

RREZE KRYEZIU BREZNICA

Musicologist, Kosovo

rreze.kryeziu@gmail.com

orcid.org/0000-0001-5601-5867

General Overview of Art Music in Kosovo: Social and Political Impact

ABSTRACT

Art Music, if understood in the sense of concert activity and foundation of professional institutions in Kosovo, started to develop by the middle of the 20th century, i.e. still during the Yugoslav period. Precisely, the population of Albanian ethnos in Kosovo was to share its fate with other people of the ex-Yugoslav State after World War II, from 1945. As an integral part of this development, new economic, political, social, and cultural circumstances arose for the professional development of Art Music as a significant segment of cultural life during this period. Prior to this period, there were no professional music institutions, no artists, composers, instrumentalists, or educated singers in Kosovo.

In order to properly understand the characteristics of Art Music in Kosovo, it is necessary to take a brief look at the impact of social and political circumstances on such development. This article strives to help identify specific problems that initially affected the delayed appearance of such a tradition in Kosovo. Despite all the difficulties, and political-historical circumstances, which had overwhelmed Kosovo, and continue having a huge impact even today (2017-18), Art Music (brought and dealt with very late), has managed to achieve a lot. At least it overcame the dark period and unfavourable conditions it had encountered for centuries.

KEYWORDS

Art Music
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Introduction

The development of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo started after World War II, and it shared the same fate as other countries in the Balkans. Art Music of Kosovo has gone through different political, social, and economic situations, all of which had a strong impact in its development.

However, the impact was stronger due to the beginning of the last war in Kosovo (commencing in 1990, almost a decade before the war), a war that warranted an inevitable ten-year desertion of the Albanians' cultural and educational life in Kosovo. To gain a deeper insight into the cultural circumstances in Kosovo, it is useful to provide a brief overview of the social, economic, and political circumstances the country faced.

Socialist Yugoslavia was founded in 1946, after Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) and his communist-led partisans had helped liberate the country from German occupation in 1944-45. This Yugoslavia covered much of the same territory as its predecessor, with the addition of land acquired from Italy in Istria and Dalmatia. The previous kingdom of Yugoslavia, which existed until 1943, was replaced by a federation of six nominally equal republics: Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia. In Serbia the two so-called provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina were given autonomous status in order to acknowledge the specific interests of Albanians and Magyars, respectively (Allcock and Lampe, 2012).

Serbia – and many Serbs had viewed Kosovo as their cultural heartland – instituted a new constitution in 1989 revoking Kosovo's autonomous status. Kosovo's Albanian leaders responded in 1991 by organising a referendum, which led to the declaration of Kosovo's independence. Serbia undertook repressive measures against the Kosovar Albanians in the 1990s, provoking a Kosovar Albanian insurgency. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013) This indicates a complicated situation in terms of ethnic and national identity, which profoundly transformed in the second part of the 20th century and was felt especially at the time of the first-ever elections after World War II in Yugoslavia, as the units that were part of it started proclaiming their status of independence (i.e. Slovenia and Croatia in 1991). It also accounts for the consecutive wars instigated by Yugoslav government against

the states demanding their independence from Yugoslavia, during this time, and onwards. This includes Kosovo, which witnessed an intense war (March-June 1999) until the intervention of NATO forces, which began the bombings on Serbia's military bases, at which point Slobodan Milosevic (1941-2006) acknowledged his defeat.

The above-mentioned political and social circumstances, as well as other dramatic changes within Kosovo have negatively affected the development of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo, which, from the author's perspective, was and is a neutral sphere of identity, as it started in a vacuum – i.e. an emptiness, in terms of its activities which did not exist before 20th century. Going back in history, a stronger role of Albanian music was noted especially in terms of public awareness during the continuous tensions with the Serbian State (1912-1913) during the First Balkan War, the First World War (1913-1918), and the Second World War (1939-1945), tensions that ultimately resulted in war in 1999.

Art Music in Kosovo has gone through challenging phases, even the ones when it was not cultivated at all, due to the socio-political circumstances brought onto Kosovo's population. And I do concur with the Kosovar musicologist Engjëll Berisha (1934-2015), who outlined in his influential book *Zhvillimi i stileve në veprat e kompozitorëve shqiptarë të Kosovës* [Developing Styles in the Works of Kosovo Albanian Composers], that the best way to present this country's history is music, which is considered, from its origin as the best expression of social and cultural stories existing throughout the world (1997: 8). The compositional oeuvre of Albanian composers can surely shed light on this matter. And this comes as a result of the program of their compositions, which, besides the melodic support deriving from Albanian folk music, have been strongly supported in the great historical events of the country, which we are witnessing today through their music. In the previously mentioned book, Berisha further continues remarking:

In the 21st century, music represents national values for the younger cultures or countries that have been liberated more recently from what they had experienced during invasions. In contrast to the more affirmed cultures, which already possess centuries-long music traditions or at

least a narrative of a commonly accepted music history, it presents – on the positive side of this situation – an opportunity to develop new composition techniques that might be less blocked by pre-existent discourses, stylistic biases, etc. (2004: 87).

