

The Cultural Role of the Turkish Music Department at Radio Skopje

Introduction

As one of the most represented media, radio has a significant role in the cultural policy of the society. This medium is an important factor for the cultural identification of each population, especially when it comes to minorities. These were the facts incorporated in the starting point for the topic of our research. In fact, our interest focused on the cultural role of the radio broadcasting on Turkish language in Republic of Macedonia and its part in the shaping and directing of the musical taste of the Turkish population in the region.

The national Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) is the only radio station in Republic of Macedonia that broadcasts programme in Turkish language.

Bearing in mind that the activities of the Turkish Music Department at MRT have not been entirely documented (with the exception of a short article in the monograph issued on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of MRT and a few articles in the daily newspaper 'Birlik'), we decided to first review the evolutions path of this medium - from the period of its establishment up to present day. Therein, we paid particular interest to the following segments:

- the music sector: music programmes and music genres that were presented in the programmes;
- new music recordings

Since we are discussing a period of sixty-two years of existence of this department, we considered the review by decades as the most appropriate approach for embarrassing more information in a systematic way.

Having set the methodology, during the process of gathering information for the area of our research, we primarily used the following instruments:

- documented data (articles from the daily newspaper ‘Birilik’ and the phonodocumentation of the Turkish Music Department at Radio Skopje);
- interviews (with present and former employees in the Turkish Music Department at Radio Skopje).

This retrospective aimed at getting a clear picture about the dynamics in the process of activities of this medium during the six decades, as well as about the music contents represented in the programme within particular periods. Thus, we came to recognize the intensity of the cultural role of this institution and its influence on the Turkish population, as well as the directions in the shaping the music taste of the Turkish population residing in the Republic of Macedonia.

I. Historical retrospective of the Turkish Programme Sector at Radio Skopje

1. 1940s and 1950s

The Turkish programme radio broadcasting started concurrently with the establishment of Radio Skopje on 28.12.1944. The first cluster of people working on show preparation was created. These people were: Husni Kemal Zulfi, Husametin Vardar and Serafedin Judzel. Mr Mustafa Karahasan was appointed as the first editor-in-chief (Monograph, 1994: 22).

The first show, which was of a purely speaking character, was broadcasted in the village of Vranovci (municipality of Veles). Music was integrated with the first radio shows broadcasted from Skopje in the very first days of 1945 (from the interview with A. Engullu: Skopje, 28.08.2006).

In 1946, Mustafa Karahasan takes the post of the Head of Department. Among the other collaborators, there were Enver Tuzdzu and the eminent poet Nedzati Zekeria. The first presenter was Ms Dzevahir Selim (‘Birilik’, 1994).

In 1946, with the broadening of the Radio Skopje programmes, the Turkish Programme Sector also expanded. The programme included shows dedicated to culture, a literary angle, and presentation of events and performances of cultural-art societies.

1.1. Music Sector and Instrumental Ensembles

From the period of establishment of the Turkish Department up to the middle 1950s, production of music contents was realized through live performances.

Therefore, it was required to create instrumental ensembles. The first orchestra that had its start in the Radio Skopje programme incorporated the members of the vocal-instrumental assembly 'Jard'm' ("Help"), that had existed in the times of Yugoslavia Kingdom. Among the members of this orchestra we find the names of Bekir Hadzikune, Redzai Zekeria, Musa Halim (soloists), Husref (cannon), Mustafa (ud), Salih (tambourine) (from the interview with A. Engullu: Skopje, 28.08.2006).

In 1946, Vasil Hadzimanov initiated the creation of the 'Chalgii' orchestra that has been active throughout the six decades. This orchestra included the following instruments: violin, clarinet, kanon, ud, dzumbush, kettledrum, and tambourine. It was managed by the violin player Ilmi Baki.



"Chalgii" orchestra

This orchestra reached its highest summit in the early 1950s when each of the music instruments was doubled. Depending on the needs of the repertoire, other instruments were often included, such as saz, cymbals, drum, or wooden spoons.

