of property of the school and society via the court¹⁹ and the recognition of the present state of affairs (Pbr. 11842 from 5 July 1919).

Owing to the fact that the Belgrade Choral Society was successfully neutralized in the process of the internal reorganisation of the Serbian Music School, Petar Krstić was able to proceed with his reformative undertakings. With the approval of the new Statute from the authorities, the deeply modified mechanism of decision-making could finally become viable. Still, various "technical" issues including the problem of the school's building and the material status of teachers needed to be tackled. To conclude from Krstić's activities and writings from this period, the only move he

15 See AY-66-632-1044, The minute book of the Council of the Serbian Music School's meeting held in Belgrade on 5 June 1919, a copy, Belgrade Choral Society, no. 35, 5 June 1919.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 In 1909 Mokranjac prepared the new Statute of the school and presented it to the members of the school's Council. He intended to create stronger relations between the school and the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, and to pass on all the authority to the director of school. As Kosta Manojlović noted, "according to the previous Statute, signing of administrative documents, presidency over the Council and school governing was in the hands of the president of the Belgrade Choral Society. It turned out impossible to realize in practice and the director took over these duties, which was acknowledged in the new Statute. Moreover, the Statute was modified in order to be adapted to practice. On this occasion Mokranjac stated what I have already mentioned: "We never acted by the rules, instead of which C. Manojlović and I made decisions on what and how something should be done". See Manojlović 1924: 37.

19 AY-66-632-1044, The head of Arts Department to the management of the Music School in Belgrade and the Belgrade Choral Society, Ubr. 348, 9 February 1920.

found meaningful in that context was the procurement of state support and, accordingly, the school's 'etatization'.

FROM SUBSIDIZED TO PUBLIC MUSIC SCHOOL AND CONSERVATORY:
PETAR KRSTIĆ'S VIEWS ON AND ACTIONS IN THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE SERBIAN MUSIC SCHOOL

That internal reshaping of the school and the change of its functioning represented a significant step forward, but was insufficient for its thorough transformation despite the enthusiasm, discipline and commitment of both the school's collective and management, was evident to Petar Krstić in the first months of 1919. Therefore, in parallel with work on the new Statute, he dedicated himself to explaining to the authorities the necessity of solving the school's financial problems that, as he believed, was a prerequisite for its fruitful functioning. Besides communicating with the Minister of Finances of the Kingdom of SCS who seems to have shown understanding of the school's (difficult) position, Krstić wrote an extensive letter to the Minister of Education in March 1919 explaining in detail the challenges that were faced by school teachers and management and the results they achieved in spite of numerous obstacles.²⁰ This document, ten pages long, contained, among other things, information on school's main goals since its foundation, such as the education of musical specialists whose role was to 'spread music to the masses' or to 'create and collect everything that is needed for primary and secondary schools', the formation of music teachers for secondary and music schools, choirmasters of choral societies and churches, conductors of civil and military ensembles, theatrical singers and instrumentalists, composers and a musical audience.²¹ Krstić stated that in the post-war circumstances "the school needed to approach its tasks even more seriously than before", that it should become "a centre for music education for our people from this and the other side of the Sava and the Danube", a nursery for musical talents, and a place that would gather the most able teachers from all-over the country.²² For that reason, and the fact that the number of students was increasing each year and that the school's collective showed enough professional capacity for future development, this institution deserved more substantial financial support. It was necessary in order to ensure not only its proper functioning (adequate work space and working conditions) but also the basis for further expansion (financial and social security of teachers, the school's own building). The first plea sent to the Minister of Education from the Serbian Music School after the Great War concluded with the following words:

20 AY-66-632-1044, A memo to the Ministry of Education, no. 23, 29 March 1919.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

After the vengeance of Kosovo, and the unification of South Slavs, the Serbian Music School also expects the realization of its ideals and, thus, hopes for your help. It is the duty of the homeland towards the shadows of the fallen intellectuals who fought for freedom and culture.²³

Despite the fact that Krstić pondered over the idea of school's 'etatization' since he was appointed its director in 1914, it was not referred to in the letter. Whether he thought it tactless or premature to mention this possibility on this occasion is not very clear from the relevant document. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he continued to work on it, which was reflected in his actions and correspondence initiated after he was formally elected the school's director in July 1919 according to the regulations of the new Statute. Only two weeks later, Krstić wrote to the Minister of Education, this time with intention of presenting him with a document entitled *The Draft of the Law on State Music Schools in the Kingdom of SCS* (see Illustration 3).²⁴ In the *Draft*, he summed up his thoughts on the proper organization of music education in the Kingdom of SCS and the significance of the Serbian Music School, renamed Belgrade Music School in the projected reformative process. Several assumptions upon which this document was based were of crucial importance and they were thoroughly explained and elaborated in some of the Krstić's writings published in 1921.