In a specific culture such as that of Kosovo, reliance on national values was almost inevitable. However, this was not easy to accomplish by taking into consideration the government of that period, which did not allow such a thing. Firstly, during the Yugoslav period (1929-1989), as a Kingdom (1929), then renamed as Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and when the situation changed, the Serbian government that dominated the region from 1989-1999 did not allow the use of overtly specific national (i.e. Albanian-rooted) values/elements, other than the cultivation of music that did not contain any national motives – be it in its lyrics or melody (Munishi, 2001: 111). According to the Serbian writer and publisher based in London, Radomir Putnikovich (1936-), during the previously mentioned period, the music in Serbia was mostly in service of patriotic ideas and of the preservation of the nation, as indicated by the ecclesiastical performances of the time (1995).

If we go back in time, the situation regarding Albanians in Kosovo was better in 1945 when the socialist government under Josip Broz Tito came to power. Tito, a Yugoslavian revolutionary leader and a statesman, is still remembered with sincere sympathy by many Albanians of former Yugoslavia. Concerning the above-mentioned period, as the British historian and academician Noel Macolm states in his book, *Kosova një histori e shkurtër* [Kosovo, a Short Story], Albanians of Kosovo regarded Tito as the man who stopped or opposed the hostile policy of the regime of former Yugoslavia (2011: 398). Tito systematically repressed all manifestations of nationalism throughout Yugoslavia, seeking to ensure that no republic or nationality gained dominance over the others. In particular, Tito weakened the power of Serbia – the largest and most populous republic at that time – by establishing autonomous governments in the Serbian province of Vojvodina in the north and in Kosovo in the south. As the authors Daniel Bethlehem and Marc Weller noted in their book, *The Yugoslav Crises in International Law*, “When Kosovo became a province, by Tito’s decision, Kosovo’s borders did not precisely match the areas of ethnic Albanian settlement in Yugoslavia (significant number of Kosovo Albanians remained in the

Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia)” (Bethlehem and Weller 1997: 15). This means that it was an unjust territorial division, but Tito made this decision to satisfy Kosovo by declaring it a province, and also to satisfy other countries that were part of Yugoslavia while maintaining the stability of his government.

After Tito’s death, the situation in Kosovo was becoming more difficult with every day that passed when Slobodan Milosevic came to power in 1989. According to Bethlehem and Weller, in 1991 Milosevic stopped the work of the Kosovo Assembly, whose delegates had declared Kosovo’s independence on July the 2nd of the same year (Bethlehem and Weller, 1997: 15). This deteriorating situation affected the culture in general, by suspending any existing cultural activity, which came from the largest ethnicity in Kosovo, which were and are Albanians. Regarding this, Malcolm remarks:

This was responded to by a cultural war in Kosovo; Albanian intellectuals began expressing their discontent with the Serb establishment through different writings in and out of Kosovo. Professor Ali Hadri, was forced to resign from the Institute of History accused as a "nationalist", then the sociologist Hajredin Hoxha was attacked aggressively for his study in which he mentioned the demand for secession. On the other hand, the Serbian intellectuals, such as Dimitrie Bogdanovic with his book Knjiga o Kosovu accused Kosovo Albanian people that they were trying to create an “ethnically pure province, and so did other books during the 80's where the main focus of Serbian authors was to present the history of Serbs in Kosovo as a permanent ethnic martyrdom (2011: 423).

Reactions from the Serbian side were retaliated with imprisonments of Albanian intellectuals and insurgents, expulsion of teachers and students (who, at the time, refused the new Serb syllabus, which excluded the teaching of Albanian literature and history) from educational institutions (Malcolm, 2011:436). I was part of the generation which was not allowed to learn Albanian language, or in it, in educational institutions. Having been excluded from the public educational system, the teaching continued in private homes, lent for that purpose by the parents of the pupils, as

well as the homes of the teachers and people of goodwill, homes which served as an improvised school environment. This situation was motivated by hoping to avoid the abandonment of education by the younger generations, but the conditions and the learning outcomes were very weak.

