



Gregor Pompe

Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani
Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Slovenian Music in the First Decade after the Second World War – In Search of Socialist Realism

Slovenska glasba v prvem desetletju po drugi svetovni vojni – v iskanju socialističnega realizma

Prejeto: 11. julija 2018

Sprejeto: 20. avgust 2018

Received: 11th July 2018

Accepted: 20th August 2018

Ključne besede: socialistični realizem, slovenska
glasba, glasba 20. stoletja

Keywords: socialist realism, Slovenian music, twenty-century music

IZVLEČEK

Po drugi svetovni vojni je Slovenija postala del socialistične Jugoslavije, ki je po vzoru Sovjetske zveze umetnost nadzorovala iz ideološke perspektive. Obstoječe študije o vplivih novega družnega sistema na slovensko glasbo niso odkrile nobenih razločnih in odkritih političnih posegov v glasbeno življenje, zato se je smiselno vprašati, ali je mogoče takšne vplive prepoznati v skladateljskih delih, nastalih v prvem desetletju po koncu druge svetovne vojne. Izkáže se, da so bile zahteve in rešitve precej ambivalentne in arbitrarne; nekateri skladatelji, predvsem tisti, ki so nadaljevali s tradicionalnim glasbenim izrazom, niso prilagajali svojih estetskih postulatov, medtem ko lahko slogovne spremembe opazimo predvsem pri tistih skladateljih, ki so se *novi glasbi* zapisali pred vojno.

ABSTRACT

After the Second World War, Slovenia became a part of socialist Yugoslavia, which, following the example of the Soviet Union, scrutinised art from an ideological perspective. Previous studies of the influence of the new social system on Slovenian music have not discovered any distinct and direct political interventions in musical life, so it is reasonable to enquire whether such influences can be identified in the works of Slovenian composers from the first decade after the end of the Second World War. It turns out that demands and solutions were rather ambivalent and arbitrary; some composers, particularly those who continued traditional musical expression, did not adapt their aesthetic principles, while a change in style is observed especially in those composers who had endorsed the *new music* before the war.

1. 1945: Between Tendentiousness and Autonomy, and between Traditionalism and Innovation

The year 1945 is an important turning point in the history of Slovenia and consequently in the history of Slovenian music. It marked the end of the war, which had caused shortages and suffering, and the emergence of a new country with a new ideological system. The system was imposed by the Communist Party, which had taken the leading position in the Liberation Front (LF) during the war and was the political and moral victor at the end of the war. Following the example of the Soviet Union, it attempted to transform the artistic sphere, too, into a mouthpiece for its ideological slogans. To this end, the Agitation and Propaganda Department, or Agitprop, was established in 1945, its principal task being the "correct" ideological and political education of the masses.¹ Thus the Communist Party began controlling the cultural sphere, with its most typical measures including blocking "opponents". In the field of music, this meant the abolition of existing institutions – Glasbena matica (The Music Society), organ schools, the journal *Cerkveni glasbenik* (Church Musician) – that appeared to be of bourgeois origin or were too close to the Church authorities. Everything that was of bourgeois provenance was generally suspicious: "Since the new government conceived the new state as a state of workers and peasants, the cultural policy, too, was oriented towards satisfying the cultural needs of the broadest possible social strata."² In practical terms, this meant the separation of workers' culture and high culture, with union associations becoming the principal vehicles of culture.³

The end of the war and the establishment of the new government also brought unpleasant existential consequences for some people. All of those who had supposedly broken the cultural silence during the war ended up before the court of national honour, with the interpretation of what constituted cultural silence being made stricter when necessary. Some musicians were also among those convicted (composers M. Lipovšek and P. Ramovš, singers M. Mlejn and V. Heybalova); however, the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia soon proclaimed an amnesty, which meant that "the majority of cultural workers [...] participated normally in the cultural developments restored after the liberation, some of them soon occupying important positions, as well."⁴ It seems that the post-war "settlements" did not have any long-term consequences, which is probably also related to the fact that many of the musicians who had been closer to "the other camp" during the war left the country in fear of post-war persecution.⁵

Several partial studies made by Slovenian musicologists have attempted to examine the political and ideological influences that accompanied the changes of 1945 and that could be construed from the work of the principal music institutions or musicians. Although they have not revealed any significant evidence that politics interfered directly

1 Aleš Gabrič, *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika 1945–1952* (Ljubljana: Mladika, 1991), 495.

2 Ibid., 489.

3 Ibid., 567.

4 Aleš Gabrič, "Kulturni molk," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 29, no. 2 (1989), 410.

5 Cf. Edo Škulj, "Glasbeno ustvarjanje Slovencev po svetu," *Meddobje/Entresiglo* 31, no. 3–4 (1997).

in the aesthetic orientations and work of the central music institutions, indirect pressures were all the more common. Ivan Klemenčič is convinced of the major and adverse impact of communist totalitarianism on music, as the primary characteristics of the time were allegedly “the abandonment of autonomous aesthetics and the developmental discontinuity of Slovenian music”.⁶ He highlights indirect pressures on musical institutions that were allegedly “under constant ideological supervision and included in the new communist society, or socialist society, as it was later renamed.”⁷ Klemenčič does not provide any actual facts or documentary materials to support his claim, but he was probably aware of the absence of clear evidence himself, as his evaluation of political influences on post-war Slovenian music contains a certain ambivalence: he establishes that “despite the mandatory nature of socialist realism, the model of this materialistically founded and ideologically conditioned art was not presented clearly”.⁸ This kind of dichotomy – between emphasising the power of totalitarianism and the domination of the doctrine of socialist realism, on the one hand, and the absence of evidence and credible testimonies, on the other – can also be discerned in other papers addressing the problem of the intrusion of ideology in the field of musical artistic autonomy in Slovenia. In his survey of the music broadcast on the radio in the first decade after the Second World War, Matjaž Barbo states that the programme became “abnormal” after the war; however, he also admits that “already the first years see, besides politically coloured performances of the radio and philharmonic orchestras [...], the establishment of an increasingly autonomous concert life of an average philharmonic orchestra with a programme similar to those of symphonic orchestras elsewhere.”⁹ A similar paradox is revealed even more clearly by Aleš Nagode, who points out that the Slovenian Philharmonic, “behind the exterior of paroles and submission to imposed patterns of behaviour [...], lived as a protector of the bourgeois musical tradition of its predecessors”;¹⁰ in other words, the post-war “emergence” of the Slovenian Philharmonic was partly a delayed result of the tendencies of the Slovenian bourgeoisie, which could be realised precisely in the era of the proletarian revolution, whose alleged aim was, *inter alia*, “to erase all traces of bourgeois culture”.¹¹

This ambivalent dichotomy between the dictates of ideology and the actual cultural practice is more precisely elaborated by Leon Stefanija, who identifies a clear discrepancy between the two. His analysis of material from the archives of the Society of Slovene Composers points out an interesting ideological “equation” that supposedly applied to Slovenian culture in the 1950s: “We do not prohibit, but only what will not harm us is allowed.”¹² Stefanija therefore points out the paradox that socialist realism

6 Ivan Klemenčič, “Glasba in totalitarna država na Slovenskem,” in *Temna stran meseca*, ed. Drago Jančar (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1998), 327.

7 Ibid., 328.

8 Ibid., 325.

9 Matjaž Barbo, “Socrealistična glasba na radijskih posnetkih in programih orkestrov v prvem desetletju po vojni na Slovenskem,” in *300 let Academia Philharmonicorum Labacensium*, ed. Ivan Klemenčič (Ljubljana: Muzikološki inštitut ZRC SAZU, 2004), 252–253.

