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Slovenian Music in its Central European Context: The 20th-century experience

Slovenska glasba v njenem srednjeevropskem okviru: izkušnja 20. stoletja

SUMMARY

POVZETEK

Slovenia has had a rich and varied musical history, despite the fact that it was part of the Habsburg Empire and then a constituent part of Yugoslavia. Its recent smooth transition to independence and its realignment with Central Europe have been noteworthy. In the past, Slovene or part-Slovene composers such as Gallus, Tartini and Wolf worked abroad, while in the 20th century composers normally returned to Slovenia after studying abroad. For example, Marij Kogoj and Slavko Osterc studied in Central Europe and maintained a strong musical connection with Central European modernism in the 1920s and 1930s. Kogoj's strong links with Viennese expressionism were well expressed in the opera *Črne maske* of 1927, while Osterc's connections with Hindemith, Honegger and others is evident in the opera *Krog s kredo* and orchestral works such as *Mouvement symphonique*. On the other hand, Kozina, Arnič and Škerjanc developed a less advanced style and kept less contact with the rest of Europe. The political situation in the 1940s and 1950s made outside travel difficult, changing the situation dramatically. Composers such as Ramovš and Uroš Krek had different experiences: Ramovš managed to study with Frazzi and Casella in Italy, while Krek did not study abroad. Both, however, produced works in a distinctive neo-classical style that typified the immediate post-war period. Ivo Petrič's music follows the styles of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. From the late 1950s onwards the situation changed with strong

Slovenija ima bogato in raznoliko zgodovino glasbe, kljub dejstvu, da je bila del habsburškega cesarstva in nato Jugoslavije. Nedavna osamosvojitve in preusmeritev k Srednji Evropi so vredni pozornosti. V preteklosti so slovenski ali delno slovenski skladatelji, kot so bili Gallus, Tartini ali Wolf, delali v tujini, medtem ko so se v 20. stoletju skladatelji po študiju v tujini ponavadi vrnili v Slovenijo. Na primer, Marij Kogoj in Slavko Osterc sta študirala v Srednji Evropi in ohranjala močne glasbene stike s srednjeevropskim modernizmom v 1920 in 1930. Kogojeve močne vezi z dunajskim ekspresionizmom so jasno razvidne iz opere *Črne maske* (1927), medtem ko so Osterčevi stiki s Hindemithom, Honeggerjem in drugimi vidni v operi *Krog s kredo* in delih za orkester, kot je *Mouvement symphonique*. Na drugi strani so Kozina, Arnič in Škerjanc razvili manj napredne sloge in gojili manj stikov z drugimi deli Evrope. Politični položaj v 1940. in 1950. je oteževal pot v tujino in dobera spremenil situacijo. Skladatelji, kot sta Ramovš in Krek, imajo drugačne izkušnje: Ramovšu je uspelo študirati s Frazzijem in Casello v Italiji, medtem ko Krek ni študiral v tujini. Vendar sta oba ustvarila prepoznavna dela v neoklasicističnem slogu, ki je zaznamoval vojno obdobje. Glasba Iva Petriča sledi slogom Prokofjeva in Šostakoviča. Od poznih 1950. naprej se je položaj močno spremenil s trdnimi stiki s Hrvaško, Poljsko in deželami Zahoda: zlasti Francijo, Nemčijo, Anglijo in Združenimi državami Amerike. Ti stiki so v 1960.

contacts with Croatia, Poland and countries of the West: France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States in particular. This contact encouraged the emergence of a new avant-garde in Slovenia in the 1960s with such composers as Petrič, Ramovš, Lebič, Jež, Božič, Matičič, Globokar, Stibilj and Štuhec coming into prominence. Later they were joined by Pavel Mihelčič and Maks Strmčnik. Matičič and Globokar mostly stayed abroad, while Stibilj returned permanently later. In the decades before and after independence in 1991, a new generation of composers became established, with the most advanced composition by Aldo Kumar, Uroš Rojko, Tomaž Svete, Brina Jež-Brezavšček and Nenad Firšt. Post-modern tendencies are found in the music of Jani Golob and Marko Mihevc. All these composers are providing the Slovene musical scene with a wide variety of distinctive music that is both challenging and interesting.

