

Sounding the turn to the West:  
Music and diplomacy of Yugoslavia after the split with  
the USSR and the countries of “people’s democracy”  
(1949–1952)

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My grasp of the research area of music and diplomacy is grounded on the experience that I gained through the realization of a project investigating the Belgrade Choral Society’s concert tours abroad at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> There, I explored how music was incorporated into the diplomatic strategies that the Kingdom of Serbia practiced in its cross-border relationships with empires, states, cities and ethnic communities of the Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Ottoman Europe of the time. Focusing on a new topic in this article, my approach to music in diplomatic interactions remains the same line. It is placed in the context of cultural diplomacy and poses questions about the involvement of music in policies and practices of cross-border networking, exchange, representation, negotiation and mediation, while encompassing different state officials and non-officials, groups, institutions and organizations, as well as both formal and informal, elitist and non-elitist events and activities. Such an approach shares its interests with a spectrum of contemporary studies that open the space for investigating diplomacy as a social and cultural practice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Biljana Milanović, “Musical Representation of Mokranjac and the Belgrade Choral Society as a Form of Cultural Diplomacy,” in *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856–1914): The Belgrade Choral Society Foreign Concert Tours*, edited by Biljana Milanović (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA and Serbian Musicological Society, 2014), 11–42.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Music and Diplomacy from the Early Modern Era to the Present*, edited by Rebekah Ahrendt, Mark Ferraguto, Damien Mahiet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Houssine Alloul, Michael Auwers, “What is (New) Diplomatic History?,” *Journal of Belgian History* 48/4 (2018): 112–122; Cécile Prévost-Thomas, Frédéric Ramel, “Introduction: Understanding Musical Diplomacies—Movements on the ‘Scenes’,” in *International Relations, Music and Diplomacy, Sounds and Voices on the International Stage*, edited by Frédéric Ramel, Cécile Prévost-Thomas (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1–19; Giles Scott-Smith, Kenneth Weisbrode, “Editorial,” *Diplomatica: A Journal of Diplomacy and Society* 1/1 (2019): 1–4.

The research of music and diplomacy in socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991)<sup>3</sup> is an extensive, complex and interdisciplinary task that musicologists have not dealt with so far. My work focuses on the period after the conflict with the Cominform (1948), when the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY), faced with the problem of political and economic isolation and complete severance of relations with the Soviet Union and other countries of "people's democracies," made a strategic turn to the countries of parliamentary democracy. Music gained a significant role as a mediator in diplomatic efforts to renew broken ties with the West. Within the framework of the new international cooperation with a number of countries, various types of musical activities were conceived in a relatively short time and already realized in the period of 1950–1952.

In the text, I deal with the role of music in the realization of the new diplomatic policy of turning to the West. I am primarily dedicated to the contextualization of musical activities, not only with respect to the foreign, but also the internal policy of the FPRY, its cultural policy, as well as certain ideological and aesthetic views on music in Yugoslavia.<sup>4</sup>

#### Visions for cultural (and musical) activities in the new diplomatic agenda

In the regrouping of power after the WWII, Yugoslavia openly sided with ideological like-minded countries, supporting the Soviet Union in the conflict with the capitalist West. Yugoslavia also opted for the Soviet social and cultural model internally, and in the field of art, it accepted the doctrine of socialist realism. The conflict with the Cominform in 1948, the uncertainty of survival due to the severance of communication with the Eastern Bloc, the real danger of a Red Army intervention, and finally the decision to accept military and economic aid from Western countries and the United States, proved to be crucial preconditions for change in the long-term perspective. During the 1950s, Yugoslavia built its own

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<sup>3</sup> The official name of socialist Yugoslavia changed several times. With the Constitution of January 31, 1946, Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFY), which was created during the war (1943), ceased to exist, and the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) was established. With the Constitution of April 7, 1963, the name of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia changed to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

<sup>4</sup> I based my research on the study of archival material, supplemented by various secondary sources. The archive fonds of the FPRY Government's Council for Science and Culture [Komitet za nauku i kulturu vlade FNRJ], which was in charge of scientific and cultural relations with foreign countries at the federal level, served as the main analytical material (Archives of Yugoslavia /Arhiv Jugoslavije, AJ / The FPRY Government's Council for Science and Culture, 317-5-12). A two-volume collection of selected archival material related to the cultural policy of Yugoslavia until 1952 was also useful: Branka Doknić, Milić F. Petrović, Ivan Hofman (Eds.), *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1945–1952. Zbornik dokumenata*, Vols. 1–2 (Belgrade: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2009).

version of socialism, which at the same time represented new international positioning of the state. It was the only socialist country that was acceptable in the eyes of the West, and it gradually renewed its ties with the countries of the Eastern Bloc, but maintained a distance from favoring any of the two sides in the Cold War division, while focusing on the struggle of “small” nations for independence, peaceful resolution of crises, and strengthening the role of the United Nations. The country got closer to many countries of the so-called Third World, and became one of the main factors in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (1961). At the same time, the processes of reshaping politics, society and culture took place within the state itself through the rejection of Soviet models, weakening of dogmatism and party control, introduction of public property, decentralization and creating a model of self-government, as well as liberalization in art, moving away from the initial framework of socialist realism.<sup>5</sup>

The beginnings of the liberalization of cultural policy in the country itself were gradual and uneven. The paradigm of socialist realism in music was still dominant immediately after the break-up with the Eastern Bloc. Music production abounded in mass songs, cantatas and remakes of folk songs. The prevailing attitude was that new music should be “healthy,” “objective,” appropriate to the socialist rebirth of the country and accessible to the masses. It was supposed to resist “foreign influences” resolutely, as well as “modernist trends,” “idealistic views,” “formalism,” “subjectivism,” “bourgeois decadence” and “constructivism.”<sup>6</sup> From the beginning of the fifties, compositional-stylistic and aesthetic elements of moderated modernism started to appear slowly, and although social realism remained in place for some time, it started fading gradually and disappeared by the end of the decade.<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt that

