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**“Daleki svijet muzikom dokučen”
 (“A distant world touched by music”)**

A Contextual and Critical Study of Yugoslavian Music as Exemplified in the
Life and Music of Josip Štolcer Slavenski (1896-1955)

By
Danijela Špirić

Presented for the degree of MA

University of Durham, Department of Music 2003

ABSTRACT

The core of this study is a contextual, critical and analytical study of the life and work of Josip Štolcer Slavenski (1886-1955). It consists of a brief outline of nineteenth-century socio-political, cultural and musical trends in the former Yugoslavia which serves as a broader context for the period of *Moderna* (avant-garde). This movement, which attempted to embrace new ideas and developments of mainstream western Europe, emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and played a major role in Slavenski's musical development. Particular reference to Slavenski's circumstances are examined in the biographical chapter and his periods of study in Budapest, Prague and Paris are discussed, as is the important recognition of his music at the Donaueschingen Festival in the 1920s, and how the changing political climate of Yugoslavia, from monarchy to republic, influenced Slavenski's political and national affiliations. With this contextual backdrop, which includes reference to a number of Slavenski's contemporaries – namely Kodály, Bartók, Suk, Novák, Hindemith, composers of the Second Viennese School, and his own Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian compatriots, the dissertation focusses on particular aspects of Slavenski's work with special emphasis on his use of Balkan folk music, his autodidactic theories of 'Astroacoustics', the expressionist fabric of his music, and the socialist realism of his later works during the 1940s and 1950s.

In attempting to illuminate the nature of the 'Slavenski phenomena', this work also offers certain suggestions as to what might have been the reasons for the neglect and creative aridity of his later years. Furthermore, it is hoped that the conclusions of this study may in themselves provide an impetus for further research into Slavenski's work which has received little attention in English-speaking musicology.

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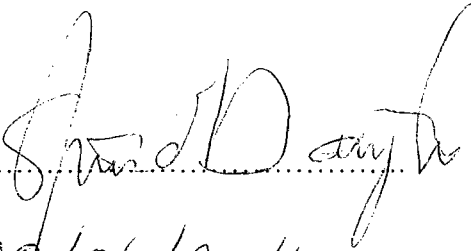
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Declaration

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University. If material has been generated through joint work, my independent contribution has been clearly indicated. In all other cases material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrase suitably indicated.

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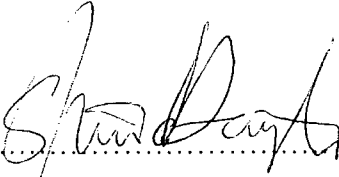
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Portrait

Josip Štolcer Slavenski

(1896-1955)



Acknowledgements

As always, my greatest debt is to my parents for their unconditional support, encouragement and education which they provided for me; once again I thank my mother for all the work which she had done in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, in collecting the writings, manuscripts and recordings on Slavenski, as well as obtaining important contacts for research. The everlasting memories of my father and the love and support of my mother have been the guiding light during this work.

The impetus for this research stemmed from Bojan Bujić's critical advice; my first thanks must therefore go to him. I am also grateful to Eva Sedak, who has kindly offered her advice during the initial stages of my work. I am thoroughly indebted to Dr. Andy Nercessiaen for his exceptional support and guidance, constructive criticism, critical evaluation and constant reassurance; this work would have been impossible without him.

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performances of Slavenski's work from the radio's archive, which has not been an easy task, considering their condition after the archives had suffered during the 1990s bombing of Sarajevo. Furthermore, I am indebted to her for the many newspaper articles on Slavenski which she had collected and preserved for years.

I owe a standing debt of gratitude to the music staff at the Durham University, for all their inspirational work, and their support during my studies here; the teaching has been both thought provoking and truly inspiring. Namely, I thank my supervisor Jeremy Dibble for all of his work during this year.

Any errors of fact, interpretation or translation are of course my own; I would therefore like to take the full responsibility for any flaws that may be encountered throughout this thesis. This work provides a small repayment to the many people, from whose help and friendship I have benefited so greatly over the past year, in particular Theo Hutchinson.

Notes on Musical Examples, Illustrations and Tables

Exx. 1 and 2 in chapter three are taken from Vlastimir Peričić's article on "Josip Slavenski i njegova 'Astroakustika'", *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1984) pp. 7-9.

Exx.12: a,b,d, (chapter four), are taken from Marija Bergamo's *Elementi ekspresionističke orijentacije srpskoj muzici do 1945. godine* (Belgrade: SANU, 1980) p. 67; the rest of the Exx. (1-11 and 14-17) are taken from Eva Sedak's compilation *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, Vol.2 (Zagreb: MIC and Muzikološki zavod, 1984) pp. 9-210.

The maps in the first chapter all come from Hupnick and Cox: *Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Balkans* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Maps 25, 35, 36 and 45.

The table (Fig.1) in chapter three comes from Peričić's 'Josip Slavenski i njegova Astroakustika', pp. 6-7. The tables in chapter four are my own.

All translations are my own.

Abbreviations

B&H Bosnia and Herzegovina

ISCM International Society for Contemporary Music

MIC Muzikološki informativni centar (Music Information Centre)

Key to Pronunciation

A	a	as in <u>cup</u>
B	b	as in <u>b</u> ath
C	ts	as in <u>its</u>
Č	ch	as in <u>ch</u> at (hard ch)
Ć	ch	as in <u>ch</u> at (soft ch)
D	d	as in <u>d</u> own
Dž	j	as in <u>j</u> am (hard j)
Đ	j	as in <u>j</u> am (soft j)
E	e	as in m <u>e</u> t
F	f	as in <u>f</u> ive
G	g	as in <u>g</u> rand
H	h	as in <u>h</u> at
I	ee	as in <u>fe</u> t
J	y	as in <u>y</u> ellow
K	k	as in <u>k</u> ick
L	l	as in <u>l</u> ove
Lj	ly	as in <u>L</u> jubljana
M	m	as in <u>m</u> ore
N	n	as in <u>n</u> eed
Nj	ny	as in <u>n</u> ew
O	o	as in <u>o</u> r

P	p	as in <u>p</u> ut
R	r	as in <u>r</u> aw (rolled 'r')
S	s	as in <u>s</u> plit
Š	sh	as in <u>sh</u> out
T	t	as in <u>t</u> ower
U	oo	as in <u>loo</u> p
V	v	as in <u>v</u> ictory
Z	z	as in <u>z</u> ebra
Ž	s	as in pleas <u>u</u> re

Preface

Within research into central and East European musical cultures, the former Yugoslav perspective has often been somewhat neglected. Whilst there has been a large body of research concerned with its socio-political developments, musicological studies remain a relatively uncultivated area. One of the main reasons for this has been the lack of opportunity to study the Croatian and Serbian languages, which has led to a shortfall of proficiency in western scholars. I have been fortunate in having lived and studied in Yugoslavia during my early years, whilst gaining further education and musical training in England. This has allowed me to develop the skills necessary to embark on such a study; substantial experience of both Yugoslav and Western cultures, their individual modes of musical and artistic thinking, as well as the freedom to engage in a critical, contextual and historical study.

The work I have chosen for this study is that of Josip Štolcer Slavenski and the reasons for doing so are manifold; in terms of history, Slavenski was active during a period of Croatian and Serbian *Moderna* (1920s and 1930s), which offered a multi-layered and heterogeneous musical texture of a newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1919, named Yugoslavia in 1929). With the political liberation from Hapsburg and Ottoman rule, composers were now able to pursue other directions, besides those of nationalism. Whilst Slavenski's predecessors were concerned with pursuing the objectives of musical nationalism, notably through folklore, he falls into a category of inter-war composers whose prime concern was folklore as the *fons et origo* of tradition, capable of underpinning the *new* musical language. In other words, they were

becoming increasingly preoccupied with the issues of western musical developments, such as recognition of exhausted traditional systems, and a need to replace them with new ones. Slavenski's approach to solving this crisis was to try and find a way of synthesising tradition and the avant-garde. More precisely, he used folklore as his source of tradition and history, which provided the roots for his musical idiom. Within this framework, he consciously strove to find a way of musical thinking congruous with western contemporary perspectives.

Although Slavenski has received attention from numerous authors, the bulk of this research forms unscholarly and somewhat parochial musicological comment, with the notable exception of distinguished studies carried out by Sedak, Bujić, and few choice exceptions. Thus, this work aims to redress the balance in this lack of critical and analytical thinking, whilst at the same time providing both a contextual study and a backdrop for a more musicological analysis.

Hence, the first two chapters provide such a contextual study. The first comprises the main aspects of Croatian and Serbian cultural and socio-political developments during the nineteenth century, with a view to illuminating the nature of *Moderna* and its reinvigorated nationalism at the turn of the century. The second provides a more immediate context for the understanding of Slavenski's life and work, preconditioned by the events and developments outlined in the first chapter.

The third and fourth chapters examine the more relevant musicological issues: Slavenski's relationship to, and his use of, folklore, his concepts and theories of '*Astroacoustics*' and the expressionist fabric of his work. All three are in response to somewhat speculative approach to studying Slavenski's work, more concerned with

hypothetical pronouncements about his innovative and progressive character, rather than a critical or analytical evaluation and investigation of the possible reasons for a gradual decline of his artistic and creative energy. Furthermore, as there is no critical evaluation of Slavenski's music in English, this study intends to close this gap. It does not claim to be exhaustive in its account; rather it aims to provide the impetus for such an investigation and a stimulus for further research in this field.

Chapter One

The History of Croatian and Serbian Musical Cultures in the Nineteenth Century

This chapter aims to paint a picture of Croatian and Serbian musical cultures during the nineteenth century. In doing this, it will chart the course of their individual progress. First, it will look at Croatian development in the light of *Illyrism*, Croatian late Romanticism, and Croatian *Moderna* (avant-garde). Secondly, it will examine Serbian developments. Specifically, this will comprise early and late Romanticism, and the Serbian period of modernism, which forked into a continuation of late Romanticism and tendencies more aligned to western contemporary musical thinking. It will proceed to compare these two musical cultures, with a view to illuminating the varying play of nationalism within their development. This will in turn clarify the nature of *Moderna* and its nationalist direction both in Croatia and Serbia, which emerged in response to:

- (i) the unsatisfied nationalist ideals during *Illyrism* and late Romanticism in Croatia,
- (ii) delayed musical developments in Serbia during the nineteenth century.

This will provide the background essential for understanding reinvigorated nationalism prevalent in Yugoslav and most other East European composers active during the first half of the twentieth century, as well as outline a brief history of nineteenth century culture in the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, this should provide grounding for our understanding of Slavenski's cultural and musical background in relation to various matters discussed throughout this thesis.



The Early Nineteenth-Century: *Illyrism* (1835-1848)

In order to understand fully the musical fabric of Slavenski's works, and indeed the majority of Yugoslav composers during the first half of the twentieth century, it is essential to formulate a certain cultural background in which geographical, historical and political issues had a major influence on the formation of their musical idioms. One of the principal and most influential cultural factors in the earlier nineteenth century was the *Illyrian* movement which flourished generally between 1830 and 1850, more specifically from 1835 to 1848.¹ This was a nationalist movement led by young Croatian intelligentsia against the Hungarian bourgeoisie and their rule in Croatia. In turn, it spawned a greater sense of cultural nationalism in the area of *Illyria* (north-west Dalmatia, the upper coastal area of Trieste and Istria) and later throughout most of Croatia (to Zagreb, Varaždin and northern Croatia).

To grasp the fundamentals of Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian history, as well as subsequent national movements in the Balkans during the nineteenth century, it is necessary to accept the hegemony and the imposition of foreign cultures. In the case of Slovenia and Croatia, the political rule of the Hapsburg monarchy had lasted since the sixteenth century (Fig.1). This political, cultural and social union with Hungary and Austria lasted until 1918, when the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created (Fig.2). In

¹ Županović, Lovro: 'Glazbena umjetnost u vrijeme hrvatskog narodnog preporoda', *Zvuk*, 67 (Belgrade, 1966), 189.

Fig. 1: The borders of Hapsburg and Ottoman empires in the nineteenth century Balkans.



Fig. 2: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, 1918.



1929, King Aleksandar Karadjordjević proclaimed a royal dictatorship and the state was renamed Yugoslavia (Fig. 3). Subsequently, in 1945, the Yugoslav monarchy was abolished and the federal people's republic of *SFRJ* (The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) was proclaimed (Fig. 4).² While Serbia enjoyed a relative degree of autonomy and independence under the Ottoman rule, the hegemony imposed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the *Illyrian* countries (Croatia and Slovenia) determined their cultural and educational foci. Consequently, musical life in Croatia was shot through with western cultural influences. German culture prevailed in Zagreb and Varaždin; Hungarian in Osijek; and Italian in Dalmatia.³

It was at the time of European Romanticism that the *Illyrian* movement appeared, gathered momentum, reached its peak and declined. It manifested itself at the same time as other national and culturally secessionist movements in Europe during the assimilation of European romantic ideas.⁴ However, whereas those mainstream nations of Europe - France, Germany and Italy - focussed on the more abstract notions of Romanticism (the lonely artist, nature, introspection, and in time the formation of a musical canon), the *Illyrian* movement concerned itself essentially with the awakening of a national consciousness. In other words, its manifesto was fundamentally political.⁵ Of course, Romanticism served to heighten those elements of nationalism - language, exoticism, orientalism, and an emphasis

² In Serbia (during the nineteenth century), the cultural influence from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy spread among the Serbian population of Vojvodina. This influence had spread southwards into the central regions of Serbia and contributed to the uprising against the Turks and the liberation of Serbia in 1867. With its relative autonomy, Serbia (and similarly Bulgaria) tended to look east to Russia, with a musical influence principally centred around religious and vocal music.

³ Tomašek, Andrija: *Musical Culture in Croatia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Zagreb: Museum of Arts and Crafts, 1997), 2.

⁴ Županović, Lovro: 'Glazbena umjetnost u vrijeme hrvatskog narodnog preporoda', 189.

⁵ According to Tuksar, during the initial stages of *Illyrism* music did not benefit as much as literature or political thought.

Fig. 3: The borders of Yugoslavia in 1929.

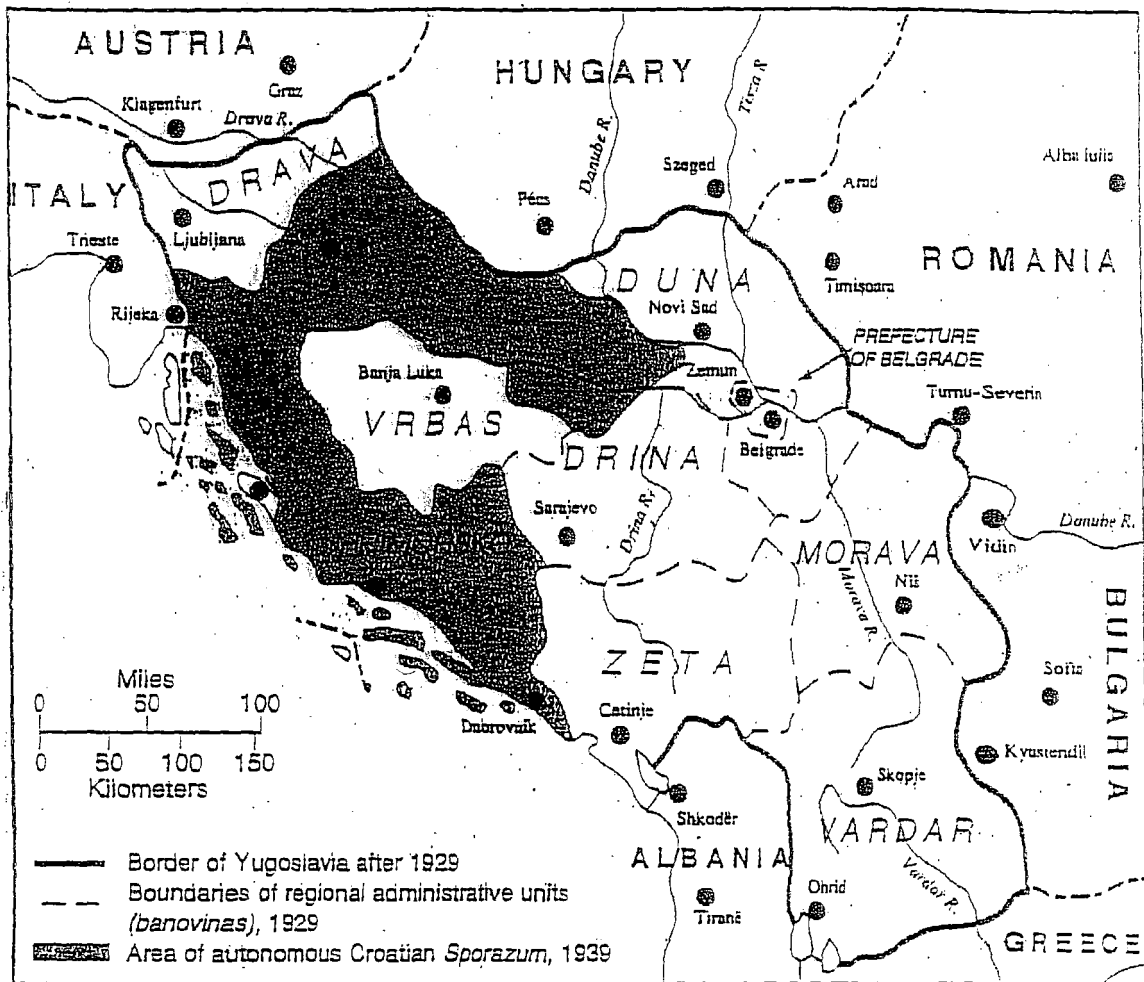


Fig. 4: The borders of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 1945.



on 'otherness'- that were prevalent in *Illyrism* and served to underpin the emergence of more popular forms of art, especially folk music. Like Russia, Scandinavia, Spain, Poland and Czechoslovakia, there was a need to re-invent a sense of national identity and culture, and the simplest means of achieving this musically was to rediscover or even create genres of 'traditional' music. (Paradoxically, those who chose to propagate the traditional repertoire with its idealisation of rural life were the bourgeoisie - the middle classes - who, as inhabitants of urban society, had little to do with the peasantry. This is often the reason why most of its repertoire deals with the glorified forms of representation, rather than the harsh reality of exploitation, hunger and poverty.)

Three main events marked the period of *Illyrism*:

- (i) the establishment of *Musikverein* (Music institute) in 1829,⁶
- (ii) the creation of two new genres of songs, *budnice* and *davorije*, especially the *budnica* '*Još Horvatska ni propala dok mi živimo*' (*Croatia Will Not Fall into Ruins While We Live*) written in 1833,
- (iii) the opening of the public theatre in 1834.

In Zagreb (which was at the time known by its German name *Agram*), the establishment of *Musikverein* in 1829 was one of Croatia's most significant musical events. Initially, its musical sentiments were essentially Austro-German, while today its identity as the *Narodni zemaljski glazbeni zavod* (Croatian Music Institute) is fundamentally Croatian. At this time, Croatia witnessed the creation of two distinctive genres of popular vernacular songs. One was the *budnica* (derived from the verb *buditi* - to wake) - a popular song used for the awakening of the national consciousness. The other, *davorija*, is a battle song, sung by the

⁶ '*Musikverein*' developed into what is today known as '*Narodni zemaljski glazbeni zavod*' (Croatian Music Institute).

army in preparation for combat and designed to fire the soldiers' morale and spirit. In musical terms they demonstrate clear expression, simple structures and above all brisk melodies. They demonstrate ideal forms of choral pieces sung in unison, sometimes unaccompanied or with a simple piano accompaniment - both self-evidently associated with rejuvenation. The best-known example of the *budnice* was '*Još Hrvatska ni propala dok mi živimo*' which was understood as a seminal national song. It was the first song to be sung in Croatian (a language which at the time was proscribed), when German was the *lingua franca*, and it became the unofficial Croatian anthem overnight.⁷ (However, in spite of the overt enthusiasm for this particular national song, little progress was made in the more scientific investigation of folk music until the advent of Antun Dobronić during the period of Croatian *Moderna*.)

The nationalist sentiments of works from other eastern European countries heightened the awareness of Croatian nationalism, which was strongly influenced by the thinking of *Illyrism*. The operas of Glinka and Smetana were seen as the epitomes of national music and drama, and as the vehicles of political thought. Vatroslav Lisinski (1819-1854), who studied in Prague, is often referred to as the father of modern Croatian music and, as an *Illyrian* composer, the *leader* of Croatian nationalism in music (according to Tuksar).⁸ Throughout his life he was harassed by the pro-Hapsburg establishment and the opportunity to develop a musical style outside the European mainstream was largely restricted. His principal works, which established his place in Croatian musical history, were two national operas, *Ljubav i zloba* (*Love and Malice*) of 1846, and *Porin* of 1851. Interestingly, *Ljubav i zloba* achieved its national message through its libretto, since the

⁷ Županović, Lovro: 'Glazbena umjetnost u vrijeme hrvatskog narodnog preporoda', 190.

musical fabric of the opera was largely Italian (after Donizetti) and reflected the composer's Dalmatian home and its propinquity to Italy. Musically it combined the characteristics of early romantic opera with the folk music of northern Croatia. *Porin*, Lisinski's second opera, although permeated with the strains of both Croatian and Czech folklore - probably the result of his Prague studies - brought to a close the first stage of the Croatian composers' search for national expression. Yet, just as this form of Croatian nationalism might have moved into a new gear, both Lisinski's death in 1854, and the adverse effects of the political climate in the Hapsburg empire served to interrupt this development.⁹

Late Romanticism: Zajc and Kuhač

Following Lisinski's death and the aforementioned hostile effects of the political climate in the Hapsburg empire, the *Illyrian* movement, with its nationalist orientation, began to evanesce, and the period of late Romanticism in Croatia was mainly dominated by composers Ivan Zajc (1832-1914) and Franjo Ksaver Kuhač (1834-1911). As two of the most prominent names during the mid nineteenth century, their influence was strongly felt for almost four decades (1880s until the end of the First World War). Zajc was not only influential but also highly prolific, producing an astonishing 1202 works. His masterpiece, *Nikola Šubić Zrinjski* (1876) is considered a national opera which, according to Tuksar, is powerfully emblematic of Croatian patriotism. This opera is often referred to as the

⁸ Tuksar, Stanislav: 'Croatian Music Culture', *Music of Yugoslav Peoples and Nationalities* (Zagreb, 1980), 25.

