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## COMPOSER, JOURNALIST AND PEDAGOGUE DRAGUTIN ČOLIĆ (1907-1987) ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH

**Abstract:** This paper examines the compositional, journalistic and pedagogical work of Dragutin Čolić, the artist who, according to the period of his activity and the characteristics of his output, belongs to the first generation of Serbian avant-garde composers. The stylistic-expressive features of Čolić's compositional writing are defined in three phases, with a focus on the early and late periods, in which his creative work was marked by expressionism.

**Key words:** “the Prague Group”, expressionism, dodecaphony, atonality, athematicism, quarter-tone music, Schönberg, Hába

Composer, journalist and pedagogue Dragutin Čolić belongs to the generation of Serbian composers educated in Prague in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Užička Požega in 1907. He acquired basic music knowledge in the Music School in Belgrade, under Miloje Milojević. From 1929 to 1932 he studied in Prague in the class of Jaroslav Křička, Karl Boleslav Jirák and Alois Hába at the State Conservatory, as well as under Josef Suk at the Master School. Speaking about his student days, stylistic starting points and orientations, Čolić points out that “it was the time when I became enthusiastic about Arnold Schönberg's output and modern music and basically, I have since remained on the same positions”.<sup>1</sup>

On returning from his studies in 1932, Čolić worked as a professor of theoretical subjects at the Stanković Music School, at the Music High School of the Music Academy from 1937, and then spent almost four decades (1940-1977) teaching harmony, counterpoint, and harmonic analysis at the Music Academy. At the same time, he contributed, as a journalist and critic, to music magazines and daily newspapers such as *Muzički glasnik* (1932), *Zvuk* (1932/3), *Slavenska muzika* (1939/40), *Srpski književni glasnik* (1937), *Pravda* (1933/35), *Život i rad* (1938), and *Vreme* (1939). The beginning of his political engagement also dates back to the inter-war period. A leftist since youth (he was expelled from high school because of his political orientation), he became better acquainted with the ideas of the labor movement in Prague, after which he joined the Communist Party in Belgrade and started the magazine “Communist” under an assumed name.

After World War II, he resumed his compositional work, which was suspended during the war years, as well as his pedagogical activity at the Music Academy and his contributions to the magazine “Borba”. From 1945 to 1946 he was the choirmaster of the “Abrašević” Cultural Club and was involved in the work of the Association of Serbian Composers since 1945. His years-long pedagogical practice and examination of theoretical

problems resulted in the study *Razvoj teorija harmonskog mišljenja. Od modalnog višeglasja do proširenog dursko-molskog tonaliteta (The Development of Theories of Harmonic Thinking. From Modal Polyphony to Extended Major-Minor Tonality)*.<sup>2</sup>

Along with his Prague fellows Ljubica Marić, Vojislav Vučković, Stanojlo Rajičić and Milan Ristić, Čolić was a distinct representative of the avant-garde spirit in inter-war Serbian music. Compared to the aforementioned authors, his compositional path developed in similar directions. It was marked by changes, shifts, vacillations between the old and the new and attempts to build his own style using modern devices. On the whole, the trajectory of Čolić's creative work encompasses three stages.

### *The Prague output*

The beginning of this period is marked by Čolić's youthful openness to new tendencies in art and by Prague's cosmopolitan atmosphere. Alois Hába claimed that Serbian music of the time gained in Čolić one of Schönberg's most devoted followers: "Čolić has grasped the melodic and harmonic principles of twelve-tone music, which should be modeled on Schönberg's works... His task is to better acquaint the Yugoslav music public with the principles we are trying to realize together and so provide new, clear foundations, both stylistic and sound, for the further development of European music."<sup>3</sup>

The "stylistic and sound foundations" of Čolić's compositions from the Prague period – *Teme con variazioni (Themes and Variations)* for piano (1930), *Prvi gudački kvartet (The First String Quartet)* (1932), and *Končertino (Concertino)* for quarter-tone piano and string sextet (1932), were indeed built on Schönberg's and Hába's avant-garde works. His lost works – *Gudački sekstet (String Sextet)*, *Duvački kvintet (Wind Quintet)*, and two *Svite (Suites)* for quarter-piano – probably belonged to the same stylistic genre.