10 Aleš Nagode, “Slovenska filharmonija v prvem desetletju po 2. svetovni vojni,” in *300 let*, 237.

11 Ibid., 231.

12 Leon Stefanija, “Totalitarnost režima in glasba,” in *Muzikološke razprave: in memoriam Danilo Pokorn*, eds. Nataša Cigoj Krstulović, Tomaž Faganel and Metoda Kokole (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2004), 145.

in Slovenian music should be sought in the “non-existent” (thus, in those art practices that the leading cultural ideologists did not find “agreeable”) and in the fusion of elements from artistic and popular music cultures. Although Stefaniija does not doubt that “the state apparatus of the 1950s established political levers that forced from public life those whose artistic ambitions – if they did not oppose the written rules – tried to live without regard to the nation”.¹³ This is further confirmed by a statement by the newly elected president of the Society of Slovene Composers in 1950, with the predominant thought that the belief “that art does not have anything to do with the development of society [...] is still rather widely accepted among our artists, especially composers, showing that some of our artists are ignorant both of the development of society and the development of art, believing that art goes its own exclusive way with its own laws”.¹⁴ When examining musical journalism in the daily newspaper *Ljubljanski dnevnik* for the relevant period, Stefaniija finds that music “seemed an activity too politically marginal to win the formal political attention devoted especially to literature and later to film.”¹⁵ Similar conclusions are drawn by Gregor Pompe in his analysis of the operation of the Ljubljana Opera in the 1950s, when he establishes that the government was not particularly interested in opera because it seemed unable to recognise its potential as propaganda. Opera was therefore not harmful, nor did it have any ideological potential, so it gradually slipped into social obscurity, as was most apparent from the level of funding. The reduced budget resulted in the number of premieres being cut by almost two thirds, while numerous departures for better paid jobs abroad further weakened the opera ensemble, which is why the Ljubljana Opera was no longer able to maintain a prominent position within the Slovenian cultural sphere.¹⁶

Similar tensions are disclosed by Katarina Bogunović Hočevár, who examines the post-war activities of the Slovenian Philharmonic. She draws attention to a representative article by Vlado Golob, which is not devoid of political paroles in the sense that “our Slovenian Philharmonic [...] will serve all of our people because its work will focus both on raising the artistic level and on the organisation of cultural and art events in industrial towns, in local cultural centres and across our republic”.¹⁷ Although a survey of the post-war concerts of the orchestra paints a similar picture, as the number of tours and occasional concerts significantly exceeded the number of performances in its own concert hall,¹⁸ the authorities were in fact preoccupied “with the reorganisation of the institution itself rather than the content”.¹⁹ Bogunović Hočevár therefore accepts the assumption “that political ideology did not have any influence on the programme policy of the institution in the first two years of the Slovenian Philharmonic’s

13 Leon Stefaniija, “Društvo slovenskih skladateljev do konca 1950. let,” in: *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji 1945–1963*, ed. Tatjana Marković and Leon Stefaniija (Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2015), 204.

14 Quoted from *ibid.*, 203.

15 Leon Stefaniija, “Relativna avtonomija glasbe: primer *Ljubljanskega dnevnika* 1951–1961,” *De musica disserenda* 3, no. 1 (2007), 95.

16 Gregor Pompe, “Na obrobju. Delovanje ljubljanske Opere med letoma 1950 in 1960,” in: *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji*, 84.

17 Vlado Golob, “Nekaj besed k ustanovitvi Slovenske filharmonije,” *Ljudska pravica*, 11 January 1948.

18 Katarina Bogunović Hočevár, “Slovenska filharmonija v 1950. letih: sledi (družbeno)političnih teženj v delu glasbene ustanove,” in *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji*, 14.

19 *Ibid.*, 22.

activities".²⁰ The ambivalence of the relationship between pressure and practice is also pointed out by Lojze Lebič, who is convinced that "there was no deliberate relationship between ideology and music; there was (fortunately) no outstanding ideologist in the music circles. [...] This is one of the reasons why Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, an impressionist of *Weltschmerz* orientation, was able to be the leading authority in music at a time of heated discussions for and against Slovenian impressionist painters."²¹ Thus, it seems that Slovenian music lived "in relatively peaceful coexistence with the post-war government,"²² or that aesthetic conservatism (typical of the leading post-war composers Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, Blaž Arnič and Marjan Kozina) and "the doctrine of socialist realism [...] found themselves in a firm marriage practically without any discussion."²³

The most extraordinary position granted to an individual after the war was undoubtedly that assigned to Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, in a turn of events that alone testifies to the unusual ambivalence of the post-war music era. One would expect Škerjanc to be on the list of artists undesirable for the new country for at least two reasons: firstly, his wartime servility towards the Italian authorities and the dedication of his *Third Symphony* to the High Commissioner Emilio Grazioli, and, secondly, the fact that, as a composer, he was committed to the conservative bourgeois tradition of the past. This is a background on which it was impossible to attach any positive slogans, and that did not allow for the collective spirit, instead being clearly anchored in existentialist subjectivism. Instead of being "lustrated", however, Škerjanc was "promoted", becoming the first post-war dean of the Academy of Music.

This leap can be credited to the principal post-war cultural authority Josip Vidmar. As a prominent intellectual and a founding member of the Liberation Front, Vidmar mostly played a positive role during the war as well as during the tense times after its end, as he regularly stood up against the ever-emerging political desire for the ideological indoctrination of art.²⁴ However, in his own personal beliefs – not by any Marxist logic – Vidmar was aesthetically attached to the tradition, to conservative positions; thus, for example, he criticised the works of painter Stane Gregar (1905–1973), claiming that they had an unrealistic basis and that such abstract painting did not have a significant future.²⁵ Similarly, he was reserved towards Modernist innovations in music. In a private conversation about Osterc's more radical compositions, such as *Štiri simfonične skladbe* (*Four Symphonic Compositions*, 1939), he allegedly stated that "Osterc is a cancerous tumour on the body of Slovenian music,"²⁶ which clearly shows his rejection of the *new music*, and thus also his logical support for the more traditionally oriented Škerjanc.

In post-war Slovenian music, two tension pairs are crossed: in addition to the ambivalent relationship between political tendentiousness and artistic autonomy, there is

20 Ibid., 18.

21 Lojze Lebič, "Glasovi časov I," *Naši zbori* 45, no. 1 (1993), 111.

22 Ibid., 112.

23 Gregor Pompe, "'Nove perspektive' v slovenski glasbi po letu 1945," in Roger Sutherland, *Nove glasbene perspektive* (Ljubljana: LUD Šerpa and Slovensko muzikološko društvo, 2009), 249.

24 Cf. Gabrič, *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika*, 409 and 646, Aleš Gabrič, *Socialistična kulturna revolucija* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1995), 166, 274 and 285.

25 Ibid., 109.

26 Pavel Šivic quoted after Veronika Brvar, "Mejniki. 10+75," *Glasbena mladina* 23, no. 4 (1992-93), 9.

also the “duel” between traditional musical expression and the innovations of the *new music*. The “resolution” of this quadrangle of tension seems to be largely arbitrary, as the “advocate of the bourgeois style”, Škerjanc, was given precedence over the successors of Osterc, the bearer of “socialist-oriented ideas.”²⁷ This means two things: firstly, that Vidmar decided on the basis of his own aesthetic preferences rather than political tendencies, and, secondly, that such aesthetic regression, which was at the same time aesthetically immanent to some of the leading Slovenian composers, corresponded with the demands of socialist realism for the comprehensibility and accessibility of musical art. This was not, in fact, one of the central targets of cultural policy authorities, as the semantic elusiveness and the consequent reduced designating potential of music was less interesting to the government until it discovered that it was easier to reach the masses through popular genres.