⁹ The course of this progress was not regained in essence until the end of World War I, following the creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918.

Croatian *Nabucco*, with its unrestrained orientation towards Italian operatic models and vocal style, particularly that of Giuseppe Verdi.¹⁰ Ironically, as Tuksar points out, it was the universality and international style of Italian opera (as opposed to the more nationalist tendencies of Lisinski) that gave birth to its Croatian national counterpart. Kuhač's achievements as the founder of Croatian musicology and historiography stood very much in contrast to the 'cosmopolitanism' of Zajc. Kuhač laid the foundations of ethnomusicology in Croatia and published two capacious volumes of 1600 southern-Slavonic folksongs in 1881.¹¹ These two volumes served as a major source of 'national reference' for Croatian composers and musicians in the 1920s and 1930s.

Partly because of the unfulfilled national aspirations of the *Illyrian* movement, and partly due to the stylistically inchoate attempts of Zajc in his operas, which were too eclectic to define a clear Croatian voice, a later generation of composers sought to compensate for this lack of national maturity (or definition) during the 1870s and 1880s. They overcame the provincialism of their forebears and, in rising to a higher stylistic and technical level comparable with their mainstream European contemporaries, they eclipsed the likes of Lisinski, Zajc and Kuhač.¹² Three key figures in this generation were Blagoje Bersa (1873-1934), Josip Hatze (1879-1959), and Dora Pejačević (1885-1923) whose high cosmopolitan Romanticism and technical assurance provided the vital transition between Zajc's period of 'internationalism' and the birth of Croatian *Moderna* around the 1920s. Their ideologue was Antun Dobronić (1878-1955), a forceful personality whose work extended into the provinces of vocal and instrumental music in Yugoslavia, embracing both

¹⁰ Tuksar, Stanislav: 'Croatian Music Culture', 26.

¹¹ Another four hundred songs from this collection were prepared for publication by Božidar Širola and Vladoje Dukat in 1941.

¹² Tuksar, 27.

Croatia and Serbia. His music established itself primarily as that of Croatian *Moderna* and became a touchstone for a later, more modernist generation.

Croatian *Moderna* (Croatian Avant-Garde) ¹³

The heterogeneity of stylistic and aesthetic ideals during early *Moderna* ¹⁴ resulted in a broad artistic pluralism, which was paralleled in other branches of the humanities (notably literary symbolism, The *Jugendstil* or *Art nouveau*, realism, futurism, expressionism, *Zenitism*, impressionism and 'new folklorism'). Many of these ideas were subsequently harnessed to a lesser or greater degree as vehicles of nationalist expression, and music was no exception, as can be seen in the works of Blagoje Bersa, Antun Dobronić, Josip Hatze, Dora Pejačević, Krešimir Baranović (1894-1975), Dragan Plamenac (1895-1983) and several Croatian composers of Czech origin, including Fran Lhotka (1883-1962).

In Croatia, three main modernistic strands were manifest: (i) neo-Romanticism and neo-classicism (often underpinned by nationalist tendencies), (ii) impressionism, expressionism, atonality, and (iii) other modernistic techniques such as Habá's quartertone methods. All three attempted to break away from tradition and with the international or cosmopolitan tendencies of their predecessors. This is the case with Hatze's politically orientated *Adel i Mara* (1934), Pejačević's romantic and Rachmaninov inspired piano concerto (1913) as well as Dragan Plamenac's *Trois poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* (1913)

¹³ The matter of defining Croatian modernity (or the *Avant-garde*) in the decade prior to the First World War has often proved to be somewhat problematic. This is largely because of its intrinsic diversity and the number of directions in which it had developed.

¹⁴ Stipčević, Ennio: 'Hrvatski glazbeni paradoks', *Vijesnik* (Zagreb), 05 January 2000.

which evince a sound world of new tonal systems influenced by impressionist and expressionist tendencies. The complexity of stylistic and aesthetic achievements of Croatian modernity is most conspicuous in Blagoje Bersa, where Mahler's concepts of a poetic musical framework are evident (as well as those of Richard Strauss), in his 1906 opera *Oganj*. At this time of new stylistic diversity Slavenski fell into a category of composers who sensed a need to revisit those notions of folklore explored during the time of the *Illyrism*. However, this time they looked to *synthesize* the traditional and new through exhaustive engagement with folk material and by extracting those elements of 'raw material' as a means towards a new modernism. However, there was a key difference in their use of folklore. Previously, folklore was used as a source of musical language amenable to nationalist objectives; now it was used primarily as the provenance of authentic musical language and antiquity. In this category of composition, there were two directions: (i) one which followed Stravinsky's synthesis of the traditional elements (as is evident in the work of Krešimir Baranović); (ii) the other which adhered more closely to the example of Bartók, as set forth in the music of Slavenski.¹⁵ In light of this, it needs to be emphasised that the artistic environment in pre-war Croatia was scarcely sympathetic to innovation and the modernist tendencies of dissonance and atonality, which prevented Slavenski and his contemporaries from fully flourishing. This was confirmed by the popularity of and interest in Slavenski's music abroad rather than at home. Therefore, while he attempted to conform to the artistic demands of his environment, it was precisely this that led him to an obstruction in his artistic pursuits. (This will be discussed further in the next chapter.)

¹⁵ Sedak Eva, *Glazba: 20. Stoljeće I* (Croatia: Panorama, 2002).

Early and Late Romanticism: National Styles

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, following the Serbian national rebellion against the Ottoman Empire and the newly founded Serbian state, the conditions for healthy and relatively undisturbed cultural developments were established, both in Serbia and in Montenegro. Though it lay, both culturally and religiously, outside the parameters of Western musical culture, and with its overlay of imposed Ottoman tradition and the politics of the recent past, Serbia nevertheless began to pursue 'western aspirations' in terms of its creativity and education. However, lacking the roots of western tradition, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Serbian music was mainly characterised by amateurism,¹⁶ as it appeared to lack musical infrastructure. Music was mostly used to promote patriotic ideals (especially folk and church music). This was closely entwined with Serbia's orthodox tradition and its choirs, which were seen by many as 'pillars' of Serbian musical life.¹⁷ A chief proponent of this choral style was Kornelije Stanković (1836-1865) who considered this conception of the national style to be the only possible interpretation for his music. Around 1850 the first collection of spiritual and secular melodies in Serbia appeared, completed and catalogued systematically by Stanković who was venerated both as the ideologue of Serbian Romanticism and as the founder of the Serbian Nationalist School. He is also thought to be the first to have used traditional music and to have

¹⁶ Until the mid-nineteenth century most music making in Serbia was limited to singing in church, peasant entertainment, and a small number of amateur singing societies. The most significant of these singing societies was the *Beogradsko pevačko društvo* (Belgrade choral society), founded in 1853.

transcribed Serbian chant into staff notation in his *Pravoslavno crkveno pojanje u srpskog naroda* (*Orthodox Chant of the Serbian People*) published between 1862 and 1864.

Around the second half of the nineteenth century, Belgrade gradually gained supremacy over other Serbian towns and cities and it was there that western European musical culture could be most keenly felt. The main reason for Serbia's 'westernisation' was the spreading cultural influence of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy which extended southwards (especially to Vojvodina). The cultural imperialism of both the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires contributed significantly to yet another uprising against the Turks and the liberation of Serbia in 1867. Another prominent feature of this period was the revived interest in the historical past. The populous, whom Skerlić described as still in 'the bonds of serfdom and poverty',¹⁸ identified their historical misfortune of social deprivation as a force for national feeling and self-esteem, and this rapidly became a central current of Serbian patriotic expression, particularly in music and the arts. From the 1880s onwards, Serbian composers wrote music for plays and choirs using traditional (church and folk) music, in which national ideology came to the fore. The Serbian romantic national school culminated in the works of Josif Marinković (1851-1931) and Stevan Mokranjac (1856-1914). Marinković was a passionate romanticist, the author of patriotic songs and pieces for choir influenced by Serbian folk music, notably the genre *Kolo* (*Round dance*).¹⁹ Mokranjac, as Milojković-Djurić has described, 'succeeded in preserving and fostering the spiritual and

¹⁷ Pejović, Roksanda: 'Musical Composition and Performance from the 18th Century to Present' in *The History of Serbian Culture* (Middlesex: Porthill Publishers, 1995).

¹⁸ Milojković-Djurić, J: *Tradition and the Avant-Garde: Literature and Art in Serbian Culture 1900-1910*, East European Monographs, No. 234 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 25.

¹⁹ The *Kolo* is a form of a traditional closed-circle folk dance. It includes regionally differing *kolos*, with different choreography. Their names usually relate to the manner of the dance, their origin or region where they are to be found, and occasionally accompanied by singing.

musical essence of folk music'.²⁰ In Serbian music, his cycle of fifteen songs represents the artistic stylisation of folk melodies in terms of their classical patterns. Above all, his contemporaries recognised him as a proponent of the 'Southern-Slav' movement.²¹

After 1903, with a constitutional parliamentary government in place, important political and social changes took place in Serbia. The unpopular and tyrannical regime of Aleksandar Obrenović had brought the country to the verge of ruin. Following the demonstrations in March 1903, military leaders decided upon regicide, and Petar Karadjordjević was elected to the throne. Soon, a general uplifting was felt in all areas of social and political life, and these changes influenced an awakening of the national spirit. Pursuing once again their national historical objectives, the united Serbian youth set about realising their unfulfilled aspirations. With Marinković and Mokranjac as two towering figures, the first years of the twentieth century were marked by the emergence of larger musical forms, such as opera and symphony, chamber music and oratorios. The birth of Serbian opera dates from around 1904, marked by Stanislav Binički's (1872-1942) work *Na Uranku (In the Early Morn)*. The plot takes place in a Serbian village occupied by the Turks. True to its milieu, the music was based on the Serbian folk idiom with oriental influences, such as the opening chant of the muezzin.²² This work is imbued with romantic folksong elements, particularly Serbian and Asian traditional songs, as well as showing the influence of the *verismo* style of late Verdi and Puccini. The same is true of Isidor Bajić (1878-1915) and his operas, overtures and choral works, and the incidental music of Petar

²⁰ Milojković-Djurić, J: 'Musical Arts in Serbia at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century', *Tradition and Avant-garde*, 73.

²¹ Similar recognition was given to Jovan Skerlić in the field of literature and Paja Jovanović in the field of pictorial arts. According to Milojković-Djurić, the later was seen as 'an apotheosis of the Serbian past in awakening a national consciousness', *Ibid.*, 3.

²² An Arabic word for a Muslim crier who proclaims the hours of prayer from a minaret or a roof of a mosque.

Krstić (1877-1957), who began his multi-faceted musical career at the turn of the century, similar to Binički and Joksimović. Sharing their renewed feeling for national consciousness, these composers also attempted to enhance their compositional and technical craft in order to elevate Serbian music above the amateur levels of proficiency of the past, to be more in line with the levels of western European composers.

Two Currents: The Continuation of Romanticism and Serbian ‘Moderna’

The works of composers born in the last two decades of the nineteenth century began to reflect the stylistic tendencies of mainstream European music at the turn of the century. This narrowed the gap between the stylistic trends of Serbia and the rest of the world, which, until that time, had been considerable.²³ Gradually, Serbian music approached the technical assurance and craftsmanship of European compositional standards. Some composers pursued and emulated the Austro-German style of Strauss, Mahler and alike (notably Petar Stojanović, 1877-1957), or used traditional folksong elements within the established romantic language (such as Petar Krstić, 1877-1957).²⁴ Others, such as Miloje Milojević (1884-1946), Stevan Hristić (1885-1958) and Slavenski, developed a musical style in a more modern direction; their major works appeared during the inter-war period. As the last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a sudden flourishing of musical life in Serbia, numerous representatives of the younger generation emerged whose focus was primarily on the progressive trends of western European music. This was because the majority of them studied in Prague, which was renowned as one of

²³ Peričić, Vlastimir: ‘Music Culture in Serbia’, *Music of Yugoslav Peoples and Nationalities* (Zagreb, 1980), 51.

the European centres of the avant-garde during the 1920s and 1930s. The majority of the young inter-war generation chose to abandon the entrenched notions of Serbian nationalism in favour of a more universal European expressionism. Nevertheless, there were some composers who, while espousing highly technical and organised avant-garde methods, deliberately retained a prominent national orientation through the continued utilisation and manipulation of the ethnic repertoire, for example Hristić.

The Turn of the Century

When considering the political and cultural developments in both Croatia and Serbia during the nineteenth century, one notices the sudden and intense flourishing of musical culture, following the decline of centuries long Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule. In addition, various advanced and contemporary western ideas were gradually reaching most of Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia, and served as an impetus for the liberation of oppressed nationalities, who wished to regain both national and political independence. Culturally, these tendencies came to the fore during the 1830s in Croatia, with the period of *Illyric* renaissance. Politically, they became clearly manifest with the *Martovska Revolucija* (March Revolution) in 1848, bringing relative national freedom for Croats, Slovenes and Serbs (who lived north of river *Sava*), but which was destroyed by the 1850s absolutism. With the October agreement in 1860, the pre-1850 national movements became reinforced. While Slovenia, Dalmatia and Istria remained a part of Austria, these tendencies were constrained in Croatia due to the Austro-Hungarian agreement (1867) and its dual monarchy. Croats (and Serbs who lived in the area of Hapsburg monarchy) became part of

²⁴ Pejović, Roksanda: 'Musical Composition and Performance from the 18th Century to the Present'.

Hungary, where Hungarian domination tried to suffocate the Croatian national aims, which in turn spurred a greater pursuit of national rejuvenation. Similar events took place in Serbia and Bulgaria, though with a different course of developments. Constant armed uprisings led to the earlier liberation of Serbia (unlike Croatia and Slovenia), due to the weak Turkish rule. Although the Serbs and Bulgarians formed a part of Turkish government, they gained relative autonomy, and with the Berlin Congress (1878), total independence.²⁵

These political aims during the nineteenth century were closely linked to the cultural developments and provided an impetus for their growth. They became a subject of national tendencies and their main aim was to 'free themselves from all foreign influence'.²⁶ Nevertheless, the musical developments in the Slav South were scarce. With the exception of *Illyrism* and Zajc's period of internationalism, there was little other musical development in Croatia and Slovenia; in Serbia (and other countries under the Ottoman rule), musical life was reduced to the preservation of church singing. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of unfulfilled nationalist tendencies during the nineteenth century and the foreseeable political liberation, the individual countries of the Slav South came closer and consequently became synchronised in their artistic and nationalist pursuits at the turn of the century. While their objectives during the nineteenth century were essentially nationalist, they were becoming concerned primarily with artistic accomplishments, underpinned by a more subtle nationalism.

²⁵ With this the centuries-long Ottoman rule ended. Nevertheless, the annexation of Bosnia, and the ever-growing tension between Serbia and Bulgaria, led to the first and second Balkan Wars 1912 and 1913, and subsequently World War I.

²⁶ Cvetko, Dragotin: 'Menjanje muzičkih prilika sredinom i u drugoj polovini 19. veka', *Južni sloveni u istoriji evropske muzike*, 185.

For the first time in history, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes became united as a nation-state, with the formation of a constitutional monarchy in 1919, under the Serbian Karadjordjević dynasty. Each of these nations entered this federal arrangement bringing with them their own historical, political and cultural identities. These *individual* national characteristics had been important as a weapon to fight the centuries-long oppressive rule of larger empires but, with the new federal identity of Yugoslavia which the King introduced in 1929, a number of political and cultural changes were effected. These placed a new emphasis on merging diverse national characteristics, in order to create a cultural life symbolic of the newly united state. Essentially, this diverse set of cultural backgrounds (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin) should have been perceived as a positive quality, capable of embracing twentieth century pluralism. The new state needed to provide equal opportunities for all nationalities within the federation, encouraging developments originally constrained by the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman regimes. However, due to past oppression and confinement, these nations had spent centuries trying to preserve *their own* history and culture. This, alongside the unresolved fundamental question of equality, always suggested (and recently became evident with the 1990-1995 conflagrations throughout former Yugoslavia) an obstacle rather than a stimulus for progressive cultural developments engendered by the formation of the new state. On the positive side, many political, social and cultural changes which took place during the early twentieth century, were regarded as affirmative, and underpinned much artistic progress in Yugoslavia. Composers, who were not pressured into voicing their country's political oppression and its nationalist objectives, were able to pursue music as art *per se*. This was particularly the case with Slavenski, who was foremost

concerned with technical artistry and used the folklore tradition as foundation for his musical material, rather than as a vehicle for nationalist achievements.

Having examined the nineteenth century Croatian and Serbian cultural and socio-political developments, this chapter has provided a brief contextual background for the subsequent cultural flourishing of *Moderna*. It has offered several lines of development, namely political despotism and 'amateur-like' musical tradition, which could suggest the dual character of twentieth century *Moderna*: (i) its continuation of tradition, re-emphasised by the nationalist ideals of this despotism, and (ii) its attempts to find a new musical language congruous with western contemporary tradition and the aforementioned concerns with music *per se*. The latter often resulted either with composers attempting to find a way of synthesising the 'old' and the 'contemporary' sound, or with the complete negation of tradition and history, in favour of more radical experiments such as atonality and serialism. Slavenski falls into the first category of *Moderna's* composers, who became absorbed by the need to combine the ancient with the progressive. Paradoxically, the ancient or the historical tradition provided the background to this progressiveness. In other words, while previously folklore had been used primarily as a tool for national awakening, for Slavenski it provided a musical material which served as the basis for his musical language. The next chapter offers a brief biographical study, which will provide an immediate context for Slavenski's life and work, and a background for a further contextual and analytical examination of Slavenski phenomena which is harnessed by this 'old-new' dichotomy.

Chapter Two

Biography

Early Years

Josip Štolcer Slavenski was born on 11 May 1896 in Čakovec, a small town in northern Croatia. He was the oldest child of Josip Štolcer (senior) and Julija Novak. He inherited a prominent musical gift, and shared a deep devotion for Međimurjean and old Croatian melodies with both of his parents; his father who was a great village *citraš* (zitherist), and his mother, who was a 'living musical archive'.²⁷ With the support of his mother, he began to accumulate, at the age of ten, the keyboard music of Bach and Beethoven and harmony textbooks in order to develop his technical knowledge. By this time, he had already developed aspirations to pursue a musical career. In spite of financial difficulties, his mother (who was overtly ambitious for him) found a way to provide for his education. Furthermore, as an apprentice to his father, he learned the trade of a baker which provided for him and his family at various points in his life.

Around this time, he read Flammarion and Jules Verne,²⁸ and at the age of fourteen he finished his schooling in his hometown of Čakovec. The closest *gimnazija* (Gymnasium - the Sixth form college) was in Varaždin, but he was unable to pay the necessary fees for this educational establishment. Instead of attending the *gimnazija*, he became an apprentice baker and returned to Varaždin in July 1912 to work as an assistant at the bakery belonging

²⁷ Sedak; Eva: 'Prilozi: J. Š. Slavenski - nacrt za životopis', *Josip Štolcer Slavenski; skladatelj prijelaza*, Vol. 1 (Zagreb: MIC and Muzikološki zavod, 1984), 231.

²⁸ These were the first indications of his interests in cosmos and astronomy, which later played an important role in the formation of his musical thinking. (Discussed in chapter 3 as 'Astroacoustics').

to his father's cousin. His musical talent caught the attention of a respectable Varaždin composer and pedagogue Antun Stöhr, who gave Slavenski his initial musical training and supported his first creative excursions in the field of music. The period between 1912 and 1913 was spent in Varaždin and proved useful to Slavenski's future creative development. Through Stöhr's introduction he met Dragutin Simon, a judge and an excellent pianist, who gave him his first serious piano lessons. Stöhr, Simon, and others (who formed a Varaždin circle of wealthy and cultivated friends) attempted to help Slavenski to enter the Music School of *Hrvatski glazbeni zavod* (Croatian Musical Institute). However, the works submitted were rejected as not being of a satisfactory standard. His application for a Petrović scholarship was also turned down, as he was not a native of Varaždin.

The Budapest Years

With the help of few Varaždin professionals, which included the lawyer Ivan Novak and his friends, Slavenski received a sufficient sum of money in order to travel to Budapest in the autumn of 1913 where he attended the Budapest Conservatoire. Having passed all his entrance examinations, he studied the counterpoint and form with Viktor Herzfeld (1856-1919), harmony and counterpoint with Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967), instrumentation, score-reading and acoustics with Albert Siklós (1878-1942). His first work, *Souvenir (de Varaždin)* of 1913, was written immediately preceding his journey to Budapest and it was dedicated to Stöhr and Simon. This piece, written by a sixteen year old boy, is charmingly naïve and somewhat juvenile in its technical accomplishment. His school works, 1913 *Fuga za orgulje u Es duru* (Fugue in E flat for organ) and 1916 *Uvertira* (Overture),

witness an interesting sound-world of a young and enthusiastic composer. This quality seems to have won him recognition and sympathy with his teachers at the Conservatoire and in a way compensated for his lack of knowledge in other areas (namely his practical studies on the piano and the double bass).