Despite Hába's claim and this student's enthusiasm for twelve-tone music, Čolić was much more influenced by Schönberg's pre-dodecaphonic expressionism. The presence of series in *Variations* and the dodecaphonic profile of the themes from *String Quartet* notwithstanding, the rational organization of music material lacks consistency and does not play a prominent constructive role.

In both cases, the composer opted for the variational approach to structuring form. Presumably well-acquainted with Schönberg's works from the pre-serial phase, he sought to achieve the ideal of formal evolutiveness, which he realized by constant variation and motivic transformation. Although an external form does exist, sometimes even with a distinct physiognomy, the focus is on the organization and development of the internal tone matter, while the dynamic impulse becomes entrusted to the motive. Proceeding from Schönberg's teaching, Čolić arrived at Hába's study of abstract musical forms that entirely dismisses

traditional formal patterns, symmetry of melody and repetition of familiar motives, and tried to apply it in his quarter-tone *Concertino*.

The music expressiveness of these compositions ranges from the cold, anti-romantic objectivity of the *Variations* and *Concertino* to the emotional subjectivity of the *String Quartet*. The extremely condensed or entirely bare texture is permeated with deformed lines of irregular rhythmic pulse, with a dissonant intervallic picture and frequent vacillations between register extremes. The tendency towards linear profiling of music material, frequent changes of meter and fast alternations of extreme dynamic values contribute to the sound quality whose end result is unmistakably an expressionistic one. The harmony is devoid of any tonal logic and the insistence is on chromatics and succession of fourth chords. The sporadic and brief tonal points of reference can be determined only by pedal tones.

The fundamental logic of formal structuring of the *Variations* should be sought in the logic of combining the theme motives, their continual transformation, regeneration by new intonational cells and their division into autonomous motivic nuclei. The work is, in fact, a compromise between the method of free variation and serial organization. The series is an integral part of the theme and does not appear as a whole further on in the composition. Čolić treats the twelve-tone row, as well as the theme, with great license, using only one of its parts, which becomes thematically autonomous through permanent variation. The dominance of internal structure over the external in variations I and II is replaced in II and IV by a somewhat firmer formal framework. In variation III, the first five bars of the theme are exposed in a regular movement of crotchets and this element is treated thereafter as a two-part invention theme. The final variation IV is a passacaglia built upon the initial motive of the theme. The motive is transferred from the bass to the upper parts and transposed on different pitch-levels. The ever different variants of the initial motive appear above the “theme” of the passacaglia, within free melodic flows and between incisive fourth chords. The conception of the *Variations* for piano led a critic of the magazine “Venkov” to observe that Čolić has “a predilection for experimenting and relies on contemporary German music... but in doing so he is very inventive and shows a talent for dynamic shading and economizing means of expression.”<sup>4</sup>

The suggestions of a firmer formal organization in the *Variations* become more manifest in the *First String Quartet*. However, despite the three classical movements that have traditional contours (sonata – three-part form – double fugue), Čolić’s music idiom still remains extremely acute and moves within atonal, chromatic linearity, while the principle of motivic variation initiates the creation of a thick tangle of contrapuntal lines, particularly in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement. Both themes of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement appear as having the dodecaphonic profile in that the entire chromatic row is represented; however, the composer does not treat this material as a series. Just as the structuring of form was entrusted to certain motives in the