spodbudili novo avantgardo v Sloveniji, h kateri sodijo Petrič, Ramovš, Lebič, Jež, Božič, Matičič, Globokar, Stibilj in Štuhec. Kasneje se jima pridružita Pavel Mihelčič in Maks Strmčnik. Matičič in Globokar sta ostala večidel v tujini, medtem ko se je Stibilj kasneje za stalno vrnil v domovino. V desetletjih pred in po osamosvojitvi leta 1991 se je izoblikovala nova generacija skladateljev, z najnaprednejšimi deli izpod peresa Aldo Kumarja, Uroša Rojka, Tomaža Sveteta, Brine Jež-Brezavšček in Nenada Firšta. Postmoderne tendence je mogoče najti v delih Janija Goloba in Marka Mihevca. Ti skladatelji prinašajo na slovensko glasbeno sceno bogato vrsto prepoznavnih glasbenih del, ki je izzivalna in zanimiva.

For a relatively small country, Slovenia has had a rich and varied musical history. Its current population is under two million and its land area is 20,273 square kilometres (half the size of Switzerland). The country lies at the crossroads between East and West (Italy and Hungary) and between North and South (Austria and Croatia). It embraces many different land forms: coast, mountains, fertile plains, limestone Karst and much else; it is indeed very easy to travel from one area to any other in less than two hours. The unifying factor in over 1000 years of documented history is Slovene, the distinctive language and voice of its people. Although for most of this time Slovenia was incorporated into the Habsburg empire, thus making German a working language for many people, Slovene was consistently used by the inhabitants of the area. After the First World War Slovenia joined the new country of Yugoslavia. Despite the political pressures of centralism, Slovenia retained its character and language in the first Yugoslavia as well as under the Communist regime of Tito after the Second World War. The transition to independence in 1991, whilst not without its serious problems, was effected, if not completely smoothly, at least with determination, moderation and speed. Another trend that was immediately apparent was the new country's realignment with Central Europe, something that was explicitly indicated by the very early moves to join the European Union.¹

The musical implications of this were considerable. Potential composers born in Slovenia frequently worked abroad, taking their natural place in the Central European milieu. On the one hand they were able to work where musical traditions were more developed, and they were able to become part of the cultural environment of the wider area and in a sense more international.

¹ I explored this extensively in an unpublished paper entitled 'The Realignment of Slovenia with Central Europe' given at the conference entitled 'Ethnicity and Nationalism' at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK in September 1995.

Before the 20th century a number of Slovene-born composers worked in neighbouring countries and took their natural place within the European context. In each of the three typical examples presented here, the musical styles adopted were those of the musical *lingua franca* of their time. In the first example, Jacobus Gallus (1550–91), the late Renaissance composer, was born in Slovenia.² He developed his musical experience in Austria and settled in Prague where he composed much of his music.³ His late Renaissance polyphonic style is comparable with that of his contemporaries, Lassus and Palestrina, and in many respects just as highly esteemed.⁴ The second, Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770), was born in Piran on the Slovenian coast, but worked in Prague and numerous places around Italy, living mostly in Padua.⁵ The third composer, Hugo Wolf (1860–1903), was born in Slovenj Gradec in the north of Slovenia, but always worked in a German-speaking environment⁶ and lived mostly in Austria.

In the earlier 20th century, with the incorporation of Slovenia into Yugoslavia, links with central Europe were often explored with major Slovenian composers studying abroad and bringing outside influences to bear on the Slovene musical scene. This was not a new development, but it assumed greater importance as Slovenia's national consciousness had been considerably increased. Composers would not now come from a remote part of the Habsburg Empire, but from an important part of a country independent of its neighbours.