Set against the context sketched out above, my focus goes towards the impact that historic events had on the Art Music works and compositions in a multi-ethnic, yet ethnically divided environment such as Kosovo. The historical circumstances of Kosovo's dramatic conditions culminated in the sole purpose of showing its need to found its own state, which was ultimately achieved in 2008.

In 1999, the fate of history turned sides in favour of the Art Music development. The Albanian music revival in Kosovo had no older historical, musical, or classical reference point for a local Art Music history, such as Franco-Flemish renaissance music, or the Viennese classical composers. As mentioned above, its development started in the 20th century – the development of Art Music of a state, which the Serbian government had put it in a state of clinical death (1914-1945) (Munishi, 2001: 295). To that point, cultural activities had suffered not only from isolation, but also suppression in Kosovo for ten more years (1990-1999).

According to the Serbian musicologist Melita Milin, Art Music and composers' oeuvres were isolated as a result of the negative effect of the previously described dramatic changes and other historic circumstances in Serbia during and after 1945, and during the 1990s (2009). At the time of writing, Kosovo still did not have an adequate hall for Art Music concerts and shows. The lack of conditions for performance is contrasted by a strong local interest in cultivating Art Music literature among local composers. As a result of the above-mentioned circumstances and lack of venues, which are necessary for the presentation of specific genres, only some of the existing composers continue composing in Kosovo nowadays.

This situation, notwithstanding, Art Music in Kosovo, was performed, presented, and developed after World War II.

This means that we cannot make a real comparison between Art Music of Kosovo with that of other states of the world.

The main reason I can never make such a comparison is that the inception of Kosovo's Art Music took place only in 1944-45 (as mentioned above), whereas world Art Music at that time was characterized by twelve-tone serialism, atonality, and minimalism, all of which were integral to the composers' education and work. Yet Kosovar composers, especially in the beginning of their compositional oeuvres, did not employ these styles, considering the non-existence of previous Art Music styles in Kosovo, which hindered Art Music in Kosovo from developing in parallel with the Western European one, and resulted in an inability to analyse previous styles, which may have been a huge support to their newly-composed Art Music oeuvre, the newest in Europe and beyond.

Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo: General Considerations Regarding the Pre-Conditions of Art Music Development

According to Berisha, a pre-condition for the development of Art Music (professional music) in Kosovo were the registered amateur music societies active at the end of the 19th century, also known as the 'Albanian Renaissance' (2004: 36). The same situation was the case in Serbia which ruled Kosovo during the 19th century, after the Balkan Wars (late 19th century). According to Radomir Putnikovich, Art Music life in Serbia had its beginnings in the amateur music ensembles and foreign musicians, i.e. Czechs. As he pointed out:

The period itself was remarked by amateurism, but Serbian music of the Romanticist style began then, based on the folk melodies. Apart from native Serbian musicians, the rise of music was also contributed to by foreigners, especially the Czechs, who were choir leaders in Serbian singing societies, playing in orchestras and teaching in the Serbian schools (1995).

As indicated by Putnikovich, Art Music in Kosovo also began its life with these semi-professional ensembles formed in different cities of Kosovo, i.e. the Cultural Art Society 'Agimi' in Prizren in 1944, and other societies of such type that consisted of choirs and chamber orchestras of unique importance for Art Music. Special credit goes to the music art institutions for introducing and further developing Art Music in Kosovo by starting their activities in 1948, when the first school of this kind was

established. Soon after the establishment of the music faculty (1975), the introduction of the first professional composers, orchestras, ensembles, ballet, and classical music festivals followed. Further, we shall prove that in Kosovo, halfway through the 20th century (reasons for the delay are specified in the Introduction of this article) a part of the primary conditions for introduction and development of this type are fulfilled. As such, we mention other introductions that speak for themselves, such as the nonexistence of a national opera house or even an adequate music (concert) hall, which does not motivate composers to expand their compositional opus; eventually the result is the lack of opera and other compositions for the stage.

For a limited time, there was a broad and genuine development in music activity, such as amateur societies like Ramiz Sadiku, Bajram Curri, Kastriotët etc., and despite the difficult circumstances, the spark for a beginning of cultural life was lit. As previously mentioned, sadly, this would come to a halt and collapse by the end of the 1990s. The total occupation of Kosovo found Albanians unprepared and completely unused to such an environment. This ultimately affected our general cultural flow, and music in particular. Nevertheless, despite all the torture and political influences, music and its power prevailed by accompanying the people of Kosovo through the darkest times.

Albanian composers of Art Music in Kosovo: a historical division

Art Music development in Kosovo was divided into three generations, and accordingly, composition studies are also divided in that way, (Berisha, 1997: 34) paying attention to the stylistic characteristics and modes of musical expression of Kosovar Albanian composers.