variations, here the motivic uncoiling also provides the integrality of polyphonic, imitatively built sections of themes I and II. The slow movement of the three-part contours stands in contrast to the polyphonic, kinetic outer movements. The ternary form is based on thematic and textural similarities between the initial and final sections, while the expressionistic quality is achieved by melodies growing out of lapidary motives, using atonal structures and frequent changes of meter. The final, double four-part fugue is conceived as the pivot of *String Quartet's* sonata cycle. With regard to type, this is a double fugue with special expositions of themes. The melodic structuring is done in the expressionistic manner – the themes are chromatic (II has the complete twelve-tone row), permeated with sharp intervallic skips. Interestingly, the composer did not use the full potential of the double fugue for motivic development. In that respect, the 1<sup>st</sup> movement is the most interesting and the manner in which its microstructure is built has several points of contact with *Variations*.

The furthest point in the composer's departure from traditional frames is *Concertino* for quarter-tone piano and string sextet, the first compositions of the piano concerto type in Serbian music. According to Hába, Čolić succeeded in creating “an autonomous and original composition in an athematic style.”<sup>5</sup> *Concertino*, along with several lost works written in the quarter-tone system, resulted from the author's creative encounter with the output of his professor A. Hába and from his interest in the new ways of musical expression. The composition is realized in two movements, with an overlapping between the slow movement and the finale in the second part of the cycle. There are four sections in the fragmentary structure of this movement: Andante ben sostenuto – Allegro – Andante – Allegro.

The content of *Concertino* does not develop in a tonally fixed space. In addition, the thematic material in the composition is not treated in the traditional sense of the word. Form does exist in the most general terms, as a certain degree of music organization. This formal license leaves the work devoid of clearly profiled thematic complexes, while larger wholes are built by alternating between dynamic and register contrasts, textural contrasts or by sudden rhythmic changes. Besides athematicism, harmonic nonfunctionality, fluctuating and complex metric and an intervallic picture, another characteristic of *Concertino* is “antiromantic objectivity, which is expressed in the slightly dry piano movement, devoid of the usual technical devices (passages, figurations, whole chords).”<sup>6</sup>

The analysis of stylistic and compositional-technical characteristics of Dragutin Čolić's Prague works leads us to the conclusion that despite fluctuating between dodecaphonic laws, free organization of music material and traditional forms, the composer was for the most part influenced by Schönberg's way of structuring from the pre-dodecaphonic period. Čolić's Prague output appears as nonuniform on the level of compositional technique as well as on the level of quality of expression. Under the influence of Schönberg and Hába, between elements of dodecaphony and classical forms, athematicism

and atonality, objectivity and subjectivity, he made his choice and attempted to create an acceptable system. Although this period can be characterized as experimental, its significance for the study of Čolić's creative persona is unquestionable inasmuch as the expressionism from the pre-war period, refracted through artistic maturing, played a significant role in his later output as well (at the beginning of the 1960s) and so made a full stylistic-esthetic circle in the author's work.

#### *The period of stylistic changes (1939-1961)*

From his return from studying in Prague until the onset of World War II, Čolić worked as a music critic and journalist. In his music writings, he was very clear about his ideological attitudes and his artistic orientation towards modern music.<sup>7</sup> Čolić believed that music, like other social phenomena, is entirely dependent on the environment in which it develops. He divided art into progressive and reactionary, depending on whether it fosters positive or negative social forces. He correlated the emergence of atonal and quarter-tone music with the economic and cultural milieu and stressed that it was not legitimate to deny the purpose of their existence. Čolić viewed contemporary music as a logical consequence of the previous historical development of music and, accordingly, he saw the idiom of music avant-garde merely as one of the many stages in the evolution of music art, pointing out that dodecaphonic technique was not a goal in itself, but one of the means to achieve a certain musical expression. His reviews and critiques are "characterized by unpretentiousness and a need to realistically evoke music events, as well as by a certain reservation and objectivity in appraising the music qualities of a work or interpretation, without the romantic zeal or pathos".<sup>8</sup>