The first significant move in this direction was taken by Marij Kogoj (1892–1956) who studied in Vienna in the years 1914–18, studying with Schreker and Schoenberg and making contact with the work of Schreker, Zemlinsky, Richard Strauss and others. He returned to his native Ljubljana and composed his pioneering psychological opera, *Črne maske* ('Black Masks'), based on a Slovene translation of the play *Chornyi maski* by the Russian playwright, Leonid Andreyev, which collected together many of these Viennese influences.⁷ Ivan Klemenčič linked this work with the appearance of expressionism very strongly: 'as probably not only the central work of musical expressionism in Slovenia but the most important achievement after J. Gallus.'⁸

The second of these composers, Slavko Osterc (1895–1941), made even more strenuous efforts to make contact with the mainstream of European musical culture, learn from it and bring the results of his searches back to Slovenia. In the first instance, he studied in Prague with Karel Boleslav Jirák and Alois Hába in the years

² See Edo Škulj: *Clare vir Ob 450-letnici rojstva Jacobusa Gallusa* (Ljubljana, 2000), 539–40 who presents the latest state of research into the early life of the composer.

³ This is given by Hartmut Krones in *Jacobus Handl-Gallus (1550–1591) Moralia – Harmoniae morales*, ed. Tomaž Faganel (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2000).

⁴ The most recent extensive discussion of the European context of Gallus's work can be found in Edo Škulj's *Clare vir Ob 450-letnici rojstva Jacobusa Gallusa* (Ljubljana, 2000), 399–456.

⁵ Katarina Bedina in her paper 'Fenomenon glasbenega baroka na Slovenskem' (The Phenomenon of Baroque Music in Slovenia), *Muzikološki zbornik* xxviii (1992), 5–9, explores the Slovenian connections as they might have applied to Tartini.

⁶ Amanda Glauert: *Hugo Wolf and the Wagnerian Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1999) emphasises the German nature of all of Wolf's settings, and in particular the relationship with the music of Wagner and the songs of Mahler and Richard Strauss.

⁷ Niall O'Loughlin: 'The European Context of Marij Kogoj's *Črne maske*', in *Opera kot socialni ali politični angažma*, P. Kuret (ed), Festival Ljubljana, Ljubljana, 1993, 26–35.

⁸ Ivan Klemenčič: *Slovenski glasbeni ekspressionizem od začetov do druge vojne* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1988), 170.

1925–27. This had an important effect on Osterc's music. Jiráček was thought to represent the avant-garde of the 1920s, but when Osterc was in Prague, he did not really succeed in breaking out of the late romantic tradition. Hába, on the other hand, was far more adventurous, introducing Osterc to quarter-tone music, something that Osterc used in a handful of pieces. This dichotomy between the old and the new was often present in Osterc's music, notably in his full-length opera *Krog s kredo* ('The Chalk Circle') of 1928–29 which has many traditional melodic features, but frequently uses virtually atonal harmonies. It has a number of techniques in common with a similar but later opera based on the same story, *Die Kreidekreis* by Alexander Zemlinsky.⁹ What is also significant about Osterc's career was the extent of his correspondence with numerous prominent composers and other musicians: from other parts of Yugoslavia (Miloje Milojević, Boris Papandopulo, Ljubica Marić and Vojislav Vučković); with composers in Italy (Casella and Dallapiccola), in Germany (Karl Amadeus Hartmann), the conductors Hermann Scherchen, Karel Ančerl and Fritz Mahler and the English musicologist, Edward Dent.¹⁰ He was an active member of the ISCM (SIMC) with a number of his works performed at ISCM festivals in Florence in 1934, Prague in 1936, London in 1938 and Warsaw in 1939.¹¹ Osterc's legacy is considerable and is now gradually being revived: it displays a style that was becoming less influenced by the romantic ideas shown in the works of the late 1920s and was adopting a spare and terse neo-classical style with some similarities to that of Hindemith and Honegger. This is readily apparent in his late *Mouvement symphonique* which was performed in London in 1938. The Slovene musicologist Dragotin Cvetko made an important point when he wrote: 'He brought Slovene music closer to the European, without actually depriving it of its national characteristics.'¹²

