

Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo: First steps towards initiation and development phase division

Reze Kryeziu Breznica

Prof. Assist. Dr., Musicologist, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Faculty of Arts, Music Department, Rr. “Agim Ramadani”, p.n. 10 000 Prishtinë, Republic of Kosovo.

Email: rreze.kryeziubreznica@uni-pr.edu ORCID: 0000-0001-5601-5867

DOI 10.12975/rastmd.20231111 Submitted November 19, 2022 Accepted February 14, 2023

Abstract

The development of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo started after World War II and it shared the same fate as other countries situated in the Balkans. Art Music of Kosovo has gone through different political, social and economic situations as all other countries which were part of the then ex- Yugoslavia (1918-1991). However, the impact was stronger due to the beginning of the last war in Kosovo (commencing in 1990, almost a decade before the war), a war that made ten mandatory years desertion of the cultural and educational life of Albanians in Kosovo. The above-mentioned political and social circumstances, as well as other dramatic changes within Kosovo have negatively affected the development of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo, which, from my perspective, was and is a neutral sphere of identity, as it started in a vacuum - i.e., an emptiness, in terms of its activities which did not exist before 20th century. This article, strives to identify the existence of Art Music in Kosovo whose development when observed, acts as evidence just how great an achievement can be reached over a very short period of time. Its main purpose is to highlight the first steps towards its initiation and also the growing European music tradition within a society which was isolated for centuries.

Keywords

art music, central resources, Kosovo Albanians, isolation, social-political impact

Introduction

Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo begins its development in the middle of the last century. Exactly, the Albanian ethnos in Kosovo, after the Second World War (Clara & Ninhos, 2016), from 1945 shares the fate with the other peoples of the then Yugoslav state. As an integral part of it, in this period favorable economic, political, social and cultural circumstances are created for the professional development and orientation of Art Music as an important segment of cultural life (Kryeziu-Breznica, 2020:43). During this, the basic precondition for its continuity are the activities of amateur music associations registered at the end of the 19th century, in the last stage of the so-called Albanian Renaissance. In addition to participating in some of these groups during traditional customs, followed by folk music, cultural life was complemented by performances of church choir societies. The dominance of spiritual music, over the

secular one, is related to the fact that choirs constitute an inseparable and integral part of the educational and cultural mission of the Catholic religion in all cathedrals.

During the 1930s, amateur and semi-professional chamber orchestras were formed which enriched the musical life with instrumental performances and influenced the expansion of musical culture. Among them, especially important are the wind orchestras that are created in Kosovo in which Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and since 1941 Albanians also participate.

In 1944, four military wind orchestras were formed in Prishtina, Prizren, Gjakova and Mitrovica, in which descending instruments such as the harp and the small drum are used. In their concert activity and holding weekly performances, these orchestras become important initiators of musical life in Kosovo.

Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo: First steps towards initiation and development phase division

In November 1944 in the city of Prizren by the choir of Albanian intellectuals Anton Çeta and Zekirija Rexha formed the cultural society “Agimi”. Lorenc Antoni (1909-1991) - the first composer of Art Music in Kosovo (Berisha, 2004:48)- appears as composer and conductor of choir pieces (Berisha,

2004:48). All previous musical activities highlighted, from the choir to the music of military orchestras, give a great contribution and inspiration for starting the path of professional activity in the field of Art Music which leads to the need for the formation of music education.



Photo 1. Choir at society “Agimi” (Conductor, Dashnor Xërxa). Photo provided from the monograph “Agimi”

With the increase of the material and personnel base, schools for primary music education are opened (the first school established in 1948 in the city of Prizren), as well as music secondary schools (1949 also in the city of Prizren) in a large number of

cities. Educational institutions starting from the first primary school, through the first high school of music, to the opening of the Faculty of Music Arts (1963) are the basis for creating and shaping the potential of productivity and reproduction in the country.



Photo 2. Faculty of Arts - Music Department in Prishtina, Republic of Kosovo, <https://arte.uni-pr.edu/>

In the development of Art Music however, the main role is played by composers and their contemporary creativity, which in itself bears the traces of European music of the 20th century. As a result of the absence of the Faculty of Music in Kosovo until 1975, young authors of the war and post-war generation were forced to study at music faculties in the main centers of the former Yugoslavia such as Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, and through their professors also indirectly feel the influence of contemporary European trends. Returning to the homeland from different sides, composers have brought and practiced the norms of harmonic and polyphonic words, instrumentation, vocal, instrumental and vocal-instrumental forms, genres and structures, means of expression characteristic of the countries in which they were educated.

However, most decided to base their creativity to a large extent on the folklore basis, with the participation of peculiarities arising from the folkloric musical idiom. Over time, the musical idiom transforms its content, emphasizing the tonic-ethical values differently and making the psychology of the importance of the tonic material and that mutation of the source of the musical-folklore archetype as a condition for the immanence of Kosovar-Albanian Art Music.

With the opening of the faculty, through the pedagogical activity of the already established composers, a complete basis is obtained for the identification of different composition schools, to a greater or lesser extent, included in the individual creations of future generations.

In the works of Kosovar composers in general one can see a wide spectrum in the transfer of musical inspiration from: simple musical expressions colored in the national musical style through the use of musical folklore, to neo-romanticism, through neoclassicism to expressionism and complete submission of atonality.

Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo, is the only

musical genre for which nobody spoke and wrote so far or for which even today (2023) we cannot find the appropriate information. As I am part of the population of Balkan region, just as the musicologist of Serbian origin Tatjana Markovic, I came to the conclusion that both of us (me and Markovic) are bothered by the same problem. As Markovic points out in her article titled "Balkan Studies and Music Historiography: (Self) Representation between »Authenticity« and Europeanization", the first thing one might notice while trying to find literature about Balkan music - via Google or in Wikipedia but also in sources such as the leading world music encyclopaedias *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart 2* - is that the concept of "Balkan music" has been represented almost exclusively by traditional, sometimes even neo-traditional or "turbo-folk" music, and rarely by Art Music, especially by contemporary Classical music (Markovic, 2009). As Markovic consequently stated in her above-mentioned article:

"Since the changed political situation in the Balkans from 1989 onward, a redefinition of national self-representations took place one more time. New languages were constructed, new national academies of sciences were founded, new national histories were written, and new were moreover national sport teams, tourist guidebooks, and national histories of music" (Markovic, 2009:5).

I do agree because the same situation is in Kosovo, as one of these countries of Balkans that never had a history of Art Music or was never represented through Art Music, and it was not mentioned even in the History of Art Music of Yugoslavian countries (Andreis, 1982). According to the Croatian historical musicologist Josip Andreis (1909-1982), the only author who wrote about the music history of ex-Yugoslavian countries, the history of Yugoslav musical culture is a result

of the efforts of basically Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs. Andreis further remarked:

The other Yugoslav peoples and territories have no history of Art Music of their own because of very unfavorable and unavoidable circumstances. They are experiencing their musical presence, with significant results and success already achieved. However, having in mind that this book is primarily a historical development of Yugoslav musical culture, the chapters about those Yugoslav people and regions, which gained a richer and more intensive musical life in different respects only after World War II, will not be included (Andreis, 1982:6).

One of those countries which started to cultivate Art Music after World War II is Kosovo. According to the written history of music during Yugoslav period, Serbian musicologist Markovic remarks in her article "Balkan Studies and Music Historiography":

History of music production in Yugoslavia could be called a survey in words and sound: Jugoton in Zagreb, the dominant record label in Yugoslavia, published five extensive series of Long Play recordings - 105 in total - accompanied by survey texts (in Serbo-Croatian and German) on music of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia (Markovic, 2009:1).

Today, music activities in Kosovo continue to have shortcomings in documentation, including the writing of its history, which would serve to evidence the existence of a culture of a people at a certain time. If the term historiography in the early modern period meant "the writing of history", then, in accordance with Markovic, the historiography of music in the Balkan region has not yet been a topic of a study (Markovic, 2009). This means that knowing the difficult circumstances that Kosovo has faced, the same situation cannot be said about its history of music. The lack of proper documentation, the ruined archive makes

it difficult to write a complete and clear history of music. It has been considered and still is a very problematic area.

My idea of writing the article History of Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo came as a result of a yearning to be recognized by our music culture identity which until nowadays 21st century does not possess archive or many documents or even many memorized activities from the past generations, which makes us remain behind so many European countries, but also neighboring ones, such as Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro etc. Therefore, knowledge about music history always occurs as a product of a specific present (Ph.D. Fellows of "Erinnerung - Wahrnehmung - Bedeutung, 2011). It is based on a constructive recollection of the past and on the contingency of its change (Ph.D. Fellows of "Erinnerung - Wahrnehmung - Bedeutung, 2011). However, this process of writing music history is not only influenced and generated by individual musicologists, a great variety of professions and different media partake in the production, realization and spreading of music-based knowledge (Ph.D. Fellows of "Erinnerung - Wahrnehmung - Bedeutung, 2011). As Vesa Kurkela and Markus Mantere have pointed out, all in all music historiographers/historians have witnessed a growing need to reconsider objects, axioms and perspectives of writing history of music (Kurkela & Mantere, 2020:2). For example, I cannot say the same for Kosovo. The history of Art Music in Kosovo was never written. There was no interest in writing history and I believe this came due to the difficult circumstances which Kosovo has been through.