Čolić's compositional work was rather neglected in the pre-war and war years. One of the likely reasons was the author's preoccupation with pedagogical and journalistic activity, but the reasons should also be sought in external circumstances, that is, in the turmoil and the reexamination of criteria and attitudes in the then European and even domestic art. It was only natural that a socially involved artist such as Čolić should feel the need to conform to the general artistic situation and meet the demands of the epoch with his music. Besides, after the initial enthusiasm for European avant-garde and the almost complete identification with the most significant exponents of that avant-garde, Čolić and other composers of the "Prague group" must have felt the need to find a path of their own. Unfortunately, the pursuit of individual style and unfettered artistic growth were cut short, first by the war and later by the limitations of "radical realism". Most of Čolić's Prague colleagues approached the new treatment of certain parameters of music language (the restoration of the classical form, tempering of athematic turgidity, and softening of atonal acuteness), each with a different

motive and in a different way, although a real stylistic turnabout in their creative work did not take place until World War II was over.

It is not surprising, then, that Čolić's decision to adjust his social and political ideals to his music idiom was preceded by a temporary suspension in the creative field, all the more so as it was necessary to abandon the very modern music language from the time of his Prague studies. *Tri narodne pesme (Three Folk Songs)* for mixed choir (1939) are the starting point of the composer's turnabout in the sense of abandoning radical expressionism. After World War II, Čolić continued to adjust to the prevailing cultural tendencies imposed by "socialist realism". From then until the early 1960s, his music was stylistically closest to the neoromantic, often with folkloric coloring and a social programmatic basis. In terms of genre, he composed vocal, vocal-instrumental, chamber, symphonic, and applied music.<sup>9</sup>

Dragutin Čolić's compositions from this period stand in marked contrast to his pre-war output. The former expressionism gave way to anachronous neoromanticism, with the inevitable folkloric overtone. In terms of artistic achievement, the author's compositions from the 1950s do not stand out among the myriad of average "sociorealistic" works of the then music production. Their only positive influence on Čolić's later work could be found in the experiences that, thanks to them, he gained in the spheres of classical form and tonal harmony.

#### *The mature creative phase (1961-1981)*

Having departed from "sociorealistic" positions and turning once more to expressionism, in 1961 Čolić achieved creative synthesis. However, by comparing the "old" with the "new" expressionism of Dragutin Čolić, we come to realize that it was not a one-track return to his former stylistic point of reference. His mature age, as well as the previous phase, resulted in a crystallization of expressive devices and an eschewing of modernist extremes.<sup>10</sup>

The symphonic triptych *Preludijum, Fuga, Postludijum (Prelude, Fugue, Postlude)* from 1961 opened a new, last chapter in the output of Dragutin Čolić. The composition is a synthesis of his previous experiences and marks a qualitative leap in relation to his post-war works. On the whole, this piece represents different aspects of expressionistic emotionality, of the ebbs and flows, the contracting and loosening of the emotional tone. Elements of dodecaphony are applied freely and are manifest primarily in the profile of thematic material and in the reflection of this system's polyphonic essence on the autonomy of the voice-parts. The mostly predominant feature is the interweaving of dodecaphonic and freely shaped thematic levels. The a thematic turgidity of his student compositions is replaced by relatively solid formal structures of the movements, with a systematic arrangement of the internal material. In the framework of extended tonality, the important elements of Čolić's harmony

include chromatics, bitonality, and sound disharmony of the vertical and atonal planes created by merging autonomous harmonic layers.

