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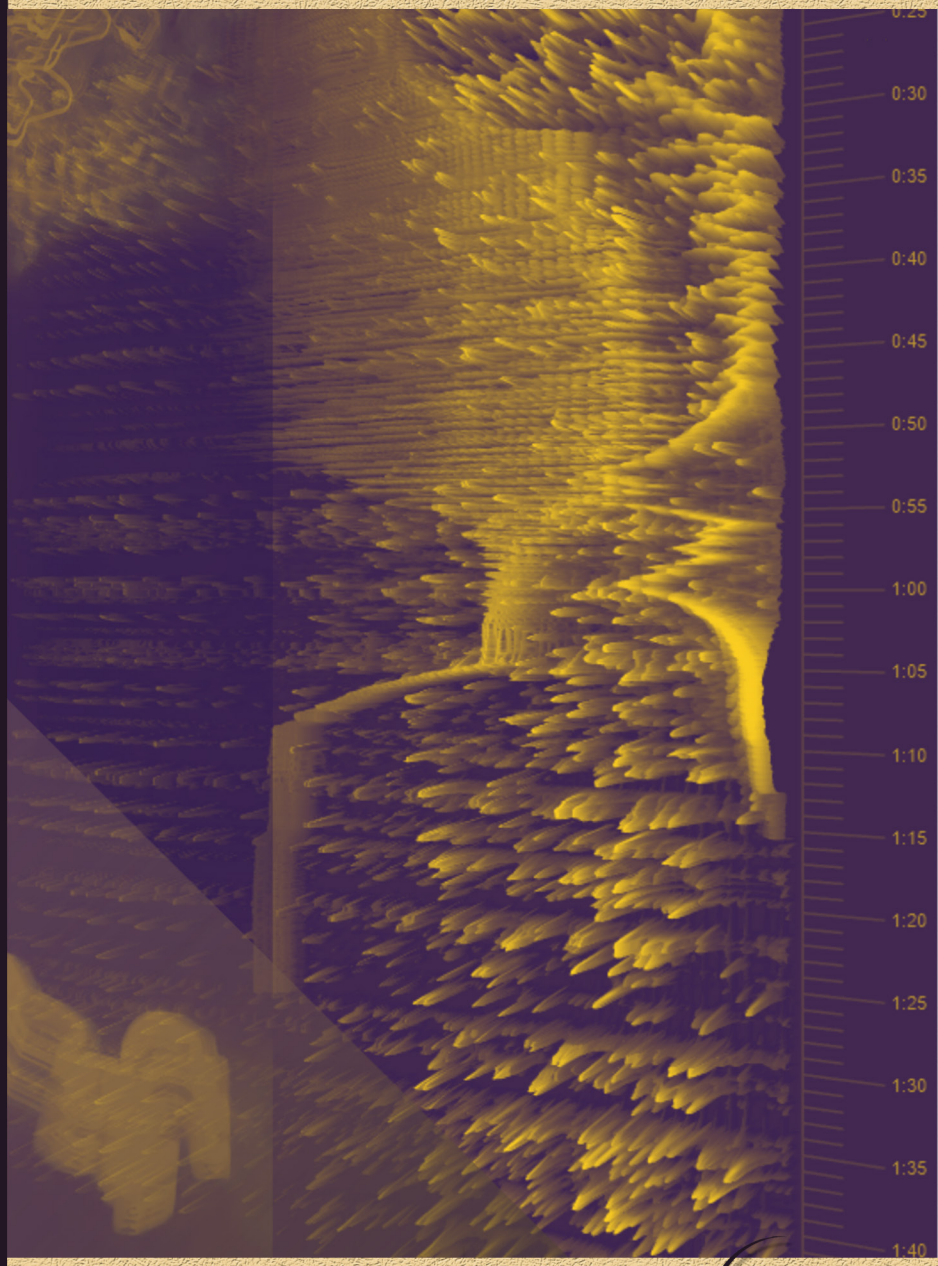

Journal of INSAM
Institute for Contemporary Art Music

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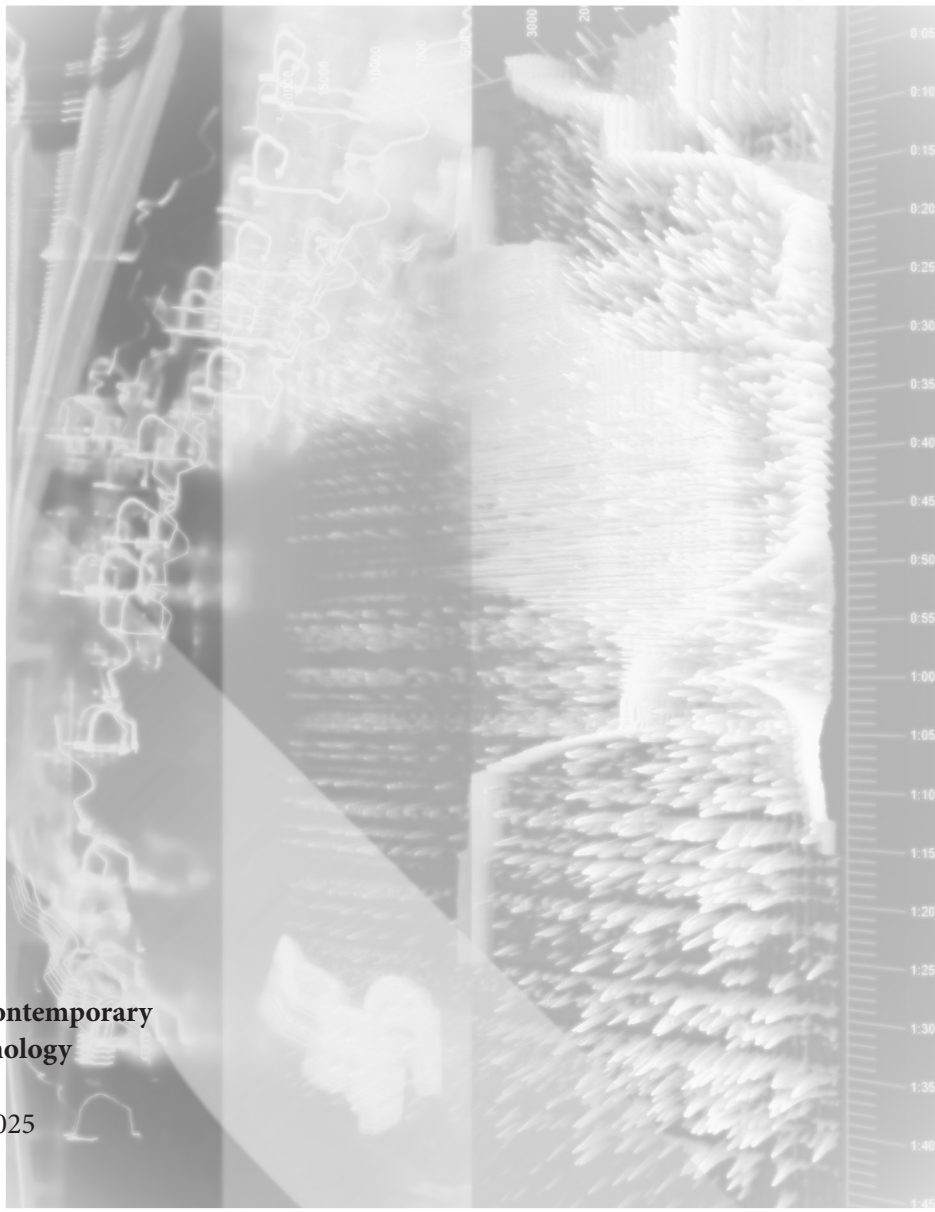

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INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology is an international peer reviewed journal dealing with topical issues in contemporary art music, visual and performing arts, and technology. The journal encourages interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and innovative views on these subjects, aiming to create a platform for communicating new ideas and theoretical and artistic impulses.
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EDITORS' FOREWORD

The main theme of the *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology* No. 15, another issue in the journal's ongoing development that we are delighted to celebrate as a milestone and on the occasion of the INSAM Institute's 10th anniversary, is "Radio Art". In the year that marks the 40th anniversary of the *Sound Workshop* [*Radionica zvuka*], a serial dedicated to radio art produced in Radio Belgrade, we were inspired to invite collaborators to write on the histories, presents and futures of this artistic form. In response, we received five original articles discussing the histories of radio art serials, competitions, a radio documentary drama as a result of a collaborative educational project and radiophonic genres. Moreover, this theme was not merely contained in the *Main Theme* section, but was also marked by contributions in the *(Inter)Views* and the *Reviews* sections.

As a still elusive form, one which is audio-oriented but liminal in terms of touching on various other artistic disciplines, with complex histories and, more times than not, hardly accessible archives, radio art is a living form of expression that stays oriented towards experiment and sonic research in the times of technological changes. The texts that follow explore the gaps we have in radio histories, and reflect on the ways we think of radio art today.

The *(Inter)Views* section firstly offers a conversation between Salomé Voegelin and Nathalie Singer ("Tuning into the Pluriverse: Listening as Resistance, Radio as World-Making"). Their thoughtful dialogue touches on many of the topics that are echoed in other papers, thus presenting the core issues and potentialities of radio art today, significantly decentralizing research of the practice and exploring colonial power and resistance through technologies. Among other issues they mention is the one of relational nature of sound and importance of listening as embodied practice, explored further in Marija Maglov's interview with Manja Ristić ("The Ritual of Bonding that will Change the World"). From the first serial she produced, to the practice of *listening-with* micro environments and to the listening to collective silence as a political act, Ristić explains various aspects of her poetics.

The interviews are followed by two essays, by Ivana Stefanović ("Three Extraordinarily Painted Seasons… and This is not the End: Serbian Protests 2024–2025") and Ana Kotevska ("*Sounds of changes*: An *Ars Acustica* sonic review"), who created a radiophonic piece *Sounds of Changes* in response to this issue's call for papers. Stefanović was

the first editor of *Sound Workshop* and one of the key figures in Serbian radio art history. As such, her name is often repeated throughout the volume. She herself, however, chooses not to look back, but documents the working of a radio artist in real time, when prompted to create during turbulent social upheaval happening in Serbia. Ana Kotevska, as musicologist and author of radiophonic essays, gives more details on the chosen sound documents and self-reflection on the collaboration between her, Stefanović and sound designer Zoran Jerković (another key figure in Serbian radio art) as a "discreet homage" to their work in *Sound Workshop*.

We open the *Main Theme* section with the paper by Đorđe Malavrazić titled "From *Sound Workshop* to Radio Film: Tracing Serbian Radio Art History Backwards". As both a historian of radio and a long-time editor of various programs and sections of Radio Belgrade, who initiated the establishment of *Sound Workshop*, Malavrazić is uniquely positioned to give both the testimony of his role in the history of Serbian radio art and a historian's look into the early stages of that history. Employing the interesting narrative device of starting *in media res* – that is, from the moment of initiation of the new serial – the author gives us the overview of the *Sound Workshop* up until the present day, before taking steps backwards toward radio experiments in the 1960s and, finally, its beginnings in the 1920s which were largely unexamined previously.

Virginia Madsen explores the history of *Atelier de création radiophonique* ("Propositions from the history of the radio as atelier: imagining a new radio and a new listener in the life of the *Atelier de création radiophonique* of Radio France"). This platform was looked upon by creators all around Europe (including Radio Belgrade). Although one of "the twentieth century radio's great artistic and exploratory sites", as Madsen calls it, the thorough English-language overview of *Atelier*'s history and practices was until now missing. Madsen lays out a detailed account of the context, prehistory, establishment and workings of the *Atelier*, based on numerous interviews conducted by the author, demonstrating the importance of oral testimonies in conducting research on radio histories. She rounds up the paper with aesthetic ideas behind the radiophonic atelier, layering her historical account with the philosophical dimension of the whole project.

Beside the serials, international festivals and competitions were significant institutionalised platform for radio artist (and radio stations producing radio art works). In her paper "Swiss radiophonic art and commissioned compositions by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) at the *Prix Italia*", Tatiana Eichenberger offers an comprehensive account of Swiss entries over 75 years. Original research based on extensive archival work, the article offers a plethora of information. However, it also works on another level as it shows how the categories of radiophony / radio art were conceptualized in passing decades, and what was understood to be radio art in the first place. Thus, she demonstrates how the question of genre could be explored through history of radio art, which can be used as a basis for theoretical grounded discussions of the subject.

While the first three studies of the *Main Theme* section primarily investigate the past of radio art, the closing two papers recount contemporary accounts of radiophonic practices. Ana Čorić's article, "Tuning in the Valley of Sounds: Exploring Collaborative

Professionalism in Radiophonic Art", recounts the results of the project by music and sound researchers aiming to capture the soundscape of Lož Valley in Slovenia through intergenerational dialogues between school children and elderly citizens, which resulted in a documentary radio drama. Touching on sound pedagogy, acoustic ecology and collaborative professionalism, providing an extensive theoretical background and detailed account of the project's phases and results, the author presents a complex narrative which points to at least one direction of broadening the scope of children's education regarding sound and nurturing future radio art practitioners and listeners.

The genre is at the core of Anđela Milić's paper ("The Question of Genre in Experimental Radio Art in Serbia"). Starting from a position of composer at the early career stage, she reflects on her encounters with radio art in higher education curricula. This leads her further to explore overlaps and differences between electronic music and radio art, approaching the latter from the perspective of acousmatic reasoning. Her paper reflects the contemporary situation of composition students who do not explore radio art in depth within their formal education, and listen to it within the framework of history of electroacoustic music (both forms, of course, having close historical links). She revisits Pierre Schaeffer's principles of sound perception and focuses on the acousmatic listening from the composer's perspective. As examples in the analysis of radiophonic genres, she uses works from *Sound Workshop* serial, thus rounding up the *Main Theme* issue with the serial whose jubilee inspired it in the first place.

The two articles in the *Beyond the Main Theme* section deal with two seemingly different subjects, yet they are nonetheless aligned through nostalgia in music, as well as dealing with music practices from the past in the contemporary moment. Andreas Kitzmann's article ("Copying and Selling the Future's Past: Buchla/Arp Replicas and Intangible Sonic Practice") presents the results of fieldwork addressing the longstanding tension between conserving historical electronic instruments and keeping them musically alive, proposing replicas and reconstructions as meaningful forms of preservation. Drawing on the example of Willem Twee Studios, renowned for their dedication to maintaining rare electronic instruments in working order, and contrasting case studies of the Buchla 100 and ARP 2500, it examines how different replication strategies negotiate authenticity, accessibility, and historical integrity. This study ultimately argues that replicas complement original instruments by sustaining the sonic practices, knowledge, and performative traditions that constitute the living heritage of electronic music.

Contributing to the growing knowledge of film music studies, in her article ("Imagining Interwar Sound and Space: Film Music and Cultural Memory in the Post-Yugoslav Context") Marija Golubović examines the role of music in the films *Montevideo, Bog te video!* [Montevideo, God Bless You!] (2010) and *Montevideo, vidimo se!* [See You in Montevideo] (2014). The author focuses on how music contributes to the reconstruction of interwar space, time, and historical imagination. Drawing on theories of film music, memory culture, and everyday life, the study demonstrates how musical choices shape emotional narratives, nostalgia, and idealized representations of the post-World War I period. Structured around a series of spatial relations – from the center

and periphery of Belgrade to Yugoslavia's position within Europe and its encounter with Uruguay – the article situates film music within local, national, and global contexts. It highlights Magnifico's score, particularly the song "Pukni zoro" [Break, O Dawn], as a key example of how film music can transcend its cinematic function to become a lasting symbol of national identity and collective memory.

Finally, the *Reviews* section brings two contributions that also relate to our "Radio Art" theme. The first one, written by Patrick Valiquet, Évelyne Gayou's *A Revolution in Music: The History of the Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (2025), an English translation of the book originally released in French twenty years ago. The second one, penned by Sascia Pellegrini, offers insight into Myles W. Jackson's *Broadcasting Fidelity: German Radio and the Rise of Early Electronic Music*, dedicated to the developments in German radio sphere in the 1920s.

As we round out this jubilee issue, we would like to thank all contributors for their dedicated work and valuable insights, the reviewers who consistently ensure a high scientific standard, as well as our trusted proofreader, Anthony McLean. As always, we hope that these milestones – the 15th issue and eight years of the *INSAM Journal*, and ten years of the INSAM Institute for Contemporary Art Music – will inspire us to continue moving forward and to engage with enthusiasm in the pressing questions of music, art, and technology today.

In Belgrade and Sarajevo, December 19, 2025,

Dr. Marija Maglov, Guest Editor of the Issue's Theme
Dr. Bojana Radovanović Šuput, Editor-in-Chief

INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology
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RIJAD KANIŽA
Head of the INSAM Institute for Conteporary Art Music

10 YEARS OF THE INSAM INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART MUSIC: CONTEMPORANEITY IN CONTINUITY

The year 2025 marks ten years of activity of the Institute for Contemporary Art Music – INSAM. This anniversary is not only a turning point in time, but also an opportunity to reflect on the development of a specific research and production practice in the field of contemporary music, art(s) and technology, as well as on the circumstances that made such practice possible in a regional and international context.

The INSAM Institute was founded in January 2015 in Sarajevo as a fully digital Bosnian-Herzegovinian and international institute for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research of contemporary music and new artistic paradigms. As the only institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is systematically dedicated to the research of contemporary music and art, the INSAM has from the very beginning operated outside traditional institutional frameworks, developing as an open platform for the meeting of artistic practice, theory, technology and experimental research methods. Over the past decade, the Institute's activities have included artistic and scientific research, publishing musical scores and scientific papers, organizing concerts, performances, exhibitions, competitions, lectures and workshops, as well as continuous support for young artists and transdisciplinary researchers.

The ten-year development of the INSAM is largely marked by the vision and dedicated work of its co-founder and long-time director, Dr. Hanan Hadžajlić. Her vision and will enabled the development of this kind of research practice in the region, laying stable foundations for the international growth of the INSAM. We also owe special thanks to Dr. Dino Rešidbegović, co-founder of the Institute, whose support in maintaining the vision is unwavering.

Almost all the work capacities of the Institute are focused on the development of the quality of the *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, which was

founded in August 2018 with the aim of establishing a recognizable international platform for the scientific research of music and art in relation to technology. From the very beginning, the Journal has positioned itself as an advocate of open science and open access. In accordance with the emancipatory policy of the INSAM Institute, all published works are available for free, without the collection of royalties, thus consciously opposing the commercial and often exploitative models of academic publishing. At the same time, such a decision is not only a technical or financial issue, but a clear value position on the democratization of knowledge and the availability of research work.

The appetites of the editors in encouraging interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches and innovative views on contemporary art music, visual and performing arts and technology are reflected in the fact that during seven years of active publishing, the Journal gathered scientists, performers and artists who recognized the importance of artistic research and theoretical articulation of artistic practice, including a handful of diversity of research profiles and interests. Therefore, special thanks also go to Dr. Bojana Radovanović Šuput, editor-in-chief of the *INSAM Journal for Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, whose continuous editorial, research and managerial work is one of the key guarantees of the magazine's quality, relevance and international recognition.

Entering the second decade of activity, with thanks to everyone who has left even the slightest trace, the INSAM Institute's focus is primarily on the development and platformization of the Journal as the Institute's central discursive infrastructure. The commemoration of eight years of active publication of the Journal in this 15th crystal jubilee issue is accompanied by its redesign, which aims to strengthen the visual identity, functionality and long-term sustainability of the journal in the modern digital environment.

However, this celebratory text is not the place for a conclusion. The INSAM Institute for Contemporary Art Music, as well as the *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, continue to act as a space and platform for critical dialogue, research and experiment, aware of the responsibility borne by the institution of knowledge in a time of accelerated technological and social changes.

(Inter)Views

Guest edited by Marija Maglov

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TUNING INTO THE PLURIVERSE

LISTENING AS RESISTANCE, RADIO AS WORLD-MAKING

A Conversation between Salomé Voegelin and Nathalie Singer

Prof. Salomé Voegelin.

Prof. Nathalie Singer © Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

Salomé:
Hello Nathalie, it's a real pleasure to speak with you about the possibilities and realities of radiophonic worlds. Radio is a format that has been present in my life at different moments and in different guises; as something I consume, avidly, as something I produce, occasionally; as art, as a channel of communication, as a technology and as a philosophical thinking tool. The radio carries narratives and performs invisible dramaturgies, it enables an imaginary of connectivity and reciprocity, it bridges geographies

and transforms temporal realities. How do you define radiophonic art within all these overlapping dimensions?

Nathalie:
Thank you, Salomé. I'm glad to have this conversation with you. That's the beauty and challenge of radio – it's so elusive, so multifaceted. I usually distinguish between two approaches: first, the classical, journalistic radio; and second, *radiophony*, encompassing all forms of artistic and experimental radio practices.

I've worked in this field for over 35 years, and I still struggle to define it precisely. It spans genres – the radio play, acousmatic music, *ars acoustica*, transmission art, even radio activism. It exists somewhere between literature, reportage, experimental music, media art, performance and social practices. This in-between-ness makes it hard for academia to categorize its practice, which is perhaps why so far, no comprehensive monograph on radio art has been published.

Salomé:
I have always experienced radio as having this incredible capacity, historically and still now, in its new, digital formats, to not only record, report on or narrate reality, but to make reality, which becomes realities: plural possibilities that intervene and augment what we perceive to be a current reality; and that can question normative ontologies and political normativities.

Nathalie:
Absolutely. Radio produces multiple listening spaces: the space of recording, of transmission, of reception – and, crucially, of imagination. Sounds enter my room and blend with my acoustic environment, forming a world of invisible connections. Radio can transmit reality, but it can also construct fictions and temporary worlds. The line between what's real and what's imagined becomes uncertain. And therein lies the power of radio art: beyond merely conveying information, it also has the ability to generate new imaginaries and thus to propose new worlds.

Salomé:
At a time when freedom of speech and collective action are under pressure worldwide, your work as Professor for Experimental Radio at Bauhaus University Weimar feels more relevant than ever. I'm especially interested in your recent project *Listening to the World – 100 Years of Radio*, supported by the Goethe-Institut and the New European Bauhaus. What did you discover about radio's contradictory nature – its potential both as a tool for social connection and as an instrument of political control?

Nathalie:
Your question goes right to the heart of our research. Over the course of *Listening to the World*, my team and I conducted fieldwork in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Southern Africa. We explored how radio has shaped listening and identity over the past century. What we found was a deep ambivalence: radio has historically served both as a medium of propaganda and as a platform for resistance. From colonial-era transmission towers to today's digital shutdowns during political crises – like in Iran or during the Arab Spring in Egypt – radio has consistently played a double role.

Figure 1. Panel discussion: "Architectures of Power and Propaganda" at Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, with Elizabeth L. Enriquez, Frederike Moormann, Nathalie Singer, Riar Rizaldi and Alfredo Thiermann. © Laura Fiorio

Colonial powers built massive radio infrastructures to control distant territories. These ruins still exist and are often only now being rediscovered – frequently by artists.[1] But beyond these physical relics, we found subtler forms of influence. In the Philippines, for instance, American forces used radio to disseminate their language and popular culture, deeply influencing local identities.[2] In remote regions like Sagada, we encoun-

1 For example, the two artistic projects: Riar Rizaldi: *Tellurian Drama*, and Angelika Waniek, Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Frederike Moormann, Dieter Daniels, Tuli Mekondjo: *From Windhoek to Kamina to Nauen*,
2 See Elizabeth Enriquez: *Appropriation and Resistance in Philippine Colonial Radio* as part of the panel *Architectures of Power and Propaganda* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin/ Rec. Radio Talk Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Weimar 21-24. October 2024.

tered hybrid expressions – indigenous language country music mixed with traditional gongs.[3] These stories show how radio, even unconsciously, shapes culture and listening practices.

Yet, we also gathered numerous accounts of the radio being used as a means of resistance. In Colombia, radio was a key tool for the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) during the civil war.[4] In Indonesia's jungles, anarchist collectives operate underground stations. In Myanmar, since the 2021 military coup, rural radio has become a lifeline for oppressed ethnic communities.[5] And in apartheid South Africa, the ANC's *Radio Freedom* broadcast from neighbouring countries, crossing borders to mobilize resistance. Radio waves don't stop at national lines, after all.[6]

Salomé:
I've only observed and participated in two "radio workshops" myself – one with Tetsuo Kogawa, and another with the Shortwave Collective. Both emphasized DIY transmission and listening as an embodied, experimental act. Your project also included workshops – in Manila, Johannesburg, and Montevideo. How do you stage radiophonic workshops, what is your approach?

Nathalie:
I created something we call the *Bauhaus Listening Workshops*,[7] emerging from the *Real. Sense.Lab*, a lab I co-founded at Bauhaus University investigating how performative modes of perception can help shape more sustainable environments.

For *Listening to the World*, our workshops were designed to be reciprocal – not exporting predefined notions of what radiophonic art "should" be but rather co-creating radiophonic work with local participants. In each location we brought together about 20 sound practitioners and researchers, which we selected in collaboration with local curators. Formats included dyadic listening, blind walks, expanded listening walks, radio talks and a *Listening Future Lab*.

In South America, for instance, many community radio actors met in person for the first time at one of our workshops, which led to a surge in collaborative projects. In Southern Africa, we saw how the workshops created space for artistic growth, particularly for women, and even opened healing processes related to colonial trauma. Personally,

3 Listen to Jerry Fati-ig & Sagada Musiceros: *Extract from Jam Session*, a band of indigenous people, the kankana-ey, from the mountain region of the Philippine.
4 Listen to Alejo Duque (Radio Libre): *Archives from the Lab #TodoEsRadio, held with ex-combatant members from the ex-FARC* (with English translation as part of the Audioplayer, from minute 20'24" on).
5 See/Listen to the presentations from Riar Rizaldi: Otonomi Feral: *Ecotage, Anarchism, and Radio in the Forest* and of the Anonymous Author: *Myanmar Radio After the Coup*.
6 See Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi: *The African National Congress's Radio Freedom and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa scientific project*.
7 See *Bauhaus.Listening.Workshop #3 – Johannesburg*.

I learned a tremendous amount about listening cultures in the Global South. All our sessions were recorded and are now documented on the *Transcultural Listening Map*, a web platform that continues to grow and connect radiophonic practices internationally.

Figures 2 and 3. Listening to Radiofrequencies during the Bauhaus.Listening.Workshop #1 – Montevideo, March 2023 © Tarruman Corrales.

Salomé:
Europe is currently phasing out FM signals, moving toward DAB+, internet radio, and podcasts. But these digital infrastructures are increasingly vulnerable to populist and authoritarian control. Therefore, I am curious about the transmission and listening possibilities that are made inaccessible through the FM switch-off, can we regain those for political and artistic interventions and resistance? Can we pirate the switched-off frequencies, switch them back on and generate an alternative network of sounds?

Nathalie:
Yes, that's a crucial question. Just recently, when a power outage hit the Iberian Peninsula, people dusted off their old crank radios to get updates. Analogue radio remains cheap, accessible, and resilient – especially in crisis scenarios.

By traveling the world, I also encountered small Indigenous radio stations, like Radio Amazondas in the Peruvian jungle, Radyo Sagada in the Philippine mountains, or La Voz Indígena[8] in Argentina. They play a crucial role in giving often-unheard communities a voice and in reinforcing their cultural identity.[9]

Tetsuo Kogawa's micro-radio concept, which you mentioned earlier, is especially relevant here: it works with low-range transmission as a radical alternative to mass media.

8 Listen to La Voz Indigena: *Gender Memory and Communication*.
9 Listen also to Tendayi Chakanyuka: *The Situation of Community Radio Stations in Zimbabwe*.

While traditional radio has largely faded in the Global North, podcasting and audio walks – its digital descendants – are thriving. But I believe analogue radio might see a revival, especially at the local level.

Narrow casting and the social practice of radio making can also resists the monopolization of digital platforms. In our digital era, we're largely at the mercy of a handful of tech giants whose algorithms are designed to prioritize engagement and profit over truth, diversity, or the public good. These systems decide what grabs our attention – not what's accurate or meaningful. The result is a media landscape where outrage spreads faster than facts, creators are forced to play the algorithm's game just to be heard, and most of us end up stuck in echo chambers without even realizing it.

As FM frequencies are freed up, there's potential for small-scale, community-based broadcasting. If this were to happen radio-making could give marginalized voices a platform, counter social isolation, and push back against algorithm-driven content silos. Radio teaches us to listen – to perceive nuance rather than black-and-white binaries. That's a cultural technique sorely needed in our polarized world.

Salomé:
Drawing on Arturo Escobar's concept of the *pluriverse*, which proposes a decolonial design of the world that allows for multiple realities – do you see yourself as a designer of possible worlds when working with students or collaborators?

Nathalie:
That's a beautiful way to frame it. In fact, we might have called the project *Listening to Worlds*, plural. Like in my earlier exhibition *Radiophonic Spaces*. It gestures toward a multiplicity of sonic realities, layered and overlapping, often resisting the borders that map the world in political or colonial terms.

We tried to explore listening not only as an aesthetic gesture but as a situated, embodied, even spiritual act – deeply informed by place, memory, and culture. And while I hesitate to call myself a "designer" in the conventional sense – since design often assumes control, intention, and measurable outcomes – what does resonate with me is the suggestion of radio as an opening up of spaces for others to imagine and listen in plural ways. Radio, as I understand and practice it, is not about shaping a product, but initiating a process. It's about hosting and sometimes, the act of listening itself becomes the design.

Salomé:
And what about healing? I know your recent work touches on the healing potential of sound – not just physically, but also socially and politically. Can radio heal?

Nathalie:
That question has followed me through many of my workshops and personal works. I approached healing from many directions – rituals, body rhythms, collective memory, ecological attunement.[10]

Traveling, we found that in many cultures, healing is already embedded in the act of listening. In Sagada, we heard of the *dap-ay* – a circle where the young massage the feet of the elders while listening to their stories. If radio can heal, it's not through a frequency or formula, but through the cultivation of attention, empathy, and relational time.

Therefore, radio is never just about content; instead, it's about relationships and relationality. And in this sense, I think the most radical thing we can do right now is to listen. Really listen. To each other. To our surroundings. To the worlds within and beyond our own. Because perhaps listening is the first form of world-making. And radio, with all its fragility and resilience, reminds us that even in the static, even in the interference, there are signals worth finding.

Salomé:
I totally agree with you and believe that this is a very important moment to listen, to listen to how we listen and take part in radiophonic practices. To learn and understand what we listen to and how we hear it; and to remember collective possibilities and the violence of populist pressures and promises.

This leads me to my for now last question. In Tate Modern, there's this striking sculpture by Cildo Meireles – *Babel* from 2001– a towering structure made of hundreds of old radios, each tuned to a different radio station. Some date back to the 1920s, others are more recent. The work is at risk of falling silent once FM signals are switched off. At a British Art Network seminar in 2016, the suggested solution was to gut the radios and replace their receivers with DAB chips – preserving the visual nostalgia while masking the disappearance of analogue radio. I felt this missed the conceptual point of the work – the entropy, the fading signal, the fragility of connection.

So, I wonder: should we work with the nostalgia of radio – the family gathered around a wooden speaker, the wartime messages, the gravity of political news – or is your work

10 See project: *Sonar-Sanar y Sonar*.
Listen also to Victoria Yam: *The Healing Frequencies of the Mak Yong Ritual* or Duduzile Masuku: Malopo and Dinaka Ritual Dances.

more concerned with what radio *is* and *can be now*? How do we engage with the legacy of radio without going backwards – but also without denying what is being lost?

Nathalie:
Thank you for raising the danger of radio nostalgia – it's a powerful trap. For me, it's not about returning to the small frequency boxes of the past, nor to traditional Indigenous practices, which often carry patriarchal structures no longer suitable for today. But we *can* learn from those pasts, especially from the unique qualities of radiophonic listening that we've already discussed – and rethink them with future technologies in mind. That could mean more ecological, more sustainable forms of radio. For example, new kinds of listening devices – perhaps wearables, integrated into clothing or everyday objects – or alternative energy sources inspired by biological systems or quantum computing. Systems that are less globally controlled and energy-intensive than our current digital infrastructure, which still relies heavily on massive, centralized data centres.

So, the "radio of the future" wouldn't just be a nostalgic object. It would be an *invented* medium – a new space for listening that's reimagined both technically and socially. A space that opens up pluralistic worlds and enables a different kind of social practice – one rooted in care, diversity, and shared attention.

Links and Further Listening

Websites:
- www.experimentellesradio.de
- www.radiophonic.space
- www.uni-weimar.de/realsenselab/

Explore the projects, recordings, and collaborators mentioned in this conversation by accessing the hyperlinks in the text, footnotes, or via:

Transcultural Listening Map – www.listeningmap.de

Suggested Entries

Bauhaus.Listening.Workshop – Montevideo

- **Alejo Duque (Radio Libre):** "Archives from the Lab #TodoEsRadio, held with ex-combatant members from the ex-FARC", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#229.
- **La Voz Indígena**: "Gender, Memory, and Communication", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#389.
- **Fátima González Donado:** "Amazondas", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#762.

Bauhaus.Listening.Workshop – Manila

• **Riar Rizaldi:** "Tellurian Drama", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#550.
• **Elizabeth Enriquez:** "Appropriation and Resistance in Philippine Colonial Radio" as part of the panel „Architectures of Power and Propaganda at Haus der Kulturen der Welt," Berlin/ Rec. Radio Talk Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Weimar 21–24. October 2024, https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#960.
• **Gwen Gaongen**: "History and Programming of Radyo Sagada", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#444.
• **Anonymous Author:** "Myanmar Radio After the Coup", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#444.
• **Riar Rizaldi:** "Otonomi Feral: Ecotage, Anarchism, and Radio in the Forest", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#444.
• **Jerry Fati-ig & Sagada Musiceros**: Extract of Jam Session, https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#406.
• **Victoria Yam:** "The Healing Frequencies of the Mak Yong Ritual", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#406.

Bauhaus.Listening.Workshop – Johannesburg

• **Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi:** "The African National Congress's Radio Freedom and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#1214.
• **Angelika Waniek, Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Frederike Moormann, Dieter Daniels, Tuli Mekondjo**: "From Windhoek to Kamina to Nauen", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#1625.
• **Tendayi Chakanyuka:** "The Situation of Community Radio Stations in Zimbabwe", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#1133.
• **Duduzile Masuku:** "Malopo and Dinaka Ritual Dances", https://listeningmap.de/tlm-frontend/#1133.

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"THE RITUAL OF BONDING THAT WILL CHANGE THE WORLD": INTERVIEW WITH MANJA RISTIĆ

Figure 1. Manja Ristić, photo by Zoe Šarlija.

Anyone interested in the fields of experimental radio arts, interdisciplinary sound research, and field recordings has by now encountered the fascinating work of Manja Ristić, a Belgrade-born (1979) violinist, sound artist, poet, curator, and researcher. Published by international labels such as LINE, REKEM, Erstwhile, Unfathomless, tsss tapes, Wabi Sabi Tapes, DASA tapes, Inexhaustible Editions, Skupina, Flag Day, and Naviar Records, commissioned by Kunstradio-Radiokunst, Radiophrenia, Radio Art Zone, Radio Belgrade, and others, curated for Ars Electronica (Austria), Cona Zavod (Slovenia), G12Hub (Serbia), BELEF (Serbia), CIFRA World (UAE), her works

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reveal particular awareness of relations and connections between humans, non-human worlds, and the environment in general. For her, sonic encounters are acts of meaning-making, while sound is both an artistic and an ethical act. In addition to revisiting her own relation to radio art, given this special issue, we discussed the ways in which sonic creations and listening practices have particular resonance with modern sensibilities in turbulent social times.

What are your first memories of listening to the radio? Do you remember it as a particular sound(s) or as a situation and visual memory?

To be honest, I can't recall my very earliest memory of listening to the radio, but I do remember the exact age and feeling when I began listening consciously and with full engagement as a teenager. The war had broken out a year or two earlier; I was 12 or 13 years old, and it was B92 Radio. I would listen to it whenever I had a spare moment – sometimes leaving it on all night and falling asleep to it.

In the early 1990s, another "modern" radio station launched, Radio Penguin. I would switch between the two constantly; for my generation, they were windows to the world. It's important to understand the context: this was the era of the fall of Yugoslavia. Serbia was trapped under Milošević's regime, and all state media was saturated with propaganda. B92, which had grown out of a youth programme on the main city FM station (Studio B) in the 1980s, became the first independent radio station and was openly critical of the new regime. Radio Penguin was a private station, financed by a shady Italian businessman who ultimately ended up in prison. I've forgotten the full story, but the socio-cultural backdrop was one of war, dictatorship, and a pervasive repression of freedom of speech.

How did your interest in radio art start? Given that you are a trained classical musician (violinist) and active as an experimental musician and improviser, was there something you were searching for in radio art that you could not find or express in other music/sound art fields you were active in?

No, I don't think so – it felt like the most natural thing to me from the very start, because I had already developed a somatic connection to the medium. Using transmission as a way to explore and share sound art seemed the most logical way of working with sound. I was already deeply involved in improvisation and experimental music, and had just graduated from two very prominent music academies, when I was invited to explore web-streaming as a means of connecting performers in virtual space. That was 20 years ago.

Soon after, I was invited to host my own radio show on the internet station Novi Radio Beograd. I hosted, produced, and often performed in a series of web-streamed concerts, connecting performers worldwide through live jam-session software. The for-

mat of the show opened the door to all kinds of live studio experimentations, including spoken word. It was both the evolution of the internet and the transformation of radio into a digital creative space – the shift from terrestrial broadcasting to streaming.

My show, *Soundbridging*, ran for three years. After that, I began collaborating with the Slovenian collective Cona Zavod, which at the time was developing one of its most remarkable projects – Radio Cona, a curated temporary radio station exploring the medium as a platform for sound-related arts. Gradually, I began creating sound art, composing, and moving from instrumental performance into electronic and electro-acoustic work.

It was radio that taught me how to use the studio; I had to learn sound engineering, and my technical stage experience improved significantly. But most of all, radio helped me find my voice – in both the literal and metaphorical sense.

What is your relationship to the rich history of radio art in Radio Belgrade, or in other European centres? Did you have any figures whose work particularly inspired you?

Radio Belgrade 3 had a profound influence on me. As a young classical musician, its rich archives and consistently serious, educational programming instilled a deep sense of culture in my developing psyche. For us – students of classical music – having our concerts broadcast from major chamber and orchestral venues around Belgrade was the highest honour a performance could receive.

I first learned about the Electronic Studio from a history book (I'm not joking). By the time I was studying, it had long ceased to exist. When I discovered its legacy, I was already immersed in the European experimental and electroacoustic scene. Among the composers who left a lasting imprint on the Studio, Ljudmila Frajt stood out most vividly to me.

Over time, I developed my own relationship with Radio Belgrade through a few collaborations and projects, including a meaningful friendship with Radio Belgrade 3 editor Ksenija Stevanović. She taught me that musical thinking is not only about aesthetic articulation, but also about profound critical reflection.

My connection to *Radionica zvuka* [*Sound Workshop*] and the radio drama tradition at Radio Belgrade began through musicianship. As a student at the Academy of Music, I often accepted invitations to play violin for radio drama productions. Sadly, my generation did not build bridges to the vibrant sound art tradition of the 1960s and 1970s – a period shaped by giants like Arsenije Jovanović, Neda Depolo, and Ivana Stefanović. We came of age in the aftermath of war, in a cultural vacuum left by the dismantling of a republic. In that atmosphere, cultural identity – once nurtured within institutional frameworks – slipped into the politics of rising nationalisms, censorship, and shrinking spaces for progressive expression.

So we turned to the independent scene, underground culture, and citizens' initiatives to build a more vital environment for contemporary arts and education. From 2004

to 2024, as a founding member of the Association of Multimedia Artists in Belgrade, I helped produce hundreds of international projects, cultural events, sound-related and scene art productions, publishing editions, artistic and media platforms, cultural policy conferences, and educational formats. During that time, while building scenes – including community radio, applied music for film and theatre, improvisational and experimental collectives – we occasionally collaborated with the National Broadcasting Agency, but not often. This isn't a critique, just a reflection of the reality: building culture means building bridges between divided public spheres.

I don't think I'm the right person to speak authoritatively about the tradition of radio art within the National Broadcasting Agency. That task belongs to those who have studied the celebrated generation that won awards at radio festivals in the 1960s and 1970s. If anything, I may be continuing their tradition of invisibility – a quiet persistence within Serbian society, marked by a lack of belonging in a deeply corrupt cultural landscape. Narratives about the disappearance of the Yugoslav radio tradition – and perhaps the non-visibility of my work and others like me – may one day be preserved by archivists at the British Library, ORF, or Phonurgia Nova. For reasons I can't fully explain, we seem to matter to them.

We are conducting this interview at a time of an exceptional student anti-corruption movement taking place in Serbia for months. One of the most striking acts of protest and rebellion is the daily 15-minute silence in memory of the victims of the Novi Sad tragedy. You recorded one of these deeply moving, contemplative, but also possibly unsettling, silent observances that are, in a way, emblematic of this movement. From your point of hearing, is there some significant change in the way this social movement grew and was received, that is observable in this immersion in shared silence?

Absolutely. Having experienced it first-hand on many occasions, I felt it as a powerful act of synchronisation with a deliberate, holistic intent. It is a ritual of attentive, intentional listening that becomes a form of witnessing and integration. This form of bonding and camaraderie is a deeply embedded gesture that influences everyone's physiological, emotional, and energetic state – a conscious recognition of disruption that prompts an intentional act of reconfiguration.

By paying tribute to victims in a sustained collective ritual of silence, people are not only sharing respect and grief, but synchronising in solidarity – amplifying and gathering energy to overcome the traumatic past and to reset the destructive system of values that produced such an appalling scale of corruption and destruction.

In your note on a playlist containing this recording, you wrote: "The ritual of bonding that will change the world." I notice this affinity towards bonds, relationality, and a holistic approach beyond your protest recordings, especially those concerned with nature, the sea, and our environment in general. Since sound is this "surround"

phenomenon, perhaps more multidirectional than other senses, do you think it is in a way more effective in putting forward the idea of holistic relationality of being and things in the world?

I share your sense that sound's multidirectional nature makes it uniquely suited to expressing the relationality of being. This is at the heart of my recent article, *Mnemosonic Topographies – Sensory Epistemology Between Sound, Space, and Memory*, which I presented at the International Conference in Bucharest, *The Sonic Turn: Sound, Power, and Knowledge in Contemporary Culture*.[1]

In it, I propose a mnemosonic topography practice – an embodied listening that traces the ephemeral contours of place through sonic resonance and sensory recall. This practice draws upon field recordings and psychoacoustic reflection, navigating the liminal terrain where sonic phenomena become mnemonic vessels, carrying sedimented histories and affective geographies. It is trauma-informed and tackles the ethics of minute listening; it interrogates how acoustic ecologies inscribe themselves upon the sensorium, revealing latent narratives embedded in the sonic substrata of landscapes, and exposing the entanglement of personal and collective memory with spatial experience.

Figure 2. Nazare, Portugal. Photo by Mark Vernon.

1 Manja Ristić. 2025. "Mnemosonic Topographies – Sensory Epistemology Between Sound, Space, and Memory". *The Attic*. October 4. Accessed 12 December 2025.

Sound/noise pollution was also the topic of your work. As a sound artist, how do you find measure when working with sound? On the other hand, what do you think are the ways for someone perhaps not familiar with radio and sound art to get interested, if there are already so many sounds around us, stealing our (short) attention, inducing fatigue?

The measure comes from awareness, and from conceptual thinking. There is also a strong element of sensory – and more broadly, body–mind – recall when entering a landscape. For me, it is a developed intuitive practice: movement is conditioned by the vibrational flow already present in the place, and I either follow it or attune to it. It is a delicate process, sometimes automatic, sometimes intentional, and always responsive to the environment's own dynamics.

People are increasingly drawn to contemporary sound practices because of their sensory nature and immediate neurological effects. Different modes of creative sound practice find their audiences, but more consistent and articulate institutional support would help make them accessible to a wider public. We cannot ignore the neurological crisis of the digital age – an era in which attention is fragmented, sensory engagement is flattened, and the nervous system is under constant strain. We need to recognise the diverse sensory and cognitive modes we possess as vital to collective resilience. Sound research – especially when grounded in practices like mnemosonic topography – offers a rapid, non-invasive means of re-sensitising perception and re-establishing relational bonds with the environment, while also serving as a practice of self-care and self-repair.

How does your working process look? Do you collect sounds regularly with the idea of using them somewhere, sometimes, or intentionally, with the clear idea of how you will use them?

No, I don't cultivate projection in that sense. Ideas often arise in a strong conceptual manner, but what truly builds a work is the interplay between intuition, experience, and knowledge. The final intention embedded in the work is, in the end, energetically carved and released with care – but the process itself remains open, experimental, holistic, unpredictable, and situational.

I collect sounds all the time. Most of the time, I am simply a medium for collecting them, or *listening-with* specific micro-environments. The act is less about pre-determined use and more about being present to what emerges, allowing the material to find its own place and meaning within a work.

There is a long list of your collaborators. How do you choose who you work with, and can you sometimes see a specific side of yourself coming forward with different collaborators? How would you describe the contemporary radio art scene/network (if there is one)? How open is it?

I have spent most of my life deeply immersed in the world of musical collaboration. There is no more intimate way to know and be with someone than through shared creative work. When it becomes a profession, a specific psychological and emotional flexibility develops – honed, for example, through chamber, ensemble, or orchestral work. Later, when it becomes a "creative life" flow, collaborations are exactly that: shared experiences of life, cohabitation, co-regulation, co-creation.

I don't choose all of my collaborators; often, I am matched with someone by publishers or promoters. Impulses to co-create can come from all sorts of different agents and mediums – and that is how it should be. Full control that bypasses openness and unpredictability often stems from a rigid ego that struggles to mature; it comes from arrogance and material ambition. Unfortunately, those values are still predominant even in working with sound. There is a strong reflection of post-colonial, power-based, and somewhat mediocre hyper-production, which can bypass even the most basic human values such as racial or gender equality, not to mention geopolitical diversity. We are still trapped in the after-effect of narcissistic, soulless materialism.

But all that will change. For me, power lies in deep connection, vision, and compassion – qualities that are timeless and rooted in perceiving the world as a unified sentience. From that perspective, competing for journalistic or institutional attention so that someone less informed can proclaim me "relevant" is not very appealing.

There are truly amazing collectives out there that selflessly hold culture on their shoulders, especially in the field of experimental radio arts. But overall, I don't find the sound scene very open. It is up to all of us involved to help the discipline mature artistically and culturally, so that new generations can build their research on a solid ethical foundation.

For listening:

Sargassum aeterna. https://rekemrecords.bandcamp.com/album/sargassum-aeterna.
genesis. https://manjaristic.bandcamp.com/album/genesis.
Into Your Eyes. https://lineimprint.bandcamp.com/album/into-your-eyes.
water memory – mnemosonic topographies of the Adriatic. https://manjaristic.bandcamp.com/album/water-memory-mnemosonic-topographies-of-the-Adriatic .
Manja Ristić and Tomáš Šenkyřík. *Vstal*. https://skupina.bandcamp.com/album/vstal.
Marja Ahti/Manja Ristić. *Transference*. https://erstwhilerecords.bandcamp.com/album/transference.
Manja Ristić and Mark Vernon. *Calypso's Dream*. https://manjaristic.bandcamp.com/album/calypsos-dream.

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THREE EXTRAORDINARILY PAINTED SEASONS ... AND THIS IS NOT THE END

SERBIAN PROTESTS 2024–2025

Two things happened one after another. First, on November 1st, 2024, the canopy of the main railway station in Novi Sad (Serbia) collapsed, killing 16 people, including two children. Soon after, the state of turmoil and dissatisfaction turned into student-led protests and faculty blockades. The students realized very quickly that it had not been an accident, but a crime, the crime of negligence, corruption, sloppiness, the crime that its perpetrators were trying to cover up and "sweep under the carpet". Some time had passed before January 14th, 2025, the day when I started to write down something about all these events, since in the meantime everything has metamorphosed, turning into a long-lasting social process that has outgrown all known forms, thus becoming an unprecedented physical and spiritual collective entity, complex, multicolored, and multifaceted, hitherto unseen in these regions. The formation of a certain, previously unknown cultural and social formula has begun; what initially started as a student-led protest grew into massive demonstrations led by high schoolers, parents, professors, citizens and people… becoming more widespread and general. Faculty buildings, rectorates, and universities all over the country were under blockade for months and the citizens were not allowed to enter them. All events, almost exclusively, took place in public open spaces, streets, squares, crossroads, as well as roads which people walked, ran, hiked, cycled, and sloshed through in the rain, sometimes only in sneakers, and other times wearing bandages. The students, high schoolers, and some older people accompanying them marched through various cities and villages in the country, even-

tually arriving to Strasbourg and Brussels. Hundreds and hundreds of kilometres of road underfoot. And this is all that should be said about the reasons and the causes of the given phenomenon.

Another thing that I can see emerging as an unavoidable theme is how the protest *sounds*. I am experienced in sound hunting, having recorded so many of them, especially in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Damascus, both in nature and in the cities, and these sounds can be heard in my radio art compositions. However, the sound of the current protests is quite different. Not only in terms if its dynamic properties, but also in all the finesse, "colours", its "leafy" formations, together with prevailing voices of young people, both males and females, sometimes even children, and their harmonics. This new, liberated spirit also introduced some mild spices: irony, a pinch of humour and lots of youthful frequencies in the air. A lot of laughter! Lots of tears, joy, and shouts. Bikers soon joined this mixture of sounds, dangerously touring through the cities, roaring on the roads, and paving the way for the students; roaring taxi engines lined and picked up the students all over the country, after numerous actions and events, driving them back safely to different cities. An increasing number of voices got intertwined in that huge sound nest, adding to the volume of the bundle now impossible to untangle, whereas sound mass started waving like a Möbius strip.

The participants (citizens, all the protesters, and all the passers-by) started to realize that in this condensed sound domain, created when a huge number of people are gathered, there is an especially striking energetic power. The city is being filled with sound, it resounds, groans, sings, rings, echoes. The city is breathing, resembling a huge organism. The multi-layered sound dissipates, multiplies, it gets drowned out, overpowering other sounds, it becomes stronger, exceeding the average urban saturation value. And it is precisely this phenomenon that I find worth recording. What otherwise happens quite rarely – this winter, spring and summer 2025 takes place not only every day, but repeatedly, for months – and that is the fact that the protest and revolt are expressed not only by its specific sound, but by the absence of it, through peaceful, deep and solemn silence, which powerfully reverberates in its fullness and soundlessness. It is something astonishingly powerful. "Pumpaj",[1] young people shouted tirelessly, "puuuumpaaaaaaj", they sang, uttered, called and… kept silent, which, in a way, produced the strongest shock.

These two opposing auditory "breakthroughs", loud noise and deep silence, emerged almost simultaneously, every time leaning one upon another, taking turns within just a few seconds. The streets are loud, the events happen daily, and the emotional charge is often (too) high. This is how "loudness" and a commemorative silence honoring victims of Novi Sad railway canopy collapse started to coexist side by side. Fifteen minutes of solemn silence and peaceful standing soon turned to sixteen minutes – as the number of victims grew – interrupting the regular day, movement, traffic, communication, tak-

1 A Serbian slang word, and one of the main slogans of anti-corruption protests in Serbia, meaning *Pump it up!, Keep going!*, which points out to the fact that the heart pumps blood essential for life. The slogan is used to provide support, love, and the message of not giving up.

ing one's breath away. Everything would momentarily stop and only the silence would remain. Then, right on cue, everything would burst with sound again.