The kind of stylistic schism that was apparent in the earlier music of Osterc can also be found in the music of three further composers. The first was Marjan Kozina (1907–66), who studied in Vienna with Alban Berg and Joseph Marx¹³ and later in Prague with Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk.¹⁴ Kozina felt that he was being led in directions that he did not want to follow in his studies with Berg and Marx, and perhaps drawn to the other extreme with his work in Prague. Kozina did not want to compose folk-like music, but equally he did not want to compose atonal or twelve-note music. His intention seems to have been to steer a middle course that drew on

⁹ Niall O'Loughlin: 'The Chalk Circle Operas of Osterc and Zemlinsky: a comparative analysis', in *Glasba med obema vojnama in Slavko Osterc*, P. Kuret (ed), Festival Ljubljana, Ljubljana, 1996, 64–76.

¹⁰ Some idea of the extent of the large number of important and valuable contacts that Osterc built up can be assessed in the letters collected together in Dragotin Cvetko's book, *Fragment glasbene moderne iz pisem Slavku Ostercu/A fragment of musical modernism from letters to Slavko Osterc* (Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, 1988). Andrej Rijavec in *Slovenska glasbena dela* (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1979), 199, also lists some of these musicians.

¹¹ Andrej Rijavec: *Slovenska glasbena dela* (Ljubljana, 1979), 199.

¹² Dragotin Cvetko: *Osebnost skladatelja Slavka Osterca* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1993), 206.

¹³ Andreas Holzer explained some of the nature of Joseph Marx's teaching in his paper 'Joseph Marx als Lehrer' in P. Kuret (ed): *Marjan Kozina 1907–1966 Mednarodni simpozij o Marjanu Kozini ob koncertni izvedbi operete Majda* (Novo Mesto: 2002), 37–42.

¹⁴ See especially Primož Kuret: 'Marjan Kozina: Prispevek za biografijo', *Muzikološki zbornik* 7 (1971), pp. 93–94 and Ciril Cvetko: *Marjan Kozina* (Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1983), pp.38–54.

the best features of his native Slovenian music, while at the same time using a strong dramatic and discordant idiom where appropriate. These two contradictory features appear very strongly in his *Simfonija*, composed in four separate parts in the years 1946–49, his powerful song-cycle for baritone and orchestra *Balade Petrice Kerempuha* ('The Ballads of Petrica Kerempuh'), which dates from 1939, and above all in his full-length opera, *Ekvinokcij* ('Equinox'), dating from 1943. In the opera Kozina succeeded in reconciling the heavily discordant added-note harmony with the folk-derived melodic lines by using common melodic cells for his vocal lines and his dramatic motifs.¹⁵ In a similar way the second composer, Blaž Arnič (1901–70) at first studied in Ljubljana, but travelled to Vienna (1930–32), Warsaw (1938) and Paris (1939–40) for further studies with little known teachers. In a series of tone-poems and symphonies, his outlook was firmly focused on the previous century, with some stylistic features in common with Bruckner and the Russian 'Five'. His provincial background (he came from the Savinja country area of Northern Slovenia) was at the root of his conservatism, but his style nevertheless derives to some extent from his studies abroad. The third composer in this group, Lucijan Marija Škerjanc (1900–73), was born in Graz, taking his basic studies in Ljubljana. His search across Europe was even more far ranging than that of Osterc or Kozina, with periods in Vienna (composition with Joseph Marx, piano with Anton Trost), Paris (composition with Vincent d'Indy) and in Basel (conducting with Felix Weingartner). Škerjanc's eclectic nature drew all of these influences into his music. His symphonies show the influence of Liszt, César Franck, Tchaikovsky and d'Indy, but some of his music also displays aspects of neo-classicism and in a few cases he even used twelve-note technique. One perhaps can say about Škerjanc's music that it has many influences that were not fully absorbed into an integrated style as one can sense to a much greater extent in the music of Osterc, Kogoj and Kozina. In fact it is this problem that has exercised Slovenian composers for much of the 20th century.