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<sup>5</sup> On the abovementioned changes in Yugoslavia’s foreign, domestic and cultural policy, see Ljubodrag Dimić, *Agitprop kultura. Agitpropovska faza kulturne politike u Srbiji 1945–1952* [Agitprop Culture. The Agitprop Phase of Cultural Policy in Serbia 1945–1952] (Belgrade: Rad, 1988); Vladimir Petrović, *Jugoslavija stupa na Bliski istok: stvaranje jugoslovenske bliskoistočne politike 1946–1956* [Yugoslavia Enters the Middle East: The Creation of the Yugoslav Middle East Policy 1946–1956] (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2007); Slobodan Selinić (Ed.), *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961* [Foreign Policy of Yugoslavia 1950–1961] (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju, 2008); Dragomir Bondžić, *Misao bez pasoša: međunarodna saradnja Beogradskog univerziteta 1945–1960* [Thought Without a Passport: International Cooperation of the University of Belgrade 1945–1960] (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011); Vladimir L. Cvetković, *Pogled iza gvozdene zavese. Jugoslovenska politika prema zemljama narodne demokratije u susjedstvu 1953–1958. godina* [A Look behind the Iron Curtain. Yugoslav Policy Toward the Countries of People’s Democracy in the Neighborhood 1953–1958] (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2013); Branka Doknić, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije 1946–1963* [Cultural Policy of Yugoslavia 1946–1963] (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Melita Milin, *Tradicionalno i novo u srpskoj muzici posle Drugog svetskog rata (1945–1965)* [The Traditional and the New in Serbian Music after the WWII (1945–1965)] (Belgrade: Muzikološki institut SANU, 1998), 31–46.

<sup>7</sup> On sorealism in music, see Milin, *Tradicionalno i novo*, 14–46. On the different standpoints on moderate/moderated modernism in Serbian music, see Melita Milin, “Etape modernizma u srpskoj

the restoration of the severed ties with the West was one of the pivotal influences in abandoning the rigid dogmatic principles and modernizing musical life.

After 1949, the Ministry of Science and Culture of the FPRY<sup>8</sup> started considering intensively how to place Yugoslav culture in the countries of Western and Northern Europe, as well as other continents.<sup>9</sup> From the beginning, activities in various fields of culture, art and science were both considered and carried out, with the aim of creating a broad platform that would enable the self-representation of the state, international exchange of experiences and the application of new knowledge for the benefit of internal changes and improvement.<sup>10</sup> The previous collaborative relations in culture, which primarily focused on the countries of “people’s democracy,” were viewed with self-criticism. Own mistakes were analyzed in parallel with examining the interest of foreign countries to familiarize themselves with Yugoslavia. It was pointed out that there had been no deliberate cultural and propaganda activities in the previous period, that the exchange of artists took place “mathematically,” mostly “based on reciprocity,” which often did not leave room for choosing appropriate artists and representative cultural content that would best represent the country.<sup>11</sup>

The first elaborations on the types of cultural activity in the West were made under the pressure of the blockade and strong negative campaign of the Cominform, which was aimed at destroying Yugoslavia’s reputation in all areas. They were based on the need to emphasize the distancing from the Soviet experience, as

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muzici [Stages of modernism in Serbian music],” *Muzikologija* 6 (2006): 93–116; Ivana Medić, “The Ideology of Moderated Modernism in Serbian Music and Musicology,” *Muzikologija* 7 (2007): 279–294; Vesna Mikić, “Aspects of (Moderate) Modernism,” in *Rethinking Musical Modernism*, edited by Dejan Despić, Melita Milin (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute of Musicology SASA, 2008), 187–193.

<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Science and Culture of the FPRY, which included the Department for International Scientific and Cultural Links, existed until May 31, 1950. Its tasks were transferred to the Department for International Cultural Links of the already mentioned FPRY Government’s Council for Science and Culture, which was operational from May 24, 1950, until January 15, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> See AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations. On forms of culture and science propaganda abroad. I. Cultural relations with foreign countries. II Scientific relations with foreign countries, [1949], Belgrade; Work plan of the Department for International Scientific and Cultural Links for 1950, s. a., Belgrade; A note on experiences in the field of our cultural propaganda abroad (our shortcomings), January 10, 1950, Belgrade.

<sup>10</sup> The work within the cultural sector comprised of different activities in the fields of literature, fine arts, art music, stage arts and folk dance ensembles, including arts education practices and the field of media exchange and propaganda (the press, radio shows, records, film). The sector of scientific relations with foreign countries shared certain activities with the Academic Council of the FPRY, and included the exchange of scientific literature, exchange of scientists, specializations, scholarships and student exchanges, as well as Slavic seminars and institutes.

<sup>11</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, On forms of culture and science propaganda abroad. Direct insight into certain aspects of cultural, educational and scientific exchange of Yugoslavia with foreign countries in the period up to 1948 can be gained on the basis of archival documents published in Doknić, Petrović, Hofman, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije*, Vol. 2, 233–302.

well as stress the country's own anti-fascist legitimacy and consistency with the original postulates of Marxism and Leninism. The victorious model of direct war experience was also projected in the field of culture and exchange with the world. It was emphasized that "we should actively participate in the general ideological struggle on the cultural front," that "in that struggle, Yugoslavia occupies the same place and role as it had in the general revolutionary struggle," and that "this part of our country's international contribution [...] has not been in our mind until recently when we were closely tied to the countries of people's democracies and withdrew from the European and non-European fronts of struggle."<sup>12</sup>

On the same basis, the tasks of scientific and cultural ties with foreign countries were formulated, which in this early phase reflected the increased caution and distrust toward the international community, but also clearly pointed to the policy of disagreement with the bloc division. While planning the activities for 1950, the following three general tasks were highlighted:

*1. Inform foreign countries about events related to the cultural and scientific development in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, and thus spread the truth about the construction of socialism in it, because socialist upgrading, which foreigners will get to know about through such activities, is a result of the socialist basis;*

*2. Such efforts require initiative and consistent participation at the front of the ideological struggle, directing activity against reactionary tendencies of capitalist countries, as well as against non-Marxist, neo-pragmatist positions taken by the hegemony of the USSR and countries of people's democracies in the field of culture and science;*

*3. Acquaint our country with the development of science and culture abroad and advanced ideas reflected through such development.*

*Such activities will result in breaking the isolation in the scientific and cultural field that the leaders of the USSR and the countries of people's democracies intend to impose, and will contribute to a more comprehensive development of our science and culture on the one hand, and spreading the truth about our country on the other.*<sup>13</sup>

The mentioned distrust, but also the strengthened control were evident in these early projections of international cultural and scientific cooperation. For example, a visit of Yugoslav artists abroad was viewed with a dose of suspicion: "The basic question that always arises in connection with these visits is the possibility for

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<sup>12</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, On forms of culture and science propaganda abroad.

<sup>13</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, Work plan of the Department for International Scientific and Cultural Links for 1950.

artists to stay abroad. It is the greatest concern. This fear has prevailed so far [...].<sup>14</sup> It was common to form lists of artists who, in addition to highly professional criteria, also passed the ideological assessment, but even such a typically agitprop control practice could not be a guarantee against the possibility of undesired emigration.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, however, international relations in culture were outlined as one of the priorities of the new course of Yugoslavia from its outset, so it was necessary to act effectively in the direction of organizing international cooperation and better self-representation abroad. This also meant a very rapid weakening of rigid dogmatic controls and the emergence of certain aspects of liberalization and decentralization in the implementation of the ideas of new cultural diplomacy. Thus, republic-level ministries, professional art institutions, specific cultural and art associations, as well as individuals were involved in the planning and realization of international cultural cooperation. Foreign cooperation and visits became possible even without the federal ministry, i.e. the Council for Science and Culture, playing the role of arbiter. At the same time, foreign diplomatic representatives in the country and Yugoslav representatives abroad were particularly active in bolstering cultural cooperation, along with various organizations such as the British Council, the Yugoslav–British Friendship Society, the Austrian–Yugoslav Cultural Relations Society, the Yugoslav Information Center in New York, as well as representatives and managers of foreign festivals, art institutions and independent foreign impresarios. The spreading of this network, which grew denser over time, implied at least two aspects that influenced the gradual establishment of a more relaxed attitude toward creativity and artists. The first referred to the respect for a professional opinion, talent and quality that was necessary to acquire a new position in the eyes of the Western, capitalist world. The second pointed to the adjustment to the ways this world functioned, that is, the adoption of specific business models in the organization, presentation and realization of the planned propaganda tasks.

Already in the earliest projections of such a diplomatic penetration into the West, music was assessed as the branch of art that offered the most comprehensive propaganda possibilities. It seems that art music could not compete only with the promotion of folk dance ensembles, which most easily penetrated the foreign musical scene and quickly became a commercial product of Yugoslav culture.<sup>16</sup> Deliberations of artistic activities in the mentioned early texts started with a statement that “the (p)lan of cultural propaganda” in previous years “did

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> In the research of the archival material, I did not come across any data that would indicate a specific case of using artistic performances abroad to flee the country. However, such cases are reported in the literature. See, for example, Oskar Danon, *Ritmovi nemira* (zabeležila Svjetlana Hribar) [Rhythms of Restlessness (recorded by Svjetlana Hribar)] (Belgrade: Beogradska filharmonija, 2005), 154–155, 234, 235.

<sup>16</sup> On the guest appearances of Yugoslav folk dance ensembles after the breakup with the Soviet Union, see Ivan Hofman, “Uloga muzičkog folkloru u spoljnoj politici socijalističke Jugoslavije 1950–1952. [The

not exist at all,” with the following criticism pronounced: the contents that could be promoted, or where and how to act was not considered; there was a mistaken belief that the artistic level of Yugoslav composers, reproduction and other artists “did not match the international competition”; the “extensive cultural heritage of our peoples” remained “completely unutilized.”<sup>17</sup> That is why the agenda of the new cultural propaganda envisaged multiple types of musical activities to be realized through the promotion of the country’s musicians and musical works abroad, guest appearances of foreign musicians in Yugoslavia, the participation of Yugoslav representatives in international music festivals and competitions, as well as various other practices such as broadcasts of Yugoslav music on foreign radio stations.

The plans envisaged that performances abroad should be of high quality and should contribute to the professional development of guest artists, their affirmation in the European framework, as well as the cultural affirmation of the country. Moreover, the tours were to be carefully planned and organized through Yugoslav diplomatic missions in other countries and the state concert agency. Performances on musicians’ own initiative were not excluded, but were not recommended, because artists, as it was pointed out, were satisfied with “being paid little by different agencies” and holding “performances at unrepresentative venues,” which is “bad for the reputation of the artist and the country.”<sup>18</sup> The plans claim that “an artist’s name is built gradually, that an artist should be launched while he is still young, that he should be helped, skillfully placed and that connections should be established for him,” and confidently conclude that “a whole range of our young artists can create solid artistic prestige soon.”<sup>19</sup>

The idea of promoting Yugoslav composers’ works was emphasized in the projections of musical activity abroad. It was especially stressed in the earliest such plan, where the idea was present in every activity, from foreign performances of music by local artists and specially organized concerts abroad to radio stations in different countries and efforts to “get [...] certain performances of our music introduced into their programs.” At the same time, the plan was for all foreign musicians visiting the FPRY to get acquainted with the music by Yugoslav authors, and for a certain priority to be given to those who want to perform and propagate it. Another part of the plans was to explore the possibility of finding “friendly foreign musicologists” interested in writing “about our music.”<sup>20</sup>

Insisting on works by Yugoslav authors was not surprising if we keep in mind that several representative concerts of Yugoslav music were held in Rome,

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role of musical folklore in the foreign policy of the socialist Yugoslavia 1950–1952],” in *Spoljna politika Jugoslavije 1950–1961*, edited by Slobodan Selinić (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju, 2008), 437–456.