The Western Balkan region – and we are located on these meridians – historically has had a lot of experience in uprisings, protests, rebellions, revolutions. Working on *Metropola tišine – Stari Ras*[2] I had been thinking about it myself while recreating associations that deal with noise and silence of ancient events. But that which was supposed to tell something about the past centuries consisted of different material. Back then, I had been collecting ephemeral and perishable remains, traces of records, preserved parts of melodies. During the 1990s, everything accelerated, even the experience itself: I was able to record and thus capture the documentary sound of the collapse of the multicultural and multi-ethnic project of Yugoslavia: the sound of bustle, the sound of processions and mass movements, with or without shouting and chanting, the sound of weeping, the sound of mothers…(recordings from Novi Sad, Belgrade, Sarajevo,… the cities in which I created *Lingua/phonia/patria*[3] *and Lacrimosa*[4]); the sound of stone and air reverberating after murderous attacks. The scarcity of performing tools while working in a cold studio during wartime winter increased my sense of anxiety, seclusion and defeat, and it was only thirty years later that *Veliki Kamen*[5] strengthened me in my idea of exploring tough Balkan themes.

Now, in 2025, the rebellion is alive everyday, omnipresent, almost unstoppable, with its ritually repetitive component being the *silence*, group silence, the voicelessness of the mass consisting of living people, here and now, simultaneously performing observance of silence in many places. This is when the silence starts ruling the cities, roads, open spaces, squares, crossroads, streets, fields… From 11.52 to 12.08 (although the exact time can occasionally vary) the cities become everyday 16-minute-"metropolises of silence", turning to meditative sessions, mental "breaks" and purgatories, dramatically changing the cityscape. I am now likely to think that a man who keeps silent is a different man. He stays alone with himself, observes the unobserved, feels the unfelt. This kind of silence with no living soul, a cat, or a machine, when no sounds of footsteps or car wheels can be heard, the silence created by nature "that sleeps" (which brings back my memory of a filming scene of muezzin in Damascus one night of a full Moon[6]) – is a different kind of silence. It is filled with breath of living people withdrawing into themselves, "looking inward", willingly trying to discipline every voice, speech, breathing, one's heart beats – it projects on the scanner of listeners' senses quite a different inner image. In such silence, the silence of all living beings, huge will and strength is con-

2 The *Metropolis of Silence/Stari Ras*, 1992. Radiophonic poem for tape. Performed by "Ensemble Renaissance" (early music ensemble). Sound Engineer: Zoran Jerković. First broadcast on May 27th, 1992. London. Ars Acustica Festival.
3 *Lingua/Phonia/Patria*, 1989. A co-production of Radio Belgrade and Hörspiel studio WDR Cologne.
4 *Lacrimosa*, 1993. ORF (Radio Austria) Production. First broadcast on May 6th, 1993: ORF, Vienna.
5 *A Large Stone* [*Veliki kamen*], 2017. Based on fragments of *Hasanaginica*, a play by Ljubomir Simović. First broadcast on Radio Belgrade 3, May 7th, 2017
6 *Prvi istočni san* [*The First Eastern Dream*], 1998. ORF Production (Radio Austria) Kunstradio-Radiokunst, Vienna. Audio Editor: Heidi Grundman. Sound Engineer: Gerhard Wieser. First broadcast on Radio Austria, The First Programme, October 8th, 1998.

centrated. The kind of strength that does not rest, but plunges. Thus, careful listening to this silence brimming with life leads to understanding the message sent by human beings. There is something liturgical to it, but I would rather describe it as a painful and struggling ascent of a maturing society.

Are sonic arts (including radio art) "a safe house" for a genuine story about realistic topics? Does, paradoxically, a non-musical document truly preserve the artistic expression from the unwanted layers of pathos and narration, by transposing sensibility into other methaporical and symbolic artistic spheres? Does sonic art represent truth? Or, does it, at least, give it a chance? And is it even allowed to talk about truth nowadays?

Little is left of nature. City birds usually cannot be heard due to the noise. But they have their own sound identity that can be heard in silence. When people stop, when they keep quiet and lower their head, the birds start behaving as "soloists" and, together with barking dogs, they become the main agents of the silent reality. The birds flutter, flap their wings, "call" each other. A whole flock rises somewhere, and after a sudden change of sound drifts, one can hear a rhythmic wing work that slowly, dynamically "fades away" and disappears, without using a potentiometer (regulator), but by means of mere physical distancing. Trees, birds, and dogs represent rare remnants of nature in urban ambiences, and they should therefore be registered here as a precious rarity. Andersen's fairy tale already showed a long time ago that a mechanical nightingale would not be able to replace a true, living one, whose exclusive singing can cure the emperor. Only the bird that flies, sings, and does not mechanically repeat its song has healing properties. This is perhaps the reason why a bird's singing does not disturb the silence, but rather weighs it, deepens it, granting it the spatial and meaningful dimensions. In the minutes following the beginning of silence, one can hear ravens croaking, dogs barking in the distance, or some random voices from the invisible yard. The presence of these sounds now resembles a family gathering.

Music has been written about since antiquity, whereas untempered sound has been written about only since recently. Those who listen to life sounds do not remain deaf to the possibility of composing and creating an artistic form using "non-artistic" material. This is probably the very moment when the sound art, or sonic art, was established. Only the 20th century brought a realization that the world is filled, perhaps even overloaded, with all kinds of sounds that are not even harmonized, melodized, or musicalized, but the sounds that are by no means simply noise. In social events charged with meaning, reason, and justification, sound quality is being received and processed differently. And it itself gains some meaning, being shaped into an idea or a metaphor.

I observe with my ears, more than with my eyes, what is now going on here.

Cities are very loud environments, and that is why the phenomenon of street silence is in stark contrast with everything that a city represents. The abruptness of the emergence of silence is another striking component. When several hundreds, thousands, or several hundred thousands of people enter the silence simultaneously, does everyone remain alone or not…? This happened for the first time in such a magnificent way at Slavija Square in Belgrade, on December 22nd, 2024, during the early evening hours.

Within only several seconds, more than 200,000 people became utterly silent. Another extremely sonically impressive protest took place in front of Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), a national media service. The speed at which everything unfolded then created a sensation of the abyss in which noise and silence alternated in huge waves, so that one burst of sound was followed by a burst of silence. Sudden bursts of silence for a huge number of people provoke some kind of weakness, they create a sensation of feeling upset, a physical rest provokes unrest. Or perhaps it provokes the opposite? The moment in which two opposing sound realities collide – the familiar, expected one, and another one, representing the immediate discharge followed by silence – brings a dramatic and completely new experiental phenomenon. The moment I am writing this text, the protests have been taking place for months, all these months of daily standing at various Serbian crossroads now enter the third season.

The sound experienced its another "performance" on the big stage playing the big role.

Five months since the protests started, precisely until March 15th, there were many hundreds and thousands of rallies all over the country, with hundreds of thousands of participants. On that March 15th, in the middle of willful and disciplined silence, 300,000 citizens who filled the square and the whole surrounding plateau were attacked by an unknown "weapon", which is for the time being also called a "sound" or "sonic" weapon. In one of the main streets, a strange sound that can only be described as "something" burst out. Various witnesses reported "something like" creaking, humming, or roaring. It was the sound that could not be identified, recognized, or named. The sound of unclear properties. People who were "hit" by this weapon were terrified, they fell down, had problems with spatial orientation, experienced pain or hearing troubles, which only further deepened and expanded the interpretative range of this ritual social act. Whether we call it a sound cannon or not, this "something-like-sound" was directed towards the silent crowd. It was the culmination of that "something" that has not yet been officially confirmed. Soundwise, the attack lasted for a short time, and it was only the students' composure that prevented the effects of the potential stampede that could have been caused by fear, and that would have further led to unimaginable consequences. Even the international community got engaged in the investigation that followed.

The first encounter of the opposing sides happened on New Year's Eve. The students welcomed the new year of 2025 in heavy silence. At the nearby square, a turbo-folk singer was singing at the top of his voice, whereas the young protesters were trying to ignore him. The sound struck the silence. Or the other way round?

In May, the situation already became significantly different: it was no longer possible to ignore the fact that "our children" and "the opposing side" became physically so dangerously close to one another. A noisy para-city consisting of light white tents was created in the middle of the central boulevard and the nearby park. Group A is blocking group B. Now these two groups are so close, never have they been closer to each other. Sounds collide, different music genres collide, whistles collide with the messages of the lyrics. While one group is silent, another interrupts the silence in various ways.

A boundary is drawn, but in the midst of noise, it is hard to discern where exactly the boundary is broken.

Some time later another large intersection is occupied. Now together with the professors who are suddenly deprived of their salaries. The sound that characterizes them is the sound of quiet conversation, pleasant, cultured music, and even concerts in the evening hours. A bit of rock, a bit of jazz, a bit of classical music. The range of diversity is expanding.

None of the rallies that occasionally grew into a continuous row of rallies sounded the same. Dry summer brought an additional background made of various sounds of rustling leaves on the branches; epic scenes accompanied by many flags fluttering in the wind; suddenly the rain joined the city sounds, thunders or a storm outbreak; showers and thunders merging with regular and irregular weather phenomena; Chinese raincoats rustling in the wind, whistles and speakers' voices amplified through megaphones, fighting the storms.

On June 28th, 2025, after a huge protest rally at Slavija Square, the students take off their hi-vis vests, they join the citizens and merge with the rest of the crowd. But this is not the end.

That's when police cordons started to form in order to suppress the protests, "the forces of order" as masked goons walking in boots approach, the violence erupts, batons and shields are used, people are beaten and wounded, there is blood on their faces and their hands. Arrests become more common, and the sound properties become different.

This is where thinking about another and quite different sound encompassing the entire horizon could start, and that would require a new and a different type of essay. However, this one ends here, without following any rules or literary conventions determining what a proper text should look like, it gets out of the rhythm, it interrupts observation, just like when one's eyelids close. All of a sudden.

Translated by Ivana Maksić

SOUNDS OF CHANGES
Ars Acustica review

The piece is avalable on the *Museum of the Nineties* website.

The content can be accessed via this link or QR code below:

Photo by Gavrilo Andrić.

Student protests. Serbia, December 6, 2024 – June 28, 2025
Authors: Ivana Stefanović and Ana Kotevska
Duration: 16:25
Sound design: Zoran Jerković
Private production "Samizdat"
Completed on August 25, 2025.
The documentary materials used were recorded on private mobile phones, obtained via social media, or taken from publicly available media outlets.

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SOUNDS OF CHANGES

An *Ars Acustica* sonic review

Sounds of Changes, a co-authored *Ars Acustica*[1] spatio-temporal experiment, was conducted during the summer of 2025 in improvised studio conditions, after months of active participation in the Student Protest in Belgrade and intensive monitoring, listening to and contemplating their empowerment, spread, unexpected mobility around Serbia and Europe, the wondrous power of transformation and creative, rapid responses to new situations, all from the perspective of acoustic emanations and the documentary, "ethnographic" recording and collection thereof. It goes without saying that, conditionally speaking, the following *comments* should in no way be perceived as instructions for listening, but rather as a collection of basic information and self-reflections related to the creation of *Sounds of Changes*.

After a months-long preparation phase, which Ivana Stefanović and I went through mainly individually, with occasional meetings and frequent exchanges of opinions and materials, we decided to undertake composing – in the sense of trying to put together and compress an imaginary sound portrait of the Student Protest, keeping in mind the announced theme of the new edition of the *INSAM Journal*. Whether from personal "archives" in our cellphones or through downloads from the internet, we let about a hundred "examples" pass through our hands and ears in order to choose forty which were given the status of sound objects and acoustic events. When making the selection, we were simultaneously guided by personal perceptions of their symbolic meanings at the time when they unfolded, assessments of expressive capacity which has not been called into question by the time that has passed, as well as by inherent acoustic and

1 Out of the multiple applicable terms (radiophony, radio art, radiophonic music…), we opted for the term *Ars Acustica* seeing as new technologies and platforms do not consider solely the radio a medium of transmission.

music values. As composer, Ivana defined the potential order of the chosen elements and thus the general dramaturgy of the future whole; Zoran Jerković critically listened to them, tonally leveled them and provided them sonic cohabitation, whereas I, from the perspective of a musicologist, suggested certain limitations for the overly expansive field of association that was opening up before us, the project title, and experiment[2] as the possible subgenre. We went into the editing process in the last days of August, with prepared material and the decision to rely only on the documentary material from the exterior, recorded between December 6, 2024 and June 28, 2025 – the period during which the protests could truly be described as student-led. We chose without discussion just one student protest matrix, taking the civil, ideological, activist position of the rebelling part of Serbia and thereby excluded "the others," the opposed side of the incumbent authorities, even though we had at our disposal recorded moments of "incursion," clashes between the two sides and their trying to shout each other down. *The others* are represented by just one acoustic event which turned into a collective experience when on March 15, 2025, at a megaprotest in Belgrade, a yet unidentified sonic weapon was used during a 16-minute silent tribute. The studio simulation of a "sonic cannon" (Earshot.ngo) we used is the only "intruder" in the documentary material and, at the same time, the only symbolic representative of the invisible *others*.

For the sake of keeping track more easily, three elliptical verbal fragments taken out of an impassable forest of signals and cries (*Pumpaj!* / *Pump it!*), slogans (*Ruke su vam krvave!* / *Your hands are bloody!*), directive communication in moments of crisis (*Ne trčite!* / *Don't run!*), and innumerable speeches which marked the breadth of the students' field of knowledge and inventiveness, at the same time emitting a considerable expressive, rhythmic and dynamic potential, deserve to be commented on separately. We perceived these three verbal messages, three female voices – enigmatic, unfinished and eclectic yet deadly, flowing among the mythical, archaic, symbolistic, philosophical and technological linguistic spheres – launched at the right time, as representative moments for the power and chronology of a generational rebellion.

The first (*The sun started shining for us on December 6!*), spoken at a protest at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences, figuratively speaks of dawn, of the birth of hope for a new day and a new beginning. The second (*So be wise as serpents and innocent as doves*) from the Gospel of Matthew (10:16) suggests ways to achieve a balance between maturity and kindness and has a wide intergenerational – albeit local – range of meanings, given that it simultaneously recalls the words of the late Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Pavle and the eponymous book by Serbian philosopher, writer and psychotherapist Vladeta Jerotić (2017). The last verbal, pre-recorded message, which the students played at the end of the mass protest in Slavija Square on June 28 and whereby they gave citizens the "green light" and urged them to take freedom into their own hands, in addition to a "traffic light," gained its full meaning two days later on the offi-

2 At first I was considering "ocherk," "a Russian term referring to a genre of narrative prose in which the plot is based on a true event and real people, while treatment aims for artistic creation" (*Rečnik književnih termina* 1992, 541).

cial Student Protest Instagram page: "The green light is not a sign to head into a charge, or for violence. It is not a light for war. It is not for revenge. It is a light for the future."

The months-long protests against the current corrupt government have, by changing society as a whole, also transformed the established soundscapes of urban units in Serbia, thanks primarily to the creativity, unpredictability, and mobility of the rebel students, but also of rebel citizens. Therefore, our "experiment" on the (in many ways) unique and long-lasting Student Protest, conducted in the days of their transformation into a civil uprising and of the first clear signs of recognition coming from the European Union, cannot be classified under established and familiar radiophonic formats. Innovative sonic breakthroughs, noise and commemorative silence do not easily fit into a soundscape or soundwalk, in the sense that shaped these subgenres of Ars Acustica in the mid-1980s, especially their refined, often poetic and static individualized experimental soundprints of cities in Klaus Schöning's *Metropolis* series (Kotevska 2015). With a dose of caution, I say that with *Sounds of Changes* we attempted to compress the hypersonic energy that brings life back to squares and streets rather than "blocking" them, alternating noise, silence and an eclectic musical repertoire and particularly the awakened choirs across the country (Kotevska 2025); to suggest their movement and detect changes in space and time, emphasize the enormous (and not always harmless) power of nonverbal communication to connect, mobilize, wake up and unite individuals of different ideological orientation on the emotional, identity and ideological plane. This time spontaneously, without any force or imposed canons! Possibly the best testament to that is the poem *Serbia* by Oskar Davičo, in an expressive and subversive performance by a "mumbling choir," which stood out as a necessary link in forming the chain or procession of awakened choirs.

Or, as better phrased by Jonathan Sterne, founder of the Sound Studies at McGill University in Montreal: sound offers ways of alternative access to the main problems raised by reflecting on the humanistic and social scene, it reaches culture, power… dealing from its own perspective with big historical, philosophical and political questions (Sterne 2015).

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As it usually goes, already on the first day of editing the initial questions and dilemmas faded away, the pressure of the outside world vanished, bias and activism retreated before the laws of sound composing… They were replaced by a shared focus on the forty chosen sound fragments, the forming of microstructures, their logical joining into sonic events, the simultaneity and layering of voices, the search for the right measure and the right place for islands of silence, the contrasting of sound planes, climaxes, care for proportions, duration and whole of the form… with a constant exchange of opinions. Listening, checking, correcting, leveling the visible layers, and again listening with former and present "ears."

During our ten or so working days for the 16:25 minutes of *Sounds of Changes*, an atmosphere typical of past individual and joint recordings on Radio Belgrade was created. A discreet homage to the now non-existent Studio 10 and to Radio Belgrade's *Sound Workshop* formed more than four decades ago.

Translated by Tijana Cvetković

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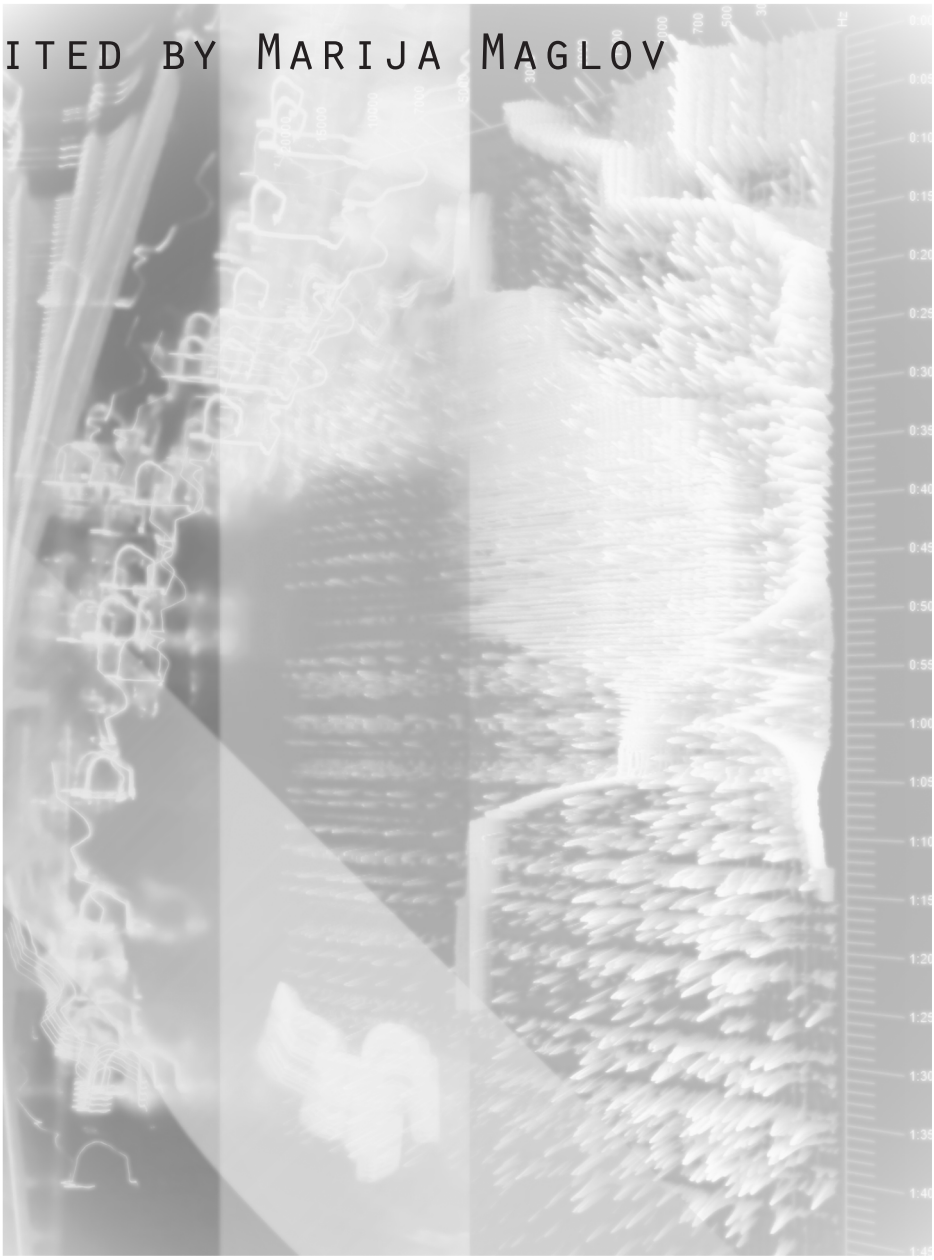
Main Theme:

RADIO ART

Guest edited by Marija Maglov



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FROM *SOUND WORKSHOP* TO RADIO FILM: TRACING SERBIAN RADIO ART HISTORY BACKWARDS

KEYWORDS
history of radio, noise, "radio-film", *Ars Acustica*, radio art, *Sound Workshop*

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this paper is to analyse the Radio Belgrade's *Sound Workshop* series and to shed light on the experimental trends that preceded it. In the first part, the author examines the reasons for establishing *Sound Workshop* at the beginning of 1985 and determines, from a chronological and conceptual point of view, its place among other European series of the same type. The second part of the paper explores the initial tendencies and early works of the acoustic art in Radio Belgrade, which preceded the founding of the *Sound Workshop* and became part of its reprise collection. The final part of the paper deals with the first appearance of the terms "radio art", "radio film" and "bruitism" in the Belgrade cultural circles (early 1920s, zenithist Ljubomir Micić) and the realisations of the first radio collages in the country (late 1930s, writer and director of Radio Belgrade, Veljko Petrović).

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Introduction

At the beginning of 1985, on January 6th, the Drama Program of Radio Belgrade launched a new series titled *Sound Workshop* [*Radionica zvuka*], which has brought a breath of fresh air, experimenting, and invention in the world of acoustic creativity for the past forty years. This series has combined an enthusiasm for a long and continuous quest, as old as the media itself, for the grail of a specific radiophonic expression, irreducible to anything else, alongside an effort to establish a unity of words, sounds, noises, and silences, the key elements of radio storytelling, following the creative principle of soundcollaging. The closest and somewhat alternative international terms for such sound creations would be "ars acustica" (Klaus Schöning 1970s) and "radio art" (Weill 1990). Radiophonic pieces are not performed from texts or musical scores, and they cannot be preserved in letters or notations (Trišić 1983, 138). Since they cannot be reconstructed from any written source, they exist as unique entities solely in the medium of sound.

In such a radio series that airs once a week on the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, on Sundays, featuring eight premieres a year, it is apparently not possible to constantly maintain a quality of pure experimentation, but its consistency of distinctly modern and avant-garde approach cannot be denied. At first, one could assume that the sound portraits of particular composers and musicologists offer the opportunity for huge respite, but the type and the very radicality of their style prove otherwise. They simply consist of more speech than some other pieces, but if we allow ourselves the freedom of analogy as listeners, they are more likely to bring to our mind the portraits of Ambroise Vollard, Gertrude Stein, and Juan Gris, rather than classical paintings.

Sound Workshop: Its Emergence and the Reasons Behind it

Radio Belgrade's series *Sound Workshop* was launched relatively early. Its great inspiring predecessors were *Atelier de création radiophonique* (Radio France) and *Studio Akustische Kunst* (WDR Köln) (Schöning 1991), the workspaces opened in 1969. In fact, many renowned experimental radio art series emerged only later – namely, Spanish *Ars Sonora* was launched on October 6th in 1985, Austrian *Kunstradio – Radiokunst* in 1987, *New American Radio* in 1987, Australian *Listening Room* in 1988, and Czech *Radioatelier* in 2003. When in 1989, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) established a network of editorial offices for radio art called *Ars Acustica Group* in Florence, Radio Belgrade joined it owing to *Sound Workshop*, soon getting an opportunity to participate in its activities and to exchange programs with other radio stations free of charge. Even though in the first year of *Sound Workshop*'s existence, two representative

foreign pieces from previous *Prix Italia* were presented to the listeners, *Ars Acustica Group* was a more reliable source which ensured a constant European component of its repertoire.

Preparations for the introduction of *Sound Workshop* were taking place, understandably, in the second half of 1984. After taking into consideration the current international tendencies, Belgrade's excellent experience in experimental sound pieces (resulting in receiving some of the world's prestigious awards), as well as the concept of radio art getting further away from the literary paradigm and closer to documentary drama and sound collage poetics, during one editorial meeting, while being the editor-in-chief of Radio Belgrade Drama Department, I presented an initiative for launching a series dedicated to sound essayism. (Back then we already had a documentary-drama program.) My idea was firmly supported by Neda Depolo, Ivana Stefanović, Slobodan Boda Marković, Miroslav Jokić, and Predrag D. Stamenković. But two types of criticism that were expressed on that occasion are also worth acknowledging, since they still have the power of occasional reemergence.

Convinced in defending the interests of their profession, the editors with backgrounds in literature emphasised that the Drama Program should deal with drama, and not music, since it was established for that, and got its name after it. I had already encountered this type of objection before, since right after I was appointed as the editor-in-chief I was presented with a dilemma: whether the piece *Little That I Remember* [*Ono malo čega se sećam*],[1] created by Ivana Trišić, director Darko Tatić, and sound engineer Marjan Radojčić, and already selected for *Prix Italia* festival, should be equipped and sent to the organiser, if necessary, by the Third Program of Radio Belgrade, or by the producer of this extraordinary achievement, the Drama Program itself, despite the previously taken position that it should not submit a work in the category of "radio music", which is a different type of production. I managed to solve the dilemma easily, which resulted in the 1983 *Prix Italia* Award, given to the real producer of this piece, the Drama Program of Radio Belgrade. I was also fully aware that the very concept "radio drama", or, even better, "radio play", creatively expanded in recent years and decades, encompassing some previously non-specific areas. Nevertheless, *The Little I Remember* was not a music piece, but rather a collage made of music, speech, and sounds, created according to the musical principle of unifying fragments into a new piece. Those kinds of sound workshop broadcasts were also created and sent to festivals by similar Drama programs abroad, since only them, just like in our case, had the most modern equipment and highly trained staff on their radio stations, which is a prerequisite for these sophisticated sound syntheses.

Another critical approach, adopted by some directors as well, dealt with good tradition. Since the Drama Program had previously had success in the genre of radiophonic compositions, most often created by Arsenije Jovanović, one should only continue embracing inventive ideas of promising and already accomplished authors when they sporadically appear. This correct statement could easily lead to the unfounded negation

1 More on this composition in Maglov 2025a.

of the need for the aforementioned genre to be supported and systematically nurtured within the framework of a new, special series, intended for the production of musical radiophonic collages and other types of sound research. In essence, it dealt with legitimising a prestigious radio artistic domain, a move that was about to raise the standard of the repertoire to a highly competitive level, both in Yugoslavia and abroad.

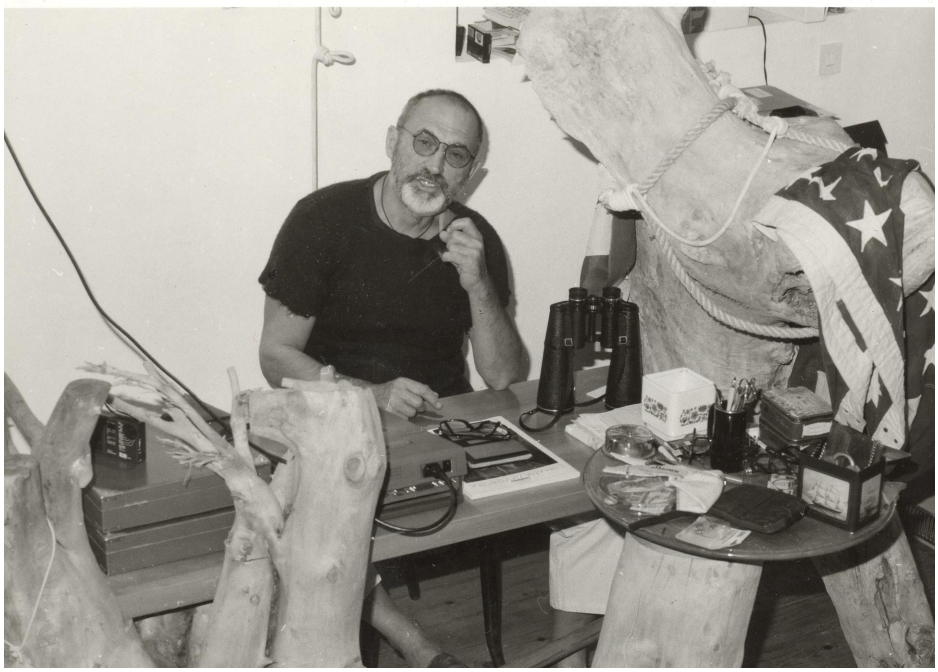

Figure 1. Arsenije Jovanović © RTS Program Archive.

The editorial discussion ended with my conclusion that the decision was a purely editorial matter and that I, as then-current editor, should take full responsibility. Even if there were any risks involved, they paid off very quickly in an undeniably excellent series that its first editor, Ivana Stefanović, named *Sound Workshop*, thus materializing it practically from one timely idea. The series soon became, and throughout time has only confirmed to be, the most representative one broadcast on Radio Belgrade. Consequently, in 2001, editors Predrag D. Stamenković and Miroslav Jokić established "Sound Workshop Days", during which the most recent works from annual productions were presented and discussed by authors, radio critics, literary professionals, intellectuals, and other Radio Belgrade contributors. On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, in 2005, a compilation of Sound Workshop selected editions, coupled with some earlier pieces that preceded, was released.[2]

However, the most convincing evidence of the creative quality of *Sound Workshop* were the awards and recognitions in international competitions: *Prix Italia* (twice, one *special mention*); *Premios Ondas*, Barcelona (twice); *New York Radio Art Festival*

2 *20th Anniversary of "Sound Workshop of Drama Program" Radio Belgrade*, 2005. Belgrade: Radio Television of Serbia.

(twice); *Bienalderadio*, Mexico City (three times); *International Radio Festival*, Tehran (twice); *WDR Acustica International*, Cologne; *Palma Ars Acustica* (honourable mention), *Soundscape Festival*, Barcelona; *International Radio Festival in Rust*, and *Slabbesz Prize*, Austria. *Sound Workshop* was also awarded two Yugoslav prizes for best shows on *The Week of Radio* in Ohrid and four awards on FEDOR – regional Festival of Documentary Radiophony in Belgrade, which had its "music feature" category.

Some of the most prominent authors who have contributed to *Sound Workshop* in the previous 40 years were Arsenije Jovanović, Ivana Stefanović, Vladan Radovanović, Slobodan Boda Marković, Ivana Trišić, Darko Tatić, Olga Brajović, Aleksandar Protić, and Jovana Stefanović. All of them received international awards. Petar Teslić, Predrag D. Stamenković, Jasmina Zec, Bojana Žižić, and Ana Kotevska were also praised for their high level of engagement and creative achievement. In the genre of radiophonic compositions writers are not that common and prevailing, and the crucial *axis* turns to be *composer-director-sound engineer*. It is, therefore, essential to mention the most prestigious ones who belong to the third category: Zoran Jerković, Marjan Radojčić, and Petar Marić, as well as Slobodan Stanković, Aleksandar Stojković, Zoran Uzelac, and Milan Filipović, in the following generations.

Figure 2. Predrag Stamenković, Zvonimir Kostić i Boda Marković © RTS Program Archive.

In the circle of the aforementioned authors, Vladan Radovanović was recognized for his distinct aesthetic approach. As a composer and the head of the Electronic Studio of Radio Belgrade, founded in 1972, he embarked on the path of generating and processing sounds from their foundations, by assembling them from aliquot tones and disassembling them using filters, or by means of vodocer voice distortions etc. In a conversation with musicologist Marija Maglov, he confidently emphasised that *Sound Workshop* does not deserve that name, since its audio equipment, as opposed to one that the Electronic studio has at its disposal, cannot truly cultivate the sound, but rather

record existing noises and use ready-made effects (Maglov 2022, 269). However, his contribution to *Sound Workshop* is substantial and he even symbolically anticipated it, since in 1984, when there were ongoing discussions about it, he worked on *The Eternal Lake* [*Malo večno jezero*], employing incredibly long and complex montages, eventually winning *Gianfranco Zaffrani Prix Italia* in the category of "radio music". Other authors did not have such an exclusive approach, but all of them, like Radovanović, inclined to modern and avant-garde poetics, embracing the collage technique, radical montage, citations, juxtapositions, simultaneities, polyphonies, interruptions of suggestive narration, abruptness, sharp cuts and construction emphases.

Figure 3. Vladan Radovanović © RTS Program Archive.

Ivana Stefanović, the first music editor of *Sound Workshop* (1985–1990) understood that the series exceeded the laboratory framework and that it opened it up to poetic heights (cf. Stefanović 1985). As a professional composer, a skilful writer, and a good judge of reliable standards, she was building *Sound Workshop* from its very foundations, establishing a carefully selected but not too narrow circle of its contributors, characterised by a diversity of styles and signatures. It could be concluded that during her editorship, her credo was expressed in the idea that all elements of the *Workshop*'s pieces – speech, music, noise, silence – are potentially equally important, and unified following certain musical compositional criteria.

In her book titled *Muzika od ma čega* [*Music Made of Anything*], Ivana Stefanović argued that all fragments of everyday life that have sound properties can make a composition (Stefanović 2010). Although this may sound like an inherently Cagean idea, this American composer actually proclaimed that music made of anything *could* be made by anyone. On the contrary, Ivana Stefanović maintained that music made of

anything could be made only by Someone – the more simplistic and rudimentary a fragment of the soundworld is, the more talented and masterful artist is required to transform it and turn it into Something. She preserved the notions of "art piece" and "intentionality". In practice, as an editor, she sought and found radiophonic authors of great talent and virtuosity, driven by the desire to experiment, but also to make successful and well-rounded sound creations.

This is precisely the type of radiophonic compositions produced in *Sound Workshop* and awarded for their brilliance that Ivana Stefanović created herself: *Lingua/Phonia/Patria*, *Metropola tišine – Stari Ras* ([*The Metropolis of Silence – Ancient Ras*], FEDOR award, Belgrade, 1991 and 1992), *Lacrimosa* (SLABBESZ Prize, Austria, 1993; FEDOR, 1993) and *Veliki Kamen* ([*A Large Stone*], *Prix Italia*, 2017).[3] Her extraordinary skills employed in shaping and directing *Sound Workshop* positioned her side by side great producers such as Klaus Schöning (*Studio Akustische Kunst*), Heidi Grundmann (*Kunstradio – Radiokunst*), Pinotto Fava (*Audiobox*, Matera), Helen Thorington (*New American Radio*) and Neda Depolo.

Figure 4. Ivana Stefanović © RTS Program Archive.

The second editor of the series, from 1990 to 2001, was Slobodan Boda Marković, a director and author, who despite having graduated only from a music high school, had a rare and refined talent of recognising what was radiophonically appealing and new. He partly changed the principle of treating all the components of radiophonic expression equally, by switching the focus from music and noise to speech. In search of original

3 For further information on these compositions, see: Stefanović 2010, Veselinović-Hofman 2011, Medić 2012, Kotevska 2015, 2019.

ideas, drafts and synopses, he initiated a broader collaboration with people of letters. However, generally speaking, the tendency of musicalisation of the entire soundworld was preserved. An unwavering and inquisitive spirit, Marković constantly enriched his knowledge of traditional music. He would often bring various records and exclusive recordings of traditional music from faraway countries and cultures he visited, enthusiastically presenting them to listeners and friends. With surrealist sensibility and views as an editor, he privileged the direction of artistic exploration that used Serbian and world folklore and spiritual music heritage in a new, innovative, and surreal way, building fortresses in the air. With his creative engagement, together with writer Đorđe Lebović, he brought to the Drama Program *Prix Rai* from *Prix Italia* festival (*Traganje po pepelu* [*Searching in the Ashes*]) in 1985. As a creator of acoustic collages *Liturgija za jednu običnu ženu* [*A Liturgy For An Ordinary Woman*] and *Bečka grupa* [*Vienna Group*], he brought to *Sound Workshop* in 1989 the JRT *Zvonimir Bajsić Award* for new aesthetic breakthroughs in radiophony, on FEDOR.

Predrag D. Stamenković, a composer and a choirmaster, the founder of the *Choirs Among Frescoes* festival, attempted to achieve a conceptual synthesis of the previous two approaches during his editorship of *Sound Workshop* (2001–2022). Predrag D. Stamenković relied more on professional composers than Boda Marković did, and he drew slightly more from ethnological material and mythical sources of inspiration than Ivana Stefanović. He himself was deeply dedicated to spiritual music, but, just like his predecessors, he did not adjust the repertoire to his personal affinities – it was a matter of nuances among different paths and approaches. As an editor, he conceived a notable retrospective serial *Pioniri radiofonije* [*Pioneers of Radiophony*], in which he introduced the listeners to important early pieces of experimental orientation made in Belgrade, pointing specifically to a series *Eksperimenti i ostvarenja* [*Experiments and Achievements*], as the *Sound Workshop*'s predecessor. He considered *Sound Workshop* to be in the range of "the most intriguing, the most renowned and the most awarded series of the Drama Program of Radio Belgrade in the world" (RTS – Radio televizija Srbije, 2013). Unlike his predecessors, he had one extra editorial obligation – to plan and produce the participation of *Sound Workshop* in a common European program, EBU *Art's Birthday*, which has been broadcast live since 2005, on January 17th, via satellite. Serbia was represented, among others, by Arsenije Jovanović, Ivana Stefanović, Anja Đorđević, Saša Latinović, Svetlana Maraš, Vladan Radovanović, and Ana Kotevska. Predrag D. Stamenković created several notable radiophonic compositions for *Sound Workshop*, some of which were *Pentominoe* [*Pentominoes*], *Zdravice* [*Toasts*], and *Izranjanje* [*The Emergence*].

Starting from 2022, the series was produced by Dragan Mitrić, a music editor with considerable experience, and a proven composer of special music for radio dramas. He would undoubtedly, had the conditions been better, further pursued a steady line of editorial policy, which had already proved its excellence. However, neither good editors, nor talented authors, with constantly renewing circles of contributors, not even the continuous flow of awards at international sound festivals, could resist the steady, now two-decades-long decline in culture funds, and the impact it had on the Drama

Program of Radio Belgrade. Paradoxically, it happened at the time when Radio Belgrade was being transformed into a public service, the aim of which should precisely be supporting and encouraging cultural, educational, scientific, drama, documentary, and musically artistic parts of programs! For instance, the number of *Workshop*'s premieres per year, namely, the new, original works, realised exclusively in the medium of sound, was initially eight, and then it dropped to five and less. "Sound Workshop Days" used to be organised once per year, then biennially, and it has been a long time since they have been organised at all. The legendary Studio 10, in which Radio Belgrade had produced demanding projects and organised mini-concerts even before the Second World War, was lost, and a newly built drama studio has slightly weaker equipment, which means that sometimes, even though rarely, additional equipment from Studio 6 is required. The series has, since its foundation, never had the possibility for commissions, nor foreign artists' guest appearances, and throughout time, trips to international festivals and conferences have been reduced, which has resulted in poorer opportunities for contacts and collaborations with radio colleagues from abroad.

In fact, the productions in the genre of *Ars Acustica* have always, regardless of time and place, required more money, more time, and more advanced studio equipment than any other type of production. This is probably one of the reasons why some of the globally best experimental series in this genre, as well as some of the previously mentioned ones, *Atelier de création radiophonique*, *Listening Room*, *New American Radio*, gradually ceased to exist. Belgrade *Sound Workshop* managed to endure, mainly due to the fact that since its beginnings it has operated in not so favourable conditions, constantly overcoming numerous obstacles and challenges.

Early Belgrade Sound Explorations

Sound Workshop emerged in continuity and in organic connection with early experimental tendencies that gained prominence on Radio Belgrade in the middle of the 1960s. The main representatives of these tendencies, then young artists, have for several decades brought an extraordinary quality to the repertoire of the Drama Program, and they also managed to leave a significant mark on *Sound Workshop*, during a slightly longer period than its first phase. Due to the fact that in the production of eleven other series of the Drama Program, a considerable number of radioart productions has been accumulated throughout time. In the very beginning *Sound Workshop* effortlessly occupied 44 yearly terms of program schemes with its quite adequate reprises. The continuity also dealt with the production framework: it was an ever-producing radio drama facility, to some extent divided in the 1960s and 1970s into different radio channels, implying that, for example, when one said that *Experiments and Achievements* was a Third Program series, it meant precisely that it was created by efforts of the not quite centralised drama editorial board, which, following the requirements of cultural and avant-garde concepts, aired it on the Third Program.

Formationally, radio drama artists had for a long time been distributed in specifically distinguished radio waves departments. For instance, Darko Tatić was placed among a group of directors of The Second Program of Radio Belgrade, together with Danilo Nikolić, an editor, a playwright, and later an eminent writer. They would work on the same project together with proofreaders, actors, and sound engineers, organising reading rehearsals and recordings in Studio 10. Another small group was formed on the First Program of Radio Belgrade, etc.

As a newly hired journalist on the Third program, I personally had a chance to witness how everything operated in the early 1970s. At the end of each year, a special editorial meeting would be organised with an agenda of discussing a selection of drama premieres for the upcoming year, previously printed in the form of around twenty brief synopses. During these meetings, some of the attendees would ask questions, or they would express certain objections and provide short suggestions or even sharp critiques. The epithet 'thirdprogramish' was the key one. The editorial boards tried to adjust the repertoire so that the radio dramas would be suitable for the conception of the program on which they would be broadcast. Radio artists kept this in mind, still creating following their intuition and aesthetic standards. The idea that centralisation was necessary to a certain degree is shown in the fact that, at the beginning of the 1960s, the works of drama were broadcast with a general program announcement: "Radio-Television Belgrade: Radio Drama Department." Although it had some persistent supporters, such as the tenacious Neda Depolo, the Drama Program as a consistent and separate project, which gathered many professionals required for radio drama production at one place, was only realised in 1976. Its first editor-in-chief was Gojko Miletić, and the new reorganisation contributed to new standards – professional editorial discussions about all listened premiers, a constant sharpening of criteria and an undeniably more advanced level of production.

The series *Experiments and Achievements* and, the preceding one, *Drama posle ponoći* ([*Drama After Midnight*], The First Program), brought, together with a wider program selection, the early productions of Serbian radio art, and it would be worthwhile to delve into the period when they were made, approximately from 1961 to 1974. The authors represented in the series *Experiments and Achievements* were: theatre critic Vladimir Stamenković, editor-dramaturg Neda Depolo, editor and playwright Aleksandar Obrenović, writers Mirjana Stefanović, Gordana Boškov and Vida Ognjenović, directors Petar Teslić, Boda Marković, Arsenije Jovanović and Darko Tatić, composers Vojislav Voki Kostić, Srđan Barić, Dušan Radić, Enriko Josif, Zoran Hristić, among many others, and Vuk Vučo, a writer, and series producer, represented far more often than others.[4]

However, some of the stars that brought the brightest light to radiophonic art were soon recognised for their talent, perseverance, and aesthetic achievements. Summarising the 1960s, critic Đorđe Đurđević emphasised that there emerged a tendency of

4 A full list of works in the series is given in Donić and Rajić 2004, 97–106.

experimenting with the sound, supported by some unprecedented technical advancements – portable tape recorders, multi-channel mixers, stereophony – which enabled sophisticated sound explorations as well as complex, jump montages, concluding: "This distinctive approach is especially characteristic of a directorial trio made up by Boda Marković, Arsa Jovanović, and Darko Tatić" (Đurđević 1987, 10). Bearing in mind that Đurđević was by no means alone in his assessment, we could claim that 1961 was *annus mirabilis*, since in that year all these three exquisite artists started their prolific and long-lasting engagement in Radio Belgrade. Marković and Tatić were officially employed, whereas for constant success of Arsenije Jovanović, who was engaged outside of the editorial office of Drama Program, close collaboration with Neda Dapolo was of immense importance, since she was the editor who openly encouraged new radiophonic tendencies as well as sound experimenting. The series *Experiments and Achievements* indeed had an elitist, but a very demanding concept, so its repertoire only partly included the pieces which anticipated contemporary *Ars Acustica*. It further developed into three contemporary series that belonged to the Drama Program production: these are *Radio igra* [*Radio Play*], *Vrtovi poezije* [*The Gardens of Poetry*] and *Radionica zvuka* [*Sound Workshop*]. Understandably, each of these series could bring excellent results – it is only a matter of differences in terms of genre and the degree of musicalisation of all components of radio expression (cf. Ćirić 2015).

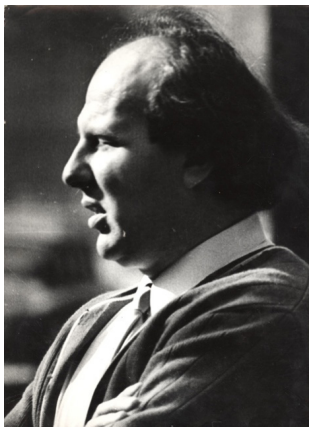

Figure 5. Darko Tatić © RTS Program Archive.

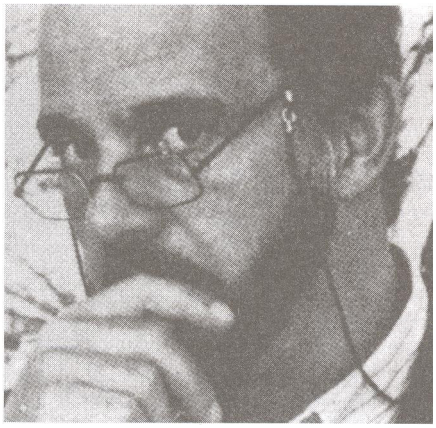

Figure 6. Vuk Vučo © RTS Program Archive.

To put it briefly, considering early radio plays, Vuk Vučo was our most prolific author, with his imaginative reworkings of foreign literature pieces and witty improvisations with groups of terms in Vuk Karadžić's *Dictionary*. The authorial creative contribution of Arsenije Jovanović should also be emphasised. In his piece, *Đavolov pečat* ([*The Devil's Stamp*], 1970) he made use of dark, sombre sounds, allusively creating the atmosphere of pogrom. The documentary basis of it consisted of the medieval chronicles of witch trials coupled with records of dogmatic debates concerning casting spells, demons and signs of being possessed by an evil force. Another supreme contribution

was made by Petar Teslić, who, in 1970 and 1971 put in the ether all four radio plays by Peter Handke, among which the fourth one, *The Wind and the Sea*, dealt with nature phonography, as if to express the author's fascination by the world of sounds and noises, similar to that of John Cage. All these four neo-avant-garde texts were presented almost right after their publication, owing to the Third Program's modernist orientation and the enthusiasm of Petar Teslić, partly rooted in the German language and culture.

Another type of works, released in *Experiments and Achievements*, dealt with transforming poetry into a radiophonic act and event. A part of Serbian early sound experiments consisted of innovative artists' attempts to create new radiophonic poetry by introducing and using all powers of inspiration and technology, discovering previously unknown order of lines, recomposing their rhythm and melody, and forming different shapes of acoustic reliefs by means of stereophonic placements of different plans. Boda Marković was the first to embark in the open and, in October 1961, he directed *Orfejev put ka svetlosti* [*Orpheus Path to Light*], his own adaptation of Dušan Matić's work. Arsenije (during that period and longer: Arsa) Jovanović had another poetry-related adaptation of one Matić's work – *Laža i paralaža noći* ([*The Liar and Arch-Liar of the Night*], dramatization of Neda Depolo), as well as in the series *Drama posle ponoći* ([*Drama After Midnight*], The First Program, 1964). In 1962, Darko Tatić was given a very demanding project of dramatisation and direction of Assyrian and Babylonian *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, whose place in the history of world literature was guaranteed long ago, and the realisation was an example of his early brilliant mastery. Marković, Jovanović, and Tatić, always balancing between being at poetry's service and using poetry at their own service, were coming back, without longer breaks, to this genre, assisting it with their talent of providing sound to poetry lines, to touch cosmic strings and transcend toward metaphysical and otherwordly. Interestingly, all three of them dedicated most of their experimental strivings in the field of radiophonic expression to the poetry of Vasko Popa and Dušan Matić. A great deal of other artists, especially after the series *The Gardens of Poetry* was launched, left their own mark in this genre, often with quite satisfying, but never outstanding results. The biggest breakthrough, however, was made, if we take a little glimpse into the future, by Olga Brajović, an experienced director of great skills and masterful perfection, with a slightly more traditional signature, who in 1985, during the very first year of *Sound Workshop*, astonished everyone with the innovative piece *Ulrik* [*The Howl*], based on Alen Ginsberg's poetry. The *Premio Ondas* prize given to that amazing, dramatically-orchestrated piece, crowned the previous Belgrade's quest for a perfect synthesis of poetry and radiophony.

The third type of production, which was employed in a series *Experiments and Achievements*, was investigative-essayism. It preceded *Sound Workshop* and partly fitted into its reprise collection. However, among the production pieces that we can consider an anticipation, there are only a few that can be claimed to belong to the series repertoire and to *Drama After Midnight*, so the perception gets inevitably broader. *Divinus Circulus* (July, 1966) a piece by Vuk Vučo, editor of *Experiments and Achievements*, is an early example of a sound play which eliminates the verbal element at the account of

combining music and different noises. Despite reducing himself to non-verbal means, he is trying to tell a story – the one about the human life cycle, an eternal cycle of birth and death. Therefore, these important 19 minutes of Serbian radiophony start with water drops, choir music, a thunderstorm and a baby crying, and they end with a clock striking, drawing water from a well, a woman's croak and a baby crying. The proof of how serious the approach was in order to realise this not-so-original, radiophonic idea, is the very team selection, which consisted of composer Vojislav Voki Kostić, sound engineer Milosav Mitrović and, a foley artist with a special mission, Milorad Radulaški.

However, in early explorations that led to *Sound Workshop*, and later systematically developed and spread under its wing, Arsenije Jovanović was undoubtedly the first and the most important figure (cf. Maglov 2025b). He appeared in the early 1960s as the director of Becket's plays: radio drama *Everything That Falls* was broadcast on November 6, in 1961 as a part of *Drama After Midnight* (First Program, Monday, 00.05), and *Reči i muzika* [*Words and Sounds*] was aired on the first day the Third Program of Radio Belgrade was launched, on November 10, in 1965, and it had a character of editorial manifesto. Initially, Jovanović applied his skills as a director to radio drama as a literary form, favouring the avant-garde approach, the one that breaks with the conventions of a traditional "invisible theatre". In the second phase, however, Jovanović composed his own authentic radiophonic pieces, in which his concept is more dominant than any type of materials and backgrounds, organised as music structures. In 1967, with *Igra za jednu Galiolu* [*A Play for One Galiola*], Jovanović became the founder of the genre of radiophonic compositions in Serbian culture, as well as a relentless autochthonous radio art researcher, who would become internationally renowned, receiving a great number of festival awards and a very good reputation of his works in the whole world. In his early collage compositions *Galilej potok* [*Galilei's Stream*, 1970], *Vilini vetrovi* ([*The Fairies' Winds*], 1971), and *Krajputaši* ([*Roadside Tombstones*], 1971), he made his creations of music-sound-speech, based on folklore – curses, spells, lyrical poems, and epitaphs on roadside tombstones, drawing from that material arche-sounds of an eerie, mystical, and metaphysical quality. This will occasionally still remain the source of his inspiration, but in Jovanović's thematic opus there are also purely urban, natural, and faunophonic motifs. In *Resavska pećina* ([*Resava Cave*], 1977) he lured music from stalactites and stalagmites that had been formed by the patient work of nature for more than thousands of years. Everything he incorporated into his new sound workshop pieces – whether natural and artificially produced sound, or an authentic documentary recording, highly important in some of his works, or music, literary fragments – was merely some material for free rhythmic metamorphoses, and not a source, prototype or work model. Of all Serbian radiophony masters, with the exception of professional composers, he most closely followed the compositional principle of integrating elements into a whole, and came closest to the forms and parameters of music as such. Jovanović contributed immensely to the creation of history of radio art in the 1970s, receiving two *Prix Italia* awards for his extraordinary work (*Roadside Tombstones*, *Resava Cave*) as well as two *Premios Ondas* (*Resava Cave* and *Duž duge, duge ulice* [*Along*

the Long Long Street]). The latter was the only one that he gave the subtitle "radiophonic composition" to, probably because it was based on Volfgang Borchert's novel, which made it more necessary to precisely define his true nature of a radical researcher in the field of sound expression (1979). Jovanović would continue for decades on, until the end of his life in 2025, to create radiophonic compositions (80 in total), bringing to the Drama Program awards from newly-established festivals all around the world, but the significance of his work could no longer historically be the same.