Two further composers whose music is affected by the same trends are Pavel Šivic (1908–95) and Marjan Lipovšek (1910–95). After studying in Ljubljana, both Šivic and Lipovšek travelled for advanced work in Prague, composition with Josef Suk and Alois Hába and piano with Vilem Kurz. Lipovšek went on to study composition in Italy with Casella. In the case of Šivic, the advanced ideas of Hába seemed to conflict with the relatively traditional ideas of Suk and in the case of Lipovšek with the neo-classical idiom of Casella. This is clearly discernible in the music of both composers.

Following the Communist revolution that took place in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, communications with the outside world, especially with Central and Western Europe, became very difficult. During this period, music in Slovenia developed in comparative isolation with composers being left very much to their own devices. The music of this period is by and large unadventurous, but mostly well crafted. Composers such as Uroš Krek (b1922) and Primož Ramovš (1922–99)

¹⁵ I investigated this in some detail in Niall O'Loughlin: 'The Dramatic Integration of Conflicting Musical Techniques in the Opera *Ekvinokcij* by Marjan Kozina', *Music and Theatre*, P.Kuret (ed), Festival Ljubljana, Ljubljana, 2003, 96–108.

were using a straightforward neo-classical style that formed a foundation for their techniques. Krek did not study abroad, while Ramovš travelled to Italy to work with Vito Frazzi and Alfredo Casella in 1941–43. During this period Ramovš encountered many new works from Central Europe, including those by Berg, Dallapiccola, Stravinsky, Petrassi, Hindemith, Honneger and Casella himself.¹⁶ Typical works of this time were Krek's *Simfonieta* of 1951, *Mouvements concertants* of 1955 and the *Sonatina* for strings of 1956,¹⁷ and Ramovš's *Simfonieta* of 1951 and *Musiques funèbres* of 1955.¹⁸ Ramovš studied briefly with Osterc in 1941, but at this stage it was the influence of Casella that was of greatest importance with Osterc's influence remaining dormant for the time being. Another composer of this generation, Ivo Petrić (b1931), who had studied composition with Škerjanc, was finding stimulus and inspiration from the music of Prokofiev and Shostakovich in such works as his *Concerto grosso* of 1955 and his three early symphonies.

It is difficult to overestimate the change that took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the outlook of Slovenian composers as they were again able to travel abroad. The destinations were very varied. At first this was within the Yugoslav state, but increasingly Slovenes made strong contact with countries to the north, mainly Austria and Germany, and to the west, especially Italy, to say nothing of further contacts with the United Kingdom, France and the United States. As these barriers broke down, Slovenian music gradually took its place in the European milieu. The character of Slovene music changed dramatically; no longer were Slovene composers content to draw a few techniques and some inspiration from music of Western Europe and remain within their own prescribed limits. Many of them had had a good grounding in basic musical techniques and proved their ability to produce music of high quality. Now they wanted to become part of the ferment in musical creativity that was arising all over Europe. The stage was set for the emergence of the Slovenian avant-garde.

At first it took place at a local level; contact with neighbouring Croatia has always been strong. With the founding of the Zagreb Biennale in 1961, a platform was established for performances in front of a large and receptive audience for contemporary music. Slovene composers were not extensively represented at first, only Osterc and Srebotnjak in 1961, but in 1963 works by Ivo Petrić, Primož Ramovš, Slavko Osterc and Uroš Krek were performed. In 1965 there was in addition music by Milan Stibilj and in the late 1960s music by Petrić, Srebotnjak, Ramovš, Pavel Šivic, Pavlè Merko, Vinko Globokar, Lojze Lebič, Matičič, Darijan Božič, Osterc, Igor Štuhec and Jakob Jež was performed.¹⁹ This represented the coming of age of avant-garde music in Slovenia, which sat very comfortably beside advanced music from Croatia and from all over Europe and America.