First of all, music education ought to be divided into three cycles – preparatory, secondary and high, and each of them should take place in a specific type of school. Preparatory schools could offer only courses in violin, piano, solfeggio and choral performance, while secondary schools had both preparatory and intermediate courses and, if possible, courses for music teachers. High schools encompassed preparatory, lower and higher courses for different musical subjects along with courses for music teachers, and operatic and dramatic art. This type of school should be public (state funded), whereas secondary schools could be both public and private. Public music schools had to have their own building and an adequate inventory, while its curricula should be laid down by the Minister of Education. Secondly, teachers in public music schools ought to have the same rights and privileges as teachers in secondary public schools. They could be appointed to the following positions: director, professor, trainee professor, teacher, trainee teacher and part-time teacher, which is confirmed by the Minister's or King's decree. Finally, both public and private music schools were to be monitored by the Minister of Education as well as their curricula. Their teachers had to be the citizens of the Kingdom of SCS, but, if necessary, citizens of foreign countries could be engaged under special contracts.

23 Ibid.

24 Historical Archives of Belgrade, *Mokranjac* Music School, General Archive, 1915–1919, Inventory no. 184, A memo to the Minister of Education, 24 July, Belgrade. IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, *The Draft of the Law on State Music Schools in the Kingdom of SCS*, 27 July 1919 (prepared by the director Petar Krstić).