According to this division, the first generation is represented by Lorenc Antoni (1909-1991) and Rexho Mullaj (1923-1982). These composers lived and composed in the time of former Yugoslavia (the second and the third generation and some of the composers from the fourth/new generation did as well), when Kosovo was recognised as an Autonomous Socialist Province within Yugoslavia (1946-1990).

Lorenc Antoni and Rexho Mullaj are known as the pioneers of Art Music (professional/classical music) in Kosovo, not only due to the fact that they

established modern composition grounds, but also for carrying the experiences from working with amateur collectives. This indicates that the compositional oeuvre of the above-mentioned composers is characterised by a local Kosovar musical expression derived from the collections from the field and Albanian folk music, while it is identified through melodic and rhythmic elements. At the time when these two composers lived and started their musical activity, Kosovo still lacked music education institutions. This situation would undoubtedly directly affect their creation, which remained without significant technical-compositional elaborations (particularly in reference to Lorenc Antoni).

The second generation is represented by the composers born in the thirties of the last century, such as: Fahri Beqiri (1936-), Mark Kaçinari (1935-1985), Akil Koci (1936-), Vinçenc Gjini (1935-), Esat Rizvanolli (1936-2006). This generation provided us with a larger number of composers representing this period – composers who lived and composed in better conditions compared to the first generation, because they had the opportunity to be educated in and outside our country (major cities of former Yugoslavia, such as Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo etc.), due to social changes mentioned in the first part). It needs to be taken into consideration that now secondary music schools (since 1949) existed for them, which was a great relief for young talents, who would one day become the representatives of Art Music in Kosovo. The criterion for division based on stylistic orientations and ideo-aesthetic principles can be seen more precisely in this generation of composers, considering that there are significant stylistic differences amongst them.

The uniqueness of this generation is that while they may have many similarities and many differences at the same time, they ultimately enriched Art Music of Kosovo with various influences from European music which they brought in. In the oeuvre of these composers, the folk motifs with frequent citations remain present, especially in the works of Halit Kasapolli and Mark Kaçinari, while the works of Fahri Beqiri, Esat Rizvanolli and Vinçenc Gjini have fewer citations, but contain the melo-rhythmic elements of our folk music (i.e. odd meters such as 5/8, 7/8, 9/8, augmented seconds, modal scale etc.). Akil Koci in the second phase of his career, detached from these principles and headed towards the avant-garde and the stylistic

directions of 20th century music. The style of these composers in contrast to the national one is close to the late European romanticism and neoclassicism up to the emergence of expressionism.

The third generation includes Zeqirja Ballata (1943-), Rauf Dhomi (1945-), and Rafet Rudi (1949-). Traces of late 19th, early 20th century Western Art Music are most apparent in the compositions of Kosovar Albanian composers of the third generation. When I say traces, I refer to the influences of Western Classical Music, or more precisely, the national romanticism of the 19th century and the atonal music of the 20th century, which are both part of the approach of some of the composers of this generation (not all of them), especially in the second phase of their oeuvres, when they moved toward the avant-garde and 20th century modernism

Albanian composers in Kosovo were split, as a part of the third generation finished their education in the universities in Skopje (Macedonia), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Belgrade (Serbia), due to the lack of such institutions in Kosovo, until 1963. The above-mentioned composers, even though they belong to the same generation, have stylistic distinction, which is natural due to the existing pluralism of styles in that period, as well as the freedom the composers had, to return to earlier styles, or access new waves of music that were circulating in Europe at that time. We can notice in their works a modern elaboration of composition elements starting from harmony, serialism, and polyphony. As a result, it is worth mentioning, that composers such as Zeqirja Ballata and Rafet Rudi, in the early stages of their careers were more traditional, with their scope spanning from neo classicism to neo baroque, which is well documented through the analysis of compositions that these composers left behind. They continuously searched for, and aimed at access towards the modern/avant-garde Art Music, which is evident in the second phase of their compositional oeuvre. On the other hand, a composer of the same period, Rauf Dhomi, goes in the opposite direction by devoting all of his work to the national style, more specifically, the late national romanticism, as expressed by the recently liberated Kosovar Albanian people.