The early opus of Vladan Radovanović includes a radio drama *Odlazak* ([*Departure*], 1966–1973). Radovanović arranged the text for this piece as a score, treating words like notes. Six voices were positioned right opposite the audience, and they occasionally interrupted the succession of musical dissonances by uttering insignificant things, creating the absurd atmosphere. The voices, manipulated by filters and exposed to electronic transformations, were marked for the intrusion time, the approximate duration, dynamics and spatial displacements. The ambience was stereophonically shaped as "a hemisphere, a starry dome replica, and a space for dream visions" (Tatić 1978, 48). Fading into depths symbolised real departure and vanishing. This piece certainly marks the history of Belgrade's experimental tendencies, but the key radiophonic piece is *The Eternal Lake*, with its working title *Snevač* [*A Dreamer*], that Radovanović created later in 1984, the year when *Sound Workshop* was conceived.[5]

The emergence of Serbian *Ars Acustica* was certainly influenced by knowledge of avant-garde tendencies worldwide, such as the emergence of musique concrète in Radio France (1948) as well as electronic music in Radio Cologne (1951). It was also influenced by John Cage, the Vienna Group, a German new radio drama (*Neue Hörspiel*), etc. In his book *Ispreturana autobiografija* [*A Jumbled Autobiography*], Arsenije Jovanović emphasised the influence of a book by Pierre Schaeffer, the founder of research studio *Club d'Essai* and a developer of *musique concrète*, the school of thinking and composing that utilised radio and a magnetic tape, a great technical invention of the 1940s, treating them as instruments (Jovanović 2025). To such music, composed of recorded sounds from nature, belongs the radiophonic work *Poslanica ptica* [*The Epistle of Birds*] by Ivana Stefanović, which was awarded the *Jean Antoine-Triomphe Prize* in 1974 in Monte Carlo. The exclusive material of this radiophonic composition consists of a bird song, arranged into a rounded music collage piece, by means of complex and finely crafted editing (by sound engineer Marjan Radojičić), which could not have been possible to make at that time outside of a radio studio due to its sophisticated technique. The composition allows for not only a nice but also a powerful aesthetic experience, since it is rich in tensions and resolutions, and it resists relying on the appealing effect provoked by these "dear creatures". This was a magnificent start for Ivana Stefanović, whose most prominent and most successful radiophonic pieces would be produced within the coming years and decades.

5 More about *The Eternal Lake* see in: Veselinović 1991, Srećković 2011b, Neimarević 2012, Maglov 2020, 2022, Emmery 2021.

The two out of three aforementioned great experimenters and artists, Darko Tatić and Boda Marković, also emerged as the authors of sound collage creations, though they did not belong to this particular period of 1961–1974, Tatić with his pieces *Hydrodialectica alias aque rondo* (1977) and *Metastaza* ([*Metastasis*], 1987), and Marković with *Dozivanja* ([*Calling*], 1980), *A Liturgy for an Ordinary Woman* (1989) and *Vienna Group* (1989). These authors were primarily dedicated to radical changes and transformation of the very form of radio drama, achieving amazing success and recognition with that artistic engagement.

From "Radio Film" to the First Serbian Sound Workshop

Looking back, we slowly approach the inter-war period and all those still insufficiently known and researched phenomena that had anticipated Serbian *Ars Acustica*, even though they are not directly related to the history of this movement. For instance, a key text by Ljubomir Micić *Šimi na groblju latinske četvrti – Zenitistički Radio-Film od 17 sočinenija* [*Shimmy at the Latin Quarter Cemetery - a Zenithist Radio-Film in 17 Pieces*] has been analysed in literature and art studies exclusively as a narrative literary structure, and not as a template for radio performance, which is the perspective that opens up not only due to its title, but due to its inherent properties as well. Micić's terminology, which made him, clearly without his intention, relevant in today's discussions about the concepts of "radio art" and "radio film", together with the constitutiveness of noise (*bruit*) for the genre of radiophonic compositions, has not contributed to general emergence of topics such as "Micić and radio" or "Zenithism and radio". Similarly, the pioneering radiophonic collages by writer Veljko Petrović were not even by association linked to anything contemporary, which is why there remains a complete discontinuity between them and the real boom of radioartistic experiments during the 1960s. The first radio art experiments between the wars therefore require even more thorough exploration and their introduction into the field of dialogue and interconnections.

The beginning of the 1920s was the time of Zenithism, an avant-garde movement founded and led by poet Ljubomir Micić, who deserves our attention, among other things, because of his undeniable leadership in the field of discovering, celebrating, and understanding the artistic radiophony. The striking dates would make any researcher afraid of possible exaggeration and not seeing things clearly. Namely, the Dutch radio station PCGG was the first to start its regular broadcasting schedule, in November 1919, whereas the American broadcaster KDKA (Pittsburgh) announced itself in November 1920, by reporting on the presidential elections. BBC was launched in November 1922. The Belgrade-Rakovica radio station was among the earliest in Europe, officially starting on October 2, 1924.

However, Ljubomir Micić published his first texts on radio art in 1921, whereas his fiction piece *Shimmy at the Latin Quarter Cemetery – a Zenithist Radio-Film in 17 Pieces* was released in March, 1922 (Micić 1922a, 13–15). At that time, in Serbia and in most of Europe, there were neither radio stations nor receivers. There were only

ПРЕТЕЧА РАДИО БЕОГРАДА: ИНЖЕЊЕР МИХАИЛО СИМИЋ ПОДЕШАВА УРЕЂАЈЕ ПРЕДАЈНИКА У РАКОВИЦИ ПРВЕ РАДИО ТЕЛЕГРАФСКЕ СТАНИЦЕ 1924. ГОДИНЕ

Figure 7. Engineer Mihailo Simić adjusting the transmitter equipment at the first radio telegraph station in Rakovica, 1924. © RTS Program Archive.

radio amateurs who passionately listened to the sounds coming across the ocean and from the north of the continent, although only occasionally due to the brevity of programs and the weak signals. Considering the motif of radio found in other writers, Micić could have heard only some metaphors here and there – Marinetti for instance, coined a word "wireless imagination" in 1912, and there were some similar hints in lines of Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, and Vicente Huidobro. It was only Khlebnikov who wrote a whole text in 1921, or rather, an outstanding poem called *The Radio of the Future*, which remained unpublished, due to circumstances, until 1927. (Khlebnikov 1921/1927, 392–396).

Should we even consider the literary perspectives of Ljubomir Micić when we discuss experimental radio art, if at the time of publishing his pioneering texts the radio was only emerging, and the experiments were not even on the horizon? The answer is: yes, indeed, at least when dealing with issues such as, for example, establishing the history of today's relevant terms of "radio art" and "radio film". It is widely accepted that the first term was coined and introduced into wider use by Kurt Weill in 1925, in his text *Possibilities for Absolute Radio Art* (Weill 1925/1990). It might have been so, but Micić, in his part of the triptych titled *The Manifesto of Zenithism* (coauthored by Ivan Gol and Boško Tokin), signed on June 12th, 1921, insisted, in the apodictic manner of avant-garde proclamations, that the zenithist word that he equated with the art, must borrow from modern communications medium, the radio, its attributes of magic, electrification and telegraphic conciseness:

> Zenithist magical word = Radio Station A
> Man's fluid feeling and twitch = Radio Station B
> Zenithist word must be electrification
> Zenithist work must be a radiogram. (Micić, Gol, Tokin 1921, 14).

The following year, on July 14th, 1922, a special issue of the magazine *Zenit* [*Zenith*], printed on a single sheet, was published in Munich. It consisted, among other things, of a printed text by Micić, titled *Drugi proboj Varvara* ([*The Second Attack of the Bar-*

barians], Micić 1922b). One of the constant elements of Micić's program was, evidently, that he was on the side of the barbarianism, which he considered pure, uncorrupted by civilisation and creatively potent. From that point of view, he sought the balkanisation of the supposedly worn out, decadent, and sterile Europe. (Similarly, Miguel de Unamuno advocated the hispanisation of Europe.) With a slogan "No more art", the Serbian zenithist claimed with his raised finger:

> Nikola Tesla beat Michelangelo, Kandinski, and Picasso. It was a Serbian genius from the Balkan who discovered wireless telegraphy for humanity. Not Marconi!
> Radio = new art! Everything else = lemonade with ice! (ibid.)[6]

Micić further elaborated that Zenithism was a new kind of art that broke with tradition and sentimentality, precisely the kind of art that we need nowadays. Representing the very centre of communication among European avant-garde movements, *Zenit* soon found itself in a position to convey the enthusiastic reaction of the Italian paper *Bullettino quindicinale di Roma* to the aforementioned Micić's words: "RADIO = Arte nuova! RADIO = Arte nuova! Ogni extra non e che limonata al ghiacco. (The statement by a Serbian poet, Ljubomir Micić, that we want to spread.)" (Micić 1922b, 14).

This does not mean that these quotes serve to transfer the authorship of the term "radio art" from Weill to Micić. They only serve as an indication that such variations of the term emerged since the very beginnings of this new mass media, at least in *Zenit*. Moreover, it should be noted that Micić literally and even graphically equated radio and art, which is close to McLuhan's thesis that the entire medium is a singular message (McLuhan 1971, 41), whereas Marinetti's concept of "Radia" and Weill's "Radiokunst" clearly did not apply to any radio program, but exclusively to the artistic one. However, it is true that in the beginning of any medium, and Micić speaks out precisely at that period, everything that becomes a part of the program provokes an unusually powerful effect, as well as the excitement similar to the aesthetic one.

A metaphor of "radio film" is quite the same. It is hard to find the use of that term in literature, to denote a genre that would precede the one appearing in the title of Micić's text *Shimmy at the Latin Quarter Cemetery – a Zenithist Radio-Film in 17 Pieces* (to put it again: March, 1922). The formal definition of the word was given by Alfred Braun, the director of Radio Berlin, a station that, in the second half of the 1920s and in the 1930s, had the boldest and the highest quality radioartistic production: "Acoustic film was a term we used in Berlin… for a radio play through its dreamlike, quickly moving sequence of images gliding, jumping, overlapping each other, alternating between close-ups and distance shots blending in and out deliberately transferred the techniques of moving pictures to radio" (as quoted in Schöning 1991, 316). This is precisely the meaning of the term that Ljubomir Micić had in mind. Like other avant-gardists, he accepted the idea of "radiogenicity", defined by a set of specific properties that separate

6 "Radio = Neue Kunst! Alles andere = Limonade mit Eis!".

radio from literature and theatre, providing it the artistic practice *sui generis*. However, he did not show concern that such autonomy could be threatened by the influence of film, since it was by definition an avant-garde medium, an ally in gaining more independence from classical aesthetic norms, and a driving force of modernity. Micić's radio poetics is therefore cinematic, that is, montage-like. In a text with a graphically ambiguous title *Radio film i zenitistička okomica duha* [*Radio film and the Zenithist Vertical of the Spirit*], also made in 1922, Micić posed a rhethorical question: "Can the existence of radiotelegraphy, radio film, radio concert, and radio news be secondary for new poets?" to which he replied: "A radio-film-zenithist vertical of the Spirit is required." (Micić 1923).

In its original meaning, the term "radio film" referred to the procedures of montage, simultaneity, revealing the construction etc., characteristic for (avant-garde) film, applied to the radio artistic domain. However, some of the theoreticians, following production trends, have shifted the meaning of the term towards documentarism and sound recording *en plain air*, outside of studios, in the field, and optically, on film tape, which was technically feasible already at the end of the 1920s. This shift ensured the possibility of editing and the creation of radiophonic documentaries (Dziga Vertov, Walter Ruttmann). However, even the studies whose goal, evident from the titles, is to problematise the history of the term "radio film", do not mention any earlier instance of its use, that would precede Micić's usage (Hourahan 2013, Dotto 2016, Madsen 2018, Dolotova 2025).

Apparently, there is no older text written for radio play than the aforementioned *Shimmy at the Latin Quarter Cemetery*, written at a time when the area of Yugoslavia and much of Europe was yet uninhabited by the sound from the ether. (Time has irrevocably confirmed that it was Micić's crucial work.) With all due caution, it could be stated that Micić created "a radio on the radio" play model, which in the middle and by the end of the 1920s brought many other experiments, both on paper and on radio waves, by Hans Flesch (*Zauberei auf dem Sender*, Flesch 1924), Bertolt Brecht (*Der Lindberghflug*, 1929, see Brecht 1997), and Vladimir Mayakovsky (*Radio-October*, 1935). It is clear that *Shimmy*, essentially, does not conceptually correspond to a type of classical radio drama, whose first example in Europe was *A Comedy of Danger* by Richard Hughes (BBC), performed in 1924. However, its text definitely corresponds well with radio plays *Magic on the Air* by Hans Flesch and *Hello, Here Is Frequency Earth* by Friedrich Bischoff, also from 1924–1928 (according to Born 2015). Avant-garde radio art was apparently not established as a polemic reaction to the classical radio art, but they both emerged and developed simultaneously for a time.

Based on the principle of simultaneity, which Micić considered crucial both for film and radio, *Shimmy* has a collage structure: it is made up of reporters from all the main radio stations in the world, who, one after another – which is "the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous" by Ernst Bloch (1932, 8) – report to the central radio station built on top of the Tatlin's Tower, located in the field near Petrograd. Those "reporters" are mostly prominent avant-garde artists of that epoch – Mayakovsky reporting from

Moscow, Karel Teige from Prague, Yvan Gol from Paris, Vladimir Tatlin from Petrograd, Ljubomir Micić from Zagreb, Filippo T. Marinetti from Milan, Valery Polyansky from Warsaw. All of them spread news of the success of Zenithism and new art, they report on famine in Russia, the power and beauty of aeroplanes, the triumphs of Charlie Chaplin, the shimmy as a symbol of an exhausted Europe, the breakthroughs of jazz etc. – unfortunately with some allusions and hints that are not very easy to decipher for modern readers. *Shimmy* had not had its sound realisation for a long time, all the way until the mid-1980s, as was the case with Marinetti's extraordinary acoustic assemblages that he called "radiophonic syntheses" (*sintesi radiofoniche*). We can use Pavle Levi's term "written film" (Levi 2013, 77), to name Micić's piece "a written radio", which did not become a radiophonic radio only due to circumstances.

Serbia did have, in the inter-war period, a meander of acoustic experiments and montages of radiophonic creations of speech, noise and music, existing only in sound. The most deserving for this is Veljko Petrović, a writer who became the program director of Radio Belgrade by the end of the 1930s and, instead of sitting peacefully in his armchair, went down to directors and actors, further turning even to field recording and dramaturgy. He later recounted that even while he was a ministerial official for years, he was secretly tormented by passion for media engagement (he had the press in his mind) and that his imagination was particularly sparked by radio, from the very beginnings, at a time when one would listen to various reports with headphones, with only few hints of something artistically fresh. He collected literature and enthusiastically read foreign, especially German, studies on radiophony, which introduced him to a distinct world of "audible play", how he translated the German term *Hörspiel*. However, he was particularly into "radio montages", a form of combining previously recorded segments of speech, music, and noises into whole pieces that had to be given a specific melody and a leading theme.

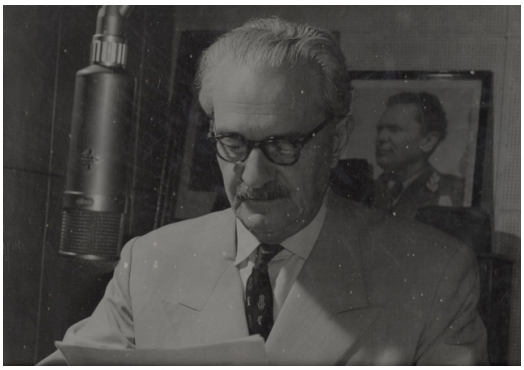

Figure 8. Veljko Petrović © RTS Program Archive.

Veljko Petrović was a rather traditional poet whose work was referred to by zenithist Ljubomir Micić as "a thin deal" (Micić 1921, 11). However, in the field of radiophony, guided by intuition and passion for technological innovation, Petrović displayed an avant-garde spirit, magnetically drawn to "a particular type of radio drama that is on the horizon", "something entirely authentic" that radiophonic authors would "compose solely for", and something that all the elements of radiophonic narration "combines past all temporal and strictly logical, rational or, even stylistic distances" (Petrović 2024a, 66). Petrović had the only chance to hear that type of "radio film" on German radio stations, the most developed radio broadcasting in the world back then, thus embracing the term "radio montage" and undoubtedly anticipating the direction of development

that would lead contemporary European and Belgrade authors to the genre now widely accepted as *Ars Acustica*.

Moreover, it could be said that Veljko Petrović, due to his own interest and radio research, as well as his genuine enthusiasm for radio, his cultural openness, huge creative energy and, certainly, his position as a director, established the first *Serbian sound workshop* at the end of the 1930s. As far as it is known, three pieces emerged from it: *Vršidba* [*Harvest*], *Proboj solunskog fronta* [*Breakthrough of the Salonika Front*], and *Prolećna simfonija* [*Spring Symphony*]. The Drama Program of Radio Belgrade mainly aired adaptations of foreign works of literature and theatre pieces, staged and acted out, which is why Petrović's montages probably looked like sensations coming from the future.

In order for sound to be treated as an object, and for fluid acoustic material to be manipulated by cutting, omitting, transferring, inserting, and pasting, it was necessary to first freeze sound in time, that is, to record it, either optically on film tape, or by engraving it on a phonograph record. The choice of method affected the quality of the editing, since the sound film was much more flexible and it allowed the author's intention to be realised with significant precision; the recording could be replayed afterwards, and the work result itself could be refined and perfected to finesse by editing and mixing. The records, however, provided a very short recording time (less than five minutes per disc), and the possibility of playback was limited to only a few times. The type of recording determined its durability, and Petrović's montages were gramophone-like. The excerpts from newspaper articles and radio conversations with Veljko Petrović, as well as short press fragments and announcements – radio criticism was not established back then, and we no longer have it nowadays – are now the only, and therefore, a primary source of knowledge about his sound workshop achievements.

Radio montage *Harvest*, which the author called an "audible play", was premiered on July 22nd, 1938. It presented documentary sound images, recorded in the countryside, and then collaged with thoughtfully selected music, passages from Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* and Gotovac's orchestral piece *Kolo*, along with spoken sections from reporters and participants in the performance. The goal was to convey the atmosphere, so to speak, a "harvest symphony" (we would nowadays say) by means of O-Ton, sounds, voices, and songs of those gathered, as well as music from the gramophone records (*Radio Belgrade* 29, 1938, 7). Veljko Petrović was clearly aware that this was an important milestone for Serbian radiophony and the birth of a new genre in our country. The *Radio Belgrade* magazine announced it as "the first attempt of its kind" (ibid.). And, indeed, objectively speaking, during the inter-war period, radio montages were still a rarity, even on programs of the largest European stations, simply because they were complex and expensive. Above all, they required extraordinary efforts of a large team of people, at the time when there were no easily portable sound recording devices, nor sophisticated mixing machines, necessary for a thematic field recording of certain material, which would then be brought into a desired harmony with music and words in the studio, and thus integrated into a layered radio piece. In other words, radio montages required the technology of the future, that became available in the 1950s

and 1960s. Twenty years later, in a conversation with journalist Saša Marković, Veljko Petrović tried, although he was not specifically asked about it, to look back and reflect on that event as well:

> At this moment I must remember some of our radio-scenes, such as the harvest scene. We wrote the lyrics together, composed it, and with all the props, we brought to life all sounds, we were singing, crowing, chirping, barking, mooing, simulating the sound of rain and thunder, using various machines and wheels, and all of it in such a way that people wanted us to repeat it several times (Petrović 2024b, 434).

Reruns were broadcast on the program of a shortwave radio station (Belgrade 2). As for the effects, Veljko Petrović perhaps used his authority to purchase as many of them as possible, because at the end of 1940s an article was released on Radio Belgrade claiming that the station possessed two and a half thousand records; among which, "a very important place is occupied by records that are used for radio montages, on which the sounds of thunder, storm, wind, whistling, train movement, water, animal calls etc. were recorded" ("2500 gramophone records", *Radio Belgrade* 1940, 5).

There is no sufficient data on *The Breakthrough of the Salonika Front*, and regarding the sound collage *Spring Symphony*, or *Spring* – both titles are found in the press – it was definitely broadcast on April 28th, 1939, and the newspapers defined it as "a gramophonic radio-montage" which required a lot of effort and discovered new possibilities of radio expression. An article in *Vreme* [*Time*] announced the event ten days earlier:

> On April 28 at 8 PM, Radio Belgrade will broadcast a very interesting program. On that occasion, a radio-montage called *Spring* will be broadcast. Radio-montages are very popular on international stations. Here, they have still been pretty rare but successful. Last summer, we listened to the radio-montage *Harvest*, and the montage *The Breakthrough of the Salonika Front* was also successful. ("Radio Announcement", *Vreme* 1939).

The main characteristics of these Serbian "radio films" are identical to the global ones. Namely, there is no plot, nor causality of the scenes, so fragments are organised into separate units thematically: harvest, the breakthrough of the Salonika front, spring. The title *Spring Symphony* and the phrase "harvest symphony" explicitly refer to a music constructivist principle. In his seminal work *Radio*, Rudolf Arnheim claimed: "The rediscovery of the musical note in sound and speech, the welding of music, sound and speech into a single material, is one of the greatest artistic tasks of the wireless" (Arnheim 1936, 30). For Petrović's "interweaving of sound and music" the following passage is indicative: "Within certain period of time there are not only successive, but also parallel representations; our ear is capable of distinguishing several simultaneous sounds" (ibid, 24).

Petrović's noticeable insistence on the importance of the original acoustic document, which is achieved by special recordings of sound events and the accompany-

ing noises, is in concordance with European experiences. Petrović sought poetry in the combination of "sounds from nature, the košava, the Senj storm, and the Velebit blizzard" and instructed the radio poet to record the immediate, unforced voices of "farmers and workers, their worries and songs, the screeching of wheels and the sound of hand tools, the host's advice, the granny's admonition with thumping on the loom in the background, the sound of belts and machine chains", since the audible play, just like real life, is made up of "sounds, songs, instruments, and a set of everyday objects with which we live in the community" (Petrović 2024b, 435).

Thinking about the sounds in parallel, it is regrettable that we can only imagine how Ljubomir Micić, had it only been historically possible, would have sonically realised his *Shimmy*, in whose sixteenth fragment there is a hint of "36 syphon bottle – bruit". It is not by chance that this sixteenth radio live streaming, as a part of the central radio program of Petrograd, is attributed to a Dadaist poet, Dragan Aleksić, who, in the third issue of *Zenit*, briefly defined bruitism: "The music from anything for the meaning of Everything" (Aleksić 1921, 5). Veljko Petrović, averse to literary avant-garde experiments and proclamations, seemed to unconsciously or tacitly accept the consequences of Aleksić's definition, of which he was probably not even aware, by composing radiophonic works from everything, including the once ignored, noisy components of everyday life.

Generally speaking, one of the biggest innovations of the twentieth century was precisely the legitimation of noise in art. Previously avoided as an accidental and unwanted phenomenon, during the avant-garde period it gained a fundamentally equal significance for the creation of innovative, collage sound structures, just like words, music, and silence. The common interpretation is that this discovery of the value of sound from irregular vibrations partially arose from the development of music itself, which, at the end of the nineteenth century, experienced a certain exhaustion of tonal harmony and the emancipation of dissonance. Among the first researchers of the integration of music with a concrete reality of noise, as a means of its renewal, were the composers Luigi Russolo, Eric Satie, Arseny Avraamov, Edgar Varèse, Kurt Weil, George Antheil. However, while noise later emerges stylistically pronounced only in certain music genres and some composers' work, for example, Cage, Stockhausen, Kagel, in the genre of radio compositions and collages, it has become a constitutive and essential component. Two pioneers of the genre, Dziga Vertov and Walter Ruttmann, emphasised the same programmatic principle. Vertov wrote: "I decided to include the whole soundworld in the concept of Listening" (according to Bulgakowa 2008, 145), whereas Ruttmann wrote: "Everything audible in the world becomes material." (Goeren 1994, 25–26).[7] This is the path that Veljko Petrović took, and the path that today's authors of sound workshop take, utilising once unimaginably perfect technical means to create innovative works from any given component of the soundworld.

7 Ruttmann's text was originally published under the title "Neue Gestaltung von Tonfilm und Funk. Programm einer photographischen Hörkunst" in *Film-Kurier* 255 (26.10.1929) (cf. Goergen 1994, 25–26).

It is reasonable to pose a question as to whether it is even possible to meaningfully talk about *Harvest* or *Spring Symphony* without a direct experience of these pieces, in the absence of the primary source material, just like all other destroyed and lost creative syntheses that were uniquely radiophonic and could not have existed outside of their sound form. The answer would be that the researchers of these sunken worlds cannot form an aesthetic experience or aesthetic judgement of them. But then the entire world history of radio art in the 1920s and partly in the 1930s would remain in the dark, with only a few pillars of light, if at least what can be said based on the available documentations is omitted. Indeed, the extent of material decay was enormous. Among the achievements of that period, only those printed on film tape avoided decay. *Wochenende* [*Weekend*] by Walter Ruttmann, which was recorded and broadcast for the first time in 1930, is considered to be the first preserved work of radio art. Most radio dramas have survived, but only in the form of text, which can always revive through new performances. However, this also means that the fate of documentary creations and radiophonic compositions and collages, inevitably linked exclusively to the sound recording, was the most problematic.

Since only the conceptual aspects of the lost broadcasts managed to be transmitted throughout time, the history of inter-war radio art is mostly the history of ideas. With them, it is possible to reconstruct, using documents, the appearance, structure, significance, and historical context of radioart projects and fill in the gap, made evident after the disappearance of some valuable product. A certain consolation can be found in the fact that, in the era of art reinvention, during the first decades of the twentieth century the freshness and originality of ideas were of almost equal significance like their realisations themselves, so the concepts, sometimes, served not only as the sole, but the primary source of knowledge about the vanished artifacts as well. What we know about the enthusiasm and trailblazing breakthroughs of Veljko Petrović and his collaborators is enough to describe the works, to outline the silhouette, and to present the concept of the first Serbian sound workshop. Without even knowing about it, the foundations of the second sound workshop began to be established during the 1960s and early 1970s, by the incredibly talented professionals in the field of radiophony, whom this text was dedicated to. From the perspective of the new generation of innovators, all of them will become a part of an integrated tradition as well as great figures that the art of radio composition and radio collage would further develop from.

Conclusion

British radio historian, Tim Crook, wrote: "Most early radio plays created by the BBC and other international broadcasting organisations have not survived as mechanical records" (Crook 1999, 7). Without a permanent recording, he believed, a radiophonic piece remained an extremely ephemeral, "vanishing" form – but in his comprehensive, historical overview of the radio drama development, a chapter on the early

forms and trends was nonetheless included, with the help of accompanying documents and press releases. Deprived of the direct and immediate experience of the work, in the complete absence of the aesthetic object, we can similarly, when it comes to *Harvest* and *Spring Symphony*, resort to secondary sources, bearing in mind the context of the condition of a national radio drama as a literary work during the given period. And it barely existed back then. At the end of 1930s, writer Stanislav Vinaver humbly referred to his educational synopses for audio portraits of historical figures and events, which were gladly revealed to the wider public about ten years ago, as "radio montages" and "radio presentations", avoiding the term "radio drama", the specific genre in which Germany, Great Britain, and France, for example, had already made considerable progress (Vinaver 2015). Judging by this analogy, and by the slow and gradual progress of our inter-war radio condition in general, it would be an exaggeration to imagine the radio collages created by Veljko Petrović and his collaborators could be measured with the globally most renowned ones – but the very knowledge that we, too, had certain early pieces in such a complex, experimental form, almost exclusively reserved for a developed radiophonic world, can fill us with satisfaction.

Owing to, above all, the exquisite generation of creative directors, editors, and sound engineers, since the early 1960s, and especially during the "golden age of the Belgrade radio school", 1971–1991, an extraordinary rise and international impact of Serbian radio art was accomplished. It can be stated without any exaggeration, since we participated in the events, and international competitions on major world stages, and received many accolades. At the end of *Radio Week* [*Nedelja radija*] in Ohrid, in 1988, Paul von Martens, editor of Swedish program in Finland, stated: "There are three world centers today where authentic radio dramas are created, Belgrade, Berlin, and Paris, all of them with long tradition in this field" (as quoted in Savićević 2004, 167). Indeed, even then, during that successful period, as is tangibly shown by international awards, the greatest contributions were made in the field of radio art. Today, Belgrade's high position among other radio stations in the world is largely preserved owing to pieces produced by *Sound Workshop*.

Translated by Ivana Maksić

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FROM *SOUND WORKSHOP* TO RADIO FILM: TRACING SERBIAN RADIO ART HISTORY BACKWARDS
(summary)

The aim of this paper is to analyse Radio Belgrade's *Sound Workshop* series and to shed light on the experimental trends that preceded it. In the first part, the author examines the reasons for establishing *Sound Workshop* at the beginning of 1985 and determines, from a chronological and conceptual point of view, its place among other European series of the same type. Special importance is attached to its association with the international network of radio art editorial boards – Ars Acustica Group – which was

formed by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in 1989. The author points to certain differences in the editing styles of the series among Ivana Stefanović, Slobodan Boda Marković, Predrag D. Stamenković, and Dragan Mitrić, who nevertheless all followed common general principles and supported the tendency to musicalize the entire soundworld, including speech and noise. It is estimated that over the past 40 years, the series has had a high-quality repertoire and introduced authors whose works have brought to Serbian radio numerous awards from the most prestigious international festivals. The second part of the paper explores the original tendencies and early works of the acoustic art in Radio Belgrade, which preceded the founding of the *Sound Workshop* and became part of its reprise collection. The breakthroughs of Serbian creators in this domain from the beginning of the 1960s were influenced by avant-garde trends in the world, for example, by concrete music in Radio France (1948) and electronic music at Radio Cologne (1951), the activities of John Cage, the Vienna Group and German New Radio Play (*Neue Hörspiel*). The series with an avant-garde orientation were *Drama after Midnight* (First Program) and *Experiments and achievements* (Third Program) and among the authors of musical-speech-noise collages, united by musical principle, the most prominent were Arsenije Jovanović, Vladan Radovanović, Ivana Stefanović, and Vuk Vučo. (Darko Tatić and Boda Marković are also worth mentioning, even though they were more oriented towards new forms of radio drama.) The author argues that Arsenije Jovanović is the founder of this genre in Serbian culture (since 1967) and the figure whose works will significantly mark the *Sound Workshop* too. The final part of the paper deals with the first appearance of the terms "radio art", "radio film" and "bruitism" in the Belgrade cultural circles (early 1920s, zenithist Ljubomir Micić) and the first realisations of the radio collages in the country (late 1930s, writer and director of Radio Belgrade, Veljko Petrović). These isolated attempts are not sufficiently researched and known and did not influence the later trends of radio art, but they are an important part of Belgrade's achievement, which belongs to the pioneering era of radio in the world.

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PROPOSITIONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE RADIO AS *ATELIER*: IMAGINING A NEW RADIO AND A NEW LISTENER IN THE LIFE OF THE *ATELIER DE CRÉATION RADIOPHONIQUE* OF RADIO FRANCE

KEYWORDS
L'Atelier de création radiophonique (France Culture); radio art; radio documentary; *Ars Acustica*; radio programs (France); public service broadcasting radio (France); *création sonore*; France Culture, Radio France; Alain Trutat; Réne Farabet; documentary arts (audio and radio).

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ABSTRACT
This article offers an encounter with one of twentieth century radio's great artistic and exploratory sites, the *Atelier de création radiophonique* (*ACR*) of Radio France. This Atelier was envisaged from its outset as a program dedicated to experiment and research. According to the proposal, drafted in 1968 by Alain Trutat and Jean Tardieu (poet, Director, France Culture), a new space was required which might continue the (broken) tradition of experimentation established with the earlier Studio' and Club d'Essai (1942–1960) from which Pierre Schaeffer developed his *musique concrète*. The *ACR* went to air on October 5, 1969 and its propositions to the listener and contributions to the world of radio would be fundamentally different. Already by the early 1970s, this 'show' was attracting interest internationally – its works were achieving critical acclaim. The *ACR*'s influence continued to grow as this *chantier* (building site) increased its interactions with the wider radio ecology, particularly within public service media circles. Yet, the impacts and legacies of the program have received insufficient critical attention, even as a new idea of the listener, the radio documentary and film sonore were proposed here by the program's core producer-artist-thinkers – including Trutat, René Farabet, Yann Paranthoën and Kaye Mortley. This article offers an introduction to this program, providing an overview and contextualisation, while also highlighting the ways in which the *ACR* lived up to that initial challenge (1968): to be something "more" than "art"; to respond and explore in new ways, and with sound, the "key subjects of our time" (1968 Proposal). This atelier would participate in history as well as reflect upon it, creating "broadcast events" and acoustically rich works that would be original, surprising, provocative. This essay documents some of the distinguishing aspects of a project that evolved over a 30-year period, drawing on the author's oral history interviews (with key figures), plus primary and other research conducted in France and in Australia from 2003 to 2017 – in many cases assisted by these same audio-visionaries.

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This article seeks to make an encounter with the experiments and philosophical ideas that emerged from one of twentieth century radio's great artistic and exploratory sites, the *Atelier de création radiophonique* (*ACR*) of Radio France. This weekly program was launched within the French national broadcaster, France Culture, under the direction of Alain Trutat in 1969. Its brief at the time as a program and as a space was to imagine and broadcast new forms of radio, to cross boundaries in craft and genre, and re-invent or create new dialogues with radio's older forms while sounding out possible futures. In doing this the program should, as the figure of the artist's atelier suggests, offer "a space where one might be invited to try out ideas freely," and "see things in the process of being made" (Farabet 2003, in Madsen 2001–2004). As one long-time sound engineer for the *Atelier* also recalled: "It was truly an atelier where everyone has their hammers and nails. When something doesn't work, you can pull out the nails and begin again"[1] (Creis in Madsen 2017). Under the foundational leadership of Trutat and René Farabet – the latter Producteur-Coordonateur de l'*ACR* de France-Culture, Radio France (1969–2001) – this site was able to make an important contribution to the wider radio arts internationally, with impacts and legacies that have barely received enough attention, especially not outside of France.

My interest in this space where experiment was foregrounded and ideas of radiophonic art also coalesced, comes from around 15 years of direct interactions with the program while it was in operation (1986–2001) and when working for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). I was a producer with ABC Radio's Arts Unit (producing for Radio National and ABC FM), and in a freelance capacity over many years, coming into contact with *ACR* work and producers through programming and through events and visits. This paper also draws on archival research conducted at L'Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA), the French Bibliothèque Nationale and Radio France's own program archives. It draws on other sources where the *ACR*'s work can be located as many productions were also adapted and broadcast internationally: for example, by the ABC – and thus *ACR* programs are part of the ABC's historical record. They are also a part of other broadcasters' entangled histories as they disseminated selections of *ACR* output. Additionally, this article benefits from extended oral history interviews, connections and conversations recorded with some of the core audio-visionaries of the period of the *ACR* (to 2001) (René Farabet, Kaye Mortley, Alain Trutat, Yann Paranthoën) and includes reflection from sound engineer Michel Creis and assistant producer Janine Antoine. (Antoine was a member of the working group of the *Atelier de Création Radiophonique* since its inception and Creis since 1970). It is important here to highlight the connection and access opened by the presence of Australian radio *auteur* Kaye Mortley, who after working for the ABC from 1974–1979 left her country of birth and moved to Paris to join the *Atelier*, becoming a long-time producer. She continued to make freelance works for the radio in several languages and for multiple broadcasters, including

1 "C'était vraiment un atelier où tout le monde en avait les marteaux des clous et on y allait tout. Quand ça n'allait pas, on a arraché les clous, on recommence." Michel Creis. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

ABC (see Madsen 2024, in Beaufils, Deleu, Héron 2024). My subject here is also inspired by the Editor of this special issue, who in her call for papers references the "40th anniversary of Radio Belgrade's *Sound Workshop* (*Radionica zvuka*)". She suggested the Belgrade site acted as a kind of trigger for the Issue's theme – radio art.

Development of new radio art and electronic music spaces in Post-World War 2 radio

In European State and PSB radio stations, we find a long and productive history of artists of various forms and mediums creating for the radio, with many of these artists and radio producers working in these stations and for these institutions drawn to forge new kinds of radiophonic work, later also electronic music experiences, some engaging with literature and writing, while others more with musical/sound and sound-text composition plus performance. There are yet others invoking traditions of broadcast reportage and documentary in their audio arts and as part of the new practices they developed. In the Post-World War II period exploratory studio spaces were established within numerous state and national PSB organisations. A number of these were designed for making extended works where voices and music, sounds and actuality (as the Germans termed this, *Original Ton* or *O-Ton*) might be recorded, mixed and edited to create new forms of radiophonic expression. These spaces (and not only for radio drama or music) were in time equipped with an array of new sound technologies: these developed for recording, mixing, processing, and transmission. Advances in recording from the 1950s to the 1970s were enabled by new precision microphones too, developed with differing capacities and patterns. In time, mono to stereo transmission meant new ways of recording, production, reception, along with higher quality sound achievable for listeners. The 1968 Proposal for an *Atelier* to be created within ORTF and France Culture, for example, states that it was an opportune moment to propose this new program offered in the new "Frequency modulation" or a "compatible Stereophony" and oriented towards "*la création radiophonique pure*", and "new works and talents" (Tardieu and Trutat 1968, 149).

Magnetic tape machines (pioneered and used during the war by the Nazis) were adopted widely by broadcasting organisations upon their discovery and after the fall of Germany when they were developed further, in all cases (but at different times) replacing earlier disc and wire recording, so allowing radio programs to be easily edited, layered and montaged.[2] Mono (¼ inch) and later stereo, plus new high quality portable tape recorders, then later multi-track recording, would revolutionise program and pro-

2 As Richard Kostelanetz reminds us, along with discs prior to World War II: "sound was recorded on continuous wire that, while it could be cut, it could not be spliced easily. That is, its parts could not be reassembled without making thunderous tell-tale sounds. Precisely because acoustic tape, by contrast, could be spliced gracefully, sounds separately recorded could be fused without distracting interruptions" (1990, 293).

duction practices, especially in drama, features and music, and the audio arts as this field developed. The importance of tape and the new kinds of construction possible because of it should not be downplayed when addressing the arts of the radio forged here – especially significant for the *ACR*, and the radiophonic imaginaries that this atelier and its creators proposed and explored, even into the digital era (Farabet 2011, 15).

By the 1950s and 1960s, 'radio labs' and 'studios' opened across multiple countries or became sites for continuing experiments with *musique concrète* and related but also divergent electronic forms of music. Increasingly complex and multipurpose mixing desks ensured kinds of sonic creativity and control over sound not possible before the 1960s, with electronic devices enhancing the ability of artists, producers (and their collaborators) to process and manipulate audio and specific sounds in unexpected and diverse ways. We know this was the case for the music world leading to a revolution in music, but so much less has been documented or charted in radio in this regard. These *essais* or experiments might be aimed at artistically inclined radiophonic productions, and they supported television projects with musical themes and effects. European radio was most active here from the late 1950s.

Italian composers Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna founded and directed an experimental radio studio for Radio Audizioni Italiane (RAI) in Milan, the *Studio di Fonologia*. This was established within Italian national radio in 1955 and was influenced in part by Pierre Schaeffer's and Pierre Henry's research: one of its special foci however was to be the voice, in particular the singing voice. The Polish Radio Experimental Studio was launched in 1957 and was active until 2004. Like the BBC's *Radiophonic Workshop* launched a short time after, this Warsaw Studio within the state radio was tasked with creating new sounds for radio and television, and like other electronic music studios launched elsewhere in European and Scandinavian radio institutions, it envisioned itself as "a hub for the production of electronic music" (Bohlman 2020, 717). It was also "the first space of its kind behind the Iron Curtain" (Jiricka in Crowley 2019, 271). The first German (NWDR to become WDR, West German Radio) Cologne studio for electronic music opened much earlier of course, in 1951 directed by Herbert Eimert. Karlheinz Stockhausen took the reins as its second director in 1962, advancing the making of electronic music, but also producing from audio archives new forms of "radio music" and radiogenic performance works: e.g. his astounding *Hymnen* (1966–1967) which features manipulated and montaged/layered recordings of national anthems from around the world, with many of these (167) different anthems sourced from WDR's own radio archives. Former ABC Classic FM producer Stephen Adams described this form of radio art as "radio music," naming *Hymnen* a prime example of the genre. This is an art associated with the radio first and foremost: the resulting recording or transmission "provides its own context" (which is the radio), he explained. For Adams, the parameters for any art of the radio includes this distinction: "Radio arts and music work exist apart from other performance contexts. They define radio spaces which are virtual spaces" (Adams in Madsen 2015).

The BBC's *Radiophonic Workshop*, also influenced by the French *musique concrètistes*, was launched in 1958, although it would soon be understood as largely a site designed to provision various areas and departments of the BBC (including television) with music and special effects, assisting in a range of performance productions and genres of program. It is important to add here however that this Workshop's inception had been spurred on by the productions of the Radio Drama and Features Departments within BBC Radio, and their championing of new features and radio play forms and especially those (largely) modernist works produced from the late 1950s, e.g., Beckett's BBC radio productions such as *All That Fall* (1957) and *Embers* (1959) supported and directed by Donald McWhinnie and others (see McWhinnie 1959). There are numerous producers' works that also engaged with the *Radiophonic Workshop*[3] with some radio drama productions gaining an entire score through this collaboration.[4] The producers of BBC features and documentaries and drama were also responsive to the new technologies and techniques available for making their sound plays and creative documentary features, including approaches that were made possible working with tape, plus electronics and *musique concrète* experimentation. This workshop collaborated with producers and artists for these kinds of programs then, but particularly as these experiments were supported within the BBC's cultural Third Programme, a channel launched late in 1946 to prioritise arts and culture in its programming and in its production: "The Third Programme set itself up as an enormous idealistic experiment…making the best of culture available to everybody… It was culture not just music" (Kenyon, Nicholas, BBC Controller Radio 3, 1992–1998, in BBC Four, 2005). Here producers could more easily create, collaborate and experiment because they were given the resources and they now had greater time and opportunities for making serious artistic genres plus a range of more elaborated forms.

Contextually, The Third Programme opens up a new ecosystem favouring experiment in a range of forms for radio, also ensuring a level of commissioning and production that opened the space to new and established writers, actors, composers and artists. As Kenyon recalls in a documentary (2005) commemorating this BBC cultural channel: "Each evening could be constructed as a work of art… it wasn't something that you casually had on in the background" (BBC Four 2005). Plays and documentaries here became less live affairs (as they had been) and increasingly pre-recorded (edited) works (more like film productions) that were cut, voiced and mixed/layered in new ways, including with the use of effects and music specially composed or produced for the work. Field recordings or sound sourced on location also became a more integral part of some productions. In time, this distinctive BBC channel influenced

3 Barry Bermange's four sound collages he labelled *Inventions for Radio* (BBC 1964–1967) was a series of works composed with field sounds and 'ordinary people's' voices he had collected and recorded from life. These pieces which play between art and a kind of documentary poetry were made with the sound designer/composer Delia Derbyshire of the *Radiophonic Workshop*. See Radiophonic Workshop Audio, n.d. and Butler 2020.

4 Not all work was modernist. Malcolm Clarke of the BBC *Radiophonic Workshop* contributed a score to John Tydeman's production of *Hamlet* broadcast on BBC Radio 3, 31 October 1971.

other broadcasters, who took similar steps in their programs, or in some cases whole networks or outlets dedicated to culture were established, modelled on The Third. Here we can identify RAI's Terzo Programma and the French national outlet, France Culture, established in December 1963. Most notably this *chaine* would become the natural home of the *ACR*. Writing in 1968, in their proposal, Tardieu and Trutat describe the public for the *ACR* and France Culture as being "between the 'Third Programm' of the BBC and that of the old *Club d'Essai* of the RTF" (1968, 149). France Culture continues today, although without its *Atelier de création radiophonique*.

By the 1970s (and perhaps a kind of parallel development to the *ACR*), a distinctive 'Studio' within the decentralised German public broadcasting system (ARD) proposed the *Neue Hörspiel*, or 'New Hearplay' and this would mix art and drama and music. (*Hörspiel* was the term used for sound drama in German radio, although the term is broader than the English close equivalent of 'radio play'). This new experimentation was particularly promoted by Klaus Schöning from the late 1960s, who directed his own studio at Westdeutsche Rundfunk Köln (WDR), the Studio Akustische Kunst. Schöning engaged modernist composers and artists from Germany and around the world to make for his Studio while retrieving much earlier produced works of acoustic art from the annals of oblivion, for example broadcasting Cage's early radio works, and that of Weimar pioneer Walter Ruttmann (who adopted the term "acoustical film" as he had used a special technique of optical sound film to not only create movies in the 1930s, but also radio *sans images*). Schöning proposed *or proclaimed* the *Hörspielmacher* for his expanded radio art which responded to new forms of sound-text poetry and acoustic sculpture. For Schöning and others attracted to work in this space, the figure of the *Hörspielmacher* represents a new kind of radio author – perhaps a writer (dramatist, poet…) but also likely to be a composer-director or a builder-sculptor (Schöning 1991, 322; Schöning 1969; 1970). These spaces opened to conceptual, fluxus and 'new media' artists, with new works commissioned from Cage and other 20th century arts luminaries (Kostelanetz 1990). In this 1970s period, we might add that *ACR* Director René Farabet explored similar ways of approaching the radio as artists' space, working at times even with the same *Hörspielmachers* as Schöning.[5] From almost the first program, Trutat and Farabet invited artists into their atelier, making adapted works of *Neues Hörspiel* and other forms, blurring the boundaries of the radio play and music theatre, of sound poetry, music and sound art, but also documentary. A good example is Argentinian Maurizio Kagel's *Inversion of America* (*l'Inversion de l'Amerique*) produced for WDR (1975–1976) and broadcast on the *ACR* on January 8, 1978. Interestingly, this text dealing with the savagery of conquest by the Spanish in the Americas remained in German for the *ACR's*

5 Schöning's Studio proposed a new autonomous "language of acoustic art" in which "the spoken word, sound effects, music, and documentary sound in every possible guise are co-equal constitutive materials of an artistic composition" (Schöning 1991, 316–317). This requirement for "equality" of these elements appears quite prescriptive: his proclamation of achieving a "true acoustic art" contrasts with the ACR's more playful, heuristic approach and its mixing of more traditional radio but also film genres. There is a common stress nevertheless on the idea that these new radio artists might use radio "productively", not just "reproductively" here (Ibid., 321).

presentation, a simultaneous translation to French was intermixed with the composition of voices and effects. This was a near 50-minute work but sitting in a context of the longer 'radio journey' available to the *ACR*'s listeners. *Neue Hörspiel* was also a subject of a later program of the *ACR (*"Le Hörspiel, un art appliqué", September 24, 1979/January 6, 1980): Kagel and Schöning are in conversation with Farabet. Farabet also collaborated with Schöning on some other adapted audio theatre-music works throughout the 1970s and 1980s when both these directors were recognised as leaders of radiophonic experiment and creation in European public broadcasting circles. Composer-writers and sound sculptors such as Gerhard Rühm or the American Bill Fontana created for these two experimental sites, in addition to the aforementioned composer-artists Kagel and Cage. Artists from Australia were invited to make work too: writer-producer Paul Carter and composer-writer Moya Henderson were commissioned by Schöning and Farabet – some of these were co-productions between the ABC and *ACR*, or ABC and Studio Akustische Kunst.[6] Kaye Mortley visited the *ACR* on a Fellowship (1978–1979) where she was invited by Trutat to make work (Mortley 2024, 271).

The *ACR* celebrated radiophonic compositions across the genres by presenting works made in a variety of other workshops as well, for example, the May 14, 1972 *ACR* represented Fabio Mauri's complete radio opera *Lezione d'inglese* (made in Milan RAI's Fonologia studio – see Malatini 1981, 112) in a French version. *Leçon d'anglais* was of similar length to the original: 2 hours 44 minutes. Here is but one instance where we can recognise how international exchange and co-operation were strong themes of radio and art as this space evolved in European public and state radios in the post-war period. Farabet and Trutat attended major international events and prizes throughout the world where new work of interest to the *ACR* might be encountered and where *ACR* productions commenced to make waves and have influence, e.g. The *Prix Italia* (from 1949), then The International Features Conference (IFC) from its inception in Berlin in 1975. European Broadcasting Union (EBU) specialist colloquiums were occasions for airing ideas in documentary-features, *Ars Acustica*, and radio drama. *ACR* founder Alain Trutat (then Artistic Advisor Radio France and Director of Studies INA) offered an unconventional provocation to the EBU-supported conference, *Rencontres de Tenerife*, organised by Radio Nacional de Espana (1977) which also featured Schöning (WDR), Franco Malatini (RAI), Douglas Cleverdon (BBC Radio Features) and Richard Imison (BBC Radio Drama). Farabet offered sophisticated thinking and ideas on radio, the sonic, listening… to EBU symposia, IFC attendees, or to its associated festivals, masterclasses or workshops and other conferences (often in the form of intimate theatrical provocations). Some of these many performance-texts were later published, but also developed for collections or journals (e.g. Farabet 1979; 1981) while others appeared in his own books (e.g., "Espaces de l'utopie radiophonique" derived from the Strategies de l'Utopie conference, Centre Thomas More (L'Arbresle, Rhone, 1978) (in Farabet 1994b).

6 Henderson first worked with Stockhausen in his Darmstadt studio, then with Kagel, before proposing a number of experimental music theatre radiophonic works she later made for the ABC (Madsen in Mildorf and Verhulst 2024,154) from the 1970s to the 2000s.

There is sadly very little translated into English: I note the Special Issue of *Art & Text* on Sound I co-edited with Martin Harrison and Tony MacGregor in 1989 which features "In the Beginning was the Ear" (Farabet 1989).

Foundation of the *ACR*: first propositions and the sinuous journey

Why propose an "atelier" to be created in the heart of the national French cultural broadcaster? This *Atelier* was envisaged from its outset as a site dedicated to experiment and research. According to the proposal, drafted in 1968 by Alain Trutat and Jean Tardieu (an eminent poet and director of France Culture – established only five years before the *ACR* as a public station dedicated quasi-exclusively to culture, knowledge and the spoken word), a new space was required which might continue the (broken) tradition of experimentation and research established with the Studio d'Essai and Club d'Essai from which Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry pioneered a sonic and also radiophonic art form – *musique concrète* (1942–1953).[7] Schaeffer, Tardieu, Trutat and others in France had steered sonic and poetic-dramatic experiments commencing before the Second World War and they had produced a significant output by the 1960s, involving a wide variety of artists, writers and composers. In France the Studio d'Essai (1942–1945, the first experimental studio founded by Schaeffer) became the Club d'Essai (directed by Tardieu, 1946–1960) (Robert 1999, 103). Other comparable musical labs as I have mentioned, designed for radiophonic and musical experiment, evolved under the influence of both these pioneering groupings.