In the period from 1890 until shortly after the end of the First World War, Budapest was an increasingly prestigious European centre for the study of music, which rivalled Vienna, Berlin and Leipzig and other emerging centres such as Prague and Munich. What was crucial to Slavenski, however, was the presence of Bartók and Kodály in Budapest.²⁹ The ethnic research of these two men had already made a deep impression on the young Croatian and had forged a direction for him in terms of compositional style. Slavenski worked for both Bartók and Kodály, transcribing their 'field notes'; it was an experience which provided him with essential skills and a modest wage. It is possible that it was precisely this interface with the *pučki* (popular)³⁰ musical texts that deepened his natural inclination towards this idiom and significantly influenced the beginning of his musical maturity. This was reflected in Živković's statement that 'the purpose and the centre of gravity of the Budapest period of study, it seems, resided in overcoming the current methods of applying the folk melody to artistic forms.'³¹

In assimilating the folk idiom through the manuscripts of iconic figures such as Bartók and Kodály, Slavenski constructed a defence of national identity in favour of smaller nations which were under the hegemony of larger ones. This is particularly

²⁹ Bartók never taught Slavenski, as he refused to teach composition and mainly taught the piano. Slavenski attended Kodály's lessons during the first year of his Budapest studies.

³⁰ The exact translation of this word is somewhat ambiguous. Its meaning lies somewhere between 'plebeian' and 'popular' (not referring to contemporary implications of popular music, but rather a more traditional and older sense of the word).

³¹ Živković, Milenko: 'Media vita in morte sumus', *Zvuk*, 6 (Belgrade, 1956), 221.

conspicuous in his reproach of Bartók whom, he felt, interpreted the peculiarities of folk language of neighbouring nationalities – such as Međimurje - *exclusively* from the perspective of Hungarian influence. Slavenski wrote about this at a later date:

...in the second phase of his musical work, Bartók [...] defiantly settled on the pentatonic scale, which mainly solves the problem of national identity of the individual folk songs. According to him, the melodies where the pentatonic scale is used, are true Hungarian melodies, which Árpád...brought from the remotest regions of Asia into Europe. During Bartók's time, the pentatonic scale was rarely found in the songs sung by the populace [...] hence Bartók proclaimed the songs noted down by László and other collectors as "new", that is those of Varoš [city] [...] However, when I sang Međimurjean melodies to Béla Bartók for the first time, he exclaimed with great enthusiasm "Eureka, eureka". This is probably because those melodies captured the old Slav pentatonic scale (e.g. A C D E G), since that pentatonic scale is much prettier than the Mongolian anhemtonic/hypopentatonic scale (G A C D E). Despite this, he was, consciously or unconsciously, working with the ideas gathered during his journeys with which he attempted to prove an affinity between Hungarians and the rest of the vast Mongolian population. Bartók usurped the Old-Slav pentatonic scale as Hungarian.³²

World War I and the Return to Čakovec

With mobilisation at the end of 1915, Slavenski ceased studying in Budapest and enlisted in the medical corps as an ambulance driver. While serving in the military, he travelled regularly through both Croatia and Hungary and used his time to collect and note down various folk melodies where he observed important phenomena about the identity of Croatian and Hungarian folk songs. The majority of the two years (1915-1917) he spent engaged in this fieldwork were on the border with Romania, where he also found the time and conditions suitable for composing (this is apparent from the date and location of the

³² Slavenski, Josip: 'Muzički folklor kao političko oružje', *Književne novine* (Belgrade, 1 April, 1955). cited in Sedak's *Josip Stolcer Slavenski*, Vol. 1, 235.

aforementioned orchestral fugue).³³ In 1918, Slavenski found himself back in Zagreb, but after the war had ended he returned to Čakovec in order to resume composition, which had now established itself as his principal career path. Despite all of his hopes and desires, the return to his father's bakery was the only feasible means of existence for him as a young composer. The residues of his Budapest schooling gave a provisional tone to this interlude in Čakovec. Slavenski restored his involvement with professional circles of Varaždin intellectuals (with Novak, Zlatko Baloković and Ernest Krajanski). Throughout his life, Krajanski served as a major inspiration and support to Slavenski, by significantly influencing his political inclination towards the left, his ethic for hard work and knowledge, as well as his decision to pursue further education. Besides this, Krajanski was one of the spiritual fathers of Međimurjean youth: in particular, he played a vital role in informing young Međimurjeans that Međimurje had not been included in the new post-war state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, proclaimed on 1 December 1918. As a result, a delegation of dissenting Međimurjeans, led by Novak (with Slavenski present in this delegation) travelled to Belgrade at the beginning of December to demand the annexation of Međimurje into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Furthermore, it was Krajanski and the Varaždin circle who influenced Slavenski's decision that, according to the Slav character of his music, he should change his surname – Štolcer - first to the hybrid Štolcer-Slavenski ('Slavenski' - an adjective of 'Slav'), and later to Slavenski.

³³ There are two dates for this fugue. The first one is 1917 Ploesti (the time of his army duty at the Romanian border), and the second is his own transcription dating 15 January 1920, Čakovec.

The Prague Years

Futile Remedy
The Molday's water flows, slipping
In a circle surrounding Prague
Just like a dampened and dripping
Cool headache compress or rag
To soothe the Prague creatures' mania
Or this symptom of their disease.
Yet I fear that the ache in their crania
*The proudest of currents can't ease.*³⁴

Despite the unpleasant reality of financial hardship which forced Slavenski to provide for himself and his family, the first clear signs of his success became obvious with the performance of his *Nokturno*, conducted by Milan Sachs with the Zagreb Philharmonia on 10 May 1920. It received a positive critical response, and it was probably the success of the *Nokturno* (with the assistance of Novak) that galvanised his aspiration to attend the Prague Conservatoire, where he travelled in December 1920.

We do not know which compositions Slavenski presented for his entrance requirement to the conservatoire, but it is possible to know which compositions he had completed by this time. His list of works included two string quartets Opp. 3 and 4, while prior to his journey to Prague he had worked on a 'large Latin mass' and a symphonic opera *Stvaranje (The Creation)* for choir, organ and orchestra. It is believed that the above quartets were actually two different versions of what became the First String Quartet

³⁴ These images of Prague describe a territory lacking continuity with other territories, geographically as well as temporally. The history in Kisch's verse seems to have been piled up vertically on the burdened necks of the city's inhabitants - or perhaps just some of them. The image of a continuous landscape, peopled with a national family, and sharing a common history - the intersection of *folk*, language and territory - would have been a familiar atmosphere for Slavenski. (Kisch Egon Erwin cited in Spector, Scott: *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's 'Fin de Siècle'* (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 2000), 9.

(1923), while the mass probably became the *Misa za muški zbor a cappella* (*Mass for Unaccompanied Male Voices*).³⁵ Moreover, his symphonic opera *Stvaranje* was regarded as one of the most interesting projects of his life in that it was perceived to generate ideas for a whole complex of works such as *Religifonija* (*Symphony of Religions*), *Prasimfonija* (*Symphony of the Ancient Time*), *Kozmogonija* (*Symphony of the Cosmos*) and *Haos* (*Chaos*), and which, under the title of *Misterij* (*Mystery*) (a title which replaced *Stvaranje*), preoccupied Slavenski from his early youth.

As Sedak has stated, the three years spent in Prague provided Slavenski with immeasurably richer experiences than he had gained in Budapest. The new federal republic of Czechoslovakia, which had always enjoyed a degree of prosperity under Hapsburg rule, quickly established itself as an industrial leader in Europe. Moreover, its geographical location, which had always rendered it an important cultural crossroads in Europe, allowed Prague and its Moravian counterpart Brno, to flourish after independence from Austria. Musical life in Prague duly blossomed with the end of the First World War, and its eclectic range of styles and movements amply justified its title as the 'European Conservatoire'. This newly re-invented country attempted to synthesise its central tendencies (which formed its foundation) with the cross-fertilisation of other national tendencies. The revolutionary avant-garde of Prague brought together the various artistic fields of painting, architecture, literature, drama and music along with an already established national tradition, and for the first time in its recent history, Czech music opened itself out towards non-Germanic, and more precisely, French influences. This was particularly exemplified by Novák and Suk; the former followed the modernism of Richard Strauss, the latter distanced himself from traditional Czech Romanticism in exploring an 'intensely accomplished sense

³⁵ Sedak, Eva; 'Bilješke o nekim do sada nepoznatim skladbama', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo. 1981).

of polyphony, Slavonic gloom, naïve mirth [...], and a tendency for metaphysical fancy'.³⁶ Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk marked an era in which the vital and gifted generation of younger Czechoslovakian composers came of age, acting in culturally less developed surroundings but with a distinctive bohemian character that had international appeal. Hence Prague soon became the hub of musical progress in central Europe. Young Serbian and Croatian composers came to Prague around this time in large numbers (such as Dobronić and Lhotka). Krsto Odak also studied there and Slavenski retained a close friendship with him until his death. Among Slavenski's Czech colleagues, he felt closest to Emil František Burian, but he also became good friends with Alois Hába. Hába's famous thesis concerning quarter-tone intervals was of interest to Slavenski,³⁷ but he was fascinated by quarter-tone music even before his trip to Prague, as is evident in the *Fuga*. Concerning his relationship with his teachers, Slavenski was (as might have been expected) closer to the flexible artistic temperament of Suk, rather than the more dogmatic Novák.

The contemporary atmosphere of Prague, which was reflected in Slavenski's friendship with forward-looking musicians and artists (Slavenski was, incidentally, close to the Varaždin painter Ivan Režek, who was a prominent disciple of *Zenitism*, an eastern European version of Dadaism) and this enthusiasm to associate himself with modernism, drew him to the activities of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). Slavenski attended his first meeting of this organisation in 1922 as a private individual (representation of the Yugoslav section was not established until 1925). This eventually led to Slavenski's close association with the ISCM after his return to Yugoslavia in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

³⁶ Stuckenschmidt, H: *Neue Musick*, (Berlin, 1951), cited in Sedak's *Prilozi*, 239.

³⁷ Hába, A: „Mladi jugoslovenski kompozitori i četvrttonska muzika“, *Zvuk*, 3 (Belgrade, 1933).

Owing to the deterioration of his material circumstances in Prague – whatever help there was from Međimurje it was clearly insufficient to cover his day-to-day expenses – Slavenski was forced to consider moving from Prague. He subsisted for a while as a cinema pianist, but this employment seems to have been short-lived. It is only when the situation dramatically worsened that he wrote to Dr. Krenedić (one of his referees for the Prague Conservatoire), informing him of his work but also of his circumstances, and pleading for any sort of help. We are uncertain of the nature of Krenedić's reply, but it evidently did not promise any further financial assistance since Slavenski decided to leave Prague after graduating in 1923 following three years of fruitful study and productivity.³⁸

Despite his financial difficulties, Slavenski's time in Prague witnessed the production of several new compositions which effectively marked the first period of his maturity as a composer. As claimed by Sedak, judging by the many distinctions he achieved during this time, this period was unrepeated in terms of its creative and artistic invention.³⁹ Ćiril Lica performed *Jugoslovenska svita* (*Yugoslavian Suite*) for piano with considerable success on 8 January 1922 in Zagreb. On this occasion, Šafranek-Kavić noted that 'according to his totally individual orchestral compositions, previously unknown, the author once again achieves equally important success [...] with this work, as he did with some vocal arrangement of folk songs which were performed by our choirs. Slavenski in all of his compositions shows a great deal of witty invention, lively rhythms and a sense of colour; we can hope for great things from him, following his return from studying in Prague.'⁴⁰ A song cycle *Iz Jugoslavije* (*From Yugoslavia*) for a solo piano also appeared at

³⁸ His Prague diploma dates 28 June 1923 and is signed by J. B. Foerster (who was the rector then), Vítězslav Novák, Josef Suk, Leoš Janáček, Josef Klička and a few lesser known academics.

³⁹ Sedak, Eva: 'Prilozi', 240.

⁴⁰ Šafranek-Kavić, L.: 'Muzička sezona 1921-1922', *Nova Evropa*, 3/4 (Zagreb, 1922), 103.

this time. Following the performance of 'Voda izvira iz kamena' ('Water Springs from the Stone') by 'Hlahol', a choir in Prague, on 22 May 1922, the choral society 'Kolo' performed 'Da si bila' ('If Only You Were') on 28 March 1923 in Zagreb.

Around this time, Slavenski worked intensively on his First String Quartet which underwent a major period of evolution and revision before its groundbreaking performance in Donaueschingen in 1924. Today we know that there are three versions of this important work: two three-movements versions and one in two movements. (According to Živković, it is most likely that the version of the First String Quartet performed at the Prague Graduation Concert, and the concert in Zagreb on 26 October 1923, was the same version that won him such great prestige at Donaueschingen.)

The Zagreb Interlude

On 28 September 1923 Slavenski returned to Croatia and accepted a position teaching theory at the lower secondary school of the Royal Academy of Music in Zagreb.⁴¹ The Academy at this time enjoyed a great reputation following its separation from the Croatian Musical Institute (the latter still considered as a beacon of Austro-Germanic influence). Lodging with his Prague friend, Dr. Grabušić, Slavenski formed a circle of friends in Zagreb with whom he stayed in touch until his death. Among these friends were Odak, Dobronić and Žganac, as well as two members of the Zagreb String Quartet, Širola and Kunac. He composed his only piano sonata for Svetislav Stančić (one of his Academy colleagues), and for his friend Željko Balković he composed his Violin Sonata. These

⁴¹ The teachers there were Fran Lhotka as a rector, Václav Huml, Svetislav Stančić, Juro Tkalčić, Blagoje Bersa, Antun Dobronić, Ćiril Licar, Franjo Dugan, V. Rosenberg-Ružić.

works were met with great acclaim and reflected Slavenski's creative drive at this time. This was probably due to the increasing variety of musical life and activity that was taking place in Zagreb, which offered numerous performing possibilities and opportunities.

The intensity of this productive period was crowned with the exceptional success of his First String Quartet during the Chamber Music Festival in Donaueschingen in 1924. From the 142 sonatas and trios, 91 quartets and quintets, and 47 other chamber works entered for consideration by the panel (Brukhardt, Schoenberg and Schreker), Slavenski's work was selected.⁴² The Chamber Music Festival established by Hindemith and Křenek at Donaueschingen served as a major compositional stimulus for contemporary European composers (primarily from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia) as well as forming a major conduit for composers to meet and receive information about new music and the progressive contemporary techniques. The year 1924 was also an important year in that Schoenberg's Serenade Op. 24 – a work evincing prototypical dodecaphonic techniques – was heard for the first time at Donaueschingen.⁴³

⁴² It is misleading (as was often inferred), to believe that Slavenski's work received the first prize, as there is no proof that the festival was a competition. It is only certain that the jury had selected his quartet to be performed in the context of this festival.

⁴³ The programme for the Donaueschingen festival on the 19 and 20 July 1924 was: Erwin Schulhoff's string Sextet, Josef Matthias Hauer's *Five Pieces for a String Quartet* Op. 30 and *Helderin-Lieder*; Alexander Jemnitz's String Trio Op. 22; Ernst Toch's String quartet Op. 24; Max Butting's *Small Piece for a String Quartet* Op. 26; Hermann Erpf's *Two Part Movement for a String Quartet*; Anton Webern's *Six Bagatelles for a String Quartet*, Op. 9 and *Trakl-Lieder*; Georg Winkler's Soanta for Viola and Piano Op. 5; Heinz Joachim's *Three Piano Pieces* Op. 2; Isko Thaler's *Tune for Alto and Piano*; already mentioned Schoenberg's *Serenade* Op. 24; and Egon Wellesz's *Persian Ballet - A Dance Interlude*.

The Belgrade Years

It is difficult to imagine what direction Slavenski's musical development might have taken had he stayed in Zagreb, but it is certain that his short stay in the Croatian capital represented a high point in his compositional output to date. At the same time this period of composition marked the beginning of his future musical explorations in which his musical language and compositional aims gained a new clarity and vision. It is not possible to discover a clear reason for Slavenski's departure from Zagreb. However, it is worth noting what Milana Slavenski (his wife) commented about the cultural and political atmosphere in Yugoslavia's two major capitals: ' [...] Musical life in Zagreb [...] those who were affiliated to music [...] came from the higher social classes, have been educated in classics (and not only in music), and looked down on the Međimurjean population from a great height, frowning at the 'inadequate' [people] who trembled at a dissonance both musically and orally [verbally] [...] while in Belgrade, everything was being built anew, unburdened by the conservative influences, freely rooted, and eliminated with difficulty.'⁴⁴ It is possible that the whole atmosphere of Zagreb's musical life did not completely suit Slavenski's unpredictable, unshapable, and somewhat raw artistic temperament.⁴⁵ Zagreb may have seemed suffocating to him, but in reality it is more likely that Slavenski's departure, as Sedak has insinuated, was more to do with Slavenski 'being released from his academic duty' at the Academy, at the end of 1923 after a series of redundancies were enforced. Without a job, Slavenski left for Belgrade having been invited by Jovan Zorko to accept a position of permanent Professor at the Belgrade Music School. However, this

⁴⁴ Slavenski, Milana: 'Biografija Josipa Slavenskog – rukopis', cited in Sedak's 'Prilozi', 242.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

position did not seem so attractive at the time as is evident from Milana's recollections: 'What a meaningless title – professor at a music school, and a permanent position at the private secondary music school at that, which has neither real permanent pupils, nor a contract of employment conditions which government workers enjoy [...] Thanks to Russian emigrants, renowned singers of Tsarist operas, opera was created, and with it an orchestra [...] Professional composers in those surroundings are not only a socially indistinct category – i.e. the avant-garde composer – but a very absurd one too!' ⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Slavenski had no time or motive to notice this 'absurdity'. His ardour for work and his belief in new musical perspectives reached its apogee during his time in Belgrade, which was reflected in his new compositions, the quintet *Sa sela* (*From the Village*), the Sonata for Violin and Organ, the Piano Suite *Iz Srbije* (*From Serbia*), and the symphonic sketches *Mladost* (*Youth*) which were all composed in 1925. *Sa Sela*, later revised, was performed in 1928 in Belgrade.

Winter in Paris

After this immensely productive episode, Slavenski suddenly decided to travel to Paris where he spent the entire winter season of 1925-1926. There he attended the *Schola Cantorum* receiving composition classes from the somewhat aged Vincent d'Indy. There is little information about his Paris sojourn. Slavko Batušić's account describes his complete antipathy to Parisian musical life, which was foreign to him in comparison with the life offered by Budapest, Prague, Zagreb and Belgrade. Again, no particular reasons for his discontent have been suggested, but one may assume that he was antagonistic towards the

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

traditional and rigorous teaching of d'Indy at the *Schola Cantorum* with its strongly Catholic aura (incidentally, Slavenski converted from Catholicism to the Orthodox faith in 1944). He also had little French, which excluded him from entering into the social milieu of the city; moreover, having come from Serbia, with a very different musical culture to that of France, Paris must have appeared to him as overtly liberal and Bohemian society, both artistically and socially.

It was probably the painter Branko Micić (pseudonym - Poljanski) who was responsible for persuading Slavenski to study in Paris. (In addition, Poljanski's brother Ljubomir Micić was the founder of the artistic movement, Zenitism, which was a Balkan conflation of several extreme European artistic movements mainly Dadaism).⁴⁷ In Paris Slavenski acquainted himself with those who were spearheading developments in musical neo-classicism, and he apparently met Milhaud and Poulenc and heard some of Honegger's works. Yet, in spite of these efforts, he avoided the concert halls and theatres; instead he finished his first cycle of pieces for piano and tidied up some choral works and the First String Quartet. For the latter, he was offered a publishing contract by Schott following its successful execution in Donaueschingen; the contract was signed on the 8 March 1926 in Paris, where they purchased all of his compositions to date for 10000 francs. On 25 July 1926 he enjoyed further success at Donaueschingen with two choral works, *Molitva dobrim očima* (A Prayer to Kind Eyes) and *Ftiček veli* (A Little Bird Says).

⁴⁷ Subotić, Irina: 'Istorijske avangarde: dadaizam - zenitizam – nadrealizam', *Od Avangarde do Arkadije* (Belgrade: CLIO, 2000).

Return to Belgrade

In July 1926 he returned from Paris to Belgrade where he accepted the position of a music teacher at an all boys' *Gimnazija*. He retained this post for a considerable time (1926-37); this period was mixed both in terms of its compositional quantity and in terms of variety. All of his attempts to free himself from teaching duties were unsuccessful, and his creative potential remained constrained by the exhausting work at the school. Notwithstanding these obligations, he wrote several new compositions, which included a two-movement piano cycle *Pesme i igre sa Balkana* (*Songs and Dances from the Balkans*), a Violin Concerto, the *Balkanska svita* (*Balkan Suite*) and *Balkanofonija* (*Symphony of the Balkans*), all written in 1927.

On 7 July 1928 he married Milana Ilić, an educated and independent woman whose decision to marry a baker's son was, at the time (according to Sedak), a true gesture of social conviction. At the same time, the *Balkanofonija* was performed at the Berlin Theatre on 25 January 1929 which served as an important starting-point for its successful European tour (Warsaw on 12 April; Hamburg on 22 May; Nuremberg on 26 May) and later performances took place in Paris (in 1939), London, the USA and Japan.

Problems continued in Croatia with his family. His second sister Ana died from tuberculosis in the spring of 1931 after a period spent in a sanatorium. His mother died three months later. His other sister, Mica, died in 1942 from tuberculosis in a Belgrade hospital, and his father's death occurred in 1945. In other words, within the span of fourteen years he lost his entire close family.