<sup>17</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, A note on experiences in the field of our cultural propaganda abroad.

<sup>18</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, On forms of culture and science propaganda abroad.

<sup>19</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, A note on experiences in the field of our cultural propaganda abroad.

<sup>20</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, On forms of culture and science propaganda abroad.

Vienna, Bern and London in late 1949, about which the professional public in the country was informed in early 1950.<sup>21</sup> Concerts were organized by the Yugoslav embassies these cities in celebration of Republic Day, November 29. This was the most important public holiday in the FPRY, which symbolized the authenticity of the Yugoslav victory over fascism, and was celebrated abroad with works by contemporary Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian composers in collaborative performances of Yugoslav and foreign musicians.<sup>22</sup> The idea of putting art in the place of political speeches on such occasions proved to be a well-devised step, which created an image of a progressive socialist country among officials and the public, unburdened by the ballast of ideology.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the performances themselves made positive impressions. The evaluations of interpretative abilities of young Yugoslav musicians were exceptional and often expressed in superlatives. The critical reviews of the performed works were mostly affirmative, and indicated great interest in learning about the composing traditions of Yugoslavia, represented in these performances by romantic and moderated modernist, mostly folklore-inspired works. Finally, the

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<sup>21</sup> "Jugoslovenski koncerti u inostranstvu povodom 29 novembra [Yugoslav concerts abroad to mark November 29]," *Muzika* 4 (1950): 123–132. Within this text, several critical reviews from the foreign press about each of the mentioned concerts were reported. It includes translations of reviews from the *Berner Zeitung*, *Berner Tagwacht* and *Le Sentinel* (Bern), *Wiener Kurier* and *Weltpresse* (Vienna), *Irish Independent* (Dublin), *Daily Herald*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Times* (London), *Birmingham Mail*, *Birmingham Post* and *Glasgow Herald*, as well as *La liberta d'Italia*, *Il giornale d'Italia* and *Quotidiano* (Rome).

<sup>22</sup> Pianist Ivo Maček and alto Marijana Radev from Zagreb performed at the Bern Conservatory together with local chamber musicians (the program included Josip Slavenski's String Quartet No. 3, Maček's *Intermezzo* for piano, Božidar Kunc's *Six Bagatelles* for piano, Boris Papandopulo's *Konradanica* for piano, Ilija L. Marinković's Wind Quintet, songs of Blagoje Bersa, Jakov Gotovac and Krešimir Baranović, Slavenski's String Quartet with Alto *Pesme moje majke* (My Mother Songs). The concert in Vienna was held at the Musikverein. Slovenian conductor Samo Hubad and Zagreb baritone Vladimir Ruždjak performed with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra (three movements from Slavko Osterc's *Suite*, Lucijan Marija Škerjanc's Symphony No. 5; Krešimir Baranović's song cycle *Z mojih bregov* (From My Hills), Jakov Gotovac's Simfonijsko kolo (Symphonic kolo). The performance at the Central Hall Westminster was entrusted to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under its chief conductor George Weldon and Zagreb conductor Milan Horvat, starring pianist Kendal Taylor (Marjan Kozina's symphonic scherzo *Bela Krajina* (White Carniola), two dances from Stevan Hristić's ballet *Ohridska legenda* (The Legend of Ohrid), Škerjanc's Piano Concerto in A Minor, Stjepan Šulek's Symphony No. 2). The concert at the Teatro Quirino in Rome was performed by the RAI Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Belgrade conductor Živojin Zdravković and with Belgrade cellist Mirko Dorner and Zagreb soprano Dragica Martinis (Suite from Hristić's *Ohridska legenda* (The Legend of Ohrid), Symphonic Triptych from Petar Konjović's opera *Koštana*, Gotovac's Symphonic kolo, songs by Milo Cipra, Božidar Kunc and Blagoje Bersa). Zdravković and Dorner performed with the same orchestra once again, presenting works by Mozart, Schubert and Haydn.

<sup>23</sup> This can clearly be seen from certain comments in the press. For example: "Happy is a republic that, in addition to defending its interests, can deal with the spreading of its culture and art" (*Le Sentinel*); "Celebrating a national holiday with a concert of contemporary music is without a doubt a sign of good and refined taste and unusual musical feeling" (*La liberta d'Italia*). "Jugoslovenski koncerti u inostranstvu," 124–125; 129.



concert in London was presented by two prominent British artists who were ready for closer cooperation with Yugoslav musicians. While pianist Kendal Taylor visited the FPRY on several occasions and promoted works by Yugoslav authors, helping organize concerts of Yugoslav musicians in London, conductor George Weldon also performed Yugoslav music and had a major tour in Yugoslavia in the early 1950s, after which he wrote about his positive musical impressions of the country.<sup>24</sup>

The first experiences of the musical breakthrough into the West confirmed that music offered great opportunities for presentation abroad, so the approach taken in further work included versatile planning, more comprehensive activation of musicians and their associations, various activities, with constant self-analysis and a critical attitude toward the achieved results.

