Half a century of the independent development of a scholarly discipline is a significant anniversary which obliges us to take a retrospective view, since it is only on the basis of a thoroughly examined experience of tradition that a vision of the future can be built. Half a century ago, when the foundations of the Department of Musicology at the Academy of Music were laid, and when the Musicological Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts was founded (the first institution of that kind in Yugoslavia at the time), this practically marked a new stage in the development of musicology in Serbia. We remember its doyens – Stana Đurić-Klavnic (1908–1985), Nikola Hercigonja (1912) and Petar Konjović (1885–1970) – with special piety and respect, as it was with great knowledge and spirit, insight, devotion and perseverance that they paved the way which was not easy to tread. The establishment of a high standard of theoretical thought on music was one of the last steps in the long path of development, started in our professional music back at the beginning of the 19th century. Let this jubilee year be marked by a retrospective view of the contributions given to the Serbian musical historiography by our oldest scientific institution in this field, founded with the aim of fostering and promoting theoretical, historiographic and ethnomusicological academic thought.

It is very interesting to see what the first selection of printed books says about the shaping of the future orientation of the Institute’s work. Until the beginning of the 70s, when one can speak of the advent of a new, more dynamic stage in the development of Serbian musicology, the most striking feature is that the printed books reflected a careful selection of the past: Prilozi bibliografskom rečniku srpskih muzičara (Contributions to a Bibliographic Lexicon of Serbian Musicians) by Vladimir Dordević (edited by Stana Đurić-Klavnic) – a valuable bibliographic work by one of the pioneers of musical scholarship from the 19th century and Izbor eseja
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(Selected Essays) by Vojislav Vučković (1955), a musicologist whose theoretical, aesthetic, historiographic and sociological thought is characterized by a spirit of the new age, perhaps still inadequately understood at the time.

The valuable, dedicated work of the chroniclers is thus confronted with ideologically heated (but not less valuable) contemporary (and modern) theoretical thought of high professional standard.

On the other hand, the necessity to view historiographic issues thoroughly and comprehensively is illustrated by two important monographs – on Miloje Milojević, by Petar Konjović (1954) and on Josif Marinković, by Vlastimir Perić (1967). While the former, written immediately after Milojević’s untimely death, by a colleague and a friend, is a valuable, necessary starting point of research, but surely not the reliable, final word and a generally acceptable evaluation of Milojević’s contribution to composition and musicology, the latter succeeds in giving a comprehensive view of Josif Marinković’s opus and influence, so thorough and reliable that no significant supplement to it was produced in later times. The last one in this series, the analytical study by Milenko Živković on Mokranjac’s Rukoveti (Song-Wreaths) heralds by its choice of subject the later persevering and consistent treatment of compositions and ethnomusicological work of the great representatives of Serbian music. The indebtedness of Serbian musicology to Mokranjac has still not been adequately shown. Milenko Živković’s study initiated the necessary analytical work concerning the Rukoveti, but it has rather raised questions than given answers, and a similar comment can be given regarding the questions raised in the discussions collected in the Proceedings dedicated to Stevan Mokranjac (1971).

In the subsequent orientation of the Institute’s publishing plan an important place was occupied by the proceedings, most often of symposia dedicated to the most significant Serbian composers – Kornelije Stanković (1985), Petar Konjović (1989), Stevan Hristić (1991) and Miloje Milojević (1998), which contain an exceptionally vast contribution to the research of their life and works, which is a necessary precondition to writing monographic syntheses which were to follow. A certain exception in that sense are the proceedings Srpska muzika kroz vekove (Serbian Music through the Ages), which was compiled as part of the activities in the preparation of the exhibition bearing the same name in the Gallery of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a manifestation jointly realized by the Gallery Council and the Musicological Institute. The organizers of the exhibition wanted to represent the development of our music from the earliest surviving evidence on the musical practice among the Serbs to the second decade of the 20th century, when the death of Stevan Mokranjac marked the end of one of the periods in its development. The exhibition was also a kind of testimony on the results achieved by musicologists and ethnomusicologists who were contributors of the Musicological Institute, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its work. The book was published in Serbian and French; the orientation towards French was not a mere accident, which is evidenced by a long analytical study by Louis-Marc Suter on four concert works by Serbian composers (1989). These two books clearly testify to an awareness
of the need to promote our achievements on a world scale, a wish to do so, but also very meagre possibilities for the realization of such projects.

Part of the publishing activity of the Institute is also directed towards publishing doctoral dissertations – by Marija Bergamo, Danica Petrović and Roksanda Pejović – whose diverse fields of research bear clear witness to the broad space open before our scholars. Arising as solitary lights in the vast sea of uncovered fields of research, they shed their light brightly and impose themselves as the pillars of future endeavours in those fields. Another work of capital importance is also the Multilingual Dictionary of Musical Terms (1985) by Vlastimir Perišić, a kind of a book that is normally the result of long term work by numerous teams of authors in other countries.

An interesting indicator of the state of our musicological scholarship is the fact that in the second period of development only one monograph was published, and it was dedicated to a musicologist – the book by Roksanda Pejović on Stana Đurić-Klajn (1994), a book by a pupil to her great teacher, a work which solved the issues of the systematization of musicological material in an original way. Another original contribution to the research of the earliest musical past was given in two books from the edition Old Serbian Music I–II (1973–75), in which eleven works by old Serbian composers were printed for the first time – kir Stefan Srbinić, kir Nikola Srbinić and the monk Isaija Srbinić, with texts, transcriptions and comments (ed. Dimitrije Stefanović).

Though not large in number, but significant and valuable for the development of our scholarship, the publishing activity of the Musicological Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts remains as a vestige in time, a solid testimony on the efforts and achievements of the contributors of this institution accomplished in the first fifty years of its existence.


7. Stara srpska muzika I i II (compiled by Dimitrije Stefanović), 1973–75.


(Translated by Branka Nikolić)