

The Role of Personality in Cultural and Educational Policy (Macedonian post-war music activists)

After the end of World War II and after the formation of the Macedonian state within the People's Yugoslav Federation there was a significant attempt to quickly overcome the economic, cultural and educational underdevelopment of Macedonian society inherited from the previous period. The first post-war years are significant in the history of the Macedonian Republic because it was then that the new socialist system was established. Thus, attempts were made to improve the development of education, as it was evident that the young country would not see social progress without professional staff in education. As for centuries the Macedonian country, culture and language were not acknowledged, a need for the preservation of those values arose. There was also a need for organizing society as to suit the modern European standards. This included the establishment of a clear and defined cultural and educational policy. Therefore, this period notes the establishment of almost all the significant educational and cultural institutions, excluding the music oriented ones. Cultural and educational music policy show the following tendencies:

- approaching European culture (founding music institutions, ensembles; developing composition schools);
- preserving cultural heritage (establishing institutions for the research and preservation of folklore);
- creating a music education system suitable to the socialist idea of accessibility to all social groups.

At the time, the most active and enthusiastic people in the organization of music life in the Republic of Macedonia were the prominent musicians – composers and teachers – **Stefan Gajdov**, **Zhivko Firfov**, **Trajko Prokopiev**, **Todor Skalovski**, **Petre Bogdanov-Kochko**, as well as **Asparuh Hadzhinikolov** who greatly contributed to music education, organization and publishing.

Their biographies show many similarities. They were all educated at the music schools in Belgrade. Upon their graduation, before and during the war, each of them used the opportunity of working in different regions of Yugoslavia. After the liberation, they were the people who were professionally trained to lead the cultural and educational music policy. Each of them, depending on their primary occupation, contributed to the establishing of a national music life:

1. Composing (Macedonian School of Composition)

In Macedonian history, these composers are considered the first generation of Macedonian composers. The main genre that they write in this period is music for choirs, which corresponds to the large number of amateur choirs whose repertoires they wrote. Their choral pieces range from simple variations on folk themes, through the deeply developed spiritual pieces, to the large works which use complex polyphonic techniques. Through these works the *national style* of Macedonian professional music was established¹.

2. Music institutions for performance and research

The same people contributed to the establishment of several institutions which reflect the level of music culture of a given country:

The Symphony Orchestra was created immediately after the liberation (24.11.1944);

The Radio Skopje Choir (1945);

The Association of Composers and Interpreters of Music (19.01.1947)

Macedonian Association of Composers (MAC) – separated from the reorganization of the previous association (19.06.1950)

Macedonian Opera (1.1.1948) – a professional artistic sector within the Macedonian National Theater, founded after the performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* on 9.5.1947.

The Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances “Tanec” (24.05.1949), at first named Macedonian National Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances, then renamed as “Tanec” in 1953.

The Macedonian Philharmonic (5.11.1950), established on the basis of the Symphony Orchestra.

¹ Later they wrote music for theater and films (Prokopiev), vocal/instrumental music (Skalovski), solo and chamber music (Gajdov), as well as songs based on the contemporary Macedonian language (Golabovski, 1999).

The Institute for Folklore “Marko Cepenkov” (1950), whose ethnomusicology sector included collected, transcribed and processed music from all parts of Macedonia.

3. Music pedagogy, through working at:

The Music High School (1945) – the first educational music institution in the Macedonian language. Its establishment initiated the work of all the existing or future music ensembles in Macedonia.

Singing Courses for Teachers (1945 and 1946) – a solution for overcoming the deficit of trained teachers, after the liberation.

Courses for Choir-Masters (1948) for preparing conductors lacking music education.

The Department of Music in the College of Pedagogy (1953).

The aim of this research is to present the activities of these musicians in all realms of music life through the functions they performed during the first 10 years of the liberation. The fact that the same people frequently performed many different activities was a result of:

- after the war they were professionally untrained;
- they were ambitious and creative and
- they were in their most resourceful and mature years of their lives.

Stefan Gajdov (1905-1992)

Graduated at the Department of Theory and Teaching at the Belgrade Music School. During the occupation he worked as a teacher of music at the Girls’ High School and taught piano at the Music School in Skopje. After liberation, when his organizational skills and music qualities became most evident, he worked as a music teacher, choir-master and composer.

Music pedagogy:

- From 1.10.1946 to 1.9.1955 he taught all the music theory subjects (solfeggio, theory, choir, choral conducting, harmony, counterpoint, teaching methodology, score playing, composition exercises) at the Music High School in Skopje.
- Lecturer at the Singing Courses for Teachers (1946).