2. In Search of Socialist Realism

Although not voiced directly, the “demands” that the new government placed on musicians were adopted from the Soviet model, with the idea of socialist realism taking hold around 1946. The idea came from Belgrade and, although socialist realism never grew into an official state art orientation as in the Soviet Union, there were indirect pressures to this end. This is what makes socialist realism even more phantom-like as a stylistic description: part of its ambiguity derives from its unclear terminological status. Nor did the political elites strive to come up with a precise definition, as it was primarily about a list of rules regarding what art must not do if it wanted to serve the new system.²⁸ Socialist realism is therefore not primarily a “musical style, or a method of creating music (as has been claimed many times), but a discourse about the conditions of ‘political correctness’ in music”.²⁹

Socialist realism was an artificially created system of ideological and aesthetic norms that particularly emphasised demands for the “beautiful” and the generally understandable (culture must also be understood by the working class and must not be reserved only for the bourgeoisie), while the artwork must show positive tendencies that highlight the values and achievements of the new social order. In the Soviet Union, the demand for the understandable placed socialist realism in close connection with literary realism,³⁰ which meant that the new style assumed the characteristics of the style of the nineteenth century and was consequently a case of conservative aesthetics. In music, it seemed that such demands could be approximated precisely through certain genres: monumental symphonies, symphonic poems, cantatas, operas and mass songs; that is, through genres in which the political tendency could be clearly expressed through a programme or through lyrics.

²⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁸ Geoffrey Chew and Mikuláš Bek, “Introduction: The Dialectics of Socialist Realism,” in *Socialist Realism and Music*, eds. Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew and Petr Macek (Prague: KLP, 2004), 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁰ Ibid., 11.

2.1. Monumental Genres of Socialist Realism

However, an examination of the genre specifics of Slovenian music in the first decade after 1945 strengthens the awareness of the unusual ambivalence of post-war Slovenian music in relation to the ideological requirements: monumental symphonies and operas are hardly found after 1945, or their compositional characteristics are identical to those of works created before 1945, so it would be difficult to attribute ideological connotations to them. This situation is partly related to the specifics of the Slovenian music infrastructure, which was not capable of major philosophical statements even before the war, at the time of early Modernism. The first two Partisan operas were thus written only in the late 1960s, although they had both been conceived by their respective composers much earlier: Rado Simoniti probably began composing *Partizanka Ana* (*Partisan Ana*) on a libretto by Smiljan Samec as early as in 1944, but the radio premiere of the work only took place in 1967 and the stage production eight years later;³¹ Radovan Gobec wrote his opera *Kri v plamenih* (*Blood in Flames*) in 1969, although the libretto was based on his play *Komisar Janez* (*Commissioner Janez*), written in 1944.³²

The situation in the field of symphonic works was not much different. During and after the war, Blaž Arnič continued his series of symphonic poems and symphonies that bear a distinctive mark of the time in which they were created. Thus, *Symphony No. 5, Op. 22, "Particular"* was permeated with the topic of war, as was the symphonic poem *Gozdovi pojejo, Op. 27 (The Forests Sing, 1945)*, which addresses the "freedom coming from once lonely forests that were brimming with partisans and their songs during the Italian and German occupation."³³ In both of these works, Arnič neither seeks new means of expression nor adapts to the new requirements; he persists with his own version of early Modernism with the increasing use of extended ostinato formulae serving as a basis for long melodic ideas, while the form remains committed to a basic tripartite structure. Extended ostinato formulae are also typical of *Symphony No. 7, Op. 35, "Symphony of Labour"* (1948), whose very title suggests that it targets a broad audience and "celebrates" labour as the basic human good, as is further confirmed by the subtitle *Simfonija delovnih brigad (Symphony of Work Brigades)*, the titles of the movements ("Work", "Rest", "Competition") and the composer's note that the motivation to write the symphony came from "music lovers from Ljutomer". Furthermore, the scoring for a small ensemble with piano is rather "amateur", as well, making the piece more accessible to amateur orchestras. *Symphony No. 6, Op. 36, "The Self-Sown"* (1950) establishes contact with the social theme through Arnič's friend, writer Prežihov Voranc, while *Symphony No. 8, Op. 40, "On Home Soil"* (1951) celebrates the native land, but without folkloristic embellishments. The individual movements of the latter evade classical sonata form and again have titles, so we could seek similarities with a symphonic poem, where the cycle is unified through the thematic material. In this

31 Primož Kuret, "Skladatelj in dirigent Rado Simoniti (1914–1981)," *Rado Simoniti. Pevec Goriških Brd*, ed. Jonatan Vinkler, (Nova Gorica: Kulturni dom Nova Gorica, 2008), 18.

32 Borut Smrekar, "Operna dela Radovana Gobca," *Radovan Gobec (1909–1995). Tematska publikacija Glasbeno-pedagoškega zbornika*, ed. Darja Koter, (Ljubljana: Akademija za glasbo, 2010), 134.

33 Blaž Arnič quoted from Andrej Rijavec, *Slovenska glasbena dela* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1979), 23.

symphony, Arnič uses typical ostinatos to establish close contact with Bruckner's symphonic logic, while numerous sequences, repetitions and gradations, as well as the dense orchestration, also indicate a closeness to Wagner. Furthermore, the emphasised rhythm shows some influence of Mussorgsky, that is, the composer who was considered closest to realism in music. Arnič does not change his idiom after the war: his early Modernism, caught in numerous ostinatos, was fully in accordance with the requirements of socialist realism without any adaptations.

Only slight changes in comparison to the pre-war style are revealed by the most famous symphony of this time, which was – symptomatically and in the same vein as Arnič's works – created as a series of symphonic poems: Kozina's *Symphony*, consisting of the symphonic poems "Ilova gora", "To the Fallen", "Bela krajina" and "Seaward". The individual "movements" do not create a heterogeneous impression. Their symphonic character is impaired by the choice of material: the thematic material does not have distinctive symphonic characteristics and is therefore not suitable for development, instead possessing a more distinctly cantabile character. Although "Ilova Gora" – which supposedly portrays battles between Partisans and Germans, although the composer "did not have the intention to imitate realistically," but rather to "create a general impression that cannot be fully expressed either in words or in images or in melody"³⁴ – is conceived as a sonata movement, new thematic material is introduced in the development section and the transitions between the themes are not smooth, so the presentations of themes become self-contained structural elements that often stand out with prevailing homophony and rich orchestration, creating the impression of a melodic sequence rather than an evolving thematic process. This simplification of symphonic logic, in conjunction with the exuberant orchestration (there is an imbalance between the non-complex compositional technique and its presentation, i.e., the internal and the external), as well as the partial absence of the tarter harmony that had characterised Kozina's pre-war work and the adoption of folk material in the most famous movement "Bela krajina", bring the symphony close to socialist realism.

Thus, rather than in monumental symphonic genres, the new political tones resonate more in the intimate genre of lieder, where composers "adapt" to the situation by selecting lyrics and then applying a simplified musical texture. *Šest Kajuhovih (Six Songs by Kajuh)* (1946) is a tribute to the topic of war by Matija Bravničar. Significantly, these lieder withdraw from the composer's earliest, Expressionist lieder and approach Romantic expression through sumptuous harmonies (in addition to bichords, there are also the typical late Romantic seventh chords) and a formal construction that follows the turns of the lyrics but eschews pure through-composed form by repeating sequences, even approaching Romantic expression. A similar approach can be observed in the *Sixteen Lieder* (1946) by Marijan Lipovšek, based on poems by Mitja Šarabon published in his poetry collection *Bolečina (Pain)*, 1944).³⁵ Pavel Šivic, too, immediately "forgot"

³⁴ Marjan Kozina quoted from Ciril Cvetko, *Marjan Kozina* (Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1983), 152.

³⁵ Such musical "adaptation" by Lipovšek is, on the other hand, undermined by the choice of lyrics: Mitja Šarabon (1922–1987) fell from grace with the government after the war because he had, during the war, organised a memorial event for his friend France Balantič, a poet killed in a battle against partisans. The government apparently did not find this too disturbing, so it was satisfied with the "appropriate" style of the music, which followed the example of early Modernism.

his Prague models and experiments after the war, when he wrote a series of lieder and choral pieces. His works in this period are again tonal, based on motivic-thematic working, and simply tripartite in terms of form: *Partizanovo slovo* (*Partisan's Farewell*) and *Ciproš* from 1948 are based on lyrics by Matej Bor, while *Pesem dela* (*Song of Labour*) for mixed choir, composed in the same year on lyrics by France Filipič (the author of a novel about the Pohorje Battalion) is also "appropriate" in terms of content.