Albanian musicians and all other composers born in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s who actively contributed in this specific field, are not divided into generations by

Berisha, so I will classify them as belonging to the new, or fourth generation of composers, which includes Mendi Mengjqi (1958-), Baki Jashari (1960-), Valton Beqiri (1967-), Donika Rudi (1982-), Kreshnik Aličkaj (1982-) and Dafina Zeqiri (1984-). This qualification (fourth generation) appears due to the implication of various styles in the compositional opus, and not based on the age. Despite the contemporary element, the fact that their compositional styles vary greatly is actually characteristic of them as a group. Some of them tend to remain more traditional in the context of application of Albanian folk music as can be seen in the works of Mendi Mengjqi (the first stage of his career), Valton Beqiri, Baki Jashari, and Kreshnik Aličkaj, while others have embraced the contemporary spirit, including its experimental aspects, as can be seen in the works of Dafina Zeqiri and Donika Rudi.

Mengjqi, Beqiri and Jashari are stylistically closer to the Art Music of Western Europe of this time. Mendi Mengjqi started composition studies in Kosovo and finished them in Poland. Even today, his compositional oeuvre is influenced by the new Polish school of composers. Younger composers received lessons from the young generation of Albanian composers, such as Mendi Mengjqi, in Kosovo. They graduated with degrees in composition from the Faculty of Art Music in Pristina (Kosovo), where since 2000, with the insistence of composer Mendi Mengjqi, a Composition department was established within the Music faculty. Composers like Dafina Zeqiri and Kreshnik Aličkaj completed their studies in Kosovo, and the influence of Mengjqi's composition style in these two composers is evident even today. Donika Rudi started composition studies in Kosovo and went on to study Acousmatic music in Belgium.

As a result of my observations, first of all, it is worth noting some of the key moments reflected in this division, starting from the professional qualification of composers. Some of the Art Music composers in Kosovo, such as Rexho Mullaj, Fahri Beqiri, Esat Rizvanolli, Zeqirja Ballata, Rafet Rudi, Rauf Dhomi, or Akil Koci, due to a lack of adequate education opportunities in Kosovo, were obliged to attend studies in foreign countries (usually in parts of former Yugoslavia, such as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia).

While here we mainly talk about the first, second and third generations of composers, a few of them returned to contribute and share their knowledge, however, others, such as Vinçenc Gjini, Akil Koci, and others, never came back to Kosovo, not only because of the last war in our country, but also due to various financial problems which affected most people in Kosovo. Composers of the new generation, such as Valton Beqiri, Baki Jashari, Kreshnik Aliçkaj, Dafina Zeqiri , who lived and composed in favourable conditions and with adequate education in the country, with their work being interpreted and performed both on their “home turf” and abroad, by different orchestras, are worth noting. This was made possible through individual attempts, such as either participating in different international competitions for composers, or meeting international conductors who from time to time work with the Kosovo Philharmonic.

A great opportunity for presenting the works of Albanian composers of Kosovo abroad are various festivals, the mission of which is the promotion of their compositional oeuvre.

The Second Yugoslavia (1963-1991), which included Kosovo, was and is still considered to have been the best period for the development of music in general, which had a huge impact in the broader development of the Art Music scene as well, with regard to Kosovo as well. However, the presentation of the traditional (and, thus, local-national) aspect in the composers’ compositional oeuvre was not allowed, always in accordance with the leaders of Yugoslavia, who gave patriotic and political connotation to it. Although, regarding Albanian Art Music, composers of Kosovo were free to choose their compositional techniques and styles. Their oeuvre was subject to the influence of other countries, which were part of ex-Yugoslavia. This lasted up until 1990, when every music activity of the Kosovar Albanians was stopped.

The Impact of Socio-Cultural and Political Developments on the Life and Work of Albanian Composers in Kosovo

As we have mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, it was precisely the unfavourable historical, political, economic, and cultural circumstances, which led to the delays of the emergence and development of Art Music in Kosovo, which begins

its journey after the Second World War (1945). Before this war, professional music institutions did not exist neither in Kosovo, nor in the other parts of former Yugoslavia inhabited by Albanians, nor in Albania itself.

As already mentioned, the end of World War II witnessed the instauration of the communist regime in Yugoslavia and the imposition of the socialist realism in music. Although this period lasted only several years, the impact of the damages it caused lasted much longer. The establishment of the first Art Music institutions (the music school in Prizren in 1948) also enabled the gradual development of professional musicians, most of whom, due to the nonexistence of such an institution in Kosovo, would be obliged to further continue their musical studies in other cities of former Yugoslavia, such as Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, Belgrade being the largest (under the power of which were all other Yugoslav states).

Coming back to their hometown from the above-mentioned cities, composers, such as Esat Rizvanolli, Rafet Rudi, Zeqirja Ballata, Rauf Dhomi, Mendi Mengjiqi, brought and practiced harmonic and polyphonic rules, vocal forms, instrumental, and vocal-instrumental genres and structures, means of expression characteristic of the countries where they got their education. However, the majority of them decided that their work, to a great extent, would be based on folk music elements.