Increasing musical activity abroad under the auspices  
of the Council for Science and Culture  
of the FPRY Government (1950–1952)

The newly established Council for Science and Culture, which took over the tasks and competences of the Ministry of Science and Culture, continued to increase the cultural propaganda in its Department for International Cultural Links.<sup>25</sup> Thanks to numerous reports of the department, as well as individual archival documents related to some musical activities and events, one can gain detailed insight into the types of musical activities abroad and their development in the three-year period starting in 1950.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> See George Weldon, "Impressions of Music in Jugoslavia," *Tempo* 15 (1950): 30–31. The same text translated into Serbian was published in Belgrade (Džordž Veldon, "Utisci o muzici u Jugoslaviji," *Muzika* 5 (1951): 185–187).

<sup>25</sup> The President of the Council was Rodoljub Čolaković, who was also the Minister of the previous Ministry of Science and Culture. The head of the Department for International Cultural Links was Franc Drenovec, and after him Vanda Novosel. Various clerks and employees worked at the Department, among whom some were highly educated individuals, such as Kristina Krista Đorđević. Already in the first months of the council's work, senior Department officials held numerous talks with important representatives of the country abroad regarding the cultural policy and on organizing important cultural events in different countries. See, for example, AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Conclusions of conversations with comrades Ljubo Drndić and Saša Šokorac, September 23, 1950, Belgrade; Note from the meeting on cultural issues 20-IX-50. Representatives of the Council for Science and Culture present: Vanda Novosel and Franc Drenovec. Conversations with Ljubo Drndić (US) and Saša Šokorac (England), September 23, 1950, Belgrade; Notes from the meeting at the Directorate for Information, s. a., Belgrade.

<sup>26</sup> The systematization of data presented in the text is based on information from various individual documents, as well as short annual reports, detailed summary reports, analyses and plans on the monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual basis, which were carefully written by individual employees of the Department. Among these documents, three short annual reports were also published in Doknić, Petrović, Hofman, *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije*, Vol. 2, 444–452; 452–456; 459–462.

Participation in international competitions and attendance at foreign festivals were a significant part of the work through which the Department implemented the policy of supporting promising, primarily young musicians, intending to provide them with financial support and organizational training and professional competition in a broader international framework.<sup>27</sup>

Most young artists were interested in one of the leading international competitions held in Geneva (Concours international d'exécution musicale de Genève). The first successes of Yugoslav musicians—Mirko Dorner (cello) and Mariana Radev (solo singing), who won first prizes in their respective categories in 1949—probably contributed to that. As many as eleven Yugoslav candidates participated in the same competition in 1950. However, given their poor results,<sup>28</sup> the Council concluded that the success of these artists was not commensurate with the large material costs set aside for the Geneva competition, that the poor results showed insufficiently strict selection criteria for candidates, and that some artists did not have time to prepare adequately for the competition. Therefore, the criteria for sending musicians to this competition were tightened in the following years, so better results were subsequently recorded.<sup>29</sup>

Renowned international competitions in Italy, Belgium, France and Great Britain also attracted the attention of young Yugoslav musicians. In the observed period, there was only one poor result, while all other participations testified to the higher artistic quality of the Yugoslav candidates in relation to their competitors from other countries.<sup>30</sup> The greatest success was achieved at the competition in Belgium (Concours international de chant de Verviers), which showed that Yugoslavia had a significant number of excellent young singers. The large team of Yugoslav participants, with individuals taking all the first prizes, caused a sensation

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<sup>27</sup> See AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Report on the work of the Department for International Cultural Links for 1950, s. a., Belgrade; Annual report for 1951, November 19, 1951, Belgrade; Annual report for 1952, s. a., Belgrade.

<sup>28</sup> No candidate was awarded, only violinist Igor Ozim and singers Ana Lipša and Miroslav Čangalović received medals.

<sup>29</sup> In 1951, three candidates went to Geneva (Zorica Filipović, Dragutin Mirković and Fredi Došek), of whom opera singer Zorica Filipović got into the finals of the competition. The following year, six musicians participated (Olga Jovanović, Branko Pajević, Ela Kovačević-Štajner, Zvezdana Bašić, Jelka Krak-Stanić and Sonja Draksler). Out of 80 pianists, Olga Jovanović won third place and Sonja Draksler came in fourth. Branko Pajević was tenth out of a total of 46 violinists.

<sup>30</sup> Violinist Josip Klima from Zagreb was eliminated in the first round at the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris. Both performances of Yugoslavs in the competition in Vercelli (Concorso Internazionale di Musica Viotti in Vercelli) resulted in the highest awards: in 1950, among young composers Vlastimir Peričić, a student of the Music Academy in Belgrade, received a cash prize for his String Quartet, while the duo Ivo Maček and Mirko Dorner won first prize in the chamber music category in 1952. Violinist Igor Ozim, who competed in the Carl Flesch International Violin Competition during his studies in London, won the first and only prize in that competition in 1951.

among the Belgian public. The press published very favorable reviews about them, emphasizing the dedication of the approach to young talents in the FPRY.<sup>31</sup>

The presence of Yugoslav artists at international music festivals, as well as summer courses held as part of those events, provided an exceptional opportunity to establish professional ties and meet prominent world musicians and music educators. Such cultural events provided opportunities to attend a large number of high-quality musical performances in a short period of time, which was of particular interest for gaining insight into the contemporary music trends at the international level. Yugoslav musicians were initially referred primarily to the Salzburg Festival.<sup>32</sup> However, the Council for Science and Culture quickly adopted expert opinions on the importance of visits to various events of this type, so the list of festivals was significantly longer in 1952, with the idea of musicians “expanding their artistic horizons and sharpening their criteria in making assessments of new works and performing arts in general.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Valerija Hejbalova, Nada Putar, Tomislav Neralić, Jeronim Žunec, Ratimir Delorko, Miroslav Čangalović, Janez Lipušček, Rudolf Francl and Vladimir Ruždjak participated in the competition. Awards went to Ruždjak, Lipušček, Neralić and Putar, as well as Hejbalova, who also received a great honorary award.