Regarding the above-mentioned, this is the first act of this type under received by me, and hopefully in the future from others, because it will always be a need for a change and to enrich the history with its concrete elements.

Research Purpose and Problem

Set against this situation, the purpose of this article is to determine and recognize the consequences of Albanian Art Music introduction in Kosovo and to follow the development and phase division. This article tends not to show the evidence of national Albanian music. Its main purpose is to highlight the growing European music tradition within a society which was isolated for centuries. Therefore, this research is not only an Art Music history of Albanians in Kosovo, but also pursues the role Albanians played in Art Music in Kosovo and beyond.

I also reconsider the division of the generations of Kosovo Albanian Art Music composers by expanding it with the new generation of composers. Focus will be on the development of this type of music including all its components (institutions, composers and their compositional oeuvre style).

Method

This research can be considered as a historical review in qualitative research types, as it is conducted as an examination of Kosovo Art Music in the historical context on the axis of important records and documents. In the research, some documents were examined in order to reveal the findings related to the research problem. These are written historical records, associated research, photographs, newspapers, etc. Accuracy and reliability criteria were taken into account in the selection of these documents.

Given the lack of an archive, written documents, an integration of oral history became necessary. In recent years, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in studying the same phenomenon has received significant attention among the scholars and researchers.

This study has also been based on data triangulation in that it comprises the analysis of different sources, such as the study of documents, biography methods, analysis of content, ethnographic participation based

on description, as well as the case study method that has been used through direct conversations, informal interviews with participants of music life (performers, music pedagogues, etc.), and active creators in the development of Art Music in Kosovo (composers).

Results

My interest is directed towards all main components which show us the existence of Kosovo Art Music whose development when observed, acts as evidence just how great an achievement can be reached over a very short period of time. As a result, I have chosen to explore and create a work on the history of Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo through the research that will consist of two parts:

- The first part will highlight the problems that have negatively affected the emergence of Art Music in Kosovo.
- Albanian Art Music in Kosovo must have as result the establishment of educational music institutions (ranging from professional music schools all over Kosovo to more senior institutions such as the establishment of Opera and Ballet). I will also present a group of Kosovar Albanian composers that will be presented as categorized in generations by previous musicological writers. However, this categorization might need to be expanded. Musicology in Kosovo (e.g., evidenced from the above-mentioned books) considers that motivation for Art Music development more specifically the weak sparkle in this field is a result of its late introduction. Having this in mind, I decided for the theme of the research to be history and all of its components that made its initiation in a multi-ethnic state such as Kosovo.

As previously mentioned in the introduction part, the main focus of the people of Kosovo was the creation of the new independent state. This is one of the key elements that proves just why Art Music of the population

in Kosovo was developed later and by such creating consequences resulted in stagnation of the development of institutions, of the new music professional staff and ultimately a not so rich music life. The year 2000 marks the establishment of the Symphonic orchestra and later (2003) the Opera of Kosovo, that carries out its activity in the National Theatre and enables the development of art and scenic music with performances of many concerts and fragments of different operas.

Representing the first musicologist from the University of Pristina (Kosovo), Faculty of Arts, it is essential that I continue enlightening a significant number of characteristics that cultural music presently contains in Kosovo because, as a result of the socio-political circumstances, they never came out.

History of Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo Through Cultural Memory

While analyzing comparable music historiographies, a title that caught my eyes and intrigued me was *Music historiography in New Zealand* by author Martin Lodge (Lodge, 2009:32). New Zealand is a state that is felt to be at the end of the world from a Kosovo-related perspective, and about which the New Zealand historian Michel King (1945-2004) remarked: "According to the current consensus of scholarly opinion, New Zealand was the last significant land mass on the planet to be settled by humans" (King, 2003), - and similarly, its music history is little known in Kosovo. From my perspective it appeared as an economically stable state, nowadays with no big challenges. To my surprise, Lodge (2009) described a pace of development of Art Music similar to Kosovo. As he pointed out in his study: "Music historiography in New Zealand faces a number of special challenges, and the paucity of comprehensive music history writing in the country prompts investigation. Significant contributing factors to the current situation turn out to lie in the unique social, political and cultural history of the nation and certain limitations of narrative music history writing techniques in the Western tradition also play a role" (Lodge, 2009:32).

It is exactly the same situation in Kosovo. Some well-known authors, musicologist to date pose a question regarding the relevance of writing a history of music (Kurkela & Mantere, 2020:2). In the introduction to their publication *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions*, Vesa Kurkela and Marcus Mantera add that history with all its inevitable issues of rhetoric, power and legitimacy and emphasis - has become a contested and problematic area of scholarly inquiry (Kurkela & Mantere, 2020:3). Still, it does depend on how we view history, in my case history of Art Music.

Kosovo has a relatively young Art Music that was developed in challenging circumstances as a result of which there is a significant absence of documentations in its archive. Lack of relevant documents continues today in Kosovo. One of the reasons is the Serbian Government which at the end of the war (1999) has received from institutions all the documents that could highlight the history of Kosovo Albanians by culture (music, theatre, film) and another part got burned during the last war (1999). I thus came to conclusion that in this part of the Balkans (Kosovo), music history can be written easier through support of the cultural memory, considered to be as the social construction of the past - not just an individual, private experience but it is also part of the collective domain. Memory and history, far from being synonymous, are thus in many respects opposed. Regarding this, the French historian Pierre Nora stated: "Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name (Nora, 1989:8). It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived". On the other hand, as Nora pointed out, "history is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer" (Nora, 1989:8).

The Serbian government had served well for 10 years of extinction of the musical

life for the destruction of archive and every document and the persecution of any musical activity that has to do with Kosovo Albanians. In the last war (1999), the archive, libraries and record libraries, including other musical institutions in Kosovo, remain vacant, and any evidence of the existence of this culture became inexistent or inaccessible. What helps us today is precisely the memory of the individuals who have been part of this entire process in initiating and developing the Art Music in Kosovo, as well as of the most difficult circumstances that came from the Serbian government (1980-1999).

As mentioned above, cultural memory has greatly helped me in collecting and recording the materials part of this thesis. Still, Art Music in Kosovo remains trapped within its borders, unprompted and not evidenced. Isolated due to political circumstances already mentioned numerous times, Art Music of Kosovo until this century and after its independence (2008) has sparked interest across Europe and beyond. At least it enabled the state independence of composers and performers to make its promotion abroad. I was also part of the concerts and festivals in many European countries where I did share some of the main characteristics about Art Music in Kosovo and its components.

According to the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski (1929-2009), cited in the article "The Ends of Music History, or: The Old Masters in the Supermarket of Cultures", "we learn history not in order to know how to behave or how to succeed, but to know who we are" (Berger, 2014:11). The reason behind my focus on Art Music history of Albanians in Kosovo is precisely this, proving the existence of Art Music in Kosovo among the people are considered to have very old culture in the Balkans.

To write Art Music history one needs compositional oeuvre, and especially the existence of basic conditions for development as a generating motive for music production. The great support on writing the Art Music history of Albanians in Kosovo we can find in

the historical circumstances, economic and especially political ones (various empires that ruled in Kosovo) and perception/inclusion of foreign cultures within the national culture.

In Kosovo, since the previously mentioned years (1980-1999) the most difficult period of all times started, when writing national history, playing or enjoying national sports could never cross people's mind. Nowadays, even though with many difficulties, certain conditions have been created albeit with limited funding yet one that will ensure evidencing its existence and continuous development.

Division of Art Music Development in Kosovo (1945-2018)

According to the well-known Kosovar musicologist Engjëll Berisha and his articles about Art Music, from 1945 until 1975 Art Music in Kosovo can be divided in three development phases based on: designated compositions, treatment to national and folk music traditions and the institutional musical environment (Berisha, 2004:37). Berisha's three phases include three periods of time starting from Art Music initiation in Kosovo in 1945 until 1955, then the second phase 1955 till 1965 and the third one which starts in 1965 and ends in 1975. The three above-mentioned phases were developed at the time of the so-called Tito's Yugoslavia (1945-1980) or the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which for as long as it lasted, provided general social development of Kosovo. It is not accidental that after 1975, Berisha did not provide information on the development of Art Music in Kosovo. It was this phase when Kosovo's relations with Yugoslavia were getting complicated. Kosovo, as well as other states, part of the then government of Yugoslavia, had begun seeking independence. This idea came as a result of the oppression that was made to it, especially after Tito's death. The year 1980 marks the beginning of a long and difficult period for Kosovo which brought the 1999 war, and also Kosovo's independence in 2008. There is no written evidence of what

happened with Art Music after that period (after 1975), what made me very curious and decided to undertake a thorough research for the Art Music development after 1975, and I came to the conclusion that we face here another/new stage development of Art Music, starting from the preceding year (1975) until the present days (2021).