According to the musicologist Melita Milin, the use of folk music in former Yugoslavia was re-actualised, often regressing to simplifying and keeping only a surface level. However, starting in the middle of the 1950s, a number of works of lasting value were created, all using some elements of folk and church music with great refinement (Milin, 2009).

Not only in Kosovo, but also in other countries inhabited by Albanians, such as Albania, although having independence and being a free country, until the Second World War no development of Art Music occurred. It was the weakest country in terms of economics, with unfortunate illiterate people. As a consequence, in these circumstances, a development of Art Music in Albania differs from the education of Albanian composers of Kosovo. Composers of Albania, such as Çesk Zadeja (1927-1997), Tish Daija (1926-2004), Pjetër Gaci (1931-1995), Ferdinand Deda (1941-), etc., due to the political relations of the state, pursued their studies in Socialist

states, such as the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, until appropriate institutions opened in their country such as Liceo, founded in 1946). In the case of Albania, Byzantine manuscripts are presented as evidence for the beginning of musical life there (Markovic, 2009). But because neither in the medieval period, nor at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century was there any individual who primarily identified as a composer who enjoyed an authentic musical education. According to the Albanian musicologist Hamide Stringa, it was only after the country's liberation in 1945 that Albanian music really did begin to flourish (Markovic, 2009).

Regarding Kosovo, with the opening of higher education institutions, the need for musical production also appeared. The compositional oeuvre of Art Music would not exist without such institutions. After the establishment of the institutions for music education, the foundation of Radio Television of Prishtina Symphony Orchestra, and, in the 1970's, a professional choir and ballet ensemble, had a great importance for Art Music. In Kosovo, the concert life of Art Music gradually began, and was considered to be another big push for the expansion of Kosovar Albanian composers' compositional oeuvre.

All of these circumstances had a direct impact on the music literature of its composers, but after a few years of activity, it was completely overthrown in the period (1990-1999), because the Serbian government of that time violently stopped the education process for Kosovo Albanians, and cultural life would undoubtedly go to its total silence.

The composers of this period were only in the role of music pedagogues in the schools known as the 'home schools'. They continued their compositional oeuvre secretly, which would be presented only after 1999. Composers who fled Kosovo, such as Vinçenc Gjini, Zeqirja Ballata, Baki Jashari, etc., continued the presentation of their work in the countries in which they chose to live and continue their musical activity.

Besides the importance of local music for the development of Art Music in Kosovo, according to Berisha, in order to better comprehend the compositional oeuvre of Albanian composers of Kosovo, it is also necessary to present some of the features of

European music that was composed during 19th and 20th centuries (2004: 9). The reason why Berisha advised this seems to be quite logical, because these periods are characterised by musical romanticism as the style and foundation of national schools, as the need for emancipation and cultural identification of many peoples. This stylistic movement, with all its features, would present itself in the 20th century, especially in those countries that later found their liberation. Among them, the people of Kosovo, namely the composers of Art Music in the beginnings of their compositional work approached 19th century romanticism, but they also worked on the new styles, which were active in the 20th century.

According to Melita Milin, Serbian Yugoslav composers of the 20th century, had to present to the so-called European music community their musical craftsmanship and creative individuality conveyed through the introduction of native folk elements as tokens of a specific identity (2009). The same situation was pervasive in 20th century Kosovo, but only at the very beginning. Later on, compared to the other states of Yugoslavia, Kosovo due to the influences of the often difficult and unexpected political circumstances remained too far behind, and not only in its Art Music development, but unfortunately in terms of society as a whole. Kosovo was seriously damaged by successive wars, up until and including, the last one in 1999. Compared to the other states that were part of Yugoslavia, Kosovo was not a Republic, it was considered as an 'autonomous region' (1946) and then 'autonomous province' (1963) within Serbia. This resulted in the increase of inter-ethnic tensions up through 1989.

Going back to our main focus, I can conclude that the concise use of folk music elements by Albanian composers was warranted by the lack of earlier styles in this art. The need for an expression of nationalism and the desire to tell about the existence and identification of a culture was obvious in the midst of the ongoing attempts at assimilation on the part of the Serbian government. This trait (use of folk music) is also linked with the nationalist view of Europe developed in the 19th century, but not in regard to Kosovo. Even in Albania, situation, in terms of the use of folk music elements, was the same, but unlike Kosovo, which was part of Communist Yugoslavia, Albania was at that time, in the phase of Socialist Realism, an ideology which we can find in the work of many composers, such as Abdulla Grimci (1919-),

Çesk Zadeja, Tish Daija, Ferdinand Deda (1941-), and Kristo Kono, given that music, according to the government of the time, was used for socialist education of the population, and this type of composition had not only national and regional, but also polynamic value (Berisha, 2004: 32, 33, 34). According to Albanian musician Melita Dervishi, this process in Albania came too late, due to the delayed development of Art Music, a problem that in this case is very complex (Dervishi, 2016). The process started its way when Albania was among the Socialist states and when the communist system exerted a real censorship over art in general, both with respect to composition and interpretation (Dervishi, 2016).