2.2. Political and Social Demands and the Unmitigated Rule of Tradition

Similar observations to those regarding Arnič and Kozina could apply to a number of other composers: after 1945, the stylistic aspect of their work remains identical to that before the war. In the 1950s, Lucijan Marija Škerjanc's chamber music relates directly to *fin-de-siècle* Modernism. Pet liričnih melodij (*Five Lyrical Melodies*, 1953) for violin and cello has a distinctive "Romantic" colouring, with Škerjanc continuing to employ traditional musical technique centred around a melodic line, as suggested by the title itself. In *Twelve Preludes* (1954), he created piano miniatures in which numerous personal signatures of the great nineteenth-century masters are recognisable. *Piano Sonata* (1956), which brings a sequence of three non-contrasting movements, is a similar hybrid of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In typical Škerjanc spirit, all of the movements are rather slow and lyrical, and only the last movement truly flares, while the eccentric content of the many tempo and expression marks (e.g., *diafano*, *incalxando*, *vittorioso*, *chiaro*, *sognando*) are reminiscent of Scriabin.

Škerjanc confirmed his aesthetic ideals, which were firmly anchored in the past, in several articles and reviews. He most likely sought to pass them on to his composition students, as well, so it is no wonder that his students Zvonimir Ciglič (1921–2006) and Janez Matičič (1926) started from similar bases.

Ciglič concluded his studies with Škerjanc with the *Sinfonia Appassionata* in 1948. The three-movement piece demonstrates the composer's attention to orchestration, while the compositional procedures seem markedly Impressionist and the expression is Romantic and ecstatic. The piece shows recognisable influences of Franck (the cyclical character), Debussy (the meticulous structuring of orchestral textures) and Scriabin (the ecstatic gradation, the exposed role of the first trumpet), while the synthetic mixture of early Modernist motives is not far from Škerjanc's symphonic attempts during the war. It is therefore not surprising that Ciglič won the award of the Presidium of the People's Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia in 1948, a success that was probably largely thanks to Vidmar, partly reflecting the latter's inclinations towards Škerjanc and his aesthetic orientation. The composer's dedication written in the score also seems pro-government: "This work is dedicated to those who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of their people in the pandemonium of passion and suffering." However, while the phrase "freedom of the people" sounds like a typical slogan exalting the national liberation struggle, the use of the word "passion" is much more unusual in this context, indicating a less collectivist and a more subjectively coloured interpretation of historical events.

Ciglič later created two more outstanding works. The lush orchestration and ecstatic rhythm of the symphonic choreographic poem *Obrežje plesalk* (*Shore of Dancers*, 1952) partly resembles a similar “Ravelian” turn of Žebre, while the opening lyrical theme on the flute, with its ornamentation and narrow ambit, invokes the opening of *The Rite of Spring*, whose influence may be also recognised in certain other rhythmic, textural and harmonic “situations” (bitonality, severe semitone collisions). Whereas *Obrežje plesalk* demonstrates the temperamental, extroverted nature of the composer, *Concertino for Harp and Strings* (1960) is an introverted lyrical work. From the stylistic perspective, Ciglič was expressly opposed to Modernism, which he considered “anaemic experimentation”, “attractive decoration” and “feminine cries”;³⁶ nevertheless, while strictly observing a periodic and schematic tripartite structure, he mostly abandons simple functional harmonic logic, instead resorting to pentatonic or whole-tone modality, quartal harmonies, and dissonances of seconds and sevenths. Ciglič’s opposition to Modernism was, however, not politically or ideologically motivated, but is better understood as a consequence of the composer’s faith in pre-war traditional aesthetics (Ciglič’s examples are Debussy, Ravel, Franck, and Stravinsky). His “unproblematic” style is therefore not a result of his ideological adaptation, but rather of an acceptable point of departure. The composer’s sense of independence is, after all, confirmed by his fate later in life: he was imprisoned twice after the war and felt strongly politically marginalised in his later years.³⁷

The music of Janez Matičič is also undisturbed by the political upheavals of the time. Even before his arrival to Škerjanc, Matičič’s talent was outstanding. His immanent musical energy was inexhaustible and removed from any extramusical references. It would be futile to seek such references in Matičič’s great form, the symphony. His first symphonic work, *Symphony No. 1 in E minor* (1953), brings sonata-shaped movements in a three-movement sequence, an approach that is also typical of Škerjanc’s symphonic opus. In fact, the combination of clear formal outlines, tonal centres and strongly expanded harmony resembles Škerjanc’s works in general. As Matičič began his musical career torn between pianism and composing, it is no wonder that most of the compositions written in his early period were for “his own” instrument. In *Suite No. 1* (1946) for piano, the titles of the individual movements (“Promenades”, “Reflections on the Lake”, “In the Alps”, “Daydreaming” and “Evening”) still indicate links with the Romantic type of miniature. The style shows strong influences of Impressionism, recognisable in typical “aquatic” passages or the blurred watercolour textures. In *Passacaglia* (1947), the first piece written under the mentorship of Škerjanc, Matičič tackles the strictness of Baroque form, which he fills with a romanticised harmonic flow and abundant pianistic virtuosity, thus placing the work in the tradition of Busoni. Besides Debussy and Ravel, the young composer must have also been impressed by Chopin’s opus, some echoes of which can be traced in *Capriccio* (1947) for piano, while *Eight Preludes* (1947) also reveals Scriabin’s model, not only in the harmony, but also in the fragmented rhythm.

36 Zvonimir Ciglič, “O fenomenu umetniške ustvarjalnosti,” *Bilten Društva slovenskih skladateljev*, 7–8 (1970), 7.

37 Cf. *ibid.*

2.3. *Adaptations, Changes, Alienations*

However, not all composers continue the tradition of early Modernism after the war, as did Arnič, Kozina, Škerjanc, Ciglič and Matičič. This is true especially of those who, in the period between the two wars, were enthusiastic about Kogoj's approximation of Expressionism or Osterc's New Objectivity. Their post-war opuses show clear changes that could be understood partly as adaptations to the aesthetic demands of the new government. Thus Danilo Švara, who reached his peak before the war with the Expressionist cantata *Vizija* (*Vision*, 1931), now creates works containing a certain communicative "flirtatiousness" related to socialist realism, as is indicated by the very title of *Symphony No. 3, "Worker"* (1946) or the overture *Borec* (*Fighter*, 1953) with its partisan topic. Šivic is also very elastic in terms of style, Bravničar is "wrapped" in a safe coat of Neo-Baroque and functional tonality, while Lipovšek explores and experiments.

It seems that the composers whom the government found non-problematic were those who continued in Škerjanc's spirit, with the dolorous tension of Romanticism or the emphasised colourful quality of Impressionism. This is rather paradoxical, as one would expect the new government to interpret this approach as a continuation of the bourgeois aesthetic, which was regarded as inappropriate, decadent and reactionary in the new times. More dilemmas were encountered by those composers who sought a new expression or established a bitterer attitude towards the reality of the world, thus even pointing out the intolerability of the social relations. The changed situation made these composers abandon contemporary means of compositional expression and seek two ways leading to social "appropriateness" or the "evasion" of precise ideological statements:

1. Some resorted to a combination of the national and the folkloristic, partly based on the Romantic heritage and partly on Bartók's premises;
2. Others held on to the apparent lightness of Neoclassicism, especially the type developed by Prokofiev.

2.3.1. *Adaptation No. 1: The Marriage of the National and the Folkloristic*

One of the paths to the great national topics was that of setting Prešeren's verse to music. In this respect, the poetic work of central importance is certainly *Sonetni venec* (*Wreath of Sonnets*), in which Prešeren places patriotic feelings alongside love. It seems that it was precisely this poetic-national prestige, i.e., the status of the "great" national literature, that motivated Lucijan Marija Škerjanc to set it to music (the first version of the cantata was written in 1939, but it was revised a decade later); in other words, it was not only about aesthetic premises, but also – much like Škerjanc motives in the composing of Aškerc's lyrics in the cantata *Ujedinjenje* (*Unification*, 1936) – about political opportunism. Similarly, Škerjanc attempts to "pay tribute to" Prešeren with *Gazele* (*Gazelles*, 1950); this time, however, it is a symphonic work in which the composer addresses the poet with immanent musical means.