In my interview with Farabet (Paris, 2003), the former director of the *ACR* recalls its foundational years, explaining the thinking behind this development in French national radio (my transcription text is a mix of English and French):

> After the war, the Club d'Essai of the RTF (Radio-Diffusion Francaise)… was an important thing for the radio. It was perhaps a little literary, rather than radiophonic, but in the Club d'Essai there were a lot of interventions by poets. In this place [*lieu*] – it was a little before I became involved – they had the idea however that radio could be something more than the diffusion of information etc., so they proposed works of the kind that were literary, also where works of art of various kinds could be distributed to the 'grand public'. This was interesting because it was a propulsion into the public sphere of work that might formerly have only existed in small journals, presses etc. This was interesting in and of itself. Jean Tardieu was himself a poet, and a dramatist… He was also very open – quite curious about things. Thus,

7 Schaeffer and Pierre Henry in the later 1960s formed the Groupe de Musique Concrète (renamed the Groupe de Recherches Musicales, or GRM). By recording sounds onto tape, and then manipulating and experimenting with these in different ways, they were formulating early building blocks of what later (in the digital era) would become known as 'sampling'. 'Scratching' was also a methodology in the earlier Studio d'Essai and Club d'Essai. This detailed work also formed the basis of the later sphere of *musique acousmatique*.

> when the Club d'Essai disappeared, there was this period, a dead time in the radio when they'd lost the spirit of innovation (*esprit d'innovation*) and of exploration (Farabet in Madsen 2001–2004).

Trutat, who co-wrote the proposal (1968) for the *ACR*, remembers well how:

> In 1968 there was no longer any research service at ORTF or experimental radio. Pierre Schaeffer's Studio d'Essai no longer existed. (He had other activities connected to Television.) The Club d'Essai of Jean Tardieu didn't exist any longer either. (He'd also become the director of the station dedicated to music: France Musique.) I thought there was a great lack in the radio as to a place where research on radio could be done… or experimentation... So, I went to see Tardieu (Tardieu who was still in *la Maison* [headquarters of Radio France: short for *Maison de la Radio*], but he was going to retire soon. I thought it was a good opportunity to see him now, especially as the Directeur General of the French radio at the time was not particularly open to such ideas or experimentation [this was Pierre de Boisdeffre, in charge of ORTF (1963–1968)]. I thought Tardieu could help me (Trutat in Madsen 2002).

History here was also feeding into this desire for a new type of radio experiment and working site for reflection, expression and innovation/modernisation, and not only in the forms, machines or apparatus of radio but in the relationships these might have to audiences or listeners. A new atelier rather than a studio, club or lab was deemed important in 1968 not only because a gap was perceived in the schedules and creatively, but because there was a compelling need to attract new (and younger) audiences, plus talent to the radio at a time when television was taking up much of the limelight. Thus, in the proposal this putative program would be broadcast in stereo, comprising "original radiophonic works, works of fiction or music" but it should aim to create something more: "a radiophonic event" with "broadcasts dealing in depth with the key subjects of our time" (Tardieu and Trutat 1968).

Recalling how the *ACR* might address this break from earlier experiments *and* the increasingly explosive context of French life in 1968, Farabet emphasises how the radio had become moribund during this time of crisis in France: it was no longer responsive to the upheavals or the technologies. He recalled hearing interviews for instance that were completely rehearsed beforehand – they had no element of spontaneity or playfulness. One of these interviews he'd listened to like this was even more ridiculous because it was with the famous surrealist André Breton. While he also recognised there was "Pierre Schaeffer… *musique concrète*… electronique, but this was a little bit apart from the rest" (Farabet in Madsen 2001–2004), Farabet is clear that the radio as he saw it/heard it was: "up to that time in the fridge…frozen…in slippers (*pantoufles*)". Also, "in reality, there was a feeling that effectively something was missing on the level of the purely *radiophonique*, of *a langage radiophonique*" (Ibid.).

Trutat's and then Tardieu's insistence and belief in the idea of an atelier cannot be understated here, as the higher authorities were won over by the detailed *projet* they

proposed (ibid., 1968).[8] With Tardieu more than simply behind it – a co-author – the program concept would be communicated to the very top of the institution (Boisdeffre on April 24, 1968, but earlier "notes" had been shared in December 1967) (in Tardieu and Trutat 1968) and would be soon after given the go ahead. Moreover, it would be well supported with resources and time. At these early stages, a Note to Boisdeffre mentions "the ateliers playing a role adjacent to the old 'Club d'Essai'" [the plural was used because at first there were to be more than one evening proposed for these ateliers]. Farabet also affirms the importance of Tardieu's role in the decision:

> Thus, we get to Tardieu, who was interested in this idea of proposing works ["*des oeuvres*"] specifically for the radio: *emissions très elaborés* – not simply the usual productions. He wanted to find *original works* [Farabet's emphasis] conceived for the radio, but these might also create, what he called, "*des évenéments radiophoniques*" [radiophonic events]… (Ibid.).

The inclusion of the new *ACR* in the national French radio would be "one of the last acts of Jean Tardieu at the ORTF before he retired in 1969" (ibid., 1996; Preface/Note to Tardieu and Trutat 1968, in Pradalié and Prot 1996), 147). The *Atelier* had been propelled into being by ideas as much as individuals then, with the context of 1968 itself playing strongly into this. As Farabet reflects here: "68 put into question all of our ideas about radio… we could not simply reproduce ideas that were circulating, instead we would try to provoke, unsettle" ([*provoquer, deranger*] (Farabet 2003, in Madsen 2001–2004). In the very first programs we can hear the street as more than a setting, it is the performance itself as it also becomes a kind of life force; the microphone is also at times a character in the midst of this, or a means of transport into this reality which is also a theatre and a new kind of fiction now supplanting the poets of the studios of the past. Let's hear from a perceptive insider/outsider in this transformation who might offer us his framing of these events, also a key to the awakening being captured, unveiled, and animated. Michel De Certeau conveys here the profundity of the changes, and accounts for that life as he registers its compulsive birth onto the streets, and with an auditory attentiveness rarely found in other writers of the period:

> A kind of festival (what liberation is not a festival?) transformed the inner workings of these days of crisis and violence… Something happened to us. Something began to stir in us. Emerging from who knows where, suddenly filling the streets and factories, circulating among us, becoming ours but no longer being the muffled noise of our solitude, voices that had never been heard began to change us…[W]e began to speak. It seems as if it were for the first time. From everywhere emerged the treasures (De Certeau 1997, 11–12).

8 In Trutat's words, Boisdeffre responded: "I read your paper, but I don't understand anything. However, I do think you are right [*vous avez raison*], even as I think there is a lot of nonsense [*connerie*], but you can go ahead [*allez-y*]" (Trutat in Madsen, 2017).

Farabet has written much and spoken at length about this "propulsion" of the *ACR* into the light and noise of the streets of Paris, indeed out of the soundproofed studios of a more orthodox (but not always polite) radio, responsive to the waves emanating from the "*Evénements* of 68". For example, he is very clear: "I see the *ACR* as another event of 1968" (in Madsen 2001–2004); or: "it was the 68 zeitgeist…radio entering the outside world, the streets...[T]o regain a poetic function in this period, the radio must track the real without fossilizing the event, therefore using a roving microphone [*traquer le reel, sans fossiliser l'évenément – utiliser a micro mobile*]." These images are cinematic ones too, recalling the earlier *éclatement* of *cinéma-verité,* the essay film as reflexive, reflective, playing between reality and fiction, and this proposition additional to the Situationists' poetics and their theatrical *critique/politique* also infusing 1968. Trutat reminds:

> The first programme after *La Rentrée* [the return to work after the yearly extended French holiday period July-August] was concerned in the main with the *manifestation* which was called *La Biennale Artistique de Paris*… an international event, new artists… video was just beginning… lots of performances… the time of 'happenings'... The first collaborators on this programme were René Farabet, Janine Antoine, Viviane van der Broek… and sound engineer, Marcel Grenier… We worked very hard, all night, our facilities weren't very good then… (Trutat in Madsen 2002).

In its first programs the *ACR* is literally then another part of "the festival" de Certeau describes, opening its microphones to this art of the "happening" – channelling new voices while being a participant in a pageant and picaresque of history in the making. In this way, Farabet had written, the radio could "regain its expressive facility and power, its Dialectic" (Farabet 1972, 20). This event-space and the atelier-programme it tries to create is as much political then as cultural. The events of May 1968 in Paris (strikes, demonstrations, happenings, the presence of the Situationists and poetic-political provocations they also usually had a hand in) also then offer a compelling strand of reasoning behind the proposal to establish something new for/into the schedules of an already more mature and venerated broadcaster, France Culture, not least a purveyor of the ever-evolving national *patrimoine* (heritage). It is perhaps not so surprising that these older more seasoned players/leaders – *hommes de radio*[9] – Tardieu but also Trutat, were so attentive to these forces of change, and boldly responding to them in their proposal. It is also entirely in keeping with their sensibilities and their own development (when we consider their distinctive artistic careers and attitudes to art and the radio).

9 Literally 'men of radio': a common term in the golden age of radio, used in France even until the 1970s and referencing the many writer-producers or writer-directors who became involved in making programs for French radio, and in particular of a cultural type. After World War II, these writers, poets, literary journalists and *hommes de culture* could be found in the state radio. Tardieu, Trutat and even Farabet are a part of this cultural formation. See Ed. Pierre-Marie Héron's (2001) *Les écrivains hommes de radio (1940-1970)* for a nuanced and detailed exploration of this culture that also sets the scene for the establishment of the *atelier* in 1969.

Trutat produced Beckett's *Tous ceux qui tombent* in 1959 for example, and was an innovator-provocateur well before the *ACR*, broadcasting that foundational documentary *Bonjour Monsieur Jarry* (co-made by George Charbonnier in 1951). This "*radio essai*" or *documentaire de création* was concocted to channel Alfred Jarry and his infamous *Ubu Roi* (first staged in Paris in 1896, and inspiration to the Surrealists and Dadaists) and was highly controversial for the RTF at this time.[10] In a very different era (1968) so it is that Trutat takes his "dream" to Tardieu: to give another chance to radio to become "one of the *beaux-arts*":

> We had a dream. We considered the radio as one of the 'beaux-arts'. Thomas de Quincy said radio was one of the beaux-arts. That is a little a dream perhaps, because it seems to me that radio does not have the status of art – and partly because we have never had any serious critics (Trutat in Madsen 2002).

Granted at first almost three hours of time for its activities and *essais,* this unusual program with its *longue durée* was almost immediately proposing spaces for "sinuous journeying" and new ways of essaying in sound (Farabet 2003 in Madsen 2001–2004):

> It's extremely interesting, I think, this duration question, this space of the long duration. It was said that people wouldn't listen for a very long time... More and more programmes were tending to become shorter, smaller. But for us it was completely the reverse… (Farabet 2003 in Madsen 2001–2004).

Even when the *ACR* was reduced to two hours from an initial expansive time of the almost three hours it had first been granted, then reduced further to 90 mins (still not insubstantial), the program did not shy away from its pursuit of these kinds of critical provocations – but also let's describe them now as sensuous "itineraries" for the listener (who was always a consideration, perhaps even at times, central.[11] This

10 At the time of the *ACR*'s founding, Alain Trutat (1922–2006) was Director of Drama for France Culture, the national cultural channel he had helped to found. Trutat created a large body of work in radio from the post-war era of the 1940s as well as directing Drama at France Culture for more than 25 years. Notably, he always sought to open the spaces of the national broadcaster to new thinking, techniques and approaches, championing artists and writers from outside the sound medium. He invited Marguerite Duras, for instance, to create for the radio a new form for her *India Song* (first made for theatre). Before this celebrated film was completed (1975), a radiophonic play for voices was commissioned for l'Office national de radiodiffusion télévision française (ORTF), written and re-visioned for audio, then directed by Georges Peyrou and broadcast 1974 on the ACR. An excerpt is available (Chénetier-Alev 2025). While Trutat also respected the tradition at the French broadcaster of the Studio d'Essai and the Club d'Essai (directed by Tardieu, 1946–1960), with the *ACR* he did not want to recreate this 'workshop', birthplace of *musique concrète* and a place to experiment for poets, writers and composers. He aimed for a space more inviting to a broader public, as well as to artists, writers and technicians from all fields and forms.

11 "Dès le début, le projet est donc de ménager un espace de liberté à l'intérieur d'une chaîne soumise à une grille de programmes un peu rigide et de privilégier ainsi la fonction divagante, déroulante de la radio, plutôt que sa fonction informative ou pédagogique" (Farabet 1994, 15). Translation: "From the beginning, the project is then to manage a space of liberty in the interior of a channel which has to submit to the program schedule, this a little bit rigid, and to thus privilege the wandering, unscrolling function of the radio, rather than its informational or pedagogic function".

was a kind of "capricious itinerary" that Farabet tells us allowed for different forms to co-exist in the one space: the interview, the actuality, the "*plan sonore*", the play, drama, essay, document, the documentary… Thus perhaps here we can come to understand how documentary becomes – and perhaps unexpectedly – a form or project of greater importance than ever before *in sound.* Certainly, this is so with the *ACR* in French radio, but also in the story of radio art. Alongside experiments in music, we should not overlook the impact of experimentation in radio drama and radio plays. Nor should we misunderstand the role and place of poetic or *auteur* 'features' – these "feature length" works only later becoming known as *documentaire de création* in the French national broadcaster. As Trutat explains, the concept "barely existed before the *ACR*" – perhaps "a precursor" was a "documentary of this type being made about Alfred Jarry… which used *the magnetophone* [tape recorder], and this allowed for montage; thus a relation could be established here with the *pellicule* [tape – but this word is more often used for celluloid film]" (Trutat in Madsen 2002).

Mixing worlds, forms and formats, reality and fiction in these "radiophonic films" and related audio allowed the *ACR* team to focus on the creation rather than the content, with themes for these journeys offering diverse kinds of "propositions" to listeners who also were enabled to "compose" and create themselves as they accompanied the producer down one trail or another. The listener here is freed to conjure up mental signs and images from the sensory world brought into being by these words and sounds. And so, the wandering function Farabet refers to as a "*vagabondage*" (Farabet, 2003 in Madsen 2001–2004) is crucial here to the *ACR* from the beginning. The Situationists, active at the time of the *ACR*'s creation, and behind the events of 1968 as poets, polemicists, activists, philosophers and town planners, might have described this proposal in related terms: for example, they spoke of embarking on walks as transient "passages through varied ambiances" (Debord 1956). This would be part of their pursuit of playful and poetic *dérives* building further on ideas originating with the Romantics (Baudelaire's *flaneur*), then the Surrealists (think of Breton's *Nadja*): these became political and cultural ways to counteract "the society of the spectacle" as Debord would dub this newly mediatized and mediated space (1967). This openness of the *ACR* (from very early on) to these kinds of detours, the *dérive*, the *detournement*, and the longer voyage where the unexpected is an outcome and the listener acknowledged as a creator or composer, continued to be strongly championed in most of the *ACR*'s work, while at the beginning it offered a kind of counterpoint to the more familiar radio program formatting and division of genres of these stations (and where the listener is more passive as a consumer or as an audience-receiver).

These formats emerging by the late 1960s, we might now acknowledge, were a characteristic of both public and commercial radio outlets around the world, although an entity like France Culture appears to have been more open, even opposed to being identified in this way. One-time France Culture Director, Yves Jaigu, described the *ACR* as a program space that allowed the cultural channel itself to appear as "an instrument of creation" (1970s, undated, in Autissier and Laurentin 2013, 226). To be in this space

set aside for creation within the supporting matrix (institution) is then also at the very heart of the *Atelier* as it was conceived in 1969 and as it evolved for thirty years after that with a producer-thinker like Farabet, but also with Trutat who sought to re-ignite and re-animate a space of freedom inside the institution, while responding to the new technologies, new ideas and the streets that had become a theatre or *film sonore* to be channelled by microphone and tape, a *mise-en-ondes* from the *mise-en-scène*. This is again the provocation Farabet spoke of, to not only *dérange* (to derange) here, but to *élargir le champs* (widen the scope, enlarge the field) (Farabet 2003 in Madsen 2001–2004).

In this open space, less lab or even electronic studio (men wearing white lab coats), it is striking how the *documentaire de création* becomes an almost primary site for experiment, revelation and research. Especially too the sounding of recorded life, in traces of the real captured and inscribed by tape-recorders into the new broadcasting environment – and for this to touch, and to be apprehended by a new kind of active imaginative listener, a listener that Farabet also has beautifully and richly theorised, imagining through the combined work perhaps of the *ACR*, but also quite specifically (analytically, poetically, philosophically) explored through his published books, public presentations and other writings. Etienne Noiseaux's words begin to encapsulate for us the significance of Farabet's illuminations here, and his undertaking through the extended "*recherches*" of the *ACR* over 30 years: "René Farabet talks about radio and sounds in a unique way. His language, rich in imagery and poetry, is probably the only way we can render the complexity of the radiophonic expression" (Phonurgia Nova 2018).

Emphasis on documentary creation, sculpting of primary field recordings, "real-fiction"

Here I would like to stress the importance of portable magnetic tape recorder improvements to sites such as this one, especially when we try to understand this *documentaire de création* project/form as possibly one of the *ACR*'s greatest achievements. Increasingly sophisticated machines (like the Nagra, first used in Radio France, 1955) allowed high fidelity sound scenes to be captured in the field, eventually also in stereo. These *en plein air* recordings would progressively become possible *as longer durations* too – and so potentially constituting auditory equivalents of filmic 'scenes', and especially when placed in the many new "radiophonic films" and montage works, as these long form essays came to be categorised (although primarily by *ACR* authors). We can firstly cite an early but 'totemic' *ACR* exemplar, a "mythic" radiophonic documentary (France Culture 2016) *Good Morning Vietnam,* realised/directed by Janine Antoine, but composed/edited/montaged from extensive recordings made during the Vietnam war by photographer journalist Claude Johner (Associated Press, Gamma, New York Times), and composed/arranged, and edited after he had discovered the portable tape recorder

and the revelatory microphone (producer, Alain Trutat).[12] This "'totem of a documentary' that has marked the history of radio in France" (France Culture 2016), was pure actuality in long scenes recorded on the move, montaged in sections, produced from more than 50 hours of the war photographer's wandering recordings (*ACR* broadcast January 16, 1972).[13]

Barely known outside France, but at least recognised there in the history of national radio and audio documentary, we also encounter *ACR* team member, maker of *documentaire de création* and sound engineer, Yann Paranthoën, who created an audio homage to the developer of the machine he believed was the catalyst for this new era of radio, and which in its high fidelity and stereo emanations would give to radio he imagined a new identity and future. In Paranthoën's 1987 program for the *ACR*, "On Nagra: il enregistera" [Nagra: I will record], he salutes Stefan Kudelski and his 1951 invention of the first portable professional quality reel-to-reel recorder, writing provocatively: "Radio before the Nagra: was it really radio?"[14] The Nagra, in addition to the 16mm portable movie camera, had already revolutionised documentary cinema in France, and now it was giving a new life to radio, especially cultural radio. Yet, let us not get too carried away by this horizon of possibilities coming with the Nagra,[15] or with the role of magnetic tape and the Nagra in the development of radio's expressive documentary forms – perhaps an artform as much as mediatic communication and representation. This 'new wave' in sound documentary radio has largely been missed by most radio and media historians, at least outside France. I have addressed this development and lack in numerous writings (e.g., Madsen 2005; 2010).

These specialised sites for radiophonic expression and experiment would be known and recognised then not only for fictional or electronic/musical work. The *ACR* embraced the documentary imagination as I have dubbed it, and this atelier's achievement can be more amply appreciated when considered in relation to the 'nonfiction' realm I would argue: this also demonstrates how the radio arts are not to be confined to one set of forms, genres or formal experiments (see also Madsen 2025). Thus, the sound/actuality document recorded and woven into/through the audio-visionary documentary imagination (developing particularly from the late 1960s in France) might become something other here – as the microphone is used 'to write': it is a *micro-stylo* or mi-

12 Described also evocatively by Pascal Mouneyres for Syntone, September 30, 2016 after the repeat historic broadcast on France Culture, 2016. https://syntone.fr/good-morning-vietnam-le-souffle-heurte-de-lapocalypse/

13 See also Antoine in Madsen, 2017; and the Folkways Records album of the program, FD 5445, (50 minute version) produced with English language description in 1972, which outlines how the documentary set about "resurrect[ing] the whole atmosphere of the war, the American war machine, robot controlled, cold, metallic, like a science fiction harvesting machine, crushing human life, a peaceful village in the High Plateaux, a school, the laughter of children symbolic of life itself. It is not a matter of a series on anecdotal reportages on the war in Vietnam but of a more generalized reportage on the war itself, with two actors – life and Death – the war machine and the Vietnamese… (Johner, 1972, his notes to the record, Folkways).

14 Originally broadcast on the *Atelier de création radiophonique*, France Culture, August 9, 1987. See also Paranthoën 1993; and Paranthoën et al 1990. *Propos d'un tailleur de sons*. Arles: Phonurgia Nova.

15 The Nagra that could synchronize sound with the frames on a reel of film, The Nagra II, revolutionised documentary movie making in the USA. D. A. Pennebaker for instance, recorded Bob Dylan's 1965 tour using it in his classic *Don't Look Back*, released in 1967.

crophone-pen, drawing on the *camera-stylo* (camera-pen) analogy already proposed by *Cinéma-verité auteurs* and critics at this time (Astruc 1992). When composed and 'cut' – as with film – audio documentary *création* might be so transformed as to become more than document/s, exceeding also the reduction to analogue imprint or residue of 'the real'. A poetics and 'play' of the real is now proposed and achievable in radio through these new or expanded kinds of works that feature or even privilege actuality recordings in their *mise-en-ondes*, and as these sound scenes are spun into *films sonores* or new *films radiophoniques* (Farabet and Mortley use this term often in my interviews with them and in their own writings, e.g. Mortley 1996). The latter term soon becomes a genre descriptor for work completely formed from field recordings (Pivin), although woven with text at times (Mortley 1996; Mortley 2024). Works like José Pivin's *Cameroun Opera* is described thus in the 1987 *ACR* retrospective devoted to Pivin: 'José Pivin-Ecoutes', broadcast in the October 4, 1987.[16]

The new *metteurs-en-ondes* working as part of the *ACR* take up these ideas and a comparable sensibility and approach revealed in the work of the new wave *cinéastes* whose work is much better known today, indeed continues to be quite famous. This is happening in other locations and stations in Europe by the early 1980s, also with the work of the *Atelier* a strong influence. Trutat also confirmed to me the significance of this strand of production within the *ACR* many years after its foundation, as he reflected: "Documentary is the most interesting of the radiophonic forms… [*C'est la forme radiophonique le plus intéressante*]… When we talk about the *documentaire* of the *ACR*… it's like the film documentarists, Joris Ivens, Flaherty, Chris Marker, Jean Rouch, Morin, Dziga Vertov – yes, we made an *Atelier* on him" (Trutat in Madsen 2002). Trutat also stresses how the "Nagra was fundamental. It changed everything… After the Nagra there was the possibility to multiply further the possibilities of radio" (Ibid.). In a notebook I still have, Trutat wrote a list of *auteurs* he considered "most important" in this documentary field, and they were all connected to the *ACR*: Janine Antoine, René Farabet, Yann Paranthoën, George Aperghis and Kaye Mortley. And also sound engineer, Michel Creis. As Mortley notices, "no one works alone especially not in the French studio context" (Mortley, in Madsen, 2017). Trutat advances still more creator names from beyond France (figures such as Georgio Pressburger from the Milan RAI studios) and others experimenting elsewhere in this *nouvelle vague* era.

These makers (including Trutat himself) of diverse and signature works have all made important and memorable pieces of the documentary imagination. Particularly in the European context of public and state broadcasting, this program would receive regular and sustained critical acclaim. Amongst international radio makers it won admirers; it also received many awards, particularly in the documentary-feature category. Its core producers (Farabet, Yann Paranthoën, Janine Antoine, later the Australian Kaye Mortley, also Andrew Orr) and the programs originating here won accolades and prizes, but also influenced a number of broadcasters to establish a new set of ateliers, 'labs',

16 Released as a vinyl recording: Ocora, 1984.

studios and 'rooms' modelled on or inspired by the *ACR*. These were founded mainly from the 1970s and into the 1980s (at the ABC, Australia for example these spaces commenced with Sunday Night Radio 2 in 1972–1973 and ended with *The Listening Room* and *Radio Eye*; in Finland there was the *RadioAtelier*, and the equally sophisticated documentary work of a Barbro Holmberg or Harry Huhtamaki). The *ACR* program (and those modelled on it) commissioned a wide variety of writers, composers, sculptors, film makers and artists of all kinds from within and outside France, working collaboratively or alone to engender and adapt works into French, or to be part of co-productions with other national broadcasters, the co-funding creating a vibrant ecology as larger scale projects (sometimes in multiple languages) became possible. Authors including Michel Butor, Marguerite Duras, Nathalie Sarraute, plus many composers and Fluxus artists, were invited to make for this space; one of the most significant of these in my view was George Perec, and this connected also with the *ACR*'s yearly collaboration with the Festival d'Avignon (see Autissier and Laurentin 2013). The *Atelier* was represented in 5 DAT tapes given to Madsen by Farabet, 2004. The DAT tapes offer a selection of original work produced for *ACR* and the Festival of Avignon.

The *ACR*'s radio art achievement is likely to be therefore more graspable as a result of this international influence and in formal terms because of the close attention to the *band* (tape) imprinted with its magnetic reality, and turned towards *auteur* documentary, even filmic modes of creation, montage and essaying. These kinds of audio documentary are of the kind that Farabet, Trutat, Mortley, and many others would reference as "reality-fiction" or "realfiction" (Farabet 1981; Mortley 1981)[17] and their makers would also go on to win many awards for works of this kind they made – drawing, channelling, illuminating with the microphone (see Madsen 2023). The *ACR*'s approach to *documentaire de création* draws on varying and international traditions and strands of thought and making here however, but poses its own originality as it enlarged the space for radio and audio expression through the illuminations offered in its finely calibrated and ultimately poetic *mixages* between reality and fiction, complexifying and extending our conceptions of the radio space as a fertile and rich site for a new art.

While the *ACR*'s role would be disruptive then – overturning older formats and breaking free of the radio 'grid' that kept fiction from nonfiction, radio drama from features and documentary, and lastly poetry from journalistic forms, the journey would rarely be jarring (or not for long) as the listener is also to be courted through story, voicing and the weaving of sound scenes: there is a beauty to be encountered in the sounds and voices, in these extended *paysages* (landscapes) and knitting of the strands (to "*tricoter*" and to draw on rhapsodic weavings) in these poetic but also (just beneath the

17 As to the sounding landscape captured by our microphones, Farabet writes it is not a given, as reality, more… it becomes for him "a fantastic universe… and there are strategies that are musical and strategies that are dramatic". Translated from "*un univers fantastique en proie a la disproportion...un espace strie, dont la topographie fausse determine: une strategie musicale de l'ecoute et également, une strategie dramatique de l'ecoute: ce milieu sonore est a la fois permanent et instable. A chaque instant, un evenement peut eclater, et nous sommes livres a une sorte de jeu d'attente. Nous sommes dans un univers diegetique, peut-etre gouverne par un maitre du suspense, par un dieu de la fiction*" (Farabet 1981, 76).

surface) political and fundamentally ethically-reflexive provocations (Farabet, 2003 in Madsen 2001–2004). In this space opened up for listening and the new listener, the *ACR* perhaps has heard the ideas of philosopher Gaston Bachelard who proposed a certain kind of radio as being therapeutic not long after the Second World War. He was invited by the radio institution in 1949 to reflect on this in a period of rebuilding and re-imagining when it was thought this could not easily happen (in France, was poetry possible after Vichy, after the Shoah?). This invoking of Bachelard (and it is there in Farabet's own developing philosophy of the radio in his writings) allows me to now speak briefly of the possible impact of such thought on the ACR and perhaps also to the resonances I discovered still persisting in the archives and through these preliminary reflections.[18]

Bachelardienne reverie and the radio: the *ACR*'s resounding

In 1951 Gaston Bachelard wrote one small essay on the radio: "Rêverie et Radio" (in Bachelard, 1970). The renowned French philosopher asked rhetorical questions about the future of radio: was it possible that a kind of radio space-time be devoted to the nurture of the unconscious? Could the prevailing codes of the time (which seemed to divide radio into information, education, reality, and entertainment) be altered just a little to accommodate another kind of radio – something compositional and imaginative (in its most concrete sense) as well as therapeutic? Was there the space to develop a radio which, "on each wave", would touch and caress this "inner space of the listener" using what Bachelard had called the "principle of reverie"? (Bachelard 1951, 218). For Bachelard, radio was the ideal medium in which the possibility of an opening and a refuge might be offered to a listener – simultaneously an intense and easeful listening revealing "the essence of intimate reverie" (Ibid., 219). For Bachelard, this radio of sounds "well made" might return the *auditeur* to something like a "nocturnal" (Ibid., 223) world of their own making as much as to a daylight world in which words and sounds are created, captured and manipulated by a radio producer or writer. In the Bachelardian "proposition" to the radio, the radio engineer would give way to a new type of engineer, a "psychic engineer" (Ibid., 218), who could speak "to the inner psyche in the manner of the poet". "[T]he listener might hear but no longer strain too much to listen." (All quotes in: ibid., 221). Images of the house, the cave, an attic, the night, are evoked in this idea of intimate reverie, and these ideas were to be resounded in the *Atelier* of twenty years later. As Farabet explains:

> One doesn't listen to this kind of radio as if one were dreaming, but to recall Bachelard; it's more like reverie. Unlike the dreamer, however, this radio listener has some conscious control over the images; he has the possibility of ferrying a little his own boat (Farabet in Madsen 2001–2004).

18 In the program (*Je suis venu pour écouter*, July 1, 1979) of the *ACR*, Farabet included the words of Bachelard from his 1951 essay, "Rêverie et Radio" (originally broadcast in the Club D'Essai in 1948).

In this space dedicated to sustaining what Farabet and others describe as a "compositional listening", the ear is given its freedom to drift and (in Bachelard's terms) an imaginative "constellating power" (Bachelard 1943, 227).[19] This is a form of radio (as Bachelard suggested) able to produce mental images. The radio "film" not only unwinds, moving past us like film, it also allows the listener "to see" mental images which open onto a perhaps invisible yet resonant interior that might also be felt and experienced. These images while "less exact perhaps…remain images nevertheless – at the interior of the sounds. At the interior of the voices there is this circulation of images, and also this constant continuity, which does not stop. Even the silence continues – always this unwinding" (Farabet in Madsen 2002–2004).

The *ACR*'s central proposition has always been one fundamentally tied to opening up the space of listening and auditory experience for a real person, not a formal, academic or overly aesthetic delineation or framing at all, even as an aesthetical stance, or a response to sounds, the spaces in between, the silences…also shapes what we ultimately hear. This listening is considered compositional (for the listener and the producer) and for the *ACR* must be open to the "chance encounter," and that "vagabond space" Farabet continued to promote, even after he had left the *Atelier* long behind him. If we begin to dig into this past, unearth and reconnect the writings in sound connected to this project, or the works and ideas produced through this atelier as I have commenced to do here, we are likely to encounter an expanded concept of the radiophonic imaginary and its as yet unfulfilled, still latent audio-visionary potential. This "research" and these *essais* furthermore speak to the new audio media ecology today (radio, podcast and beyond), again to provoke or remind us that the "radiophonic imaginary" is detectable in these places too, and therefore far from silenced or exhausted (Madsen 2023). Re-encountering the *ACR* today (traces are accessible on many sites, archives and works) is aimed at acquainting reader-listeners with this extraordinary output and body of sustained creation which still reaches into a host of sites around the world and the radiophonic memory.[20] This encounter has also tried to convey the sense of beauty of these (it seems) always evanescent gestures, and the sophisticated propositions made through the audio-visionary microphone, opened as it was here, to the world and to the imagination.

19 In *L'Air et les Songes* (Librairie José Corti, Paris, 1943) Bachelard refers us to the universe as it is poetically apprehended by human culture. The imagination is a primary force, says Bachelard (1943, 229). The constellations – purely figures of an imaginary consciousness with no scientific truth – nevertheless possess or emit a primary "constellating power" – which opens the dreamer still further to these dark spaces "illuminated by the imaginary which has produced them in the first place." [Le] rêve constellant tire des lignes imaginaires'. (227) and '[L]a nuit étoilé est ma constellation. Elle me donne la conscience de mon pouvoir constellant.' (229)

20 Listen to Farabet's *Words from Inside (St Maur Prison): An exploration of listening and liberty* (along with English translation) on Radio Atlas: https://www.radioatlas.org/words-from-inside-st-maur-prison/.

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PROPOSITIONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE RADIO AS *ATELIER*: IMAGINING A NEW RADIO AND A NEW LISTENER IN THE LIFE OF THE *ATELIER DE CRÉATION RADIOPHONIQUE* OF RADIO FRANCE (summary)

This article offers an encounter with the experiments and ideas that emerged from one of twentieth century radio's great artistic and exploratory sites, the *Atelier de création radiophonique* (*ACR*) of Radio France. This weekly program was launched within the French broadcasting outlet, France Culture, under the direction of Alain Trutat in 1969. Its brief at the time was to imagine and broadcast new forms of radio, cross boundaries in craft and genre, and re-invent or create new dialogues with radio's older forms. In doing this it should, as the figure of the artist's atelier suggests, offer "a space where one might be invited to try out ideas freely," and "see things in the process of being made" (René Farabet interviewed by the author, 2003). This *Atelier* was envisaged from its outset as a site dedicated to experiment and research. According to the proposal, drafted in 1968 by Trutat and Jean Tardieu (poet and director of France Culture), a new space was required which might continue the (broken) tradition of experimentation established with the earlier Studio d'Essai and Club d'Essai (1942–1960) from which Pierre Schaeffer developed his *musique concrète*. Such a program was deemed important in terms of attracting new talent and younger audiences to the radio at a time when television was taking up much of the limelight. This program, wrote Tardieu and Trutat in their proposal, should comprise "original radiophonic works, works of fiction or music" but should also aim to create something more: "a radiophonic event" with "broadcasts dealing in depth with the key subjects of our time" (1968). A direct response to the upheavals of May 1968 in France, this unusual program in the heart of the public institution would be granted almost three hours of time for its multiple '*essais*', engaging a huge number of artists from France and beyond as it evolved. Unlike other radio programs of this same era, this was a show of the "*longue durée*", gifted with three hours of time to propose to the listener "sinuous journeys" that mixed worlds, forms and formats, allowing for a "*vagabondage*" as Farabet described his approach (all quotes, Ibid.). By the early 1970s this show was attracting interest internationally,

achieving critical acclaim. Yet, impacts and legacies of the program, as suggested by the author, have received insufficient attention (particularly beyond France) even as other broadcasters from Australia to Finland were inspired to create new kinds of work or establish a set of ateliers modelled strongly on the *ACR*. Re-encountering this site today in its historical context acquaints readers with the program's sustained creation over more than 30 years under the leadership of Farabet and Trutat, while also introducing a sense of the sophistication of its provocations and gestures as producers sought to explore new ways of making, or new radiophonic forms. A new idea of the listener, the radio documentary and *film sonore* was proposed in this "*chantier*" (as Farabet described this theatre-like, yet also film-like space: for him this was a "building site"). Drawing on the author's primary research embedded in a wider study of the radiophonic imagination and making a case for the importance of oral history work like this which preserves the trajectories, knowledges and practices of some of radio's leading pioneers and audio-visionaries, this article offers an overview of the *ACR*, and contextualisation. Digging into this rich site within media and art history we discover a neglected but connected part of the wider international history of the medium. We can also register an expanded concept of the radio and the listener, as listeners – as if for the first time – are invited in as co-creators by the *Atelier*'s producer-artists.

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SWISS RADIOPHONIC ART AND COMMISSIONED COMPOSITIONS BY THE SWISS BROADCASTING CORPORATION (SRG SSR) AT THE *PRIX ITALIA*

KEYWORDS
radiophonic art; musical work; electroacoustic music; auditory arts; Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR); promotion of music; Rai – Radiotelevisione italiana; *Prix Italia*; radio competition; radio archive.

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ABSTRACT
Since its establishment as a public broadcaster in 1931, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) has been tasked with producing and disseminating information and entertainment programmes. Its cultural remit has also encompassed the promotion of culture, including music. One form of this promotion has been the distribution of composition commissions for different occasions. The inventory of these works, which is being compiled as part of the project "Music promotion over the airwaves. The SRG's commissions of Classical Music and their Effects on Musical Life in Switzerland (1931–2021)" at Zurich University of the Arts, also includes a few pieces that SRG SSR submitted to the international competition *Prix Italia*. A systematic search in the *Prix Italia* archives brought up 221 works of Swiss radiophonic art that can be considered its representative selection. This contribution takes the opportunity to examine the collection of productions submitted to the competition by SRG SSR, offering a unique overview of Swiss radiophonic art and exploring its characteristics and development in the course of the entire competition. On the other hand, a look behind the scenes of the *Prix Italia* offers an impression of what has been understood as radiophonic art in the international European radio community and how it has transformed over the last 75 years of the radio history.

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Introduction

The scope and character of radiophonic art have been discussed repeatedly in disciplines at the intersection of the auditory arts and technology, such as musicology, sound, media or radio studies. However, there is neither consensus on the use of the terms 'radiophonic art', 'radio art', 'experimental radio' or 'avant-garde radio', nor on what specific art form exactly they refer to. The search for the roots of radiophonic art usually leads to the first theoretical and practical approaches to merging auditory arts and technology. This indicates a very broad theoretical and methodological approach and includes necessarily developments in the field of music (cf. Knilli 1961, 9ff.; Cory and Haggh 1981; Kahn and Whitehead 1992; Dack 1994; Hagelüken 2008). However, there seems to be a certain consensus in the research that the definition of radiophonic art has been changing throughout the historical phases of media developments (Hall 2015). Consequently, there is no single definitive answer to the question of what radiophonic art is. Rather, a situational approach using case studies can be applied, examining what has been considered radiophonic art and in which contexts. In the following, I will approach this question on the example of Swiss radio and its contributions to the international competition *Prix Italia*. I will examine what was considered radiophonic art within the specific framework of this radio competition and I will trace its transformations due to technological, social and political developments.

The Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR)[1] has commissioned compositions from composers since its establishment in 1931. The production and promotion of contemporary music, alongside its dissemination, has been part of SRG SSR's cultural remit as a public broadcaster. Swiss broadcasting is divided into four language regions, which operate with a high degree of autonomy. As a result, historical developments in the four language regions have been very different.[2] While in the German-speaking part there have been hardly any commissions since the late 1980s, commissioning continued in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland until the 2020s. Within the corpus of the confirmed commissions of the SRG SSR,[3] which currently comprises around 565 pieces, nearly one-third are works of radiophonic art. The most represented genres are music for radio plays, radio operas, radio operettas, radio pageants and jingles. Among these are 16 works of radiophonic art that were written explicitly for the international competition *Prix Italia*.

1 The name of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation in the four official languages in Switzerland is: German: *Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft* (SRG); French: *Société suisse de radiodiffusion et télévision* (SSR); Italian: *Società svizzera di radiotelevisione* (SSR); Romansh: *Societad svizra da radio e televisiun* (SSR)). In the following, the official abbreviation "SRG SSR" is used.

2 The regional radio and television stations operate as corporate units of SRG SSR: *Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen* (SRF), *Radio Télévision Suisse* (RTS), *Radiotelevisione Svizzera* (RSI) and *Radiotelevisiun Svizra Rumantsch*a (RTR). Until the end of 2011, the German- and Romansh-speaking radio formed a single entity *Radio der deutschen und rätoromanischen Schweiz* (DRS).

3 This collection of works from recent history of Swiss new music is the subject of the research project at Zurich University of the Arts entitled "Music promotion over the airwaves. The SRG's commissions of Classical Music and their Effects on Musical Life in Switzerland (1931–2021)", https://www.zhdk.ch/en/researchproject/musikfoerderung-ueber-den-aether-592181 [29.09.2025].

The competition was founded in 1948 and is hosted by the Italian broadcaster *Rai – Radiotelevisione italiana*. The submitted works were divided into the categories *Music* and *Drama* which were defined as "musical works with text" and "literary or dramatic works with or without music". Therefore, both categories were relevant for radiophonic works containing music. The works for the *Prix Italia* competition therefore oscillate between the two areas of music and radiophonic art. Both forms appear on the radio in the electroacoustic milieu and both are produced by electroacoustic means. Instrumental and vocal music, recorded or synthetic sounds as well as speech, noises or silence are equally considered as creative elements for composition.[4]

The assignment of composition commissions at the Swiss Radio was anything but systematic. No clear internal strategy for commissions is discernible. Whether a composer got a commission or not seems to have depended rather on the individual responsible persons, the heads of the music departments, and their interests and personal networks. Documentation of this commissioning activity also varies greatly from studio to studio. Thus, only a small part of the Swiss works submitted to the *Prix Italia* could be identified as commissions so far. Systematic research in the *Prix Italia Archive* of *Rai – Radiotelevisione italiana* (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 2025) has resulted in the compilation of 221 radiophonic works (including the 16 already known), partly to be incorporated into the existing inventory of SRG SSR music commissions (Sandmeier 2022). In order to determine their competition entries, the SRG organised its own competition, the *Prix Suisse*. The winning works received a prize and were entered in the *Prix Italia* on behalf of SRG SSR. Therefore, these works represent a special type of composition commissions by the SRG SSR. For many years the awarding of prizes for radio works has been part of the SRG's efforts to promote radiophonic art and music.

The productions by the Swiss Radio that took part in the *Prix Italia* can be regarded as the most representative works of Swiss radiophonic art. Based on these productions, I will shed light on what was, within the framework of the *Prix Italia*, considered radiophonic art in different time periods and where the intersections with music were drawn. Over the decades, radiophonic art has changed significantly, influenced by technological, social, political and aesthetic transformations. These changes can be observed not only among the submitted works by the Swiss radio, but also in the way the competition itself has been modified.

As this study focuses on a classification and an overview of the newly researched archive material, it methodologically primarily follows a historical-archival approach. This methodology limits the contextualisation and an in-depth discussion in a broader theoretical framework of musicology, sound and media studies or radio research to some extent. However, this study provides a sound basis for such further examinations.

4 The close connection of both forms has become particularly evident in the 1950s in the electronic studios at public broadcasting corporations (especially in Paris, Cologne, Milan and London). There, experiments with electroacoustic radio technologies were conducted and new theoretical and aesthetic concepts as well as compositional methods and forms of auditory arts were developed (Eichenberger 2021a).

Before turning to the corpus of the SRG SSR competition entries, I will outline some key milestones and significant transformations in the history of the *Prix Italia* in the first chapter. The second chapter traces the modifications to the definition of radiophonic art within the regulations of the competition, and examines whether and how historical developments have been reflected. In order to understand what was considered radiophonic art at the outset of the competition, the following chapter focuses then on the jury's discussions in assessing the works in the early 1950s regarding their classification. Finally, the last chapter traces the development of Swiss radiophonic art in the competition in the course of its 75 years.

Prix Italia – Establishment and development of a radio competition

The international competition *Prix Italia* was founded in September 1948 by fourteen radio corporations during a conference on the Italian island of Capri. It was intended to establish a platform that would stimulate the creation of works of words and sound specifically written for radio and to promote their dissemination. The conference outlined the starting point of this initiative, discussing the potential but also the limitations of radio in relation to artistic production: The still relatively new medium radio had not only the advantage of bringing existing art forms to a broad audience, but also provided a unique platform and means for creating entirely new art forms. However, radio was unattractive as a source of income for writers or composers: revenue-generating repetitions as in concerts or theatre were not deemed feasible or acceptable for radio programmes (*Radiocorriere* 1948a, 3f.).

The competition's generous award fund with at least 20,000 Swiss francs[5] for the first prize was intended to counteract these disadvantages: On the one hand, authors were to be adequately remunerated for their creative work; on the other hand, the propagation of these high-quality works within an international network was to be guaranteed. In order to establish such a network and bundle the resources of broadcasters in the so-called European zone (Europe, North Africa and the Middle East), the conference in Capri was convened and the competition was subsequently launched (cf. *Radiocorriere* 1948a; *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 1948). In the introduction to the 1950 annual report, Sir Ian Jacob, then President of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), reported on the first successes: "It has already made known internationally a number of radio works that would otherwise have remained confined to their national transmitter systems" (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950b, 8). At the 1952 general meeting, a statistical report was presented listing the number of broadcasts of the award-winning works and those mentioned by the jury during the first three years of the competition. Some works reached up to 11 broadcasts (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1952b, Appendix No. 4).

5 The award was indeed stated in Swiss francs and not in Italian lire.

The regulations adopted in 1948 allowed submissions of musical or musical-literary works that were explicitly "created for the microphone" and took into account the "requirements and special possibilities of the radio". These were to be sent in as recordings of the original version together with the score and translations of the text into French and English[6] as well as explanatory notes. The jury evaluated the works not only on the basis of a simple reading of the scripts or scores, but primarily on the basis of the listening experience (cf. Radiocorriere 1948b, 8).

Over time, the competition developed into a platform for the newest international radio and, soon afterwards, television productions, keeping pace with the changing times by reflecting current political, economic and cultural events as well as technological progress: Thus, in 1957, the *Prix Italia* established a television competition and created a new radio category for stereophonic works in 1962. The latter was abolished in 1971 as stereophony had become a broadcasting standard. In 1982, satellite television became a topic at the first edition of the annual conference, whereas in 1998, the discussions had moved on to "[t]he creative power of broadcasters in the new digital environment". Subsequently, the web competition was introduced in 2000 (a special prize for web products has been awarded since 1998.) Already in 2002, the topic of intermediality, particularly "cross-media", was brought up, followed by "trans-media" in 2014 and "cross-platform" in 2018. The *Prix Italia* has reflected ongoing global events by the situation-based awarding of special prizes for current topics. In 1991, for example, the theme of the annual conference was "East/West: the new frontier of television" reflecting the fall of the Berlin Wall and the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union. Also in 1991, a special prize for coverage of the Gulf War was awarded to CNN and BBC World. From 2001 to 2008 a special prize "Communication for Life" was awarded for television programmes dealing with the economic, social and cultural effects of war, emergencies, intolerance and repression (cf. Polognieri 2025, 313–20). These awards indicate a heightened awareness of high-quality journalism as well as of current world events within *Prix Italia*.

What did these transformations mean for radiophonic art? How did it position itself in the context of these developments of the competition? The following section traces the changes in the definition for the works submitted to the competition in the radio category over the course of its 75-year history and highlights the most important milestones.

Modifications to the definition of admissible works for *Prix Italia*

From a structural point of view, not many changes can be observed in the radio section of the competition. In 1953, the three categories *Music*, *Drama* and *Documen-*

6 The official language of the competition was French. Since 1949, the annual reports have been published in French, while the minutes of the jury meetings and the general assembly meetings have been published alternately in Italian and French. Only from 1954 onwards a bilingual publication of the minutes – in French and English – has been established.

tary were established and have remained in use until today. However, over time, the definitions of admissible works have undergone some modifications. In the first few years, the wording was discussed and refined several times. These discussions provide insights into the contemporary understanding of radiophonic art and its relationship to music. The initial conference in Capri in 1948 established a very simple and open definition of the works eligible for competition: "un ouvrage musical ou musico-littéraire". Interestingly, purely literary works were not considered for the competition at the first stage. The correspondent for the Swiss *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* mentioned that these might be included at a later stage (cf. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 1948). Already a year later, a more specific definition was provided, allowing literary works with or without music to be submitted. Under article 3 of the regulations, radio works were divided into the following two categories: "1°) une œuvre essentiellement musicale avec ou sans texte; 2°) une œuvre essentiellement littéraire ou dramatique avec ou sans musique"[7] (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1949, cf. minutes of the general assembly on 29 September 1949, 4). It was also decided that the prize would be awarded to musical works in even years and to literary or dramatic works in odd years. This practice continued only until 1953. Afterwards, both prizes were awarded annually. At the general meetings in 1951 and 1952, article 3 was discussed extensively. The debates centred on the definition of musical works and whether they should be admitted either with or without text, or only with text. Discussions also focused on the adjective "essentiellement". According to René Dovaz, director of *Radio Genève* and delegate of SRG SSR at the jury meetings, both the wording "essentially musical work" and, a year later, the new wording "musical work with text" led to some challenges for the jury. In the second case, works were allegedly sent in although it was obvious that the text elements had been artificially inserted into an otherwise purely musical score (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1952b, cf. minutes of the general assembly on 6 October 1952, 11). Despite these experiences, the wording "un'opera musicale con testo" and "un'opera letteraria o drammatica con o senza musica"[8] was adopted in 1952. Radiophonic works belonging to these two categories had to meet certain requirements, which were specified in the second part of the definition:

> Tali opere devono essere create appositamente per la radiodiffusione ed avere un carattere tale per cui questo mezzo di espressione convenga loro meglio di ogni altro. Esse devono presentare delle qualità estetiche notevoli e contenere degli elementi che perfezionino e arricchiscano l'esperienza radiofonica (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1952b, cf. Appendix 6, 1).[9]

7 Translation: 1) a work that is essentially musical, with or without text; 2) a work that is essentially literary or dramatic, with or without music.
8 Translation: a musical work with text; a literary or dramatic work with or without music.
9 Translation: Such works must be created specifically for radio broadcasting and be of such a nature that this medium is more suitable than any other. They must be of high aesthetic quality and contain elements that enhance and enrich the radio experience.

Further changes only occurred after 1970. Due to recent technical and aesthetic developments, an addition was made in 1971. The wording was changed to "a musical composition with words or new sound elements," adapting it better to electroacoustic means and practices. In 1973, the prize structure was adjusted, so that both the radio and television sections could award three prizes each. The new definition was formulated without any further discussion as follows: for the music category, any "programme in which music plays the dominant part" and, analogously for the drama category, any "programme in which the text plays the dominant part" were eligible (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1973, 162). In effect, this meant a return to the original open definition from 1949: A work or programme "in which music plays the dominant role" is basically an "essentially musical work." This definition was not revised until 2016.

In 1970, an interesting debate concerning the television section emerged: In response to the development of new TV programmes with a popular character and the potential to attract broad audiences, the *Prix Italia* considered dividing the music category into the subcategories "original productions" and "more popular entries." Due to rather negative feedback and concerns expressed by member broadcasters that the award might lose prestige if multiple prizes were awarded or a rather artificial distinction would be drawn between original works and those produced to attract popularity, this change was not implemented (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1970, cf. Appendix 4). Remarkably, a similar discussion arose in the radio section during the 2000s. At the extraordinary general assembly on 31 January 2000 in Naples, it was reported that "documentaries on music and artistic performance of music found themselves competing against each other, to the embarrassment of the jury which was forced to select one prize for two such different genres" (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 2000, cf. Minutes of the extraordinary general assembly of the Prix Italia (Naples 31. January 2000), 2). In 2002, the music category in the radio section was indeed divided into the subcategories "composed work" and "work on music" – the latter referring to productions for a broader audience, as the wording of this category from 2015 confirms: "programmes about any kind of music attracting a broader audience" (cf. for example Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 2015, 40). These sub-categories were discontinued in 2016 and since then, there has been again only one single music category, the definition of which explicitly includes both directions:

> Music-composed works (programmes specifically composed and recorded for radio, which stand out for their creativity and sound exploration) and/or programmes (or part of a programme) about any kind of music attracting a broader audience. The prize is awarded to the best programme which intentionally and creatively promotes the spreading of musical culture, regardless of genre (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 2016, 4).