This conclusion came about because this kind of compositional oeuvre is an extraordinary reflection of the life of Albanian society at this time, an oeuvre that was not allowed to overcome the ideology of socialist realism, given the delayed contact with contemporary, avant-garde, and modernist movements. As in other countries of the former Yugoslavia, oral tradition was the product of a combination of factors. As Serbian musicologist Roksanda Pejovic sketched the process with regard to oral tradition in Serbia, she outlined that people naturally brought traditions with them from their ancient homeland to the lands where they settled on the boundary of the civilizations of East and West (2012). Pejovic further continues:

This was combined with the tradition they encountered in the new land, which was in direct contact with the classical heritage. Later on, it developed further as it defended itself from oriental influences, while accepting elements of those influences at the same time (2012).

This unfortunately did not happen in Albania. The musical development in Albania was manipulated and impacted by political factors. At this time (20th century), Albania was becoming a Communist state, closed in itself, not only unable to face outward in the sense of physical boundaries (people had very few opportunities for tourist travel with the small exception of other communist countries, like Russia and China), but also, and above all isolated, in terms of information on other realities (Cili, 2009). The Serbian government of that time in Kosovo (1945-1990), unlike Albania, was much more open in relation to the development of professional music

for Kosovar Albanians. This can be evidenced even better by the statement of Mateo Cili, an Albanian musician, who said:

Culture became the slave of the state power, and the examples are many: starting from newspapers and books, regularly written and revised by the ("Labour Party") Then the songs, the simplest form of defiance for the masses in those years, the songs that were state-operated communist propaganda megaphones, with folk music, typical dance and well-known voices. In any case, the young singers who came later, were only "approved" by the government: popular music development started from here that even now, in 2009, is the majority of all the music genre (2009).

Great influence on the development of the Art Music life of Kosovo, in addition to folk music, came from the initiative of the concert life, which was presenting its very beginning from the founding of the symphonic orchestra of RTP¹. Then, the Collegium Cantorum² lead us towards the need for the emergence of local musical literature, by enriching the expanded repertoire of the above-mentioned institutions.

Set against this background, in the compositions of Kosovo composers in general, one may notice a wide spectrum of conveying the music inspiration: from simple musical expressions with the stylistic colouring of national music, through the use of Albanian folk music from neo-romanticism, through neo-classicism (second and third generation of composers), and up to expressionism and complete submission to atonality (fourth/new generation of composers). However, the majority decided to support their compositions on folk music grounds, with an inclusion of particulars derived from folk music (first generation of composers).

Lorenc Antoni, also known as an ethnomusicologist besides his work as a composer, did special fieldwork in almost all areas inhabited by Albanians, where he collected traditional songs, transcribed, and analysed them, extracting their basic

¹ RTP – Radio Television of Prishtina

² In 1969, the first ensemble of semi-professional mixed choir "Collegium Cantorum" was formed in Prishtina (Kosovo) upon the initiative of the affirmed composer and conductor Mark Kaçinari.

characteristics, particular to Albanian folk. He included these songs in his collection titled *Folklori muzikor shqiptar* [Albanian Folk Music]. This collection and analysis that Antoni accomplished will enable Albanian composers of Kosovo to get to know their folk music and its characteristics better, which will find their presence in their compositional oeuvre.

Nonetheless, Kosovo remains far behind in the development of Art Music, and we must further take into consideration the compositional affinity of our composers, who still live and perform their musical activity (in most cases as lecturers), while being left with no motivation to continue forward with their compositional oeuvre. All these issues add to the late beginning of Art Music foundation and the late presence of composers.

Art Music in Kosovo began with choral compositions, which were more elaborate, and later, with stylised folk music. Seen as a whole, musical nationalism, lasting almost a century from the mid-19th to mid-20th century produced valuable works, some of which are among the best composed in Yugoslavia. In many works of Kosovar composers, we find as the main theme the treatment of the history of the Albanian people, the treatment of our human, historical figures.