¹⁶ Borut Loparnik: *Biti skladatelj* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1984), 237.

¹⁷ Niall O'Loughlin: 'Expressive Emotion and Symphonic Economy: A Note on Recent Works by Uroš Krek', *Muzikološki zbornik* 38 (2002), 85–95.

¹⁸ Andrej Rijavec: *Slovenska glasbena dela* (Ljubljana, 1979), 244, describes very succinctly the classical, neo-classical and neo-baroque nature of these works.

¹⁹ This information has been obtained from the website of the Zagreb Biennale at www.biennale-zagreb.hr.

This contact with the latest avant-garde music was part of the process that opened the eyes and ears of Slovenian composers, but even more influential was the experience gained from visits abroad, both to study composition and to hear new music in concerts and opera houses. A number of composers moved abroad to study. Vinko Globokar (b1934) studied in Paris at the Conservatoire and later with René Leibowitz, and worked in Berlin, Cologne, and Buffalo, New York. Janez Matičič (b1925) went to Paris in 1959 to study with Nadia Boulanger and worked with the Group de Recherches Musicales under Pierre Schaeffer. Milan Stibilj (b1929) studied in Ljubljana and then with one of the founders of the Zagreb Biennale, Milko Kelemen, before working in the electronic studio in Utrecht²⁰ and in Berlin and in Montreal. After his early studies in Ljubljana, Alojz Srebotnjak (b1931) went to Rome, then to London in 1960–61 to study with Peter Racine Fricker and in 1963 to Paris. This had far-reaching effects on the styles of these composers. Globokar under the influence of Leibowitz became an integral part of the Central European avant-garde with such composers as Stockhausen, Maderna and Berio and performers such as the Kontarsky brothers. Stibilj pursued a lonely path, establishing his own intellectually based technical means of expression.²¹ Srebotnjak became one of the few Slovene practitioners of a form of twelve-note music, shown in a series of imaginative works that followed, notably Six Pieces for bassoon and piano, *Microsongs* of 1964, the Harp Concerto of 1971, the piano trio *Dnevnik* of 1972.²² Globokar was mostly based in Paris, but regularly visited Slovenia to make contact with the Slovene musical scene. Matičič remained in Paris to establish his own brand of modernism, but both Srebotnjak and Stibilj returned to Ljubljana after their foreign studies.

A number of other composers did not study abroad at this stage but travelled to hear performances of new music all over Europe. Particularly stimulating in this respect were the visits by Petrić, Ramovš, Lebič and Jež to Poland. Petrić's Slavko Osterc Ensemble performed his *Croquis sonores* and Ramovš's *Enneaphonia* in Warsaw in September 1963 and at the Zagreb Biennale.²³ Both these works represent different aspects of the Slovenian avant-garde. *Croquis sonores* extensively explores new harp techniques, while *Enneaphonia* employs textures built up from groups of contrasting melodies in ways suggested by such composers as Penderecki and Ligeti.

New works by Lojze Lebič (b1934) and Jakob Jež (b1928) added to this trend with great effect. Lebič's *Meditacije za dva* for viola and cello of 1965 brings in new melodic techniques and the cantata *Požgana trava* of the same year display new vocal techniques even if the harmonic content is less adventurous. The masterly chamber

²⁰ For details of the composer's work in Utrecht see Milan Stibilj's article 'Mavrica, glasba za magnetofonski trak / Der Regenbogen für vierspüriges Tonband', in Primož Kuret (ed.): *Slovenska glasba v preteklosti in sedanjosti / Slowenische Musik in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Ljubljana: Kres, 1992), 193–203.

²¹ See my article: Niall O'Loughlin: 'Process as Musical Form in the Music of Milan Stibilj', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 30, 1994, 71–82.

²² I investigated some of these techniques in my article, Niall O'Loughlin: 'Alojz Srebotnjak's Use of Twelve-note Techniques', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 26, 1990, 45–57.