As will be discussed later, it is very possible that this division has had a significant influence on the type of productions that have been submitted to the music category

by the SRG SSR from that point onwards. The second part of the definition, outlining the criteria, has also undergone significant changes compared to the version that had been in force since 1952. The focus was no longer on works created specifically for radio that should enhance and enrich the radio experience and demonstrate high aesthetic quality. The new definition focussed mainly on programmes contributing to the dissemination of music culture in general. This definition has remained in force to this day. The last modification in the Radio section was made in 2023, when it was renamed into *Radio & Podcast*.

The modifications in the definition of the admissible radiophonic works in the early stages of the competition were mainly a result of challenges encountered by the jury in assessing the submitted works. In the following, I will take a closer look at the discussions of the jury in the early 1950s, which centred on the definitions in articles 2 and 3 of the regulations: On the one hand, this involved distinguishing which works were considered musical and which literary. On the other hand, it addressed the radio characteristics of the submitted works and evaluating their aesthetic qualities. The examination of these issues and questions emerging from the jury's discussions reveals not only the understanding of radiophonic art at the beginning of the competition by the leading figures in European broadcasting. It sheds light on the developments of this new art at a time when it began to be shaped by the availability of new technical means, in particular the magnetic tape recorder.

Classification of radiophonic art at *Prix Italia* in the 1950s

Extensive discussions arose within the jury regarding the distinction between the two categories *Music* and *Drama*. Within the "musical" editions of the competition held in 1950 and 1952, certain productions were excluded because the jury considered them to be literary rather than musical works. In 1952, Pedro do Prado, delegate of the Portuguese *Emissora Nacional de Radiodifusão*, argued for the exclusion of the Dutch production *The Town Musicians of Bremen* by Jurriaan Andriessen:

> The entry submitted by the Netherlands is undoubtedly a literary work with music; I repeat, undoubtedly. Do you wish to convince yourselves? Make this experiment: listen to the literary part alone. It is a work which begins, continues and has a conclusion. Do the contrary: listen to the music alone. It has no sense. The pieces of music inserted into it are nothing but illustrations of the text. It is a book with illustrations and illustrations have no influence on the status of a literary work. The structure, the skeleton so to speak, is literary and not musical because the music in it is only complementary (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1952a, cf. minutes of the jury on 4 October 1952, 17).

It is questionable whether such straightforward arguments would actually be helpful in classifying works using speech, music, sounds, noise and silence as equally important compositional elements. It is likely that numerous literary or dramatic works

of an abstract nature would also fail Prado's "experiment". There were also less conservative voices in the jury when it came to assessing the literary or musical character of the works. Another example is the work *Le briquet* by the Finnish composer Nils-Eric Fougsted in 1950. It was also put on the list for elimination because of its allegedly literary character. Jouko Tolonen, musical director of the Finnish *Oy Yleisradio Ab*, argued for its retention in the "musical" competition:

> L'œuvre ‹Le briquet› a été composée avec des textes parlés, très courts, séparés par des textes musicaux composés expressement pour la Radio. Je pense que l'esprit et la substance de l'œuvre sont parfaitement conformes à l'esprit du règlement. Je pense, donc, qu'elle doit être retenue (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 9th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 14).[10]

Tolonen's argument, emphasising the concept of interplay between text and music and its radiophonic character, did not convince the majority of jury members. *Le briquet* was excluded with a vote of four against two with one abstention (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 8th jury meeting on 15 September 1950, 15).

This leads to a second point intensively discussed by the *Prix Italia* juries in the early 1950s: During both "musical" competitions in 1950 and 1952, the jury debated how exactly to interpret the wording in article 2, "œuvres crées spécialement pour la Radio" (works created especially for radio). In the jury's morning session on 16 September 1950,[11] Pedro do Prado stated that nine of 21 works should be excluded because, for various reasons, they were not "created specifically for radio": Among them were three symphonies which, according to Prado, could certainly be broadcast on the radio, but had not been written for the radio. Three other works did indeed contain text, but their music was unsuitable for radio broadcast. Two works had clearly been written for the theatre, and the music in one work appeared to be much more suited for cinema than for radio (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 9th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 10). In the ensuing discussion, each of these works was briefly discussed to determine whether or not it should remain in the competition. However, no clear arguments were put forward as to what constituted a "specifically radiophonic work". The decisions were based mainly on subjective opinions. At the beginning of the afternoon session, jury vice-president René Dovaz emphasised the responsibility of the jury to adhere to the regulations and to award prizes to works that were better suited to the medium of radio than any other. It was the jury's task to identify the elements in these works that improved and enriched the broadcasting experience. Dovaz also expressed his own difficulties in deciding whether a work that could easily be performed in a concert or theatre could really be considered radio-specific. Unfortunately, his im-

10 Translation: The work *Le briquet* was composed with very short spoken texts separated by musical passages composed specifically for radio. I believe that the spirit and substance of the work are perfectly in line with the spirit of the rules. I therefore believe that it should be accepted.

11 On 16 September 1950, two jury meetings were held, the 9th meeting in the morning at 9:30 a.m. and the 10th meeting in the afternoon at 3:00 p.m.

portant remarks were not followed by any substantive discussion addressing these issues (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 10th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 1).

Similar discussions, based on subjective opinions rather than substantial arguments, can be observed on the example of two Swiss contributions. Among the works mentioned by Prado that had text but, in his opinion, lacked radio-specific music, was Rolf Liebermann's *Streitlied zwischen Leben und Tod*: "Je dirai que ce n'est pas une musique expressement composée pour la Radio",[12] Prado stated (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, c.f. minutes of the 9th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, p 10.). The jury president, René Tellier, musical director of French-speaking programmes at the Belgian *Institut national de radiodiffusion*, summarised his assessment of the piece as follows:

> Pour moi, la musique est bonne, mais un peu lancinante, et trop pleine de philosophie. Je n'y ai trouvé aucune expression directe; elle est renfermée dans un cadre ou deux, ce qui m'a un peu choqué. C'est une grande fresque, du point de vue radiophonique, mais dans laquelle il n'y a pas besoin d'un texte pour expliquer les choses (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 10th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 10).[13]

A contradictory opinion came from Dario De Rosa, delegate of *Ente Radio Trieste*:

> Contrairement à notre Président, j'ai trouvé que dans la musique de Liebermann il n'y a pas trop de philosophie; au contraire le texte est beaucoup plus profond que la musique, et est facilement compréhensible. Du point de vue radiophonique, je trouve qu'il vient à se créer une efficacité extraordinaire dans l'alternative entre le chant de la vie et celui de la mort (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 10th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 10).[14]

After these two contrasting statements, no discussion emerged among the jury members. These quotations illustrate the uncertainty prevailing among the jury members with regard to what was to be considered radiophonic, or which aspects were to be included under this heading at all: Tellier argued in favour of radiophonic expression, pointing to the expressiveness of music, which would work even without text; De Rosa, in turn, emphasised the contrasting nature of the chants of life and death as a radiophonic expression – both actually mentioned different musical aspects and qualities of the work.

12 Translation: I would say that this is not a piece of music composed specifically for radio.
13 Translation: For me, the music is good, but a bit haunting and too philosophical. It is confined to one or two frames, which shocked me a little. It's a grand fresco, from a radio perspective, but one in which there is no need for a text to explain things.
14 Translation: Unlike our President, I found that there is not too much philosophy in Liebermann's music; on the contrary, the text is much deeper than the music and is easily understandable. From a radiophonic point of view, I find that an extraordinary effectiveness is created in the alternation between the song of life and the song of death.

After discussing Liebermann's piece, the jury moved on to the next Swiss work, *Concerto*, an *évocation musicale radiophonique* by Pierre Wissmer. It was unanimously agreed that the musical quality of Wissmer's *Concerto* would not match that of Liebermann's. With the exception of Tellier's brief remark that, although the work was of no particular artistic value, it would certainly attract the attention of listeners, the assessment focused exclusively on musical aspects without taking into account its radiophonic qualities: De Rosa noted that the music was more suited to a film commentary than to a work of purely musical aesthetic value. Per Lindfors, deputy head of the music department at Swedish *Radiotjänst*, even considered it frivolous to consider music such as Wissmer's alongside Liebermann's for a *Prix Italia* award. Interestingly, the explanatory texts that had to be sent in with the works were not discussed by the jury at all. The explanatory text by Wissmer as well as by the script author Pierre Girard clearly showed the thoughts behind the creation of this work for radio. Wissmer and Girard adhered closely to the specified requirements, producing a piece exclusively for radio and essentially musical in nature. It is evident that from the very beginning, starting with the development of the idea, there was close collaboration between the author and the composer: The music carries the narrative along – without it, the story would be incomprehensible. The concept also took into account the listener and their listening situation: Since radio addressed rather small groups or individuals, a more intimate and confidential sound was chosen – in clear contrast to Liebermann's work for large orchestra and choir. Although orchestra and choir are also used in *Concerto*, they are processed using radio techniques (variable microphone positions, the use of echo chambers and filters) to achieve the intended intimate atmosphere (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950b, 75–78). Liebermann's explanatory text, conversely, is a very ordinary description of the work in which radiophonic aspects are not mentioned at all (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950b, 71). The work titles ultimately speak for themselves: whether Liebermann's "dramatic cantata" for soprano, alto, tenor and bass, narrator, mixed choir and orchestra or Wissmer's "évocation musicale radiophonique" were conceived specifically for radio does not require further comment.

The aesthetic qualities of the music and the reputation of the composers apparently played a greater role than the radio qualities in the early years of the *Prix Italia*. The 1950 award-winning work *Ifigenia*, a one-act opera by Italian composer Ildebrando Pizetti, shall serve as an example of these trends. During the jury's long discussion about this work on 16 September 1950, two points of view became apparent: One clearly advocated aesthetic qualities and considered them more important than radiophonic ones. Prado emphasised that a production had to be first and foremost a work of art in order to qualify as a radiophonic work at all:

> [...] j 'aimerais préciser que nous sommes là pour attribuer un prix à une œuvre d'art radiophonique. N'oublions pas, toutefois, qu'avant tout il faut que ce soit une œuvre d'art. C'est là la première des conditions. Nous ne réussirons jamais à arriver à une œuvre d'art radiophonique si ce n'est pas une œuvre d'art. [...] Nous ne sommes pas là

> pour décerner un prix à une œuvre dont la qualité n'est pas très élevée uniquement parce que nous savons qu'elle est très radiophonique (Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana 1950a, cf. minutes of the 10th jury meeting on 16 September 1950, 9).[15]

Especially the last point in Prado's statement seems questionable: conversely, this would have meant that any high quality piece of classical music barely meeting the conditions formulated in article 2 could participate in the *Prix Italia* and be given preference over other radiophonic works. Other jury members praised Pizzetti's work in terms of musical quality, but noted that the work did not in any way improve or enrich the radio experience, as required by the regulations. It was not created in such a way that it was better suited for radio than any other medium, and there would be no difference between playing it on the radio or in a concert hall. In the voting for the *Prix Italia* award, the aesthetic argument in favour of a high-quality musical work of art seems to have convinced most of the jury members.[16]

The musical works with no discernible radiophonic concept that were submitted to the *Prix Italia* at the beginning of the 1950s refer to the tradition of "radiophonic music" developed in the early days of radio during the 1920s. It was music composed specifically for radio, often commissioned works, that took into account the particular sound conditions of radio technology at that time. This was usually achieved by using smaller, adapted instrumentation. However, with the expansion of broadcasting houses and the establishment of radio symphony orchestras, such adaptation was no longer necessary (cf. Kleinen, 19f.). As a result, this concept was outdated by the 1950s, and "radiophonic music" did not differ significantly from that composed for the concert hall.

After outlining the framework of the international radio competition and discussing the fundamental developments and issues at its outset, I will now focus on Swiss radiophonic art, addressing the question of how these developments were reflected in the works submitted by SRG SSR throughout the history of the competition. Since the entire development of the 75 years cannot be presented in detail, an evaluation of the available material will be provided, offering a general overview. After a brief overview of the body of works, I will discuss selected pieces with regard to certain aspects reflecting the transformations of sonority and aesthetics of the Swiss radiophonic art over time.

15 Translation: [...] I would like to point out that we are here to award a prize to a work of radio art. Let us not forget, however, that above all it must be a work of art. That is the primary condition. We will never succeed in obtaining a work of radio art if it is not a work of art. [...] We are not here to award a prize to a work that is not of a particularly outstanding quality just because we know that it is very radiophonic.
16 This conservative tendency at *Prix Italia* was already observed by Angela Ida De Benedictis (cf. De Benedictis 2004, 157).

Swiss radiophonic art at *Prix Italia*

Since the first edition of *Prix Italia* in 1949 until 2025,[17] SRG SSR has submitted 221 works of radio art in the three categories *Music*, *Drama* and *Documentary*. Out of these, 88 feature music in the credits, of which seven use pre-existing compositions, mostly classical music. For the remaining 81 productions, it can be assumed that original music was created or a mixture of newly composed and pre-existing music was used. In addition, there are another 23 works that are credited not as "music" but as "sound" or "sound track".[18] The 81 productions with original music include 42 in the music and 33 in the drama categories, plus two productions in the stereophonic and another two in the documentary categories. As the categorisation was only introduced in 1950, the two works from 1949 do not belong to any category. While productions were entered almost every year during the 1950s and 1960s into the Music category, the number of submissions gradually declined from the mid-1970s onwards and increasingly so in the 1980s. A similar tendency cannot be observed in the drama and documentary categories. In the 1990s and 2000s, only four productions per decade were submitted in the music category, and in the 2010s, only two. In the 2020s, the number of entries increased again, with one production submitted each year. However, since the 2000s, productions in the music category have mainly explored and documented various musical topics, but are not works of art themselves. Between 2002 and 2015, these belonged to the subcategory "work on music". Most of them do not list any credits for music, indicating that no new musical content was created for them.

The productions that list music in the credits feature relatively similar sonorities from the 1950s up to the 1970s.[19] The orchestral sound with voice – often including spoken word – predominates. The music is predominantly classical, but forms of popular music occasionally appear. Genres vary from opera, operetta, early music to folk music, jazz or chanson. Until the early 1960s, works designated for the music or drama categories often tend to be very similar in terms of sound. Therefore, attempts to distinguish between musical and literary works would lead to similarly extended discussions as in the examples mentioned above. Since the 1960s, fewer productions featuring music in the credits have appeared in the drama category. The categories therefore seem to have stabilised and certain criteria for the individual categories appear to have become established at the Swiss radio studios.

17 The winners of this year's edition, under the slogan "Get Real", can be consulted under: https://www.rai.it/prixitalia/news/2025/03/2025-Prix-Italia-Competition-b68f9f9a-716d-4da0-9971-e63e8573314f.html [02.10.2025]. The final event took place in Naples between 20 and 24 October 2025.

18 This does not mean that the other productions do not contain sound or even music. However, as not all recordings of the productions are accessible, the initial classification had to be based on the credits.

19 Due to the available sources and the accessibility of the recordings, only selective statements can be made about the productions. The *Prix Italia* Archive contains SRG SSR radio productions dating from the mid-1970s onwards (with two exceptions from the 1950s). There is a gap between 1993 and 2009, and recordings are only available again from 2010 onwards. The recordings that have not yet been published are marked with the note "multimedia coming soon" – indicating the archive still being in the process of publishing. Some recordings from the 1950s and 1960s could be listened to on PIPnet (PlayInfo Plus), an internal database of SRG SSR.

Although the competition works of the first two decades share a similar sonority, three tendencies can be identified in their conception: There are works, such as Liebermann's dramatic cantata, which do not primarily pursue a radiophonic concept. These include, for example, *Geneviève* (1955), an *opéra comique* by Aloÿs Fornerod, *Pétrarque. Un chant d'amour et d'absence* (1958) by Jean Binet, *Meditazione su una maschera di Amadeo Modigliani* (1961) by Vladimir Vogel, *Die schwarze Spinne* (1964), an opera in one act by Heinrich Sutermeister, and Pierre Wissmer's *Le quatrième mage* (1965), an *oratorio radiophonique*. All five works submitted in the music category are regular orchestral works with choir and soloists. The implementation of a radiophonic concept is confined to smaller instrumentation adapted to the conditions of the radio studio or to the figure of a narrator commenting on the events between musical sections.

A second tendency is represented by works in which the text plays a primary role and the music has more of an illustrative character, serving as introduction, accompaniment, and connecting element or functioning entirely independently in self-contained sections. In these works, text and music interact only marginally. These include, for example, Rokuro Kurachi's *Otohimè, principessa del mare* (1951), *Le petit garçon de l'autobus* (1958) by Julien-François Zbinden, *La Danseuse et le Maréchal* (1961) by Pierre Métral, or Heinrich Sutermeister's *Der gestiefelte Kater* (1954) and *Der Papagei aus Kuba* (1962). The first three productions competed in the drama category, the last two in the music category. They are characterized by long spoken sequences without musical interaction, and conversely, relatively long musical sequences are presented without any interaction with the spoken word. In most cases, both tendencies are characterized by a substantial musical component. Remarkably, the interaction between music and words is not the main focus of their artistic ideas and radiophonic concepts.

In the works of the third tendency, significantly more emphasis is placed on the constitutive potential and interaction between spoken word and music, which often intertwine. Examples for this third group are Hans Haug's radio opera *Die verirrte Taube* (1952), *Microbus 666* (1956), a *fantaisie radiophonique* by Julien-François Zbinden, and the radio ballad *Quatembernacht* by Walter Furrer. Among the productions of this third tendency, the following three are particularly remarkable as examples of a gradual change of sonority: *La nique à Satan* (1956) by Frank Martin, *Léon coeur d'accordéon* (1959), and *Le Passager* (1961), both by Voumard. These pieces achieve their new sound by employing chamber music instrumentation with individual or fewer instruments. New timbres are created through innovative instrumentation with unusual instrumental combinations – such as accordion and harpsichord in *Léon coeur d'accordéon* – as well as through the use of musical styles such as jazz (*Le Passager*) or chanson (*Léon coeur d'accordéon*). Experimental elements such as an imitative interaction between a voice (shrill high male voice) and an instrument (bassoon) in *La nique à Satan* further contribute to this new sonority. These productions which oscillate between music and radio drama, seek to connect these genres and explore their boundaries through experimental approaches, represent important milestones in a gradual process of breaking away from traditional forms.

In the works of the 1950s and 1960s radiophonic effects such as filtering, echo or delay, as well as radio practices such as manipulation of speed or direction, are barely used. The few echo or delay effects are produced to create a spatial ambience. Therefore, these Swiss pieces are not comparable to the experimental and innovative radiophonic works produced in electronic studios at broadcasting corporations in Europe, foremost in Paris by the *Groupe de Recherche de Musique Concrète* (cf. Dack 1994; Héron 2006; Cohen 2015) or by the *BBC Radiophonic Workshop* (cf. Niebur 2010; Eichenberger 2021b) in London in the 1950s. The first production to achieve a new sound quality through electroacoustic means and to clearly stand out from other productions was the winner of the 1962 *Prix Italia* in the music category, *Le damné* by Marcel van Thienen. It features a balanced mix of music, speech, and sounds, and makes use of radiophonic effects and electronic sounds. With a radio voice being used as sound material, the radio itself becomes a subject of self-reflection for the first time.

Further productions involving a more comprehensive use of electroacoustic means appear in the competition only at the end of the 1960s/beginning of the 1970s and still represent unique cases. These are the pieces *Les vêtements de la demoiselle ou "L'entomologiste Naturalisé"* (1968) by Werner Kaegi (music) and Roland Sassi (text) and *Martyrs* (1970) by Jean Derbès (music) and Gérard Lucas (text). Both were produced at *Radio Genève* at the *Centre de Recherches Sonores de la Radio Suisse Romande*, an electronic studio established in 1956 that was primarily dedicated to productions for radio, television, and film, but also produced compositions of electroacoustic music (cf. Muggler and Spoerri 2010). While in the first piece, electroacoustic effects such as echo and filter are used throughout the entire piece to create a dreamlike artificial environment and a somewhat mysterious atmosphere, in *Martyrs* they are used much more extensively and sophisticatedly. The introduction ushers in a completely different sonority compared to the 1950s and 1960s: it begins with voices played backwards and sped up or slowed down. The five parts of the Catholic mass on which the piece is based are presented conceptually and sonically in very different ways; the use of electroacoustic means and the treatment of voices, sounds, and noises as elements of the composition stand in total contrast to the very traditional liturgical form.

In the 1980s, the auditive quality of Swiss productions reached a new level. Sound elements like speech, music, noise, and electronic sounds merged in the electroacoustic milieu to such a degree that the term "sound design" lends itself to describing the processes and the sound results. Prime examples for this new standard are the productions *Ville* (1984) and *Juste une dernière question* (1988), both produced by Gérard Suter. The contrast between *Ville* and Rudolf Kelterborn's *Die schwarze Spinne,* an orchestral work with choir and soloists, is striking. Submitted in the music category in the same year, the two works operate in completely different sound worlds. In *Ville*, Suter uses live music played on electric and acoustic instruments (guitars, bass, percussion instruments) together with recordings from around the city of Geneva and a narrative voice. These elements flow together into a homogeneous soundtrack of impressions and atmospheres. *Juste une dernière question* explores the subject of radio itself: radio voices

and sounds form a substantial part of the sound material. Although Suter's productions of the 1980s opened up a new direction in Swiss radiophonic art, they stayed exceptions in several respects: Firstly, not many Swiss composers seem to have been interested in radiophonic art based on experimental use of electroacoustic techniques. Secondly, during the 1980s and 1990s, significantly fewer Swiss productions were entered into the music category of the competition. And thirdly, most of the productions sent by SRG SSR to the *Prix Italia* did not feature any music in the credits.

Since it is currently impossible to listen to the productions from the 1990s and 2000s due to the unavailability of the recordings, I will now leap into the 2010s. This entails a significant change, not only in terms of sonority, but also in terms of the types of the submitted works: There has been a complete shift of Swiss productions in the music category towards documentaries and discussion programmes about music. With a few exceptions, talking about and reporting on music have replaced artistic forms and no new radiophonic works of musical character are created for the competition. Examples from this new vein of productions include the radio documentation *Moulin Rouge, la leggenda della culla del can-can* (2012) by Marco Kohler, Jean-Guy Coulange's portrait of double bassist Nicolas Crosse from the radio programme series *La sarabande* (2017), and, in the last two years, the programme *Russian Music: To Play or Not to Play?* (2024) by Florence Baeriswyl and Nicole Freudiger from the radio series *Kontext*, as well as *Luci e suoni di Notre Dame tornano a vivere* (2025) a documentary about the destruction and reconstruction of the Notre-Dame cathedral by Alessandro Bertellotti.

All of these entries belong to the subcategory "work on music" introduced in 2002, which, although it has not explicitly existed since 2016, still remains eligible for submissions in the music category. One notable exception among the latest Swiss entries is *Lettre à Irma* (2020) by Benoît Bories and Aurélien Caillaux. They work with sound material from field recordings, acousmatic composition, as well as the voices of an infant and a narrator. The piece reflects on the transformed soundscape of the outside world during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Lettre à Irma* is an original production and would have fitted into the music subcategory "composed" that was abolished in 2016. Like Suter in the 1980s, Bories' and Caillaux' *composition sonore* represents a form of radiophonic or electroacoustic art that to this day remains an exception among Swiss entries for the *Prix Italia*.

Conclusion

The examination of the SRG SSR productions participating in the *Prix Italia* throughout the competition's 75-year history provided insights on two different levels: On the one hand, it was pointed out how the understanding of radiophonic art has transformed in the course of technical, political and cultural developments in international European perspectives, with the competition serving as a reference point. On the other hand, the examination of Swiss radiophonic art and its development in the course

of the competition provided an initial insight into this hitherto rather neglected subject matter.

At the outset of the competition in the early 1950s, considerable disagreements emerged within the jury, with partly very controversial arguments regarding the understanding of radiophonic art. These controversies became particularly apparent within the musical editions of the competition. Some jury members tended to assess only aesthetic qualities of the music rather than considering the radiophonic qualities of the pieces. These controversial views were rooted in two different concepts of radiophonic art with regard to music: On the one hand, it was the concept of "radiophonic music" from the early days of radio developed in the 1920s. It referred to compositions in classical forms created for radio broadcasting but differed from pieces for the concert hall only in smaller adaptions to the specific acoustic conditions of early radio studios and technology. On the other hand, in the electronic studios of radio broadcasters a new experimental electroacoustic art form has been developing alongside electroacoustic music since the late 1940s. The creative use of electroacoustic means and composition with sound material played a primary role in this innovative concept. Although the *Prix Italia*'s definition of radiophonic art was indeed forward-looking insofar as it was intended to promote art that "enriches and expands the radio experience," the jury's discussions revealed a clear preference for conventional "radiophonic music," which met such requirements only to a very limited extent. In other words, the majority of the jury members leaned towards the familiar rather than engaging with the unknown.

The new experimental art form was incorporated into the *Prix Italia* regulations explicitly only in the early 1970s, when the wording "or new sound elements" was added to the definition of admissible musical compositions with words. The adapted definition of 1971 took into account new technological and aesthetic developments of the experimental radiophonic art. The productions submitted by SRG SSR only marginally reflected the newer developments. Until the 1970s (and in some cases even the mid-1980s), Swiss radiophonic art predominantly adhered to the conservative concept of "radiophonic music". Whether a similar tendency could be found in the contributions of other European broadcasters could not be assessed here and would require further comparative research. Throughout the history of the competition, only few Swiss productions employed the technical possibilities of radio in innovative ways or reflectively explored radio as a medium. The kind of auditory art in which all sound elements merge into new experimental forms is largely absent from the radiophonic works selected by the SRG SSR for the music category at the *Prix Italia*.

Furthermore, the analysis of the Swiss submissions has revealed a fundamental shift in focus from highly musical productions to journalistic documentary programmes on various kinds of music: Until the end of the 1980s, these consisted of predominantly musical works without obvious radiophonic concepts. Part of the pieces explored innovative approaches of combining speech and music. This changed completely in the 2010s at the latest. Since then, no new original radiophonic compositions are being produced. Instead, programmes from regular radio production are submitted.

Several reasons can explain this shift towards journalistic nature of the "music" productions. One is the development of *Prix Italia* in the 1990s and the increased interest in journalism, high-quality reporting, and topicality. Another reason can be found in the changes the Swiss broadcasting landscape underwent since the 1980s. A growing number of private competitors forced the introduction of new SRG SSR stations and programmes. Due to these new expenditures, the SRG SSR's cultural programmes found themselves under constant pressure to reduce their costs (Sandmeier and Eichenberger 2025, 256ff.). This mainly affected the music departments, which had to almost completely abandon commissioning new compositions. Nowadays, the SRG SSR awards commissions only on a very sporadic basis – with decreasing frequency.

In general, the high aesthetic standards demanded at the outset of *Prix Italia* no longer seem to play any role today: according to the current regulations, reporting and the dissemination of information have become the main focus. As far as the Swiss entries are concerned, the artistic works of high aesthetic quality that were so important at the beginning of the competition have become rare exceptions. Swiss radiophonic art is not tangible at the *Prix Italia* any more.

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SWISS RADIOPHONIC ART AND COMMISSIONED COMPOSITIONS BY THE SWISS BROADCASTING CORPORATION (SRG SSR) AT THE *PRIX ITALIA* (summary)

This contribution presents the results of a completely new research on Swiss radiophonic art submitted at the international *Prix Italia* competition, covering the entire 75-year history of the competition. The research is based on a compilation of works commissioned by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) to composers since its founding in 1931, in which 16 works that participated in the *Prix Italia* could be identified so far. In a new systematic research in the *Prix Italia* archives, an additional collection of 221 radiophonic works (including the 16 already known) could be registered. This body of works constitutes a representative selection of Swiss radiophonic production over the last 75 years. The examination of the history of the competition and developments in the categories within the radio section on the one hand, and the corpus of Swiss

competition entries on the other, revealed significant aspects of the transformation of radiophonic art in the context of technological, social, political, and cultural changes since the end of the Second World War.

Since both *Prix Italia* categories *Drama* and *Music* considered radiophonic productions with music, the submitted works have the particularity of oscillating between the two fields of music and radiophonic art. At the beginning of the competition in the early 1950s, there was a strong emphasis on aesthetic qualities of a work of art in both music and drama categories. Analysis of the jury minutes from the first editions of the competition revealed uncertainty amongst the jury in assessing the specific radiophonic characteristics of the productions. The Swiss productions from the first three decades of the competition display a very similar sonority. Most of them are orchestral works with spoken word, some of which are without a particular radiophonic concept, while others are innovative and place more emphasis on the constitutive potential and interaction between spoken word and music. In the 1970s, the competition's reflections on technological developments can be observed. Among the Swiss productions, there are also individual cases since the late 1960s that demonstrate a more extensive use of electroacoustic means. These, however, remain exceptions. Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual trend towards a focus on information in reporting within the competition. The last two decades show a remarkable transformation of the radiophonic productions submitted by SRG SSR: hardly any new original musical compositions of radiophonic art have been submitted in the music category, but rather journalistic programmes on various musical topics. The reasons for this shift can be attributed on the one hand, to the development of *Prix Italia* in the 1990s and the increased interest in journalism, on the other hand, to the changes in the broadcasting landscape in general, which has been confronted with permanent cost-cutting measures in the cultural sector of SRG SSR since the 1980s.

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TUNING IN THE VALLEY OF SOUNDS: EXPLORING COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALISM IN RADIOPHONIC ART

KEYWORDS
acoustic ecology, community, documentary radio drama, listening, radiophonic art, soundscape, sound pedagogy.

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ABSTRACT
This study explores collaborative professionalism through a participatory case study focused on sound-based art situated in the Lož Valley, Slovenia. Drawing on sonic studies and sound pedagogy, the project involved school children, elderly citizens, and professionals in sound and music, aiming to map local soundscapes and create a documentary radio drama. Methodologically, the study used ethnographic observations of the process and focus group interviews with participating professionals. It unfolded in two phases: live encounters in school and community settings, followed by online workshops. The inquiry was structured around four guiding questions related to the: (1) specifics of collaborative participatory sound work in Lož Valley; (2) connection between sound, space, identities, and communities; (3) professionals' understanding of collaborative processes; and (4) evolving relationship between children and sound. Findings reveal that children and elderly participants, recognised as experts in their lived experience, enriched the creative process and fostered new intergenerational connections rooted in everyday acoustic environments and technologies. Additionally, the results indicate that listening and sound-making exist on a continuum of participation, where peer collaboration and a relational approach to education enhance children's listening capacities. The study contributes to debates on participatory art, collaborative professionalism, and collective authorship in contemporary education and cultural production.

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Introduction

Technology and digital culture in education are primarily examined through the lens of visual engagement, given that we live in an increasingly visual era. Despite the popularity of podcasts in (music) education (Michelse 2023; Bolden and Nahachewsky 2014) and the growing interest in sound-based pedagogy for children (Tinkle 2015; Recharte 2019), little is known about how curated listening practices in the community support the development of auditory culture, especially among teenagers. Even less attention has been given to the potential of community engagement, intergenerational collaboration, and interdisciplinary approaches in creating new spaces for auditory learning.

This paper examines collaborative professionalism within the international project *B-air Infinity Radio: Creating Sound Art for Babies, Toddlers, and Vulnerable Groups*,[1] which brings together nine European countries under the leadership of Radiotelevision Slovenia (Creative Europe, 10/2020—12/2023). *The Whisper of Memories* [*Šepet spomina*] is part of the B-air project developed by Radiotelevision Slovenia in the last quarter of 2023. It is rooted in Raymond Murray Schafer's soundscape theories (Schafer 1967; 1986; Järviluoma et al. 2009) and research on the relationship between sound, people, and the environment. It started as an experimental participatory project guided by a team of professionals in sound and music, including a radio director, sound artists and engineers, music educators, a writer, and researchers in ethnology, anthropology, community music, and sound pedagogy. The project's goal was to document the sounds of Lož Valley through intergenerational dialogue, culminating in a participatory documentary radiodrama[2] for children and adults as a soundmap. Pedagogically, the project aimed to involve school children (aged 9 to 14) in various aspects of the process: exploring the story and collecting local legends, learning how to record sounds and conduct interviews, interviewing elders, writing a script, and sound design. The research, following the children's encounters, comprised two parts: (1) live interactions in the school library and community (September 2023), and (2) online workshops (October to December 2023).

This research presents the results of ethnographic observations and focus group interviews conducted with members of the professional practice community to gain insights into how visiting artists and children exercised their creative agency in participatory radiophonic art. Four research questions guided this exploration:

1 B-air Project website: https://b-air.infinity.radio/en/ (access: 15. 10. 2025.). B-air project publication (eBook): https://b-air.infinity.radio/documents/200/B-AIR-Art_Infinity_Radio-eBook.pdf (access: 15. 10. 2025.).

2 *The Whisper of Memories* [*Šepet spomina*] participatory documentary radio drama: https://prvi.rtvslo.si/podkast/rio-radijska-igra-za-otroke/173250372/175009826 (access: 15. 10. 2025.).

RQ1: What are the specific features of collaborative participatory soundwork in Lož Valley?
RQ2: How does this project connect identities and communities centered around sound and space?
RQ3: How do professionals perceive the collaborative process in the project, and what kind of impact does it have on them?
RQ4: How does children's engagement and relationship with sound and the listening process change throughout the project?

To gain a richer understanding of the process and relational dynamics between the team, I conducted several focus group interviews and ethnographic observations of the pedagogical processes during both in-site and online work with children. In analysing the specifics of the process, I use the situational knowledge generated by the co-researcher Katarina Juvančič, an ethnologist, anthropologist, singer, and songwriter who investigated soundscapes and sonic sensibilities (Juvančič 2023).

Theoretical Background

For this research, both Katarina Juvančič and I agreed on viewing the soundscape as a musical composition (Schafer 1967; 1986) and as a cultural system (Feld 1982). Pedagogy in sonic arts draws from the 1960s and 1970s, influenced by the pioneering work of Canadian composer and music educator Raymond Murray Schafer and his World Soundscape Project (now known as the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology), as well as from the work of other composers and artists concerned with the ways of listening, such as John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, and Max Neuhaus (Tinkle 2015).

> Enabling an aesthetic approach to everyday ambient sounds may empower the listener to merge life with art and be able to import rich moments of aesthetic experiences from music into their everyday life activities, just by choosing to listen, at will, with musical ears and a listening body (Etmektsoglou 2019, 4).

Fostering soundscape awareness, hearing, and listening is a primary area of discovery, research, and experimentation. Characteristic of sound-based education, this leads to *soundscape competence*. Juvančič (2023, 377) describes it as an "ability to comprehend environmental sounds as meaningful." The ecological approach in child development (Gibson and Pick 2000) perceives children as active and embodied agents in their environment, including the world shaped by their relation to and immersion in sounding objects (Etmektsoglou 2019). This approach challenges traditional methods of music education, expanding it toward a sound-centered approach that uses local soundscapes

as resources and encourages lifelong engagement with the sonic world. Etmektsoglou (2019, 6–8) describes soundscapes in music education as "music compositions", "bridges to others, to the environment and the aesthetics", "agents for life-long intra-personal development and identity formation", and resource for "solitary and communal listening experience".

Dionyssiou (2019, 22–28) proposes a methodology for listening to the acoustic environment based on perceiving sound as: (1) a gesture/movement; (2) a means of sound creation in the classroom; (3) a connection with the environment; and (4) a link to culture. Each of these dimensions of engagement with sound brings its own purpose, so it is useful to think about their combination within the learning contexts. The *sound as movement* guides learners to "higher levels of sound appreciation," while the *sound as a means of sound creation in the classroom* encourages them to adopt a "playful, creative and artistic attitude in relation to the sound" (Dionyssiou 2019, 28). It also enables an interdisciplinary approach and involvement of teachers with different expertise and specialties, as well as involving visiting artists in school projects, just like the one presented in this paper. The *sound as a connection with the environment* can help raise learners' awareness of acoustic ecology, "develop environmental consciousness" and "explore the history and features of a place through its soundscape" (Dionyssiou 2019, 26). Based on acoustemology and Steven Feld's idea of the soundscape as a cultural system, *sound as a cultural product and a link to culture* invites learners "to understand and appreciate the sound as a cultural process, as an expression of the relationships in a community" (e. g. identifying local idioms and dialects, understanding local songs, games and customs, etc.).

The focus of sound pedagogy, as an analytical framework in sonic arts, is on transforming "auditory perception in the everyday life of the subject" (Tinkle 2015, 222). It relies on counter-pedagogies such as Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (Freire 2022), Raymond Murray Schafer's concept of "ear-cleaning" and "ear-opening" (Schafer 1967, 1), and John Cage's idea of "musicalisation of aurality" (Kahn 2001, cited in Tinkle 2015, 222) that involves listening without carrying a cultural backpack filled with codes related to the learning of music in schools. Emerging as an approach that opened "possibilities for broader and more immediate *participation* than in Western art music" (Tinkle 2015, 223), sound pedagogy (often called *critical sound and listening pedagogy*) shows the ways to listen in another way, where sound is perceived as a process which opens and expands forms of active engagement and participation in music. This happens through participatory exercises in a continuum of active listening and active soundmaking (Keylin 2023; Tinkle 2015). Recharte (2019, 78) introduces an "acoustemological, cultural production approach to music education" rooted in generating knowledge through and within the ecology of relations during listening practices in our everyday lives. This aligns with Salomé Voegelin's idea of a *continuum of sound*, as an inclusive approach to listening that transcends genre boundaries, from classical music to experimental sound art. By highlighting the fluid, interwoven nature of sound experiences, she encourages listeners to engage with the "complex continuity" of the sonic

landscape, enhancing awareness of our interconnected roles within it. This approach not only deepens musical and artistic engagement but also invites listeners to consider ethical and ecological issues through sound. The agency of sound and its capacity to build community and solidarity is emphasised in Brandon LaBelle's writings (LaBelle 2018; 2021). While Voegelin (2014; 2018) argues that sound reveals voices and presences excluded by visual hierarchies, thus exposing the fragility of democratic space, LaBelle (2018; 2019; 2021) discusses the connection between justice and audibility, suggesting that listening and acoustics can reconfigure power and social orientation. Acoustic territories and spatialisation in the listening process, seen as a participatory act, serve as a foundation for the invisible, energetic architecture that extends social boundaries, providing an in-between (liminal) experience for listeners (LaBelle 2015). Listening can thus generate social, spatial, and phenomenological auditory knowledge and understanding of reality. Through everyday sensory aspects of listening, participating and tuning into the community, we practice sonic citizenship (Højlund et al. 2024).

Pedagogy in sound arts demands a collaborative culture, especially within community settings. For the Lož Valley project, this meant a collective effort from professionals across various disciplines, united by a shared interest and focus on sound. Unlike traditional professional collaboration, *collaborative professionalism* (Hargreaves and O'Connor 2018a) involves shared values and goals, inquiry, responsibilities, and new partnerships between different institutions and the community. In addition to social responsibility, it adopts a relational, situational, and contextual approach, emphasizing constant reflection. While professional collaborations and learning communities often rely on top-down knowledge transfer, collaborative professionalism adopts a bottom-up approach, with joint efforts based on "solidity and solidarity" (Hargreaves and O'Connor 2018b, 21–22). This approach values both individual professional expertise and the relationship between members equally. The concept of collaborative professionalism has gained popularity, particularly in settings that emphasize teamwork and shared responsibility as essential for addressing the complex challenges in education today. Collaborative professionalism and sound pedagogy in community environments may support the *expansion of professionalism* (Westerlund and Gaunt 2022) to address societal challenges and needs.

In this type of participatory sonic project, it is vital to observe aspects of intergenerational learning and peer learning. *Intergenerational learning* involves educational practices that encourage interaction, collaboration, creative aging, and knowledge-sharing between different generations, typically involving older and younger people. The aim is to foster a mutual learning environment where individuals of various ages can exchange skills, experiences, and perspectives, thus enriching each other's understanding and abilities. In music education, this approach is already showing promise. Although programs for seniors and kindergarten and primary school children, as well as seniors in nursing homes, are more common (e.g., Varvarigou et al. 2013; 2011; David et al. 2018), research on intergenerational interactions between seniors and teenagers remains less frequent. Particularly interesting is the research from music therapy that involves ac-

tive, music-based interventions connecting adolescents and elders with dementia (e.g. Dorris et al. 2022; Hessenberg and Schmid 2013).

Peer learning is closely associated with democratic and inclusive education, although it has often been described as hierarchical because it usually involves roles of being the "helper" and being "helped", based on differences in abilities within the group. Creech, Varvarigou, and Hallam (2020) suggest viewing mixed ability levels not as a problem but as a resource that can enrich peer interactions and guide peer learning toward more collaborative and differentiated approaches. They see relational knowledge, friendship groups, and peer scaffolding as essential components for creating an inspiring learning environment, especially for teenagers. When considering types of peer learning, it's important to distinguish between cooperative and collaborative, as well as symmetrical and asymmetrical peer learning. Cooperative learning is structured by the teacher and followed by intentional peer activities aligned with the teacher's goals (focusing on organization and skill transfer), while collaborative learning refers to "the process of discovery" (Allsup 2003, 33), which fosters interpretation and group creativity. Unlike symmetrical peer learning, asymmetrical peer learning involves learners of different ages and abilities, which can be useful for generating collective peer knowledge (Creech, Varvarigou, and Hallam 2020).

The *Whisper of Memories* Research

The Whisper of Memories was initially developed as an experimental project by a team of sound and music experts. Its goal was to capture the unique soundscape of the Lož Valley in Slovenia through an intergenerational dialogue that eventually became a documentary radio drama. The main theme of the radio drama, our starting point, was a local legend about a boy who dreams of having wings to fly while working in the fields with his family. An eagle appears and lifts him up; they fly together over the valley on various adventures, and eventually, he returns to the land as an old man. Pedagogically, the project aimed to involve school children at different stages of creation and production, equipping them with skills in storytelling and audio techniques. The number of children involved was 14, aged 9 to 15, all of whom conducted interviews with seniors. Two of them (aged 12 and 14) participated in the sound editing workshop, while three of them took part in the scenario writing workshop.[3] The educational process guided children through collecting local legends, learning to conduct and record interviews, writing scripts, and sound design. This educational component was divided into two phases: (1) live sessions with children at school and in the community (September 18th to 23rd, 2023), and (2) online workshops (once a week from October to December

3 Although we initially wanted to be present in all workshops, organizational reasons prevented us from participating in both the sound editing and scenario writing workshops because they were scheduled at the same time. The entire ethical procedure for the research was conducted by Radiotelevision Slovenia and the Elementary School Stari Trg pri Ložu, and the parents' confirmations we got as a team on the first day of our work.

2023). The core team of visiting artists included professionals with diverse expertise in sound, each with their own role. My role was to observe the process and assist as a pedagogue since most team members lacked prior pedagogical experience. That is why I engaged with the process as a practitioner-researcher, as practice was a central method of scientific inquiry.[4] All exercises used in the scenario writing and sound editing workshops are mapped and published in the B-air project publication (Čorić 2023, 383–388). The project finished in December 2023 with a group listening of the radio drama organized in the Lož Valley by the community that gathered everyone involved. Furthermore, the radio drama *The Whisper of Memories*, children's sonic miniatures, and interviews with team members were broadcasted at Radiotelevision Slovenia. Interviews with elderly people led by children were broadcast in full length on the local radio in Lož Valley.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology is used to address the four research questions, based on the idea that in this type of project, creative sonic practices themselves constitute knowledge. In this way, as a team, we recognized that "we do knowledge, we don't just think it" (Nelson 2013, 66), highlighting embodied and experiential knowledge-in-practice (Schön 2017).

Data collection

Data were collected through: a) ethnographic observation of interviews and sound editing workshops (in school, communities, and online); and b) six focus group interviews with the team of professionals. The number of participants in the focus group interviews varied from three to six.[5] The focus group interviews were held daily after workshops at Elementary School Stari Trg pri Ložu, either while driving from Ljubljana to Stari Trg or during lunch breaks, as those were the only times I could gather the professional team together. One of these was conducted online before the project's completion. During the focus group interviews, sound professionals were asked questions directly related to the process. I also used these moments to guide them in observing specific pedagogical points during interviews with seniors led by children. These interviews took place simultaneously in different community spaces, requiring us to split up as a team. The data were recorded using a mobile phone audio recorder, manually transcribed, and analysed through thematic coding.

4 While I participated in proposing and co-creating the sound-editing exercises, I remained aside from their implementation, which enabled me to articulate a practitioner-researcher position grounded in observation and critical reflection.

5 The composition of the focus groups varied, as parallel interviews and workshops often required the professional team to divide. Depending on the focus of the questions, different members participated. For instance, one focus group included the school librarian who coordinated the entire project.

Data analysis

The analysis presented here was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, all qualitative data from the in-situ process in Lož Valley were analysed by the author and then shared and discussed with the co-researcher Katarina Juvančič and the facilitator of the sound-editing workshop. The second phase involved analysing online workshops, which were frequently shared and discussed with the sound editing workshop facilitator. This phase focused on exploring the possibilities and differences in engagement between the live workshops and online encounters with children. The third phase involved interpreting the data in dialogue with the results from Katarina Juvančič's research. The thematic coding process involved previously defined focus points such as collaborative professionalism, peer and intergenerational learning, and sound-based pedagogy. Emerging topics from the process include critiquing the current education system, emphasizing the library as a Thirdspace, and authors' rights. Results are organized thematically according to the identified topics.

Results and discussion

Collaborative professionalism: potentials and challenges of peer and intergenerational learning

Collaborative professionalism within the project involved observing the specificities of collaborative work on the documentary radiodrama in Lož Valley (RQ1). The *Whisper of Memories* is an interdisciplinary, participatory, and community-led project that extends beyond the project's timeline. The research showed that the key person in the entire project is a school librarian who has built a long-lasting collaboration with Radiotelevision Slovenia. Each year, students from the school visit the studios in Ljubljana. Afterwards, RTV technicians come to record students reading books aloud, creating audiobooks of some obligatory school literature for new generations. They are even gradually building a small computer room/studio in the library. Essentially, this project was a step forward, aiming to foster deeper professional collaboration with Radiotelevision and involve the whole community. The school library became a sonic *Thirdspace* (Soja 1996; 2010). Bringing together different generations in the library, which served as a studio, workshop, and meeting place, functioned as a time capsule and a liminal learning environment. In this lived space, physical and mental spaces from the present and the past converge into a larger whole.

Expanded professionalism as a form of collaborative professionalism in a library as a sonic Thirdspace allowed for diverse, flexible, and non-hierarchical expert positions, connecting professional identities and communities around the topics of sound and

space (RQ2). An inclusive and safe learning space enabled the discovery of a timeless story about Lož Valley by mapping sounds and memories *with*, *by*, and *for* community members of different ages, forming a counter-narrative to dominant and normative discourses in formal education.

Regarding the understanding of the collaborative working process in the project (RQ3), in addition to the evident learning happening at all levels and among all involved, not everything was smooth for the team of visiting artists. While the original plan was to include children in all aspects of creating a documentary radio drama and to foster their agency throughout the process, fieldwork revealed that completing the project with them was unlikely. Factors included the tight deadline for finalizing and broadcasting the radio drama on national radio, as well as the fact that facilitators from different countries and the school involved were located far from Ljubljana, where the Radiotelevision Slovenia studio was situated for sound editing and recording. In addition to the challenge of assembling the entire team in the same place after fieldwork in Lož Valley, we also needed assurance that children would be willing to continue collaborating online.

In addition to organization, some professionals in focus groups expressed concerns about the authorship of the radiophonic piece, citing differences in work quality between children and professionals. This kind of concern or tension is common in community art projects, resulting in performances that "unite professional and non-professional art-making" (Matarasso 2019, 26). However, children and seniors are considered professionals of their own lived experiences in this context. There was a lack of clarity during the online work within the team about the finish line. In some cases, there was a sense of lacking guidance and hierarchy, but eventually, everything went smoothly, and all the results were incorporated into the radiophonic piece. This is where the radio director played a key role in final decision-making, as she decided that the entire team makes the radio drama as a collective authorship.

Peer-to-peer "role modelling and mentoring may provide a structure for the development of well-understood musical-self stories" (Creech, Varvarigou, and Hallam 2020, 195). Regarding types of peer learning, the dynamic interactions between children as peers and among the professional team acting as peers proved especially useful, utilizing collaborative, cooperative, asymmetrical, and symmetrical peer learning in various contexts. Asymmetrical peer learning was evident in the sound editing workshop, but the child in the role of the "helped" due to less technological knowledge also served as a "helper" during the interview process with seniors. Both children and adults in the team made space for each other throughout the process, naturally embracing the shared task of creating a soundscape story. The clearest example of harmony in team collaboration happened on the last day of the on-site workshops in Cross Cave, which is described in the B-air project publication (Čorić 2023). Since peer learning proved to be a significant part of the process, the "collective peer knowledge" (Creech, Varvarigou, and Hallam 2020, 195) developed throughout all aspects of work is invaluable as an outcome.

Peer learning was less about exchanging technological skills and more about a collaborative process of discovery. It involved unlearning traditional school methods and engaging in ongoing dialogue within the team. It included continuous learning from different perspectives, such as intergenerational, peer, outsider and insider, professional and non-professional. For this reason, as a researcher and educator, I strongly relate to Juvančič (2023, 379), who advocates for more transgenerational sonic gatherings and *intergenerational sociability*, believing that "older members of the community stand to gain valuable insights from the youth (not just the other way around), as they collectively navigate the sonic landscapes of the present."

Sound pedagogy: the link between education and the community

The project in Lož Valley demonstrated that children's relationship with sound and their engagement with it drastically changed during the learning process (RQ4). In this way, we can say that they have developed sound competence, which is firmly rooted in discovery and research. It includes perceiving sound as: (1) a gesture/movement; (2) a means of sound creation in the classroom; (3) a connection with the environment; and (4) a link to culture (Dionyssiou 2019, 22–28). Juvančič (2023, 377) explains it:

> Children actively cultivated sound competence not only through formal education, including school curriculum and extracurricular activities, but also by engaging in hands-on experiences facilitated by the research team and a school librarian. These experiences encompassed interviewing older generations, visiting villages, exploring diverse soundscapes, listening to narratives, and exchanging their own perspectives on sound. Additionally, their involvement in radiophonic work, sound editing, and the creation of radio play screenwriting, among other activities, played a pivotal role in nurturing their comprehensive understanding of sound (Juvančič 2023, 377).

In addition to exploring listening to the soundscape as a research process, it is also valuable to observe how children respond to different sounds (RQ4), which was especially evident in the sound editing workshop. In her acoustic inquiry into the process, Juvančič (2023) developed a classification of sounds articulated by the interview participants (elderly people) and divided them into four categories: (1) nature sounds; (2) animal sounds; (3) social sounds; and (4) work sounds. What was particularly interesting was that seniors mentioned the role of silence as a specific part of their soundscape, often linked to water. It's clear that silence, as a culturally mediated form of communication, forms an important part of Lož Valley's identity, even among children.

Since children's task was to conduct interviews with elderly people and then listen to those interviews to select parts for sound editing, I followed and mapped "their" sounds during the workshops and in the analysis of their own sound miniatures. Children showed particular interest in these sounds:

1. social sounds (humanly crafted sounds, especially songs);
2. analogue sounds (sounds of nature and animal sounds; e. g. frogs);
3. technological sounds (machines, factories, train, tractor, cars);
4. imaginative sounds (a dragon from the local legend); and
5. silence (connection with floods, nature, rest, waiting time in the woods).

During the very first sound editing workshops, the children had the task of recalling their initial interviews with elderly people from the day before and choosing a short excerpt to work on. The children initially selected a story about church bells, and the first step was to learn how to cut that segment from the full interview, listen to it, and decide which sounds would be relevant for the soundscape. The facilitator explained how to find and insert recorded sounds from online repositories of free sounds, in case they didn't record the sounds themselves. Before inserting the sounds, two topics emerged, both encouraging children to listen more carefully. The first was the sounds of bells we wanted to find in the sound repository. Although the children initially felt the need to find the right sound quickly, while listening, one of the children noticed:

This doesn't sound like our bells!