Until 1960, this ‘Chalgia’ orchestra accompanied performances of songs from the local repertoire only (ojun havasi, turku, sharki, and other forms from the rumelian repertoire) (from the interview with Avni Engullu: Skopje, 28. 08.2006).

Apart from the basic orchestra, external ensembles also took part in the realization of music contents.

After the foundation of ‘Yeni Yol’ in 1948 in Skopje, this cultural-art society takes a huge part in the process of preparation of the music programme and the performances (Kaya, F.).

Besides ‘Yeni Yol’, other ensembles also took part in the programmes of the Turkish Music Department, since there were numerous ensembles of that type at that period. In 1949 in Macedonia, there were 61 active cultural-art societies of diverse nature, for ex. there were vocal-instrumental ensembles, choirs, drama and poetry class groups, folk-dance ensembles, and other. (Kaya, F.).



“Jeni Jol” ensemble - 1950

From 1946 up to 1960s, the programme of the Turkish Department broadcasted 15-minute music shows twice a week (Monograph, 1994: 22).

Apart from that, another remarkable music show broadcasted western classical music works. Ljubica Mutevich prepared this show and it was broadcasted once a week.

The rest of the music substance was integrated in the speaking contents.

1.2. New Music Recordings

The New Music Recordings Sector began its activities in the middle of the 1950. Realization of the first audio recordings took place in 1955.

According to the dates available, in the period between 1955 and 1960 the New Music Recordings Department realized 220 audio recordings. The year of 1956 obviously marks the highest production of audio recordings.

<i>Recording Year</i>	<i>No of Songs</i>
<i>1955</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>1956</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>1956 – 1960</i>	<i>88</i>

Among the many prolific artists who took part in the creation of the music contents during the first two decades, starting from the establishment of the Turkish Department at Radio Skopje, the most popular were the following:

<i>Performer's name</i>	<i>Number of songs</i>	<i>Year of recording</i>
1. Zekerja Reshko (Skopje)	11	1955
2. Dzevat Ali (Skopje)	3	1955
3. Musa Halim (Skopje)	22	1955
4. Raife Erife (Skopje)	3	1955
5. Ramadan Sulejman (Skopje)	24	1956
6. Nazmije Abdula (Skopje)	12	1956
7. Kemal Selim (Skopje)	10	1956
8. CASE 'Yeni Yol' (Skopje)	4	1956
9. Magbule Gacshi (Kosovo)	25	1956
10. Behidze Pagashtica (Kosovo)	18	1956

11. Shefki Jashar (Skopje)	88	1956-1960
12. Orchestra 'Chalgii' (Skopje)	18	1960-1967
13. CASE "Yeni Hayat" (Tetovo)	18	1960-1970

Songs were usually performed with an instrumental accompaniment by the 'Chalgii' orchestra or by some other instrumental ensembles of cultural-art societies (CASE), like for ex. 'Yeni Yol' from Skopje and "Yeni Hayat" from Tetovo.

2. 1960s

Until 1960, the Turkish programme marks rapid development and growth. However, with the mass emigration of the Turkish population in the second half of the 1950s and the first half of 1960s a period of stagnation seems to appear, resulting mostly from the lack of adequately educated experts in the Turkish Programme Sector.

It was the period when restriction related to broadcasting music shows in Turkish language was introduced. Namely, from 1946 up to that period, the music shows were broadcasted twice a week according to the programme schedule (each Tuesday and Thursday), taking 15 minutes each, whereas after 1960, they were reduced to one broadcast a week (Thursdays only).

In 1967, Ilhami Emin, who has greatly contributed to the development and the qualitative increase of the Turkish language programme, becomes editor-in-chief. That meant spreading out shows and human resource development. These shows became available on the frequencies in the other Balkan countries, too.

2.1. The Music Sector

Mass emigration of the Turkish population reverberates in the character of the 'Chalgii' orchestra as well. This orchestra stays without a significant number of its instrumental members.

Apparently, there was also a high outflow among the solo players, whose names were the most represented ones in the realization of music contents. This deficit in the performing

structure was partly filled by performers from the neighbouring countries, mainly from cities like Prishtina and Prizren.