After the symphonic triptych *Preludijum, Fuga, Postludijum*, Čolić composed two song cycles to Stevan Raičković's poetry: *Krug nežnosti* (*The Circle of Affection*) (1964) for bass and orchestra and *Kamena uspavanka* (*A Stone Lullaby*) (1965) for mezzo-soprano and piano. The content basis of the cycle *Krug nežnosti* is constituted by two thematic wholes; the first includes songs of a cheerful, serene atmosphere (*Ptica* [*Bird*] and *Uspavanka za školjku* [*Lullaby for a Seashell*]). In the other songs we encounter motives of loneliness (*Sam* [*Alone*]), searching (*Devojka* [*Girl*]) and uncertainty (*Dok čekaš moj povratak* [*While You Are Waiting for My Return*]). The composer included three songs in the cycle *Kamena uspavanka*: *Ruke bola* (*The Hands of Pain*), *Vrata kraja* (*The Door to the End*) and *Put u ravnicu* (*A Path to the Lowlands*). The verses imbued with feelings of resignation, despair and silent protest inspired Čolić to create vocal miniatures whose musical interpretation reveals the sensibility of Raičković's poetry.

In realizing the content, the composer strove to encompass by his music the poetic thought, to fathom the kernel of the poetic word and explore even further that which can only be imagined. Precisely because of this penetration into the subtext and its latent dramatic expressiveness, Čolić's music is less lyrical in some of the songs from the cycle *Krug nežnosti* than would be expected considering the composition's title. The expressionistic search for essence and avoidance of outside danger cleared the musical content of any illustrative details. Aiming to achieve the utmost harmony between the poetic and music expression, Čolić treats the formal, harmonic and melodic components with great license, he employs certain instrumental colors (vibraphone and celesta in *Uspavanka*), separates the instruments from the orchestra and entrusts them with the interpretation of psychological nuances of the text.

As for the relationship between voice and orchestra in the cycle *Krug nežnosti*, it should be stressed that these two media are fully equal. The vocal element is an integral part of the orchestral apparatus and its role is to clarify in words what has already been anticipated by the instruments. Accordingly, Čolić allows much of the space for instrumental sections which are entrusted with the musical development. The profile of thematic material, density of tissue and intensity of expression are entirely expressionistic in both cycles. In terms of the quality of expression, vocal lines can be classified into two groups – the first includes recitative, at times almost austere phrases, without a pronounced melodic component, while the second features ariose lines with a strong dramatic charge and the characteristics of expressionistic vocal style, abundant in major skips, dissonant intervals and changeable rhythmic figures. The cycle *Kamena uspavanka* affirms the somewhat reserved expressionistic emotionality, devoid of overly loud accents. In terms of compositional

technique, the most apparent difference between *Krug nežnosti* and *Kamena uspavanka* is the absence of dodecaphony in the latter cycle.<sup>11</sup>

It is from *Treći gudački kvartet* (*The Third String Quartet*) (1973) that a new line began to develop in Čolić's expressionistic output, a line that deviated, to some extent, from the clearly established stylistic postulates of his works from the 1960s. This was a less emotional and less dynamic expressionism, a different musical expressiveness, which did not feature sudden abrupt dramatic turns or sound explosiveness. Although Čolić's music was, on the whole, still within a framework defined by the stylistic premises of expressionism, the outlines of objectivistic expressionism replaced, to a greater or lesser extent, the utmost subjectivization and the former acuteness and emotionality. The attenuation and streamlining of the music language is certainly most evident in the chamber genre, that is, in the aforementioned *Third String Quartet* and *Wind Quintet* from 1977, which were the most suited for experiments of this kind because of their media predisposition. However, it will be seen that the author's symphonic music of the 1970s and 1980s was also of a weaker expressionistic intensity compared to the works of the same genre from the beginning of the neoexpressionistic phase.