This conclusion caused children to slow down and listen more carefully to the sounds on the list, in an attempt to find at least similar bells. When they couldn't find sounds that resembled the bells in their local environment, one child showed initiative by offering to take the Zoom recorder and capture the sound of real bells in the evening or early morning before school starts. The second topic focused on the pace and moments of silence. While listening to the finished task with an added soundscape for the story about the bells, the facilitator noticed some gaps between sentences and sounds. It seemed like the children didn't notice the pace, commenting that everything moves quickly in (social) media, with short exchanges of material. To demonstrate the power of silence in sonic art, the facilitator showed them how to create extra seconds of silence (Copy and Paste options[6]) to insert pauses at certain moments. This provided another opportunity to learn how to slow down and craft a sonic piece that "breathes".

In their second collaborative task, the children chose the part about frogs. They successfully found and inserted the sounds on their own without any issues. They independently noticed the specific moments in the piece where they could add silence, without needing assistance. Additionally, they began to experiment with sounds, conducting small tests and listening to the piece numerous times, allowing themselves to relax and truly feel the sounds without the fear of making a mistake, which was evident at the beginning of the workshop. Besides the sounds of frogs and water, the children wanted to include the well-known Slovenian song about frogs, *Žabe svatbo so imele*

6 For the workshop purposes we used Reaper digital audio production application: https://www.reaper.fm (access: 16. 12. 2025.).

[*Frogs Had a Wedding*]. Their first instinct was to download the YouTube video and simply insert the song into the soundscape. This became an opportunity to discuss copyright issues and explore an alternative way to include the song. In the end, the solution was to record the local choir singing this piece.

After the first sound editing workshop, a significant amount of time in subsequent sessions was again dedicated to silence. What was evident in all the sonic works the children produced by the end of the project during the online workshops is that silence played a crucial role in their sonic thinking, which was not the case during the initial encounters. Aside from noticing and incorporating silence into their sonic miniatures, each child gradually developed a personal relationship with silence by becoming "audible to himself as a discrete member of an audience" (Voegelin 2010, xv). Silence is not the "absence of sound"; it's the "beginning of listening as communication," which "embraces the body of the listener in its solitude, and invites him to listen to himself amidst the soundscape that he inhabits" (Voegelin, 2010, xv). This was evident when children began taking the Zoom recorder to their homes and recording sounds of silence. One child even mentioned arriving at rehearsal after hours of trying to capture the purring of his cat, one of his favourite sounds. The whole process of developing children's sonic thinking was an example of "ear-cleaning" and "ear-opening" (Schafer 1967, 1), and John Cage's idea of "musicalisation of aurality" (Kahn 2001, cited in Tinkle 2015, 222). This made us as a team to question the education system.

Critique of the education system: where does the creativity happen?

A specific topic emerged from both the ethnographic observation of the workshops and the focus group interviews with the visiting artists. In the sound editing workshops, the children repeatedly mentioned that they didn't realize *there was so much to do with sounds* because, in their music classes, they only listen to and analyse music in that way. Sonic sensibility and awareness are not part of the music curriculum. However, we took this opportunity to connect musical and sonic knowledge. With each new day and workshop, we engaged in the listening process more deeply in an organic way, gradually using more terms that children already knew from their music classes, such as tempo, dynamics, and rhythm. In this way, the process contributed to "decentering music" and "re-framing 'music education' as 'sound education'" (Recharte 2019, 82). Furthermore, strengthened by acoustemology and cultural production,[7] the sound pedagogy approach created a meaningful detour from conventional classroom practices.

7 According to Recharte (2019, 83), the concept of *cultural production* offers a framework that highlights students' "everyday symbolic materials and practices", emphasizing how meaning is constructed through relationships and symbolic action. In turn, an acoustemological approach to sound-making, originating from Steven Feld's notion of listening as knowing-in-action, understands sounds produced by humans as part of an already sounding, living soundscape. This perspective "de-center(s) the human" and situates listening within an "ecology of relationships that encompasses the human and the nonhuman, the living and the nonliving".

The radio director was usually present at the end of sound editing workshops, listening to children's sonic pieces. In one of the focus groups, she reflected on the fact that she had to explain to the children that creating soundscapes for the radio drama doesn't mean putting the same sounds the narrator is talking about.

The aim is not to illustrate something with the sound, but to create the experience of sound.

In this sense, she emphasized the importance of multisensory thinking and embracing the specifics of experimentation, improvisation, and creation processes within the school system.

Another critique came from the interviewing process. The whole team noticed that children were considering inventing questions and leading interviews with seniors as a typical school assignment. In their first interviews, they simply read the previously prepared questions without genuinely listening to people's answers.

Where and how does the real interest and motivation happens?

This was the question that the radio director asked during the reflection focus group on the first day. As a researcher, I decided to put more focus on observing the interview process. Since some of the interviews in the local community occurred simultaneously with other interviews and workshops, I couldn't observe all the interviews, so I asked the professional team to focus on specific moments of connection between the child interviewer and the elderly person responding to questions. What was noticeable in the interviews was that moments of genuine connection occurred in several situations. These connections shaped the work of the entire team in the following days because we realized that teamwork is essential for conducting the best possible interviews. Some moments of connection occurred when the child and the elderly person engaged in an honest dialogue, often when the person mentioned a game, a specific space, or a childhood story that still resonates with the child's life. This encouraged children to connect and share their own stories, which also motivated the elderly person to keep the conversation going. Another spontaneous moment of connection arose when members of the visiting artists team asked unplanned questions based on active listening. For some of the children serving as interviewers, this clearly inspired them to ask questions spontaneously. During one of the reflections, one of the visiting professionals explained the importance of acting as role models throughout the process:

We showed them how to use microphones and recorders and helped them to create questions for the interviews. But, we didn't show them how WE do it. And this is needed!

Both critiques clearly highlight the still-prevailing *banking concept of education* (Freire 2022) in traditional education and emphasize the importance of actively seeking ways to create dialogue as a transformative learning approach for both sides. Drawing

on critical pedagogy and its application through sound pedagogy in the field of sound and music, education is understood as a *grassroots process* that fosters creative schools where teaching and learning are treated as an art form (Robinson and Aronica 2015, xxvi).

Conclusion

In a world dominated by visual media, radio has continued to survive and even thrive in new ways against all odds. Since the arrival of television in the 1950s, many questioned whether radio could remain relevant in a visually saturated culture. Yet, through creativity and innovation, radio has adapted by finding new life in community radio and podcasting, which bring voices and stories to audiences in unique and engaging ways. The project presented in this paper builds on this resilience, using radio as a medium to connect children and elderly people, allowing them to share experiences, bridge generations, and create lasting memories through the simple yet powerful act of listening. Furthermore, it demonstrates the potential to incorporate various types of knowledge into the education system, grounded in the practice and lived experience of sound and collaborative community work.

Research findings indicate that involving children and elderly people, seen as experts in their lived experiences and as co-creators in participatory radiophonic projects, introduces a new level of intergenerational connection within the community. This bond is rooted in essential childhood experiences related to school, home, nature, and technology, illustrating the growing potential of radio in today's world. Results show that listening, sound creation, and music making all form a continuum of participatory radiophonic art. The multimodality of listening suggests that the deeper we involve children in participation and interaction with peers, elderly co-citizens, and radio professionals through various activities, the more focused and nuanced their listening becomes. Exploring innovative processes and collaborative professionalism within the professional community in this case study provides critical insights about the current education system and raises questions about collective authorship.

Key challenges, limitations and questions that I want to address for further research are:

1. language barriers in community research

Although the Slovenian and Croatian languages are similar, in this research, a specific language barrier affected the process in small ways. The sound editing workshop facilitator and I, as a researcher-practitioner who is Croatian-speaking, mostly didn't encounter problems with the language barrier in the on-site workshops, thanks to the children who spontaneously included language differences as a sort of game during the work. However, during online work, the language barrier was more noticeable and slowed down the process. This was also true in the delicate task of listening and editing

audio clips from interviews, where it was sometimes difficult for a foreigner to notice the subtle differences in the Slovenian dialect from that specific area, so the children stepped in and made corrections.

2. process vs. product

The topic of authors' rights, collective authorship, and the delays in finalization of the radiophonic piece emerged during the thematic analysis. It revealed that while the process was the most important, there was pressure to complete tasks by a specific date, with limited time slots in the professional studio for final edits and recordings. Furthermore, a common issue in projects involving visiting artists and community members is the question of artistic quality, as some creative professionals might perceive differences as a problem.

3. vulnerability of spaces *and/as* research contexts (rural vs. urban)

Since this project was conducted in a rural area of Slovenia, where children still live at a different pace of life than those in urban areas and align closely with the rhythms of nature, it would be interesting to repeat it in an urban setting to compare. Although the children in this project were clearly digital natives, they repeatedly mentioned that they prefer to go outside and play, ride bikes, or simply lie on the ground and listen to the silence. It would be interesting to see how children from the city respond to the sound of silence and listening in general. Another aspect of this is the comparison of intergenerational work between rural and urban areas, as it became clear that time in natural surroundings passes slowly, allowing us to talk deeply to people and truly listen.

4. knowledge production

The project in Lož Valley demonstrated *listening as a knowing in action* (Feld 2015), as a specific situational knowledge that emerged from the collaboration of sonic professionals and different generations of community members in the local environment, engaged through teamwork. It is worth considering how this can be applied or integrated into the existing education ecosystem.

5. interdisciplinary research encounters

One of the hidden gems of this research was that two seemingly unrelated researchers with different tasks entered the same process. Although not planned, the collaboration and dialogue developed spontaneously, creating connections between music education, anthropology, ethnology, and ethnomusicology. Sound-based pedagogical approaches are deeply rooted in sonic studies and the disciplines mentioned above. Furthermore, as critiques of existing education emerged from this learning process, understanding it through the lens of the anthropology of (music/sound) education became even more relevant, highlighting its potential to inform future pedagogical research in community arts projects.

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ULAZAK U DOLINU ZVUKOVA: ISTRAŽIVANJE SURADNIČKOG PROFESIONALIZMA U RADIOFONSKOJ UMJETNOSTI (rezime)

U radu se istražuje suradnički profesionalizam na participativnom projektu koji se temelji na umjetnosti zvuka provedenom u Loškoj dolini u Sloveniji od rujna do prosinca 2023. godine. Na temelju pedagogije zvuka i uvida iz akustičke ekologije, u studiji se ispituje način na koji su profesionalni umjetnici, djeca i stariji stanovnici zajednički stvorili participativnu dokumentarnu radiodramu kroz slušanje, snimanje i pripovijedanje. Istraživanje je kao cilj imalo procijeniti ne samo umjetničke rezultate već i pedagošku i društvenu dinamiku suradničke prakse. Dizajn istraživanja uključivao je kombinaciju etnografskog promatranja s fokus grupama provedenim među sudjelujućim profesionalcima. Terenski rad odvijao se u dvije faze: (1) radionički rad uživo u školama i zajednici te (2) online radionice. Analiza rezultata ponudila je odgovore na četiri ključna pitanja: (1) Koje su specifične značajke suradničkog participativnog rada na zvuku u Loškoj dolini? (2) Na koji način projekt povezuje identitete i zajednice okupljene na temelju zvuka i prostora? (3) Kako profesionalci interpretiraju i doživljavaju procese suradnje? i (4) Kako se dječji angažman sa zvukom i slušanjem mijenjao tijekom vremena? Rezultati pokazuju da je participativni okvir omogućio djeci i starijim stanovnicima da djeluju kao sukreatori i stručnjaci za vlastita životna iskustva. Njihov doprinos proširio je kulturne i međugeneracijske aspekte projekta. Interakcije su pokazale da su veze sa zvukom ukorijenjene u svakodnevnom okruženju (škola, dom, priroda i tehnologija), pružajući temelj za osobno izražavanje i povezivanje zajednice. Analiza također pokazuje da slušanje, stvaranje zvuka i stvaranje glazbe treba promatrati kao dijelove kontinuuma participacije, a ne kao odvojene prakse. Slušanje je postalo fokusiranije i detaljnije kada su djeca aktivno sudjelovala u procesima učenja i suradnje s vršnjacima, starijim stanovnicima i stručnjacima. To podupire ideju da multimodalnost u slušanju poboljšava i perceptivnu oštrinu i kreativnu kontrolu. Za profesionalnu zajednicu, projekt je poslužio kao prostor za promišljanje o suradničkom profesionalizmu. I profesionalni i neprofesionalni sudionici primijetili su promjene u svom razumijevanju autorstva, odgovornosti i načina na koji se dijeli ekspertiza. Umjesto hijerarhije, proces je potaknuo kolektivni pristup autorstvu, dovodeći u pitanje tradicionalne pedagoške i umjetničke granice. Sveukupno, studija naglašava potencijal participativne radiofonske umjetnosti u poboljšanju međugeneracijskih veza, novih oblika učenja i poučavanja u školama, kao i poticanju novih oblika suradničkog profesionalizma. Ukazuje na to da radio, kao moderni medij, i dalje ostaje relevantan za obrazovanje, kulturnu produkciju i angažman zajednice.

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THE QUESTION OF GENRE IN EXPERIMENTAL RADIO ART IN SERBIA

KEYWORDS
Radio Art; Radio Belgrade; genre; acousmatics; *Sound Workshop*.

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores potential issue of genre determination in experimental radio art in Serbia. Radiophonic works, first introduced within the framework of Radio Belgrade, have come a long way in defining their appearance. They began primarily as a literary genre, radio drama, originating from the idea of radio theater, that is the adaptation of a theater play for broadcasting on the radio. It involved the change of aesthetics in the works of Arsenije Jovanović, Ivana Stefanović and Vladan Radovanović and the idea of multimedia synthesis, as well as the work of dramatis Neda Depolo and the establishment of the Radio Belgrade's special series *Sound Workshop*, where sound itself is affirmed as the primary mode of communication with the listener, and the literary text remains in the background. This evolution culminates in contemporary productions that can be defined as electronic compositions intended for radio performance. Considering the long-standing challenge in defining the genre, in accordance with the new technical possibilities that significantly influences the changes in aesthetics, the question arises as to whether contemporary radio art can be understood through the prism of acousmatics, and electronic music especially in the context of listening practices. The focus of this paper will be on the question of whether listening to a certain radio work in different contexts – radio broadcast, concert performance, streaming platforms – can reflect on the duality of the genre of contemporary radio art.

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Introduction

For a long time, radiophony was, for me, the domain of the radio play or radio drama. I did not question this conventional understanding, and therefore remained unaware that radiophonic practice could constitute a field in which I might participate. In the final year of composition studies, I began to investigate electronic music, a development that significantly changed my artistic perspective and affinity, however I still did not associate this work with the sphere of radio art. Later, during doctoral studies, the Department of Composition received a call for radiophonic works, the *Neda Depolo student award*, issued by Radio Belgrade. This prompted both surprise and a degree of confusion: in what way could electronic composition be considered radio art? Soon, I discovered the long-standing historical relationship between these two modes of artistic expression and the extent to which they have continually informed and intertwined with one another.

This initiated my interest, and later, research into experimental radiophony and its genre. To address the challenge of examining the experimental radiophony genre in Serbia, it is essential to first understand the historical development of radio art forms. The development of this mode of expression is shaped by the very existence of radio as well as development and adoption of magnetic tape, and stereophony. It was therefore conditioned by technique and technology, whose advancement inevitably influenced both the transformation of possibilities and the awareness of listening, as well as the creation of radiophonic works. The concept of acousmatics (as explained in Schaeffer 2017, Kim 2010), spectromorphology and the existing typology of radiophony (stated in Ćirić 2015, Maglov 2022) will serve as the basis for the analysis of a few exemplary Serbian radiophonic works.

The Evolution of Radio Art in Serbia

The development of radio art in Serbia is inseparably linked with the creation and work of Radio Belgrade, one of the first media that reached a mass audience of almost all social strata. Radio Belgrade played the crucial role in organizational, financial and technological aspects in the long-term development of this form of expression. As Marija Ćirić notes: "Radiophony is an art born in the medium of radio" (Ćirić 2015, 102). In its earliest days, radio drama was performed live, in a studio equipped with props, where technicians produced sound effects in real time and transmitted them to listeners via radio diffusion. Radio broadcasting at Radio Belgrade was initially based on the studio performance of the plays, most often those adapted from theatre productions. Miroslav Jokić argues that the concept of radio drama should be understood only in a conditional sense, given the early practice of directly reproducing theatrical performances with the

required reductions (Jokić 2008, 202). At the center of this form of expression is, above all, the dramatic text and the idea that the authors of radio dramas should be dramatist, who would not only adapt texts for radio performance, but would write plays intended for microphone performance. During this period, sound serves to illustrate the action within a scene or the space in which that scene takes place. However, it soon became obvious that the shift of emphasis from the dramatic text to the sound itself was one of the possibilities for a new artistic expression, because "radiophony is the art of sound; it writes with sound and lives through its sound body" (Ćirić 2015, 102). Radiophonic works will evolve in several directions, becoming both a sound and a literary genre, in which the author should take care of writing the text for an audience that will rely exclusively on the sense of hearing. This requires writing that is not too narrative, but through the intimacy of the microphone draws the listener closer to the actor and thus to the character, and the work itself, more so than it is the case in the theater. At the same time, radiophony will develop into a unique sound genre and intrigue many artists, writers, composers, dramatists and directors eager to explore its possibilities. In her dissertation, Marija Maglov, following Piekut, discusses the way radiophonic works, like music, are understood as strong entities in certain social, political, economic and technological, as well as cultural contexts that are reflected in the organization of sound, the narratives of actors and writings in the press and archival records (Maglov 2022, 224). While radiophony depends on such conditions, its development also transforms listeners, shaping their consciousness and modes of listening, but also to a large extent on authors who discover new ways of structuring the sonic image. The 1960s marked the so-called tape revolution, a period when creators discovered new possibilities of artistic expression through emerging technology. It took time to recognize the possibilities of recorded material: that it could be copied, duplicated, timed, cut, rhythmized, and sonically transformed – slowed down and accelerated, or enhanced with effects such as reverberation. These techniques paved the way to a new aesthetics – the aesthetics of recorded and processed sound.

In this context, it is important to mention the work of Pierre Schaeffer, who was a pioneer in this form of expression. As musical material, Schaeffer used sounds from everyday life, from what he himself called "acoustic reality" (Schaeffer 2017, 38): slamming doors, footsteps, whistles of trains, human speech, and the sound of recorded instruments. Once separated from their original sources, such sounds became sound objects, a concept that developed into Schaeffer's theory of acousmatics, which will be discussed in the further text in relation to the receptive aspect of radiophony.

The organization of these sound objects results in a kind of musical flow that resembles electronic music in its form, even though the origin of music material is fundamentally different. Schaeffer's first composition in this new style was *Études aux chemins de fer* (*Railroad study*), consisting of various train sounds: whistles, and clatters arranged into rhythmic patterns. This piece, together with four others – *Étude aux tourniquets*, *Étude violette, Étude noire, Étude pathétique* – was grouped under the title *Cinque études de bruites* [*Five Studies of Noises*] and first presented to the public on French radio (Ra-

diodiffusion Francaise, later ORTF) as part of *Concert de bruits* [*Noise Concert*] on October 4, 1948 (Collins 2013, 46). In this way, radio became the first medium through which musique concrète communicated with listeners. On the other hand, there is a significant influence of the concrete music on the radio art, from the 1960s. Pierre Schaeffer's concept of concrete music and his creative use of recorded sounds provided an important stimulus for the expanded notion of play in the *Hörspiel* (radio play in German) in the 1960s (Hagelüken 2006, as cited in Fiebig 2015, 204). In the words of Gerald Fiebig: "Schaeffer's aim was to experiment with the technological equipment of radio in order to find aesthetic possibilities specific to this medium – as opposed to using radio as a mere transmission channel for music or speech" (Fiebig, 2015, 203). Despite the existing historical context of this topic, in this text I will focus on the problem of acousmatic listening from the composer's perspective.

Another significant aspect of technological progress was the recording and reproduction of sound in stereo technique, which introduces a new dimension in thinking about the spatiality of sound and sound effects. Neda Depolo, a long-time editor, as well as prominent author, was the leading advocate for broadcasting Radio Belgrade's programs in stereo, so the long tradition of radiophonic composition is often dated from the moment stereophony was introduced (Malavrazić 1999, 30). Despite these new possibilities, the transition to stereophonic radiophony was not without its challenges. As Depolo noted, "stereophonic drama, although firmly based on technique, is still not primarily a technical, but a dramaturgical problem," so a question arises: "what does stereophony mean for a contemporary dramatist" (Depolo 1999, 46). This innovation in thinking laid the foundation for the development of experimental radiophony. Not long after, in the search for new sonic possibilities, the foundation of the Electronic studio of Radio Belgrade was initiated by Vladan Radovanović and Paul Pignon. Its central instrument, the *Synthi 100*, soon gained international recognition, so the project became known as the Belgrade School of Electronic Music (Jokić 2008, 483). However, one of the most important studios for the realization of the drama program was Studio 10. Studio 10 was equipped with the necessary devices, instrument, and rooms required for its production (Maglov 2022, 252). Within this studio, a tendency toward sound experimentation began to develop through the *Drama Workshop*, "a research process in which a sound language and a specific dramaturgy of sound was created" (Depolo 1999, 135).

During this period, radio play acquired a new dimension, sound gained renewed affirmation, and became an integral component of the radio work itself, rather than just a commentary on the drama. Equally significant was the integration of noise into the compositional palette. Some of the prominent authors in this field were Arsenije Arsa Jovanović, who explored the aesthetic possibilities within the relationship between sound effect, music and the human voice. His work forms the foundation for the development of the abstract form of radiophony in Serbia, exemplified by his first radiophonic piece *Igra za jednu Galiolu* ([*Prayer for one Galiola*], 1967) as well as later works such as *Krajputaši* ([*Roadside Tombstones*], 1971) and *Resavska pećina* ([*Resava cave*], 1976/1977). Composer Ivana Stefanović, (re)creates distant or imagined sound spaces,

particularly in *Metropola tišine* ([*Metropolis of Silence*], 1992) and in works as *Poslanica ptica* (*The Epistle of Birds*, 1974), as well as *Lingua/Phonia/Patria* (1989). Vladan Radovanović approached radiophony as a new space for the realization of integral multimedia, as demonstrated in one of the first works of this type *Spheroon* (1960–1964) as well as *Odlazak* (*Departure*, 1975) and *Malo večno jezero* ([*The Eternal Lake*], 1984). At the time, this idea is very much following the European tendencies among the radio creators. In Germany, Klaus Schöning coined another term for radiophony, *Ars Acustica* (Schöning, 1991, 308), which was characterized by an approach to material and form that was neither predominantly literary nor predominantly musical (Fiebig 2015, 204). The creators of *Ars Acustica*, like Schöning, equally commissioned poets, composers, performers, sound artists and conceptual artists with a visual arts background to work in and with radio (Fiebig 2015, 204), marking a significant step towards the already mentioned integral multimedia.

In 1985, a special series of Radio Belgrade, *Sound Workshop* [*Radionica zvuka*], was created, on the initiative of Đorđe Malavrazić (Jokić 2008, 635). Its first editor, composer Ivana Stefanović, envisioned it as "a wide spectrum of dealing with music, sound, tone and noise in unity with a dramatic and textual element, and in the manner and form of radiophonic media speech" (Stefanović 1985, 57). It was a program in which "space would be opened for all kinds of multimedia speech-music type of projects" (ibid.). The primary goal of *Sound Workshop* was to expand the language of radio and to sustain ongoing production within this mode of expression. The secondary goal was to continue already established pathways for domestic artists toward the European and international radio scene, seeking a universal language that would be globally recognized, much like the work of authors who represented the production of Radio Belgrade, such as Arsenije Arsa Jovanović, who won the *Prix Italia* in 1971 with his piece *Krajputaši*. According to Ivana Stefanović however,

> When the *Sound Workshop* was formed in 1985, it emerged as a consequence of work that had already been taking place for years within the *Drama Program* and across Radio Belgrade in general. Many of the authors had already been deeply involved in sound research, and among them there were fewer musicians and more individuals from other professional backgrounds. Long before the creation of *Sound Workshop, Drama program*, included remarkable innovators who conducted extensive exploration in the field of sound. To name just a few: Darko Tatić, Boda Marković, Arsenije Jovanović... Among musicians and composers, the most important figure was Vladan Radovanović, although, at one point in the mid-seventies, I too appeared with my own modest contributions to sound research (as quoted in Maglov 2022, 245–246).

This universal language is created grounded on and in sound, on symbol (Jokić 2008, 636). Within this development, there is a tendency for a clear distinction in the use of term radiophony, so in addition to radio drama, forms closer to music were

described as abstract or experimental radiophony. Neda Depolo describes such forms as "sound realisations of an elusive genre" (Depolo 1999, 60). The realizations of these settings were made possible by a new radio technique that enables a more complex assembly and composition of sound materials, "it is written with sound, more literally, it is composed with sound" (Depolo 1999, 61).

With the focus placed on the sound itself and its organization, the question of the reception of that kind of sound structure arises. The author must address the listener's interaction with it as an integral part of the creative process. Schaeffer identified four modes of listening: *écouter* (to listen), identifying the events responsible for the creation of sound; *comprendre* (to understand), interpreting sounds as symbols, signs and signifiers; *ouïr* (to perceive aurally), a general awareness of the sense of hearing; and *entendre* (to hear), a mode in which attention is focused on the intrinsic qualities of the sound (Schaeffer 2017, 80–83). As Hamilton notes: "the musical quest proposed by Schaeffer is based on a return to sound itself" (Hamilton 2005, 8), both on the part of the listener and the author, one of the essential aspects of Schaeffer's conception of acousmatic music.

Acousmatics

The term *acousmatique* was first introduced in 1955 by Jérôme Peignot to describe the listening experience of concrete music (Piegnot 1960, as quoted in Adkins 2016, 106). Pierre Schaeffer later refined the term drawing on Pythagoras' notion of the acousmatic experience in which sounds are experienced independently of their source and mode of production. According to Schaeffer a composition can be experienced acousmatically when the "curtain comes down," which is a direct reference to Pythagoras' practice of lecturing behind the curtain. In this way, as Hamilton points out, citing Scruton, the "listening experience becomes detached from the visible source of sound, that is, it becomes an experience between the sounds that make up that composition and their previous existence" (Scruton 1997, as cited in Hamilton 2005, 10). Similarly, Schaeffer noted: "In former times the device was a curtain; today, the radio and sound reproduction systems, using all forms of electroacoustic transformations, place us, modern listeners to an invisible voice, once more under the conditions of a similar experiment" (Schaeffer 2017, 64). Acousmatics explores the inner nature of sound. Schaeffer often employed sounds derived from everyday life experiences, which he later processed until they became almost unrecognizable. It was precisely this use of such concrete sounds that led to the acceptance of the term for a new genre of music – *musique concrète*. By contrast, composers such as Stockhausen worked with electronic music, using sounds of mostly electronic origin, although the two approaches often overlap. The creators of musique concrète describe their works as acousmatic, emphasizing a listening mode in which the listener does not focus on the origin of the sound but on its abstract qualities.

A similar attitude can be found in the world of radio art creators. Arsenije Jovanović did not want to influence the listener`s imagination, but he wanted to leave the moment of the listener perception of the piece completely free. In this way, the author draws the listener into the process of creating the work itself (Maglov 2025, 92–94). Schaeffer, whose poetics were very close to those of Jovanović (ibid.), refers to this as "reduced listening" (Schaeffer 2017, 116). This attitude reflects the composer's approach, who should also, just as like a listener, engage with the abstract properties of sound rather its original source. As Hamilton explains: "A sound object is something to be investigated in itself to the exclusion of meanings and causes" (Hamilton 2005, 8). From this perspective, sound requires an autonomous identity, once it has been recorded or processed and it is no longer an acoustic phenomenon, shifting attention from its origin or context to the sound itself. The properties of sound that Schaeffer mentions are timbre – sound color, texture, spectral content – frequency content, sound envelope – the shape of sound in time, including attack and decay, which relates to duration and rhythm. In addition to the characteristics of the sound itself, once treated as an independent entity, the sound sample becomes a new building block for the organization of musical flow and musical time. Thus, sound objects become musical objects (Srećković 2011, 45–50).

A composition organized in this way requires the listener's active engagement in the listening process, which is one of the central investigated aspects of acousmatic. Suk Yun Kim proposes the concept of acousmatic reasoning as a mode of listening to electroacoustic music, in which the listener evaluates the "evidence acquired not only by listening, but also by imagining," that is, through the creation of sound images (Kim 2010, 1). This phenomenon is very specific for radio art, as the listener focuses solely on the sense of hearing, and one of the consequences is the unfolding of internal mental imagery (Maglov 2025, 93). As Arsenije Jovanović explained: "The art of radio is all in those mental images. Building those images with words, music, sound and totality of sonic language is what makes this medium unique" (Jovanović 1985, 62). Acousmatic reasoning involves three subjects (aspects): "sounds that are dis-embodied and displaced by technological manipulation, semiotic and spectromorphological listening as opposite modes of listening, and the listener's own inferential process" which interprets changes in sound over time (Kim 2010, 1). Semiotic listening is a mode of listening to electroacoustic music in which the listener perceives sounds and creates potential mental images based on their meaning, spectromorphological listening focuses on the internal components of a sound, while the inference process involves the perception of changes in the properties of a certain sound over time, which are very likely in the duration of one composition, thus also changing its context or role in a certain segment or the whole work (ibid.). The intertwining of the properties of abstract radio art and electronic music in the context of sound materials, the way of their organization and the ways of their broadcasting and, finally, listening opens the question of the two-layered genre of such sound works.

Question of Genre

Over time, three genres of radio broadcasting became established within Radio Belgrade: radio drama, documentary radiophony and abstract radiophony. According to its characteristics, experimental radiophony, a term introduced by Marija Ćirić as the closest to music – specifically electronic and electro-acoustic music. As Ćirić notes, it was considered radiophony in the narrowest sense of the term (Ćirić 2015, 106). This parallel with music arises from the way of thinking involved in creating such sound works: the author applies certain musical principles when shaping a sound image, considering the presentation of samples, rhythm, mutual relations between sounds, as well as texture and form. The creators of experimental radio works are most often also the directors of their creations: working out the initial idea, they direct/compose it until the final physiognomy is formed (Ćirić 2015, 107). The classification of radio productions into specific genres, as well as the parallels drawn with electronic music, is closely linked to the technological development and consequently to the methods by which such works were created. When discussing radiophony in the narrowest sense, Vladan Radovanović situates it within the framework of tape music (Radovanović 2010, 39), which directly suggests the use of tape recorders and magnetic tapes as sound carriers. Radio art, by its very nature, was not intended for concert performance, but primarily for the medium of radio and radio transmission. However, with the remediation of radiophonic art in the digital environment, it turned out that radiophony had "become independent" of radio as a medium and an institution and nevertheless became a "self-sufficient form" (Maglov 2022, 234).

Marija Ćirić identifies several subtypes of experimental radiophony: an experimental form with a defined plot that implies a story, and therefore some non-musical context, an influx of text or narrative elements evoked through musical rather than verbal means; a transitional experimental form in which a script exists, but without a classical plot; and an experimental form based on concrete or electronic music, which constitutes the most abstract subtype of this field (Ćirić 2015, 108–109).

There is a considerable debate regarding the connection between experimental radiophony and music and whether radiophony can be regarded as music, or whether music can be understood as radiophony. Authors such as Marija Ćirić, Marija Maglov, Miroslav Jokić, and Vladan Radovanović conclude the similar claim that the most abstract form of radiophony can, in fact, be understood as electronic music, created within the framework of radio. This raises the question of whether such a radiophonic work, when placed in a different listening context, also changes its genre definition. In other words, can such a work be regarded as a work of dual genre determination – an electronic radiophonic work? From this perspective, multi-channel compositions that require more complex reproduction systems can be excluded – binaural, which implies the use of headphones, or so-called 5.1 and 7.1 systems (or more), which employ the

use of multiple speakers, specifically placed throughout the space with the addition of a subwoofer for low frequencies. This kind of reproduction became technically possible with the advent of digital radio, the so-called DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting), through which Radio Belgrade also broadcasts (Bojičić 2007), yet multi-channel broadcasting remains far from widespread.

On the other side, it is impossible to control the way the audience listens to the radio broadcast, nor were the techniques and modes of listening the same across different periods of time. A radio piece can also be presented in a concert hall in stereo format, with the audience positioned in front of two speakers; in such a context it is often characterized as an electronic composition. When it is solely a matter of reproduction, the work may be referred to as fixed electronics – the term that in earlier decades was commonly known as tape music (Radovanović 2010, 39), reflecting its recording and playback on magnetic tape. An idea that acoustic art eventually got out of the lines of the radio medium was explained by Schöning, drawing on the practices of American composers such as John Cage and Pauline Oliveros. Schoning notes that "polymedia performance with microphone, tape recorder, video, mixer and voice was the norm" and that "the next phase in development of acoustic art will draw on works of sound sculpture" (Schöning 1991, 324).

Perception And Acousmatic Reasoning of Three Works from the *Sound Workshop*

In her classification of radio art, Marija Ćirić identifies fields of radiophony: radio drama, documentary and experimental radiophonic form (Ćirić 2015, 104). She further divides the experimental radiophonic form into potential subtypes: the experimental form with defined plot, the transitional experimental form, and the experimental form of radiophony as concrete or electronic music (Ćirić 2015, 108–109). Acousmatic reasoning, mentioned by Kim Jun Suk (Jun Suk 2010), can be applied to those subtypes of experimental radiophony that most closely resembles concrete music, that is works that use samples of everyday sounds, since in such cases the natural tendency of human consciousness to generate mental images emerges whenever a distant association with a potential sound source can be made.

In the following text, works from the *Sound Workshop* repertoire will be analyzed semiotically and within their generic context, one from each of the previously mentioned subtypes of experimental radiophony: a form with a defined plot: *Košmar jednog drveta* [*The Nightmare of a Tree*] by Aleksandar Protić; a transitional form: Ivana Stefanović's *Metropola tišine* [*Metropolis of Silence*]; and the experimental form as concrete or electronic music: *Ekstaze* [*Extasis*] by David Atanacković. These works will be examined through the lens of acousmatic reasoning. These works were selected based on their sound material, their use of concrete sounds and human voice, and their association with the aforementioned typology.

The radio work *Košmar jednog drveta* (2001) by Aleksandar Protić, premiered as part of the *Sound Workshop*, is composed of a series of concrete sounds that are put in the role of a mute narrator tracing the life of a tree. The chosen sound samples can carry a clear semiotic dimension – at the beginning of the piece, the listener, drawing on personal and collective listening experience, recognizes the sounds of nature that establish the "scene" for the further musical flow. This flow gradually evolves into a complex rhythmic presentation of sound samples undergoing a metamorphosis, transferring the listener from the world of nature to the world of man. As the samples become more industrial the association with their source becomes blurred, until the work culminates with the unmistakable sounds of printers and crumpled paper. The role of interpunction in this piece is achieved through sonic points of distinct sound effects with clear associative meanings: the opening soundscape of nature; a certain axis of symmetry (cca. 5' 15"), marked by the sound of a falling tree, a sound that clearly and unequivocally refers both to its source and to the transition from the world of nature to the industrial world of humans, and finally, the concluding sound of a printer. In this way, the author alternately approaches and distances themselves from idea of the blurred sound source. This kind of musical progression activates the inference process with each new sound layer introduced that complements or replaces earlier ones. Every sample is carefully selected, carrying an internal rhythm that counterpoints the overall rhythm of the piece, while it also contains a tonal quality that, with its melodic qualities, takes over the role of instruments at certain moments. All of this indicates that the composition *The Nightmare of a Tree* may be placed within the experimental radio form with a defined plot; the plot is a life, death and afterlife of a tree, as well as a consequence that human interference has on nature, as well as a work of concrete music, intended for radio performance. It can also be interpreted as an instance of acousmatic reasoning. Because the listener`s inference process is highly engaged, and the attention is drawn to the spectromorphologcal qualities of each sound, which allow the author to use these sounds as instruments, this piece can also be interpreted as an instance of acousmatic reasoning.

Metropola tišine (1992), a radio poem by Ivana Stefanović, functions as a time portal that transports the listener to a long time ago, to the old Ras. Although without a developed plot, it evokes memories of a distant historical moment through carefully chosen sounds with clear associative power. The sound sources in this composition are not intentionally distanced from their original form, but they vividly paint mental images and, with a carefully constructed stereo image, create an auditory theater that situates the listener at the very center of the scene. Even though the audience does not necessarily have to be familiar with the non-musical context of the work, they will certainly be able to perceive what the author intended through the universal language of the selected sound samples. In addition to direct mental images, the creation of a natural atmosphere at the very beginning, followed by a transition to a scene of an inhabited village, through the introduction of the human voice, sounds and various, everyday activities, certain sound effects, such as thunderstorm, symbolize the connection between the moment in which the composition was created (the wartime period of the

1990s) and the historical moment of Old Ras preparing for battle (Veselinović Hofman 2011, 27). By repeating previously heard sounds within a slightly altered sonic environment, the author enables listeners to recall and engage in their own process of inference, thereby skillfully articulating the sections of the form through similarities in the sound material. As Mirjana Veselinović Hofman observes, concrete musical material may be understood as either inseparable or separable from the object from which it originates (Veselinović Hofman 2011, 31). It becomes separable through the very act of recording and 'separation' from its natural environment, yet it remains inseparable within the new ambient environment of the sound collage, where it creates a clear idea for the listener of its source. In the epilogue, the strong symbolic use of water underscores the restrained flow of time and inevitability of transience. This piece can be considered transitional because it incorporates elements of non-musical content; from the perspective of electronic music, these could be interpreted as aspects of programming. At the same time, the piece lacks a clearly defined script, offering instead a series of sonic cues that evoke listeners mental imagery. This effect is reinforced by the sophisticated organization of the stereo space, which immerses the listener within the sound environment itself, allowing one to perceive horses passing nearby, an eagle flying in the distance, the presence of a shepherd, or a church close at hand. *The Metropolis of Silence* represents both a transitional and an experimental form of radiophony.

David Atanacković's *Ekstaze* (2022), the winning work of the student award *Neda Depolo* for creative contribution to radio in 2022, represents radiophony in the narrowest sense of the term, that is, the most abstract subtype of experimental radiophony. Compared to the previous two compositions, it is somewhat more difficult to approach *Extasis*, since most of the sound layers are predominantly very incomprehensible, treated like musical parameters. The sole exception is a distorted and dislocated voice, processed by a guitar amp, the only verbal expression, that can be understood, and therefore its origin can be assumed. Just like in the previous two works, the basic material for this piece is concrete sounds. The transformation of the electronic layers can be followed clearly through the work's formal structure. Already on first listen, a recognizable reprise of distinctive opening material points to an underlying reliance on traditional musical forms. *Extasis* is primarily constructed as a tertiary form ABA. Atanacković approaches sound materials primarily through their sonic components, using, as he states: "only the smallest segments of recorded files, transforming them with different forms and techniques of granular synthesis, almost exclusively" (Atanacković 2025, unpublished interview). In this sense, the layers of the sound image are highly musical: some are more rhythmic, while others are melodically and harmonically articulated. These layers are superimposed to create a complex sonic texture, and in this sense, this work can be classified in the genre of electronic music.

If we compare all three realizations, each can be analyzed through the lens of acousmatic reasoning. *Nightmare of a Tree* and *Metropolis of Silence* skillfully employ the idea of a soundscape in different ways: Protić sets up a natural environment, revealing the palette of his sound colors from which further musical layers are formed, while Ste-

fanović evokes the environment of a long-lost city. All three works use concrete sound samples as their fundamental material, sometimes fully processed and sometimes retaining a clear association. For *Extasis*, Atanacković selects the building material by analyzing the initial recorded samples, spectromorphologicaly, treating the sound characteristics themselves as the primary element for shaping the musical flow. In this way, he guides the listener toward an active act of listening, without direct association, providing only a hint of the spoken word through a very distant, distorted voice sample (8'25"). *Nightmare of a Tree* and *Extasis* are closer to the electronic music in terms of material organization methodology, while *Metropolis of Silence* resembles a live scene more closely. All three works can be analyzed through the prism of concrete or electronic music, but they can also be classified within one of the subfields of experimental radio art. This observation raises a question of whether a composition can be heard as electronic or radiophonic based on the location of listening. In this discussion, there is a dual interpretation, considering the perspective of the performance context: when they are broadcast outside the radio they can be considered electronic or tape music, whereas when presented on the radio, they function as radiophonic composition.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of examples, and with consulting cited studies, it becomes evident that the initial idea, whether musical or non-musical develops through the organization of sound materials in a fully musical manner. Regardless of whether the author functions primarily as a director or composer, the selection of materials is guided by two criteria: primarily their sonic qualities and then their semantic content. In the further organization of the sound image, whether in constructing a soundscape or an imaginary musical layer, the rhythm of the presentation of sound samples, their internal rhythmic and spectral relationships, and their spatial positioning are all taken into account. Directing sound layers in this way closely resembles a compositional process in which the basis material is melodic or harmonic, in other words, a musical motif. At the same time, the radiophonic works at question can also be considered acousmatic because they involve the transmission of musical material through loudspeakers, they can be analyzed both semiotically and spectromorphologically, and the listener is not directly confronted with the sound source, while still forming mental images and assumptions through the reasoning process, especially when it comes to radiophonics with non-musical content, whether it is text or samples from everyday life. All of the above factors explain why experimental radio art in Serbia occupies a dual genre position between experimental radiophony and electronic music. With the advancement of technology and the growing independence of radiophony from radio, both in the process of creation, where it functions as a self-sufficient artistic form, depending on the context of listening, on the radio or in a concert hall, these two forms can be seen as two sides of the same coin.

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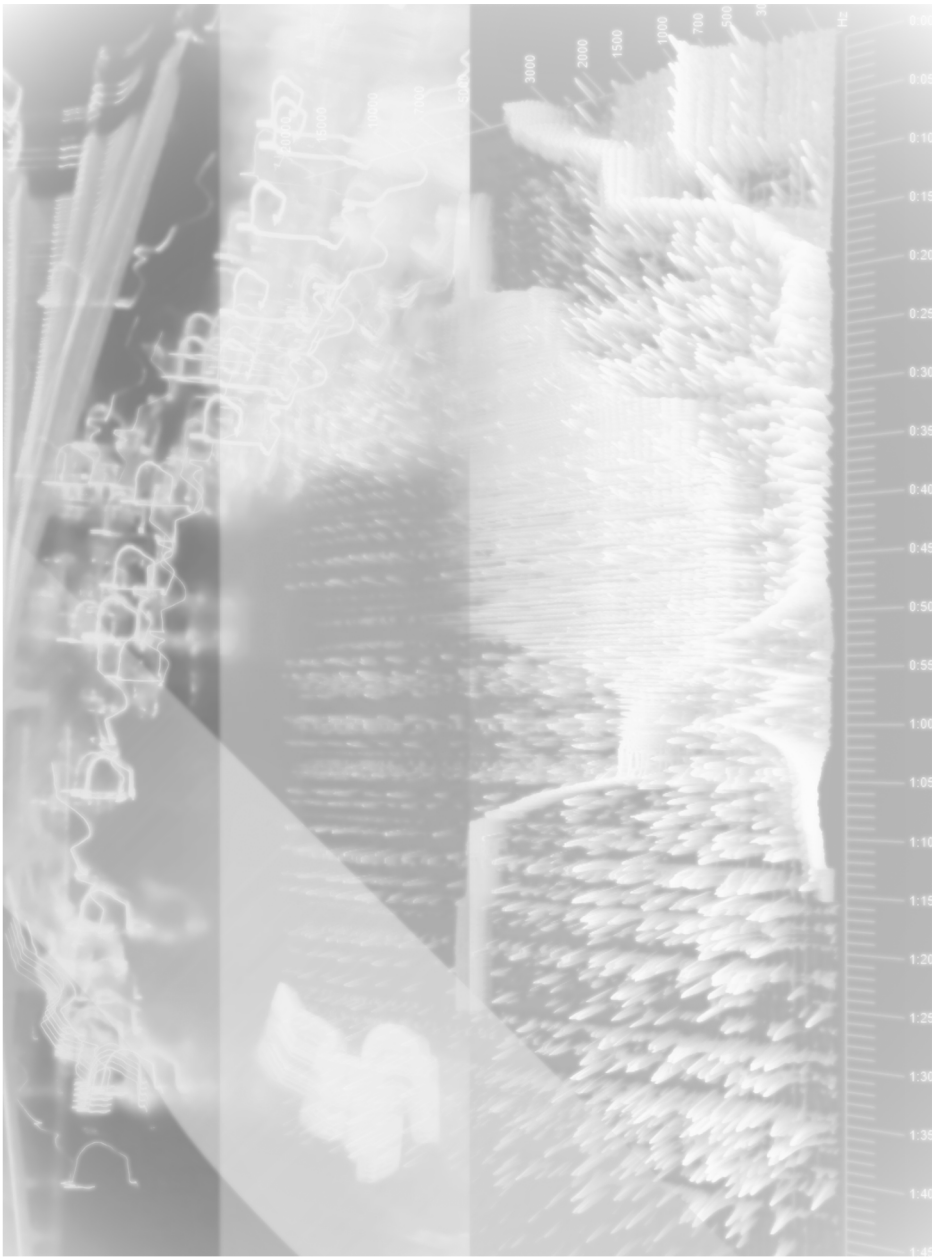
PITANJE ŽANRA EKSPERIMENTALNE RADIOFONIJE U SRBIJI (rezime)

Radiofonija u Srbiji, nastala pod okriljem Radio Beograda šezdesetih godina prošlog veka, s magnetofonskom revolucijom počinje da se raslojava na nekoliko podžanrova: radio drama, dokumentarna radio drama i eksperimentalna radiofonija. Najveću afirmaciju eksperimentalna radiofonija dobija kroz posebnu emisiju Trećeg programa Radio Beograda – *Radionicu zvuka*. *Radionica zvuka*, koja nastaje 1985. godine, kao jedan od ciljeva ima internacionalizaciju jezika radiofonije i prodor radiofonskih ostvarenja van granica tadašnje SFR Jugoslavije. Kroz istorijski prikaz razvoja radija i radijske umetnosti sagledava se kako, s mogućnošću magnetofonskog snimanja i pojavom stereofonije, ideje o fokusu na zvuk kao muzički objekat za sebe i njegov sadržaj, kao i osnovni gradivni element muzičkog toka, okupiraju radove sve više autora. U ovom tekstu ispituje se mogućnost transformacije žanrovske određenosti u kontekstu načina slušanja određenog dela. U isto vreme, kroz prizmu akuzmatike i akuzmatičkog rasuđivanja se sagledava ideja o višesložnosti žanra eksperimentalnih radiofonija u Srbiji.

Beyond the Main theme



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COPYING AND SELLING THE FUTURE'S PAST: BUCHLA/ARP REPLICAS AND INTANGIBLE SONIC PRACTICE

KEYWORDS
Electronic musical instruments; Preservation; Replication; Authenticity; Heritage studies; Intangible cultural heritage; Synthesizers; Buchla 100; ARP 2500

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the role of replicas in the preservation and transmission of historically significant electronic musical instruments, focusing specifically on a DIY reconstruction of the Buchla 100 system and a mass-produced Eurorack reinterpretation of the ARP 2500 developed by Behringer. The inquiry is informed by fieldwork at the Willem Twee Studios in 's-Hertogenbosch, an institution notable for its commitment to maintaining rare synthesizers in an operational state and making them accessible to performers and the public. This approach foregrounds the tension between museological imperatives of conservation and the cultural value derived from continued sonic and performative engagement.

Replicas are here conceptualized as a form of *second-order preservation*, wherein the continuity of technical practice, sound production, and performance traditions is privileged over strict adherence to material authenticity. The LA67 Buchla 100 reconstruction exemplifies a fidelity-driven model of replication, seeking to reproduce the design and circuitry of the original 1960s system with minimal deviation. By contrast, Behringer's ARP 2500 modules embody a corporate, consumer accessibility-oriented approach, reconfiguring the instrument within the standardized Eurorack format while sacrificing systemic and historical specificity. These contrasting strategies raise critical questions regarding authenticity, authority, and the extent to which replication practices democratize or dilute historical experience.

Drawing upon scholarship in musicology, heritage studies, and the study of technology, this paper argues that replicas function simultaneously as material artifacts and as conduits for intangible heritage. Beyond preserving circuitry or physical design, they sustain traditions of practice, performance, and aesthetic engagement that would otherwise be rendered inaccessible. While replicas cannot fully reproduce the historical aura of original instruments, they operate as vital agents in maintaining cultural lineages of electronic sound synthesis, ensuring continuity between past innovations and present communities of musicians, scholars, and practitioners.

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Introduction

In April of 2024 I had the opportunity to visit the Willem Twee Studio in the town of Hertogenbosch, 92 km south of Amsterdam. The Studio is unique in that it contains a literal treasure trove of vintage and rare electronic musical instruments, such as keyboard and modular synthesizers. The studio has one of the few fully working Arp 2500 synthesizers in existence and a dazzling studio for "test equipment" which was the basis for most electronic music in the 1950s and early 60s before the advent and adoption of voltage control synthesizers. What is particularly remarkable about the studio is that these expensive and, in some cases, irreplaceable instruments are not kept behind glass or hovered over by nervous technicians and archivists. Instead, they are made available as resources to be used by essentially anyone willing to make the trip down to Hertogenbosch, whether they be working musicians, curious academics or the public. The space itself has an air of functionality, meaning it is a space busy with people doing things with the masses of equipment tucked into almost every corner. Instruments that end up in the Willem Twee Studio do not go there to die or to be preserved in a museal limbo. Instead, they go there to continue their life as literal instruments for human expression and creativity.

My experience at the Twee studio brought to the forefront many issues and questions around the preservation of historical musical instruments, notably in terms of the ongoing tension between the rigours of preservation and cultural viability. Musical instruments have a unique cross temporal longevity in terms of their ability to maintain cultural and technical relevance across generations. A guitar or violin is as relevant today as they were in the 16th century and have been adapted, both materially and in terms of playing techniques, throughout history to remain current. The same cannot be said for many other historical artefacts that populate various museums around the world – from ancient weapons to steam powered locomotives. Musical instruments are also invested with deep and continuous layers of individual and social meaning and "are part of human history in depth that is equalled by few other types of objects" (Rognoni 2019, 403). As such, musical instruments have meaning primarily through their active use as opposed to their being static referential markers or indicators of past human practices and cultures. Indeed, during my visit, the comment was made that some of the instruments were "rescued" from state-run museums where they languished, albeit under ideal conditions, in museum basements and storage facilities.

In the context of museum preservation "sound is often the primary quality of an instrument in the outside world, but very rarely the reason for its acquisition in a museum" (Rognoni 2019, 407) given the preference, at least conventionally, for static displays of objects singled out for their historical and cultural importance. Arguably, this emphasis on 'sound' is what guides the approach taken by the Twee studio, if 'sound' is to be considered as part of the larger assemblage of musical instruments being used for creative purposes by independent actants. My aim, however, is to take things one

step further by asking the question of whether contemporary commercial replications of historically important electronic instruments can be considered as a viable means for preservation – notably preservation as realized through active and continued use of a musical/technical tradition, approach and skill/performance set and sound. One could consider this a type of 'second order preservation' that is willing to compromise authenticity for the sake of maintaining a continuity between past and present forms and practices of musical synthesis.