This does not mean that for the earlier stages we have provided the necessary and accurate material. Musicologist Engjëll Berisha wrote at a time when Kosovo was ruled by Serb government and circumstances were such that it was not allowed to write any book, article or any other scientific work related to Albanians in Kosovo and it was not possible to write against the power of time. However, my full support is in the three phases (1945-1975) divided by Berisha but complemented with works and stylistic issues on the composer's oeuvre, representing the above-mentioned phases while Art Music development phase from 1975 to 2018 is evidenced by my own research and my great desire to mark the continuity of a new culture in the Balkans. Yet subsequently, we will first get acquainted with some general pre-conditions that made the initiation and development of Art Music in Kosovo.

First Phase of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo

The first phase (1945-1955) of the development of Art Music includes the decade of the immediate "liberation" and recognition of the province of Kosovo under

Yugoslavia (Berisha, 2004:40). According to Berisha, this period was also characterized by the beginning of the first music activities from amateur and semi-professional societies until the establishment of respective music educational institutions, starting with the first elementary music school in Prizren (Kosovo) in 1948 (Berisha, 2004:40). This indicated that these societies served as a platform within which folk music and wind orchestras could form, as well as the choirs, which initially had only limited repertoire (i.e. SCA "Agimi"). These societies were characteristic throughout Yugoslavia, as an initiating stage towards the presentation of professional music that is equivalent to the opening of the first musical educational institutions. According to Serbian musicologist Roksanda Pejovic these societies were the pillars of Serbian (Yugoslavian) musical life (Pejovic, 2009:6). In Kosovo, Serbia and the whole ex-Yugoslavia they provided concerts with mixed programs - choral, soloist and orchestra compositions, including dramatic pieces as well (Pejovic, 2009:6; Berisha, 2004:42).

This phase is also characterized by the establishment of Art Music through national soloist expression displayed by choral works and songs from the first Albanian composers of Art Music in Kosovo such as Lorenc Antoni (1909-1991) and Rexho Mulla (1923-1982), (more at ashak.org). Descriptively, this so-called "national phase" is characterized also by the opening of the first musical institutions for which I will be discussing later on.



Photo 3. Music School in Prizren "Lorenc Antoni" - First music school in Kosovo

The Second Phase of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo

From 1955 until 1965 the second phase comes to light, a phase in which the basic conditions had already been created for a further professional music development that also with establishment of professional music schools is to deliver the first generation of professional musicians who were deemed to give their contribution for years to come. The lack of music university education was not a problem for Kosovo, though such an institution did not exist in the country.

The young talents could attend the University of Arts in Belgrade (Serbia), (University of Arts, Belgrade, 2022), established in 1957, which provided a professional preparation for a large number of Kosovo composers of this generation but also the successors (Berisha, 2004:38). The Russian music influence in Yugoslavia is noticed in Kosovar composers of this phase also. This indicated that local composers represent continuity in terms of folk involvement in compositional oeuvre, as the only possible style orientation of that time.

However, their basic access to modification and inspiration is based on the fact that it comes to professional educated composers, such as Halit Kasapolli (1927-1959), Vinçenc Gjini (1935-2022), Mark Kaçinari (1935-1985), Fahri Beqiri (1936-2021), Esat Rizvanolli (1936-2006), Akil Koci (1936-), etc., (Berisha, 2004:32), who had or have a clear vision for European music trends, despite the need of affirmation for national musical identity.

The Third Phase of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo

The third phase started from 1966 and lasted until 1975. The cultural-political situation remained the same during this period. Kosovo was still part of Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and professional institutions and associations in Serbia as the Yugoslav centre, continued to be used by Kosovo Albanian musicians who until 1975 did not have the opportunity to establish the Music Faculty.

According to the Serbian musicologist Roksanda Pejovic during this period in Yugoslavia (Pejovic, 2009), Art Music began to keep up with the tendencies of Western Europe (Pejovic, 2009), being part of it, the same situation was happening regarding compositional oeuvre of Albanian composers of Kosovo. They began to show interest in various stylistic trends, from romanticism to experimental music and here one can mention composers like Zeqirja Ballata (1941-), Rauf Dhomi (1945-), Rafet Rudi (1949-), Gjon Gjevelekaj (1950-) and Bashkim Shehu (1951-), (Berisha 2004:52), but some of them remained traditional regarding access to new music styles (i.e., Rauf Dhomi), (Berisha, 2004:52).

The New Phase of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo

These above-mentioned periods brought also another period of Art Music development in Kosovo from 1975 until nowadays (2022), which I title as the period of a **new generation** of composers.

This phase involves the work of various composers such as Mendi Mengjiqi (1958-), Baki Jashari (1960-), Valton Beqiri (1967-), (Berisha, 2004) and younger ones including Kreshnik Aliçkaj (1982-), Donika Rudi (1982-), Dafina Zeqiri (1984-) and Drinor Zymbëri (1987-), Liburn Jupolli (1989-) etc., who enrich the national opus with a broad spectrum of music forms such as solo, parts of choir and chamber to symphonies, major vocal-instrumental forms, as oratorios. Hence, this period is characterized by the proof of expanding the techniques of authors, as a motive for the acquisition of environment within the music of West European art.

Further, in this open phase, a huge importance is given to the formation of orchestras on which we will discuss on the second part of the thesis, and ensembles that continuously contribute for higher criteria, for professionalism and the enrichment of musical life.

This third and the new period of Art Music in Kosovo are characterized with dramatic social and political circumstances. The disintegration of Yugoslavia started around 1980 to continue with several political crises until 1990, a period which started the inter-ethnic war (Malcolm, 2011:192). In 1981, ethnic tensions between Albanians and Kosovo Serbs started, because of the unequal treatment of Kosovo Albanians by the Serbian government (Malcolm, 2011:192). This situation was becoming even more difficult in 1987, when Slobodan Milosevic came to Yugoslavia's leadership. His wild and submissive politics resulted in wars, first in Croatia and then, most severely, in multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina and the last Kosovo war in 1999 (Malcolm, 2011:196). However, exactly this stage in its beginnings represents the establishment of the first Faculty of Music (1975) as the main and most important institution until nowadays, further the establishment of orchestras and professional choirs. Later the dark side of this period also impacted in cultural development. Although between 1990 and 2000, cultural life in Kosovo was victim of violent silence imposed by the Milosevic government. This regime halted the education of Albanians in Kosovo who in response organized themselves and used private homes as the schools of that time (more at introduction). Albanian employees were expelled from each and every institution, public and private.

The activity of professional orchestras, choirs and every music association or institution in Kosovo was stopped. This presents one of the most challenging and difficult times yet one of the most fruitful for Art Music composers, some of whom left Kosovo during this time - Vinçenc Gjini to Croatia, never to return. Some of other composers, who left Kosovo during the above-mentioned period, are Zeqirja Ballata and Baki Jashari who went to Slovenia, but after the end of the war in Kosovo (1999) returned to continue giving their contribution in the field of pedagogy and composition. Their work and

compositions, however, are the best way to show the circumstances the people of Kosovo were going through. After 2000, cultural life began its revival and today besides difficult political and social circumstances as a post-war country, its development continues.

Summarily

These phases represent the main activities of Art Music in Kosovo, phases which include all components, from the first music activities and circumstances of that period but also those that come along with a new generation of Albanian composers of Kosovo. I will proceed dwelling on the fundamental characteristics of the aforementioned phases, from the origin of Art Music to its development today.

Table 1. Phases of Kosovo Art Music, influences and its philosophy

Phases of Kosovo Art Music	History (Years-Year)	Influencing Causes	Its Philosophy	Some Musicians
First Phase	1945-55	-liberation and recognition of Kosovo within Yugoslavia	-the establishment of Art Music through national soloist expression displayed by choral works and songs from the first Albanian composers of Art Music in Kosovo	Lorenc Antoni (1909-1991) Rexho Mullaj (1923-1982)
Second Phase	1955-65	-establishment of professional music schools	-local composers represent continuity in terms of folk involvement in compositional oeuvre, as the only possible style orientation of that time.	Halit Kasapolli (1927-1959), Vinçenc Gjini (1935-2022), Mark Kaçinari (1935-1985), Fahri Beqiri (1936-2021), Esat Rizvanolli (1936-2006), Akil Koci (1936-)
Third Phase	1965-75	-Kosovo was still part of Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Kosovo Albanian musicians who until 1975 did not have the opportunity to establish the Music Faculty.	-various stylistic trends, from romanticism to experimental music but some of them remained traditional regarding access to new music styles	Zeqirja Ballata (1941-), Rauf Dhomi (1945-), Rafet Rudi (1949-), Gjon Gjevelekaj (1950-) and Bashkim Shehu (1951-)
New Phase	1975-	-the disintegration of Yugoslavia started around 1980 to continue with several political crises until 1990, a period which started the inter-ethnic war... This presents one of the most challenging and difficult times yet one of the most fruitful for Art Music composers.	-the national opus with a broad spectrum of music forms, characterized by the proof of expanding the techniques of authors, as a motive for the acquisition of environment within the music of West European art.	Mendi Mengjiqi (1958-), Baki Jashari (1960-), Valton Beqiri (1967-), (Berisha, 2004) and younger ones including Kreshnik Aliçkaj (1982-), Donika Rudi (1982-), Dafina Zeqiri (1984-) and Drinor Zymberi (1987-), Liburn Jupolli (1989-), etc.