Danilo Švara also focuses on the greatest Slovenian poet in his opera *Prešeren* (1952). Following the typical nineteenth-century opera convention, the opera synopsis is based on Prešeren's unhappy love for Julija Primic. This is markedly Romantic, as Julija is not insensitive to the poet; the obstacle is an insurmountable social barrier, which seems almost in line with the classic tragic dispute between the legal and the legitimate. A high level of national value is maintained by the libretto, written by the well-known lawyer and writer Ljuba Prenner (1906–1977) and consisting exclusively of lines from Prešeren's poems, albeit torn from their context. The richly saturated harmonic matrix – which is nevertheless rather basic in its functional turns – reveals, in combination with ecstatic cantabile melodic lines, that Švara must have taken verism as an important example. Besides verism, however, the opera *Prešeren* contains discernible hints of national elements. The safe shelter of the weakened functional harmony is thus invaded by numerous allusions to Slovenian folk music, which is understood in the nineteenth-century manner as a typical national colouring that needs to be adapted to a more “exquisite” musical technique. The combination of national and veristic opera seems like a kind of sum of efforts to increase the communicative aspect of the work, and is thus a reflection of the government's demands for “appropriate” art.

This processing of folk material, adopted from the nineteenth century, is partly achieved by Šivic in *Dve narodni* (*Two Folk Songs*, 1949) for orchestra, while Karol Pahor's formally simple miniatures *Istrijanka* (*Istrian Song*, 1950) attempt to process melodicism and harmony with the use of the Istrian scale. The use of folk material is somewhat more complex in Bravničar's *Symphony No. 2 in D major* (1951), as the composer approaches Bartók's type of folklorism. The adoption of folk patterns in a non-alienated and non-embellished form is then combined with a transparent manner of construction and inherited formal procedures that place the symphony in the vicinity of Neoclassicism. The composer himself considered the use of the folk material to be distinctly nationalistic, as he was sure that

*the essence of Slovenian musical expression contained in our folk songs and dances has not been studied enough. These pieces contain so much wealth, so many original elements and peculiar musical treasures, that they could be an inexhaustible source of our creation. I personally find it unavoidable to create music that brings the scent of our soil, that expresses our essence, and that contains the characteristics of the Slovenian essence. It is interesting to see how the problem of the use of folklore in an artificial artwork was resolved by modern composers such as Stravinsky, Janáček or Bartók. Their works can be an example and inspiration to us. We need to examine the characteristics expressed by our folk songs and strive to create an autonomous music culture, which is the only way of being interesting to others.*³⁸

Bravničar's “credo” reads as an unusual marriage of a desire for music expressing the national spirit and thus showing national autonomy and identity, which is certainly a concept that had already marked the Spring of Nations of the mid-nineteenth century,

38 Quoted from the programme notes of Slovenian Philharmonic 2 (1952/53), No.1.

and music that is modern: it simultaneously draws attention to the models of the use of folk music developed by composers between the two wars, composers who were still considered “modern” in the 1950s.

Even more expressly “Bartókian” in his expression is Marijan Lipovšek with his processing of folk material in the *First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano* (1955, later orchestrated). Free rhapsodic processing bound by harmonic movement aligned to simple functional tonality does not make the songs “Vsi so venci vejli” (“All the Wreaths are White”), “Vün je süša” (“It’s Draughty Outside”), “Zakaj si dečva ne vdaš” (“Girl, Why Don’t You Give Up”) and “Dolenjski furmani” (“Dolenjska Coachmen”) very outstanding; much more distinctive is the hidden folklore spirit subjugated to a basic concertante logic that gradually intensifies the tempo and virtuosity of the piece. In Lipovšek’s case, the folklore material and the compositional structure are fused in a balanced way, thus eliminating the typical sentimental or nationalist tones otherwise associated with similar “potpourris” of folk songs.

After Pahor, the Istrian scale – probably because of its intermediate position between the diatonic and the chromatic – also attracted Danilo Švara, who, in the late 1950s, created a number of compositions in which he used the semitone/whole-tone sequence both melodically and harmonically. It seems that the Istrian scale could be best adapted to the demand for “popular” communicativeness and the renovation of the harmonic idiom. This kind of musical movement is typical of the composition *Sinfonia da camera in modo istriano* (1957), in which the folk spirit is stressed by composed meters, while the formal procedures are traditional. Švara’s *Sinfonia* is based on the intersection of folk material, traditional form and a more innovative understanding of harmony as a result of the tonal implications of the Istrian scale (the latter is actually octatonic, as used by Stravinsky to reconstruct his musical language),³⁹ which represents a late confirmation of the aesthetic guidelines by which Bartók tried to reform the “exhausted” musical movement of early Modernism in the interwar period. For Slovenian composers after the Second World War, this kind of synthesis represents the right combination of the folk (i.e., national), the comprehensible and the aesthetically innovative.

2.3.2. *The Non-Programmatic Comprehensibility of Neoclassicism*

The second path to a safe haven from the expectations of the new government led through the adoption of Neoclassical formulae with which composers could demonstrate their craftsmanship or, by skilfully manoeuvring between the more traditional (i.e., “classicist”) and modern (associated with the prefix “neo”), successfully mask both their basic commitment to the tradition as well as to the contemporary, that is, the *new music*. The former approach applies to Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, whose *Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra* (1948) represents his most typical Neoclassical work. The external reason for the simplification of the compositional approach should be sought

39 Cf. Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), Kindle ebook file, location 68745.

in the work's occasional nature, as it was supposedly written for academy production;⁴⁰ on the other hand, it seems like a faithful document of Škerjanc's commitment to the traditional. The form is transparent, the rhythmic flow is pulsating (see the typical "classicalist" Alberti basses in Example 1) and periodic (a + a'), while the harmony is not so marked by Neoclassical "alienation" (typical is the augmented chord *B-flat-D-F-sharp* in the first bar), but more committed to early Modernism through sequential models.



Example 1: The first theme from the first movement of Škerjanc's Concertino.

A slightly different approach to Neoclassicism should be adopted with regard to composers who attempt to establish themselves only after the Second World War, or who seek to find their musical expression beyond the models offered by their teachers: Osterc before the war, or Škerjanc immediately after it. Neoclassicism offered itself as a logical choice not only because of its social "suitability", but because it seemed to stand at the midpoint between the Romantic traditional over-emotionality of Škerjanc and Osterc's objectivised commitment to everything new; it seemed to offer an opportunity for evasion, which, at the same time, was not extreme. It is interesting to note that, in the early 1950s, four composers (Lipovšek and Ramovš from Osterc's school, and Krek and Škerl from Škerjanc's school) wrote Neoclassical pieces whose artificial perfection exceeds that of their teacher's works, although they do not solve the dilemmas already troubling their Western European counterparts at the time.

Marijan Lipovšek created such a refined Neoclassical work in 1950. The composer's *Second Suite for Strings* can be considered a paradigmatic example of a Neoclassical

40 Programme notes of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, 15 March 1964, 106.

work at all levels: in terms of form, it is conceived as a sonata cycle with the first and last movements as sonata movements and the middle movement in tripartite form; the composer remains committed to the periodic threading of formal units, while the harmony is diatonic with a clear commitment to the central tone *C*, but nevertheless scattered with unexpected retreats to pandiatonicism. In the 1950s, Lipovšek therefore tested different styles: from early Modernism in the symphonic poem *Domovina* (*Homeland*, 1950) through Neoclassicism and Neo-Baroque in the *Second Suite*, to Bartók's type of folklorism in the *First Rhapsody*. He was not the only composer engaged in such explorations at the time; he does, however, demonstrate the unrest of the first post-war years, ignited primarily by the developmental discontinuity associated with the lack of clarity in the expression of the expectations of the new government, but also reflecting personal composing dilemmas concerning issues of fidelity and the abandoning of the traditional musical idiom.