<sup>32</sup> As many as 20 musicians from Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Skopje took part in the Salzburg Festival in 1950 (Mihailo Vukdragović, Mladen Babić, Silvio Bombardeli, Mladen Jagušt, Svetislav Stančić, Vaclav Huml, Emil Hajek, Kiril Spirovski, Todor Skalovski, Vlada Marković, Ivan Pinkava, Jelka Stančić-Krek, Hinko Leskovšek, Dušan Skovran, Samo Hubad, Dimitirije Žerbe, Frederik Lupša, Vlado Korošec, Elza Karlovec and Dragotin Cvetko). That year, Mirko Dorner was an assistant to Italian cellist Enrico Mainardi, who visited Yugoslavia on several occasions. Only Stanojlo Rajičić, Marjan Burić and Dušan Miladinović attended the festival in Salzburg in 1951. See AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Report on the work of the Department for International Cultural Links for 1950, s. a., Belgrade; Annual report for 1951, November 19, 1951; AJ, 317-5-12, Confidential relations with Austria, Letters of F. Drenovec, the Head of the Department for International Cultural Links, sent to the Ministries of Culture of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia in June 1950, with lists of artists who go to the festival in Salzburg and summer courses that are held as part of the festival in June–August 1950.

<sup>33</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, Annual report for 1952. In 1952, Yugoslav musicians attended festivals in Florence (Ciril Cvetko from Maribor and Jeronim Žunec from Zagreb), Vienna (Boris Papandopulo from Sarajevo), Salzburg (Lazar Marjanović and Milutin Radenković from Belgrade and Gligor Smokvarski from Skopje), Lucerne (Josip Andreis and Dimitrij Žerbe from Zagreb), Edinburgh (Predrag Milošević from Belgrade and Ivo Maček from Zagreb) and Bayreuth (Dragutin Bernardić from Zagreb and Rudolf Francl from Ljubljana). Ibid.; data in the correspondence AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Zoja Levi from the Department for International Cultural Links to the Union of Music Artists of Yugoslavia, Subject: Musical manifestations abroad, V. 4266, June 18, 1952, Belgrade; K. Đorđević, Deputy Head of Department for International Cultural Links, to the Council for Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Serbia, Subject: Sending artists to festivals abroad, V. 4120, June 17, 1952, Belgrade; K. Đorđević to the Council for Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Subject: Selection of candidates for international musical festivals abroad, V. 4595, June 18, 1952, Belgrade; K. Đorđević to the Union of Composers of Yugoslavia, Subject: Sending our artists to musical manifestations abroad, V. 4533, June 17, 1952, Belgrade; R. Čolaković, Minister, to the Secretary General of the FPRY Government, Subject: Departure to the music festival in Salzburg, V. 4598, June 17, 1952.

The procedure for selecting candidates for competitions and festivals was complex in a bureaucratic sense, and included various instances at the level of ministries and music associations of the republics, as well as federal music associations. Although the council had the final say in decision making, opinions received from the Association of Yugoslav Composers and the Association of Yugoslav Music Artists were respected unless the proposed candidates had a “problematic” political past. In addition, the number of proposed candidates was usually higher than the planned material expenditures of the department, so the council had the decisive word in that regard as well.<sup>34</sup>

The annual festivals and conferences of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) were of particular importance for Yugoslav composers. Since the Yugoslav section of the ISCM was active already before WWII, contacts with that association were renewed in 1950. Milenko Živković and Natko Devčić were present at the 1950 festival and conference of the ISCM in Brussels, and only Živković in Frankfurt in 1951. Živković negotiated very actively with some of the national sections at the conference for performing contemporary Yugoslav music at the annual ISCM festivals. The following year, at the ISCM festival in Salzburg, the program included the Symphonic *Antithesis* by Matija Bravničar and the Sonata for Violin and Organ by Josip Slavenski, with both composers present.<sup>35</sup>

Živković himself published a detailed report on his stay in Brussels, including a review of trends in contemporary music, from which Yugoslav composers were cut off during the post-war years. Although Živković openly distanced himself from the creative lines in the wake of the Schoenberg tradition, his discourse was also far from socialist realism. The concluding message of his text indicates his closeness to the new course of official cultural policy, developed precisely through artistic representation abroad:

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<sup>34</sup> Compare, for example, the number and composition of candidates who visited festivals in 1952 (see footnote 33) with the lists proposed by the musical associations: AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Vladimir Marković, Deputy Secretary General of the Union of Music Artists of Yugoslavia, to the Department for International Cultural Links (for comrade Zojica Levi), Subject: International musical manifestations, No. 183, June 2, 1952, Belgrade; Lazar Maksin, Assistant to the President of the Council for Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Serbia, to the Council for Science and Culture of the FPRY Government, No. 9530/II, May 30, 1952, Belgrade. See also the documents mentioned in AJ, 317-5-12, Confidential relations with Austria, and AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Monthly report for June 1951, signed by Milena Nikolić, s. a., Belgrade.

<sup>35</sup> See AJ, 317-86-120, Report on the work of the Department for International Cultural Links for 1950, s. a., Belgrade; Annual report for 1951, November 19, 1951, Belgrade; Annual report for 1952, s. a., Belgrade; Stevan Hristić, President of the Union of Composers of Yugoslavia, to the Department for International Cultural Links, No. 81/51, April 17, 1952, Belgrade; V. Novosel, Head of the Department for International Cultural Links, to the Union of Composers of Yugoslavia, Subject: International Society for Contemporary Music Festival and International Congress of Composers in Salzburg, V. 2908, April 29, 1952, Belgrade.