As a member of the ISCM, Slavenski travelled to Berlin in 1930 and Vienna in 1932. This added significantly to his understanding of new musical developments in Europe. His links with the ISCM weakened appreciably after these trips, however, when he was accused alongside his fellow composer Miloje Milojević (another ISCM Yugoslav representative) of inaction and negligence after the work of Yugoslav section had become sparse.⁴⁸

In a creative sense, these years were characterised by a more substantial interest in the musical thematicism of the southern Balkan regions. During his trip to Ohrid, he made sketches which served as the core of individual movements of *Balkanske igre* (*Balkan Games*), and the incidental music for Antonij Panov's drama *Pečalbari* (*Migrant Workers*). At the same time he was commissioned by Eidophon-film of Berlin and Amsterdam to write music for a film *Auf den schwarzen Bergen* (translated into Croatian as *Fantom Durmitora*)⁴⁹ which was composed between 1932 and 1933. Work on *Pečalbari* was interrupted by a commission for a large vocal work to be performed at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Academic Choral Society 'Obilić'.⁵⁰ Urged on by the commission from 'Obilić', Slavenski completed one of his most acclaimed works, *Religofonija* which was performed on 2 June 1934 in Belgrade by the Belgrade Philharmonia and the 'Obilić' Choral Society. (Further performances took place in Ljubljana in 1936, Bratislava in 1937, and Zagreb in 1954.) The main conception of this work was the idea that 'every religion had its own utterance towards heaven', which at the

⁴⁸ Živković, Milenko: 'Međunarodno društvo za suvremenu muziku', *Muzički glasnik*, 10 (Belgrade, 1932). Also see, Cvetko Dragotin: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', *Arti Musices*, 3 (Zagreb, 1972).

⁴⁹ This music is also known under similar title *Das Lied der schwarzen Bergen* (The Song of the Black Highlands), today better known as *Drina-passagen* or *Narodna svita* (Folk Suite).

⁵⁰ For an additional account of Serbian musical performances and societies see Pejović Roksanda: *Srpsko muzičko izvođaštvo 1831-1941*, Special Ed. (Belgrade: Udruženje muzičkih umetnika Srbije, 1984).

time was considered as an incomprehensible idea of 'undogmatic compression of the concept of religion', and as such created uncertainty even in the left-orientated political circles with which Slavenski openly associated himself.⁵¹ *Religiofonija* – which was perceived as an obvious political gesture, notably with the last movement *Pjesma radu* (*A Song [dedicated] to Work*) – alarmed Slavenski's regular publisher, Schott, with whom the composer had signed a contract giving the German publisher first refusal on any work he wrote. Though Schott congratulated Slavenski on another success, the director of the company, Ludwig Strecker, informed the composer that 'according to the current Nationalist establishment that is ruling German musical life [i.e. the Nazis], it would be very difficult to market a work of such international character. The second movement which deals with Jewish music [it bore the title *Jevreji* (*Jews*)] and which constitutes the most beautiful part of your score, would anyway have to become apostate.'⁵²

The *Religiofonija* (perceived by Slavenski himself as a 'monumental' work), *Chaos* and *Muzika harmonije i disharmonije* (better known as *Muzika 36*),⁵³ had announced an interest in the 'purely musical'.⁵⁴ On his return from Baden-Baden, following his meeting

⁵¹ After the performance of *Religiofonija* even Miloje Milojević, a close friend and a progressive composer himself, said that despite its revolutionary and modern character, 'one step further and everything would have turned into chaos'; Milojević, Miloje: 'Pražvedba Religiofonije', *Politika*, 9354 (Belgrade, 1934), 12. However, Slavenski himself seems to have been rather pleased with the work, as evident in a letter to Osterc, dated 5 December 1936, where he wrote: 'And as far as my *Religiofonija* is concerned; no matter what could be said about it, I know that it is a monumental work. Moreover, we all [...] between ourselves know very well, what is our own value. Isn't that so?' (Dragotin, Cvetko: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', 72.)

⁵² Slavenski, Milana: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog s muzičkom izdavačkom kućom Schott', 439.

⁵³ The origins of *Muzika 36* can be traced to film music *A život teče dalje* (*And the Life Goes on*). Ludwig Strecker had advised Slavenski to use a part of the score as a separate work. Once again Strecker had attempted to contravene the rules created by the 'intruding officials' of cultural politics, for the last time attempting to 'stand up to' narcissism with 'quality'. The performance of *Muzika 36* in Baden-Baden (April 1936), almost created a chaos, similar to that of the first performance of the quintet *Sa sela* eight years earlier. Slavenski wrote (in his correspondence to Osterc), in a letter dating 5 December 1936 that this festival was organised by a group of 'progressive' Germans. 'The festival was intruded on by Fascist Germans, and Stravinsky was whistled out, Hindemith did not dare to be there in person, while all three of us were anathematised by official critics, who referred to us as 'kulturboljševci' (culturbolsheviks)', Cvetko, Dragotin: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', 440.

with Professor Helberger (who had just finished *Hellertion*, a distinctive electronic instrument with keys), Slavenski decided to buy a trautionium, an electronic instrument of the 1930s. This reinforced Slavenski's research into 'astroacoustics', a subject often discussed in his notes and sketches.⁵⁵ (This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.) Most of these, according to Sedak, are half way between science fiction and popular discussions about music theory of that time. The idea that the existing tonal system should be organised according to the new laws (a new cosmic order undecided by any other system so far), became Slavenski's primary concern. This further demonstrated his belief in the idea that tradition, defined by artistic forms and systematic conventions, was ultimately relative and temporary.⁵⁶ It is known that as a young student in Prague, under Habá's influence, he was experimenting with quarter-tone intervals; in a similar way, challenged by the advent of the 'electroacoustic-boom' in post-war Europe, he turned towards the more obscure and esoteric aspects of sound offered within traditional musical systems. He studied the musical theory of Sigfrid Karg-Elert in some detail, and 're-formualted' the tonal system in such a way that the octave could be divided into 53 equal intervals. With all these new theories he began to compose, and the results were two new pieces under the title *Muzika u prirodnotonskom sistemu* (*Music Based on the Harmonic Series*), written in 1937. The first work was written for the so-called 'Bosanquet Harmonium', an instrument created by R. H. M. Bosanquet in compliance with the Helmholtz's system, where the keys are

⁵⁴ This purely musical designated his search for a new sound. It turned to the 'synthetic' production of music, which served as an impetus for his contemporaries and their experiments with electro acoustics.

⁵⁵ Peričić, Vlastimir: 'Josip Slavenski i njegova "Astroakustika"', *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1984).

⁵⁶ Sedak, Eva: 'Prilozi', 252.

placed in such a manner that within an octave it can produce 53 equal intervals. The second work was written for four traunioniums and timpani.⁵⁷

Following a performance of *Pečalbari* on 4 September 1936, he was, a year later, collaborating with Stefanović and Davič in the running of 'Abrašević' (the 'Amateur Singing Society'). He wrote the incidental music *Oj Kuli, oj* (scored for choir, flute, piano and gong) for Arragon's musical play *Kuli*, based on the musical themes of the Hungarian composer Paul Arma. The emergence of 'socialist thematicism' was conspicuous in Arragon's play. His wife, Milana, wrote that rehearsals were held in the rooms of the *Radničke komore* (similar to the premises of Trades Unions) at the time of severe persecution by the government of independent syndicates of artists. Rehearsals and performances of the play always took place at considerable risk and were constantly under police surveillance; indeed, the production was at times subject to police raids and confiscation of equipment and materials, and the arrest for questioning of individual performers.

The same year, his *Balkanske igre* took final shape. Milojević's reflections about this work's performance on 7 March 1938 are intriguing:

The Balkans are a region which attracts tourists. With their cameras they take photos of the surface, because usually, a tourist only sees the surface. The surface of Balkan music is perceived in the same way. Furthermore, as the Balkans have been represented [...] as a "man with a knife between his teeth", a tendency to perceive them in this way is still prevalent sometimes; that the Balkans are something wild, raw, fierce, tactless. Therefore, the Balkans are rarely tame in their sensibility. Rarely tame... The Balkans are seething with fury, boiling over with the tactless shedding of blood.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ He sent both of these compositions for the ISCM festival to London (1937), but neither of them was selected for the performance. It could be said that this concluded Slavenski's attempts with the experimental media.

⁵⁸ Milojević, Miloje: 'Sedmi koncert Beogradske filharmonije', *Politika* (Belgrade, 6 May 1938), cited in Sedak's 'Prilozi', 254.

And if anyone understood this, it was Slavenski. Firmly rooted in 'The Balkans' and infused with its fervour, he felt its strength and 'greatness', its raw temperament, and its tradition. Yet he succeeded in portraying all these inherent qualities in a new and revolutionary way, for which he was dubbed a modern Balkan.

Slavenski's final appearance on the European scene, prior to World War II, took the form of an invitation to participate in the Biennial Musical Festival in Venice, where his *Muzika 38* for chamber orchestra was performed on 5 September 1938. The year before, 1937, marked an important change in his employment status, when he was offered the post of a teacher in a newly opened Music Academy in Belgrade.

Immediately before war broke out, his song cycle for soprano and string quartet, *Pjesme moje majke* (*My Mother's Songs*), took a more definite form. Various sketches of this work date from as early as 1913. It was completed for the competition 'Cvijeta Zuzorić', but unfortunately it is not known whether it succeeded in winning a prize. (Its first concert performance was not until 30 November 1949 in Bern.) Slavenski's Third String Quartet, composed four years earlier, was performed on 16 February 1940 at a concert organised by the 'Hrvatski glazbeni zavod' (*Croatian Musical Institute*).

World War II

On the eve of war, the Slavenski household prepared itself for resistance against the Nazi invasion. Milana described how many active communists and friends were hiding in the house and how Josip engaged actively in aiding his 'comrades'. Milana added that the

house was full of various leaflets, but 'no one dared to ask anything, silently minding their own business [...] because the police were constantly sniffing around.'⁵⁹ After the bombing of Belgrade on 6 April 1941, Slavenski actively engaged in helping the prisoners in Banjica. Although Slavenski was hard pressed at this time, some new compositions did appear and were written in the Đermanović-Žeželj household. Among these works were the Second and Third String Trios, and some orchestrations of a number of his early piano pieces. According to Milana, these are the two piano suites *Sa Balkana* (*From the Balkans*) and *Iz Jugoslavije* (*From Yugoslavia*), as well as the Piano sonata.

When the war was over, musical life in Serbia provided better conditions for Slavenski's work. He orchestrated *Internacionale* (*International*) and harmonised a huge number of Partisan songs, while leading a choral group of educational workers. In 1949 he wrote *Tri Romanije* (*The Three 'Romanije' [Mountains]*) for the film '*U planinama Jugoslavije*' (*In the Mountains of Yugoslavia*), though the film was never shown. These three pieces explored a hybrid style which ranged from a more serious art music to popular folk song, not dissimilar to 'Voda zvara iz kamena' of 1922. In 1945 he finished his last large opus, *Simfonijski epos* (*Symphonic Epos*) which was not performed until September 1949.

The Post-War Years

Following the Second World War, Slavenski's standing abroad had changed markedly. At first his music appeared to fit in well with the general trends of contemporary musical thinking, which were interrupted during the late 1930s. In Yugoslavia, a possible

⁵⁹ Slavenski, Milana: 'Odlomak iz biografije', cited in Sedak's 'Prilozi', 255.

continuation of these contemporary trends manifested itself through neo-classicism, a concept and style compatible with the political expediency of Socialist Realism. While Slavenski could have been an important touchstone for the interface of western developments (notably atonality, as well as the neo-classicism of Hindemith) and the musical world of Yugoslavia, his style was unable happily to accommodate these 'modernist' trends. In 1952 he received an invitation to attend the 30th anniversary of the ISCM in Salzburg as a delegate of the Yugoslav section. During this occasion his Sonata for Violin and Organ was performed. Three years later Slavenski was again elected as a delegate at the ISCM festival in Baden-Baden, this time alongside Milan Ristić. The president of the ISCM was Heinrich Ströbel, whose vision of the European music of the future was inspired by the French avant-garde, primarily the music of Pierre Boulez. This world was entirely alien to Slavenski and symbolised his isolation from contemporary advances thereafter. That Slavenski ceased to produce any music in the last five years of his life suggests that he was not prepared to accept and participate in the promulgation of these contemporary ideas. Yet, as Sedak has posited, Slavenski, with his history and experience of the avant-garde between 1920 and 1945, could have been the very composer to help Yugoslavia restore itself onto the modern European scene of the 1960s.⁶⁰ Regrettably, he fell ill suddenly and within a few months his condition rapidly deteriorated. He died on 30 November 1955.

⁶⁰ Sedak, Eva: 'Prilozi', 259.

Chapter Three

The Synthesis of Tradition and the Avant-garde:

Folklore and Astroacoustics

When we think of musical developments and advances during the first three decades of the twentieth century, we are inclined to divide composers into two major categories: those whose music illustrated the modernist tendencies of atonality (and serialism), and those who remained fixed within the already well established traditions of tonality with particular allusion to nationalist points of reference (namely folk music, dance and the ethnic repertoire). To acquire a deeper understanding of Slavenski and his music, it is crucial to recognise that his place in musical history requires an alternative perspective.⁶¹ He falls into a group of composers who could be said to bring together major characteristics from the two aforementioned categories. This analysis will consider the manner in which he embraces these two categories, and the subsequent effects of this artistic choice on his later retreat from the avant-garde.

While most of Slavenski's music is founded on a strong folk base (allied with a programmatic vein), which presupposed a firm link with tonality and tonal practices, throughout his life he nevertheless consciously strove to discover a new musical language in line with contemporary European experiments of the time (notably his experiments with astronomy and physics). The result was an irreconcilable dichotomy in which the

⁶¹ Doliner, Gorana: 'Nakon slušanja violinske sonate Josipa slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1976), 57.

expedients of both artistic paths inevitably posed significant contradictions.⁶² This chapter aims to look at the two main elements of this dichotomy; the first one in the light of folk music in Yugoslavia during the first half of the twentieth century (symbolic of the aforementioned traditionalists), with particular reference to Slavenski's music, while the second will outline the main elements concerning his theory of 'astroacoustics', with regard to his search for a new and contemporary sound. In doing so, we shall attempt to demonstrate the main draw-backs to each approach which might have served as a hindrance to Slavenski's progress, and his attempts to synthesise the two main elements of tradition and the avant-garde.

The Historical Background to Folklore

The history of music (in relation to Yugoslav musical developments) is essentially discussed from two opposing standpoints: (i) Yugoslav music compared with Western historical developments and various concomitant stylistic movements, or (ii) where any such comparison is studiously avoided in order to emphasise the artistic pluralism and individuality of Yugoslav composers and their works. In this thesis, the latter standpoint, which has produced a considerable amount of inadequate and somewhat parochial musicological comment has been avoided (there are several choice exceptions).⁶³ Instead,

⁶² Other conditions of Slavenski's environment, namely, his upbringing and experience along with his education and political life (where folk music held a special place) and his encounter with bitonality and polytonality (which never evolved into complete atonality), restrained this reconciliation.

⁶³ Bujić, Bojan: 'Daleki svijet muzikom dokučen', *Izraz*, 11 (Sarajevo, 1963) and 'Tematska struktura u Prvom gudačkom kvartetu Josipa Slavenskog', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 14 (Ljubljana, 1978); Cvetko Dragotin: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', *Arti Musices*, 3 (Zagreb, 1972); Grujić, Sanja: 'Uloga folkloru u orkestarskim delima Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1984); Perićić, Vlastimir: 'Josip Slavenski i njegova "Astroakustika"', *Muzika*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1984); Sedak, Eva: *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, Vol.1 and 2 (Zagreb: MIC and muzikološki zavod, 1984) and 'Josip Slavenski; bilješke o nekim do sada nepoznatim

three groups of Yugoslav composers will be derived from the former standpoint –the ‘modernists’, the ‘traditionalists’ and those who tried to synthesise the two. This, it is hoped, should give rise to an alternative way of thinking which should provide a more incisive comprehension of Slavenski’s work and position within European musical history. Moreover, this understanding will create a backdrop in which the reasons that prevented Slavenski’s development into the territory of the avant-garde shall be examined.

In terms of contemporary Western music, as we have already mentioned, the 1920s clearly exhibited a profound polarity; in the first pole we find the continuation of nationalist sentiment in the music of Janáček, Bartók, Szymanowski, and Stravinsky (during his ‘Russian’ period). Each of them used folk music as their points of departure, (representative of ‘new folklorism’) which became a dominant force in musical thought and creativity in most of south-eastern Europe, particularly in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The second pole held Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, who exerted enormous influence on many European centres, particularly Paris and Prague. They looked to move away from the exhausted Austro-German romantic idiom which was prominent at the turn of the century, and formed a central stream of thought around which other techniques such as bitonality, polytonality and neo-classicism also flourished. This gave rise to a new system of musical thinking which characterised European modernism in the first half of the twentieth century. Slavenski falls into a group of inter-war composers who tried to synthesise the approaches held in this polarity. In other words, he remained firmly rooted in the ‘folk’ tradition, which for many Yugoslavs was the only authentic source of history and identity. Yet, although he continued to cleave to the notion of folk music with all its

skladbama’, *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1981); Živković, Mirjana: ‘Neka zapažanja i dopune u vezi sa klavirskim kompozicijama Josipa Slavenskog’, *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1981).

connotations of primitivism, pre-history, and bucolicism, his thirst for a new means of expression gave rise to a creative outlook more congruent with contemporary European thought. He aspired to formulate a new musical language more in line with the avant-garde of the Paris-Vienna axis, notably through his search in the field of 'pure sound' which extended as far as his theories about 'astroacoustics'. During his studies in Budapest, Prague, and Paris, he became personally acquainted with the leading European musicians of his era, namely Janáček, Hába, Stravinsky, Hindemith, the composers of *Les Six*, Bartók, Kodály, Novák and Suk, as well as their individual musical idioms. Given this maelstrom of musical ideas, styles and philosophies, it is inevitable that Slavenski would be influenced by them to varying degrees.

The formula of Slavenski's synthesis of these polarities may be understood in the following way: the bedrock of his style remained unremittingly wedded to the use of folk material (and by implication to tonality), but within this framework he explored several distinctive 'modernist' techniques or approaches.⁶⁴ Thus, throughout his career, he tried to find a way in which folk music and contemporary techniques could co-exist (at a time when many composers were inclined to choose exclusively between one or the other such as, for example, we see Kodály on the one hand and Webern on the other). So far two distinct currents of musical thinking in the first half of the twentieth century have been mentioned and how Slavenski attempted to synthesise them. Now folklorism and astroacoustics will be discussed as the means by which he undertook this synthesis, which should illuminate our

⁶⁴ 1) he explored the possibilities of bitonality and polytonality, which were in part derived from the existing raw material of folk music (*Slavenska Sonata* and the First String Quartet); 2) he anticipated the sound world of electronic music (in particular, sections of the *Sonata religiosa* and *Chaos*); 3) he looked to free himself from a romantic lyricism (evident in his early piano works according to Švarc) in favour of a new language of timbres and colour (*Religiofonija*); 4) he sought to create a new means of organising sound according to the laws of science (through mathematics and astronomy); this exploration existed only in notes, sketches and

understanding as to why he ultimately failed to find a place in mainstream European music, and instead found himself occupying a by-way which contributed to the aridity of his final years.

The History of Folklore in Yugoslavia: New Folklorism

As an important component of Yugoslav musical culture, musical folklore was often viewed from two different standpoints. Firstly, it was seen as a precious cultural inheritance which could provide a fertile background for new musical advances and developments. Secondly, in contradistinction, because folklore was a 'living social substance' of the past (involving numerous extrinsic elements such as performance practice, social location and function, and rituals), it has proved to be a major hindrance for some composers in their assimilation of modern techniques. This is why an uncritical approach to folklore and its tendency of becoming a 'fetish', which in Yugoslavia and most of Eastern Europe goes as far as to be referred to as *folkloromanija* (folklore-mania),⁶⁵ is a highly negative propensity among Yugoslav composers. According to Čolić, at its most extreme, it served as an escape from reality, leading to a *cul-de-sac* of primitive *sevdalisanje*.⁶⁶

drafts entitled *Astroacoustics* which failed to materialise into a coherent theoretical discovery. Nevertheless, this thinking underpinned his whole creative output.

⁶⁵ Čolić, Dragutin: 'Folklor i umetnička muzika', *Zvuk*, 17/18 (Belgrade, 1958), 326.

⁶⁶ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, *Sevdalinka* (Turkish *sevdah*, meaning passion, love, and yearning) replaced what was the most popular lyrical-vocal genre until then - *turčija* (a song in the Turkish style). In their character and origin, *sevdalinke* (pl.) are closely related to some other Turkish genres, *makam*, *hidžaz*, *usak* and *nahvani*. *Sevdalinka* is a highly melismatic solo song, with relatively free and *askak* (assymetric) metre and tempo; essentially it is a love song, where a man or a woman sing about their unrequited love. This genre developed largely under the auspices of local Muslims; by the end of the nineteenth century it became the musical heritage of all Bosnian people. With the prevalent 'socio-cultural' changes during the twentieth century, the primordial 'non-tempered' modal system was replaced by Western tonal systems, with a more structured formal organisation. During the 1950s, *sevdalinke* merged with Yugoslav 'popular and mass culture' (Himzo Polovina, Safet Isović, Hanka Paldum, etc.).

Musical folklore played a central role and functioned as the basis for many artistic achievements throughout the history of individual nations and the wider history of Western music. Permeating and uniting itself with the achievements of Western musical practices, folklore contributed to the creation of new values, not only within the cultural framework of a single nation, but on the broader world stage. The assimilation and decline of folklore, as a particular category in 'constructing' a nation's musical culture, has been recognised as a long and complex historical process. In Italy, France and Germany, folklore largely dissolved into art music, but in other regions of Europe, where the traditions of art music were less strongly rooted,⁶⁷ folklore became a vital element of musical expression where the traditional repertoire had been rediscovered as part of a nationalist resurgence. A folk melody (with all its characteristics and implications) served as a projection of revolutionary and secessionist nationalism and constituted one important factor in a much wider matrix of the transformed bourgeoisie who appeared on the European stage after the French Revolution. This fertile wave of nationalism – which had certain international characteristics (best exemplified by Zajc's *Nikola Šubić Zrinjski* of 1876) – spread through most European countries during the nineteenth century. Its influence was strongly felt in most artistic genres and especially in music where the new national schools shared similar objectives. Composers such as Zajc, Mokranjac and Dobronić, in the former Yugoslavia, Chopin in Poland, Liszt in Hungary, Smetana and Dvořák in Bohemia, Hartmann and Grieg in Scandinavia, and the 'Mighty Handful' in Russia, all constructed their musical idiom using some aspects of folk tradition. The national *melos* gave an impression of a new and stimulating stylistic expression and at the same time, the very fact that their music was

⁶⁷ Some French composers revisited the notions of folklore during the early twentieth century.

accessible to their environment, meant that it permeated all levels of the national superstructure.