IVANA VESIĆ

FROM GREAT EXPECTATIONS TO GREAT DISAPPOINTMENTS

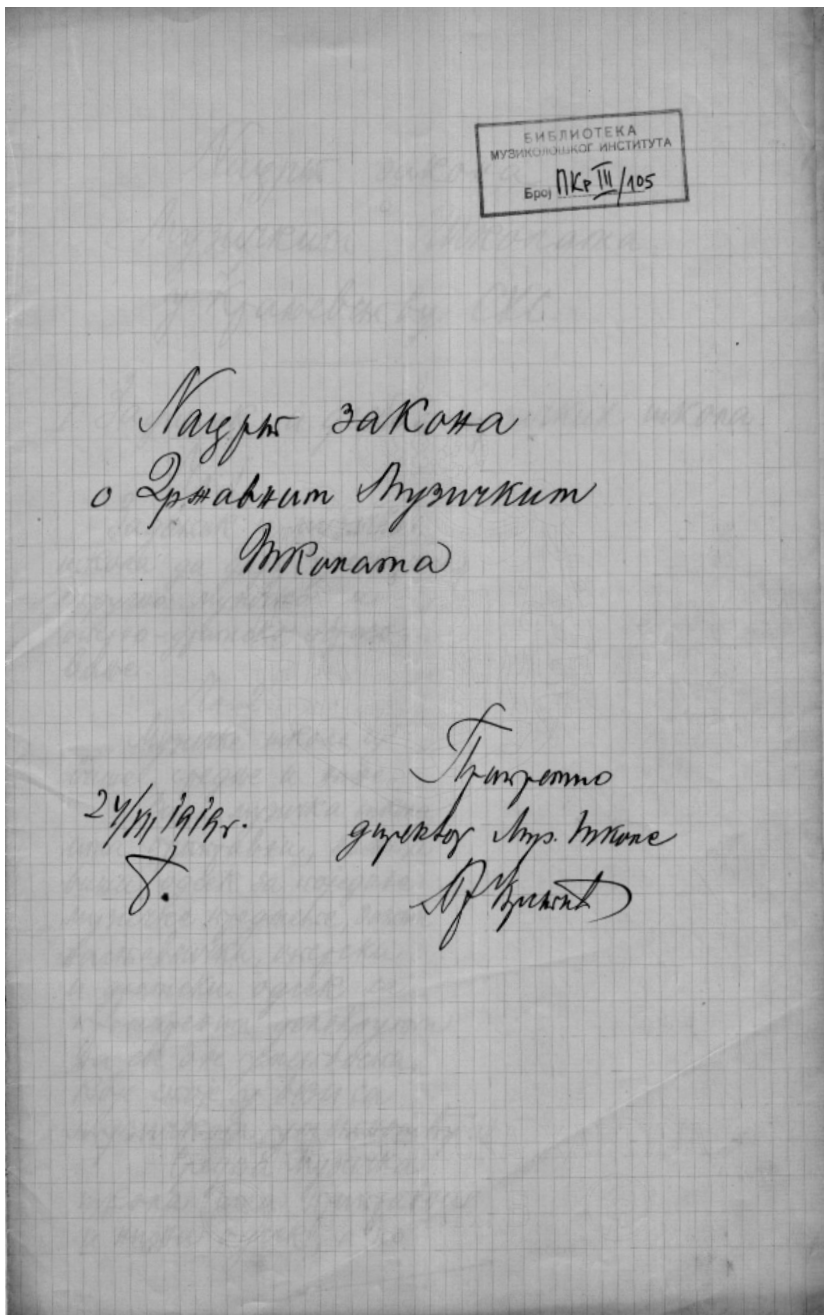


Illustration 3. *The Draft of the Law on State Music Schools in the Kingdom of SCS, IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Educational Work, Materials on the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade, 27 July 1919, prepared by the director Petar Krstić*

The claim that high music schools must be state funded was first mentioned by Krstić in his exhaustive memo to the Minister of Education in March 1919, referring to the practice and tradition of developed Western European countries. He stated that 'rare musical talents found in private schools are usually sent to [...] conservatories or musical academies that are almost always state funded. [...] There is no doubt that this relationship [between private and public schools] will develop in our capital in the future.'²⁵ In his article on the Belgrade Conservatory prepared and published in 1921 he considered it once again in a more systematic manner.²⁶ Analysing the history and characteristics of music education in Western and Central Europe, Krstić concluded that the coexistence of private and public institutions is typical and that state funding prevails in the domain of high music education. The most prestigious conservatories in the 'Old Continent' are, in the majority of cases, funded from the state budget. This correlation was not accidental for Krstić and was explained by specific differences in the nature of private and state schools. As he pointed out, unlike private schools that are primarily materially oriented and whose aim is, before all, the creation of profit, public schools have a more 'idealistic' grounding – artistic aspirations are their main *raison d'être*.²⁷ When school authorities are focused on expenses and profit, other (artistic) issues cannot be treated as priority, and, conversely, when financial matters are of no great concern, emphasis can be put on other problems.

Krstić thought it impossible for a private enterprise, especially in southeastern Europe, to realize a serious, and materially incredibly exhausting task such as the foundation of a conservatory. For that reason, together with strong empirical indicators from the developed countries, the only acceptable solution that could generate expansion and advancement of music education in the Kingdom of SCS was the foundation of public schools.²⁸ In order not to lose precious time and energy, instead of the creation of new institutions, Krstić suggested the transformation of already-existing schools with a certain tradition and experience. As we shall discuss later, in case of the 'eastern' part of the Kingdom, he had no doubts that the Belgrade Music School was the most 'eligible' for that process and that it had the greatest potential for becoming a conservatory in the near future.

While Petar Krstić and his colleagues were trying to initiate the broader reforms of their own and other music schools in the country as soon as possible, the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom SCS was in the process of constitution in 1919 and without the definitive financial plans. Therefore, to Krstić's memo from March 1919 the following response was given in December the same year: The problem of Belgrade Music School, its progress and material security, will be solved as soon as the

25 AY-66-632-1044, A memo to the Ministry of Education, no. 23, 29 March 1919.

26 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 7–12.

27 Ibid, 8–9.

28 Ibid, 11.

funds for the definition of our artistic culture are approved.²⁹ This referred indirectly to the issue of 'etatization', although, it must be noted that it is not known whether there was any reaction to *The Draft* sent to the Minister.