*Today, when Yugoslavia is gaining an increasingly important role in international politics, it is clear that we cannot remain enclosed by the Great Wall of China from the cultural events around us. We would make an unforgivable cultural mistake if we closed our eyes (more precisely, our ears) to today's music of the West, that is, if we passed by and ignored the contemporary artistic issues of Western European music—no matter how different they are (if they are in fact different) from our artistic and ideological aspirations and foreign to our needs. But we would, on the other hand, be just as fatally wrong if we accepted without any criticism everything coming from there. What we need first of all is clear perspective for choosing the positive achievements from contemporary music, then awareness of our own values and confidence in our own strengths [...].*<sup>36</sup>

In the reports, plans and reviews of the work of the Department for International Cultural Links of the Council for Science and Culture, concerts and concert tours of Yugoslav musicians and ensembles were among the main forms of musical propaganda abroad. However, it was often pointed out that the department did not have full insight into this type of musical activity, because some musicians arranged their trips on their own. In such circumstances, the Council occasionally intervened to arrange visas, or assisted in other ways. For example, pianist Melita Lorković used her own connections when arranging a tour of Finland, Sweden, England, the Netherlands and Switzerland in 1951. On that occasion, the Council sought approval for her trip abroad from the General Secretariat of the Government and ordered Yugoslav missions in the respective countries to meet Lorković's needs when organizing her concerts and radio appearances.<sup>37</sup> It also helped Melanija Bugarinović, Drago Kunc and the young Milan Horvat, who quickly established his own musical connections and began touring Europe intensively.<sup>38</sup> Also, Marijana Radev had numerous artistic acquaintances, which enabled her to organize guest appearances abroad.<sup>39</sup>

The work of the Council in this area was based on the policy of helping young and promising artists get recognized abroad, affirm themselves and get in touch

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<sup>36</sup> Milenko Živković, "Pogled na savremenu muziku Zapada – Povodom XXIV festivala Međunarodnog društva za savremenu muziku u Briselu [A look at the contemporary music of the West—On the occasion of the 24<sup>th</sup> Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Brussels]," *Muzika* 5 (1951): 170.

<sup>37</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Work report for February 1951—Music and folklore ensembles, Belgrade, s. a.

<sup>38</sup> For example, the Council granted Horvat a foreign currency allowance for traveling to performances in Bordeaux and London in April 1951, as the fee offered to him did not cover travel expenses. AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations, Work report for March 1951.

<sup>39</sup> On this, as well as Radev's appearances in Italy in 1950, see AJ, 317-6-15, Confidential relations with Italy. Obren Miličević, Press Advisor, to the Directorate for Information of the FPRY Government, Subject: Report on the stay of Yugoslav artists in Rome, Conf. no. 32, July 24, 1950, Rome.

with foreign concert agencies and relevant musical circles. In this sense, a concert by Milan Horvat was organized at the opening of an exhibition of medieval art in Paris in March 1950. In August the same year, a big tour of Yugoslav opera singers was carried out in Israel. That was followed by the presentation of young contestants in Geneva at a concert for the diplomatic corps and cultural staff (September). A concert of Yugoslav music by Mirko Dorner and Stanoje Janković was held in Vienna (October), while Živojin Zdravković conducted the Helsinki Symphony Orchestra, performing works by Yugoslav authors (November).<sup>40</sup> The following year, performances by Valerija Hejbalova and Vladimir Ruždjak took place in London (February), a concert by Anita Mezetova and Miroslav Čangalović was held in Vienna on the occasion of Republic Day (November 29), and a concert by Vladimir Ruždjak and Ivo Maček was organized in Paris (December).<sup>41</sup> In 1952, the number of concerts increased significantly, which, along with several guest appearances by Yugoslav singers on opera stages, testified to the expansion of the geographical focus of musical performances, including to centers in Greece, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway, France, and Germany.<sup>42</sup>

The performances of the Ballet of the Belgrade National Theatre at the Edinburgh International Festival for Music and Drama (August 20 to September 8, 1951) was the largest project of Yugoslav music performances abroad realized through the Council in the given period. During the festival, the ballet *Ohridska legenda* (The Legend of Ohrid) by Serbian composer Stevan Hristić was performed eight times, and an additional show included scenes from two ballets by Croatian composers, *Licidersko srce* (Gingerbread Heart) by Krešimir Baranović and *Balada o jednoj srednjovjekovnoj ljubavi* (A Ballad of a Medieval Love) by Fran Lhotka.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, Report on the work of the Department for International Scientific and Cultural Links in 1950, Belgrade, s. a.

<sup>41</sup> AJ, 317-86-120, Annual report for 1951, Belgrade, November 19, 1951.

<sup>42</sup> These were guest appearances by the following artists: Miroslav Čangalović (participated in a symphonic concert in Vienna on January 13), Marijana Radev (five performances in Greece in January–February, a guest performance in Vienna in March), Živojin Zdravković (two performances in Finland in January, two recordings for a Swedish radio station in February, concerts in Stockholm, Oslo and Paris in November–December), Mirko Dorner (concerts in Stuttgart on May 28 and 29), members of the Slovenian Trio (concerts in Graz and Vienna in December), Stanoje Janković (seven performances at the Athens Opera), Nikola Cvejić (sang in the opera *Tosca* in Graz), Aleksandar Marinković (sang in the opera *La bohème* at the Vienna State Opera on February 6), Jovan Gligorijević (sang in the opera *Rigoletto* in the Vienna State Opera in February). AJ, 317-86-120, Annual report for 1952, Belgrade, s. a.

<sup>43</sup> The Belgrade ballet troupe also comprised individual dancers from Zagreb and Ljubljana. Hristić and Oskar Danon conducted the Scottish National Orchestra. The choreography of Hristić's ballet was prepared by Margarita Froman, the stage design by Staša Beložanski, and the costumes by Milica Babić-Jovanović. Dimitrije Parlić performed the scenes from Baranović's, and Pia and Pino Mlakar from Lhotka's ballet.