During the period of this decade, the programme repertoire mostly consisted of national production. Due to the fairly small music bank in the phonoteque, although very occasionally, there were initial attempts to integrate music contents of Turkish production. These were the first records that employees themselves personally purchased from the Republic of Turkey (from the interview with A. Engullu: Skopje, 28.08.2006).

In addition to the national domestic repertoire, western classical music works were still included in the programme.

2.2. New Recordings

In 1967, Avni Engullu takes over the position of the Head of the Turkish Sector of New Recordings.

With the outflow of local singers, which we mentioned above, the music contents within the scope of this Sector were realized through performances of a great number of solo players from the neighbouring regions, primarily from Kosovo.

In the article about Radio Skopje published in the daily newspaper ‘Birilik’ on 07.02.1969, there are a few prominent names of soloists from Prishtina and Prizren who fulfil listeners’ wishes during music shows. They were Alush Nush, Faik Emrush, Ulvi Ilta, Fatma Vesnic, Besire Alo (from Prizren), Zejnep Ramadzik, Semiha Hudaverdi, Gani Sadik (Pristine).

The number of realized audio recordings in that period is considerably lower. Hence, instead of the 220 music units recorded in 1950s, during the following decade there were only about 54 audio recordings.

<i>1960 – 1967</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>1960 – 1970</i>	<i>36</i>

3. 1970s

During the period of this decade, the Turkish language programme on Radio Skopje marks a significant quality improvement. This change is primarily due to the employment of a professional musician as a music editor. That was Aysel Redzep, a person that took all the burden of organizing, presenting and recording music contents throughout the following three decades (from 1974 to 2004) (from the interview with A. Redzep: Skopje, 24. 08.2006).

In 1978, the duration of the programme expands to 75 minutes.

In 1974, they signed a protocol on cooperation with the Turkish Radio Television (TRT). This cooperation led to enlargement of the music collection in the Turkish Music Department, which contributed to enrichment of the music programme with the current repertoire of the music scene in the Republic of Turkey (Birlik: 22.12.1994).

1.1. Music Sector

By increasing the duration of the Turkish language programme, the number of music shows that dealt with diverse genres also increased and, naturally, edited music shows became longer, too.

In 1970s, the Turkish language programme had a relatively small collection of music performances in Turkish language at its disposal; it consisted of about 200-250 music units. This collection was supposed to be used for creating a one-hour-and-a-half programme, with 70% of music within it. Due to the limited bank of Turkish songs and, also, in order to maintain the legal regulations of Radio Skopje, up to 1991 all the programmes included songs from the Macedonian, Yugoslavian, and the world repertoire. These materials were presented in music and, particularly, spoken music shows.

Moreover, a lot of material from the music production of the Republic of Turkey was also used. The programme included music contents of various music genres: artistic, pop, and folk music from the Turkish music scene. Although, as we mentioned before, this was supposed to imply genre broadening in the repertoire of the Turkish programme music shows, it also meant straining from the source and the genuine local repertoire. The

imported music works (predominantly from the Turkish folk music) became an inevitable part of the repertoire of the chalgia orchestra and the soloists performing songs from the rumelian repertoire in that time.

1.2. New Music Recordings

In 1974, Aysel Redzep takes over the position of Head of the Sector of New Music Recordings. In the course of her management, for a period of almost two decades, an outsized number of music pieces was recorded, performed by numerous solo players accompanied by the 'Chalgii' orchestra and other instrumental ensembles.

Each recorded music work contributed to the enrichment of the music substance in the Turkish programme music shows. Among the names of singers that produced a considerable number of songs, one can find: Perihan Tuna, Dzelal Nebi, Engin Musli, Nezir Nesiri, Osman Shaban, Redzep brothers, Ali, Sabri, Daut and Nazmije Abdula, Rahmi Adem, Mefail Ali, Magbule Gashi, Shefket Naim, Musa Halim, Nuri Karadza and others. Part of them were professionals while others were members of cultural-art ensembles (from the interview with A. Redzep, 24.08.2006).

Apart from national names, there were also names of singers from the Republic of Turkey visiting ex Yugoslavia that took part in the performance of numerous music works. These recordings made with their orchestras truly invigorated the phonoteque of the Turkish Programme Sector.