Despite certain delay, neither Krstić nor the school's employees abandoned their reformatory ideas. Accordingly, at the meeting of the School's Council in May 1920 the decision was made to address the Minister of Education once again with one sole request – to make the Belgrade Music School public and, consequently, to create secure posts for its teachers.³⁰ Several months later, the Minister gave support to this initiative and, soon after, a special commission was formed in order to discuss the details and prepare the necessary regulations.³¹ After a few sessions, members of the commission completed the draft of the Decree on the Belgrade Conservatory (1921). It was approved by the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of SCS on 20 December 1920, and published in the *Službeni list Kraljevine SHS* on 11 January 1921.

According to Krstić's testimony, the meetings of the commission revealed the existence of antagonistic views on the issue of 'etatization' that were the result of the differences in understanding of the needs of Yugoslav society, of the prospects of

29 See AY-66-632-1044, Arts Department of the Ministry of Education to the Music School in Belgrade, Ubr. 523, 29 December 1919.

30 See AY-66-632-1044, Music School in Belgrade to the Minister of Education, no. 96, 5 July 1920, Belgrade.

31 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 16–17; HAB, *Mokranjac* Music School, General Archive, inventory no. 185, 1920, Arts Department of the Ministry of Education to the Directorate of the Music School, Ubr. 1581, 7 September 1920, Belgrade; AY-66-632-1044, The Minister's memo to the Arts Department, Ubr. 1827, 2 October 1920. The members of the commission were the following: Branislav Nušić, head of the Arts Department, Petar Konjović, inspector of the Arts Department, Petar Krstić, director of the Music School in Belgrade, Jovan Zorko, teacher of the Music School in Belgrade, Rajna Dimitrijević, teacher of the Music School in Belgrade, Milan Grol, director of the National Theatre in Belgrade, Miloje Milojević, musician, Živojin Spasojević, associate professor at the University, Voja Spasojević, an employee of the Ministry of Finances. According to certain archival documents, prior to the foundation of this commission, the management of the Music School of the Stanković Choral Society was asked to join the discussion on Belgrade Conservatory by the authorities. One of the suggestions from the Ministry of Education was to merge this school with the Music School in Belgrade, but its leaders strongly disapproved that idea. As they stated: "a) [the school leaders] have no right to decide upon that issue and to dissolve the Stanković Music School. which is against its Statute that cannot be modified because of the many legacies and funds dedicated to it, b) the management of the school finds that it should exist in parallel with the state-owned Music School in Belgrade in order to foster competition [...], c) this private school needs state support and attention even with a very small subsidy that can be used for procurement of musical instruments and maintenance of the building, d) a certain state body ought to confirm the curricula for this school and monitor its work and, only in that case will ot not fall behind the state Music School [...]. AY-66-633-1045, Stanković Music School, A Memo of the Stanković Choral Society to the Minister of Education (and Arts Department), no. 94, 30 September 1920, Belgrade.

musical education, its role in the national culture, etc. On the one pole stood Krstić with his 'evolutionary approach' to the reforms, while on the other there were Petar Konjović, inspector of the Arts Department, and the majority of the members of the commission.

BELGRADE CONSERVATORY: AN EVOLUTIONARY OR A PRAGMATIC SOLUTION?

One of the major points of dispute of the members of the commission was the question of the future designation of the Belgrade Music School – whether it should bear the name of conservatory or not. As Petar Krstić underlined in his recollections, although it seemed a marginal, "technical" issue at the beginning, soon it turned out to expose deep ideological divisions among the music specialists. Two opposite standpoints materialized early in the sessions. One was based on the idea of the gradual transformation of the school with the emphasis on the transitory period that should serve for the consolidation of its material and human resources, the preparation of curricula, and the introduction of new subjects and instruments. While in the process of restructuring, the school was not to be named conservatory in order not to compromise this term. This point of view was advocated by Krstić.³² The other, voiced by Petar Konjović, was grounded in the belief of the necessity of skipping the transitory phases and of using the term conservatory from the start. The "cosmetic" change of name was assumed to lead gradually to internal transformation in the future. Thus, the "form" imposed on the improper "content" should, at some point, generate its restructuring resulting in a mutual crossing.