Čolić's classical architectonics, which were not characterized by formal intricacies in this period to begin with, now became even more concise. In the three relatively short movements of the *Third String Quartet*, the focus is on what is essential. Excessive repetition, variation and elaborate motivic development are omitted. The expositional principle is superior to the developmental. The content is compact, without any significant differences in emotional quality, which contributes to the creation of simple expressiveness and natural music progression. Reduction is also applied to the use of dodecaphony. Elements of seriality are incorporated only in the material of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, while the content of the outer movements is freely organized. On the other hand, the musical tissue of the one-movement *String Quartet* is the result of designed, rational organization. The dodecaphonic network is composed of three different series. Although its outer architectonics corresponds to a sonata form (with a recapitulation in which the secondary theme is exposed before the main theme), the internal content does not progress according to the principles of sonata dramaturgy. The main thematic factors have a sufficient degree of distinction, but the insistence in the composition is not on pointing out content and emotional contrasts. The sharpening of the intervallic and rhythmic picture is for the most part omitted in the profile of the thematic material of the *Third String Quartet*. Besides the slightly tenser expression in the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, breaks and irregular rhythmic pulsations are eschewed in forming melodic phrases. The shaping of lines remains completely free, although it is evident that their progression has become more focused. All the instruments of the chamber ensemble are equally treated in the presentation of thematic material. Except for a slightly greater degree of



linearity in the II movement of the *Third String Quartet*, the form is devoid of dense polyphonic interweaves.

What *Third String Quartet* and *Wind Quintet* retain in the expressionistic space is the harmonic idiom, which does not move within the sphere of tonal relations. It is safe to say that Čolić's harmony became even freer. Unlike his previous compositions, where tonal relationships and even tonal unity were being established (by having the same centre at the beginning and the end), these tonal plateaus are now deconstructed by chromatics, nonfunctional chordal shifts and free chord progression. The merging of all these elements results in a dissonant, harsh sonority, which in most cases does not create tonal associations.

Čolić's two symphonies from his post-war output were created over a span of ten years: *Simfonija in Sol (Symphony in Sol)* was composed in 1968 and *Simfonija za gudače i udaraljke (Symphony for strings and percussion)* in 1978. In the preface to the three-movement *Symphony in Sol*, the composer expounds on the programmatic basis and compositional-technical characteristics of the work.<sup>12</sup> The formal framework of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement is a sonata form, a slow movement with the atmosphere of a funeral march, whose structure is freely built on several contrasting phases, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement is a rondo. All the movements are built on a serial basis. *Symphony for strings and percussion*, besides an unusual combination of instruments, has nothing innovative to offer in terms of style and compositional technique. The number of movements in a symphonic cycle that is typical of Čolić is applied here, as well as the following: the 1<sup>st</sup> movement is a sonata form with a recapitulation where the secondary theme is exposed before the main theme, the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement is a complex ternary form, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement is a combination of the sonata form and rondo-sonata. All of the above formal models are realized in a combination of dodecaphony and freely organized material. Strings have a more prominent role than percussion, which is why the entire *Symphony* is somewhat chamber in character.

The end of Dragutin Čolić's creative path is marked by *Koncert za violončelo i klavir (Concerto for violoncello and piano)* which, besides the pre-war *Concertino* for quarter-tone piano and string sextet, is the only concertante work in his output. The *Concerto* continues the same expressionistic line that includes the *Third String Quartet*, *Wind Quintet*, and *Symphony for strings and percussion*. Čolić freed the symphonic body from the dramatic conflicts of contradictions and turned to contrasts. In the condensed forms of the movements, which are devoid of development processes, contrasting thoughts and situations are broken down with precision, while the music content at times loses its expressionistic features and transforms into direct expressiveness, in which there is no tense atmosphere, agitation and pathetic accents. The orchestration is functional, without the mixing of orchestral colors, and is often reduced to the chamber number of parts. The expressionistic elements are most evident in the presence of dodecaphony and the harmonic idiom that is not subjected to the laws of tonality.

*Concerto for violoncello and orchestra* is, in a sense, a synthesis of all the important features of Čolić's expressionism, that is, of his artistic temperament and sensibility. By this synthesis we mean, first and foremost, his serious, dramatic expressionism and the line leading from the symphonic triptych *Preludijum, Fuga, Postludijum* to some of the songs from the cycle *Krug nežnosti* and the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of *Symphony in Sol* to the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Concerto*. Also, the latent dramaturgy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of *Notturmo*, which can be compared to the emotional quality of *Kamena uspavanka* and the atmosphere of *Symphony in Sol*'s slow movement; the neoclassical color of some of the episodes from the same composition shine in full splendor in the cheerful, grotesquely playful finale of the *Concerto for violoncello*.