- Teacher of Choir Practice and the Study of Music Forms at the Choir-master Course (1948).
- In 1955 he was named Principal of the Elementary Music School in Skopje. He held this position until 1970.
- President of the Macedonian Association of Music Pedagogues.
- Conductor of several choirs: The Choir of the Girls' High School, the Mixed Railway Workers Choir, the "Kocho Racin" Choir.

Macedonian Opera:

Gajdov was part of the team which prepared the performance of the first opera in Macedonia *Cavalleria Rusticana* (9.05.1947). He prepared the choral parts performed by the Radio Skopje Choir and the Student Choir. He was also stage manager of the opera. During 1951 and 1952, he was the Director of the MNT Opera and Ballet.

MAC:

- Vice President of the Association of Composers, named as such after the founding assembly of 19.06.1950. He was the President of MAC several times: 1955-57; 1958-59 and 1959-61.
- Member of the Board of the Association of Composers of Yugoslavia.

Radio Skopje:

In 1945 he established the Radio Skopje Choir and served as its Director.

Publishing activities:

- During World War II, under the name of Stevan M. Gajdovic, he published the collection *Songs for One, Two or Three Voices for Children and Female Choirs* as a temporary textbook at the elementary schools, high schools, citizens' schools and secondary (technical) teachers schools.
- Author of one of the first music textbooks in Macedonian (*Note Singing for the Third Grade*, 1952).

Zhivko Firfov (1906-1984)

After graduating from the Belgrade Music School, he worked as a conductor of the Academic Singing Association in Zemun, also devoting himself to educating disabled students. In 1937 he enrolled at the Composition Department at the newly opened Music Academy in Belgrade. Even though he was active in the previous

period as well, his activities in music pedagogy, transcription and composing are at their peak after the liberation.

Music pedagogy:

- As an experienced teacher, he taught solfeggio and piano at the Music High School in Skopje (1945-46).
- Lecturer at the Singing Course for Teachers in 1946.
- Taught solfeggio and folk rhythms at the Choir-master Course in 1948.

Macedonian Opera:

Together with the other prominent representatives of the music life in post-war Macedonia, Firfov participated in the establishment of the Macedonian Opera. During the performance of the first opera in 1947, Firfov was the prompter.

MAC:

On 19.01.1947, on the founding assembly of the Association of Composers and Interpreters of Music he was voted member of the association.

Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances "Tanec":

One of the founders of the Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances "Tanec". In the first direction he served as Manager of the Music Sector, and later as Arts Manager (1949-1953).

Radio Skopje:

Official and Manager of the Radio Skopje Folk Music Sector.

Institute for Folklore:

Manager and Director of the Institute of Folklore of the Republic of Macedonia.

Publishing activities:

Author of one of the first music textbooks in Macedonian (*Textbook on Elementary Theory and Solfeffio for the First' Year of High School and the Fifth Grade* 1952).

He also held the following positions: Director of the Arts Sector in the Department of Culture, Art and Cultural Liaisons with other nations in Anti-Fascist National Liberation Assembly of Macedonia, and he was a visiting member of the International Folklore Association IFCM in London, as well as Honorary President of the sector for Balkan Dances at the International Association of Folk Dances in London.

Todor Skalovski (1909-2004)

He was educated at the Belgrade Music School, later continued studying conducting with Lovro Matacic. He began his teaching activities before World War II, as a teacher in the Music School in Skopje, where he was also conductor of the choir and orchestra. In 1939 he was a teacher at the high school in Sremska Mitrovica. During the war he taught in the high school in Bitola.

Music pedagogy:

- During his first school year of work at the Music High School in Skopje (1945-46) he also taught history of music.
- He is also known for teaching music courses for adults. Apart from the lectures at the courses for teachers, Skalovski also held the lectures in history of music within the Choir-Master Course.

Macedonian Opera:

Todor Skalovski conducted the first Macedonian opera performance *Cavalleria Rusticana*. After this, he conducted the premiere performances of the operas *I Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La Traviata* (1948); *The Magic Flute*, *The Secret Marriage*, *Werther*, (1953) and *Goce* (1954).

Apart from holding the position of first conductor, Skalovski also held the position of Director of the Opera from 1947-51 and from 1952-54.

Macedonian Philharmonic:

One of the initiators for the founding of the Symphony Orchestra and later for the Macedonian Philharmonic. He was its longtime conductor, and from 1954 its Director.

Radio Skopje:

Became Music Editor of Radio Skopje after the liberation.

MAC:

At the same time he was elected Vice President of the Association of Composers and Interpreters of Music of Macedonia, and on 19.06.1950 he became first President of the Macedonian Association of Composers, elected at the founding assembly. In the following years he was reelected several times.