²³ A full investigation of the work of the group known as 'Pro Musica Viva' can be found in Matjaž Barbo: *Pro musica viva: prispevek k slovenski moderni po II. svetovni vojni* (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 2001).

works *kons (b)* and *kons (a)* of 1968 and 1970 respectively and the orchestral *Korant* of 1969 show the composer's complete absorption of the new techniques in which melodic and harmonic elements are kept in balance with fluid textures and advanced instrumental techniques.²⁴

In the years from 1965 Jež produced a group of chamber works that explored a distinctive style that derived its materials from melodic material of which *Stihi* ('Verses') for oboe and viola and *Asonance* for oboe, harp and piano are typical. Rhythmically they are free, varying from irregularly spaced bars to unbarred spatial notation with certain synchronisations noted. Most of the music has an improvised quality. The consolidation of Jež's avant-garde techniques came with the cantata *Do fraig amors* of 1968 that grafted modern techniques on to music developed from the long Slovenian choral tradition. He followed this with two more imposing choral works of the 1970s, *Brižinski spomeniki* and *Pogled zvezd*.²⁵

While this has always been beneficial to the development of serious art music within Slovenia, it has not meant that the music of this country has been a pale imitation of that from abroad. On the contrary, in the best cases, it has allowed Slovenes to develop a rich musical culture that displays a fair measure of independence while still fitting in well within the evolving tradition of European musical culture.

Petrić, Lebič, Ramovš, Stibilj, Jež, Darijan Božič, Pavel Mihelčič, Maks Strmčnik and Globokar formed the avant-garde of Slovenia in the later 20th century. Orchestral works by Ramovš were frequent and impressive in their concentration on the dramatic use of textural blocks of generally homogenous sound. Especially noteworthy are the non-melodic brass textures that are totally distinctive in character that cannot be mistaken for anything else, for example in the *Simfonijska 68* with its creation of overwhelming sound and its opposite, subtle non-melodic textures, and their purposeful manipulation. Petrić's works for solo instrument and orchestra composed during this period explored the unique relationship between melodic solo parts and textural orchestral music in a compelling way, nowhere more comprehensively than in his violin concerto of 1973, *Trois images*.²⁶ The dramatic works of Darijan Božič (*b1933*) owe something to the examples of Mauricio Kagel and Györgi Ligeti, but Božič's works are different, and there is a universal human application in the composer's chosen themes. The instrumental adventures of Vinko Globokar are virtually unique in the music of the 20th century. Not only did he extend the techniques of his own instrument, the trombone, to almost unheard of lengths, but he did much the same with the violin, viola, clarinet, oboe, piano and other instruments. In another unique contribution to the literature of avant-garde music, Milan Stibilj developed a

²⁴ See Frank Schneider: 'O komorni glasbi Lojzeta Lebiča / Zur Kammermusik von Lojze Lebič', in Primož Kuret (ed.): *Slovenska glasba v preteklosti in sedanjosti / Slowenische Musik in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Ljubljana: Kres, 1992), 299–306 and Niall O'Loughlin: 'The Music of Lojze Lebič', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 19, 1983, 71–81.

²⁵ See my paper: Niall O'Loughlin: 'The Reconciliation of Old and New Musical Techniques in the Cantatas of Jakob Jež in Primož Kuret (ed.): *Choral Music and Choral Societies and their role in the development of the national musical cultures* (Ljubljana: Festival Ljubljana, 2004).

²⁶ A detailed investigation of that technique is given in Niall O'Loughlin: 'Concertante Techniques in *Trois images* by Ivo Petrić', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 37, 2001, pp 103–112.

system of processes which by a form of transformation and extension became the form of the pieces themselves.²⁷

With the gaining of independence for Slovenia in 1991, all these trends became clearer and more positively focused, while at the same time maintaining an identifiable continuity with the past. This continuity has been reflected in the music from before and after independence.