The disagreement between the two musicians was not only about the question of "timing" and designation which was manifest in the work of the commission and outside it – especially in public discussions in which Miloje Milojević took the role of spokesperson for Konjović and his supporters.³³ Actually, the problem of the

32 In his opinion, Belgrade Music School at that moment was not on the level of European conservatories and needed a strong impetus in terms of finances and staff. Financial support should be granted by the state. With an adequate material basis, some of the greatest obstacles to reform could be overcome. An adequate building with a proper number of classrooms and concert halls would be provided; the list of subjects expanded and many new instruments such as wind instruments, harp and organs would be introduced. Accordingly, new teachers ought to be engaged both from Serbia and abroad. Only after these changes were made could the school enter a new stage and be transformed into conservatory. Until then, its name should be kept. See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 17–21.

33 Milojević promoted his ideas on the Belgrade Conservatory both in public and in the meetings of the Council of the Belgrade Music School. During one of debates on the school's 'etatization' when Krstić's model was supported with majority of votes, a conflict between him and Krstić flared up. Milojević insisted his thoughts on the foundation of central conservatory/academy of music for the whole

‘naming’ of the school was understood not as a professional issue, but as primarily political. From such a perspective, it was all about national prestige and pride, of what South Slavs merited and were worthy of. That was evident in Milojević’s addresses to the public. For instance, in his article on Belgrade Conservatory (1921), he indirectly accused Krstić as a reactionary who stood against national prosperity and development and promoted the *status quo* typical for the pre-war period when ‘there was no art policy’ and when neither authorities nor artists were concerned with the progress of art music. As he stated:

The time has come to open the doors for the highest artistic education in the field of music in our country, despite the reactionaries, despite those who, for reasons history will tell, wanted those doors to be closed, allegedly because we lack this or that; or who wanted to make these doors narrower and lower, narrow and high enough to let the old spirit from the past into the residency of Artistic Light. (Milojević 1921: 1)

Following Milojević’s words, anybody who opposed the standpoint of Konjović and his supporters was to be “labelled” conservative and anti-liberal and, at the same time, an adversary of the highest national interests. His approach to the topic was undoubtedly “fuelled” with political rhetoric, otherwise the debate on school reforms which was primarily of professional kind would not have turned into a sort of hate speech in which different perspectives from those he promoted were presented as ‘threatening’ to the development of art music.

Apart from the name and timing, other issues also turned out to be problematic in the course of the public debate that flourished after the approval of the Decree on the Belgrade Conservatory. Such was the question of the “general character” of studies in the conservatory – national and/or international, and the type of knowledge

country be completely written down in the school’s Council minute book to which Krstić retorted with: ‘don’t bother’. As a result, Milojević, with the support of his wife, school teacher, Ivanka Milojević, asked for the restructuring of the management of the school, accusing Krstić of mistreatment. After Krstić refuted the allegations of Miloje and Ivanka Milojević in the meeting of the school’s Council on 27 May 1920, he offered to resign from 1 July of the same year, but it was not accepted. From that point on, Milojević started to criticize Krstić’s undertakings in public. In the period from May 1920 to February 1921, he explicated the details of his proposal for the creation of a central conservatory/music academy on the university basis, with a broad artistic direction instead of a focus on ‘technique only’ several times (see Milojević 1920, 1921). According to the published sources, the most important issues for Milojević were those concerning the type of artistic knowledge produced in the conservatory, the literature on music and music literature used in the conservatory, the classification of students etc. (Cf. Milojević 1920, 1921). One of the most extensive writings on this subject was Milojević’s address to the Minister of Education from July 1920 on behalf of the Belgrade branch of the Association of Yugoslav Musicians. In it Milojević summoned his thoughts on the future of the Belgrade Conservatory – its level, aims, staff, and social and cultural role. See AY-66-632-1044, Association of Yugoslav Musicians, Belgrade branch, to the Minister of Education, no.13. 3 July 1920.