Similar dilemmas troubled Primož Ramovš, who confesses that he was "searching for the new".⁴¹ In this respect, his *Sinfonietta* (1951) reached a special level of refinement and objectivisation. His earlier *Mala suita* (*Little Suite*, 1946) for piano still relied on the genre formulae of the New Objectivity, that is, the models of his teacher Osterc, and the harmony was close to that of Hindemith, while *Symphony No. 3*, with its resolute symphonic movements, is modelled after Shostakovich's examples. In *Sinfonietta*, however, Ramovš seems to have distilled his wartime insights gained in Italy, where he furthered his studies with Vito Frazzi and Alfredo Casella. At the same time, despite the transparent Neoclassical language – as in Lipovšek, the form is transparent while the steady rhythmic pulse is an important formative force – it is not possible to overlook the traits that were to strongly mark Ramovš's future development: above all, a distinct commitment to contrast and partly to timbre, which is nevertheless surprising for Neoclassical technique.

Whereas Ramovš's *Sinfonietta* has an important role in the composer's development, *Simfonietta* (1951) by Uroš Krek (1922–2008) stands at the beginning of his career. Although its external dimensions, as well as its internal design, make the work a genuine symphony, the composer probably avoided the more "ambitious" title because he was aware that his work still explored various stylistic models and possibilities. Neoclassical brio prevails in the first movement, combined with formal transparency: the two themes are stated in the exposition of the sonata movement in a tonic-dominant tonal relationship, and are related melodically in that they both draw from broken chords, which can also be considered a typical classicist feature. The commitment to the periodic structure of the second, variation movement even evokes Brahms in parts, while the closing sonata movement is again playfully Neoclassical.

Even more consistently Neoclassical features are demonstrated by the composer's *Sonatina* (1956) for the string orchestra. The uninhibited musical "discourse" was apparently the consequence of a commission from the ensemble The Zagreb Soloists and their leader, cellist Antonio Janigro, as the composer understood the commissioners' expectation to be that "the work should have a playful character: pleasant to play for the performers and entertaining for the listeners. Therefore, neither confessional

41 Borut Loparnik, *Biti skladatelj* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1984), 100.

nor dramatic moments should be sought in it, only music written by the composer for his own leisure.”⁴² This description is symptomatic, as it seems that the composer is retreating, that he is only a master of composition making music for the general pleasure of all involved, almost for their entertainment. This objectivisation needs to be necessarily placed in the context of the unwritten demands of the time, but can partly also be understood as a shift away from Škerjanc's subjectivism and the pathos of works written in connection with the Second World War. As in *Sinfonietta*, the composer was again very careful in the selection of the title, which indicates modesty and a lack of pretension. *Sonatina* as a “small sonata” brings the features of a sonata cycle in its outlines; however, the work is Neoclassical not only in the choice of traditional formal models, but also in its commitment to economic motivic-thematic working.

Much like Krek, the young Dane Škerl (1931–2002) entered the scene in the early 1950s with his *Serenade* (1952) for strings, written only a few months before his graduation and foreshadowing “almost everything” that he later “developed and accomplished”.⁴³ By this, Škerl undoubtedly had in mind the work's symmetric form and the idea of a kind of monothematicism according to which contrasting movements draw from the same material presented at the beginning. Therefore, the piece really deals with the “metamorphosis of a theme or the atmospheric type represented by this theme”.⁴⁴ *Serenade*, whose basic pulse and humorous shifts follow the example of Prokofiev, opens with an “Intrada”. It indicates the rhythm of a march and the composer deftly evades a clear tonality, although he continuously circles around C major, which is almost realised in the final bars, where an A-flat is added to the notes of the central tonality as an alienating foreign body. Škerl remained faithful to this type of Neoclassicism, which bears the closest resemblance to Prokofiev, in his subsequent works in the 1950s. Thus, the thematic material in his *Concerto for Orchestra No. 1* (1956) is characterised by motor rhythm that is usually derived from accompanying figures and confirms the classicist homophony, while the composer again addresses the idea of motivic unification, as the closing, third movement is built from the material of both previous movements.

It is worth noting that the presented outstanding Neoclassical works of 1951 bear neutral genre names (suite, simfonietta, serenade, sonatina, concerto), which is stylistically appropriate but also means that the composers avoided the emphasis on content and therefore various programmatic or ideological bases. Faced with the demands of socialist realism for the comprehensible and the glorifying, Slovenian composers mostly resorted to communicative Neoclassicism, which addressed listeners with a familiar set of means and procedures; at the same time, they retreated into the sober objectivism of absolute music, thus skilfully avoiding the mandatory emphases in terms of content. Some composers however, did not regard Neoclassicism merely as an egress, but also as a shelter from more modern trends, such as those foreshadowed by Osterc before the war.

⁴² Quoted from the Programme notes of Slovenian Philharmonic for the Blue Subscription No. 3 (1995/96), 23 December 1995.

⁴³ Quoted from Borut Loparnik's liner notes to the CD Danijel Dane Škerl, *Ars Slovenica* (Ljubljana: Edicije Društva slovenskih skladateljev).

⁴⁴ Programme notes of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, 2, No. 1 (1952/53), 2.

3. The First Political and Aesthetic Thaw – The End of Socialist Realist Searching and Evasion

The peak of post-war Neoclassicism in Slovenia, that is, of objectivist evasion and adaptation, also represents the final stage of the search for socialist realism. In 1951, Edward Kardelj concluded at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia that low theatre attendance was not a result of the choice of plays but of their permeation with the same topics of socialist realism, leading to boredom.⁴⁵ This position indicates the first changes and slackening, which occur officially in 1952 when the Agitprop apparatus is abolished at the Communist Party Congress and the party and government apparatuses are separated, at least at the external level.⁴⁶ This is the time of the so-called first thaw, which is soon felt in the cultural field, too. At the congress of the Writers' Association of Yugoslavia held in the same year, Miroslav Krleža strongly opposes the adoption of the Soviet Zhdanov logic and, consequently, the socialist realism doctrine.⁴⁷ The same year saw a firmer reaction against socialist realism tendencies in Slovenian cultural policy by Josip Vidmar, which was further confirmed by Ferdo Kozak's statement that "socialist realism serves only political objectives, failing to address either the moral or the ethical transformation of man".⁴⁸ Of course, a decisive role was played by the opinion of the ideological rulers, especially Kardelj, who increasingly advocated the idea that people should have fun in socialism, too.⁴⁹ He stepped up his opposition to the negative assessment of individual art movements, advocating the view that negative assessments should be limited to those movements showing anti-socialist tendencies.⁵⁰ This resulted in greater liberalism and the approval of everything that did not directly threaten the monopoly of the Communist Party.⁵¹ The peak of the ideological concession was probably marked by the polemic between Vidmar and the "most rigid" cultural ideologist Boris Zihlerl in 1956. In this conflict, Vidmar reiterated his thesis that the high artistic value of an artwork is emphatically the result of the artist's ability and not the revealed ideology, by which he wanted to emphasise that tendentiousness should not weaken artistic values.⁵²

In music, all of these changes are most clearly mirrored in a concert of works by young composers at the Slovenian Philharmonic, which was organised as a result of Stanko Prek's (1915–1999) intervention with politicians in 1952 and featured new symphonic works by Prek, Gobec, Ciglič and Ramovš. The latter subsequently commented that the concert was a "milestone in our musical history so great that it deserves a monument".⁵³ The next major turning point was the establishment of the Composers' Club in 1954. It was initiated by Ivo Petrić (1931), Škerjanc's student, who was satisfied neither with his professor's work

⁴⁵ Gabrič, *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika*, 619.

⁴⁶ Aleš Gabrič, *Socialistična kulturna revolucija* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1995), 5.

⁴⁷ Gabrič, *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika*, 647.