An initiative was taken and the formation of the mixed vocal group of young singers named 'Genchlik' ("Youth") took place. This group was remarkably active for more than a year. Its repertoire included mostly rumelian songs with new orchestra arrangements. The presentation of this repertoire on the Turkish programme had an important role and it experienced a lot of sundry interpretations.

The music production sector also initiated cooperation with a newly founded external orchestra of string instruments (sazes). Actually, this performance of rumelian songs (which were basically intended for performance with a chalgia orchestra) with solely string instruments requested certain skills and competence. In cooperation with numerous

solo players, during the two years period of cooperation, many recordings with a specific arrangement were produced.

4. 1980s

In 1984, the programme duration of the Turkish Music Department at Radio Skopje expanded to 1 hour and 45 minutes.

4.1. Music Sector

What we can distinguish from the period of this decade is the broadcasting of new music shows. One of the most popular music shows that started its broadcast in 1980 was the contact-show 'Merhaba'. This spoken music show made by Aysel Redzep was broadcasted every second week. It was a show presenting news and events in the popular and folk music area and, at the same time, portraying distinguished singers and vocal – instrumental groups.

Regarding the repertoire of the Turkish Programme Sector, it mainly broadcasted the same music genres as in the previous decade but with a higher representation of the repertoire from the Turkish production. The more intense integration of the music repertoire from the Republic of Turkey resulted from the following factors:

1. By expanding the duration of the shows, a wider range of music contents seemed to be a necessity. Regarding the fact that the repertoire of the national recordings sector could not satisfy this need to a great extent, music shows had to intensify the representation of the music contents from the imported repertoire.
2. The second factor was the quality of performers. Because of the better quality of the songs of Turkish new recording sector (performances, diction, arrangements, orchestrations and techniques) this repertoire takes the primary role in the Turkish programme radio broadcasting.
3. The third factor were the listeners that expressed their wish (especially in the contact-music shows) to be updated with the current repertoire of the Turkish music scene.

4.2. New Music Recordings

In 1980s, there is a significant decrease in the intensity of the new music recordings department. It primarily results from the following factors:

- 1) Unfavourable financial conditions in RTV Skopje;
- 2) Insufficient engagement of the music editors resulting from the increased tasks and duties in the musical sector.

5. 1990s

In 1994, it was not only the duration of the Turkish language programme that expanded to 5 hours but also the process of its modernization began to take place (Birlik: 22.12. 1994).

5.1. Music Sector

The five-hour Turkish language programme increased the need for a bigger bank of music materials even more, since it had to fill in 70% from the total programme. The fairly small national music collection lead to an increased representation of music contents coming from other productions: primarily the Turkish but also from the Macedonian, Yugoslavian, and world music scene.

Within the scope of the music sector in this decade, we can point out the music show “From the World of Music” that was first broadcasted in 1991. This show had its broadcast each Sunday as part of the contact show “Merhaba”. Its concept mostly incorporated a promotion of a new album or a review of a festival event (either national or international) in the field of popular or folk music. This show also included a news segment related to the national and international music production.

5.2. New Music Recordings

The frequency in the production of audio recordings at the new music recordings department was still decreasing.

Under the initiative of A. Redzep, in 1991, a selection of songs was made for the anthology cassette that was actually the first and the only one in the Turkish Sector of New Recordings at RTS. This tape includes 9 rumelian songs interpreted by popular

singers from Macedonia, accompanied by the ‘Chalgii’ orchestra. Some of the songs were accompanied by a synthesizer played by the son of the famous singer Nuri Karadza.

6. Nowadays

Today the programme of the Turkish Programme Sector at Radio Skopje has a 5-hour daily broadcast. Music is predominant in this 5-hour period since it covers 70% of the entire programme.

<i>Radio Skopje – Turkish Music Department</i>				
Period	<i>1944-45</i>	<i>1978</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1994- 2006</i>
Duration of the programme	<i>30 min.</i>	<i>75 min.</i>	<i>105 min.</i>	<i>5 hours</i>

Review of the duration of the Turkish Music Department programme, from its creation up to present days

The present state of affairs at the Turkish Programme Sector at RS could be estimated as unfavourable. This state is primarily due to the absence of a professional music editor. It results in plenty of improvisations and ad-hoc procedures in the presentation of the music contents.