In the above table can be summarized that composers in Kosovo laid the modern composition foundations, carrying the experiences from working with collective amateurs in music life sphere. The main direction of the composers is characterized with a national music expression deriving from the collections in the field and processing of folk music, being identified through melodic and rhythmic elements. Even nowadays (2023), we note a delay of penetration of world musical styles within our Art Music style and that if we remember its early days which were also delayed. Nonetheless, the Kosovo Art Music composers of young and old age were able to follow up, being today in parallel with styles of world music, being worthy competitors in this field, but also by raising the level in our country, for a clear image for Europeans and beyond, and that could be evidenced below through their compositional work.

The Impact of Religious Spheres: The Importance of The Catholic Church Music for First Art Music Activities - Choir Appearances (1878-1944)

Art Music for Albanians in Kosovo has undoubtedly been an important part of life since Antiquity. In Kosovo, where the majority of the population is actually of Muslim faith, it was the catholic music that played a vital role in the development of Art Music in general. The use of ecclesiastical music in Kosovo, a country with Muslim majority, did not come as a result of Yugoslav repression on religion, but because music was an integral part of church activities. After all, any war that started in Yugoslavia today is known as “ethnic wars” and not as religious wars, although we know that both of them were and still are tied together, especially when we argue regarding the war zones. It was in the hands of the Western Christian Church that music in Europe underwent important developments that were to send it on a series of courses leading ultimately to classical forms and then on to influencing today’s musical styles” (Peterson, 2010). While in the ex-Yugoslavia, whose part was

Kosovo too, church singing was done on the basis of the late Byzantine tradition and on the basis of Serbian folk singing; from 1713 onward that music was part of Slavonic Church (Putnikovich, 1995).

People of ex-Yugoslavia represented a diverse religious affiliation. After the rise of communism, a survey received in 1964 showed that just over 70% of the total population of Yugoslavia considered themselves to be religious believers (Atheism and Agnosticism, 2013). The places of highest religious concentration were that of Kosovo with 91% and Bosnia and Herzegovina with 83.8%. The places of lowest religious concentration were Slovenia 65.4%, Serbia with 63.7% and Croatia with 63.6%. Religious differences between Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosnians and Albanians alongside the rise of nationalism contributed to the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1999 (Atheism and Agnosticism, 2013). However, if we go back in time, we will find that in different historical periods and circumstances, the Christian religion faced the successive difficulties. The reason I mentioned broadly the Catholic church of Kosovo is its importance towards Art Music, and the Orthodox Church (that was the second largest religious domination in Kosovo before 1999) does not have such data. Even if today, we could prove something related to my study, it would be difficult to confirm, due to the current situation in the area where the Serbs live, North Mitrovica (Kosovo) (Enemo, 2013), but even in different cities or villages Albanians are prevented from having any kind of research regarding Serb culture or any other documents. I personally had such experience. Meanwhile, the Muslim religion does not allow any non-religious musical activities within its religious institution, except religious chants which belong to this religion, and the research made until nowadays (2023) has not identified any support or relation of profane Art Music in Kosovo with Islam.

However, as the English historian Malcolm

continues further, civilized life in Kosovo began flourishing when the largest number of people in cities consisted of Muslims (Malcolm, 2011:423). One of these cities would be Prizren that in a report from 1670 was the largest city with the largest population (Berisha, 1998:63). A turn in events for the history of Kosovo as well as all the Europe is marked by the entrance of Austrians in Kosovo (1689), which was a tremendous help for the recovery of Albanian. The year of Berlin Treaty (1878) marked the separation of a territory of Kosovo that led to great uprisings from the Albanians of this region. This also serves as evidence of Kosovo historic struggles that as a consequence led to a great historical cultural stumble.

In Kosovo it was indeed in the churches where Art Music life began, similar to other parts in the world. According to Berisha (1998:63) the church named Zonja Ndhimëtare [“The Helping Lady”] as seen on picture no. 1, which has the Saint Cecilia as a symbol, who is the Patron Saint of Musicians, Music in general, and Church Music in particular), was where the first Art Music activities took place not necessarily only of Christian background but the church would also allow for cultivation of secular music. The first steps of Art Music besides catholic churches are connected to works of amateur-instrumental, wind and vocal groups that

are formed in different cities in Kosovo. Except for the participation in some of these groups during traditional activities, followed by folk music, cultural life was fulfilled with shows from Christian choir societies in that period. The prominence of religious music over the secular one in general society is a result of choirs being an inseparable and integral part of the educational and cultural mission of catholic faith in all cathedrals. From 1887 until 1892 the choir of cathedral Zonja Ndhimëtare [“The Helping Lady”] in Prizren (Kosovo) with frequent and profiled church art song displays is notable in a special manner. The work of this choir can be seen through data of that time in which the Austro-Hungarian state had donated harmonium that the choir of this church used to follow vocal parts, hence enriching the expression of music (Berisha, 1998). Regarding the Austro-Hungarian period in Yugoslavia, the Serbian musicologist Tatjana Markovic indicates that the periods of Austrian/ Austro-Hungarian rule in Croatia, Bosnia, or Serbia, by contrast, are almost always represented as periods of »culture« and Europeanization (Markovic, 2009: 2). This is seen as evident in the development of musical life, the establishment of pertinent institutions, the adoption of a European repertoire, mechanism of music education, and other signifiers of Bourgeois life (Markovic, 2009:2).



Photo 4. Church “Zonja Ndhimëtare” [The Helping Lady], Prizren, Kosovo (2014), PC: Rreze Kryeziu Breznica

It was particularly the catholic church of Prizren (Kosovo) that initiated the religious and secular musical culture life in Kosovo. Their repertoire has adapted songs from Latin to Albanian language, songs with religious character (catholic). These songs were adapted for the church choir in Albanian language by priests; they were hymns, psalms and also pieces of masses, also compositions of world known composers as George Frederic Handel and Franz Schubert.

The order of music activities in cathedrals was later to be accepted among other cities as well. Regarding the above-mentioned, Berisha concludes that this link comes with respect to cleric's works that already had experience in the formation and work of

choir as well as translation of songs into Latin, Italian and Albanian. As Berisha points out, one of them is Father Pal Lumezi, who lived during 20th century who led the choir of cathedral Santa Katerina (see photo 5) in Peja (city in the west of Kosovo), and adapts songs from Latin in Albanian and Croatian, therefore, he had an important role in the wider acceptance by believers (Berisha, 2004:80). During this phase, repertoire was divided depending on place and act of display because they were also held outside services and were substituted with folk, lyric and epic songs. Precisely, these choir activities until 1930 constituted the only way of introduction and cultivation of Art Music, soul and secular tradition.



Photo 5. Church "Shën Katerina" [Saint Caterina], Peja, Kosovo (2015), PC: Rreze Kryeziu Breznica

According to the historian András Riedlmayer, Kosovo has long been a cross-road of the Balkans, where large religious and cultural Mediterranean current is contiguous and interacted with one another and with local traditions. These cultural interactions have given Kosovo a tremendous legacy, including

a 600-years tradition of European Islamic tradition, flourishing, once a part of the country's heritage and the recognition it deserves a better rating (Riedlmayer, 2015). According to the linguist and connoisseur of Albanian literature Robert Elsie (1950-), in the 5th century Christianity had already

begun to penetrate the interior regions such as Kosovo. Among the Church dignitaries who attended the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, called by the Emperor Constantine I, to deal with the problems of Arianism, were a number of bishops from Dardania and Macedonia Salutare, which correspond to modern-day Kosovo and eastern Albania (Elsie, 2010:1-2).

Regarding the previously mentioned political-economic circumstances in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the wars that were to follow especially the last war 1998-1999 in Kosovo (Berisha, 2004:80), made that all relevant documentations of many religious institutions to be lost, documentations that could have been used to evidence the history of Albanians in Kosovo (Berisha, 2004:80). The churches have also suffered the aforementioned but also mosques of the country from which the documents were either stolen or destroyed. Included are music scores and some photos of choirs from this time to highlight the mini-culture being developed within and outside the churches.

Bearing in mind that the Albanian population in Kosovo has not had a tradition in Art Music until the period we are referring to, it is worth noting that the main support for beginnings (besides church music) of such works is found in the Albanian folk music, for the characteristics of which we shall say a few words.

Folk Music as A Central Resource of Art Music in Kosovo

According to the ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (1930-), the terms used for folk music in different cultures illuminate aspects of the related utilized concepts. The English term “folk - traditional music” music of the people and its French and Italian analogues, “musique populaire” and “musica popolare”, indicate that this is a music associated with a social class, the “folk” (Nettl, 2016). The German Volksmusik [“people’s music”] combines the concept of class with the unification of an ethnic group, as does the Hindi term log git [“the people’s music”] in

India. Czech, like some of the other Slavic languages, uses the term *narod* (“nation”) and its relatives, indicating that folk music is tied to a national concept, i.e. the musical unifier of all Czechs. Conversely, the Persian term *mūsīqī-ye maḥallī* [“regional music”] emphasizes the distinctions in folk music style and repertory among different areas of Iran (Nettl, 2016). The term folk music has also, perhaps unwisely, been used for traditional Art Music of Asian and African cultures, to distinguish them from the Western classical system (Nettl, 2016). In Kosovo, the term folk music (named *muzika folklorike* in Albanian language) has the same meaning like the above-mentioned Czech and other Slavic peoples. However, in Kosovo too, folk music is linked to a national concept, national music.