Publishing activities:

Todor Skalovski is the author of several music essays, comments and materials on the history of Macedonian music. He was one of the first members of the editorial

board of the magazine *Zvuk (Sound)* and member of the editorial board of “Yugoslavian Music Encyclopedia”.

Trajko Prokopiev (1909-1979)

Educated at the Belgrade Music School, and after the liberation (1946-47) he continued his studies in Prague, studying composition with Pavel Dedeček. Upon his graduation in Belgrade he worked as a violin teacher at the “Mokranjac” music school in Skopje, at the same time working as a choir conductor with several choirs. After the liberation he formed the Army Choir of the National Liberation Struggle General Headquarters.

Music pedagogy:

- The Presidency of the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Assembly of Macedonia named him first Principal of the Music High School in Skopje. The school started working on 2.2.1945 with Prokopiev’s lecture “What is Music”. During the first years of the school (1945-46) he taught solfeggio and violin.
- He lectured conducting at the Choir-Master Course in Skopje.
- Choir conductor with the Culture and Art Society “Kocho Racin”.

Macedonian Opera:

As a particularly active conductor, Prokopiev conducted some of the Macedonian premiere opera performances: *The Bartered Bride* (1949), *Il Trovatore* (1951), *Rigoletto* (1952) and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1954). Trajko Prokopiev also conducted the first Macedonian ballet premiere performance *Walpurgis Night* on 27.01.1949.

MAC:

Prokopiev’s name is not associated with the founding of the Macedonian Association of Composers, because at that time he was studying in Prague. He was later named President of MAC several times (1951-52; 1953-55).

Radio Skopje:

Upon his return from Prague, he was named Head of the Radio Skopje Music Program, and conducted the Radio Symphony Orchestra (1947-51).

Petre Bogdanov-Kochko (1913-1988)

Studied composition and singing in Belgrade. He was active in many fields after the liberation.

Music Pedagogy:

- In 1945 he started teaching solfeggio and solo singing at the Music High School in Skopje. He was named Principal of the school from 1946 to 1948.
- Lectured at the Singing Courses for Teachers held in 1946.

Macedonian Opera:

One of the founders of the Macedonian Opera, he later became its Director (1958-63). He was choir-master in the first Macedonian opera premiere performance, and he also played the main role of Turridu. He also played the main roles in the premieres of *I Pagliacci* – Canio, *La Boheme* – Rodolfo, and *Il Trovatore* – Manrico.

MAC:

Petre Bogdanov-Kochko was the first President of the Association of Composers and Interpreters of Music, elected at the founding assembly on 19.01.1947.

Radio Skopje:

Worked as Music Editor in Radio Skopje.

Asparuh Hadzhinikolov (1909-1980)

After completing the Music High School in Belgrade he became started working as a music teacher. He worked in Uzhice, Sarajevo, Bielina, Skopje, Pirot and Prokuplje.

Music pedagogy:

- Founder, professor and Head of the Music Department at the College of Pedagogy in Skopje (later called the Academy of Pedagogy).
- Lectured theoretical subjects at the Music High School in Skopje
- Lectured at the Singing Courses for Teachers
- Taught basic theory and instrument knowledge at the Choir-Master Course
- Principal of the Ballet School (1950-1956).

MAC:

Secretary of MAC from 1953 to 1955.

Institute for Folklore:

He served as Director of this institute for one year.

People's Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Education:

- Head of the Music Sector in this Ministry.

- On 12.08.1948 the Ministry of Education of Macedonia opened an office for organizing cultural and artistic events. Asparuh Hadzhinikolov was named Director.

Publishing activities:

In the post-war period he published several articles in the magazine *Nova Makedonija* (*New Macedonia*) and *Kulturen zhivot* (*Cultural Life*). Later, as a co-author with other musicians he participated in writing five music textbooks.

Conclusion:

The various engagements of these musicians in Macedonian music life speaks of the awareness of the country for the need of professionals to develop this cultural aspect. The fact that these musicians were also composers, interpreters, teachers and organizers is of particular importance. We find such examples of multiple activities in prominent 20th century musicians, such as for instance Carl Orff – composer, conductor, head of the dance department, head of the “Orff Institute” in Salzburg; Zoltan Kodaly: composer, violoncellist, Vice Director of the University, music critic; Dmitriy Kabalevsky – pianist, composer, professor, author of syllabi and curricula at many elementary schools, etc. Thus, through the various engagements of the professionals, a unified, coordinated cultural and educational policy was enacted in music life in all its parts:

- composing
- performance
- educational and research activities
- managing national cultural institutions through actively participating in their work.

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