⁴⁸ Ferdo Kozak, quoted from *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Gabrič, *Socialistična kulturna revolucija*, 103.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵³ Loparnik, *Biti skladatelj*, 105.

and attitude, nor with the possibilities available to students to present their new works. Since students realised the idea of the club despite the opposition of Prof. Škerjanc, the beginning of its operation can be understood as an important break with post-war conservative aesthetic positions. This was emphasised by Petrić himself in an interview for *Študentska tribuna*, when he remarked that the club “is increasingly dominated by an advanced orientation characterised by a desire to get as close as possible to contemporary European musical aspirations and develop alongside them”.⁵⁴ Petrić’s thought clearly reveals a desire to become acquainted with broader European musical tendencies and take part in “development”; the question is, however, how well the young students at the time were acquainted with contemporary European developments.

A partial answer can be found in a review of the pieces written by club members at the time. In this respect, a quite faithful sketch of the composers considered “contemporary” by young Slovenian composers in the 1950s is *Sedem anekdot* (*Seven Anecdotes*, 1955) for clarinet and piano by Igor Štuhec (1932), as all seven miniatures are conceived as tributes to individual composers: Debussy, Bartók, Prokofiev, Kogoj, Hindemith, Osterc, Slavenski and Webern; it should be noted, however, that the composer added the dodecaphonic tribute to the latter only in 1964. Young Slovenian composers who sought to approach “contemporary European musical aspirations” were therefore familiar with the major musical names from the period between the wars; they did not know the outstanding works of their foreign contemporaries and they understood the classics of the first half of the twentieth century as “contemporary”. This is not surprising if we know that Škerjanc “bad-mouthed” even Bartók and Stravinsky,⁵⁵ while Lojze Lebič, who studied with Marjan Kozina, reveals that most professors at the Academy at that time were “negligent and narrow-minded; they completely ignored the Second Viennese School as well as Bartók, Hindemith and Stravinsky”.⁵⁶

Much like German composers and subsequently other European composers, who had an opportunity to become acquainted with the important works that had emerged during the European isolation after the rise of Nazism and fascism in Darmstadt from 1946 onwards, Slovenian composers began to acquaint themselves with these works over a decade later, when Modernism had already reached its first radical peaks in Europe. Young Slovenian composers who wanted to be “contemporary” in this period therefore followed the examples of Hindemith, Prokofiev or even Shostakovich. This is confirmed by an insight into the compositions of the initiator of the establishment of the Composers’ Club, Ivo Petrić. His *Simfonija Goga* (*Goga Symphony*, 1954) follows the example of Hindemith both in the typical tense harmony and in the expression, which is objectivised and based on a smooth, skilfully perfected musical technique in which an important place is devoted to polyphony, while the motivic-thematic working still takes the central formal role.

Even more consistently Neo-Baroque is Petrić’s *Concerto Grosso* (1955) for five solo strings and string orchestra, in which polyphony serves the compositional

⁵⁴ Quoted from *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Jurij Snoj, *Portret skladatelja Janeza Matičiča* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2012), 98.

⁵⁶ Matjaž Barbo, Matija Ogrin and Brane Senegačnik, “Glasba, zvaneča metafizika. Pogovor s skladateljem Lojzetom Lebičem,” *Tretji dan* 24, no. 1 (1995), 17.

objectification. The Baroque manner is often characterised by a steady rhythmic pulse ("Vivo") or monothematic motivic development ("Largo"). However, Petrić also explores other possibilities in this period. Thus, *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (1955) approaches Neoclassicism, with the dramatic changes of tempo and the emphasis on expression tearing the music away from the grip of Hindemith-like objectivism, while the frequent orchestral climaxes in *Symphony No. 2* (1957) even reveal clear influences of Shostakovich's symphonic music. Petrić's opus in the 1950s, therefore, also demonstrates that composers were attempting to search for new musical expression, and that they followed the great composers from the period between the two world wars but did not yet have any real contacts with their foreign contemporaries.

The reasons for this separation from European trends should primarily be sought in the aesthetic poetics of the Slovenian composers who taught composition at the Academy of Music (Škerjanc, Kozina, Pahor, Arnič) and who were distrustful of the musical innovations of the twentieth century and swore by the aesthetics of the nineteenth century. It was, however, also a consequence of the post-war severing of contacts with Western Europe, which resulted from the establishment of a new social system that viewed the "rotten" capitalism of Western society with intense distrust. Even more important than both reasons separately was their firm union, which made significant political interventions in music unnecessary, as the leading composers, the authorities of musical life, were, in their basic aesthetic belief, devoted to traditional musical expression that was comprehensible to listeners and that allowed the attachment of meaning.

4. Conclusion – Slovenian Socialist Realism Caught in an Arbitrary Quadrangle of Tensions

Although, in relation to music, the post-war ideology in Slovenia was not overly precise and direct in its statements, it nevertheless defined and shaped music in the first decade after the end of the Second World War. This was directly reflected in the decline in the funding of the central music institutions and, consequently, the decline in their social significance, as the government apparently could not instrumentalise their potential for ideological purposes; at the same time, much more attention was paid to popular music from the mid 1950s. In the absence of clear "directives", numerous "solutions" proved quite arbitrary or personally coloured, as is the case with Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, who, due to the personal aesthetic preferences of the important cultural policy representative Josip Vidmar, became one of the main authorities in musical life after the war (dean of the Academy of Music, professor of composition, director of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, music critic, author of numerous textbooks). This is rather paradoxical in view of his wartime attitude and the stylistic characteristics of his compositions, which reflected a fascination with the subjective, Romantic expression of the nineteenth century. Even more surprising,

however, is the fact that the composers who had to adapt after the war were mostly those who, before the war, had followed Slavko Osterc, not only with regard to his belief in aesthetic innovations, but also in terms of his pronounced social, that is, leftist attitude. Thus, it turns out that Slovenian music in the first decade after 1945 should be examined in a tensioned quadrangle stretched between the traditional and the new, on the one hand, and the ideological and the autonomous, on the other; all combinations appear possible in this respect, which confirms the ambivalent nature of the Slovenian type of socialist realist music.

This music is generally difficult to define in terms of musicology, but its characteristics/intentions are undoubtedly most readily found in monumental symphonic and vocal-instrumental genres with clearly exposed programme or textual support. Such works were, however, rare in Slovenia; if for no other reason than the modest infrastructural conditions and the absence of a strong symphonic tradition of early Modernism. This is why – again paradoxically – more adjustments can be found in the more intimate genre of *lieder*.

Many composers did not change their style after the war but remained faithful to pre-war early Modernism (Škerjanc, Arnič, Kozina, Ciglič, early Matičič), which felt fully in accordance with ideological demands. This continuation of the pre-war heritage should not be understood as an “adaptation”, but rather as a “comfortable” continuation of the old. The opuses of some composers do, however, reveal significant changes, which need to be considered in the light of adaptation to the unclearly expressed demands of politics. In this respect, there are two solutions that turned out to be particularly practical: the linking of the national and the folkloristic (Švara, Šivic, Bravničar, Lipovšek), and the recourse to Neoclassical objectivity. The latter option provided “understandable” music based on historical codes, as well as markedly optimistic music-making in its basic rhythmic pulsation, which performed the double function of masking. Neoclassicism was thus a resort for those composers who were attracted by the *new music* and who wanted to abandon the over-emotional, markedly subjective expression of early Modernism, as well as for those who, in contrast, refused to adopt new means of expression and recognised in Neoclassicism the possibility of continuing basic traditional elements.

Although the years of socialist realism in Slovenia are not strongly ideologically marked in terms of music, they still had a strong impact on the later development of Slovenian music. This is demonstrated especially by the beginnings of the new generation of Slovenian composers, whose work began in the period of the first political thaw, i.e., in the mid-1950s. Although these composers broke with the heritage of the leading post-war composers, especially Škerjanc, and sought contact with the *new music*, their ten-year political isolation and adaptations made them start from a similar point zero as their European contemporaries immediately after the end of the Second World War, that is, a full decade earlier. Consequently, these composers, who were to be the leading figures of Slovenian Modernism in the 1960s, forever missed the first wave of European Modernism, which took place in the beginning of the 1950s, that is, at a time when the most refined Neoclassical masterpieces, remote from any innovation, were composed in Slovenia.