produced – technical and/or “artistic”. Once again, Milojević and Krstić promoted opposing stances. Milojević believed that the conservatory curricula should be based primarily on the heritage of musical classicism, with special attention given to Yugoslav music nationalism. As he pointed out, “it should not be emphasized that our nationalism deserves a prominent place which until now was not the case, moreover, it was systematically suppressed” (Milojević 1921: 3). Unlike Milojević, Krstić thought it impossible to ground a programme of studies of a conservatory on Yugoslav music because “[it] does not exist in the highest artistic sense” – “we do not have music in the monumental genres”, and also the specific music literature and didactic material for the instruments.³⁴ For that reason, he suggested the use of “the great world literature both in terms of concert pieces and textbooks” concluding that for “us as a nation an extensive cultural work is awaiting in order to come closer to the great cultural nations”.³⁵ In Krstić’s opinion, the idea that Yugoslavs ought to find their own way in this context without considering the prominent traditions of other nations was problematic and would only result in “pointless wandering in the darkness, when light can easily be reached”.³⁶

Considering the knowledge that the conservatory should offer, Milojević regarded work on performance technique as necessary, though it “should not be the single priority of music pedagogy” (Milojević 1921: 3). In his opinion, students ought to be given an adequate theoretical basis, proper understanding of musical aesthetics and the history of music, experience in group performance (chamber music, choir, orchestra) etc. (1921: 3). In the case of Krstić, the necessity of acquiring performance skills was singled out as crucial since “without [appropriate] technique of voice, fingers, bow, etc. it is not possible to think about the cultivation of music at all, even less of the higher style in music”.³⁷ As he believed, even if an instrumental soloist had perfect pitch, and a sense for rhythmic and dynamic details, it is of no value unless the soloist “possesses enough technical means to express that on an instrument”.³⁸ Krstić strongly repudiated claims that the primary task of conservatories and music schools was “to cultivate the musicality of the soul and to develop a deep sensibility for art music”.³⁹

In their public discussion on the organization and main goals of the future Belgrade conservatory, Milojević and Krstić tackled issues that were outside the domain of the approved Decree⁴⁰ and were expected to be defined by the Statute

34 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 33, 34.

35 Ibid., 34.

36 Ibid., 37.

37 See IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 37.

38 Ibid. 39.

39 Ibid. 37.

40 This document defined the following: 1. the aims and organization of the Belgrade Conservatory,

of the Conservatory. Still, the prerequisite for that was its application in practice, which turned out to be completely uncertain in 1921. Soon after this document was presented to the public, the Minister of Education asked the directors of the Zagreb and Ljubljana music schools (Franjo Dugan and Matej Hubad) to meet in Belgrade within a commission of experts⁴¹ with the aim of preparing it for use in the whole country and to modify certain segments.⁴² The meetings were held in April 1921, and resulted in slight changes of the original document including its name – The Decree on the State Conservatories of Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana.⁴³ Two months later the Decree was planned to be sent to the Main Educational Council of the Kingdom of SCS, but its further course was not transparent even for the members of the commission that worked on it.⁴⁴ According to Petar Krstić's testimony, after months of silence from the Ministry of Education, and his protests to the Minister regarding the inadequate treatment of the first Decree by the authorities, the Minister suspended it.⁴⁵ One of the reasons for this move, as was explained to Krstić at the meeting in the Ministry of Education, was that it needed to be revised "so that individuals outside the Belgrade Music School can apply for the position of director".⁴⁶ For Krstić this was a clear sign of mistrust towards him that was, as he believed, being instigated by the chief of the Arts Department, Branislav Nušić. For that reason, he decided to resign definitively from the post of director of the Belgrade Music School, after seven years of service.

EPILOGUE

Although the adoption of The Decree on the Belgrade Conservatory was received with great enthusiasm among the music specialists who had been hoping for the

2. its ownership, 3. areas and levels of study, 4. categories of professors and other employees, 5. main bodies. Cf. Uredba o Konzervatorijumu u Beogradu 1921.

41 This commission was founded on 3 January 1921, by the Minister of Education. Its members were Dr Dragoljub Arandelović, university professor, Branislav Nušić, superintendent of the Ministry of Education, Petar Konjović, inspector of the Ministry of Education, Stanislav Binički, director of Belgrade Opera, and Dušan Kotur, professor of the Karlovci Lyceum. It was supposed to discuss various issues concerning the application of the Decree. See AY-66-632-1044, Arts Department of the Ministry of Education, Ubr. 21, 3 January 1921, Belgrade.