Certain aspects of the early twentieth century avant-garde also had their roots in folklore. Their significance lay in the fact that they suffused the framework of 'bourgeoisie academicism', allowing the breakthrough of new and progressive musical perspectives. Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Bartók and Slavenski founded their contemporary artistic modes of expression and musical idiom on a conscious negation of nationalist values and ideas, and instead embraced a *melos* based more purely on the ethnic repertoire as a source of musical material without socio-political associations or nationalist fervour.⁶⁸

National and folk *melos* served as a constant source for stylistically diverse works as well as for the new and current experiments in twentieth century music. (This does not imply that art music could not find its source in the heritage provided by Western music. This is apparent in Scriabin who founded his musical language purely on the progressive developments of Western music, unlike the music of his compatriots who still relied heavily on the folk tradition.) In addition, folklore enabled those associated with the avant-garde to retain contact with their tradition and history, a factor which remained one of central concerns for composers in Europe both before and after the First World War. This is best exemplified by 'new folklorism', which became a dominant force for many composers in south-eastern Europe. During the period of 1916-1921, several key works appeared in the Balkan region: Vinko Žganec (1890-1976) published his first collection of *Hrvatske*

⁶⁸ On the contrary, Mokranjac as a pioneer of Yugoslav national direction, was a composer who understood the importance of folklore in relation to the genesis of national musical culture. (As a composer he nevertheless wrote arrangements and harmony for folk songs, namely as *Rukoveti*.) As mentioned in the first chapter, in his introduction to *Pesme i igre iz Levča*, he insisted that in order to study folk music, one needed to study 'musical grammar and logic, which is the basis of our [Yugoslav] peoples' "singing" and "dancing" [...] It is indubitable that Serbian art music can only be the one, which will be based on these principles'.

pučke popjevke iz Međimurja (Croatian Popular Songs from Međimurje) and Ivan Matetić Ronjgov (1880-1960) also made a collection of Istrian and Dalmatian choruses in 1916. In the spring of 1921, Antun Dobronić's cycle of *Jugoslovenske narodne popjevke* (Yugoslav Folk Songs), which consisted of thirty melodies from all over Yugoslavia, was published in Belgrade. These publications were enormously influential and served as a reservoir of material from which composers constantly drew their inspiration.

Immediately after the First World War, three key figures in Yugoslav music were recognised as having major historical importance: (i) Vatroslav Lisinski who was seen as the chief exponent of *Illyrian* ideals in the 1830s; (ii) Kornelije Stanković and his early works written between 1853 and 1859; and (iii) Stevan Mokranjac's *Rukoveti* (Bouquets) composed between 1884 and 1909 and his analytical studies of Serbian folk melodies written in 1908 – *Osmoglasnik* (the *Oktoechos* of the Serbian Orthodox Church). Mokranjac's collection *Zbirka Srpskih narodnih pesama i igara s melodijama iz Levča* (A collection of Serbian Folk Songs and Dances with Melodies from Levče) of 1902 consisted of 75 melodies and 13 dances. According to Vukdragović, Bartók in his *Impressions of Peasant Music of our Time* (some twenty years later) appeared to give credibility to Mokranjac's thoughts,⁶⁹ but in reality he evinced a much greater flexibility in his accommodation of a broad canvas of techniques, and refused to see new folklorism as a

Vukdragović, Mihailo: 'Idejno-estetske i stilske srodnosti i oprečnosti u razvojnim tokovima srpske i hrvatske muzike između dva rata', *Arti Musices*, Vol. 91/2 (Zagreb, 1978), 179.

⁶⁹ In the introduction to *Pesme i igre iz Levča*, Stevan Mokranjac wrote the following: What we have said so far about these melodies does not exhaust everything that could be said about them. We did not envisage a comprehensive study here, but rather an introduction. This should serve as an impetus and a guide for those who are able and willing to think about [folk] melodies. We have stated that our melodies show correct musical thinking, and that this thinking is expressed according to the well-known laws. To search for these laws means to search for [...] a musical grammar and logic, which is the basis of our peoples' 'singing' and 'dancing'. It is indubitable that Serbian art music will only be the one, which is based on these principles. We have attempted [to carry this out], and if it is God's will! (sic.) this may attempt to make way for both better and more detailed analysis.' *Ibid.*

single creative path to be followed. Having studied with Kodály at the Budapest Conservatoire, and having earned a wage transcribing Bartók's and Kodály's notes from their fieldwork, Slavenski was undoubtedly influenced by the freer attitudes of his teachers.

One of the key ideas that symbolised new folklorism was that folk music would eventually create a huge transformation in those countries with little or no tradition. This notion was supported by Kodály's claim that a lot of ancient language was preserved through dialects. The same was true of musical dialects which contained elements of the first human speech. Kodály believed that music meant more for these people, than for those whose musical styles had been developed throughout the centuries. Hence, folk music as such automatically became art music for these people. In other words, what a German composer might find in Bach or Beethoven, Slavenski would have found in peasant music.⁷⁰

Though Slavenski studied and analysed folk music, with particular reference to scales and intervallic structure,⁷¹ his approach to the subject was by no means systematic as it was for those who collected and classified material 'from the field', as in the case of Konjević (see Chapter One) or Bartók. These latter studies formed an important backdrop for his own response, but it was one that remained essentially intuitive and visceral.⁷² It was rare, for example, for Slavenski to note in his manuscripts what was the original source of his folk melodies, or even if the melodies were his own. Of even greater curiosity, is an

⁷⁰ In a letter to Osterc, Slavenski wrote that 'many authors are not even aware of the precise rhythmic-metric diction of their mother tongue, let alone their ability intuitively to have the sense of old archaic languages.' Cvetko, Dragutin: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', 66.

⁷¹ Švarc, Rikard: 'Muzika u zemlji', *Zvuk*, 10 (Belgrade, 1935), 18.

⁷² Slavenski, along with many other composers, attempted to find an authentic source of harmony through detailed studies of scales and intervallic structures. This proved problematic, as most of the authentic Yugoslav folk music is sung in unison, and as such has no implicit harmonies, except the overtone series. (This could be the reason why he later used the harmonic series as a key element in the formation of his harmonic language.)

exception - the second movement of *Četiri Blkanske igre* (*Four Balkan Games*) - where he deliberately wrote 'thema del autore'; yet Slavenski's claim to authorship was doubtful in that it resembled an authentic folk melody already collected and notated. This was probably the consequence of treating folk melody as purely musical material or as a result of 'unconscious remembering' - a form of amnesia, stemming from a deep connection to folklore⁷³ - rather than of the mind like Konjević or Bartók, who understood the repertoire from a more scientific standpoint. Such a relationship to folklore, (its complete absorption and amalgamation), crossed the borders between the authentic and imaginary, hence the frequent difficulty in distinguishing the folk citation from variation. A further example of this is 'Bugarska igra' in the first movement of *Balkanofonija*, which is in fact a literally cited folk melody 'Snošti se Janka'. The lively dance melody 'uz ples' ('to accompany the dance') retains its folk character while the overall structure is created by simple and constant repetition (five times), each time reorchestrated.

Folk citation in Slavenski's music may encompass a complete work rather than a single movement, particularly in the guise of a unique leitmotif. In the Violin Concerto (1927) the 'leitmotif' takes the form of a Herzegovian chorus 'Sastali se Čapljanski tatari' ('Čapljian Tartars Had Met Up'). Initially the motif is given to the orchestra, then the soloist, and finally it is developed through a process of continuous variation as a dialogue between soloist and individual orchestral groups. Folk citation may have a role of creating contrast or a conflicting episode. An example of this is the 'Srpska igra' ('Serbian dance') in *Balkanofonija* with its bantering chorus 'Tamo dolje gradu Carigradu' ('Down there [towards] the city of Constantinople'). Here the composer retains the chorus's melodic line, while the rhythm is *quasi parlando*. This movement also achieves the desired contrast with

⁷³ Lissa, Zofia: "Estetske funkcije glazbenog citata", *Estetika glazbe / ogledi* / (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1977), 141.

the first movement which uses a pregnant, energetic dance motive supported by a pedal point and ostinato (based on the incomplete Istrian/Jewish scale),⁷⁴ (Chapter four, Ex. 7).

The process of adapting the folk chorus to suit the character and purpose of a particular movement led to a change of structure in the second movement of *Balkanske igre*, notably in the rhythmic structure of the jagged, elegiac chorus 'Dilber tuta' (entitled 'Prespanka' in *Balkanske igre*). This chorus becomes subject to a form of orchestral 'synchronisation', where Slavenski attempts to accommodate the more rigid rhythmic formula of the dance within a much freer structure and measure of the movement as a whole.⁷⁵

As has already been alluded, Slavenski's work often illustrates a type of imaginary folk thematicism, similar to the original folk citation in its structure, harmony and larger role within a work. This is evident in the sixth movement of *Balkanofonija* where *Moja pjesma* (*My song*) is the citation of the First String Quartet's main theme, resembling the character of Međimurjean folk song. Moreover, the individual sections of the *Nokturno*'s main theme (with its Dorian mode and Pentatonic character) and the main thematic structure of *Muzika 36*, echo this idea. There are melodies which evoke Bartók's harmonisations of folk song and which share an ambience with that composer's work, particularly the use of ostinato bass accompaniment and sustained pedals (for example *Rumunska igra* in *Balkanofonija*). Furthermore, certain themes in the *igrački* (*dance*) movements invoke associations with the folk dance *Kolo* (*circle dance*), notably *Srpske igre* (*Balkanofonija*), and the *Kokonješča* and *Srpske igre* in *Četiri Balkanske igre*.

⁷⁴ See Stefanović, Pavle: 'Šta se sve krije i otkriva u 'Balkanofoniji' Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 111/112 (Sarajevo, 1971).

⁷⁵ Grujić, Sanja: 'Uloga folklora u orkestarskim delima Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1984), 12.

Besides the authentic and imaginary folk melodies, the broader structure and a large proportion of Slavenski's compositional processes are also derived from folk music. The paradigm of 'pjevanje' and 'igranje' (singing and dancing) presented a polarity of character, performance practice and interpretation. More importantly it served to provide a structural foundation to many of Slavenski's compositional designs in which a slower, more lyrical section was answered and clearly contrasted by a robust, faster and more dynamically rhythmical section. This formal structure also implied a principle of literal and varied repetition (A, A¹, A², A³ etc) where the authentic melody often remains unaltered but, using a principle exercised as far back as Glinka (e.g. *Kamarinskaja*), the harmonic and instrumental 'background' constantly changes. Clear examples of this paradigm can be seen in many of Slavenski's works - *Sa Balkana*, *Jugoslovenska svita*, *Iz Jugoslavije*, First String Quartet, *Slavenska Sonata*, *Jugoslovenska pesma i igra*, *Sa sela*, *Ftiček veli da se ženil bude*, *Pesme i igre sa Balkana*, *Četiri Balkanske Igre*, *Pesme moje majke*, *Balkanofonija*, as well as many of the arrangements of folk melodies (in particular those after 1945 exhibit the character of the faster or slower stereotypes). These two seminal elements - 'pjevanje' and 'igranje' – represent the fundamentals of Slavenski's musical texture and concepts, and will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Astroacoustics

A minority of composers, which included Slavenski (as well as Milojević and Tajčević) explored certain modernist techniques which were considered controversial in post-war Yugoslavia, and were enough to mark Slavenski and his colleagues as *autsajderi*

(outsiders). The application of these techniques (such as atonality, expressionism, quarter-tone techniques etc) initiated a search by Slavenski for a 'new' system of musical organisation and led to his detailed studies of science, notably astronomy, acoustics and atomic physics. In the past, a number of composers, ranging from William Herschel, Saint-Saëns, Holst and Hindemith, had tried to reconcile scientific ideas with musical 'laws', though none ever succeeded. The contemporary 'cosmic era' heightened attempts to explore the relationship between science and music, and the composers of Yugoslavia were among many in Europe and America to carry out such 'experiments'. Among these composers were Cipra and his *Sunčevim putem (Along the Solar Way)*, Karlo Khrombolac and his *Sazvježđa (Constellations)* and Jež's *Pogled zvjezda (Star gazing)*.

It is well known that music and astronomy had been closely associated in Greek philosophy and mathematics (in Plato, Aristotle and, above all, Pythagoras), at least in terms of acoustic theories and protoscientific thought. They shared the common idea of a number or numbers which was used to express both the laws of musical acoustics and the 'natural' laws of astronomy. In the middle ages and the Renaissance, music was embraced as a part of the 'Trivium' and later the 'Quadrivium' of subjects for a degree in which mathematics, philosophy and theology also played a part.⁷⁶

Slavenski was completely absorbed by these ideas and relationships. In the same way that he exhumed the ancient folk music of Međimurje and the Balkan region and searched for new harmonic textures, combinations and colours, he also experimented with acoustics through the use of a trautionium which allowed the octave to be divided into 53 equal intervals within the octave, and opened the gateway for new laws which could unite music, astronomy and atomic physics. The cause of his interest in this area is unknown,

though it has been conjectured that he retained both a youthful fascination for the universe, and an inborn curiosity for interdisciplinary study in the sciences as well as music.

Evidence of Slavenski's ruminations about 'Astroacoustics' (a term he probably invented himself, and which he later used in his university lectures) survives in the form of notes and sketches which were summarised and compiled in an article by Vlastimir Peričić entitled 'Josip Slavenski i njegova "Astroakustika"', published in *Zvuk (Sound)* in 1984. These notes were unsystematic and, according to Peričić, formed a 'brilliant mess'.⁷⁷ They consist of musical examples and colour co-ordinated schemes along with atomic combinations and timetables of adjacent stars and planets, interspersed with commentaries, as well as quotations of folk music (such as the folk song 'Oj glamočko ravno polje') and sacred music (notably the orthodox chant 'Gospodi pomiluj'). According to these sketches and quotations Slavenski did not believe that he was genuinely on the way to discovering some form of 'absolute truth' (which he expressed as the *lapis philosophorum* – 'the philosopher's stone'), nor did he overestimate his knowledge of scientific disciplines.

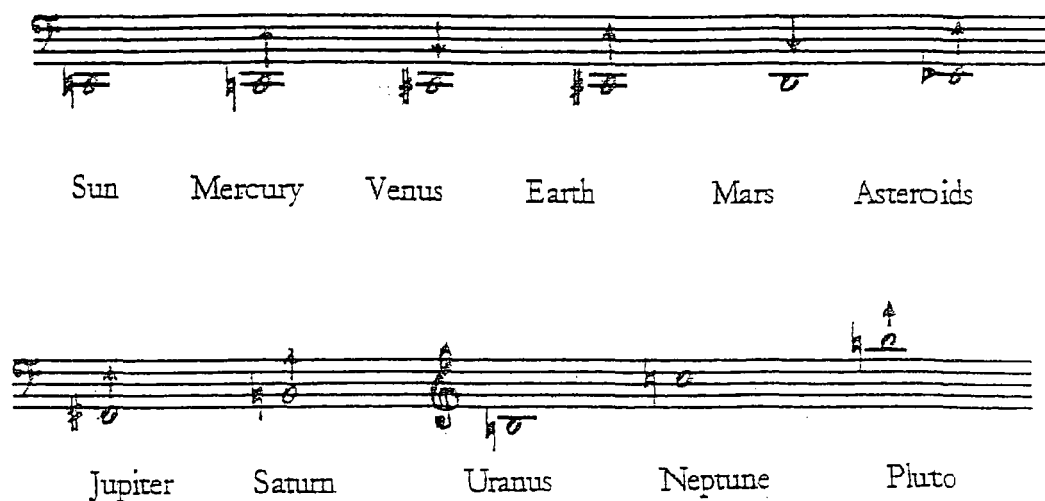
According to the literature to date, there were two main fields of interest for Slavenski: one was the organisation of the solar system and the other was the field of astrophysics (particularly wave-lengths, frequencies, and the spectrum). In the first field, Slavenski was especially concerned with the organisation and the length of planetary orbits. He used digits which represented the planets' average distance from the sun, and turned them into intervallic distances. His attempt to find a logical solution for such a theory can be outlined in four different procedures:

⁷⁶ Peričić, Vlastimir: 'Josip Slavenski i njegova "Astroakustika"', *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1984), 6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

- 1) The chain of planets was identified with the curve of the harmonic series;
- 2) The planets were placed in such a way that successive planets were 'an octave higher' than their predecessors, starting on C₂;⁷⁸
- 3) All of the planets were placed within the framework of a single octave, based on their precise planetary distance;
- 4) The planetary distance was either expressed through astronomic units (the distance between the Sun and the Earth), or through millions of kilometres. Musically, they were either transposed into mili-octaves or *savarte* (one octave equals 301 *savarts*). This resulted in various tone rows which all began with narrow intervals which gradually augmented, corresponding to smaller distances of the planets closer to the sun, and the larger distances of those farther from it (Ex. 1: a, b).

Ex. 1: a),



⁷⁸ This is the same C as the one used for the introduction of *Sonata Religiosa* (organ part), throughout the *Haos*, and *Muzika u prirodnoionskom sistemu*.

1: b).

Planet	Mili-octaves	The distance between the planets in astronomic units
Sun	0	
Mercury	39	0,39
Venus	72	0,72
Earth	100	1,00
Mars	152	1,52
Asteroids	262	2,62
Jupiter	520	5,20
Saturn	954	9,54
Uranus	1919	19,19
Neptune	3007	30,07
Pluto	3950	39,50

He transposed this sequence, starting on middle C, and created a symmetrical scale based on both sets of series. (Ex. 2) He also created an ‘all-interval’ series starting from middle C, where every subsequent interval was a semitone greater than the previous one, and each note corresponded to a planet. This resulted in the old Istrian, identical to the Jewish scale used in the second movement, *Jevreji* (Jews) of *Religiofonija* (see Chapter four, Ex. 7).

Ex. 2:



The second field of interest for Slavenski concerned wave-lengths, frequencies and the spectrum (the pattern of absorption or emission of any electro-magnetic radiation over a range of wave-lengths characteristic of a body or a substance). They focused once again on number, and more specifically the number of undulations per second which, as already mentioned, fascinated Slavenski. Given his knowledge of science it is surprising that he devised a table where he classified sounds and electro-magnetic undulations as the same series, implying that the former could become the latter through the augmentation of frequencies. Moreover, he was interested in a particular octave which contained the significant portion of the spectrum. Here he created a table of the main spectrum's wave-lengths and calculated the corresponding pitches within an octave, in an attempt to discover a spectrum-scale, or to identify the colours of the spectrum with the series of overtones and undertones.

A further set of questions which occupied Slavenski turned on atomic physics, the periodic table and the structure of atoms. He strove to find an analogy between the harmonic series and the periodic system. For this he did not simply assign a periodic element for each harmonic. Considering that the '*even*' harmonics were octave repetitions of already existing ones, he only used the '*odd*' ones, so that every element would have its own characteristic tone. For example, hydrogen (1) was C, helium (3) was g, and lithium

(5) was e_2 . (There was also a similar means of organising the atomic structure and atomic mass.)⁷⁹

For Slavenski, these three areas of interest were not independent, and this is clearly evident from their diffusion of these areas in his notes and sketches. His thinking, though based on factual material, was ultimately founded on speculative analogies and failed to illuminate genuine theories of scientific work or discovery in music or astronomy. As Slavenski himself claimed, he was not a scientist but an artist, and he clearly approached this subject with an artist's fantasy.

The principal question to be posed is whether the chasm between science and art is so unbridgeable. Pavličević suggests that the 'moment' when scientific hypothesis is confirmed by an experiment (and consequently turned into a theory or a natural law) is an experience of huge artistic inspiration. But, as this thesis is more concerned with questions of a musicological nature, we should ask instead whether these astroacoustic speculations found any form of expression and significant application in Slavenski's works. The general ideas concerning cosmic interdependence are evident in *Sonata Religiosa*, *Haos*, and *Religiofonija*, but it cannot be suggested that the language of Slavenski's music (principally tonal) was a genuine product of astronomical or physical phenomena. In other words, the 'cosmic scale' (a Mixolydian scale with a minor sixth) and the *Istrian* (Jewish) scale, (found in so many of Slavenski's compositions), occurred as the simple and intuitive products of his interaction with folk material.

⁷⁹ Alongside the number in the periodic system of elements (the number of protons in the nucleus, or the number of electrons around it), there is a number denoting the atom mass (the overall number of protons and neutrons in the nucleus). He added the order number and the atom mass to produce a number for the corresponding note of the harmonic series.

We have seen that Slavenski's approach to folk melody was intuitive, and as such crossed the borders between authentic and imaginary folklore, which was either a result of deep connection to folklore, or the unconscious remembering – 'a form of amnesia'. Whatever the reason might have been, his overall *modus operandi* with folklore was not systematic, lacking the vital understanding of folklore and its internal laws which could have served as a backdrop for a more scientific and intellectual approach to folklore. Instead, the initial creative energy (offered to him by folklore with its affiliation to tonality) proved to be a hindrance and restrained his freedom of experimenting with the wider range of possibilities offered by the extended tonality, atonality, dodecophony and serialism. Allied to this is the question of whether Slavenski's concept of 'Astroacoustics' found any form of expression and scientific application in his work. Considering this chapter's exposition it is inferred that Slavenski's process of scientific speculation was simply a naïve means of understanding the scientific nature of scales, intervals and harmony as well as its role within the much larger context of astronomy and science. Unfortunately, as such it failed to materialise into a theory or a discovery in the field of 'Astroacoustics'.