Accordingly, this study revolves around two types of replications, the first being a DIY project where, over the course of a few months, I built a replica of a Buchla 100 system, sometimes referred to as "Mort's Barge" after the pioneering electronic music composer Morton Subotnick who used the system for his groundbreaking compositions.[1] The second engagement is with a mass produced replica of the very rare Arp 2500 modular synthesizer, originally sold by Arp in 1970 and today rendered as a Eurorack version by Behringer, a large corporation that manufactures a variety of musical instruments and studio equipment, including a growing inventory of vintage synthesizer replicas. The reason for selecting these two instruments stems first from their historical importance in terms of their contribution to the development of musical synthesis and secondly to them being essentially unobtainable due to their rarity. The two instruments also represent two poles of the replica spectrum. On the one hand there is the dedicated DIY community that maintains the legacy of the Buchla 100 through activities ranging from sharing knowledge to reproducing versions of the original system. On the other there is a large corporation that harnesses the powers of mass production to make highly affordable replicas of vintage electronic instruments. In either case, it could be argued that both instances preserve the sound of these instruments in the context of active use by a broad range of musicians that potentially serves as a "legitimate and fulfilling alternative to the use of the originals" (Rognoni 2019, 411). That said, things tend to get murky whether on the DIY level or in corporate boardrooms, where remaining 'true' to the original designs and maintaining historical accuracy are tempered by the pressures associated with quick solutions, a lack of resources/knowledge, personal agendas and short-term profits. As such there is the very real risk of the replicas becoming mere approximations of the originals and catering more to a type of techno nostalgia and the consumer-driven urge to own something that has the simulated aura of a rarified object. Issues around authenticity and historical accuracy are further complicated by the DIY/commercial divide, represented here by the Buchla 100 project and the Arp 2500 from Behringer. In the former case, the relatively small group of Buchla enthusiasts who engage in the building of their own systems to supplement those still produced by the Buchla company are actively concerned with historical accuracy and see their DIY activity as a means to responsibly engage with and maintain

1 For a general overview of Subotnick's music and approach to synthesis, see Morton Subotnick. (2011, April). Morton Subotnick on the creation and legacy of Silver Apples of the Moon. ASCAP. Retrieved August 20, 2025, from https://www.ascap.com/news-events/articles/2011/04/p-Morton-Subotnick-on-the-Creation-and-Legacy-of-Silver-Apples-of-the-Moon.

the legacy of the early Buchla systems.[2] In the latter, Behringer is often criticized by the broader synthesizer and electronic music community for their perceived predatory actions in terms of churning out cheap versions of classic synthesizers (*Future Music*, 2020). However, such critiques are counterbalanced by an equally vocal group who see Behringer as a kind of democratic champion committed to making synthesizers 'for the people,' as opposed to just well-healed collectors or those with sufficient skills and time to build their own replicas.[3] While these issues will be further unpacked and explored below, it is worth noting at the outset how this tension between authenticity and access lies at the root of many discussions around how best to preserve historically important electronic instruments.

Preservation and Replication

The preservation of historical musical instruments, whether acoustic or electronic, raises complex and compelling questions regarding the interplay between musical conservation, curatorial ethics, historical authenticity, musical functionality and cultural value. In the context of institutions, such as museums and archives, matters are made even more difficult because of the competing tensions between active use and protective preservations – should historical instruments be made available to be played and risk deterioration or be safely kept behind protective barriers? Added into the mix here are replicas, which are also fraught with a range of debates, notably those concerned with authenticity.

Many historical instruments are fragile pieces, whether made of organic materials such as wood, gut, hide, ivory or the inorganic insides of capacitors, transistors and resistors. In both cases, time and use take their toll, breaking down the integrity of these materials which in turn compromise the specific acoustic abilities and nuances of these instruments. Preservation strategies tend to prioritize stabilization, avoiding interventions that might render the instrument playable but compromise its historical authenticity (Bell 2007). Common preservation strategies include techniques such as the creation and maintenance of stable environments, restricted access and the use of inert display environments that minimize any inter-material reactions. While beneficial to keeping precious artefacts preserved, they also run the risk of silencing them by stripping the instruments' primary function and identity as a sonic object, notably in terms of artistic and creative use (Smith 2007). The rarer or more unique the instrument, the greater the tension between preservation and active use, which leads to the difficult task faced by curators of having to balance educational, access and outreach goals with the

2 There are many threads in the Modwiggler forum, which is mainly dedicated to modular synthesis in its myriad forms. See for example this thread where authenticity and clones are the main topic of conversation: https://www.modwiggler.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=3901611&hilit=authentic+buchla+-clones#p3901611.

3 See for example, "Behringer Has Killed the Vintage Synth Market | It's over folks! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooGJOblhtsc&ab_channel=I%27mEspenKraftandyou%27renot.

duties of custodianship (Barclay 1997). More recent scholarship, such as by Gabriele Rossi Rognoni (2019), challenges rigid preservationist stances and instead advocates for responsible, documented, and limited use, particularly as informed by research or historically informed performance contexts.

The use of replicas provides one route out of having to balance custodianship with wider access by allowing performers, researchers and the public an opportunity to engage with the design and sound world of historical instruments without risking damage to the originals. Yet the use of replicas is not without issue, with the central concern being that of authenticity. How authentic can a replica be if it lacks the age, patina, and context of an original instrument? As in the case of the Buchla and Arp replicas, makers face the challenge of approximating historical sounds by using modern materials or guesswork to fill in missing information (Beekman 2003) due to incomplete schematics, multiple versions or obsolete components. This leads to the argument that no replica can truly reproduce the timbre, resonance or performative nuances of the original due to the subtle and intangible differences caused by aging, craftsmanship and idiosyncrasies related to internal circuits, components and electrical flows. Others see such objections as overly rigid and linear, arguing instead that any such concerns are overridden by the educational and experiential value that replicas provide. "It is simply an empirical falsehood that replicas fail to excite or inspire us. If the effect is there, we should not worry about the nature of the cause" (Sandis 2016, 242). Informative here is the early music movement of the late 20th century where replicas were really the only realistic and accessible option for historically informed performances, as noted by Taruskin (1995) and Butt (2002), who argue that the increasing access to high quality reconstructions of Baroque and Classical instruments should be seen as enabling technologies that bridge historical scholarship and living performance.

Replicas also play a large role in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. While a musical instrument itself is tangible, the knowledge of how it was played, tuned, or understood within its cultural context is either inaccessible or distorted. The use of replicas can assist in the revival and preservation of historical musical practices, techniques and performance styles and furthermore support associated cultural traditions and repertoires. The pursuit of authenticity, however, is elusive and the use of historical instruments, whether original or replicas, can lead to a kind of 'invented tradition' (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983) where contemporary performances and techniques are informed, often unintentionally, by current sensibilities, aesthetics and approaches that project contemporary ideas onto the past. While purists may find such historical 'bleed' troubling, it can also be argued that musical heritage needs to be continually "performed to remain meaningful, which renders the intangible heritage central to how people relate to the world that surrounds them" (Howard 2022, 29). As interfaces between tangible and intangible cultural heritages, musical instruments are key to the materiality of music, "as part of the sensecape that links people to places, times and technologies" (Howard 2022, 27). The meaning of a musical instrument resides in its functionality and as an object that is meant to be used, often in ways that are not his-

torically static but responsive to shifts in cultural practice, aesthetics and contemporary contexts. Replicas are part of this shifting landscape and arguably inject further nuances within the mix of historical and contemporary musical practice.

Processes of Replication

As noted, this study is based on two primary engagements with the actual material of the objects under consideration, which is to say, actively building an instrument and its case on the one hand, and purchasing pre-made components, which were then installed in a prefabricated Eurorack cabinet. The decision to engage with the study in this manner takes into consideration not only the technical accuracy behind the replicas but also their affective characteristics – bodily, emotional and sensory experiences which are often pre-conscious, non-verbal and visceral that occur before or beyond language. Vintage synthesizers – Buchla, Moog, Arp, Synthi, Oberheim, etc. – are more than tools or means to a musical end. They are deeply cultural and affective objects that provide multisensory experiences that are rich with imagined and historical resonance and often create feelings of reverence and nostalgia. I can attest to this in my visit to the Twee studio which was akin to entering into an exclusive, almost sacred space for synthesizer enthusiasts. Original instruments produce strong affective atmospheres where visual elements, patinas and even smell impact the pre-conscious sensations that are part of what Brian Massumi describes as the "non-conscious experience of intensity" associated with such machines (Shouse, E. 2005, n.p.). Added to the mix are cultural affects – what Ahmed calls "sticky" emotions where "emotions can move through the movement or circulation of objects" (Ahmed 2004, 11). Users often feel connected to musical lineages, such as the avant-garde works of Morton Subotnick in terms of the Buchla 100 and Elaine Radique's work with the Arp 2500. Combined, these affective characteristics contribute to the continued appeal of these instruments and are integral to how they are constructed with respect to historical discourses. Indeed, the set of faceplates and circuit boards that I purchased from LA67 were sold under the banner of "Mort's Barge," and described as being "based on a configuration made famous by the composer/musician Morton Subotnick" (LA67 2025). Behringer also draws on iconic artists to support the sale of its Arp 2500 clone, proclaiming that the original was "used by artists like The Who, Jean Michel Jarre, Vangelis, Kraftwerk and so many more, giving us some of the greatest records and film soundtracks we've ever heard" (Behringer, *Oscillator Module*, 2025). Such references speak also to the mythologies associated with these vintage synthesizers where "tangible aspects such as functionality, playability and quality" (Sommer 2011, 574) are coupled with intangible associations – legends, "complex musical freedom" (Buchla USA, 2025) or as Behringer puts it for their version of the Arp 2600, where ownership is "like having your piece of history enabling you to re-create timeless classics or forge your own musical path" (Behringer, *Arp 2600*, 2025). The revival of vintage synthesizers then could be seen as what Roy Sommer identifies

as "metadesign," which "creates not only myths of authenticity, but also contributes to the commercial recycling of cultural heritage (577). As such, the past not only sells but is deeply ingrained in the ongoing cultural constructions of the meaning and value of these devices. Recreating these synthesizers can thus be seen as an act of connection – connection with the past but also a connection with an established legacy of artistic and creative accomplishments and their corresponding mythologies. The Buchla 100 and Arp 2500 are heavily loaded objects which weigh on any perceived tensions between originals and copies and the extent to which either can be deployed in contemporary musical and creative production.

Building the Buchla 100

At present, replicas of the Buchla 100 are limited to a small handful of DIY suppliers who have a limited range of printed circuit boards (PCBs) and panels available and in one case, the option of having a small system (Mort's Barge) built for you at considerable expense. Another option is to use online resources to produce your own PCBs and panels, either on your own or through manufacturers able and willing to do small batch production. Given my technical knowledge and abilities, I opted for the first option and ordered a set of PCBs and front panels for "Mort's Barge," from LA67, with an additional oscillator (Model 158) and a touch-controlled voltage source (Model 114). As a whole, the system is composed of the following modules:

1. Two Dual Sine/Sawtooth Generators (Model 158)
2. Dual Control Gate (Model 110)
3. Dual Attack Generator (Model 180)
4. Timing Pulse Generator (Model 140)
5. Sequential Voltage Source (Model 123)
6. Touch Control Voltage Source (Model 114)

For each of the modules, online documentation in the form of a bill of materials (BOM), which listed the parts required for each module and basic build notes, were provided. Each BOM included a link for a prepopulated 'basket' of components from Mouser, one of the largest suppliers of electronic components for both consumers and industries. Additional components not available from Mouser were sourced from other suppliers, such as Tayda. Upon arrival, the components were sorted to correspond with the BOMs for the individual modules. The building process took place over the course of six months and involved the placing and soldering of over 500 components. As a form of quality assurance, each component was doubly confirmed from the BOM prior to being soldered in place. The modules were assembled one at a time, beginning with the two 158s and ending with the 114. For each build, the process was as follows:

1. Components were placed in the order of resistors, capacitors, diodes, transistors, switches, LEDs, input/output jacks and potentiometers.
2. The values for each component were matched to the specifications in the BOM and tested using a handheld component tester prior to being soldered in place.
3. Switches, LEDs, input/output jacks and potentiometers were mounted in the final stage, which involved fitting them to the panel board
4. Upon completion, each module was powered and subject to a basic test for functionality.

Visually, the assembled modules correspond to the aesthetics of the original which also used white panels, large 'Davies' knobs, red and black banana jacks and the non-standard 'tini-jax' (3.58mm) favoured by Buchla in contrast to the ubiquitous 3.5mm jacks found in most modular synthesizers. I did have the option of using 3.5mm jacks but as a gesture towards authenticity I decided to remain true to the tini-jax option.

Once all the modules were completed, the next step was to house them in an appropriate case. While pre-built options exist, I opted to make one myself in a style that matches the simple cases of the originals, which were essentially boxes with an open front and a recessed lip to screw the modules to. My woodworking skills are modest, so I decided on a straightforward rabbet joint to secure one board to the other. Once constructed, the boards were glued and nailed together, stained in dark walnut and an internal power supply, auxiliary power outlet (for the 114) and a switched socket for a standard AC line were added. Aesthetically, the completed synthesizer looks similar to photos of the original system, and the simple and unrefined cabinets have a suitably vintage 'vibe' to them.

The all-white front of my Buchla, however, is interrupted by two red panels for the 158 oscillators, which is a nod the infamous red panel coated with LSD, which when touched would lead to mind-expanding synth experiences during the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s "where electronic music and psychedelic drugs were intertwined" (Synthtopia 2019, n.p.). While the veracity of the story remained contestable for years, the existence of at least one LSD dosed red panel was confirmed by a repair technician who started tripping after dislodging a crystal-like substance from a vintage Buchla that he was restoring for Cal State University in East Bay, which apparently had been stored in a dark room since the 1960s. It is not clear when the panel was covered in LSD or if Buchla himself had anything to do with it. But facts are beside the point, as what matters here is how the red panel story contributes to the overall narrative and mystique of the Buchla synthesizer as an instrument that can transport one into unconventional places and states of mind. In my case, the red panels are just coated in ordinary paint and were produced by a small manufacturer in England using FTP files made available by LA67 on their website.

For the most part, the building process was straightforward given that all the components were through hole as opposed to surface mount and, given that the circuits were based on a design from the mid 1960s, did not involve any integrated circuits. The only instance where I needed to reach out to a forum where DIY Buchla builds are discussed was for the 114, where it was initially unclear on how to connect the pads for the touch controller to the main circuit board. The response was almost immediate and complete with images and detailed notes on how to proceed.

Externally, my Buchla 100 replica looks authentic enough with the only discernible 'tell' being that Buchla's name, CBS Musical Instruments, or that of the San Francisco Tape Music Center, are not indicated on the bottoms of the panels but instead bear the name of LA67 Musical Instruments. Internally, the differences are more obvious. The original, handmade circuit boards designed by Buchla are described as having "Rorschach test-like layouts that may well have been inspired by the incoming psychedelia of the period. You might see a mantis on the back of the Dual Square Wave Generator Model 144, or perhaps a muscular figure if you view it upside down" (Brown-Cácere 2024 n.p.). In contrast, the PCBs from LA67 evoke no such associations, given that the circuit traces are not visible, and the layout of the components is decidedly ordered, reflecting the automated precision of contemporary PCB manufacturing. The individual components – the resistors, capacitors, transistors and so on – are also contemporary versions of the originals, with improved specifications, tolerances and stability. That said, LA67's 100 modules are generally considered to be highly authentic replicas amongst the general DIY community, with the circuit design taken directly from the original blueprints drawn up by Don Buchla and the mid 1960s for the San Francisco Tape Music Center.[4]

Assembling the (B)Arp 2500[5]

The process of recreating a version of the Arp 2500 was a very different experience than that of the Buchla 100 for obvious reasons. I did not build the Arp 2500 clone, not even the case, which I did consider but abandoned due to time and cost but may return to at a later date. The Arp project involved a degree of archival work in terms of deciding what number of individual modules best replicated an original Arp, which essentially involved looking through old photographs, user manuals and consulting forums to guide my decisions on what to purchase. I also added two additional non-Behringer modules designed and built by Rob Keeble, who was one of the engineers working with Behringer on the design of the 2500 series. The first of these modules, the AM1047K, adds the missing keyboard percussion feature to the Behringer 1047 Multi Mode Filter

4 The high-water mark for Buchla restoration is the M.E.M.S. project, led by Chip Flynn and Mark Milanovich. The project reverse engineers Buchla 100 modules to make period accurate replicas in addition to restoring original instruments, notably the restoration of the Library of Congress's Buchla 100 system in March 2024. https://www.memsproject.info/. See also Northrop 2004.

5 The Behringer Arp 2500 modules are often collectively referred to as the (B)Arp 2500.

and allows percussive ringing tones to be generated from an attached CV and Gate keyboard or sequencer (AMS synths). The AM 1035 is part of the 'lost' series envisioned by Keeble, where he recreates modules for the Arp 2500 that never made it into production during the original run in the 1970s.[6] The 1035 is a Triple Modulator and Mixer that has three quadrant modulators that provide ring modulation, mixing and VCA capabilities, which adds a notable degree of flexibility to the Behringer Arp 2500. My completed (B) Arp 2500 is comprised of the following modules:

B 1004 Oscillator Module (total of 4)
AM 1047K Keyboard Percussion
B 1047 Multimode Filter Resonator
B 1006 Filter Amplifier
B 1003 Envelope Generator
B 1033 Envelope Generator
B 1027 Clocked Sequential Control
B 1050 Mix Sequencer
B 1005 Mod Amp
B 1016 Dual Noise/Random Voltage Generator
B 1036 Sample and Hold/Random Voltage Generator
AM 1035 Triple Modular

All modules are housed in a standard 2x140 HP Eurorack Case from Behringer.

Aesthetically, the Behringer Arp 2500 bears only a passing similarity to the original, mainly due to the shape and colours of the control knobs and the general layout of the individual modules. Missing is the large patching matrix and of course the size, given that the Behringer version is designed for Eurorack and thus more compact. There would be no mistaking the Behringer version for the original, not even at a distance. As far as the actual circuits go, Keeble noted how from the very beginning of the project, Uli Behringer's intention was to remain as true to the original as possible, using original schematics as the basis for the redesign and to keep any changes down to a minimum. Keeble does, however, acknowledge that there are notable differences – some of the LFOs are unable to go as slow as the original, the filter oscillation is not quite the same and sometimes the sound is not "as dark and moody as the original."[7] On the upside, the use of current components results in the remake being more stable than the 1970s version and given its Eurorack format, it is easier to integrate with contemporary work flows. While different in form factor, the sonic experience of the Behringer Arp 2500 modules is considered by many reviewers to be close enough to the real thing for most users, especially given the low price point.[8]

6 For more information about these lost modules, see https://www.amsynthstore.co.uk/browse/cat1461449_654544.aspx.
7 Rob Keeble, interview by Andreas Kitzmann, Zoom, September 24, 2024, 4:00 p.m. EST.
8 For a detailed review of 1004, 1004 and 1047 (in German) see: https://www.amazona.de/test-behringer-eurorack-module-1004-1005-1047-nach-arp-2500/?fbclid=IwY2xjawMG4hNleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBicmlkETFmZk9wZ0xORk91VG5vSG1UAR4YTY1TlWQacujrw3U7KG49PCppmKA-u6idnQ3yddRPD-

Of course, online there is considerable dissent here, fuelled in part by critics of Behringer's business model and culture.

Playing the Buchla 100

As noted, the form factor of the LA67 Buchla 100 replica is the same as the original, both in terms of layout and the various CV and patch points. For this reason, I was able to consult the original manual for the Buchla 100 as a starting point for my own explorations and to follow patch suggestions from online videos that feature performers using the few remaining Buchla 100 systems still in use, such as those at Mills College and The Library of Congress in the United States. Such factors contributed to a feeling of authentically engaging with a 'real' Buchla 100, notably in terms of the tactile experiences with respect to using the instrument. Missing, of course, were the affective experiences associated with playing an authentic historical instrument, especially those once used by pioneers and legendary performers. In that sense, I am 'not touching history' when I twist the knobs of my Buchla, as it is a brand-new object without the patina of past use. However, what I am doing is engaging with historical synthesis techniques in a manner that is the same as the original. There might be differences in sound due to the discrepancies between aging internal components and contemporary ones, but beyond that the 'playing' of the replica Buchla 100 modules and those of the original are identical. One effect here is the preservation of the performative and sonic experience of a historical instrument as opposed to the object itself. What could be considered authentic is the performative and technical acts associated with the Buchla 100 which essentially keeps alive the skill sets, conventions and aesthetic constructions associated with that instrument.

Playing the Behringer Arp 2500

I am fortunate enough to have spent a few hours exploring the Arp 2500 that is part of the collection at the Twee Studios, which provides a tangible point of comparison with respect to my experience with the Behringer clone. The key difference between the two is of course the physical nature of the engagement. The original Arp 2500 is a very large instrument, housed in solid wooden cabinets whereas the Behringer version is significantly smaller and thus portable and far more diminutive than its monumental counterpart. Another key distinction is the use of sliding matrix switches in the original Arp to make connections between the various modules, whereas the Behringer version uses conventional patch cords, as is the custom for the Eurorack format. The matrix makes for a much 'cleaner' aesthetic than the patch cable version, where even a

NYUnXpYy-j2i215Cg_aem_RfusW4NEFb4u_DCbZ0Y63g.

relatively simple configuration can quickly turn into a tangle of cords that often get in the way of the knobs and switches of the individual modules. The cable-free nature of the original has the effect of reducing the visual complexity of the playing experience, which is not only less distracting but also conducive to an arguably more intimate and mindful engagement with the instrument, something that Elaine Radigue embraced in her decision to purchase her 2500 as opposed to other synthesizers available in 1970, such as the Buchla system (Holterbach, 2013, 30).

One of the key features of the original Arp 2500 was the complexity of its routing system, which allowed performers to mix the signals of the various modules in unusual and at times counterintuitive ways, such as "outputs to outputs." The siding matrix systems is set up so that every module has "20 easily patched buses that multi-mix with up to 59 others," which is akin to having "10-20 patch cords into one I/O point," which while technically possible would result in a tangle of cords so deep that it would essentially obscure the panels entirely (KSS 2021).

Arguably then, what is missing from the Behringer remake is what one Modwigger commentator described as the "systemic virtues" of the original, which is more than just a collection of modules but rather a well-conceived and integrated ecosystem (KSS 2021). In contrast, the Behringer 2500 is indeed a collection of modules that for the most part replicates the design and sonic potentials of the original components but lacks the interoperability and seamless connectivity of the Arp 2500. The Behringer version is not conceived as a system per se, nor even marketed as such, given that one can purchase one or two of the modules to add a bit of Arp 2500 'flavour' to an existing modular system. In terms of playability or workflow, the experience is fundamentally different. Even my short time with the Twee Studio Arp allowed me to appreciate the instrument as a kind of self-contained, deeply organic instrument made up of wide-ranging interconnectivity that could be attained via the simple sliding of a matrix switch. My far more extended time with my Behringer 2500 is completely different. While I have taken steps to create a self-contained Arp 2500 system, with generally the same types and number of modules that an original version might have (to the extent that is possible), the use of patch cables with physically smaller modules disrupts the performative flow to the point that it is far more static in nature. In other words, I connect a series of modules in a specific way and then stay with that patch for the duration of a particular session to fully explore the possibilities that might lie within it. While I can certainly make new connections or undo existing ones, there is a tendency, at least in my case, to resist doing so given the time and cognitive energy required for a particular configuration, especially a complex one.

As a way to get closer to the Arp 2500 experience with my collection of replicant modules, I incorporated a desktop matrix mixer from Erica Synths, which has a 16x16 grid of inputs and outputs, which allows for 256 connections.[9] This is far less from what is possible with the Arp 2500, given that it featured 20 rows of connections above

9 https://www.ericasynths.lv/shop/standalone-instruments-1/desktop-matrix-mixer/.

and below the modules, which means that each module could connect 20 rows to 20 columns, with each module being able to connect to any of the rows in either section, allowing for multiple inputs to be routed to the same inputs or outputs.

From an experiential perspective, my interactions with the Behringer 2500 foregrounds the pursuit of the *sound* and *operations* of the Arp 2500 modules as opposed to the tactile and cognitive experience provided by the entirety of the original instrument. As it is not a one-to-one replica on a systemic level, the focus is arguably more on the individual modules and how they can be connected to maximize their respective abilities and their overall sonic potential. This potential can be pursued, as I have done, via a collection of modules that matches, for the most part, the same modules in the original system. In this case, Arp 2500 patches and techniques, such as those used by Radigue, can be replicated, albeit not with the flexibility and interoperability provided by the original sliding pin matrix. However, what is not being replicated, as previously noted, is the workflow of the original and its sheer physicality which effectively creates a type of second order replication where key elements are being copied as opposed to the entirety of the technical ecosystem.

Conclusion

The two replicas being considered here can be positioned at either end of the preservationist spectrum. One the one side is the LA67 Buchla 100, which is intentionally designed as an exact replica in terms of remaining true to the original as much as possible, with no added features, no changes in format and maintaining the original circuit layouts and component types. The use of Buchla-specific voltages and jacks help to maintain it as an isolated technological ecosystem that remains within the technical limits of its historical period. Arguably the Buchla 100 is easier to replicate in its original form given its relatively simpler design parameters, unlike the Arp 2500. It is also situated within a community of Buchla enthusiasts, an admittedly niche group that has a vested interest in maintaining the technical and aesthetic integrity of the Buchla ecosystem. The efforts of small, often one person producers of Buchla circuit boards and faceplates, or complete systems, come under considerable scrutiny in forums such as Modwiggler, where technical specifications, component choices and circuit design are carefully compared to their original counterparts.

On the other end of the spectrum are Behringer's remakes of the Arp 2500 modules. Aimed at the mass market and the product of a large corporation with a vast supply chain, Behringer does not adhere to the purism of the Buchla DIY scene and instead privileges affordability and compatibility with contemporary modular synthesis. Unlike 'Mort's Barge,' Behringer's Arp 2500 is not conceived as a complete, isolated system, but rather as a series of independent modules that preserve many of the features of the originals. One can, as I did, purchase all the modules and house them in a specific case in an effort to recreate the majority of the Arp 2500's functionality, albeit without

the benefits of the patching matrix. However, one could also just acquire a selection of modules, such as filter or oscillator and incorporate them into an existing modular system made up of disparate modules, which effectively merges past and present with respect to synthesis technologies and aesthetics. As previously noted, Behringer aimed to create replicas of the original modules, with any changes being those required by the desire to maintain a low price point and to reconfigure the original format for Eurorack. The result is a collection of modules that, for the most part, are considered to be 'close enough' to the originals to warrant restrained respect from synthesists wanting to have their own version of an unattainable instrument from a bygone era.

The differences between the (B)Arp 2500 and the Buchla 100 replicas raise interesting questions about the historical preservation of musical instruments within the context of contemporary consumer culture and musical practitioners. Among these is the issue of whether the efforts of producers such as LA67 isolate the Buchla within a restricted zone of exclusionary musical practice where the preservation of past techniques takes precedence over contemporary and future advances in musical synthesis. A point of contrast here is the issue of the Buchla 200 system by Tiptop Audio, which in cooperation with Buchla has reproduced Don Buchla's 200 series and converted it to Eurorack standards.[10] As with Behringer's Arp 2500 remakes, the Tiptop modules can be made part of a mixed modular system, thereby combining Buchla-style synthesis with other approaches. Or as a counterpart, one could assemble a complete Tiptop Buchla system in order to maintain the integrity of the original system. Or, as a twist, connect that complete system to other modular rigs thanks to the Eurorack standard. Like the Behringer approach, Tiptop allows for a tangible crosstalk between historical and contemporary forms of electronic music technology, which arguably both preserves and advances the performance and compositional forms associated with these instruments. Another interesting take on the preservation of classic analog synthesis is taken by the aptly named UK-based firm Analogue Solutions, which describes itself as a company that specializes in "specializing in true analogue synthesizers, sequences and Eurorack modules" (Analogue Solutions 2025). Among their offerings is the TC500, which is a massive instrument that replicates the pin matrix, module layout and general form factor of the original Arp 2500, complete with the wooden cabinets and optional 'wings' that can be added to expand the core system. From a distance, the TC500 looks like the Arp that I encountered in the Twee Studio. However, as is pointed out on their website, it is not an Arp 2500 clone and the individual modules utilize circuits designed by Analogue Solutions. What is being replicated and preserved is the general experience of using the Arp 2500, notably in terms of the user interface (the pin matrix) which is identified as one of the key elements of the Arp experience, although the Arp used a matrix based on sliders whereas the TC5000 uses pins.

On the flip side, of course, is that such hybrid systems run the risk of erasing historical forms of musical practice which, if left to run its course, will effectively leave us with

10 https://tiptopaudio.com/buchla/.

mutant forms of classic synthesizers with the originals kept behind glass in museums and private collections. Some accuse Behringer of messing with the synthesis gene pool, with their ongoing remakes of classic synthesizers which while very affordable, are considered pale imitations of the originals. Indeed, a common lament is that the practices of companies such as Behringer will eventually obliterate the market for others who seek to preserve the features and quality of vintage electronic instruments. While there is some merit to this argument it is equally valid to state that affordable remakes, such as the (B)Arp 2500, allows, at least in part, for the continuation of historical forms of synthesis within mainstream consumer and popular culture. Accessing, let alone owning an Arp 2500, is basically impossible, which means that the creative and performance practices associated with that instrument remain almost entirely out of reach. And getting closer with the TC5000, in terms of UI, comes with a $45,560 CAD price tag. However, with the (B)Arp 2500, at least some of those techniques and practices can be preserved and integrated with contemporary forms of synthesis that are within reach of the public. The same or more can be said of the Buchla 100 reproductions, which tend to be more committed to maintaining historical accuracy and systemic integrity, with the exception of Tiptop Audio which while keeping to the user interface of the Buchla 200 system, has converted it to Eurorack standards, with the added effect of making it much more affordable than the original Buchla format.

The preservation of past musical forms and practices as related to accessing historical musical instruments is complex and rife with conflicting assertions. The use of original historical instruments, electronic or otherwise, runs the real risk of degradation and damage to the point where they are no longer viable for continued musical use. However, preserving these instruments in vaults or glass cases similarly nullifies their use value as they are effectively rendered silent and stripped of their relevance as cultural objects. Using replicas is one way to enact a kind of second order restoration in terms of maintaining a continuity of technical and performance practice both in terms of preserving historically informed reproductions and integrating historical synthesis with contemporary technologies and workflows. Among the risks is the temptation to forgo historical accuracy for the sake of expediency, cost and consumer appeal, which is something that Behringer is often criticized for. While DIY and small-scale producers, such as those associated with the Buchla 100 replicas may appear to be more committed to maintaining authenticity, similar factors of cost, lack of knowledge/expertise and restricted time frames may result in a host of compromises and design changes. Both the Behringer Arp 2500 modules and the LA67 Buchla 100 system (Mort's Barge), are considered to be historically informed reproductions with the Behringer making the most compromises given their redesign of the Arp 2500 as a Eurorack-compatible collection of modules. Together they exemplify two similar yet divergent approaches to the preservation of historical forms of synthesis. One the one hand there is the Behringer Arp 2500, which recreates the individual modules of an impossibly rare synthesizer where cross talk between past and present forms of synthesis are made possible by virtue of the adaptation into the Eurorack standard. The Buchla 100 remake, on the other hand,

maintains the systemic integrity and exclusivity of the original in the form of a one-to-one replica that preserves a clear line between past and present. While replicas cannot reproduce the aura or singularity of historical objects, they serve as bridges between past and present, allowing musicians, scholars, and enthusiasts to engage directly with the legacies of electronic sound synthesis. In this sense, replicas extend the cultural life of instruments beyond the boundaries of museum vitrines, reinforcing the notion that preservation must encompass both objects and the living practices that animate them.

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COPYING AND SELLING THE FUTURE'S PAST: BUCHLA/ARP REPLICAS AND INTANGIBLE SONIC PRACTICE (summary)

The preservation of historical electronic musical instruments has long been marked by a tension between museological imperatives of conservation and the cultural value of keeping instruments available for use. This study explores this tension by focusing on replicas and reconstructions as viable alternatives to conventional preservation. The inquiry is grounded in reflections on a visit to the Willem Twee Studios in 's-Hertogenbosch, an institution that exemplifies a distinctive model of preservation. Unlike museums that often remove delicate instruments from circulation, Willem Twee maintains a collection of rare synthesizers in working order and makes them accessible to musicians, researchers, and the public. This approach underscores the idea that the cultural significance of instruments resides not only in their physical form but also in their sonic and performative activation.

Within this context, replicas can be understood as a form of *second-order preservation*. Rather than safeguarding only the original materials, replicas allow for the con-

tinuity of sound, technique, and performance practices across generations. Two case studies illustrate contrasting approaches to replication: a DIY reconstruction of the Buchla 100 synthesizer and the Behringer Eurorack remake of the ARP 2500. The LA67 Buchla 100 project embodies a fidelity-driven strategy, closely following the circuitry, panel design, and functional layout of Don Buchla's 1960s instrument. By recreating the instrument's architecture with minimal compromise, this model of replication emphasizes historical accuracy and the preservation of specific design logics that shaped early modular synthesis.

By contrast, Behringer's ARP 2500 modules represent a mass-market reinterpretation, designed for affordability and compatibility with the ubiquitous Eurorack format. While this democratizes access by enabling a wider community of musicians to engage with sounds inspired by the ARP 2500, it also entails a reconfiguration that departs from the systemic design and performative logic of the original instrument. This tension raises important questions about authenticity: to what extent does replication serve as preservation when historical and technical integrity is altered for accessibility?

Drawing on scholarship in musicology, heritage studies, and the study of technology, this study argues that replicas function as both material and affective artifacts. They embody not only circuitry and design but also the intangible cultural practices surrounding early electronic music: techniques of patching, performative gestures, and aesthetic values. The act of engaging with a replica can sustain traditions of knowledge and practice that would otherwise be lost to obsolescence or confined to archival silence.

Ultimately, the study contends that replicas do not diminish the value of original instruments but rather complement their preservation by ensuring that practices associated with them remain active. While replicas cannot reproduce the aura or singularity of historical objects, they serve as bridges between past and present, allowing musicians, scholars, and enthusiasts to engage directly with the legacies of electronic sound synthesis. In this sense, replicas extend the cultural life of instruments beyond the boundaries of museum vitrines, reinforcing the notion that preservation must encompass both objects and the living practices that animate them.

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IMAGINING INTERWAR SOUND AND SPACE: FILM MUSIC AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE POST-YUGOSLAV CONTEXT

KEYWORDS
Montevideo; film music; cultural memory; collective identity; interwar period; Kingdom of Yugoslavia; post-Yugoslav context; Dragan Bjelogrlić; Robert Pešut (Magnifico).

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ABSTRACT
In recent decades, the interwar period has emerged as a fertile ground for artistic imagination, inspiring a growing body of works across literature, visual arts, and film. Global and regional cinema plays a compelling role in reconstructing and reinterpreting this historical era. Given the centrality of music to everyday life in the interwar years, it naturally becomes an important element in shaping cinematic representations of the past. This article examines how music in Dragan Bjelogrlić's films *Montevideo, God Bless You!* (2010) and *See You in Montevideo* (2014) contributes to the evocation of life in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the very juncture of the 1920s and 1930s. By focusing on the deployment of musical genres and their stylistic connotations, the study situates the soundtrack at the intersection of film music and everyday life studies, collective identity, cultural memory theory, thanatopolitics and post-Yugoslav cultural discourse. Rather than merely treating music as a decorative or atmospheric element, the paper explores how sound actively constructs historical imagination, reinforces collective identity, and shapes affective engagement with the past.

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, the period between the two world wars has drawn much attention in different fields, from academic studies to popular culture. Many films and television series were produced during that time to revisit, reimagine, and artistically reconstruct this historical period. The production encompasses a wide range of genres, such as historical films, comedies, musicals, dramas, and thrillers, and it depicts a complicated, intolerable, and strikingly vivid time following the largest conflict in European history. Although it would be hard to list them all, several wildly popular works contributed significantly to the development of this trend. Among them, the musical *Chicago* (d. Rob Marshall, 2002) is often credited with helping to initiate a renewed cinematic interest in the interwar years, paving the way for subsequent international successes like *The Great Gatsby* (d. Baz Luhrmann, 2013), *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (d. Wes Anderson, 2014), and *Babylon* (d. Damien Chazelle, 2022). Television has likewise embraced this thematic revival, with the series including *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015), *Peaky Blinders* (2013–2022), and *Babylon Berlin* (2017–) achieving both critical and popular acclaim. Around the same time, the YouTube project Postmodern Jukebox (2012–2013) began to attract significant attention with its archaic re-arrangements of contemporary popular songs and the stylized retro visual production that accompanied them. This renewed engagement with the interwar period also found resonance in Southeast Europe, including Serbia, where directors began to explore regional variations of the era's aesthetic and symbolic potential. Filmmaker Zdravko Šotra contributed to this regional trend through his highly popular television series *Ranjeni orao* [*Wounded Eagle*] (2009), *Greh njene majke* [*Her Mother's Sin*] (2009), and *Nepobedivo srce* [*Invincible Heart*] (2010), all based on Mir-Jam's[1] interwar novels and characterized by a similarly nostalgic and romanticized rendering of the period. Building on this broader cultural moment, Dragan Bjelogrlić (1963) further adapted comparable visual and narrative strategies in his work, reinterpreting the interwar era through a distinctly post-Yugoslav[2] cinematic lens.[3] In his directorial debut *Montevideo, Bog te video!* [*Montevideo, God Bless You*] (2010), Bjelogrlić offered a depiction of interwar Belgrade. Mediated through the lens of a myth about the national football team, Bjelogrlić shows class divisions, competing ideologies, and contrasting cultural spheres through the "traditional/modern" dichotomy. This reimagining of a period no contemporary viewer remembers resonates with Velikonja's notion of "secondhand nostalgia," a mediated attachment to

1 Milica Jakovljević (1887–1952), Serbian journalist and writer.
2 Following the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (1918–1941), a socialist Yugoslavia was established (1945–1991). The term "post-Yugoslav" refers to the cultural, social, and political formations that emerged after the dissolution of the socialist state.
3 His television series *Senke nad Balkanom* [*Black Sun*] (2017–) has frequently been compared to *Babylon Berlin* (2017–) due to its dark tone, period aesthetics, and engagement with Berlin/Balkan-specific historical trauma (Aćamović 2023). Notably, *Black Sun* premiered just ten days after *Babylon Berlin*, suggesting a shared transnational zeitgeist and a striking synchronicity in audiovisual explorations of interwar Europe.

the past shaped not by lived experience but by aesthetic conventions and circulating public narratives. As he notes, positive images of the past are easily adopted from the "supermarket" of popular history, media culture, and political rhetoric (Velikonja 2009, 538) – an observation especially pertinent in the post-Yugoslav context, where the interwar era is frequently framed as a culturally affirmative and symbolically cohesive period. Indeed, the recent post-Yugoslav surge of interest in interwar culture may partly stem from the fact that socialist Yugoslavia systematically constructed the interwar kingdom as a negative "other" – a bourgeois, centralist, and ideologically obsolete formation from which the socialist project sought to distance itself by articulating a radical alternative. This ideological positioning effectively marginalized and obscured interwar cultural production for decades, creating the conditions in which renewed scholarly and public engagement with the period could emerge only after the dissolution of Yugoslavia (cf. Jović 2009, 54–68).

Based on the eponymous book by sports journalist Vladimir Stanković, *Montevideo* franchise[4] follows the early years of football in Yugoslavia through two Belgrade clubs, Jugoslavija and BSK (Belgrade Sport Club), the formation of the national team, and participation in the 1930 World Cup in Uruguay.[5] These historical episodes are interwoven with the fictionalized personal stories of two young footballers, Aleksandar Tirnanić Tirke[6] and Blagoje Marjanović Moša,[7] whose contrasting trajectories illuminate central social tensions of the interwar period. In the first film *Montevideo, Bog te video!*, set between Belgrade's urban center and its working-class outskirts, Tirke and the traditional Rosa embody modest provincial values, while Moša's ambition and his relationship with the cosmopolitan Valerija signal the appeal of modern urban culture.[8] Under the guidance of the team's coach Boško Simonović, their rise from local pitches to the national team unfolds against everyday hardship, emerging rivalries, and the broader dynamics of a society negotiating between tradition and modernity, poverty and the Yugoslav bourgeoisie. The film ends with the Yugoslav team's victory over Bulgaria, followed by a fictionalized closing scene in which young Stanoje polishes the shoes of the

4 Parallel to the two films *Montevideo, Bog te video!* [*Montevideo, God Bless You!*] (2010) and *Montevideo, vidimo se!* [*See You in Montevideo*] (2014), Bjelogrlić produced three television series based on the same (expanded) material: *Montevideo, Bog te video!* [*Montevideo, God Bless You!*] (8 episodes, 2012), *Na putu za Montevideo* [*On the road to Montevideo*] (9 episodes, 2013), and *Montevideo, vidimo se!* [*See You in Montevideo!*] (10 episodes, 2014).

5 Although written as a work of popular history, Stanković's book is based on archival materials, old photographs, and newspaper articles (Stanković 2010, 7). On the development of football in interwar Yugoslavia, see Zec 2016.

6 Aleksandar Tirnanić Tirke (1910–1992), Serbian and Yugoslav football player, later the head coach of the Yugoslav national football team.

7 Blagoje Marjanović Moša (1907–1984), Serbian and Yugoslav football player.

8 Antropologist Ivan Kovačević explores how the film's central oppositions are constructed through its characters. In his article, he identifies a series of compelling pairings: Rada Pašić and Milutinac (the hedonist and satyr vs. the political activist and romantic); two semantically distinct oppositions, Tirke – Moša and Valerija – Rosa; as well as King Alexander – Atanas Božić, which he reads in relation to the film's broader Yugoslavia–Serbia dynamic and its political implications. He also highlights the pairing of young Stanoje and Atanas Božić, whose shared entrepreneurial drive places them on the same semantic axis, differentiated only by the extremes of poverty and wealth, making their opposition scalar rather than contrastive (Kovačević 2017).

fans – a symbolic gesture of collective effort directed toward enabling the team's journey to Montevideo. The sequel, *Montevideo, vidimo se!* [*See You in Montevideo!*], follows the Yugoslav national team on its journey to Uruguay for the FIFA 1930 World Cup, where the players face new cultural settings, strong international rivals, and the pressures of representing a young state abroad. The film uses the tournament as a stage on which national expectations and personal ambitions unfold, with cultural differences rendered particularly visible through the film's soundtrack.

The film *Montevideo, Bog te video!* takes considerable liberties with historical fact, particularly in its depiction of the state's refusal to fund the national team's journey to Uruguay and the interethnic frictions surrounding that decision.[9] It interprets the financial dispute through the lens of political division within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and highlights recognizably Serbian cultural and commemorative motifs, including references to the First World War through the recurring theme *Pukni zoro* [*Break, O Dawn*], performances of the Serbian national anthem, and the stylized evocation of *Marš na Drinu* [*March to Drina*].[10] Taken together, these elements advance a specific narrative of Yugoslav relations that departs from the archival record. Such departures are not merely dramatic devices but interpretive strategies through which the interwar past is selectively reconfigured and affectively mediated for contemporary audiences.

Like many contemporary historical films, both parts of *Montevideo* rely on an interplay of visual codes, narrative conventions, and particularly music to construct a convincing representation of the past. The stylized reconstruction of the interwar period in both *Montevideo, Bog te video!* and *Montevideo, vidimo se!* supports an approach that treats music as an active force in shaping historical imagination rather than merely as background embellishment. Instead of aiming for factual accuracy, the movies construct a universe that is emotionally believable and narratively compelling, projecting modern sensibilities onto a history that has been selectively remembered. The soundtrack, composed by Slovenian singer Robert Pešut (Magnifico), draws on a palette of stylistic references, including Balkan and Latin folk idioms, early jazz, cabaret, and schlager, producing a retro-sounding yet distinctly modern sonic landscape. Magnifico and Bjelogrlić conducted extensive research on the music of the period, ranging from American popular music for dancing – Charleston – to early Croatian recordings of popular songs, as well as Serbian folk motifs and operetta (Matoz 2013). The soundtrack became so

9 Historically, the financial burden of the 1930 World Cup was largely assumed by Uruguay, which covered travel, accommodation, subsistence, and compensation for lost wages for up to twenty players, with an additional eight days included (D'Amado 2020, 7–8). Stanković likewise notes that the organizer covered the travel and accommodation costs for seventeen members of the Yugoslav delegation (Stanković 2010, 25), which makes the film's portrayal of the team raising funds independently a clear departure from the facts. The narrative also attributes the lack of state support to political tensions following King Alexander's introduction of dictatorship in 1929 and the relocation of the Football Association's Assembly from Zagreb to Belgrade in March 1930. It further fictionalizes the claim that the king refused financing because no Croatian players joined the team, as well as the suggestion that private donors would have supported a solely Serbian representation. These narrative interventions shape the film's depiction of interethnic relations and the discourse of Yugoslav unity (Nikolić 2012).

10 *Marš na Drinu* [*March to Drina*] was composed by Stanislav Binički at the beginning of the First World War, commemorating the Serbian army's victory over Austro-Hungarian forces at the Battle of Cer.

popular that Pešut released in 2013 an album containing twenty-one songs composed over four years of work on the two films and the television series, which serves as an expanded version of the cinematic story.

As film music scholars have noted, sound often operates as a vehicle for emotional orientation and historical imagination (Gorbman 1987; Kassabian 2001). Although *Montevideo, Bog te video!* has been discussed in terms of its ideological narratives and discursive constructions of space, time, and collective identity (Simeunović Bajić 2012; Nikolić 2015; Kovačević 2017), the specific role of music in shaping these frameworks remains underexplored. This article addresses that gap by examining how genre-coded musical references contribute to the emotional framing of history and the construction of cultural memory. The central research question asks: How does music produce a stylized vision of the interwar period within post-Yugoslav historical imaginaries in conjunction with image and dialogue? Rather than focusing on musical structure, the analysis foregrounds affective functions and intermedial dynamics, situating the soundtrack as a key agent in reconfiguring the past for contemporary audiences.

Theoretical Framework

Music in films is crucial for providing the audience with emotional and temporal orientation. It creates mood, maintains consistency, and aids in creating a logical sense of location and time (Gorbman 1987, 53–69). As music helps create memory-worlds, these emotive functions become even more apparent, opening up the past through sentiment and atmosphere rather than empirical detail. In *Montevideo*, these functions acquire particular significance: music operates as a structuring device that shapes the viewer's orientation toward the interwar period, mediating temporal continuity, emotional tone, and the film's broader framework of memory. While Gorbman underlines music's narrative and emotional function within films, Fiske offers a broader lens through which music can be understood as socially embedded and materially experienced. That is in line with more general viewpoints in cultural theory, which hold that popular forms play a part in blurring the lines between art and everyday life. As John Fiske argues in his account of the culture of everyday life, popular cultural practices reject aesthetic "distance" and instead embed art within the social and bodily context of lived experience (Fiske 1989, 154–155). Although he is not addressing music explicitly in this section, his insight can be quite relevant to the analysis of historical movie soundtracks that, like both parts of *Montevideo*, rely on genre-based and stylistically familiar idioms. In this sense, the *Montevideo* films use music as a vehicle of affective memory: it bridges the gap between past and present by activating sensory and emotional associations rooted in both cultural knowledge and personal identification. This concept is also articulated by the Serbian historian Andrej Mitrović, who highlights how the arts document history by describing how historical events are experienced emotionally and symbolically rather than by narrating facts. Rather than portraying events in a documentary or sequential fashion, artistic forms such as music and film

reveal the existential and affective dimensions of historical experience. According to Mitrović, this fusion of personal narrative and broader historical forces allows us to grasp the past not merely as a series of external occurrences, but as a human reality shaped by memory, identity, and cultural values (Mitrović 2008, 48–49). His observations refer to the first half of the twentieth century – an era defined by war, revolution, and systemic crisis – in which cultural production functioned as a "seismic sensor" of history's intrusion into the everyday. Viewed through this lens, art becomes a site where the "tragedy of living" is both represented and emotionally processed and collectively remembered (Mitrović 2008, 84, 88). Applied to the *Montevideo* films, this perspective highlights how their portrayal of different social strata enables a nuanced understanding of interwar society in all its class, cultural, and ideological diversity. It also conveys the rhythms of everyday life, ranging from the city center, where the upper social strata spent their nights in clubs and entertainment venues, to a *kafana*[11] in Čubura, which at that time marked the edge of the urban periphery. In this respect, it is hardly surprising that one of the principal settings of the narrative is a *kafana*, given the significant social role it played in that period.

Since the plot of both films unfolds during a turbulent chapter of Serbian national history nearly a century ago, it is necessary to address the role of cultural memory because this period still intrigues public interest. Contemporary theories regard remembrance not as the transmission of historical truth, but as a mediated and symbolic process shaped by structures of representation. Film and music are actively performing the past by reshaping it to fit present cultural frameworks. Within this theoretical horizon, Aleida Assmann emphasizes that memory is never purely individual but always culturally constructed through communicative practices such as speech, images, and rituals. Because memory depends on representation, it is inseparable from the media that sustain it. As media technologies evolve, so too does the constitution of memory: it once relied primarily on written language, but from the nineteenth century onward it expanded to include visual images, and in the twentieth century it incorporated recorded voices and sounds. In this sense, cultural memory continually changes in tandem with the media through which it is transmitted (Assmann 1992, 10–11). The distinction becomes particularly evident in the difference between written and oral cultures: while writing provides the possibility of separating functional from storage memory, oral traditions rely on embodied and performative practices such as rhythm, song, dance, or visual techniques of recall, where such a division cannot be sustained (Assmann 1992, 126). In this sense, the *Montevideo* films exemplify the dynamics Assmann describes: through familiar musical idioms, recurring motifs, and stylistically recognizable sonic gestures, they activate cultural memory not by reconstructing the interwar past, but rendering it affectively present. In doing so, the films translate historical material into emotionally resonant forms that circulate as part of contemporary remembrance.

11 The *kafana* (from the Turkish word *kahvehane*) is a traditional Balkan establishment serving food and drinks, but it has also been a central space of social and cultural life. The most proper English equivalent would be tavern.

Sociologist Todor Kuljić shows that such narratives serve to stabilize the present by reinterpreting the past in ways that accommodate current needs and by neutralizing the disruptive potential of history (Kuljić 2006, 10–13). This mechanism is clearly at work in *Montevideo*, where the interwar past is reframed through a harmonizing and emotionally accessible vision that aligns with contemporary expectations of continuity. Within this mediated logic, music can be interpreted as a form of memory work, a medium that structures affective responses and embeds historical meaning in emotionally resonant soundscapes. This provides the theoretical ground for examining how *Montevideo*'s soundtrack contributes to the construction of collective memory. By reconfiguring interwar musical idioms into nostalgic and emotionally charged soundscapes, the film reframes trauma and loss, integrating references from the First World War and its aftermath into a harmonious narrative that favors consensus over conflict. This dynamic resonates with what has been theorized as thanatopolitics – a logic in which remembrance of loss is not confronted, but neutralized through omission, aestheticization, and emotional consensus (cf. Kuljić 2014). In this sense, the song *Pukni zoro* offers an especially vivid example of thanatopolitics: while serving as a leitmotif for the horrors associated with the First World War, it simultaneously neutralizes their disruptive force by translating them into an aesthetically cohesive and emotionally uplifting musical code. It is also worth noting that, in the context of post-Yugoslav screen culture, Dijana Jelača argues cinema actively participates in narrating and emotionally processing trauma rather than simply reflecting it. Her study focuses on the concept of "dislocated memories," which are types of remembrance that surface in the voids of official historical discourse and allow movies to use affective registers to give voice to repressed or unresolved pasts. From this angle, both parts of *Montevideo* can be viewed as a cinematic practice of selective remembrance: instead of directly addressing traumatic ruptures, it reimagines the interwar years through nostalgia and, most importantly, music, which recasts collective memory into a seemingly cohesive national story (Jelača 2016). Based on the theoretical insights outlined above, the discussion now turns to the role of music in reimagining the interwar period and in mediating the historical narratives and emotions associated with it.