6.1. Music Sector

The most popular contact shows, where music predominates, are the shows ‘Yelpaze’ (“Rainbow”) and ‘Merhaba’ broadcasted during the weekends.

During the last few years (more precisely, after the retirement of A. Redzep 2004), in the absence of a music editor, music contents on the Turkish language radio programme have been almost individually realized. In the shows there are music pieces downloaded from the Internet. Music contents in the phonoteques are virtually not used, despite the fact that part of the old audio recordings was digitized.

Music shows are characterized with genre diversity, the most prevalent being the repertoire from the music scene of the Republic of Turkey. There is an evident domination of the Turkish pop music. Besides pop music, the programme also includes

artistic, folk, Turkish classical music, as well as some forms of spiritual music. During the last year, although to a smaller extent, the programme also included western classical music works. Under the initiative of Ms Teuta Shabani (who was engaged as a music editor for a one-year period), during 2005/6, each Saturday, western classical music was broadcasted for half-an-hour (11.30 – 12.00).

The following table presents the genre classification of the music shows represented on the Turkish Programme Radio. According to the presented data, the most represented music genre within this programme is pop music from the music scene of the Republic of Turkey. This demonstrates the dedication of the programme towards the younger population.

music genre	broadcasting		total minutes		
	period	title of show	minutes	total	per week
<i>rumelian songs</i>	once a week	<i>From Song to Song</i>	30 min.	30	30
<i>folk music from R.T.</i>	Monday to Friday	<i>From Song to Song</i>	30 min.	150	
	twice a week	<i>Time Alone with a Singer</i>	25 min.	50	315
	twice a week	<i>One Artist One Song</i>	20 min.	40	
	Monday to Friday	<i>Entertaining Minutes</i>	15 min.	75	
<i>artistic music from R.T.</i>	Monday to Friday	<i>Music minutes</i>	25 min.	125	200
	three times a week	<i>Time Alone with a Singer</i>	25 min.	75	
<i>classical music from R.T.</i>	sekoja sabota	<i>Rainbow</i>	30 min.	30	60
	once a week	<i>From Song to Song</i>	30 min.	30	
<i>pop music from R.T.</i>	Monday to Friday	<i>A Display of Topics</i>	60 min.	300	
	Monday to Friday	<i>National Authors Songs</i>	25 min.	125	
	Monday to Friday	<i>From Song to Song</i>	15 min.	75	685
	Monday to Friday	<i>We Have Selected for You</i>	25 min.	125	
	three times a week	<i>One Artist One song</i>	20 min.	60	
<i>spiritual music</i>	once a week	<i>spiritual music</i>	20 min.	20	20

In 2004, the process of digitization of the old audio recordings in Radio Skopje began. During the last two years (2004 to 2006) 274 Turkish songs were digitized, recorded in the period between 1955 and 1970.

At present, the phonoteque includes over 10 000 music works from the area of pop and folk music in Turkish language. It is understandable that besides the music units recorded within the scope of our production, music contents from the production of the Republic of Turkey are also included. One part of the collection was damaged during the flood in 1962, and the earthquake in 1963 however, the human factor has had a great deal in this destruction throughout the six decades.

6.2. New Music Recordings

Currently, the new music recordings are reduced to a minimum. Apart from the previously mentioned factors, the situation became worse with the splitting of the 'Chalgii' orchestra.

Conclusion

Regardless of the unfavourable state of affairs in the Turkish Programme Department at Radio Skopje today, we should emphasise that this sector has an important role in the cultural policy of the Turkish population in the Republic of Macedonia. The importance of this editorial office is even higher because of the fact that it has been the only radio station in Macedonia that broadcasts Turkish language programme.

Therefore, this department has a significant role in the shaping and directing of the musical taste of the Turkish population and it represents one of the most vital forms of cultural identification of the Turkish population residing in the Republic of Macedonia.

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