They continue to provide Kosovo Art Music with a foundation of a considerable number of works of various forms and genres, but with a gradual decline in number, thus making me more curious and prompting me to decide that the research on the Art Music activity of Albanian composers in Kosovo will be based on this matter. I asked myself two questions:

- the decline of the number of composers was the result of modern techniques which are now demanded worldwide, and which, for our composers, is still only a topic that finds circulation in Europe and beyond. Would this, then, be evidenced with their compositional oeuvre below, or
- the circumstances and bad luck of a country, which for a long period of time could not promise a reasonable socio-economic life, let alone allow for thinking about art, all of this resulting in depleted motivation for composers for such an approach, or even for the expansion of their musical opus;

However, Albanian composers and other composers from the former Yugoslav countries are little known abroad. This can be attributed to the very rare performances of their music abroad and the lack of a sensitive cultural policy. According to Milin, the question of whether a specific Serbian national expression has been achieved is hard to answer (Milin, 2009). I can say exactly the same for Kosovo.

For a certain period of time, Albanian composers of Kosovo joined Serbian composers (for their studies) and others within Yugoslavia, very little is written, talked about and supported even today about that period, one of the reasons being that these composers (Albanian) never believed in Yugoslavia, and even today do not want to identify or analyse the territorial-political context, which according to composer Rafet Rudi was inexistent and ridiculous (Rudi, 2017). According to Rudi, Kosovar composers cannot be recognised as Yugoslav, nor can their oeuvre be identified as such. The territorial environment in which they lived made them change their names, as a result of the social changes of that time (2017).

Thus, gradually according to the analysis made about the life and musical activities of composers of Art Music in Kosovo, most of them today, similarly to any other composers of the world, find themselves immersed in certain musical styles, in which they have based their compositional oeuvre. All this gives us the impression of 20th century musical pluralism, where as publicist and editor John Burrows who stated in his book titled *Classical Music*:

Music of this century known as modern, has developed in a wide variety of styles, many of them strongly influenced by ideological, social, and technological changes, but also found themselves practicing their music activity as lecturers or managers of different music institutions, often obliged by the financial difficulties in which the society was going through" (Burrows, 2005: 380), in this case society in Kosovo as well.

Conclusion

Having the label of one of the newest states in the world, Kosovo remains a focal point of research interest for various disciplines, due to its political, economic, and undoubtedly, cultural development. Kosovo has always been regarded as an area of

many political, ethnic, and territorial conflicts. The central aim of the paper was to present a different Kosovo – through the perspective of art and culture, to investigate the determinants of the existence of Art Music, with a focus on social, economic, and political contexts that have shaped its development. Furthermore, the aim of this study was to identify the existence of a new culture that – as I have asserted here – is apparent in the rich sphere of Art Music.

If I summarise all the findings from a broader perspective, Art Music in Kosovo exists, and is presented in four periods/generations of composers, evidenced and divided through the practice of compositional techniques such as: harmonic and polyphonic rules, orchestration, vocal-instrumental forms, genres, and tools of expression. A great contribution came from the establishment of professional educational institutions in the country, which, with all the documentation and evidence of its historical aspect, for a short time managed to establish an identity, and also give a worthy reflection of culture in Kosovo.

Today, Art Music continues its development mostly by people of good will, and factors directly associated with Art Music, such as performers, composers, etc., through performances in concerts, festivals, and other activities without any relevant financial benefit. Local cultural festivals receive minor support from relevant institutions (Ministry of Culture, Culture Directorate of Municipalities or private sector institutions) for their organisation, with many students and people of good will contributing in their organisation with no benefit. All these events are free for the public, with the sole reason of extending the popularity of Art Music, and to create a public for the new art in Kosovo. One cannot survive as a free artist in Kosovo, as is the case in most other countries. Musicians are obliged to have second jobs (in some cases even out of their profession) in order to earn a normal living. Unmotivated artists, engaged in Art Music, can be easily noticed among the artistic community. In normal conditions, one initially chooses a profession because of the talent and love for it, decides to pursue it, which should eventually enable one to make a living from it. This does not occur with the Art Music in Kosovo.

Today our artists are in a very difficult position within the artistic community. These problems have undoubtedly weakened the concert and theatre life, the presence on

the stage. Furthermore, for many years now, (Kosovo, being a state in transition) commercial music has occupied a leading role. If, in the near future, better conditions for Art Music development are created (such as proper infrastructure of music educational institutions, concert halls etc.) as well as financial support from relevant institutions mentioned above, I am confident it would pave a way for further development of Art Music. This way, artists would continue their journeys, having greater opportunities towards achieving and offering Kosovo a fully fledged Art Music practice.

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