The role of folk music cultivated has become the subject in studies of many issues related to the defining the national individual style of the composers in different periods. Folk music has fed and actively feeds the professional art by giving examples of deep thought with an amazing phenomenon. This situation has happened in Kosovo. In the Art Music foundation, folk is used in various ways, ranging from methods of citation, elaborated by the compositional individuality of the composer. Regarding the Albanian folk music, Albanian ethnomusicologist Armira Kapxhiu points out in her article “The Impact of Folklore in the Musical Cultivated Creativity” that in many cases the innovative modal-harmonic of Albanian folk compositions has maintained its importance, as well as other elements like prosperity of melodic figurations, rhythmic variety, instrumental colours etc. (Kapxhiu, 2016).

The beginnings of Art Music in Kosovo, as in other Balkan countries, have a direct link with local folk and also popular melodies, which were the only and main support for Art Music composer’s oeuvre. The reasons and causes of the retardation of the appearance of Art Music and the support that folk music had in its compositions have already been discussed at the introductory part of this

work. Folk music, in addition to the support that gave rise to the overall musical culture in the country, was also “used” for a creation of a national cultural identity. However, what is known is that the first compositions of Art Music that were of folk music-based were made of simple formal structure. Evidenced are some a cappella choral pieces elaborations and stylizations from folk music which we will discuss further at Kosovar composer oeuvre.

If we go back to the above-mentioned “folk music” and its equivalents in other languages denote many different kinds of music. “The meaning of the term varies according to the part of the world, social class, and

period of history. In determining whether a song or piece of music is folk music, most performers, participants, and enthusiasts would probably agree on certain criteria derived from patterns of transmission, social function, origins, and performance” (Nettl, 2016).

In ex-Yugoslavia (part of which Kosovo was as a multi-ethnic country) folk music had the same social function for all people’s part of it. It was known as “national music” (i.e. in Albanian language “muzika folklorike”, in Serbian “narodna muzika”) a national music that differs in language and its construction in the various constituent states of Yugoslavia.



Photo 6. From left: Lorenc Antoni, Fahri Beqiri and Vinçenc Gjini

Bearing in mind that Kosovo Albanians have not had a tradition or development of Art Music styles before the 20th century - a period which is known for the beginning of growth, the sole type being cultivated in this time was Albanian folk music which later on was going to act as the basic support for introduction and development of Art Music. Regarding the compositional oeuvre of Albanian composers in Kosovo, some of the main and popular choral arrangements are: Lorenc Antoni’s choral summaries “Kore shqiptare” [“Albanian Choirs”] and “Jehonat e zemrës” [“The Echos of the Heart”], Fahri Beqiri’s “Shkoj e vij” [“I go and come”], Vinçenc Gjini’s “Blegëron delja” [“Bleating Sheep”] etc. As the composer Rafet Rudi indicated, in isolated societies, such as population of Kosovo, folk music is far more popular and sits in a dominant place in the actuality of cultural “consumption” while in place with

more developed culture and with a higher degree of social-economic development it is less present (Rudi, 2002:242). This, however, did not happen among Albanian professional composers who initiated the development of Art Music. As evident from their compositional oeuvre, they were and remain grateful for folk traditions, characteristic elements that this folk music possesses using them in their works; this is best noticed if we undertake a brief analysis of our composers, in particular of their initial part of compositional oeuvre.

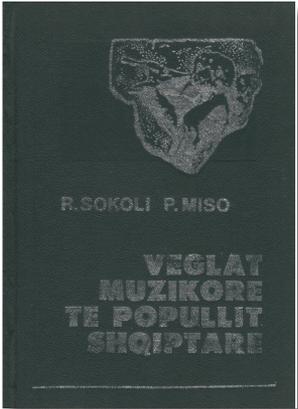
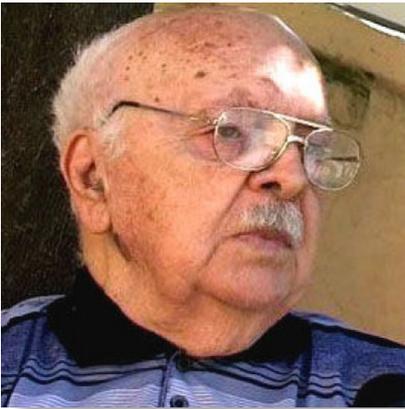
To better comprehend the use and support of folk music in Kosovo’s Art Music initiation and development (composers’ oeuvre), I think one should share few words about its main characteristics. Albanian folk music of Kosovo was initially anonymous, without any identified authors, with melodies which were composed by the population,

later developed and stylized by Art Music composers as is known in present times in Kosovo. This type of music was cultivated by ensembles and different amateur semi-professional societies from which it gained great popularity as it continues to be today but perhaps not listened and cultivated as much. Albanian folk music consists of two main dialects, toskë and gegë, just as the Albanian language does. Kosovo uses the music of the gegë dialect.

One of the greatest other features that Albanian folk tradition has is polyphonic music - singing in voices from amateur

singers. Unique for Albanian folk is the rhythm that shows different combinations along the basic one like (odd meters) 12/8, 7/8, 8/8 etc. Augmented second music interval, pentatonic scale and Aeolian modes, major and minor notes are support for the compositions. Albanian ethnomusicologist Ramadan Sokoli, in his book *Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar* ["Music Instruments of Albanians"] points out that among most popular instruments of folk music in Kosovo are: çiftelia, sharkia, lahuta, flute, kavall, zumare, def, drum etc., (Sokoli, 1991:145), some of these instruments can be seen in the following pictures.

Table 2. Ethnomusicologist Ramadan Sokoli and *Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar*

Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar	Ramadan Sokoli's photo
	
<p>ISBN: Publish Date: 1991 Pages: 164 Publishing House: Akademia e Shken- cave dhe Arteve Authors: R. Sokoli & P. Miso</p>	<p>Ramadan Sokoli was born on June 14, 1920 in Shkodër. He was an Albanian ethnomusicologist, musician, composer and writer. He is regarded as one of the most distinguished scholars of the Albanian and Balkan music. Some of his books were: <i>Vallet dhe muzika e të parëve tanë</i>, Tiranë, 1971; <i>“Folklori muzikor shqiptar-organografia”</i>, Tiranë, 1975, 1984, 1987, 1991; <i>“Figura e Skënderbeut në muzikë”</i>, Tiranë, 1978; <i>“Gjurmime folklorike”</i>, Tiranë, 1982; <i>“Këngë patriotike”</i>, Tiranë, 1985; <i>“Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar”</i>, me bashkautor, Tiranë, 1991; <i>“16 shekuj”</i>, Tiranë, 1995; <i>“Antifonari i durrsakut Gjergj Danush Lapacaja”</i>, Tiranë, 2000; <i>“Gojëdhana dhe përrallëza të botës shqiptare”</i>, Tiranë, 2000; <i>“Përtej 16 Shekujve”</i>, Tiranë, 2002</p>

Special importance in terms of instrumentation of Albanian people in Kosovo has an instrument named Ocarina which can be seen in photo 7, found in Runik of Kosovo.

From the diverse Neolithic location, we can single out an artefact and not only for the territory of Kosovo but for the region as well. This exemplar made of well cleaned and baked clay with a height of only 8 cm

with holes suited for fingers from down-up that served as a wind music instrument, a kind of Neolithic pipe. The instrument was named Ocarina of Runik and is the first music instrument discovered in Kosovo. The warm sounds and vibrations coming from this instrument transmit to us the rich spiritual music world of the Neolithic human of this territory (Berisha, 2010:20).

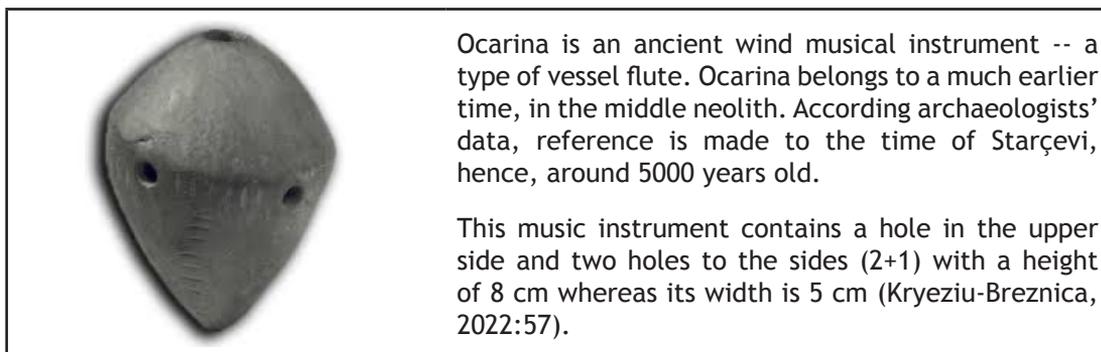


Photo 7. Ocarina (ancient instrument found in Kosovo)

Going back to the national concept that Albanian folk music has and its importance towards social and especially political circumstances through centuries in Kosovo, I relied in the article "Music and Nationalism" where the English historian Paul Halsal stated:

Nationalism was the most successful political force of the 19th century. It emerged from two main sources: the Romantic exaltation of "feeling" and "identity" and the Liberal requirement that a legitimate state be based on a "people" rather than, for example, a dynasty, God, or imperial domination. Both Romantic "identity nationalism" and Liberal "civic nationalism" were essentially middle-class movements (Halsal, 1997).