Bibliography

- Barbo, Matjaž, Ogrin, Matija and Senegačnik, Brane. "Glasba, zveneča metafizika. Pogovor s skladateljem Lojzetom Lebičem." *Tretji dan* 24, no. 1 (1995): 18–21.
- Barbo, Matjaž. "Socrealistična glasba na radijskih posnetkih in programih orkestrov v prvem desetletju po vojni na Slovenskem." In *300 let Academia Philharmonicorum Labacensium*, edited by Ivan Klemenčič, 245–253. Ljubljana: Muzikološki inštitut ZRC SAZU, 2004.
- Bogunović Hočevar, Katarina. "Slovenska filharmonija v 1950. letih: sledi (družbeno) političnih teženj v delu glasbene ustanove." In *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji 1945–1963*, edited by Tatjana Marković and Leon Stefanija, 9–38. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2015.
- Brvar, Veronika. "Mejniki. 10+75." *Glasbena mladina* 23, no. 4 (1992–93): 9.
- Chew, Geoffrey and Bek, Mikuláš. "Introduction: The Dialectics of Socialist Realism." In *Socialist Realism and Music*, edited by Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew and Petr Macek, 9–15. Prague: KLP, 2004.
- Ciglič, Zvonimir. "O fenomenu umetniške ustvarjalnosti." *Bilten Društva slovenskih skladateljev*, 7–8 (1970).
- Cvetko, Ciril. *Marjan Kozina*. Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1983.
- Gabrič, Aleš. "Kulturni molk." *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 29, no. 2 (1989): 385–413.
- Gabrič, Aleš. *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika 1945–1952*. Ljubljana: Mladika, 1991.
- Gabrič, Aleš. *Socialistična kulturna revolucija*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1995.
- Golob, Vlado. "Nekaj besed k ustanovitvi Slovenske filharmonije." *Ljudska pravica*, 11 January 1948.
- Klemenčič, Ivan. "Glasba in totalitarna država na Slovenskem." In *Temna stran meseca*, edited by Drago Jančar, 321–333. Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1998.
- Kuret, Primož. "Skladatelj in dirigent Rado Simoniti (1914–1981)." In *Rado Simoniti. Pevec Goriških Brd*, edited by Jonatan Vinkler, 11–21. Nova Gorica: Kulturni dom Nova Gorica, 2008.
- Lebič, Lojze. "Glasovi časov I." *Naši zbori* 45, no. 1 (1993): 111–118.
- Loparnik, Borut. *Biti skladatelj*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1984.
- Nagode, Aleš. "Slovenska filharmonija v prvem desetletju po 2. svetovni vojni." In *300 let Academia Philharmonicorum Labacensium*, edited by Ivan Klemenčič, 231–238. Ljubljana: Muzikološki inštitut ZRC SAZU, 2004.
- Pompe, Gregor. "'Nove perspektive' v slovenski glasbi po letu 1945." In Roger Sutherland, *Nove glasbene perspective*, 247–262. Ljubljana: LUD Šerpa and Slovensko muzikološko društvo, 2009.
- Pompe, Gregor. "Na obrobju. Delovanje ljubljanske Opere med letoma 1950 in 1960." In *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji 1945–1963*, edited by Tatjana Marković and Leon Stefanija, 66–85. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2015.
- Rijavec, Andrej. *Slovenska glasbena dela*. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1979.

- Smrekar, Borut. "Operna dela Radovana Gobca." In *Radovan Gobec (1909–1995). Tematska publikacija Glasbeno-pedagoškega zbornika*, edited by Darja Koter, 133–143. Ljubljana: Akademija za glasbo, 2010.
- Snoj, Jurij. *Portret skladatelja Janeza Matičiča*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2012.
- Stefanija, Leon. "Totalitarnost režima in glasba." In *Muzikološke razprave: in memoriam Danilo Pokorn*, edited by Nataša Cigoj Krstulović, Tomaž Faganel and Metoda Kokole, 135–146. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, 2004.
- Stefanija, Leon. "Relativna avtonomija glasbe: primer *Ljubljanskega dnevnika* 1951–1961." *De musica disserenda* 3, no. 1 (2007): 87–100.
- Stefanija, Leon. "Društvo slovenskih skladateljev do konca 1950. let," In *Ustanove, politika in glasba v Sloveniji in Srbiji 1945–1963*, edited by Tatjana Marković and Leon Stefanija, 200–214. Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, 2015.
- Škulj, Edo. "Glasbeno ustvarjanje Slovencev po svetu." *Meddobje/Entresiglo* 31, no. 3–4 (1997).
- Taruskin, Richard. *Oxford History of Western Music*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, Kindle ebook file.

POVZETEK

Dosedanje analize vplivov novega družbenega sistema po drugi svetovni vojni na slovensko glasbeno življenje, predvsem v povezavi z delom glavnih institucij, niso dale enoznačnih odgovorov, še manj pa konkretnih dokazov o tesni sprepletenosti vsebine, delovanja in ideologije. V pričujočem prispevku se istemu vprašanju bližamo z druge strani, prek analize del, nastalih v prvem desetletju po koncu vojne. Nova oblast je seveda skušala z ideologijo pretopiti tudi umetniško ustvarjanje, pri čemer je več ali manj sledila zgledom iz Sovjetske zveze, toda v uresničevanju takšnih zahtev v glasbi je bila veliko manj precizna, zavezana dihotomičnim in arbitrarnim odločitvam, pogosto povezanim z osebnimi estetskimi preferencami glavnih odločevalcev, kot je bilo to v Sloveniji na primer z Josipom Vidmarjem, ki je proti vsem pričakovanjem na piedestal glavnega protagonist slovenskega glasbenega življenja ustoličil Lucijana Marija Škerjanca. Podobna arbitrarnost se kaže tudi v dejstvu, da bi lahko sledi socialističnega realizma načeloma najlažje odkrili v monumentalnih žanrih (simfonija, kantata, opera), ki nosijo svetovnonazorske vsebine, vendar le-teh zaradi specifičnih infrastrukturnih pogojev in odsotnosti močne tradicije moderne praktično ne najdemo

ali pa je v njih mogoče odkriti le nadaljevanje predvojnih estetskih teženj. Tako mnogi skladatelji svojega estetskega pogleda po vojni v ničemer ne spreminjajo, kar velja predvsem za tiste, ki ostajajo zavezani tradicionalnemu glasbenemu stavku (predvsem moderni). Paradoksalno so k spremembam prisiljen tisti skladatelji, ki so se pred vojno spogledovali z *novο glasbo*, a ne le v kompozicijsko-tehničnem pogledu, temveč tudi v prepričanju, da mora glasba nositi bolj močne socialne poudarke, kar bi načeloma moralo novi oblasti bolj ustrezati. Toda prav zaradi omenjenih arbitrarnih osebnih odločitev svoj glasbeni jezik po vojni spreminjajo predvsem tisti, ki so se pred vojno učili pri S. Ostercu ali M. Kogoju. Pri tem se nekateri zatekajo h kombinaciji nacionalnega in folklorističnega, spet drugi pa bolj zaupajo lahkotnosti neoklasicizma. Slovensko glasbo v prvem desetletju po letu 1945 je tako potrebno motriti v napetostnem štirikotniku, razpetem na eni strani med tradicionalnim in novim ter na drugi strani med avtonomnim in ideološkim, pri čemer so možne prav vse kombinacije. Kljub temu, da torej prva povojna leta v proklamativnem smislu niso bila močnejše ideološko zaznamovana, pa je desetletna izolacija, prekinitev stikov z zahodno Evropo vendarle pustila sledi, ki so se pokazale predvsem v osemdesetih letih 20. stoletja.