42 See AY-66-632-1044, Minister to the Arts Department of the Ministry of Education, Ubr. 522, 9 March 1921.

43 Cf. IMSASA – AC, PKL, Group III, Articles and writings of Petar Krstić, Belgrade Conservatory, manuscript, s.a., 27.

44 Ibid, 28.

45 Ibid, 57.

46 Ibid, 58.

reform of music education for years, the events that followed pointed to the complexity of this process and its intricacies. Despite the goodwill of all parties concerned, the whole procedure did not end as expected. Part of the blame for the generally unsuccessful outcome was attributed to the disunity of the Belgrade music experts and their ideological and personal conflicts (Zorko 1924: 594), but this claim cannot be confirmed by the available data. Probably a set of different, mutually unrelated causes resulted in the abandonment of this historically significant project.

Regardless of the fact that the Decree was not put into force, it did encourage certain reformative shifts in the field of music education. The process of 'etatization' and transformation of existing schools in the Kingdom of SCS, supported by the Ministry of Education, motivated school leaders to prepare detailed financial estimates and inventory lists, to reconsider the classification of teachers and their rights and duties and to examine other elements. With the data and plans collected, schools took steps forward in the process of restructuring. Owing much to their resilience and determination, the management of the School of the Croatian Music Institute in Zagreb was given approval for their curricula, statute and other regulations in order to be transformed into Zagreb Conservatory as a state funded institution. This decision was made by the regional chief for Croatia and Slavonia (Anonymous 1921: 127). Similarly, musicians from Ljubljana began intensive preparatory work and campaigning in the spring of 1921 asking for state support of the Conservatory and School of Music of the Glasbena matica in September that year.⁴⁷ It was supposed to be the peak of the process they initiated in December of 1919. At the time, professors and teachers of both institutions prepared a resolution for the government of the Kingdom of SCS asking for their transformation into public establishments with the purpose of enabling their regular functioning, the social security of the employees, and enrollment of students of various social background.⁴⁸ Still, only seven years later, in 1926, the requests of Ljubljana school collective were accepted by the authorities, and the Conservatory of Glasbena matica became state owned.⁴⁹

Considering the various initiatives in the field of music education in the Kingdom of SCS immediately after the Great war, the creation of the Decree on Conservatories including the procedures that preceded and followed it represented the first important stride towards its deeper restructuring. At the same time, it was the crown of the long-standing activities of Petar Krstić who was among the figures most responsible for the process of reforms in the whole Kingdom. The work on the text of the Decree was built upon his various undertakings whose objective was, in the first place, to restructure the Music School in Belgrade completely, but also to bring the Yugoslav system of music education closer to the level of developed European countries. Krstić started with *The Decree on the Serbian Music School* in 1914 and continued

47 AY-66-632-1043. Regional Office in Ljubljana, Department for Education and Religion, to the Art Department of the Ministry of Education, 4 August 1921, Ljubljana.

48 AY-66-632-1043, To the Department for Education and Religion, 21 December 1919, Ljubljana.

49 On the history of Glasbena matica's music schools see Cigoj Krstulović 2015: 163–176.

with the thoroughly modified Statute in 1919 which, among other things, contained a detailed programme of studies and examination requirements for instruments, voice performance and music teachers. With the *Draft of the Law on State Music Schools in the Kingdom of SCS* he prepared in 1920, a solid basis for the process of transformation was created. Based on his claims, these materials were both the result of his experience as teacher and director of the Serbian Music School/Music School in Belgrade and his knowledge of the organization and functioning of music education in European countries he acquired over the years. That Krstić was well informed about this topic, and that he spent a great deal of time on its exploration and analysis is obvious in the argumentation he presented in his writings. Compared with other music specialists, specifically Miloje Milojević, his explanations were very detailed and less impassioned, while his insights were grounded on “non-romanticized”, objective evaluations. It seems that the majority of influential musicians at the time including Milojević and Konjović, who were the closest to the authorities from the Ministry of Education, did not appreciate Krstić’s tendency to speak openly about the modest results and prospects of music schools in the country compared to their Western and Central European counterparts, and to insist on patient and diligent work. Probably for that reason, his views were harshly criticized and his achievements in the domain of music education were rarely given credit. An exception was made by Stanislav Vinaver, writer and music critic, who in his discussion of Belgrade Conservatory in 1924 praised Krstić’s work. In his opinion: “Primarily, the best director of the music school who could appear in our milieu was Petar Krstić. He ruled the Music School and restructured it with the utmost order and precision, with great meticulousness and routine” (Vinaver 1924: 11).