Three groups of composers can be identified. The first was a very vigorous and challenging avant-garde, some of whose compositions have been noted already. Its members continued with their work uninterrupted after independence.²⁸

Secondly, in the decade before independence there had also built up a new younger generation of 'modernists' who were establishing themselves as the composers of the late 20th century. Especially notable are Aldo Kumar and Uroš Rojko (both born in 1954) who have struck an enterprising line of development, Tomaž Svete (b1956), Brina Jež-Brezavšček (b1957) and Nenad Firšt (b1964). For example, a piano piece by Kumar called *Sonata z igro 12* (Sonata – a game of 12) is a brilliantly conceived set of variations on a rising chromatic scale, using octave dislocation, rhythmic reorganisation, changing registers, and the use of parallel chords, as part of a renewed avant-garde idiom. Rojko exploits new instrumental techniques, but his music is particularly notable for its brilliant sonorities. Likewise Svete's orchestral style as shown in a piece entitled *L'amour sul mar* is sensuously scored and suggestive of the influence of the French composer Olivier Messiaen in its textures and harmonies. As an indication of the wide range of Svete's technique, the powerful 'philosophical opera' of 2000 called *Kriton* sets the text of Plato's dialogue of the same name in a tautly organised structure of great dramatic immediacy. By contrast, the delicate and sensitive works of Brina Jež-Brezavšček are equally impressive. *Presenečenje* (Surprise) for solo violin and the more substantial *Aulofonia domestica* for oboe, clarinet and percussion explore a number of new violin and woodwind techniques respectively, while the brilliantly multi-layered *Sonsong* for orchestra develops these ideas in complex textures.

Alongside these two groups there is a third which might be called post-modern. The composers include under this heading did not follow the trends of the American minimalists, but rather those of the popular and folk-derived idioms that have been so prominent in parts of central and southeastern Europe. Of particular note are Jani Golob (b1948) and Marko Mihevc (b1957).

Golob's earliest published music dates from the late 1970s, after playing the violin as a professional and having studied with Uroš Krek. The folk-derived *Štiri Slovenske ljudske pesmi* used folk songs from Slovenia that are transformed and put into a vividly modern context. What is so good is that the originals are presented with a raw

²⁷ See my article: Niall O'Loughlin: 'Process as Musical Form in the Music of Milan Stibilj', *Muzikološki zbornik*, 30, 1994, 71–82.

²⁸ These composers are featured in my article: Niall O'Loughlin: 'Music in 20th-Century Slovenia – the avant-garde', *The Musical Times* (March 1993), 130–133; further studies of this music can be found in Leon Stefanija's excellent monograph: *O glasbeno novem: ob slovenski instrumentalni glasbi zadnje četrtine 20. stoletja* (Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2001) and my book *Novejša glasba v Sloveniji* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2000).

intensity without any false sentimentality. Golob's works for violin, the solo *Sonatina*, and the *Sonatas Nos 1 and 2* with piano of show a mastery, not just of violin technique which can be taken almost for granted in Golob's work, but also of formal manipulation. The rhythmic structures of all three works remain fairly strictly controlled, the idiom is vivid and full of exciting writing with suggestions of folk violin playing.

Of newer music of traditional orientation, Marko Mihevc's symphonic poem *Equi* of 1990 is a piece of some 17 minutes' duration that sizzles with energy, in a slimmed down orchestral texture. Concessions to modernism are relatively few: for example, the reported atonality is suitably disguised. Mihevc's ability to draw something new out of the old techniques is impressive in *Equi*, as in two other symphonic poems, *In signo tauri* of 1991 and *Miracula* of 1993. His fluency and accomplishment are very impressive, but one wonders whether these features are perhaps becoming more important than the musical content.

There is every indication that composers have been following the solid tradition that had been built up in the 1980s and earlier and will follow the works mentioned here with others that are similarly challenging and interesting. With the new opportunities presented by the situation now apparent in over a decade since independence, there is likely to be a new flourishing of native Slovene musical talent. It will undoubtedly take place in the now firmly established Central European context.