Chapter Four

The Expressionist Fabric of Slavenski's Work

In the past, expressionism (as an artistic and stylistic movement) was used as a tool to survey a significant proportion of Slavenski's compositions. However, much of this critical commentary, essentially by Yugoslav scholars (and most particularly by Marija Bergamo), has not engaged with the full ramifications of expressionism and its application to Slavenski's work. In other words, the *fabric* of expressionism (consisting of concepts such as 'inner necessity', 'expressionist ecstasy' and 'distortion', individual subjectivity, and the musical language which resulted from it) was not examined in any analytical or theoretical detail. This chapter intends to redress that balance, and aspires to provide a more adequate analysis and appraisal of important aspects of Slavenski's expressionist work.

For the purposes of context, it is important to outline the main aspects of expressionism and its context within Yugoslavia during the 1920s and 1930s, after which key elements of Slavenski's expressionist leanings will be illustrated. His expressionist style will be assessed in terms of:

- i) his intuitive approach to musical material and his relationship to 'pure sound', (which sometimes found its roots in folk music, sometimes from his attentive listening to bells);
- ii) a certain autonomy of melodic and rhythmic elements used as all-pervasive motives and which are central to the encompassing dialectical bifurcation of singing and dancing.

Western Expressionism: A Background

Jim Samson's seminal work, *Music in Transition*, deals with the radical changes in music which occurred during the first two decades of the twentieth century, and principally focuses on the decline of traditional functional tonality. Such a transition also reached Yugoslavia (though less radically and at least a decade later),⁸⁰ and took on a form which reflected a region on the periphery of mainstream European developments. The year 1910, (in relation to expressionism's emergence as an aesthetic force), was considered by Samson as the 'year zero', in which expressionism occupied a central place in European stylistic pluralism.⁸¹ At this time Yugoslavia was entering its period of *Moderna* and began to assimilate more contemporary mainstream European ideas with Blagoje Bersa as a dominant and leading personality.

In the Western world at this time, it was felt that there had to be a new way of seeing 'with the inner eye'. It was *de rigueur* that this new sensibility had to shock audiences into participation; the artist was to become an 'activator' rather than an imitator or the echo of the natural world. According to Herbert Read, expressionism did not attempt to portray the objective facts of nature, nor any abstract notion based on these facts, but the subjective feelings of the artist. Expressionist art is for him, therefore neither fully objective, nor fully abstract. Rather, it is an urgent emotional phase which constitutes a transition from the objective to the abstract. In Western music, this meant the abandoning of tonality and the rejection of the more 'calculated' twelve-tone system. In other words, 'if

⁸⁰ Sedak, Eva: *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, Vol. 1, (Zagreb: MIC koncertne direkcije Zagreb i Muzikološki zavod muzičke akademije sveučilišta u Zagrebu), 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

tonality (the objective) offeres a system of laws suggested by the overtone series in nature, and if the twelve-tone system (the abstract) offeres a virtual dictatorship by the composer, it is the anarchic (subjective) area in between which is the linguistic area of expressionist music'.⁸² This music, neither objective nor abstract, and led by its inner expressive quality, can be observed in the atonality of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Die Jakobsleiter*. In eastern Europe, however, expressionism took the form not of atonality, but of a version influenced by folk music and its raw bitonal and polytonal character, as can be seen in the music of Stravinsky, Bartók and Slavenki.

Today the term expressionism in music suggests a reference to Schoenberg's post-tonal (atonal) period of 1908-1921, as well as the work of the Second Viennese School at that time. Schoenberg's works of this time are associated with the ideas of 'pure expressionism', where the chromaticism of Wagner, Mahler, and Strauss were taken as the impetus. The term 'expressionism' is used to refer to music of that period with similar characteristics. However, this definition is much too narrow in its horizons since it also embraced other composers such as Scriabin, Hauer, Hindemith, Ives, Křenek, Bartók, Szymanowski, Stravinsky, and indeed Slavenki.

A notion of expressionism, referred to as by Kandinsky as 'inner reality',⁸³ stemmed from the idea that expressionism had its origins in the 'world of the unconscious'; hence it became a label for a new form of artistic freedom in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This 'inner reality' became closely associated with the quest for 'truth' and replaced those nineteenth century ideals of 'beauty' with their roots in post-Wagnerian music.

⁸² Crawford, J. C and D. L: *Expressionism in the Twentieth Century Music*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis:

Musical expressionism found its origins in the intellectual atmosphere of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna which, according to Karl Kraus, was an isolated cell in which one was allowed to scream. In addition, expressionism was seen to cross the borders between the 'extension of tradition' and its 'destruction'. The crossing of these parameters (Janus-like in character) was nevertheless often seen as anti-establishment in tone and intent. As such, it was either celebrated for its 'truthfulness to inner realities', or on the contrary, it was criticised and indeed stigmatised as 'unhealthy'. This 'anti-bourgeois' element and the emphasis on 'inner transformation' often led to political extremes in the ideologically charged world of the 1920s. This was true of Slavenski, particularly following the period spent in Zagreb (1922-5) when he always felt that the cultural and intellectual community had catered for the middle and upper classes. With his move to Belgrade in 1926, he became increasingly absorbed by leftist and anti-bourgeois ideologies engendered by Zagreb's unsympathetic cultural atmosphere as well as the revolutionary sentiment of post-war Europe. This is evident in Milana Slavenski's recollection of the time (as quoted in Chapter two, page 33) and in a letter Slavenski wrote to Osterc on 30 November 1936 when he declared: 'I am not a politician, I am a musician. Nevertheless, my convictions and my affinity lie completely to the left, where I have belonged since my birth, throughout my life and by virtue of my work.'⁸⁴ Slavenski's 'left' allegiance, which chimed with the cultural renaissance of post-war Belgrade, provided him with a new sense of freedom and he felt a natural inclination towards the expressionism's idea of 'inner transformation'. However, this inner transformation was more often than not understood as a reason to imbue his work with a potent and radical political message. This sentiment, paradoxically, had its negative

Indiana University Press, 1993), 13.

ramifications. In general, the overt politicisation of the arts paid the price of supplanting individuality, which militated against the very essence of pre-war expressionism. This ironically served to cut across the very individuality to which Slavenski aspired, and had the effect of undermining the distinctive craftsmanship and personal voice he had attempted to cultivate in his earlier works such as the First String Quartet and piano works. Such 'over-politicisation' led to the copious yet often facile *masovne pjesme* (songs written for and sung by the masses) of the post-World War II era of socialist realism.

Hence it was believed that when outer supports threaten to fall man turns his gaze from externals in onto himself – a view relating to the socio-political dimensions at that time, and to the rise of expressionism. When the supports did collapse after World War I, with the ensuing vacuum there was a need to create new, more reliable ones, antipathetical to the *Weltschmerz* of the alienated and lone artist. This, alongside the technical crisis in most arts (particularly formal construction in music), resulted in the demise of expressionism. During the mid 1920s it gave way to neo-classicism which in turn was ostracised during the late 1920s and 1930s by fascism, though after 1945 it experienced rejuvenation (actually, any art movement forbidden by the Nazis was reinstated after the war),⁸⁵ and found voice in a reconstructed form in the music of Boulez, Maxwell Davies, and Schnittke.

⁸³ Kotevska, Ana: 'Žuti zvuk Vasilija Kandinskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1983), 87-89.

⁸⁴ Cvetko, Dragotin: 'Veze Josipa Slavenskog sa Slavkom Ostercom', *Arti Musices*, 3 (Zagreb, 1972), 70.

⁸⁵ Mitchell, Donald: 'Schoenberg: The Principle Capable of Serving as a Rule', *The Language of Modern Music*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963), 26-27.

Expressionism in Yugoslavia

The manifestation of expressionism in Yugoslavia cannot be taken to resemble its Western counterpart. That is, whilst they share some important characteristics, they also differ significantly. One thing is definite: echoes of expressionism in Yugoslav arts between 1918 and 1945⁸⁶ contributed greatly to the development of inter-war and contemporary arts.⁸⁷ Expressionism survived as one of *Moderna*'s radical impulses, in all three of Yugoslavia's principal cultural centres – Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Belgrade. If we consider expressionism's national (regional) transformation, the subject becomes even more complex, due to its different permutations in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. Rather than concentrate on these national permutations, which would be too protracted for the purposes of this thesis, it would be most relevant to focus purely on expressionism in Serbia, largely because Slavenski was based in Belgrade during the creation of his expressionist works (with the exception of the First String Quartet of the Prague years).

When expressionism appeared in Yugoslavia, the various national areas exhibited distinct and somewhat contrasting cultural responses. These responses, and the varied tastes and attitudes of its artists and composers, contributed to its heterogeneous character.⁸⁸ In Serbia, musical, pictorial and literary developments during the inter-war years witnessed an interesting superimposition and amalgamation of both indigenous and foreign influences. Whilst expressionism played a key role in literature and painting, music had a subsidiary

⁸⁶ It was already mentioned that stylistic trends in Yugoslavia appeared a decade or so later than their western counterparts.

⁸⁷ Bergamo, Marija: 'Dileme i prelomi jugoslovenskih muzičkih tridesetih godina', *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1983), 6.

⁸⁸ Vukdragović, Mihailo: 'Idejno-estetske i stilske srodnosti i oprečnosti u razvojnim tokovima srpske i hrvatske muzike između dva rata', *Arti Musices*, 91/2 (Zagreb: 1978), 177-178.

role. In Yugoslavia (as well as most of eastern Europe) it endured in works which did not fit the post-tonal and atonal paradigms (notably the works of Schoenberg and Webern), and fell outside the prototypes of the Second Viennese School, a fact best exemplified by the works of Bartók, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Busoni, Křenek, and Honegger. Although there were other influential and interdependent artistic movements existing at the time, expressionism seems to have been the most prominent. On the one hand, it was furthest removed from tradition (in that it rejected established notions of romantic nationalism and tonality) yet, at the same time, it incorporated and synthesised elements (such as form, harmony, and genre) which had emerged with some fertility and imagination during the late nineteenth century, especially in Serbia where the creation of a tradition was at its peak. In spite of the view that expressionism has often been seen as a reaction against tradition (in particular Romanticism), its Serbian counterpart was strongly influenced by post-Romanticism.

Slavenski's Approach to Expressionism: A Synthesis of Tradition and the Avant-Garde

In the past, the prevailing view has been that Slavenski's music was a product of late Romanticism.⁸⁹ Such views primarily arose as a result of the composer's emotional and subjective approach to musical material. One could say that particular aspects of his work refer to a romantic background, yet other elements may be isolated which clearly illustrate Slavenski's inclination, albeit subconscious, towards expressionism. (There is no proof that

⁸⁹ Švarc, Rikard: 'Josip Slavenski i njegova klavirska djela', *Zvuk*, 5 (Belgrade, 1932/1933); Stefanović, Pavle: 'O desetogodišnjici odlaska Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, (Belgrade, 1966); Živković, Mirjana: 'Neka zapažanja i dopune u vezi sa klavirskim kompozicijama Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1981).

Slavenski became acquainted with theoretical writings on expressionism; if he did, they only provided a confirmation or rational explanation for the intuitive responses of his early years.)

There have been many analyses and examinations of Slavenski's music in terms of its folk background and origins.⁹⁰ Many musicologists, among them Bergamo,⁹¹ have made claims that Slavenski's music was entirely predicated on the arrangement and assimilation of Balkan folk music to the exclusion of almost all other styles and techniques of the period. Such claims, however, have failed to understand his music beyond this limited purview, often because they have been made without a more thorough analytical and critical investigation of the texts. As has been mentioned earlier, expressionism in Western music during the 1920s and 1930s, in experiencing its 'spiritual appeasement', reached its peak as a movement. This was followed by a need for a new genesis, the symbols of strength and power (as manifested in fascist Italy, Germany and Spain, and in communist Russia), where the alienated and suffering artist could play no relevant part. In art this was reflected in the subsequent technical crisis, and in music by the emphasis on ever-greater formal construction. In this light, many composers revisited older forms such as sonata and quartet in an attempt to go 'back to Beethoven', whose late quartets were venerated as ageless models. While Stravinsky was concerned with the athematic equality of parts in his *Three Movements for String Quartet*, Bartók also tried to synthesise Beethoven's organic

⁹⁰ Bingulac, Petar: 'Horska muzika Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 69 (Belgrade, 1966); Stefanović, Pavle: 'Šta se sve krije i otkriva u Balkanofoniji Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 111/112 Sarajevo, 1971); Koci, Akil Mark: 'Albanski folklor u delima Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 1 (Sarajevo, 1976); Doliner, Gorana: 'Nakon slušanja violinske sonate Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1976); Grujić, Sanja: 'Uloga folkloru u orkestarskim delima Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 2 (Sarajevo, 1984); Živković, Mirjana: 'Muzički folklor u studijama Josipa Slavenskog', *Zvuk*, 1 (Sarajevo, 1986); Nikolić, Miloje: "'Sapostojanje" i "izuzetnost" u folklorno inspirisanim horovima Josipa Slavenskog', *Izuzetnost i sapostojanje*, (Belgrade: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 1997).

language, Wagner's chromaticism, and the raw material of folk music, in order to provide alternatives to the more rigid systematic schemes of the Second Viennese School.

In Yugoslav musical culture, there was no such tradition to draw on; models which could be used as paradigms – Zajc's attempts at quartet writing and Pejačević's sonatas – though accomplished, were nevertheless an inadequate source of influence. In turning their back on this repertoire, Yugoslav composers embraced neo-classicism and the neo-baroque with alacrity,⁹² but due to a paucity of well-established technical training (particularly in the province of counterpoint), they invariably depended on folk material rather than the creation of a new, and more challenging language.⁹³ The few exceptions were Odak, Milojević, Osterc, and Slavenski who attempted to bring a new sense of reinterpretation to old forms. Such an example is in the rejuvenation of the sonata genre which was particularly conspicuous in Slavenski's works. The term 'sonata' in his *Slavenska Sonata* was applied loosely, and had little in common with classical sonata structure; rather, it related to its prime meaning *sonare* ('to sound') in which the concept of a broader 'sound world' is at the forefront instead of a more conventional development of thematic ideas. (This is also evident in the *Sonata Religiosa* and piano sonata.)

Although Slavenski's early works drew on Western genres (sonatas, trios, quartets and quintets), and techniques such as polyphony, their use suggested an ever-growing

⁹¹ Bergamo, Marija: *Elementi ekspresionističke orijentacije u srpskoj muzici do 1945. godine*, (Belgrade: SANU, 1980), 67.

⁹² Neo-classicism became ostracised during the 1920s and 1930s, in order to become rejuvenated after the war.

⁹³ Slavenski's dedication of his first quartet, '*dédié à quator op. 133 de Beethoven*' implies a trend of 'back to Beethoven'. This trend was initiated by Schoenberg's first string quartet in D minor (1904), which is dominated by tonal polyphony – a natural extension of Beethoven's op.133. Also in terms of polyphonic developments, the fugue in Bartók's first movement of his first string quartet (1909) is seen as an extension of Beethoven's trends.

fascination with 'pure sound', colour, timbre and texture.⁹⁴ Even during the 1920s he anticipated this sense of 'pure sound' and this became one of the main driving forces of his middle period. Though we can identify a similar mode of thinking in his piano works (one which was even more fully realised in his orchestral works), the notion of 'pure sound' was genuinely initiated by his chamber works, which, alongside his piano works from 1918 to 1927, represent experiments with sound outside the traditional boundaries of instrumentation and technique, though his obsession with colour and raw sound not infrequently led him to sacrifice technical refinement.

This duality of formalism versus colour, present in Slavenski's middle period, became more rigid in his works between 1932 and 1945. This is particularly evident in *Religiofonija* and *Sinfonijski epos*, where movements characterised by colour and pure sound are juxtaposed with movements of a more traditional construction. The latter was derived from his piano works (*Pjesme i plesovi sa Balkana* and *Iz Srbije*), his wind quintet *Sa sela* ('From the village') and the Third String Quartet. By contrast, *Chaos*, *Muzika 36* and *Muzika 38* were more radical attempts in their creations of new sounds, previously foreshadowed in *Jugoslovenska svita*, the violin sonatas and *Muzika u prirodnotonskom sustavu*. If there was to be a middle ground within this polarity, it was *Religiofonija*,⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Sedak, Eva: 'Zvučno okružje glazbe Josipa Slavenskog', Radio Sarajevo, *Treći program*, 15 May 1976, cited in Sedak, Eva: *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, 100.

⁹⁵ Despite the originality of its musical language, following its first two performances (Belgrade, February 1936 and Bratislava, April 1937), *Religiofonija* was not performed until 1954. During this period it was antagonised, due to its 'anti-establishment' in tone, particularly the movement *Rad* (*Work*). The title was changed to *Simfonija Orijenaia*, and these are the two distinct formal conceptions from 1926 and 1933-1934.

which represented a touchstone for the majority of his more advanced technical and aesthetic stimuli. *Religiofonija* also provided a seminal paradigm for the analysis of his compositional techniques (e.g. polyphony in *Hriščani* and *Muzika*, ritual ecstasy in *Muslimani*, collage and montage in *Budisti*, etc) and allows us to hear and differentiate between the formal imposition of folk paradigms – singing and dancing – and more avant-garde concepts of ‘pure sound’. These two will be discussed in relation to the basic character of Slavenski’s expressionism which is itself a bifurcation of (i) colour and intuition as the fundamental components of his music, and (ii) the melodic and rhythmic autonomy.

1926	1933-1934
<i>Pagani</i> (<i>The Pagans</i>) - Prehistoric music	<i>Pagani</i>
<i>Jevreji</i> (<i>The Jews</i>) - Levant	<i>Hebreji</i> (<i>The Hebrews</i>)
<i>Budisti</i> (<i>The Buddhists</i>) - Tibet, China, India	<i>Budisti</i>
<i>Hriščani</i> (<i>The Christians</i>) - Byzantine	<i>Chrésiens</i> (<i>The Christians</i>)
<i>Muslimani</i> (<i>The Muslims</i>) - Arabia	<i>Mohamedanci</i> (<i>The Mohameds</i>)
<i>Rad</i> (<i>The Work</i>) -The Balkan Slavs	<i>Muzika</i>
<i>Muzika</i> - Europe	<i>Rad</i>

Similarly, Mitchell talks of the cultural vacuum which was created by the Nazis at that time: ‘That political catastrophe undoubtedly played a role in hindering the advance of the New. But we must remember that Nazi censorship hit not only Schoenberg but also Hindemith, not to speak of Stravinsky, Bartók, Berg and Webern, all of whose music came under the ban [...] (Webern, of course, suffered even more rigorous stifling than his

Intuition, Colour and 'Pure Sound'

Slavenski was not an intellectual who found himself at a *cul-de-sac* of decadence with an exhausted set of stylistic precepts.⁹⁶ He was (consciously or unconsciously) aware of the crisis which resulted from the exhausted system of musical values, and a need for a set of new ones.⁹⁷ Through his numerous notes and sketches, we have proof that he consciously strove to find a new manner of musical thinking more attuned to western contemporary exigencies. Contrary to Bergamo's suggestion that Slavenski's engagement with expressionism was essentially made through folk music, an argument loosely presented without a thorough examination of the scores either on a macro or micro scale, it may be argued strongly that the individual fabric of his expressionism derived from his desire to embrace new colours and tone-qualities. This gave rise to new combinations of timbre, dynamics, density of sound, frequent ostinati, the presence of the overtone (and undertone) series, blocks of (homophonic) sound and their superimposition; all of these elements were governed by his intuitive *modus operandi* (which invariably led to a state of ecstasy or chaos, typical of expressionist rhetoric).⁹⁸

The subtitle of the second movement of *Religiofonija* is 'Musica coloristica', one which clearly shows that Slavenski intended the movement to be led by hierarchies of colour and timbre. This is evident in the distinctive combinations of instrumental (and also

master [Schoenberg] - one performance of his concerto, op. 24, between 1935-1946).' Mitchell's *The Language of Modern Music*, 26-27.

⁹⁶ Bergamo, Marija: 'Slavenski; naša istorija i naša savremenost; povodom 75-godišnjice rođenja 11.V. 1896', *Pro musica*, (Belgrade, 1971), 11.

⁹⁷ Bujic, Bojan: 'Daleki svijet muzikom dokučen', *Izraz*, 11 (Sarajevo, 1963), 326.

⁹⁸ This subsequently led to his research in the field of acoustics. See Perić, Vlastimir: 'Josip Slavenski i njegova "astroakustika"', *Zvuk*, 4 (Sarajevo, 1984), 5-14.

vocal) colours - the cor anglais and the clarinet (from b. 100 onwards) doubles the baritone solo with its prayer chorus. This is reinforced by the rest of the wind who remain on pedal points emphasising the most important notes of the scale. Also, the parallel movement in voices creates its own 'sound colour', both when it interrupts the soloists, and at the end of the movement. Finally, the harp, with its diminished fifth (E – B flat, which acts as a cell for the larger superstructure of its line), creates a complementary sense of colour throughout the whole movement.

The originality and sheer capacity of the third movement of *Religiofonija (Budisti)* is realised through a complete avoidance of variation and the traditional idea of motivic development, in which cohesive motivic potential is dissolved and replaced by a process which relies on neutral textures and blocks of sound. The overall shape of this movement is not achieved through development and 'recomposition', but rather through placing, adding, folding, layering, contrasting and superimposing the text ('*Om Mani padme hûm*') on the larger tonal and ornamented background with its fanfare motive for the trombones and tubas (bar 95, which recalls a sound of Mongolian tubes) and a canon of eight voices (Ex. 1).⁹⁹

In a similar way, the fifth movement of *Religiofonija*, entitled *Muslimani*, is achieved through the layering of the first and second sections - *Adân* and *Taksim*. This movement is subdivided into the three following sections:

Section	<i>Adân</i>	<i>Taksim</i>	<i>Ilâhi</i>
Scored for	a solo tenor, choir and strings	wind and harp	a male choir, strings, wind and a harp

⁹⁹ Bingulac, Petar: 'Simfonija Orijenta J. Slavenskog', *Savremeni akordi*, 4/5 (Belgrade, 1954), 48.