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that Krstić’s work on the reforms of music schools did not end in the early 1920s. Despite his disappointment with the way the authorities acted, as well as some of his colleagues, he continued to contribute to this process especially after he was appointed music supervisor of the Ministry of Education in 1930. Owing to this, he was involved in the preparation of one of the most important documents concerning music education in the interwar period – The Project of the Law on Art Schools, which was intended to lead to radical and lasting changes in this field.

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ИВАНА ВЕСИЋ

ОД ВЕЛИКИХ ОЧЕКИВАЊА ДО ВЕЛИКИХ РАЗОЧАРЕЊА:
ДОПРИНОС ПЕТРА КРСТИЋА РЕФОРМАМА МУЗИЧКОГ ОБРАЗОВАЊА
У МЕЂУРАТНОЈ ЈУГОСЛАВИЈИ (1918–1921)

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Петар Крстић је у својству директора Српске музичке школе/Музичке школе у Београду (1914–1921) након завршетка Првог светског рата започео интензиван рад на њеној реорганизацији и осавремењивању. Полазећи од уверења да ова установа може у блиској будућности да достигне ниво који би одговарао музичким школама у развијеним европским земљама он се усмерио на измене њеног начина функционисања и општег устројства. С тим увези, од изузетне важности била је припрема и усвајање новог Правилника школе, а затим и иницирање преговора с надлежнима из Министарства финансија и Министарства просвете не би ли се школи обезбедила материјална сигурност. Томе је убрзо придодат и предлог о подржављењу школе о чему је Крстић размишљао још у првим месецима управљања, 1914. године, захваљујући чему је настала Уредба Српске музичке школе. Предлог је у форми Нацрта Закона о државним музичким школама у Краљевини СХС предат министру просвете у јулу 1920, а озбиљнији кораци с тим у вези начињени су током 1921. године. Заправо, након поновног обраћања Крстића министру поводом питања подржављења у јуну те године, инициран је обиман рад на припреми одговарајућих докумената и извођењу овог процеса. Тако је отпочео историјски важан процес усвајања Уредбе о Конзерваторијуму у Београду који је имао неколико предфаза и потоњих разрада. Убрзо је питање подржављења Музичке школе у Београду прерасло почетне оквири и претворило се у питање конституисања високих школа за музику – конзерваторијума, на територији читаве земље. Иако напослетку овај процес није формализован, захваљујући њему начињени су помаци у реформи музичког образовања. Наиме, музичке школе у Загребу и Љубљани успеле су да материјализују своја вишегодишња настојања и оформе државне конзерваторијуме током двадесетих година.

Рад на Уредби представљао је на изванредан начин круну активности Петра Крстића у погледу темељног преобликовања Музичке школе у Београду, али и музичког школства уопште. У току дискусија које су вођене пре и након њеног усвајања, Крстић је био прилици да изложи своје погледе на проблем стварања конзерваторијума и сумира дугогодишња размишљања, сазнања и искуства на ту тему. Иако пажљиво аргументована и чврсто утемељена, његова

схватања нису наилазила на разумевање чланова комисије за припрему Уредбе, док су је поједини стручњаци оштро критиковали. Крстићеви јединствени погледи и нека врста „еволутивног модела“ који је путем њих пропагирао, нису, међутим, били узрок његовог потоњег дистанцирања од Министарства просвете с чијим челницима је одржавао добре односе од 1919. године. До тога је довело како „одељачење“ које је уследило у вези с применом Уредбе и усвајањем пропратних докумената, тако и сплетке које су настале око избора директора будућег Конзерваторијума у Београду. Ипак, Крстићев рад на реформама музичког образовања није завршен 1921. године. Он се наставио током наредне деценије када се Крстић, у улози инспектора Министарства просвете и члана комисије, посветио припреми најзначајнијег документа за ову област у читавом међуратном периоду – Пројекту Закона о уметничким школама.

Кључне речи: Петар Крстић, Српска музичка школа/Музичка школа у Београду, Краљевина СХС, музичко образовање, Конзерваторијум у Београду