Analyzing the compositional output of Dragutin Čolić, we come to the conclusion that it was for the most part marked by the aesthetic and expressive elements of expressionism. His music develops within the frames of two expressive spheres of this movement. On the one hand there is hyperemotional, dynamic expressionism, saturated with dense symphonic texture and the massive sound of the orchestra, and on the other, muted expressionistic emotionality, which surfaces only sporadically. Somewhere in the middle of Čolić's mature creative phase we observe a certain toning down of the music language, a tempering of expressionistic emotions and a turning to a more objective expression.

The stylistic trajectory that Dragutin Čolić pursued in his evolution was typical not only of the majority of composers of the "Prague group", but also of an entire epoch of our music. In his expressionistic production, primarily the post-war output, there are unmistakably significant works, as confirmed by the positive reviews they received after their premiere.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Čolić's work on the whole undoubtedly offers an interesting historical picture of the intertwining favorable and adverse social developments that marked an important period of Serbian music.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac

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<sup>1</sup> Truda Reich, *Susreti sa suvremenim kompozitorima Jugoslavije*, Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 1972, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Beograd, Univerzitet umetnosti, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Alois Haba, *Mladi jugoslovenski kompozitori i četvrttonska muzika*, *Zvuk*, 1932/33, 2, 81.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Marija Bergamo, *Elementi ekspresionističke orijentacije u srpskoj muzici do 1945. godine*, Beograd, SANU, 1980, 114.

<sup>5</sup> Alois Haba, op. cit., 82.

<sup>6</sup> Vlastimir Peričić, *Muzički stvaraoci u Srbiji*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1969, 88-89.

<sup>7</sup> In this respect, the following articles by Čolić are significant: *Moderna muzika i društvo*, *Muzički glasnik*, 1933, 7-8, 205-206; *Izražajni materijal muzike i njeno delovanje*, *Zvuk*, 1933, 6, 207-214; *Od Baha do Hindemita*, *Srpski književni glasnik*, 1937, 52/2, 124-130.

<sup>8</sup> Roksanda Pejović, *Muzička kritika i esejistika u Beogradu (1919-1941)*, Beograd, FMU, 252.

<sup>9</sup> In this period, Čolić composed the symphonic poems *Uskršnja zvona (Easter Bells)* (1947) and *Nikoletina Bursać* (1959), cantata *Patroldžije (Patrol Officers)* (1948), *Deset sandžačkih narodnih pesama (Ten Folk Songs from Sandžak)* for voice and orchestra (1949), *Deset partizanskih pesama*

(*Ten Partisan Songs*) for mixed choir (1944), music for the films *Pionir i devojka* (*A Pioneer and a Girl*) (1949), *Njena lutka Crvenkapa* (*Her Little Red Riding Doll*) (1951), *Ciganka* (*Gypsy Woman*) (1953) and *Zemlja ustanka* (*The Land of Revolution*) (1954), music for the play *U cara Trojana kozje uši* (*Emperor Trajan's Goat's Ears*) (1957) and *Drugi gudački kvartet* (*Second String Quartet*) (1959).

<sup>10</sup> The author himself discusses this in the introductory notes to his *Symphony in Sol*: "I think it is absurd to simply deny and renounce the elements of cultural heritage only to achieve originality. In principle, I am not against even the most daring contemporary sound effects unless they are a goal in itself, unless they are pushed, because of their conspicuousness, into the foreground, thereby suppressing the content, which is the essence of a work." Dragutin Čolić, *Symphony in Sol* (preface), Beograd, 1968, autograph.