I would rather freely say that the political significance of folk music is to express the national identity, especially to the late liberated societies such as Kosovo.

Regarding the importance of folk music for a

nation, Sokoli in his above-mentioned book stated: "The folk music for a nation is its identity, a kind of a business card by which it is distinguished from other nations" (Sokoli, 1991:232).

At the moment of the establishment of professional music institutions, many performers of folk music continued their studies, becoming part of professional music activities. Gradually the existence of the above-mentioned ensembles also faded away the need for popularization of commercial performers who deformed and degraded it. For these ensembles and their role in the context of musical activity, you will be provided more details in the following, however, I will mention some of them such as: Ramiz Sadiku (1958) Pristina, Hajdar Dushi (1964) Gjakova, Bajram Curri (1965) Prishtina, Agimi (1944) Prizren, etc (Berisha, 2004:50) which started their activity after World War 2. Regarding the above-mentioned, Berisha remarked in his book *Studime dhe vështrime për muzikën* ["Studies and Observations about the Music"]:

Consequences of such a national orientation is the great connection between composers and their people, emphasis of national identity, creation of national art cultural music as well as other consequences that can most easily be identified with other world known composers such as: Frederic Chopin (1810-1849), The Russian 5, Bela Bartok (1881-1945) etc. in some of their works with folk music motives (Berisha, 2004:50).

And I do agree with Berisha (2004), this national orientation has come as a result of serious political and historical circumstances, where the only way to protest against

the hard situation and to express their willingness for changing composers was their musical creativity with textual and melodic content based on the people's history.

According to Nettl, in the Western Europe during 19th century folk music songs were transcribed and notated from live performance, but then were often altered, "corrected" to conform to expected norms and published. Composers of Art Music including Johannes Brahms, Antonín Dvořák, and Joseph Canteloube fashioned elaborate piano accompaniments, and folk songs were added to classical concert programs worldwide (Nettl, 2016).

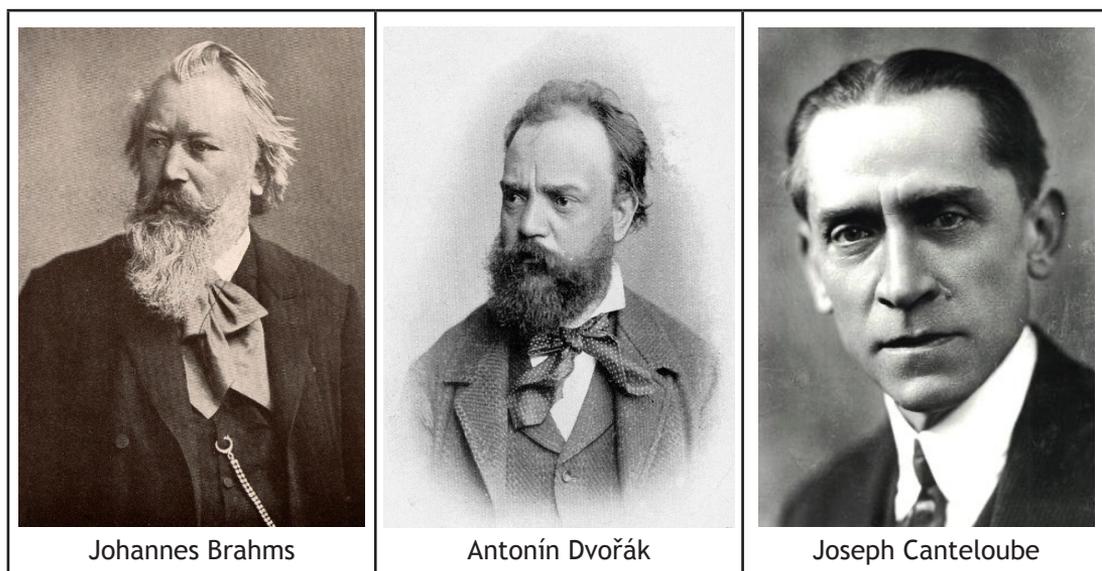


Photo 8. World known composers of Art Music

Some of the songs composed by these composers that could be found in the choir's repertoires were, for instance: "Das Lied vom Herrn von Falkenstein", opus 43, No. 4, "Liebesklage des Mädchens", Opus 48, No. 3 composed by Brahms, Dvoraks "4 Songs on Serbian Folk Poems", Op.6, "Pastourelle" by Cantaloupe etc., (Berisha, 2004:62).

Returning to the origins of Art Music compositional oeuvre in Kosovo, as it seems and was previously mentioned, it started with choral music. Precisely, choral music

with its specifics can show us its folk music role because in its initial compositional phases as the first form of Art Music in Kosovo, it was heavily supported by the usage of Albanian folk music (Berisha, 2004:62). Absence of professional music institutions and professional composers has resulted in the first works with regard to Albanian Art Music with the developments and harmonisation of folk songs that were of extremely good use to amateur and semi-amateur choirs of that time (1945-1973). One of the first composers in this field is

Art Music pioneer in Kosovo Lorenc Antoni, who gave much in the cultivation of Albanian music in Kosovo by his compositional oeuvre, conducting and enriching the first choir repertoire created in Kosovo CSA “Agimi”

(1944) in Prizren, another centre of Art Music beginnings in Kosovo. The usage of folk music could be noticed and was even merged in the invention of great compositional technique of the author himself (Berisha, 1997:30).



Photo 9. Society Agimi orchestra, photo provided from Monographic “Agimi

The Role of the Amateur-Semi-professional Instrumental Ensembles (1930-1944)

The formation of amateur chamber orchestras and semi-professional ones that enrich music life and develop music culture, with instrumental displays, evolved during the 1930s (Berisha, 2004:25). In Serbia as the centre of ex-Yugoslavia, according to Putnikovich, apart from native Serbian musicians, in the development of music (20th century), foreign musicians contributed as well, especially the Czechs, who were choir leaders in Serbian singing societies, playing in orchestras and teaching in the Serbian schools. The above-mentioned period in Kosovo’s Art Music had the identical situation and fate (Putnikovich, 1995). Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and from 1941 Albanians took part in the existing and established amateur societies and wind orchestras throughout Kosovo. During these years, to be distinguished were: Mandolin Orchestra of Peja, established by Franjo Vaculin, later under the lead of Muhamet Belegu (1927-2014); amateur wind ensemble in

Mitrovica directed by Franjo Stern, “Hajdar Dushi” orchestra renamed as “Bajram Curri” (1947) in Gjakova, “Kastriotët” in Ferizaj, “Ramiz Sadiku” (1963) in Pristina and “Gajreti” in Gjilan which along the years was transformed into a society of art and culture. The ensembles of that time were the most important part of the cultural music activity. These art societies initially began with only the orchestra and a singer, but later on expanded by adding dance ensembles, a bigger orchestra and other singers (Berisha, 2004:52). An identical situation also characterized the music of Albania. These kinds of formations/ societies rose too early in almost every city, becoming an important part of the artistic and cultural life of the neighbouring country in 1920 (Berisha, 1998:77).



Photo 10. Society “Përparimi” in the city of Peja

Photo provided from the book *Tradita muzikore në Gjakovë* (Music Tradition in Gjakova) from Behar Arllati

The music to be cultivated was the folk and local traditional music, songs with contents of different character like love songs, wedding songs, emigration songs, ballads etc., which they performed in various family events as well as tours around Kosovo. Their orchestral formation would change in particular with the impeccability of western instruments’

arrival in Kosovo. One of the most common formations consisted of: sharkia (from the orient 4, 6, 9, 12 strings), the violin (string instrument, 4 strings), bugaria (from the east 14th-15th century, 4 strings) and then later harmonica, दौरا, darabuka, clarinet, flute, double bass etc (Arllati, 2014:65-66).



Photo 11. First music ensembles in the city of Gjakova

Photo provided from the book *Tradita muzikore në Gjakovë* (Music Tradition in Gjakova) from Behar Arllati.

Given this situation, the instrumentalists performed their songs in 'softer' tonalities, i.e. major C, D, E, F, G, A (Arllati, 2014:65-66). These societies continue their work in most difficult conditions with or without the support of Kosovo institutions until

today (2023). Today, their activity is related to festivals and different cultural manifestations in and out of the country, although more often than not were deprived from participations due to financial hardships.