The reason for organizing the whole project was the interest in Hristić's ballet, which was later performed all over Europe.<sup>44</sup> Both before and after the visit to Edinburgh, representatives of music festivals, impresarios and concert agency managers were coming to Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana to see ballet and opera performances. At first, their attention was focused on ballets, among which Hristić's work was their first choice. However, it seems that the Embassy in London was one of the initiators of foreign interest in that ballet because it started promoting it already in 1949, which stimulated the curiosity of the Edinburgh Festival Board in December that year. It was the persistence of the embassy staff to overcome organizational obstacles and, in a way, discipline the insufficiently organized staff of the federal Ministry of Culture in Belgrade, which was crucial for the subsequent processes of negotiations regarding the visit of the Belgrade Ballet.<sup>45</sup> The embassy was also the primary mediator in connecting the officials of the festival with the Council for Science and Culture. This way, with the visit of Sir Andrew Murray, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and William P. Earsman in Belgrade in early 1951, the phases of more intensive arrangements for a performance at the festival began, joined also by Ian Hunter, the artistic director of the festival, and Oskar Danon, the director of the Belgrade Opera, as well as other representatives of the National Theatre in Belgrade.<sup>46</sup>

The Belgrade Ballet received a warm welcome in Edinburgh. The audience and the reviews for the broader readership indicated very favorable reactions, while professional critics also had objections regarding the music, decor and choreography.<sup>47</sup> It turned out, however, that Hristić's ballet was an excellent choice of music and stage work for foreign audiences. Already at that time, the demand for the work existed in Italy, Belgium, France, Argentina and other countries. In this sense, for example, the manager of the National Theater in Belgrade, Milan Bogdanović, held negotiations with the Théâtre National Belgique, whose representatives, along with the director of the Centre belge des échanges culturels internationaux, Maurice Huisman, were

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<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that this work was first performed abroad by the Ljubljana Ballet as guest performances in Graz and Klagenfurt in 1950. On the numerous stagings and foreign presentations of this ballet, see Ani Radošević, *O scenskim izvođenjima "Ohridske legende" Stevana Hristića* (About the Stagings of the *The Legend of Ohrid* by Stevan Hristić), prepared by Nadežda Mosusova (Belgrade: Muzikološki institut SANU, 2017).

<sup>45</sup> For details see AJ, 317-5-14, Confidential relations with Great Britain, An elaborate report by Obrad Cicmil, Yugoslav Ambassador in London, sent to the Minister Rodoljub Čolaković, Conf. no. 30/50, January 13, 1950, London; A note regarding the letter from the FPRY Embassy in London, signed by Drenovec, January 26, 1950, Belgrade.

<sup>46</sup> See various documents in AJ, 317-5-14, Confidential relations with Great Britain, as well as annual and monthly reports on the work of the council in AJ, 317-86-120, General materials on foreign relations.

<sup>47</sup> Quotations from a review in the *Edinburgh Evening News* are published in Radošević, *O scenskim izvođenjima*, 26. A selection of critical reviews of the performance in Edinburgh can be found in AJ, 317-97-144, Relations with Great Britain.

interested a performance of *Ohridska legenda* in Brussels and Antwerp.<sup>48</sup> However, activities related to new guest performances of the ballet were halted by Belgrade itself, and until the end of 1952, the Belgrade Ballet only performed abroad one more time, in Athens.<sup>49</sup> The main reasons were technical and financial, because the Council did not have the funds to finance a trip of a large ballet troupe, even partially.<sup>50</sup> In order for guest performances of the ensemble and its technical support to pay off, it was necessary to organize a series of performances at several different locations. The Belgrade National Theatre itself had no possibility for such endeavors, since, in addition to scarce resources in terms of stage sets, it was also short in the number of performers. The entire ensemble was not large enough, and an extended absence of the ballet troupe would leave no repertoire alternative.

In conclusion, it is important to stress that the case of *Ohridska legenda* reflected a very complicated and difficult situation in the country itself. Although the share of the country's budget reserved for culture was constantly increasing,<sup>51</sup> it was necessary to invest more in musical resources within the country itself. These improvements had to be done very soon in crucial musical institutions, such as symphony orchestras and opera houses in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana, so that they would be able to manage a series of guest performances abroad in the next decades. The early period of turning to the West, which was analyzed here, set the preconditions for such a cultural momentum. Between 1949 and 1952, many crucial and most difficult steps were taken in breaking through the preceding international isolation. The foundations were laid for increasingly liberal activities in culture, which also reflected from the sphere of foreign policy to the internal one.

As the only country of the Eastern Bloc that managed to oppose Soviet influence and try to build its own path to socialism, Yugoslavia strategically became a partner of Western democracies. It dealt with difficult economic conditions, and gradually established important economic ties with key Euro-Atlantic countries, receiving both annual cash loans and grants. This was the beginning of advocating its "neutrality" and successful balancing between the blocs, with culture (and music) on its forefront. In this context, music was used as a tool of soft power in a very skillful manner. The short period between 1949 and 1952 was the outset of growing musical collaboration and exchange of ideas with the world.

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<sup>48</sup> Documentation on these negotiations can be found in AJ, 317-5-13, Confidential relations with Belgium and the Netherlands.

<sup>49</sup> No information about the trip was found in the archival documentation. However, it was mentioned in Radošević, *O scenskim izvođenjima*, 26–27, and in Danon, *Ritmovi nemira*, 232–234.

<sup>50</sup> The stay, trip and per diem allowances of the participants at the festival in Edinburgh were covered by the organizers. The council provided the necessary loans for the transport of the equipment (111,191 dinars), which was shipped in both directions by train.

<sup>51</sup> For example, from the previous 2.6%, the budget for culture increased to 4% in 1952, and the largest share of this was spent on guest appearances abroad. Doknić, Petrović, Hofman (Eds.), *Kulturna politika Jugoslavije*, Vol. 1, 39.



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