<sup>11</sup> Besides *Uspavanka za školjku*, all the other songs from the cycle *Krug nežnosti* are permeated, to a greater or lesser extent, by dodecaphonic elements. As for their realization in the thematic tissue, sometimes a differentiation is made between the voice and the orchestra, that is, the material of instrumental parts is serially structured, while the voice part remains independent of the dodecaphonic setting, or alternatively, two series are used, one attached to the orchestra, the other to the voice part. Other than that, seriality is quite common. In serial work, we can observe the presence of only one, retrograde variant. The only interesting procedure (segment dodecaphony) can be found in the song *Devojka* (*Girl*): the twelve-tone row is divided into 4 fragments, each having 3 tones and these fragments are then freely combined.

<sup>12</sup> "With respect to the content of *Symphony in Sol*, I would say that in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> movements it is emotional and stems from the dramatics, defiance, conflict, and lyricism that characterize the dynamics of our contemporary reality. The 2<sup>nd</sup>, slow movement, although not programmatically conceived, is perhaps, in a sense, more concrete because it is inspired by the atmosphere of a summer afternoon at the burial ground of the peasants shot by Fascists in Popovo Polje in Herzegovina. The emotional content is the basis from which the work develops, while the technique of musical expression is conditioned and determined by that content. Hence I use the serial technique, both linearly and vertically, only inasmuch as it gives me the possibility to achieve an intensity of expression and a formal balance of a work."

<sup>13</sup> B, M. D., *Preludijum, Fuga, Postludijum*. Novo delo Dragutina Čolića, "Politika", October 8<sup>th</sup> 1962, 7; Mihajlo Vukdragović, Kamena uspavanka, *Politika Ekspres*, November 25<sup>th</sup> 1977; Mihajlo Vukdragović, Primer za ugled, *Politika ekspres*, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1978; Enriko Josif, Koncert Beogradskog duvačkog kvinteta, *Politika*, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1978.



Program of concert held in Prague in 1932 on which *Ondříčkovovo kvarteto* performed  
 the *First String Quartet* by D. Čolić

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## Summary

The creative development of the composer, writer and professor Dragutin Čolić (1907-1987) has been marked with swerves and reversals that followed the birth of Serbian music avant-garde. Stylistic source was expressionism, at first conditioned by leaning on direct models, among them Arnold Schoenberg and Čolić's Professor Alois Haba. Preserved pieces (*Tema con variazionii* for piano, *First String Quartet* and *Concertino* for quarter-tone piano and string sextet) testify of the use of contemporary compositional methods (dodecaphony, athematism, atonality) and the ambition to realize as modern style as possible.

Moving away from expressionism was provoked by "socialist realism" which concepts conditioned the next, neoromantic phase of the pieces written immediately after the Second World War.

The period that could be defined as period of artistic maturity has began in 1961. We could perceive more harsh tone idiom and direction towards neoexpressionism. Looking at Čolić's work from this context we could say that overcoming the "socialist realism" features came rather late in his case. In the moment where he composes his first more modern piece, in 1961, Serbian music was well advanced in achieving new idioms. In difference to the more chamber output of the Prague period, after the War composer turns to numerous genres and expresses himself in various types of symphonic cycle (*Symphonic triptych Prelude, Fuga, Postlude*; Song cycle for bass and orchestra *Krug nežnosti, Sinfonia in Sol, Symphony for strings and percussions, Concerto for violoncello and orchestra*). Profile and structure of almost all pieces from this period (except the cycle for mezzo-soprano and piano *Kamena uspavanka*) are defined by the synthesis of dodecaphony and freely organized material. *Third String Quartet* of 1973 and *Wind Quintet* of 1977 we marked as carriers of new currents in composers work, as pieces that have introduced the softening of the expressionist sharpness and hinted the neoclassical idiom of the final movement of *Concerto for violoncello and orchestra*. The depicted stylistic path of Dragutin Čolić was typical not only for the majority of his colleagues, composers of the so-called "Prague school", but for the one whole era of Serbian music.