Ex. 1: *Budisti, Religiofonija* (bb. 166-167).

Coro

S.
A.
T.
B.

Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm.

Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm. Om mani padme hûm.

Om ma - ni pad - me hûm. Om ma - ni pad - me hûm.

Om ma - ni pad - me hûm. Om ma - ni pad - me hûm.

crescendo sempre

Vn. solo

Vn. I
Vn. II

VI.
Vc.
Cb.

mf

mf

II

Coro

S. *Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm.*

A. *Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm. Ôm mani padme hûm.*

T. *Ôm ma - ni pad - me hûm. Ôm ma - ni pad - me hûm.*

B. *Ôm ma - ni pad - me hûm. Ôm ma - ni pad - me hûm.*

Vn. solo *ff*

Vn. I *ff*

Vn. II *ff*

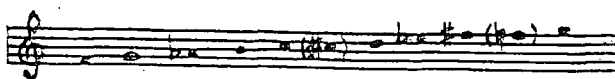
VI. *ff*

Vc. III *ff*

Cb. *arco ff*

The third section of this subdivision – the static text of *Ilâhi* and its gradual expansion of ostinati figurations – leads to a structure completely dominated by ostinati from bar 99 onwards (with the exception of the tenors). The scale (Ex. 2) is a product of the first section of this movement (the tenor solo in *Adân*) which, stage by stage, permeates all three sections. Furthermore, the two tenors' repetition of the word '*Hu*' ('He' [as in 'Allah']) also recalls the character of the first section.

Ex. 2: *Budisti, Religiofonija*.



A sense of homogeneity is ultimately created by the complete use of instruments and voices which unite in the final section, having been differentiated as separate 'components' in the previous two sections (Ex. 3). Another form of ostinato structure is evident in the sequential entries of *Sonata Religiosa*, characterised by melodic linearity, which is gradually narrowed to the span of a tritone, C to G flat (bb. 31-2). This interval resolves into a simple scalar movements of triads, moving away from the opening intervallic movement, and resembles an ostinato device, rather than the original theme (Ex. 4). A different example of an ostinato structure can be found in *Muzika* 38 which has four separate ostinati in play – o1 (bb. 4-6), o2 (bb. 88-90), o3 (bb. 133-137), o4 (bb. 187-195). Combined together, they give rise to a sense of tonal ambivalence (Ex. 5).

Ex.3: *Religiofonija, Muslimani* (bb. 123-130).

Presto (event. Picc.) 8. *hahah*

FL. I
FL. II

Ob. I, II

C. ingl.

G. c.

Arpa

Tenori I
Tenori II

Bassi I
Bassi II

Presto

Vn. I
Vn. II

Vi.

Vc.

Cb.

La i - lâ - ha il - la - 'lâh,
hû hû hû hû hû hû hû hû

La i - lâ - ha il - la - 'lâh!
La i - lâ - ha il - la - 'lâh!

125

Fl. I

Fl. II

Ob. I, II

C. ingl.

G. c.

Arpa

Tenori I

Tenori II

Bassi I

Bassi II

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vi.

Vc.

Cb.

ja al-lah hū!

hū hū hū hū hū hū hū hū

La i - lā - ha il - lā - 'lāh! La i - lā - ha il - lā - 'lāh!

125

81

130

Fl. I
Fl. II
Ob. I, II
C. ingl.
G. c.
Arpa
Tenori I
Tenori II
Bassi I
Bassi II
Vn. I
Vn. II
Vi.
Vc.
Cb.

ja al lah hū!
hū hū hū hū hū!
La i - lā - ha il - la - 'lāh hū!

130

Ex. 4: Sonata Religiosa (bb. 31-32).

130

Ex. 5: Muzika 38, O1 (bb. 4-6),

Ex. 5: Muzika 38, O1 (bb. 4-6). This musical score is for measures 4, 5, and 6. It features five staves: Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vi.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). A box with the number '5' is placed above the first staff at the beginning of measure 5. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 4 contains a whole rest for Vn. I and a half note for Vn. II. Measure 5 begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. Vn. I plays a triplet of eighth notes, while Vn. II, Vi., Vc., and Cb. play a triplet of sixteenth notes. Measure 6 continues the triplet patterns for all instruments.

O2 (bb. 88-90),

O2 (bb. 88-90). This musical score is for measures 88, 89, and 90. It features the same five staves as the previous example: Vn. I, Vn. II, Vi., Vc., and Cb. The key signature has one flat. All instruments play a continuous triplet of eighth notes throughout the three measures. The Violoncello (Vc.) part is marked with a *f* dynamic. The Contrabass (Cb.) part is marked with a *f* dynamic and includes the instruction *simile pizzicato* below the staff.

O3 (bb. 133-137),

Musical score for O3 (bb. 133-137). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes the woodwinds: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Cor Anglais (Cor.), and Bassoon (Fg.). The second system includes the strings: Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vi.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The woodwinds play a sustained melody with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment with a *fp* (fortissimo) dynamic. The score is written in 4/4 time and features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Cor.

Fg.

I

Vn.

II

Vi.

Vc.

Cb.

f

p

This musical score page contains two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Cor Anglais (Cor.), and Bassoon (Fg.). The Oboe part features a melodic line with a slur and a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The Clarinet part has a melodic line with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system includes staves for Violin I (I), Violin II (II), Viola (Vi.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The Violin I part has a melodic line with a slur. The Violoncello part has a melodic line with a slur. The Double Bass part has a melodic line with a slur.

O4 (bb. 187-195).

Fl. *p* *f*

Ob. *p* *f*

Cl. (A) *p* *f*

Cor. (F) *solo* *f*

Fg. *p* *f*

I Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

FL.

Ob.

Cl.
(A)

Cor.
(F)

Fg.

I

Vn.

II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

p *f*

p *f*

p *f*

p *f*

1795

FL.

Ob.

Cl.
(A)

Cor.
(F)

Fg.

Vn.
I

Vn.
II

Vi.

Vc.

Cb.

Further experiments in the domain of 'pure sound' are evident in the violin's autonomous part of the *Sauvage Balcaniques* section of *Slavenska Sonata*, with its dissonant clusters. These clusters culminate with an ecstatic layer of athematic and amotivic sound, bordering on noise. It is precisely here that Slavenski's eager experiments with 'new sound' push the folk implication into the background. (Medimurjean folk melody can be heard in the developmental section of this sonata, but the general sound and impression of this movement are powerfully expressionist in tone (Ex. 6).

Ex. 6: *Slavenska sonata* (bb. 181-182).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for measures 181 and 182 of the *Slavenska sonata*. The score is written on three staves. The top staff is for the violin, the middle for the right hand of the piano, and the bottom for the left hand of the piano. The time signature is 3/4, and the key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 181 is marked with a box containing the number 181. The music features dense dissonant clusters, particularly in the piano part, and a melodic line in the violin. Pedal points are indicated at the bottom of the piano part for both measures. The notation includes various accidentals, slurs, and dynamic markings such as 'm.d.' and 'm.s.'.

This search for expression led to a general linearity of form in the second movement of *Religiofonija* is emphasised by the fact that it results from a unique linear Ostinato which is based on an exotic (Jewish) scale (Ex. 7).

Ex. 7: 'Jewish' scale, *Religiofonija* (*Jevreji*).



All of the parts move diatonically within the framework of this scale. The movement does not exceed the interval of the third (with the exception of one interval of an augmented fourth, characteristic of the exotic scale). Hence the minor seventh interval in the horn part (bb. 72-3) comes as a surprise. The sets of descending sequences (present in all the parts) suggests an absolute fluidity of line, whilst the progressions of tones and semitones and the lack of a tonal centre resembles a chromatic scale.

The first movement of *Religiofonija – Pagani* (*Pagans*) – is the best example of Slavenski's use of instrumentation to achieve unusual sound qualities. A xylophone and timpani accompany the soloists (baritone and bass) and the male choir. This particular choice of instruments attempts to evoke a 'sound-world' resembling that of the ancient times – i.e. the Antiquity (or our notions of what this 'sound-world' may be). Plavša suggested that the two basic and most primitive musical forms - rhythm and 'unarticulated' human utterance – were represented by the xylophone and the timpani.¹⁰⁰ (According to

¹⁰⁰ Plavša, Dragan: 'Jugoslovenska Deveta simfonija', *Izraz*, 9 (Sarajevo, 1958), 232.

Milana, Slavenski was inspired by the unusual singing of gulls at night, which he heard during their 1928-1929 Peljašće holiday on the Dalmatian Island of Korčula.) This movement illustrates an example of the aforementioned *Religiofonija* and its stylistic middle-ground; the instrumentation suggests a concern with the purely musical and its colouristic properties, whilst being underpinned by a rhythmic canon.

In relation to expressionist techniques, the use of voice in particular, certain techniques could be seen as Slavenski's alternatives to the concept of *Ur-shrei* (primal scream), which was seen as the most extreme outlet for emotional stress and the very essence of expressionist thought and gesture.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, although tonal beauty was no longer the goal of expressionist music, the colour was of the utmost importance as a source of expressive means, which was also Slavenski's central concern. Affiliated to this was the reemphasis on the human voice - a sort of natural progression of the humanistic concerns of expressionist composers - which could serve as a way of reaching the distant past, as was the case with the first movement of *Religiofonija*. In addition, the voice as an instrument had taken the longest period of time to evolve. As such, it came closest to the authentic and the ancient sound of the very first human speech which Slavenski tried to depict.

According to Petar Bingulac, the second movement - *Jevreji* - also attempted to imitate the past, in relation to traditional and indigenous Jewish music. Similar to the first movement of this piece, the orchestra is not complete, and is reduced to a soloist (baritone), a choir, a wind orchestra (two flutes, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, two bassoons, two French horns) and a harp. Instrumentally, Slavenski attempted to re-create the sound of authentic Jewish wind instruments such as the *halil* (resembling a flute), *nebila* (resembling

¹⁰¹ Luigi, Rognoni: 'The Second Vienna School: Expressionism and Dodecaphony', cited in Crawford, *Expressionism in Twentieth century Music*, 19.

an oboe), *shofar* (resembling a horn), and a string instrument *kinor* (psaltery, a string instrument from the middle ages), which was imitated by a prominent harp.

In his quest for 'new sound', Slavenski has also frequently visited the provinces of bitonality and polytonality. The second movement - *Večernje pevanje* - from *Sa Sela* has two main tonal layers: a drone and homophonic blocks of sound, (unlike the first and third section which are created from ostinati). From bar 50 onwards, there is a gradual condensing and synchronisation of individual lines, chromatic sequences and tonal contradictions (Ex. 8). Conversely, *Slavenska sonata*, is a clear example of Slavenski's distancing himself from the tonal centre, and therefore from his traditional inheritance. The constant shift in tonality (which originates from ancient bitonal and polytonal folk melodies) has a purely colouristic role; there is no real conflict of tonal spheres. Furthermore, the polychordal formations (similar to those in *Jugoslovenska svita*), with clusters created from these seconds, and used as the basic means of progression (b. 181-182, b. 150-151) - again purely colouristic (See Exx. 6 and. 9).

As already mentioned, Slavenski's approach to composition is primarily governed by an intuitive *modus operandi*, which often spiralled into a state of chaos and ecstasy. The first string quartet's second movement - the '*tranquillo*' section - is built from two main layers: the cello pedal on C, and the other three parts are variations of the first movement's main theme in C sharp. This C/C sharp dissonance is resolved in bar 298, to C/G sharp. The climax reached through this dissonance, reinforced by the tonal tension and resolution is further emphasised through the dynamics (Ex. 10).

Ex. 8: *Sa sela*, II (b. 50-66).

50 *Feroce appassionato*

Fl. *ff* (*possibile*) *sfz*

Cl./B. *sfz*

Vn. *sfz* *sfz*

Vi. *sfz* *sfz*

Cb. *sfz*



Handwritten musical score for piano, measures 50-59. The score is written on ten staves (five systems of two staves each). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. Measure 50 is marked with a box containing the number 50. The piece concludes with a series of dynamic markings: *p*, *pp*, *ppp*, and *attacca*.

The climax reached through tempo and dynamics is probably most pronounced in the development section of *Slavenska Sonata* (b. 104-272), marked by individually labelled sections (*Allegro agitato*, *Suavage Balkaniques* (sic.), *Vivo possibile allegro*). The mid-section, *Suavage Balkaniques* (sic.), with its dynamic extremes of *sfffz* and *sffffz* border on noise, where the state of chaos is reinforced by the hitting of the piano with the fists - with its implicit folk origins (Ex. 9).

Ex. 9: *Slavenska sonata* (b. 150-151).

Contrary to *Slavenska sonata*, the first movement of the First String Quartet reaches the climax through more organised and technical means. Resembling those polyphonic works of Hindemith, especially those of his early quartets and his chamber music, it evinces a thoroughly calculated use of quadruple invertible counterpoint within a structure which is governed by fugal thinking. (Such writing was also explored in the second quartet and the parts of *Religiofonija*.) It has been regarded as one of Slavenski's most accomplished polyphonic pieces, which is discussed later on in this chapter. Alongside this notable polyphonic accomplishment, this movement is also a noteworthy example of climax achieved through thick polyphonic texture. The thematic development of the parts grows, and reaches a climax in bars 25-32 (Ex. 16).

Ex. 10: First String Quartet, II (*Tranquillo*, b. 282-300).

Tranquillo

285

con Sord. arco

ppp sempre

con Sord. arco

ppp sempre

con Sord. arco

ppp sempre

sfz ppp sempre

290

Andante

ppp

ppp

ppp

Quasi Adagio

295

Handwritten musical score for measures 295-298. The score is written on four staves. The first staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The fourth staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Quasi Adagio'. The measure numbers 295, 296, 297, and 298 are written above the staves. The dynamics are marked as follows: *pp* (pianissimo) at the beginning of measure 295, *p* (piano) at the beginning of measure 296, *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning of measure 297, and *mf* at the beginning of measure 298. The score ends with the instruction 'con Sord.' (con sordina) and a final *mf* dynamic.

A handwritten musical score for a piece marked "molto appassionato". The score is written on five staves. The first staff has a measure marker "300" in a box. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "f" (forte) and "ff" (fortissimo). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

Miloje Milojević wrote that in *Religiofonija*, Slavenski had 'used up an outer religious decor... a sound, which during the ritual is in service to religious ecstasy... resulting in a suite created from a sequence of purely musical and biographic miniatures'.¹⁰² This religious ecstasy in the fifth movement (*Muslimani*) evokes feelings of spontaneity and the presence of impulsive sensuality. A sequence of unresolved chords and a tense sound-world are the basic elements (a, b, c) of this section, resulting in a frantic state of chaos, where the text provides the overall religious/ritual characters (Ex. 11). A form of religious ecstasy and climax was often achieved in Slavenski's music by the use of repetition, which often resulted in a state of distortion, disintegration or disassociation - a state where expressionists could exhibit and reveal the very 'truth' of their inner feelings and perceptions.

With reference to the 'religious ecstasy', Slavenski used distortion as a means of creating an intense density of sound in his *Sonata Religiosa*, achieved through the simple accumulation of layers. This was accompanied by a strange vibration and intensity achieved by a constant pedal on the third organ manual which fabricated a sort of synthetic tension. From bar 210 onwards, the expressive intensity gradually augmented, and reached C, F sharp and D in all of the parts (b. 235-237), including the pedal and the first and third manuals in the organ part. Whilst on the one hand, Slavenski achieved this ritual ecstasy through distortion, on the other hand this state, reached through basic repetition, led to a

¹⁰² Milojević, M: 'Praizvedba Religiofonije', *Politika* 9354 [Belgrade] 4 June 1934.

Ex. 11: Religiofonija, Muslimani (bb. 21-31).

21 Andante ($\text{♩} = 54$) poco a poco accelerando

FL. I
FL. II

Tamb. picc.

Arpa

25

FL. I
FL. II

Tamb. picc.

Arpa

30

FL. I
FL. II

Tamb. picc.

Arpa

state of a typically expressionist disassociation from reality (see Ex. 1).¹⁰³ In the third movement of *Religiofonija - Budisti* - the text is not unified with music; rather it is an extension of it. The words are reduced to a phrase formula *Om Mani padme hûm* (A unique [self-governing] strength is in Lotus), which is repeated several hundred times throughout the movement. With these repetitions, the meaning and the clarity of the words are distorted, reinforced by the incantation of the text, and lead to a certain state of subconscious ecstasy.

All of these elements provided a grounding for Slavenski's relationship towards sound as one of the most personal, subjective and expressive qualities of his music. However, with Slavenski, it was not the case of clean or dry sound - a value in itself - as we may find with the composers of the Second Viennese School, for example.¹⁰⁴ He was intoxicated by a sensual and earthy sound, where he attempted to unite certain aspects of traditional experience (such as the subjective approach to composition, folk programme and techniques such as polytonality, bitonality, ostinati, exotic scales, polyphony) with the lucid indication of a new and contemporary approach to music (a move towards the objectivisation of content, unusual choice of instruments, quarter-tone experiments, experiments with acoustics and the harmonic-series).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ This led to many expressionist composers' interest in mysticism and the need to penetrate the 'unconscious', as Freud would have it.

¹⁰⁴ The more experimental composers argued that music is 'about' nothing at all; its sole concern is with *sound*, newly and freshly heard *as sound*, and *silence as silence*. In Schwartz Elliott and Childs Barney (eds): 'Introduction', *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1978), xvi.

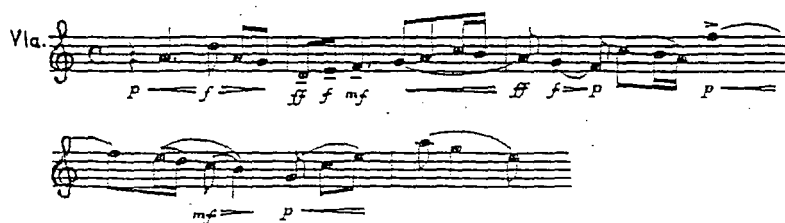
¹⁰⁵ This gradually led to experiments with electro acoustics, as was the case with *Chaos* (1932) and *Muzika* 36.

As has been suggested, the basic character of Slavenski's expressionism is a bifurcation between his overriding need to find a new musical language (which could be synthesised with the old and the ancient language) and the autonomy of melodic and rhythmic elements. We shall now proceed to examine the latter, in reference to the formal folk conceptions of 'singing' and 'dancing', - a contrast between two fundamental elements of folk tradition. This contrast is often evident in his piano music (*Sa Balkana*, *Jugoslovenska svita*), string quartets (first and third), large vocal and instrumental cycles (*Religiofonija*), concertos (*Koncert za violinu i orkestar*) or orchestral works (*Muzika 36*). It is dictated by his enduring need for ancient expression. The very nature of these elements suggests a need for a certain stability and structure (notably through rhythm), which may appear to be in contradiction to the expressionist necessities to shock and reveal the truth no matter how terrible or harrowing it might be. But this, it may be agreed, is purely superficial. In other words, 'singing' and 'dancing', for Slavenski represented *two* basic ways of portraying the Balkan mentality,¹⁰⁶ and these acted as the central axiom of his thinking rather than simply a structural paradigm. More often than not, Slavenski simply put a title of 'singing' or 'dancing' in his scores, which served as expression markings. They also provide a very flexible formal outline in which he was free to explore various sound colours and harmonies. This formal freedom, and his experiments with new sound resulted in melodic and rhythmic autonomy. The first one ('singing') was a result of unrestrained melody (governed by expression), which determined both vertical and horizontal structure; the second ('dancing') provided an unrestrained formal drive towards the climax, through superimposition and the repetition of various rhythmic cells.

¹⁰⁶ Bergamo, Marija: *Elementi expresionističke orijentacije*, 73.

'Singing', as the first unit of this bifurcation, elevated the melody to a position of superiority, be it through dense polyphonic interweaving, or through a single melodic line. Often it consisted of a sequence of intervals, which, as an autonomous element, escaped becoming absorbed by the harmony, and as an 'a priori-given' unit flourished through repetition and not development.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, melody (by which we imply themes and motives) is at the basis of all Slavenski's music; the harmony remains of secondary importance, and is a product of vertical structure, which is governed by the melody (the horizontal structure).¹⁰⁸ The melody can be diatonic, or sometimes, if the two (melody and accompaniment) are independent, bitonal or polytonal. It is rarely based on major or minor; rather it originates from modal, exotic or oriental scales (Exx. 12: a, b, c).

Ex. 12: a) The First String Quartet. I,



b) *Religiofonija, Jevreji*,



¹⁰⁷ Sedak, Eva: *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, 86.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*



c) *Religiofonija, Mulsimani* .



‘Dancing’, as the second element of this bifurcation, serves as an eminent contrast to the first one (‘singing’). Tonally it is different from the first one, often being bitonal or polytonal. It presents the rhythmic autonomy in most diverse ways, where a ‘rhythmic cell’ or ‘embryo’ is taken as an impetus and a moving force for the overall movement. These cells can be either an ostinato, a rhythmic variation, a change of metre, or various polyrhythmic combinations. In the fifth movement of *Religiofonija*, the whole second section is created from a development and superimposition of ostinati. The ending 4-voice ostinato’s main aim is a polyrhythmic structure. This is achieved by layering the groups of four, five and six quavers on top of each other (Ex. 11). The second movement of the Second String Quartet reached a climax half way through the movement; the transition point is the chromatic C/C sharp in bars 40-41, passing between the first and the second sections of this movement - *poco animato appassionato* to *poco crescendo ed agitato* - the second one having an imitative, almost stretto-like character. Different rhythmic possibilities of the main theme spread through all of the parts, reaching the summit in bar 46 (Ex. 13).