Photo 12. Cineli (left) and Small baraban (right)

In 1944, four military orchestras¹ were formed in Pristina, Prizren, Gjakova and Mitrovica, where instruments like cineli [cymbal] and small baraban (small folk drum called Nagara from India) were used. The military orchestra in Pristina was made of thirty musicians and worked under direction of Isa Drakula and the same number of musicians is noticed in Prizren, under direction of Stjepan Mateiq and in Mitrovica 24 members under direction of Buco Ramadan. In Gjakova was the largest military orchestra consisting of 60 instrumentalists directed by Hungarian musician Janosh Nemeti. In his concert activity and weekly displays held, these orchestras transformed in significant initiators of music life in Kosovo. During this period, notable is the role of individuals like Bogoljub Vojnovic and Nikolla Bunjin, who showed great enthusiasm, commitment and motivation for their work. Unfortunately, after the end of Kosovo war in 1999, a large number of documents which could highlight the life and musical activity of these

individuals were destroyed, and today we get only indirect information from people who were part of these activities or that once could be heard and read about them, but no details are available.

¹ The information regarding the military orchestras is taken from a letter written from a friend called Barisic to Professor Engjëll Berisha (1934-2015), in 2010.



Photo 13. Red Hall at the Palace of Youth, the only concert hall in Kosovo, before and after the war
 Photo provided from Dam Festival website (www.damfestival.com)

One of the SCA (Society for Culture and Art) that occupies the most important place in development of traditional and art culture in Kosovo is “Agimi”, that was established by some of the most well-known intellectuals of our country. This society continues its existence to date (2023). However, it is in no different position to other societies alike in Kosovo suffering from difficult conditions. As Berisha outlines regarding SCA “Agimi” in the monography where he was a co-author with Kolë Biter Shiroka, this SCA was formed in November 1944 in Prizren, by the Albanian intellectuals Anton Çetta and Zekirija Rexha. Lorenc Antoni became the composer and conductor of the SCA “Agimi” choir - the first composer of Art Music in Kosovo. According to the musicologist Engjëll Berisha who was also for a period of time part of the SCA, the first chamber ensemble (1945) worked under “Agimi”, composed of: Xhemil Doda (violin), Nuri Sherifi (violin), Lorenc Antoni (cello), Kolë Shiroka (flute), Lazër Mjeda (clarinet), Josip Barashiq (horn), Nela Jakic (piano), Anton Mjeda - (contrabass) (Berisha & Shiroka, 2004:24). To evidence how great was the importance of these societies for the

cultivation of Art Music in Kosovo, we will mention some of the main Art Music pieces that were part of their repertoire. In the repertoire of the chamber ensemble, one could notice works of Wolfgang A. Mozart (1756-1791) *Midnight Serenade*, Franz Schubert (1797-1828) *Unfinished Symphony*, Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) *Hungarian Dances*, transcripts of operas from Friedrich Flotow (1812-1883) *Marta*, Georges Bizet (1838-1875) *Carmen*, and parts of Lorenc Antoni’s (1909-1991) i.e., *Vallet shqiptare* [“Albanian Dances”] (Berisha & Shiroka, 2004:24).

Along the chamber orchestra, integral parts of this society were the orchestras of madolinata (1951) as seen in the picture no. 13 and tambourine (1956), the first founded with initiative of the teacher Gani Luboteni (1927-2012), and the second by father Kol Gjoni, and during mandolin courses they taught music theory for technical grasp of the instrument and guitar (Berisha & Shiroka, 2004:24).



Photo 14. Mandolinists orchestra at Agimi Society, photo provided from Monographic "Agimi"

The Tambourine Orchestra had its first public concert performing the work of above-mentioned composer Lorenc Antoni, an orchestral work titled "*Rapsodia shqipëtare nr.2*" ["Albanian Rhapsody no. 2"].

Of special importance in this society is the mixed choir, considering Prizren's long lasting tradition of choral singing. This choir interpreted the most prominent works of world and local composers like: Ludwig V. Beethoven (1770-1827) "Nature is Sleeping", Wolfgang A. Mozart (1756-1791) "Waves", Lorenc Antoni "Blegëron delja" ["Bleating Sheep"], Fahri Beqiri "Erdh Misiti" ["The Match Came"], Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884) "Bartered Bride" etc. The cultural institutionalization of Albanians in Kosovo began with these societies. According to Berisha, the purpose of the establishment of the aforementioned ensembles was multifaceted, but primarily to develop Albanian cultural activities (Berisha & Shiroka, 2004: 30).

As a result, the above-mentioned cultural societies, the need for the establishment

of professional music schools was felt, out of which the first professional staff will be introduced.

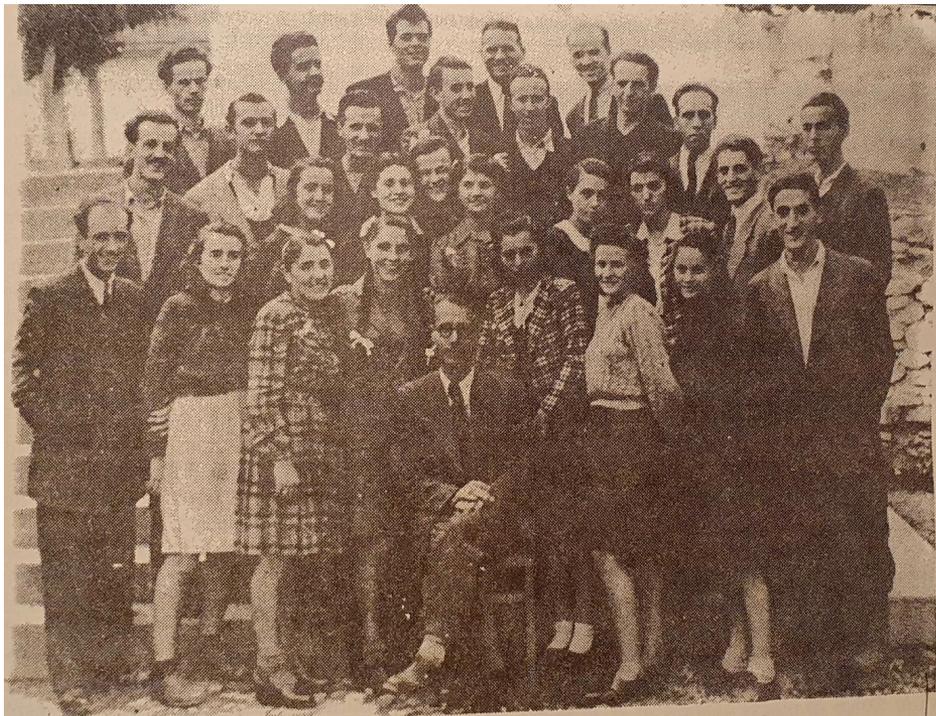


Photo 15. Choir at society “Agimi” (Conductor and director of Agimi, composer Lorenc Antoni is seen in the center, sitting. Photo provided from the monograph “Agimi”)

Initiated after the Second World War by talented, non-professional musicians, members of the cultural, artistic societies, the Art Music in Kosovo laid the foundations. These foundations managed to survive the difficult social, economic and political circumstances mentioned and elaborated along the entire article.

Conclusion

Summarising the findings Art Music of Kosovo Albanians established its own development path in the middle of the last century when more favourable economic, political, social and cultural circumstances arose. Gradually, I come to the conclusion of the existence of and a continuous development of Art Music of a new state with a history of an aggravated past such as Kosovo. This article, particularly strived to help identify the first steps towards professional music in Kosovo and also highlight the specific problems which initially affected the delayed appearance of such tradition.

For a limited period of time, a broad and genuine music activity in Kosovo was developing despite the difficult circumstances the spark for a beginning of cultural life was lit. Sadly, this came to a halt and would collapse by the end of the 1990s. This ultimately affected our general cultural flow in particular that in music. Nevertheless, despite all the torture exercised, all the political influences, music and its power prevailed by accompanying the people of Kosovo through the darkest times.

Followed by occasional disruptions to its development, yet it continues to entice an extra-ordinary interest and not only for Kosovo. As previously mentioned, the first steps of Art Music are connected to works of amateur-instrumental, wind and vocal groups followed by folk music that are formed in different cities in Kosovo. Cultural life was also fulfilled with displays from Christian choir societies in that period. The prominence of religious music over the secular one in general society is a result

of choirs being an inseparable and integral part of the educational and cultural mission of catholic faith in all cathedrals - despite the dominance of Muslim faith. These choirs would play an extraordinary role for the initiation of Art Music in Kosovo.

As I would argue on the basis of my findings, the appearance delay of Kosovo's Art Music resulted in a compositional oeuvre which was based on Albanian folk music, where composers began to express the national aspects, because they wanted to be distinguished by a unique style. Considering that they did not have local preceding role-models, the four individual generations of composers got stuck to folk music elements, always merging their original invention within the trends of world music which was a trend at that time.

As I have mentioned, due to the lack of relevant supportive literature, documentation of the archive of Art Music in Kosovo, my work on the history of Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo was and still is difficult. Nevertheless, this was one of the reasons of my growing curiosity and going deeper into details in my work. Intact with different stages and periods, both historic and stylistic, Art Music in Kosovo supported into the religious music in its beginning, and in particular in the folk Albanian music, nowadays (2023) it is the best cultural representative of Kosovo. This is evidenced through the focused on the key moments of Art Music in Kosovo, including interpretative one (amateur-semi-professional ensembles) and most importantly the existence of the composing school.