Although Nataša Simeunović Bajić has examined notions of time, space, and collective identity in her study of the first *Montevideo* movie (Simeunović Bajić 2012), the present analysis takes a different approach by focusing on how music shapes the films' representation of the interwar period. Regarding to geographical space, we can observe several contrasting relations in which music plays an important role, establishing a clear trajectory: on the local level of the city of Belgrade (center vs. periphery), through the national frame of Serbia and Yugoslavia, then to Yugoslavia's relations regarding Europe, and finally the intercontinental (and global) relations between Uruguay and Latin America, and Yugoslavia. The text is thus structured around these four axes, each of which highlights a distinct dimension – whether practices of cultural exchange, cultural memory or collective identity, in which music plays an important role.

Belgrade's city center vs. periphery: Between the East and West, Tradition and Modernity

When discussing the interwar period in Yugoslavia, one inevitably encounters the dichotomies of East and West, or tradition and modernity – tensions that have been extensively analyzed in the scholarly literature, and also reflected in popular media. In *Montevideo, Bog te video!* and *Montevideo, vidimo se!*, sound and image conjure a vision of the interwar past, where music plays a crucial role in evoking time, space, and atmosphere. The soundtrack combines mostly newly written material with retro-styled arrangements that do not seek historical fidelity, but instead generate an affective soundscape capable of bridging past and present.

Belgrade, the capital of the newly established state of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, is portrayed as a stratified urban space, with its vibrant center on the one hand and its working-class periphery on the other. The center is shown through cafés, cabarets and night-time promenades, accompanied by music that evokes the cosmopolitan image of interwar Belgrade through a series of popular musical forms. Songs such as *Pinja kolada* [*Piña Colada*], arranged in the style of interwar schlager and deliberately recorded with a retro timbre reminiscent of (for example) Vlaho Paljetak's Edison Bell Penkala recordings,[12] conjure the sound of urban entertainment culture. This song also becomes a leitmotif of Terazije, one of Belgrade's main streets, which pioneer of Yugoslav film criticism Boško Tokin described as a stage for the city's modern transformations. In his words, Terazije embodied the ambivalence of the new era: a space at once semi-urban and semi-cosmopolitan, dazzling with automobiles, jazz, and elegant appearances, yet reckless and morally unsettled, playing what he called a "dangerous game" of modernization (Tokin 2015, 51). The cabaret number *Samo malo* [*Just a Little*] is introduced at the very moment when one of the main characters, popular football player Blagoje Marjanović Moša, announces that the players are going to the Džokej club. The ensuing line, "Mošo, to je za gospodu – zato će vam trebati šeširi," ["Mošo, that's for gentlemen, so you'll need hats"] functions as a marker of class distinction, situating the scene within the codes of bourgeois sociability.[13] Music begins at precisely this juncture, underscoring the transition from everyday life to the elite spaces of urban nightlife. Other sequences further accentuate the theme of cosmopolitan decadence. In the Džokej club scene, the song *Marija Ana* underscores an eroticized dance performance, staging the pleasures and ambiguities of interwar nightlife. The melody subsequently reappears in Tirke's opium scene at Valerija's, now framed as diegetic gramophone music, which

12 For more on popular music published by Edison Bell Penkala, see chapter V in book *Rana domaća diskografska industrija: Edison Bell Pekala, Elektroton i Jugoton* (Ceribašić, Dunatov, and Vukobratović, eds. 2025).

13 The Džokej (Jockey) club was an exclusive members-only venue in Belgrade, regarded as the city's most elite gathering place. Presided over by Prince Paul, it attracted the political and economic elite, offering luxury cigars, expensive drinks, and popular dance music such as the Charleston (Belingar and Mijatović 2018, 233–234).

amplifies the sense of decadence and the transgression of social norms. Finally, the original interwar schlager *Tri palme na otoku sreće* [*Three Palms on the Island of Happiness*], heard when Milutinac[14] is called to join the team, ties the making of the Yugoslav football squad to a repertoire of European-style popular song, aligning the sport with the sound world of interwar modernity.

The gathering of football representatives is staged in the popular Belgrade variété Ruski car,[15] where the performance of Cossack musicians illustrates the blend of modern urban entertainment with the traditions brought by the Russian émigrés. This detail highlights yet another aspect of interwar Belgrade, which was the significant presence of Russian émigrés who were intricately woven into the city's musical and cultural life (Golubović 2025). Therefore, entertainment for the upper social strata here does not consist solely of European popular genres, but also incorporates elements of Russian musical heritage perceived as an exoticized refinement from the cultural Other (Vesić 2015; Golubović 2024). The sequence includes famous song *Катюша* [*Katyusha*], although the song was first premiered only in 1938. This anachronism exemplifies the film's broader approach to stylization: while not strictly adhering to historical chronology, it employs one of the most famous Russian romances to evoke the memory of a shared Russian legacy within Belgrade's interwar soundscape. This sequence then moves to *Evo banke, cigane moj* [*Gipsy, here's my money*], a popular urban song not political in itself, but placed alongside dialogue about disputes between Zagreb and Belgrade football authorities and the Croatian boycott of the national team. Its cheerful tones create an ironic counterpoint, overlaying serious tensions with the familiar sounds of interwar entertainment. In this way, the film uses music not to document events, but to juxtapose registers of pleasure and conflict, transforming a well-known song into a vehicle for narrating broader social divisions.

The other face of Belgrade emerges in scenes set on the city's periphery, most vividly in the *kafana* Čuburska kasina, which functions as a focal point of communal life. Here, the musicians perform urban folk songs such as *Tri metera somota* [*Three Meters of Velvet*], evoking forms of entertainment characteristic of the local milieu and rooted in older traditions of conviviality. The tension between center and periphery is further articulated through class distinctions. When Valerija, portrayed as a wealthy painter with cosmopolitan ties to Paris, arrives with Moša at the *kafana*, confronted with the setting, she ironically remarks: "šteta, nisam ponela opanke [too bad I didn't bring my peasant shoes]" (in Serbian – *opanci*). This moment underscores the social contrasts within interwar Belgrade, where elite nightlife and vernacular spaces coexisted as parallel but hierarchically marked domains of cultural expression.

14 Milutin Ivković Milutinac (1906–1943), Yugoslav football player and medical doctor.

15 The Ruski car, located in Knez Mihailova Street, was likely opened around 1870 in a single-storey building with a garden. After the construction of the new luxury palace, completed in 1926, a restaurant operated on the ground floor, while the basement housed a nightclub intended for elegant evening outings. The venue functioned as a varieté, with dance, music, and song; jazz orchestras performed there, and dance evenings (in Serbian – *igranke*) followed the varieté program (Belingar and Mijatović 2018, 193–194).

A notable exception to the predominantly Europeanized soundscape is *Zum-zum kolo*, whose folk resonance makes it one of the most distinctive numbers in the films. It appears consistently in football scenes, functioning as a leitmotif that symbolically intertwines two seemingly distant practices: the modern sport imported from the West and the traditional *kolo* dance. The piece first appears during Tirke's ball dribbling, and later underscores the training sequence in which coach Boško Simonović exhorts the players to act "svi k'o jedan" ["all together as one"]. Here, the music translates football into a metaphor of coordinated collective performance, its rhythmic structure echoing both the steps of the dance and the movements on the field. The same melody returns in a very different register when it accompanies the brawl between BSK and Jugoslavija team players, where it ironically frames conflict as another form of collective release. Through these shifts, *Zum-zum kolo* highlights an additional tension: football, though introduced as a modern Western sport, becomes fully assimilated into local identity through its association with folkloric musical idioms.

Conflict with Memory: Thanatopolitics and Constructing the Past

Both parts of the *Montevideo* film franchise present the interwar years in a filtered manner rather than presenting a complete confrontation with the national ruptures of the time. The darker aspects of the time are not absent, but remain largely in the background, surfacing only occasionally. The crossroads of the 1920s and 1930s was a time of profound upheaval, both in Yugoslavia and globally. King Alexander established a royal dictatorship in 1929, which exacerbated ethnic tensions inside the fledgling nation. At the same time, socioeconomic divisions became more pronounced, and the New York Stock Exchange crisis had an impact on the global economy. These realities are only faintly registered in the films, which instead foreground sporting success, camaraderie, romance, and scenes of communal celebration. Nevertheless, the result is not a denial of conflict, but its aesthetic containment within a narrative of youthful optimism and national aspiration.

The tone is set already in the opening sequence, established through the theme *Ljubav u Ce-duru* [*Love in C major*]. A clarinet melody with string accompaniment, recalling the idiom of light salon music, conveys a bright and optimistic atmosphere as the young narrator Stanoje walks through images of "old Belgrade." The voice-over presents 1930 as a year of dreams, "the first decade of peace after the Great War," while archival footage situates the story in a city still recovering from destruction. The music contributes to an image of the past as a space defined by stability and everyday charm. The same theme reappears when Tirke is first introduced in the Čubura district, where it symbolizes the optimism of a younger generation – set in sharp contrast to *Pukni zoro*, whose recurring presence throughout the film evokes the trauma and losses of the First World War. These contrasts, arising from shifts in atmosphere, carry interpretive weight and are far from neutral. Ultimately, a light melody in C major curates the past

into an emotionally cohesive narrative, trading historical rupture for affective continuity and recasting interwar life as a space of play, achievement, and shared pleasure rather than conflict.

The most popular song, the aforementioned *Pukni zoro*,[16] composed by Robert Pešut in a pseudo-traditional style, features a quasi-martial introduction reminiscent of *Marš na Drinu* and a simple, melancholic, and singable melody in moderate tempo. Although written nearly a century after the First World War, it evokes the sonic profile of 'old' patriotic songs and functions as a kind of mnemonic code for sacrifice and collective memory. Its recurring use across both films also mediates between personal memory and collective aspiration. This dual role creates a reminiscence effect typical of classical cinematic storytelling, where music operates both as an emotional cue and as a tool for memory and anticipation (Bribitzer-Stull 2015, 11–12). The appearance of the same theme in moments of hope and disillusion is no coincidence: *Pukni zoro* serves as a leitmotif, transforming cultural memory into an affective code for the interwar past. In this capacity it takes on a mournful, prophetic quality, linking sporting injustice to the larger cycles of national loss and further reinforcing the song's role as a conduit of emotional and collective memory. *Pukni zoro*'s broad popular appeal shows how a newly composed song can resonate as if it belonged to an older cultural repertoire, softening the distance between contemporary listeners and the interwar past.

Particularly significant is the use of this song that appears in varying narrative contexts and accumulates meaning through repetition and transformation. Its first appearance coincides with Tirke's entry onto the BSK's football field, which the narrative overlays with memories of the First World War and the moment he learns of his father's death. Here the melody underscores the intertwining of personal loss and national sacrifice: Tirke inherits his father's medal together with the charge to "carry it with pride," just as a French soldier urges him to strike the ball back. *Pukni zoro* symbolically substitutes for the memory of the Great War, transforming loss into pride, sacrifice into continuity, and grief into collective resilience, while simultaneously positioning football itself as a symbolic continuation of wartime endurance. In this way, the song glorifies sacrifice by making football players national heroes and presenting sporting triumph as a symbolic continuation of wartime endurance. These depictions are prime examples of what Todor Kuljić has referred to as thanatopolitics, which is the political use of sacrifice and death as the cornerstones of collective memory and national cohesion (Kuljić 2014, 19–35). The song *Pukni zoro* does not evoke a Yugoslav collective identity but rather reflects a distinctly Serbian memoryscape, rooted in narratives of sacrifice and suffering from the First World War.

The relationship between Serbian and Yugoslav identity surfaces most clearly in the stadium scene that concludes the first film. After the victory over the Bulgarian national football team, the crowd began to sing the Serbian national anthem *Bože pravde* [*God of Justice*], rather than the Yugoslav hymn.[17] The choice is symbolically charged: by this

16 The song *Pukni zoro* recurs in both vocal and instrumental arrangements.
17 The anthem of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was

point, the Yugoslav national team is composed exclusively of Serbian players, and the anthem underscores the persistence of a specifically Serbian identity that resists subsumption into a broader Yugoslav framework. The moment thus captures the inherent tension between the official narrative of Yugoslav unity.

Nevertheless, in the second film, *Pukni zoro* appears in an instrumental version during halftime of the final match, when Yugoslavia has been treated unfairly against the Uruguayan team – a moment that not only highlights sporting injustice, but also foreshadows the broader disappointments awaiting the country in the years to come. At this moment, coach Boško Simonović delivers a poignant speech:

> If you go back onto the field now, you will face injustice – an undeserved defeat. But I'd like us to go through this final lesson together, while we are still a team. In life, you'll face many more injustices, many more defeats, but you'll be on your own. All of this must be endured. They say that's how one becomes a man, my children [*Montevideo, vidimo se!*, 131:30–131:20].

The return of *Pukni zoro* in this scene signals a shift in tone: from hopeful anticipation to a sober acknowledgement of life's hardships. The music foreshadows the broader historical tragedies to come – the 1929 Wall Street Crash that reached the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the assassination of King Alexander in 1934, and eventually the outbreak of World War II.[18]

Yugoslavia and Europe: Music and Identity

The relationship between Yugoslavia and Europe may be seen, in a broader frame, as analogous to that between Belgrade's city center and its periphery, for the newly established state itself functioned as part of Europe's periphery. This was evident on multiple levels, including the musical one (Tomašević 2008). Yet the situation was not uniform across the country. The western regions, formerly part of the Habsburg Monarchy, were more directly exposed to European influences than Serbia in the East. Such historical asymmetry shaped the cultural geography of the interwar state, but Belgrade, as the capital, rapidly advanced and absorbed European currents (Babović 2018; Marković 2025). This dynamic is visible on multiple levels in the film, from social distinctions and fashion to music, automobiles, and football, culminating in the expanding reach of mass media that were transforming Europe at the time. Particularly striking is the live radio broadcast of the Yugoslavia – Bulgaria football match in the final sequence of the

combined of three songs: *Bože pravde* (formerly the anthem of the Kingdom of Serbia and today the anthem of Serbia), *Lijepa naša domovino* (now the Croatian national anthem), and *Naprej, zastava slave* (the former anthem of Slovenia). It was never officially proclaimed as the state anthem by law; the only formal regulation concerned the order in which the verses from the songs were to be performed.

18 The team's captain, Milutin Ivković Milutinac was executed by the Germans during World War II for "communist activity."

first film, presented as a technological marvel that situates Belgrade within a modern European framework. Popular culture in interwar Yugoslavia rapidly expanded through dance, film, the illustrated press, and radio, creating a shared cultural space that often transcended regional and social boundaries (Vesić 2023; Golubović 2024). Although cultural elites frequently expressed concern about the "foreignness" of such influences, mass entertainment nonetheless functioned as one of the few integrative forces in a heterogeneous state. This tension – between the transnational influx of new cultural forms and the political imperative of national integration – mirrors the ambivalence staged in *Montevideo*. The film's soundtrack negotiates precisely these codes, aestheticizing rather than resolving them.

The soundtrack thus participates in broader cultural narratives about the Balkans and Europe, constantly balancing imported idioms and national frameworks. In the film, jazz, cabaret, and schlager signify cosmopolitan modernity, resonant with the mass-entertainment culture of urban centers such as Berlin or Paris, while folkloric inflexions and Orientalizing gestures evoke what Maria Todorova has described as symbolic Balkanism – a discourse that situates the region as liminal and exotic in relation to Europe's cultural "center" (Bakić-Hayden 2006; Todorova 2009).[19] Balkan idioms in Serbian music in the first half of the twentieth century often functioned both as signs of national specificity and of alterity (Milanović 2008). This interplay of imported and native codes mirrors Yugoslavia's ambivalent positioning in European cultural space: at once a participant in modernity and a bearer of a distinct, frequently stereotyped, identity. Although composed to sound old and evoke nostalgia, the soundtrack operates through modes of listening that Kassabian defines as "ubiquitous listening" – forms of everyday musical presence whose emotional effect arises not from analytical attention, but from ambient resonance embedded in daily life and mediated by mass media (Kassabian 2013).

The ironic reappearance of *Zum-zum kolo* during the brawl between the football players of BSK and Jugoslavija underscores its dual symbolic register. What begins as a fight between rival teams turns into a joint clash with Rade Pašić[20] and his friends. In this context, the music not only underlines the physicality of the scene but also transforms conflict into a form of collective release, a trope that resonates with stereotypical images of the Balkan temperament. Unlike the cosmopolitan idioms that dominate most of the soundtrack, overt folk markers are scarce. The striking exception is *Zum-zum kolo*, whose vernacular inflexion sets it apart as the most recognizably folk-oriented piece in the films. By reactivating these symbolic codes, *Zum-zum kolo* stages the clash at the intersection of European modernity and Balkan alterity, turning the fight itself into a metaphor for Yugoslavia's cultural position.

19 For instance, the songs *Pinja Kolada* and *Marija Ana*, conceived in the style of interwar schlager, together with *Samo malo* and *Bum Bum*, which draw on the idiom of modern dance music (Charleston), demonstrate the film's engagement with contemporary currents in popular music. By contrast, *Zum-zum kolo*, *Koka kolo*, and *Pukni zoro* function as representatives of the traditional strand.

20 Radomir Rade Pašić (1892–1964) was a Serbian and Yugoslav industrialist, the son of politician Nikola Pašić. He was notorious for his arrogance, involvement in scandals, and a lavish lifestyle.

Yugoslavia and Uruguay: Collective Identity and the Conflict of Cultures

A pivotal instance of cultural struggle in *Montevideo* occurs at the arrival of the Yugoslav team in Uruguay, where Serbian musical symbols are reinterpreted through local expressions. These symbolic encounters have historically functioned as venues for identity negotiation, wherein cultural practices serve as tools for both resistance and self-assertion. Theorists of nationalism assert that music and dance frequently serve as succinct symbols of national identity, transforming abstract concepts of "us" and "them" into emotionally resonant forms. As Martin Stokes observes, music event "evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The 'places' constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary" (Stokes 1994, 3). Anthony D. Smith similarly emphasizes that national identity rests on shared symbols, myths, and memories that bind members together and differentiate them from others, investing the idea of the nation with emotional depth and a sense of historical continuity (Smith 1991, 19–42). In this sense, the arrival of the Yugoslav team in Montevideo becomes not only a sporting or cinematic event, but also a performative scene of cultural translation, where music itself mediates between two symbolic geographies – the Balkans and Latin America. As Robert Pešut (Magnifico) once noted, the dialogue between Latin rhythms and Balkan melodies – and, conversely, Balkan rhythms and Latin melodies – feels almost natural, despite the enormous distance between the two worlds. What connects them, he suggested, is a shared emotional intensity – a pathos woven equally into their lyrics and harmonies (Matoz 2013). A South American song, he added, could easily find its home in a Serbo-Croatian arrangement for accordion and tambourine, sounding both new and strangely familiar – and the same could happen in the opposite direction (Ibid.).

Therefore, *Marš na Drinu*, the most recognizable patriotic march from the First World War, is presented in the style of the Cuban cha-cha-cha dance [*Cha del Rio Drina*]. One of the film's leitmotifs *Pukni zoro* is heard in Spanish during a celebration of a football game triumph. This version – titled *Madrugadas* – is one of two songs[21] recorded by the Spanish singer Luz Casal in collaboration with Robert Pešut and underscores the film's transnational affective appeal and suggesting how emotional memory is mobilized through familiar melodies across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This was confirmed by the singer herself in an interview: "For me, singing the two songs from *Montevideo* is a necessity. They are sometimes performed even outside this part of Europe, because the lyrics carry a meaningful message – they speak of nostalgia, freedom, of those values that are understood in every corner of the world" (Savanović and Đorđević 2022). These transpositions dramatize the encounter of national identity

21 The other one is called *Al Viento*.

with global modernity: melodies deeply rooted in Serbian and Yugoslav memory circulate in new, hybrid forms, simultaneously affirming continuity with the homeland and inscribing the narrative into an international soundscape. This gains further clarity when viewed through Bohlman's reflections on world music, which he situates within the broader processes of globalization (Bohlman 2002, xi). His discussions of repertoires that take on new meanings when separated from earlier functions, as well as of the shifting boundaries between the West and its "others," further illuminate how familiar melodies can be reinterpreted when heard in new stylistic and performative settings (2002, 19–20, 38). Within this framework, the musical adaptations in *Montevideo* emerge not merely as playful stylistic gestures but as historically grounded transformations that activate and redirect cultural memory. The symbolic axis of this negotiation is crystallized in the line "Na njihovu sambu – mi ćemo kolo" ["To their samba, we will respond with a kolo"] (*See You in Montevideo*, 38:52), uttered by the team's coach Boško Simonović during a training session ahead of the match against Brazil.

The contrast between samba and kolo goes far beyond the level of popular entertainment. It becomes a way of performing and affirming collective identity, framed by the tensions of international rivalry and cultural curiosity. This dynamic becomes especially evident in the scene where the Yugoslav team plays against Uruguay in soundtrack called *Koka Kolo*: the soundscape of the match blends the rhythm of the tango – a marker of the host nation's musical identity – with the recurring motives of the kolo, suggesting a moment of similarity rather than opposition. In this light, the film turns football into a symbolic stage where music draws and re-draws cultural boundaries. Identity here is not something fixed or isolated – it takes shape through contact, imitation, and even confrontation with the Other.

Epilogue

In the post-Yugoslav cultural landscape, the interwar period has increasingly become a space of projection and rediscovery – a symbolic reservoir through which fragmented histories are reimagined in search of continuity. The films *Montevideo, Bog te video!* and *Montevideo, vidimo se!* acted as a sort of gateway into a larger wave of film and television creation that looks to the 1920s and 1930s as a fertile field for communal imagination. Yet the value of these films extends beyond their emotional or aesthetic appeal. They are grounded in historical fact and supported by substantial research aimed at portraying the interwar period, but this material is mobilized selectively, shaping a version of interwar life that aligns with the filmmakers' aesthetic and interpretive aims.

If we return to the questions posed at the end of the Introduction, it becomes clear that the stylized vision of the interwar period emerges precisely through the interaction of music with image and dialogue, where the soundtrack serves primary as mediator of affect and historical imagination. Magnifico's movie soundtrack that blends Balkan and Latin folk idioms, early jazz, schlagers, and cabaret, constructs a nostalgic sound-

scape that encompasses both the culture of remembrance of the immense losses of the First World War and the optimism of the interwar years as a period of renewed vitality and hope. This soundscape does not simply accompany the narrative but shapes its emotional texture and mediates the relation between history and memory, translating football matches, friendships, and scenes of everyday life into musically choreographed tableaux.

While this stylization lends the films their emotional appeal, it is also ideologically charged. As Mitrović observes, cultural products rarely reproduce history itself and they rather provide interpretive frameworks through which history is emotionally processed and aesthetically reshaped. In *Montevideo*, political discord and social tensions give way to narratives of perseverance, camaraderie, and communal affect. The soundtrack thus functions as a unifying element, translating historical complexity into a mood of coherence and belonging. What results is not a reconstruction of the past, but an aestheticized memory – a carefully orchestrated vision nostalgically reimagined by filmmakers. This aligns with the broader romanticized perception of the interwar period as a time when Belgrade was striving toward European modernity, while the newly formed Yugoslavia sought to establish itself as a participant in the cultural and political life of Europe. In this light, the analysis has shown that it is not musical structure but music's affective and intermedial functions that shape the film's historical imaginary: through mood, pacing and associative resonance, the soundtrack reframes the interwar past for contemporary audiences.

By examining these two movies, we have demonstrated how recently written music contributes to the development of national identity, the culture of memory, and an imagined daily existence that is almost a century apart from our own. The song *Pukni Zoro*, which soon after the movie's premiere transcended its cinematic beginnings and into popular circulation, is arguably the most notable example of this continuity. Within weeks, the songs from *Montevideo* were echoing through public places across Serbia, while *Pukni zoro* quickly acquired the status of a contemporary folk anthem – performed by choirs, pop singers, and even the Radio Television of Serbia Symphony Orchestra, which incorporated the film's music into its regular repertoire. Its immense popularity illustrates how music can bridge almost a century of historical distance, transforming a newly written song into what feels like a long-standing expression of collective sentiment and national memory. In the end, *Montevideo* shows that music can occasionally transcend historical distance more successfully than words or images: Magnifico's soundtrack serves as a tool for both remembering and reimagining history through affect and sound in the post-Yugoslav present.

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OBLIKOVANJE MEĐURATNOG ZVUKA I PROSTORA: FILMSKA MUZIKA I KULTURA SEĆANJA U POSTJUGOSLOVENSKOM KONTEKSTU (rezime)

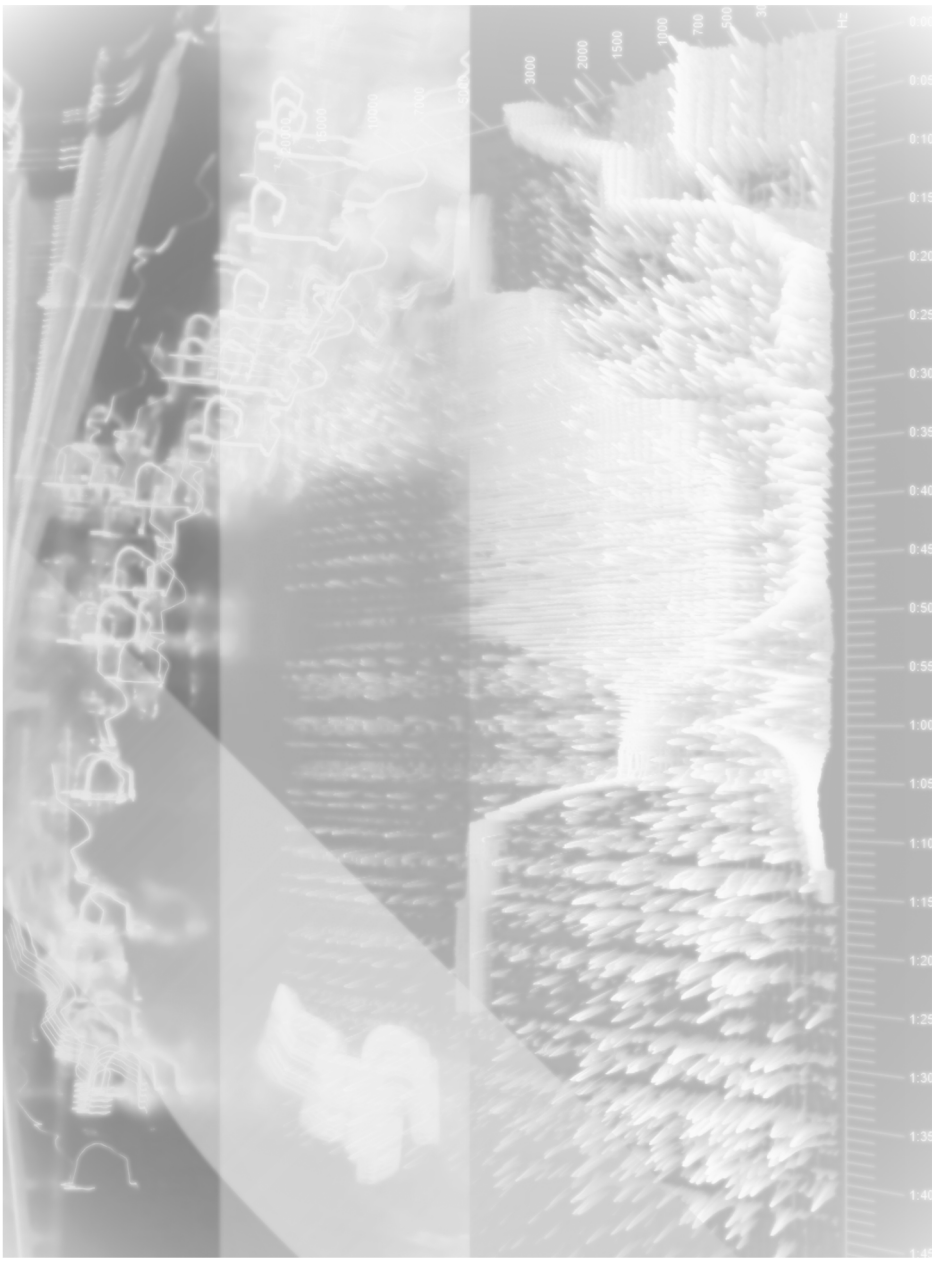
U radu smo analizirali muziku u filmovima *Montevideo, Bog te video!* (2010) i *Montevideo, vidimo se!* (2014) u kontekstu rekonstrukcije prostora i vremena između dvaju svetskih ratova. Međuratni period poslednjih decenija predstavlja neiscrpnu inspiraciju na svim poljima, od naučnih istraživanja do muzike, filma i drugih umetnosti, pa je cilj rada bio da se muzika osvetli u kontekstu nekih njegovih ključnih odlika: nastojanja društva da se oporavi od gubitaka u Prvom svetskom ratu, idealizovanog viđenja tog vremena kao epohe mira i blagostanja, kao i prodora modernih muzičkih žanrova u urbani prostor. Stoga smo analizirali na koji način muzika aktivno oblikuje istorijsku imaginaciju i emocionalni okvir filma (Klaudija Gorbman), kao i ulogu koju je umetnost – i posebno muzika – imala u svakodnevnom životu (Džon Fiske i Andrej Mitrović). Pošto se na početku filma kaže da je reč o „prvoj deceniji mira posle Velikog rata", muzika je tumačena i kontekstu kulture sećanja (Aleida Asman i Todor Kuljić) i tanatopolitike (Todor Kuljić).

Celine u radu postavljene su prema prostornim relacijama: (1) centar Beograda i periferija; (2) Srbija i Jugoslavija; (3) Jugoslavija i Evropa i (4) Jugoslavija i Urugvaj. Takav koncept omogućio je da se muzika sagleda u lokalnom, državnom, evropskom i globalnom kontekstu. Analizirani su dobropoznati dihotomi „Istok–Zapad" i „tradicionalno–moderno", gde je centar Beograda predstavljao žarište modernosti (klubovi, džez i šlageri), a periferija čuvala tradicionalne oblike muziciranja (kafana i narodna muzika). Pesma *Pukni zoro* analizirana je kroz prizmu kulture sećanja i koncepta tanatopoli-

tike, kao i nostalgičnog, emotivnog narativa koji prožima oba filma. Odnos Jugoslavije i Evrope se umnogome pokazao sličnim odnosu centra Beograda i periferije, budući da je Jugoslavija u međuratnom periodu delovala kao evropska periferija. Konačno, dolazak jugoslovenskog tima na fudbalsko prvenstvo u Urugvaju 1930. godine otvorio je prostor za susret kultura, što je inspirisalo Roberta Pešuta Magnifika da spoji balkanski i latinoamerički muzički idiom.

Analiza muzike pokazala je da Magnifikova muzika u ovim filmovima aktivno učestvuje u predstavi konstruisanja nacionalnog identiteta, kulture sećanja i zamišljene svakodnevnice udaljene gotovo čitav jedan vek. Najupečatljiviji primer je pesma *Pukni zoro*, koja je ubrzo nakon premijere filma nadrasla svoju izvornu namenu i postala svojevrsna savremena himna. Njena izuzetna popularnost pokazuje kako muzika može premostiti istorijsku distancu, pretvarajući novu pesmu u trajni simbol kolektivnog sećanja i nostalgije za jednim idealizovanim vremenom.

Reviews



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Almost twenty years have passed since the appearance of the original French publication of which this book is a translation. Several informative changes have been made, changes which we might want to read as hints to the editors' expectations about the needs of anglophone readers in the 2020s. First, consider the original title: *GRM: Groupe de Recherches Musicales: Cinquante ans d'histoire*. The phrase "fifty years *of* history" refers to the continuous operation of the GRM since the anniversary of Pierre Schaeffer's first *musique concrète* experiments in April 1948. Typical of its time, Gayou was anxious not only to recount the "birth" of an "electroacoustic community" to conserve the "specificity of the electroacoustic genre" against an oncoming wave of "forgetful" experimentation by young artists working outside the national studio system that fostered the early Cold War avant garde (5). Instead of reaffirming this anxious accumulation of institutional heritage in anticipation of a slightly more modest seventieth anniversary, translator David Vaughn and his editors at University of California Press have chosen to banish all other views: instead of a specific amount "of" history, we now have before us "the history," and specifically the history of a "revolution in music," hyperbole dispelling all doubts as to its importance. The intention seems to be to underscore Gayou's stated focus

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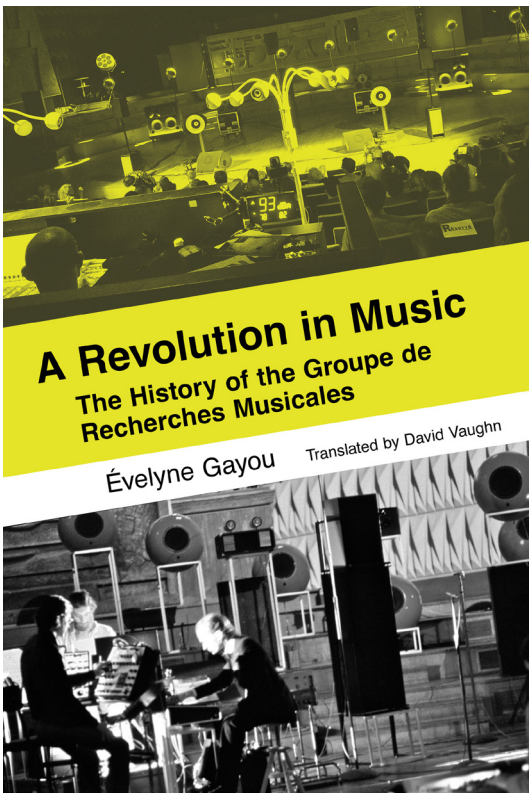

on acknowledging the work of "major twentieth-century composers who have profoundly marked the history of music" and whose research showed how "music could be done better and … achieve more" with new recording and broadcasting technologies (1). Indeed, the editors seem to want readers to take this hagiography just as seriously as they have taken Schaeffer's own rather hyperbolic theoretical writing: even the cover design echoes those of the recent translations of his *Treatise on Musical Objects* (2017) and *In Search of a Concrete Music* (2012). Interestingly, however, while both of those books carried endorsements by former GRM artistic director Daniel Teruggi, an analogous comment from Teruggi's successor François Bonnet is absent here. It is not clear what support the GRM has provided for the present translation, if any. Bonnet's own English translations are published by the decidedly edgier British press Urbanomic, but that should not have stopped him from contributing a short preface of some kind.

Another change has been made to the sequence of the original book's chapters. The short introduction has been altered slightly, both to agree with the new chapter sequence and, apparently, to puff up the seriousness of Schaeffer's thought. To wit, the sentence on page 6, "Pierre Schaeffer as a fine physicist, in his quasi-mystical quest to understand musical reality through the systematic exploration of sound matter, profoundly disturbed the so-called learned musicians of his time, provoking rejection from most." The grammatically questionable clause, "as a fine physicist," does not appear in the original. The closing paragraph designating the first chapter as "prehistory" is also new: originally, this first chapter was subtitled, more poetically, "une mesure pour rien" (one bar for nothing), which is colloquial French for the "pickup" bar that is often counted before beginning to play with an ensemble ("a one and a two and a three and a …"). In the English version, however, all of the ensuing chapters of Part one have been moved to Part two, while all of the chapters originally in Part two have been moved to Part one, following the prehistory. Instead of belonging to a chronology, then, this version seems to suggest that we treat the GRM's "origins" as one of many "themes" emerging from a rigorous musicological "forgetting" of the archival "facts": an enticing thought from a philosophical perspective, perhaps, but not necessarily what the

author or translator had in mind. Meanwhile, the new version appears to give greater importance to the remaining themes, especially those of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 (9, 10 and 11 in the original), which highlight technological, social and conceptual novelty (i.e. the titular "revolution"). The new subtitles that have been assigned to Chapters 7 through 10 (3 through 6 in the original) also seem to point in this direction, signalling "Birth," "Innovation," etc., where the original offered only a range of dates.

The reorganised first part is still useful to the extent that it explains and illustrates many of the key concerns of post-*concrète* music research in a way that is more deeply informed by observations of studio and concert practice than the quite abstract technical descriptions to be found in previously available works like Schaeffer's *Treatise* or Michel Chion's *Guide*. Gayou places insightful emphasis on Schaeffer's idiosyncratic mystical ambitions and on the pedagogical experiments he conducted on his followers in the course of their research to discover the universal perceptual structures behind music's emotional and intellectual powers. Her "prehistory" helpfully situates these experiments in relation to the history of modernist radio and cinema. Although it does not deal in sufficient detail with Schaeffer's own ideas about the moral and aesthetic impacts of broadcasting technology, it does show how much the GRM borrowed techniques and styles from other sources, to the point of lightly problematising (but again, not really engaging critically with) the notion that anyone in particular "invented" the practice of making music from recorded non-musical sounds.

However, the same pervasive idea that technological progress engenders new aesthetic possibilities that the ambitious music researcher has only to track and test (e.g. a prescient speculation about the future "playability" of the GRM's in-house database, dubbed *Acousmaline*) also leads Gayou to some unfortunate historiographical choices, the acceptability of which could certainly have been questioned had the book written in 2024. Gayou's decision to resolve the power imbalance between electroacoustic music and techno by endorsing a simplified narrative in which Schaeffer and Henry figure as "grandfathers" of the latter rings particularly false, and has already received more criticism than it deserves, not least by feminists like Tara Rodgers. (And yet, is this claim to "paternity" not the very same marketing narrative sustained by the GRM's ongoing reissue series with august post-rave imprint Éditions MEGO?)

Part two (originally part one) deserves some praise nevertheless as a reference guide to the expansive literature and repertoire that has come out of the GRM. Students and teachers of traditional electroacoustic music will find this material particularly rewarding, and far more thorough than anything currently available in English. The standardised chapter structure highlights various "milestones" of achievement or competition, and features concise annotated lists of works and composers for each historical period. Again, however, the predominant concern here is canonisation. Conceptual and cultural references are included as decorations on a secondary study syllabus, not linked together interpretively or cross-referenced with existing histories.

Although this translation is being sold by University of California Press as a work of "sound studies," it was written at a time when the emergence of that discipline was still

contested in English and had not yet been articulated in French (e.g. the journal *Sound Studies* launched only in 2015, the same year in which Jonathan Sterne's *Audible Past* first appeared in French translation). Francophones interested in Schaeffer's concept of sound already have access to much more meticulous work in Carlos Palombini and Sophie Brunet's 2010 critical edition of Schaeffer's *Essai sur la radio et le cinéma* or in Martin Kaltenecker and Karine Le Bail's 2012 anthology of studies from Schaeffer's personal archive, *Les constructions impatientes*. In contrast, Gayou's book doesn't really contribute to a critical understanding of twentieth-century sonic or auditory culture at all, and certainly not to advances in media theory. The anachronisms also extend into Vaughn's attempts to modernise the translation with more contemporary terminology. *Arts-relais* becomes "bridge-arts," fudging the more specific technological meaning of the term "relay," in spite of its currency in the English translations of proximal thinkers like Paul Valéry and Gilbert Simondon. *Électro* becomes "Electro" when "electronica" is clearly a much closer equivalent, a commercial term indicating a wide range of electronic genres.

The most alarming exclusion here is that of Schaeffer's extensive work for the French overseas ministry from 1946 onwards, work which he frequently identified as one of the most important influences on his music research. There is only cursory mention of the abortive Studio École which Schaeffer established to train colonial radio staff in the Parisian suburbs from 1954 to 1957. Also among the details which Gayou has apparently "forgotten" is the illustrious list of West African, Caribbean and Vietnamese radio engineers and composers who studied with Schaeffer from 1954 onwards. There is no mention of the dubious racial theories that Schaeffer adopted from his guru Gurdjieff and took pains to apply in his teaching and writing as explanations for the unequal development of musical cultures around the world. There is no attempt to relate GRM operations to the terrifying impacts of France's colonial wars in Vietnam and Algeria, nor, although Gayou is eager to draw a positive comparison between the "universality" of GRM practice and that of contemporaneous "atomic research," of its irresponsible nuclear testing in the South Pacific or the Sahara.

Ultimately, then, this is a book that sees no problem with limiting our understanding of electroacoustic music's historical roots to the safest and most conservative possible terms. It is an echo from the time when electroacoustic music's "elite" cultural status was first being threatened, and it should be interpreted accordingly.

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BROADCASTING FIDELITY: GERMAN RADIO AND THE RISE OF EARLY ELECTRONIC MUSIC

Princeton University Press, 2024.
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BOOK REVIEW
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Myles W. Jackson's *Broadcasting Fidelity: German Radio and the Rise of Early Electronic Music* is an informed tour de force tracing the historical vicissitudes of the development of radio in early twentieth century Germany. The book charts the emergence and growth of electric musical instruments – most prominently the Trautonium – as well as the advent of early electronic music in postwar Germany and France.

Through a precise chronology, Jackson leads us on a voyage through the technological advancements of German radio broadcasting, beginning with the 1920s and extending to the two decades following the Second World War. Alongside the rise of German radio, we follow the invention of the Trautonium, an instrument whose conception and elaboration were tied directly to the history of radio waves, at least until 1945.

The book details the parallel evolution of radio and the Trautonium, as well as their entanglement with political, social, and cultural shifts between the wars, and their exploitation under National Socialism and Nazism. In Hitler's Germany, both the radio and the Trautonium became important tools of government propaganda and education. In the post-war years, the swift transformations of music technology provoked urgent questions about electric and emerging electronic instruments: what role they might play, how musically relevant they were, and whether they risked immediate obsolescence.

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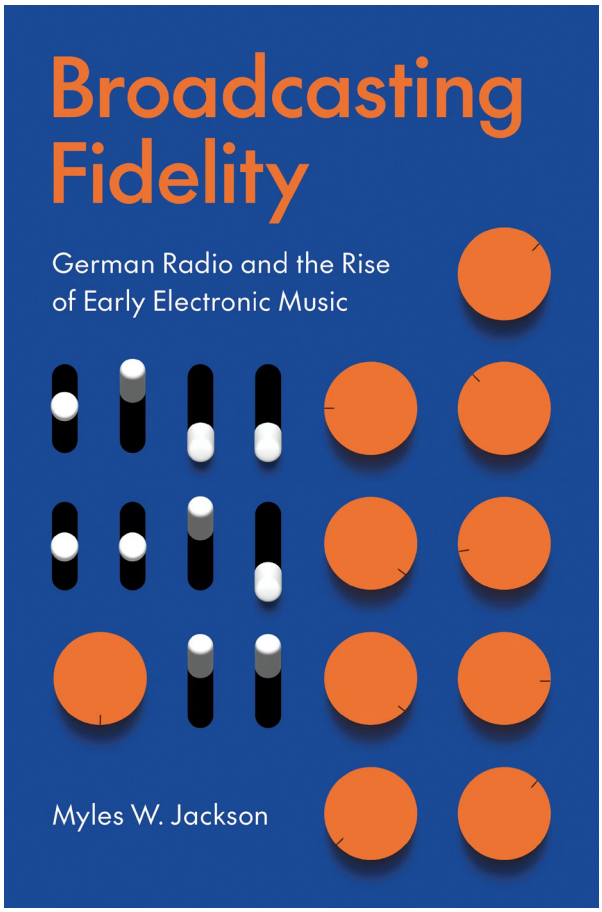

Jackson traces the struggles, compromises, and debates of composers, performers, and acoustic engineers regarding both the radio and the Trautonium from their earliest days. Their pursuit of broadcast fidelity – and the parallel emergence of instruments such as the Coupleux-Givelet organ, the Hammond Novachord, the Ondes Martenot, the Theremin, and the Trautonium – provoked larger questions about the very nature, purpose, and aesthetic of music.

The final section places these detailed historical reconstructions in perspective, asking how and where early electronic music began, who its principal actors were – sound engineers, composers, performers, and philosophers – and what their goals were. It also looks at the contrasts between the work of Vladimir Ussachevsky and Otto Luening in New York, the Cologne Studio for Electronic Music of Meyer Eppler, the German Darmstadt School of Wolfgang Steinecke, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Bruno Maderna; Pierre Schaeffer's Groupe de Recherches de Musique Concrète (GRMC) in France, and the work of Friedrich Trautwein and Oskar Sala, who brought the Trautonium to prominence in Germany. In closing, Jackson establishes a concise but timely connection with contemporary issues in music, technology, and, inevitably, the rise of so-called artificial intelligence (AI).

With meticulous documentation, the author guides us on an exhilarating journey through the intertwined destinies of radio, early electronic instruments and the birth of electronic music with its new modes of creation and performance. Occasionally, the book opens onto philosophy, drawing on Walter Benjamin, Ernst Cassirer, Theodor Adorno, and José Ortega y Gasset to highlight the socio-political and aesthetic dimensions of radio, music, and early electric instruments, but rather than pursuing these avenues at length, the author merely hints at them, leaving the reader the choice – or even the responsibility – for further exploration.

The book is unmistakably the product of a thorough investigation into technical, socio-cultural, and biographical aspects of early radio history in Germany. Particularly

remarkable is the ingenious use of the Trautonium as the book's *trait d'union*: the instrument's birth, rise, and popularization are traced in detail, intersecting with early explorations of radio waves; and culminating in the postwar development of what came to be called electronic music.

By the end of the book, the reader is left with the impression that the author has condensed, with impressive mastery, a vast array of information, historical facts, resources, and particulars. While the wealth of detail in the book's first half occasionally slows our grasp of the larger picture, the full portrait of this fascinating voyage – through radio, the Trautonium, and electronic music – comes into focus in the later chapters.

At times, I wished the book returned to the philosophers invoked earlier, expanding on the conceptual debates they raised. I also hoped for deeper discussion of the musical and compositional decisions of the composers, performers, and engineers, ideally with examples from the Trautonium's repertoire. Even if this meant sacrificing some of the technical details of early radio and electric instruments, such a shift might have further enriched the story.

At one point, the author cites the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, whom I also wish to invoke here with a favorite line: 'we know so many things that we do not understand!' (*Meditations on Quixote* 1963, p. 38). Perhaps the book's ambitious attempt to gather so much knowledge sacrifices opportunities to probe more deeply into the meaning of that very knowledge.

Of course, every perspective requires choices about what to prioritize, what to focus on, and what to set aside. Jackson's selection of sources and his command of the material are both authoritative and compelling, and the way his narrative threads converge in the final chapters is particularly effective. This book will appeal to a wide readership: from academic researchers in musicology, history, media theory, and media archaeology, to musicians and composers, and to general readers intrigued by the historical evolution of radio and electric musical instruments.

Contributors' Biographies

Ana Čorić is a Lecturer at the Music Education Department, Academy of Music, University of Zagreb. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Education at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with her research focusing on higher music education and the civic dimension of musicians' professional identity. Her interests include artistic citizenship, the university's civic mission, music mediation, and interdisciplinarity. She has extensive experience developing programs for diverse audiences and participating in international projects such as AEC's *Strengthening Music in Society* and *Power Relations in Higher Music Education*, *Ethno Research* at York St. John University, and *B-air Infinity Radio: Creating Sound Art for Babies, Toddlers, and Vulnerable Groups* by Radiotelevizija Slovenija and Creative Europe. Additionally, she serves as a lecturer at the Storytelling Academy in Zagreb and as a music mediator at the kULTRA Music Festival in Makarska.

Tatiana Eichenberger researches at the intersection of media studies and musicology. She studied musicology and media studies at the University of Basel and previously completed her musical training at the Bern University of the Arts (flute concert and teaching diploma). In 2022, she defended her dissertation at the University of Basel on the emergence of electronic studios at the broadcasting corporations in Europe in the post-war years and their significance in the transformation process of the audio arts into the electronic age. Since 2022, Eichenberger has been researching composition commissions of Swiss radio as part of the project "Music Promotion through the Ether" at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Since the end of 2024, Eichenberger has been part of the Basel University of Music's project dedicated to the 50th anniversary of its Electronic Studio (ESB) and is working on compiling its archive and drawing up the studio's history.

Marija Golubović graduated in piano performance from the Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade, and earned her PhD in history at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. She is currently employed as a Research Associate at the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Her research focuses on the cultural and musical legacy of Russian émigrés in Belgrade and the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, the development of interwar popular culture, and the piano repertoire of Serbian and Yugoslav composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. In 2025, she published her first book, which examines the impact of Russian émigrés on the development of musical life in interwar Belgrade. She currently serves as Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Muzikologija–Musicology*, published by the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. She is a member of the Serbian Musicological Society, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM), and the Board for the Protection of Serbian Musical Heritage within the Department of Arts of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Andreas Kitzmann, Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at York University, received his PhD in comparative literature from McGill University and has written widely on the impact of communications technology on the construction and practice of identity, electronic communities, modular synthesis and the influence of new media on narrative conventions. Among his publications is *Saved from Oblivion: Documenting the Daily from Diaries to Web Cams* (Peter Lang, 2004) and *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies*. Eds. Julia Creet and Andreas Kitzmann (University of Toronto Press).
Professor Andreas Kitzmann has written widely on the impact of communications technology on the construction and practice of identity, electronic communities, and the influence of new media on narrative conventions. His current project focuses on the revival of analog technologies in the post-digital age with a specific interest in the modular synthesizer as a tool to think about the relationship between technology and creative practice.

Virginia Madsen is a senior lecturer in Media and Creative Industries at Macquarie University and has published widely in the fields of media arts, public broadcasting history, documentary media, and radio/audio media. She is also a creative media practitioner and has produced a large body of work in radio and audio mainly for the Australian national broadcaster, the ABC. Prior to her teaching and research career she was a founding member of the internationally renowned ABC audio arts and performance program, *The Listening Room*. She is now working in new forms of digital audio creation (locative media) and writing a portrait of the ABC's cultural radio outlet, Radio National. Additionally, she is researching the international history of radio's 'reality forms' such as documentaries, features and hybrid works variously described as '*films sonores*', '*films radiophoniques*, and *documentaire de création*'. Virginia was Director of the Centre for Media History, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University, 2017–2020.

Đorđe Malavrazić is a cultural essayist and media historian. He was editor-in-chief of the Drama Program of Radio Belgrade (1983-1986) during the period of its greatest international succes, when three awards were won at the most prestigious radio festival *Prix Italia* and one *Premio Ondas* in Barcelona, along with a large number of recognitions at the Yugoslav *Radio Week* in Ohrid. He is one of the founders, in 1985, of the *Festival of Documentary Radiophony* (FEDOR) and the initiator, in the same year, of the reputable *Sound Workshop* series, which is part of the European *Ars Acustica* network.
He founded and edited for a long time the first all-day cultural channel in Serbia, Radio Belgrade 2, and was co-author of the book-catalogue *Elitism for all* about that program. He is the author of the books *The Upper Abyss of Sound*, dedicated to the drama editor Neda Depolo, and *Philosophical Heritage Neglected and Illuminated*, dialogue with Slobodan Žunjić. He also published two representative anthologies of texts with his forewords: *Sixty-Eights: Personal Histories* and *Literature and Radio*.

Anđela Milić was born in 1996 in Belgrade. She completed her master's degree in composition in 2020 at the Faculty of Music Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade, under the guidance of Professor Svetlana Savić. She is currently in the third year of her doctoral studies in the same class. She has collaborated with ensembles such as Construction Site - Contemporary Music Ensemble, Belgrade Trio, and the Women's Choir of the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She has participated in festivals including the International Review of Composers, KozArs, Grand Prix Romania, FESTUM, and KoMa. Her compositions have been performed in Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. She won the second prize in the *Neda Depolo* competition for creative contribution to radio expression for her composition *Bezvremena* in September 2020, as well as for her electronic piece *Hypnagogia* in September 2021. She works as an Assistant Professor in the field of music production and sound design in the Multimedia Design Department at the School of Computing in Belgrade.

Guidelines for Authors

Guidelines for authors

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