Ex. 13: Second String Quartet, II (bb. 40-51).

poco crescendo ed agitato

40

tr

p

pizz.

tr

mf

arco

ff

ff

ff

ff

50 *poco a poco diminuendo*

In the second movement of *Sa sela* (*Večernje pevanje*), motivic development replaces the theme, and creates an unstable atmosphere through layering, superimposition and the overlapping of these motivic elements. Variations of a theme in the cello and viola serve as a bridge between the two sections of this movement. The first one is Dorian, accompanied by a drone harmony on A flat minor (bass, cello and violin), and the flute's and clarinet's counterpoint, with its changeable meter (3/4, 3/4, 5/4), (Ex. 14). (The second (b. 39-66) has a pedal on B flat in the bass, and occasionally varies the polyphonic motive within the constant 4/4 measure alongside the growing polymodal combinations.) In addition, the first movement of the Second String Quartet exemplifies a clear polyrhythmic structure. These rhythms gradually accelerate in all three of the parts, aided by a simple motivic progression. What is more, this lifeless, motor-like material appears to condense the overall texture of the development section (Ex. 15).

Another element of the aforementioned bifurcation of 'singing' and 'dancing' as a formal structure, is the autonomy of the melodic and rhythmic elements. The melodic line is often unaccented rhythmically and has a free tempo. It is relatively independent from any accompanying part, and subject to its internal development; as such, its autonomy often decides the overall shape of the music, unless it is a case of melody dissolving into the overall homophonic structure, where the rhythmic autonomy determines the overall shape. This can either be achieved through imitation, or repetition with little or no motivic development.

Ex. 14: *Sa sela*, II (b.1-19).

Adagio cantabile

FL. *mf* *Intensivo*

Cl./B. *p*

Vn. *con Sordino* *p*

VI. *con Sordino* *p*

Cb. *con Sordino (ad lib.)* *pizz.* *arco* *fffz* *p*

Ex. 15: Second String Quartet, I (b.212-219).

molto agitato

sfz *p cresc.*

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

The first movement of this quartet, the '*Pevanje*' ('singing'), is a typical example of Slavenski's free development within a framework of strict polyphony. The mid-section, *con dinamico spontano*, is a double fugue. Throughout the first movement, regardless of horizontal or vertical structuring, everything originates from the main theme (melody). Monothematicism as a compositional technique was often used by Slavenski, and in this quartet it is primarily due to the highly concentrated theme, which, as an autonomous line dominates the general harmony of this texture. It is precisely this leading thematic role which provides melodic autonomy and shapes this movement as a strong formal fugue with a homogeneous character. The theme is 12 bars long, and after bar 7 acts as a revisiting counterpoint to other subsidiary contrapuntal strands. The construction of the first part of this theme (its intervals, seen as motivic units) and the way they link to each other, appear as a particularly appropriate substructure for a thick polyphonic texture - a principle for linking the thematic segments. The energy of melodic autonomy places the theme outside the parameters of strict polyphony. The intervallic diminution and the gradual disappearance of thematicism in the cello, viola and second violin, which are incongruous with the first violin's screams, stretch the boundaries of polyphony even further. The lack of the theme (b. 29-35) and the prevalence of triadic structure derived from the main notes of the theme (cello), threatens the weakening of polyphonic texture. This climax is followed by a gradual converging of the individual parts, by means of reduced intervals, where the remnants of the theme in viola are reduced to chromatic clusters (Ex. 16).

Ex. 16: First String Quartet, I (bb. 21-32).

poco a poco cresc. molto e intensivo

Handwritten musical score for the first system of Ex. 16, measures 21-24. It features four staves with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*. The tempo/mood instruction *poco a poco cresc. molto e intensivo* is written above the first staff.

25 *poco a poco accel.*

Handwritten musical score for the second system of Ex. 16, measures 25-28. It features four staves with musical notations and dynamic markings like *ff* and *f*. The instruction **25** *poco a poco accel.* is written above the first staff.

estatico

Handwritten musical score for the third system of Ex. 16, measures 29-32. It features four staves with musical notations and dynamic markings like *sffz*. The instruction *estatico* is written above the first staff.



In terms of melodic autonomy, this movement serves as an eminent example of (i) diminution, augmentation, and motivic development which are all achieved through the thematicism of all structural elements and (ii) the theme's structure (based on thirds and fifths) understood as a chain of possible tonal centres which decide the overall tonality, where every note can become a source of a new triad.¹⁰⁹ Finally, one of the best examples of rhythmic impetus governing the overall form is *Čačansak igra*¹¹⁰ (very similar to

¹⁰⁹ Bujić, Bojan: 'Tematska struktura u Prvom gudačkom kvartetu Josipa Slavenskog', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 14 (Ljubljana, 1978), 79-80.

¹¹⁰ This piece is discussed as it forms a part of later *Pesme i igre sa Balkana*, 1927, and corresponds to the period of works which are suggested to be discussed in relationship to Slavenski's expressionism.

Bugarska igra). As implied by its title 'Igra' (dance), it is inspired by a folk-dance *Kolo* (the reel dance). The complete structure exhibits a sort of 'rhapsodic uniformity'.¹¹¹ The overall basic structure is six bars of 2/4, which are repeated four times, every time slightly embellished harmonically, and serve as the underlying force of the movement (Exx. 17: a, b, c, d, e).

Ex. 17: Čačanska igra, a) (b. 1-6),

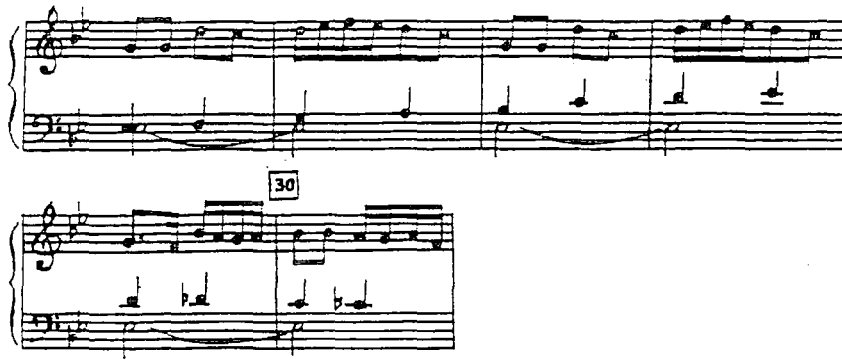


b) (b. 13-18),

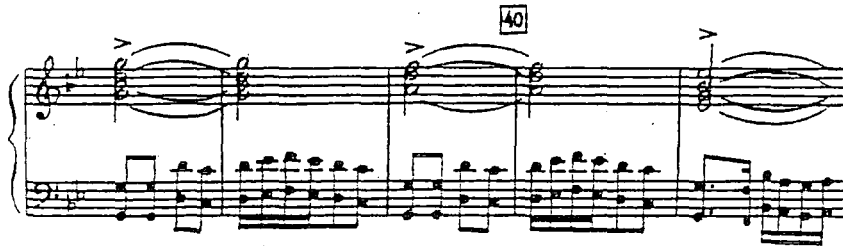


¹¹¹ Sedak, Eva: *Josip Štolcer Slavenski*, 38.

c) (b. 25-30),



d) (b. 37-41).



Hence, the main theories of expressionism have been examined in this chapter, with their particular reference to former Yugoslav musical culture. This contextual sketch has provided a backdrop for a study of some key elements in Slavenski's music, which could be taken as essentially expressionist. Within this fabric of Slavenski's technical and stylistic approach to composition, patterns of intuitive *modus operandi* and folk paradigms of singing and dancing were created, and their application as 'expressionist' media, with particular reference to the state of 'ecstasy' and 'climax', typical of the expressionism.

CONCLUSION

The study began with a contextual examination of Croatian and Serbian musical culture during the nineteenth century, providing a more immediate context for Slavenski through the biographical sketch and through engaging with certain critical and analytical minutiae of Slavenski's work in relation to folklore, his theory of 'Astroacoustics' and expressionism. This has proved to be a valuable exercise, as it not only examined the musical culture and its relevant issues during the nineteenth century in the light of politics and nationalism, but it also created a backdrop for a greater understanding of Slavenski and his work. Furthermore, it discussed Slavenski's position in the history of former Yugoslav music as a composer who attempted to synthesise tradition and the avant-garde, and suggested to what extent he might have, or might not have succeeded in this 'synthesis'.

This work has hoped to provide a background for a certain pattern which underlined the emergence of nationalism, and its metamorphosis during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The lack of indigenous Yugoslav music compelled Slavenski and his colleagues to look outside the parameters of their homeland, whilst still turning to their native folk music as the basic means of musical composition. It is precisely this unique synthesis of the aspect of native folk music and the intuitively expressive search for a 'new' and 'pure' sound which furnished Slavenski's music with a unique and personal character. This character exhibits the residues of folk paradigms - 'pjevanje' i 'igranje' ('singing' and 'dancing'), harnessed to his quest for a 'new' and 'contemporary' musical language more aligned to its Western musical counterparts.

This study claims no exclusivity or completion; rather it hopes to open the windows for further research, as well as a more critical and analytical approach to Yugoslav musicology and in particular Slavenski. After all, Slavenski himself suggested a need for critical engagement with the musical material: 'I am not ashamed of folk melody, in the same way as I am not ashamed of the fact that I was a baker's apprentice ...but I would be ashamed if I was to misuse the folk melody - as if I were to use a supreme quality flour, to make a tasteless bread.'¹¹²

¹¹² Hercegonija, Nikola: 'Sećanja na Josipa Slavenksog', *Zvuk*, 66 (Belgrade, 1966), 11.

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List of Works

Date written	Publication date	Original title	Publication title	English translation	Publisher	Scored for
1913-1921	1926	<i>Što bo tebe ljubček troštal/Ko bo tebe troštal</i>	<i>Wer wird dein Trost sein?</i>	<i>Who Comforted You?</i>	Schott	mixed choir (4-voice)
1916 (1921)	1926	<i>Voda zvira iz kamena/ Voda zvira</i>	<i>Wasser quillt - Voda zvira, (Zwölf Volkslieder für gemischten Chor)</i>	<i>Water Springs from the Stone</i>	Schott	mixed choir (4-voice)
	1951		<i>Voda zvira</i>	<i>Water Springs</i>	Prosveta (Belgrade)	
1910-1917	1925	<i>Sa Balkana, Pevanja - Igranja</i>	<i>Danse Balkanique/ Zagorski tamburaši</i>	<i>From the Balkans, 'singing' - 'dancing'</i>	Zenit (Međunarodni časopis: Belgrade)	piano
	1926		<i>Aus dem Balkan; Gesänge und Tänze</i>		Schott	
	1983		<i>SDJŠS, sv.1, Klavirska djela</i>		DSH i UKS	
1918	1943	<i>Tri tičice (improvizacija na narodne Jugoslavenske popjevke)</i>	<i>Tri tičice</i>	<i>Three [Little] Birds</i>	S-Ž	mezzo soprano and piano
1921	1926	<i>Jugoslovenska suita</i>	<i>Südslawische suite für Klavier, zu 2 Händen</i>	<i>Yugoslavian suite</i>	Schott	piano
	1969				UKS (reprint of Schott's publication)	
	1983		<i>SDJŠS, sv.1, Klavirska djela</i>		DSH-UKS	
1921	1926	<i>'Ljubica ljubezna/ružica rumena': 'De si bila ružica rumena' (De se bila)</i>	<i>Zwei Liebeslieder für gemischten Chor, Nr. 2.- 'Röslein rot'; 'Sag wo warst du'?</i>	<i>Two love songs for mixed choir, 'Red Rose'; 'If Only You Were'.</i>	Schott	mixed choir
1922	1926	<i>Sastali se čapljanski tatari (čapljanski tatari)</i>	<i>Tschapljaner Tataren - Čapljinski Tatari</i>	<i>Čapljan Tatars</i>	Schott	mixed choir (2-voice)

1922	1926	<i>Romarska popevka (molitva praslavena, romarska)</i>	<i>Romarska popevka - Wallfahrtslied</i>	<i>Roma Song (Ancient Slav Prayer, Roman)</i>	Schott	female choir (3- voice)
	1926		<i>Dva hora a cappella (Voda zvira, romarska)</i>	<i>Two unaccompanied choirs (Water Springs; Roman)</i>	Južnoslovenski pevački savez (Belgrade)	
1916- 1923	1926	<i>Iz Jugoslavije</i>	<i>Aus Südslawien, Gesänge und Tänze</i>	<i>From Yugoslavia</i>	Schott	piano
	1983		<i>SDJŠS, sv.1, Klavirska djela 1</i>	<i>'SDJŠS', Piano Works 1</i>	DSH-UKS	
1923	1926	<i>Gudački kvartet, br.1</i>	<i>Streichquartett Opus 3</i>	<i>First String quartet, Op.3</i>	Schott	string quartet
1924	1926	<i>Sonata</i>	<i>Sonate für Klavier</i>		Schott	piano
	1971				MS (Belgrade), reprint of Schott's publication	
	1983		<i>SDJŠ, sv.1, Klavirska djela 1</i>	<i>'SDJŠS, Piano Works 1</i>	DSH-UKS	
1924	1926	<i>Slavenska sonata</i>	<i>Slawische Sonate opus 5</i>	<i>Slav sonata Op.5</i>	Schott	violin and piano
	1970				SOKOJ (reprint of Schott's publication)	
1924	1926	<i>Molitva dorbim očima</i>	<i>Gebet zu den guten Augen-Molitva dobrim očima</i>	<i>A Prayer to Good Eyes</i>	Schott	mixed choir (8- voice)
1924	1925	<i>Nikad</i>		<i>Never</i>	Zora, Pevačko društvo (Karlovac)	mixed choir (4- voice)
1919- 1925	1926	<i>Sonata Religiosa</i>	<i>Sonata religiosa, Opus 7</i>		Schott	violin and organ
1925	1926	<i>Jugoslavenska pesma i igra</i>	<i>Südslawischer Gesang und Tanz</i>	<i>Yugoslavian song and dance</i>	Schott	violin and piano
	1969		<i>Jugoslavenska pesma i igra</i>		UKS (Belgrade)	
1925	1926	<i>Sa sela</i>	<i>Aus dem Dorfe, Opus 6</i>	<i>From the Village</i>	Schott	quintet; flute, clarinet, violin, viola, bass
	1983		<i>SDJŠS, sv.11</i>		DSH-UKS	

1924-1925	1926	<i>Ftiček veli da se ženil bude/Ftiček veli</i>	<i>Vöflein spricht - Ftiček veli da se ženil bude,</i>	<i>A Little Bird Says</i>	Schott	female choir (4-voice)
1927	1927	<i>Pesme i igre sa Balkana</i>	<i>Das neue Klavierbuch (part I, mov.4-6; part II, mov.6)</i>	<i>Songs and Dances from the Balkans, I and II</i>	Schott	piano
	1928		<i>Tänze und Lieder aus dem Balkan für Klavier</i>		Schott	
	1969		<i>Pesme i igre sa Balkana</i>		UKS (Belgrade)	
	1971				MS (reprint of UKS publication)	
1926-1927	1928	<i>Balkanofonija</i>	<i>Balkanophonie, für Orchester</i>	<i>Balkan Symphony</i>	Schott	Orchestra
1927	1928	<i>Šest narodnih popevaka</i>	<i>Sechs Volkslieder für gemischten chor a cappella</i>	<i>Six Folk Songs for Mixed Choir</i>	Schott	mixed choir
	1929		<i>Šest narodnih popevaka</i>		Prvo Beogradsko pevačko društvo	
1927	1928	<i>Kolo</i>	<i>Kolo-Serbischer Reigen</i>	<i>'Kolo' (The Reel)</i>	Schott	female choir (2-voice) and string quintet
1928	1930	<i>Gudački kvartet br.2, Lirski</i>	<i>Lyrisches streichquartett, Opus 11.</i>	<i>Second string quartet. Lyrical</i>	Schott	String quartet
1928	1933-1935	<i>Dječja igra, ringe raja</i>	<i>Dječja igra (iz mog djetinjstva)</i>	<i>Children's Game (From my Childhood)</i>	Gričica (Zagreb)	piano and voice
1928	1933-1935	<i>Uspavanka, zibu haju</i>	<i>Uspavanka (narodna iz Međimurja)</i>	<i>A Lullaby (Međimurjean)</i>	Gričica (Zagreb)	piano and voice
1929	1930	<i>Grad Gradile</i>	<i>Grad gradile-Vurg erbauen Zauberfrauen</i>	<i>They Were Building a City</i>	Schott	mixed choir (4-voice)
	1930		<i>Dve narodne za mešoviti hor</i>	<i>Two Folk [Songs] for Mixed choir</i>	Južnoslovenski pevački savez	
	1932		<i>Grad gradile, Dedo i mečkite</i>		'Junošenski drugar' (Sofia)	
1929	1930	<i>Ave Maria</i>	<i>Niz 'Ave Maria', sv. I</i>		Sveti Ksaver (Zagreb)	soprano, violin and organ

1930	1983	<i>Duhački kvintet</i>	<i>SDJŠS, sv.12,</i>	<i>Wind Quintet</i>	DSH-UKS	wind quintet
1933	1934	<i>Nevesto tanka/Nevesto tanka lele visoka</i>	<i>Nevesto tanka, lele visoka</i>		'Junošenski drugar' (Sofia)	mixed choir (2-voice)
1933	1934	<i>Čije je ono devojče</i>	<i>Čije je ono devojče</i>	<i>Whose Girl is That?</i>	'Junošenski drugar' (Sofia)	mixed choir (2-voice)
1933	1934	<i>Zagorska pesma/mek'nite se vi gore/dižite se, planine</i>	<i>Dižite se planine</i>	<i>Rise You Mountains</i>	'Junošenski drugar' (Sofia)	mixed choir (4-voice)
	1933-1935		<i>Zagorska pjesma</i>	<i>Song from Zagorje</i>	Grlica (Zagreb)	
	1939		<i>Zagorska pesma</i>		Južnoslovenski pevački savez	
1934	1934	<i>Kog ćete nam dati</i>	<i>Dečja igra</i>	<i>Who Will You Give Us,(Children's game)</i>	'Cvijeće Zuzorić' (Belgrade)	children's choir (2-voice)
1926-1934	1967	<i>Religiofonija / Simfonija Orijenta</i>	<i>Simfonija orijenta</i>	<i>Symphony of the Orient</i>	UKS (Belgrade)	orchestra
1937-1938	1961	<i>Balkanske igre/ Četiri Balkanske igre</i>	<i>Četiri balkanske igre</i>	<i>Balkan Dances/ Four Balkan Dances</i>	Sokoj (Zagreb)	orchestra
1916-1940	1955	<i>Pesme moje majke</i>	<i>Pesme moje majke</i>	<i>My Mother's Songs</i>	Sokoj (Belgrade)	voice and string quartet
1941-1942	1946	<i>Pesma malog pastira</i>	<i>Pesma malog pastira</i>	<i>A Little Shephard's Song</i>	Prosveta (Belgrade)	violin (cello) and piano
1944	1944	<i>Heroj Tito</i>	<i>Heroj Tito</i>	<i>Tito The Hero</i>	Gradski kulturni odbor (Belgrade)	mixed choir and orchestra (opt.)
	1945		<i>Pesma radu i heroj Tito</i>		Prvi maj (Belgrade)	
	1949				Novo pokolenje (Belgrade)	
1941-1944	1950	<i>Domovina/ Simfonijska suita</i>	<i>Brankovo kolo</i>	<i>Homeland; Branko's 'Kolo'</i>	Pér pioner (Pristina)	choir (2-voice) and orchestra
1944-1945	1946	<i>Narodne partizanske pjesme/ Partizanska suita</i>	<i>Partizanske narodne pesme</i>	<i>National Partisan Songs</i>	Pionirski rukovodilac (1947)	mixed choir (4-voice)
1945	1946	<i>Da nam živi rad</i>	<i>Pesma radu i Heroj Tito</i>	<i>May Work Live On</i>	Naša Pesma (Belgrade)	mixed choir and orchestra

1945	1945	<i>Druže Tito ljubičice bela</i>	<i>Druže Tito ljubičice bela</i>	<i>Comrade Tito, White Lilac</i>	Prvi maj (Belgrade)	mixed choir and orchestra
1945	1946	<i>Pjesma narodne omladine</i>	<i>Pjesma narodne omladine</i>	<i>National Youth Song</i>	Gradski kulturni odbor (Belgrade)	mixed choir and orchestra or piano
	1947				Prosveta (Belgrade)	
1947	1948	<i>Pesma graditelja pruge</i>	<i>Pesma graditelja</i>	<i>Railway-Builders' Song</i>	Pionirski rukovodilac (Belgrade)	mixed choir and piano or orchestra
1947	1947	<i>Udarnička pjesma</i>	<i>Udarnička pesma</i>	<i>Song of an Attack</i>	Pionirski rukovodilac (Belgrade)	mixed choir and piano or orchestra

Notes on abbreviations:

OS	Ostavština Slavenski (Slavenski archive, Faculty of Music, the Belgrade University)
SCHOTT	B. Schot's Söhne, Mainz (Frankfurt)
SŽ	Sedak-Živković (Thematic Classification of Slavenski's work, in Sedak's <i>Josip Štolcer_Slavenski</i> , Vol. 2, Zagreb: MIC, 1984)
DSH	Društvo skladatelja Hrvatske, Zagreb (Croatian Composers' Society)
UKS	Udruženje kompozitora Srbije, Belgrade (Serbian Composers' Society)
SOKOJ	Savez organizacija kompozitora Jugoslavije (Association of Organisations of Yugoslav Composers)
SDJŠS	Sabrana djela Josipa Štolcera Slavenskog (Complete Works of Josip Štolcer Slavenski)