The musical criticism is what is currently missing in our society, which also allowed the stagnation, the mismanagement and its vague development. Art Music community in Kosovo lacks in professional criticism even in daily publishing and constructive critics. Often, we do not have one due to lack of courage in Kosovo's small community. We also lack the required knowledge for such a thing, especially when we are dealing with

Art Music as a relatively new genre in Kosovo.

Art Music in Kosovo has been shaped by a complex interplay of outside political factors that were answered by the creation of a new local identity in which folk music played an important role. Art Music in Kosovo, which today although cultivated under unfavorable conditions and circumstances; it managed to rank at the artistic level of different European countries and beyond.

Recommendations for Further Research

Today, Art Music in Kosovo continues its development and this is also shown during this article, but I hope that in the near future, one will have further studies of this kind, which may also bring us even more details about the unique characteristics of Kosovo's Art Music, which undoubtedly will sustain its path of development. Furthermore, one can also continue researching the ideoaesthetics and social aspects of Albanian Art Music in Kosovo.

Hopefully, this study may be the beginning of a wider research for professional music of Kosovo Albanians, may serve as support for the local and international researchers with the aim that in the future it provides possibilities to enlighten many factors that were an obstacle of its development but also for those who enabled its permanence and enrichment.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank all the collaborators who has helped with this study. A special gratitude to the photographers, portals and other institutions who have gave me the right to use their archives, documentation and the photos.

References

- Andreis, J., & Cevetko, D.D.K. (1982). *Historijski razvoj muzičke kulture u Jugoslaviji (Historical development of music culture in Yugoslavia)*. Školska knjiga., Zagreb
- Arllati, B. (2014). *Tradita Muzikore në Gjakovë (Music Tradition in Gjakova)*. URA, Gjakovë.
- Atheism and Agnosticism. "Yugoslavia - Religious Demographics". ThoughtCo. 2013. <https://www.thoughtco.com/atheism-and-agnosticism-4133105>
- Berisha, E., & Shiroka, K. (2004). *Monografia e SHKA "Agimi" (Monograph of SCA "Agimi")*. Vertigo, Prizren.
- Berisha, E. (1998). *Kultura muzikore (Music Culture)*. Libri shkollor, Prishtinë, 1998.
- Berisha, E. (2004). *Studime dhe vështrime për muzikën (Studies and Overviews on Music)*. Academy of Science and Arts of Kosova, Prishtinë.
- Berisha, E. (1997). *Zhvillimi i stileve në veprat e kompozitorëve shqiptarë (Style development on the oeuvre of Albanian composers)*. Enti i teksteve dhe i mjeteve mësimore të Kosovës, Prishtinë.
- Berisha, M. (2010). Archaeological Guide of Kosovo, Ministry of Culture of Kosovo. http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/drafti_i_guides_-anglisht_final.pdf
- Berger, K. (2014). The ends of music history, or: the old masters in the supermarket of cultures. *Journal of Musicology*, 31(2), 186-198. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jm.2014.31.2.186>
- Clara, F., & Ninhos, C. (2016). *Nazi Germany and Southern Europe, 1933-45*. Science, Culture and Politics. Palgrave Macmillan. UK.
- Elise, R. (2010). *Historical dictionary of Albania (second edition)*. Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press Inc.
- ENEMO, (2013). "Enemo Election Observation", The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations. http://enemo.eu/uploads/file-manager/Missions/Kosovo-2013-Municipal-Local-Elections/Preliminary%20Statement%20-%20Round%20I/preliminarystatement05.11.2013_ENG.pdf
- Halsal, P. (1997). *Music and nationalism*, NATMUSIC. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/NATMUSIC.asp>
- Kapxhiu, A. (2016). *The impact of folklore in the musical cultivated creativity, Anglisticum*. <http://anglisticum.aassee.eu/index.php/Anglisticum/article/view/1206>
- King, M. (2003). *The penguin history of New Zealand*. Auckland: Penguin Group NZ.
- Kolakowski, L. (1990). *Modernety on endless trial*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kryeziu-Breznica, R. (2020). *Kompozitorët e Muzikës Artistike në Kosovë - ndarja historike sipas muzikologjisë kosovare (Composers of Art Music in Kosovo - historical division according to Kosovar musicology)*. Social Studies 7: Kosova Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Kryeziu-Breznica, R. (2022). *Mes kërshtërisë dhe dashurisë për muzikën (Between curiosity and love for music)*. Kukuzeli. Prishtinë.
- Kurkela, V., & Mantere, M. (2020). *Critical music historiography*. routledge. New York.
- Malcolm, N. *Kosova një histori e shkurtër (Kosovo, a short history)*. (2011). KOHA. Prishtinë.
- Martin, L. (2003). *Music historiography in New Zealand*, University of Waikato <http://www.rilm.org/historiography/lodge.pdf>

Markovic, T. (2009). Balkan studies and music historiography, (self) representation between »Authenticity« and Europeanization. *Kakanien Revisited*, 1-8. <http://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/balkans/tmarkovic1.pdf>

Nettl, B. (2023). "Folk Music", Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/art/folk-music>

Nora, P. (1989). *Lieux de mémoire (Between memory and history)*. *Representations* 26.

Pejovic, R. (2009). *The history of Serbian culture*. Musical composition and performance from the eighteenth century to the present. https://www.rastko.rs/isk/rpejovic-music_xviii-xx.html

Peterson, J. (2010). *The church and the development of music*. Mfiles UK, <http://www.mfiles.co.uk/church-music-and-hymns.html>

Ph.D. Fellows of "Erinnerung - Wahrnehmung - Bedeutung: Constructing Historiography of Music", "The Formation of musicological Knowledge", Golden Pages, (2011). <http://goldenpages.jpehs.co.uk/conferences/constructing-historiography-of-music-the-formation-of-musicological-knowledge>

Putnikovich, R. (1995). *The history of Serbian culture*. https://www.rastko.rs/isk/rpejovic-music_xviii-xx.html

Riedlmayer, A. (2015). *Diplomacia Kosovare përdor shkatërrimin e xhamive në lobimin për UNESCO (Kosovar diplomacy used the destruction of mosques in lobbying for UNESCO)*. Kosova Press. <http://www.kosovopress.com/sq/lajme/diplomacia-kosovare-perdor-shkaterrimin-e-xhamive-ne-lobimin-per-unesco-47353/>

Rudi, R. (2006). *Sprova estetike-Muzika shekullit XX (Aesthetic trial - 20TH Century Music)*. Dukagjini. Prishtinë. Republika e Kosovës.

Sokoli, R. (1991). *Veglat muzikore të popullit shqiptar (Music instruments of the Albanian people)*. Akademia e Shkencave dhe Arteve. Tiranë, Shqipëri.

Shupo, S. (2005). *Biographical dictionary of Balkan composers*. ASMUS. Tiranë, Shqipëri.

University of Arts in Belgrade, (2023). <http://www.arts.bg.ac.rs>

N.A., "Orkestrat frymore në Shqipëri" (Wind orchestras in Albania), Top Channel Television, 2011, <http://top-channel.tv/lajme/artikull.php?id=207584>

Web Sites

web 1. <https://ashak.org/>

web 2. <https://www.arts.bg.ac.rs/en/>

web 3. <https://serbianempire.wordpress.com/>

web 4. <https://www.mfiles.co.uk/>

web 5. <https://www.kakanien-revisited.at/>

web 6. <https://www.britannica.com/>

Biodata of Author



Prof. Assist. Dr., **Rreze Kryeziu-Breznica**, musicologist, history of art music, is an Albanian musicologist. Her academic and research work is mainly focused on Albanian and Balkan music. Kryeziu - Breznica was born in Prishtina (1986) where he took her first piano lessons in the elementary music school while in secondary education, she attended lessons in music theory. Rreze graduated from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prishtina (Kosovo) with distinguished success in the Department of Musicology with mentor Professor Engjell Berisha. At the same time, she attended studies in the direction of Music Pedagogy at the same Institution of Higher Education. Rreze continued her studies at the 'master' level (Musicology) at the Faculty of Music at the University "Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje (North Macedonia) with mentor Professor Stefanija Leskova-Zelenkovska. She completed her doctorate at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Bern (Switzerland) with mentor Professor Britta Sweers. As one of the most active personalities in the classical / art music scene of Kosovo, Kryeziu - Breznica is the initiator and bearer of many cultural activities, conferences and musicological tables and musical events in Kosovo. She is the general director of the International Music Festival "DAM" and secretary of the Association of Composers of Kosovo. Since 2009 she has been teaching "History of World and Albanian Music" at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prishtina. Kryeziu - Breznica has done valuable work in compiling the Biographical Dictionary of Women Composers in Kosovo (2017) while four of her publications are "Monografi/Monograph - Reshat Randobrava", "The first Albanian Opera in Kosovo" and "The History of Art Music of Albanians in Kosovo", "Mes dashurisë dhe kërkërisë për muzikën (Between Love and Curiosity for Music)".

Email: rreze.kryeziubreznica@uni-pr.edu

ORCID: 0000-0001-5601-5867

Web Site: <https://shkencapoitilke-unipr.academia.edu/RrezeKryeziuBreznica>

Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=new_profile&hl=en

Research Gate: <https://www.researchgate.net/search?q=rreze%20kryeziu%20breznica>

