

## **CONCERT ACTIVITY OF THE LJUBLJANA CONSERVATORY STUDENTS FROM 1933 TO 1938**

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**Abstract.** *Ever since it was set up in 1919 until the founding of the Academy of Music in 1939, the Ljubljana Conservatory has been the leading educational institution in Slovenia. The activity of the Conservatory in the period between the two world wars contributed not only to the development of music education, composition and performance, but also to the laying of professional foundations on which today's music-pedagogical work in Slovenia is based. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the activities of this institution and to show the activities of students and professors in the period from 1933 to 1938. Relevant data for the study of activities in the mentioned period were obtained by researching the annual reports on the work of the Conservatory, as well as from scientific publications whose subject is related to the topic of the paper. The outcome indicates significant facts related to the operation of this institution and we have not found them in the literature published so far. The obtained indicators show not only the artistic development in performing, the creative activity of students who attended the Department of Composition, but also the work of the Conservatory in the above mentioned period.*

**Key words:** *Conservatory, music education, concert, Janko Ravnik, concert activity, Ljubljana*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The real development of music education in Slovenia began with the founding of the Conservatory in 1919. Before the founding of the Conservatory in Slovenia, there was no institution that would provide professional training for young musicians. By founding the Conservatory in Ljubljana, “Glasbena matica” (hereinafter GM) laid the professional foundations for professional music work (Krstulović 2015). Today, this institution celebrates more than a hundred years of existence where Slovenian professional music and ballet education is still and largely based (<https://www.kgbl.si/zgodovina-kgbl.html>).

Public performances at the Conservatory, which on most occasions took place in the Union Hall and the Hall of the Philharmonic Society in the period between the two world

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wars, had a positive impact on the audience. The concerts were a “great map of the school” (Krstulović 2015, 185). However, relatively little is known about this segment of the Conservatory's work<sup>1</sup>, except for the knowledge from the concert critics<sup>2</sup> (Stefanija 2019). The lack of informative literature on the topic of concert activities raises numerous questions regarding the average number of performances, the number of students present at the performances, the concert program, etc. On the other hand, a considerable amount of literature has been written about the work of some professors and students. However, in a more modest edition we find research, in which the authors present the work, changes and development of both students and professors and the entire work at the Conservatory through the methods of unified databases and the collection of objective factors. The main goal of our study is to present relevant information through data research methods (which are primarily related to the study of the report document), data that we do not find in the available literature on the activities of the Conservatory with a focus on students' concert work.

Having that in mind, in the following study attention will be focused on the importance of the Conservatory for the Slovenian region. During the almost century-old tradition the Conservatory faced numerous changes: location, changes in the name of the institution, sources of funding, etc. However, the primary focus of the work since its establishment until today has remained unchanged – to educate professional music staff for the development and training of capable musicians in the country (Stefanija 2019). The work of the Conservatory in the period between the two world wars can be divided in three *phases* of development. *The first phase* is characterized by the beginnings of the work of the Conservatory under the auspices of GM until nationalization, i.e. from 1919 to 1926. Formally and substantively, the Conservatory was reshaped when *Phase 2* began, or more precisely when funding and organization were no longer *in the hands of* GM, but of the state. In the period of nationalization, this institution was separated organizationally from the GM school. However, the number of students in that period of time did not grow (which was a characteristic of previous years), it declined and that is an interesting piece of information (Krstulović 2015). The *third phase* began in 1939 with the founding of the Music Academy in Ljubljana<sup>3</sup> (Pintarič 2019).

In the early days of the work at the Conservatory, the trumpet section was the most problematic due to the lack of teaching staff. On the other hand, the greatest development among instrumental and vocal departments was shown by the students in the departments of piano, violin and solo singing due to the strong or high-quality teaching staff (Pance 2020). In her publication *Czech Violinists in Ljubljana: Jan Šlais's Contribution to the Ljubljana's Violin School*, Maruša Zupančič (2020) dealt in detail with the character and work of the violin professor at the Conservatory, Jan Šlais. In his research, Zupančič came to the conclusion that most of today's Slovenian violinists are the *violin descendants* of Jan Šlais who has, during the last hundred years, decisively influenced the development of violin playing in Slovenia. Marjana Vangerl (2020) on the other hand, dealing with the life and work of Janko Ravnik (with special reference to his pedagogical work) pointed out that almost all Slovenian piano schools are directly or indirectly connected with the pedagogical work of Ravnik. According to the above-mentioned authors Zupančič and Vagel, we conclude that the first wave of teaching staff was laid at the Conservatory on the basis of music-pedagogical work in Slovenia.

<sup>1</sup> By this term Conservatory we mean the names that this institution: the Conservatory of the Ljubljana “Glasbena Matica”, the State Conservatory and the High School of the Music Academy ect.

<sup>2</sup> Reviews of the concerts were written after the performance and published in the daily press.

<sup>3</sup> At that time, the State Conservatory changed its name to the Secondary Music School of the Music Academy (Stefanija 2019).

Concerts at the Conservatory were, for many participants, the first public performances of future educated musicians. These were public and cultural events, attended by prominent citizens, politicians and highly educated people (Krstulović 2015). Public school performances have encouraged numerous composers to write children's and youth compositions for choir, string orchestra and other instruments<sup>4</sup> (Krstulović 2015). Special students' attention was attracted by Cvetko Budkovič's research (1995) to the scientific study of the Conservatory with a review of the concert activity. Budkovič researched criticism in the daily press which referred to the concert work of students from the Conservatory, and presented the results in the monograph *Music in Slovenian II* (in Serbian: *Slovenačka muzika II*). In the monography, he came to the results during the research which show the changes in both the teaching staff and the number of students at the Conservatory. Budkovič's focus in researching the work at the Conservatory was not primarily based on aggregated data on performances during a particular academic year(s) (which might be expected), but on the presentation of individual student performances and professors' criticism in the press.

Various aspects of the Conservatory's work are presented in the previous part of the text. Our opinion is that the changes in the organization of the Conservatory (changes in the school management, teaching staff and other information identified in the previous part of the text) have consequently affected the concert activity of students. In this study, we want to get data on changes and regularity during the academic years, which primarily relate to concert activities at the Conservatory. Specific issues that will be addressed later in this text are as follows:

1. How much did the reduction in the number of enrolled students affect the concert activities of the Conservatory?
2. From whose class or from which section do we notice the most frequent performances of students?
3. The works of what composers and composers of what nationalities were most frequently performed?

For the research period we chose the year 1933, which coincides with the changes in the school management (departure of M. Hubad and arrival of J. Betteto in the position of principal), and changes in the political situation in the country (death of King Alexander 1934). The final year of 1938 is identified with the then changes in the country (gradual approach of World War II), the reduction in the number of enrolled students (the first reduction in enrolment is observed in year 1934) and the last years of the Conservatory before the founding of the Academy of Music (1939).

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

The methodological approach of the research is based on obtaining and analyzing the existing data on the performances of students and professors at the Conservatory. The organization of the research is aimed at collecting relevant data from the report on the work of the Conservatory for a period of five academic years (starting from the academic 1933/1934 until 1937/1938). Considering that the work reports consist of several segments of the work of the State Conservatory (directory of students, etc.)<sup>5</sup>, an essential part of our research is the

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<sup>4</sup> Among the well-known authors who donated their works for the needs of the school or public performances are composers: Adamič, Jeraj, Pavčič, Škerjanec, Šivic, Osterc, Mirk, Tomc, Lipovšek, Šantel i Mirca Sancin.

<sup>5</sup> The documents of the work report are available on the website of the Digital Library of Slovenia (<https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-FQB8NIZT>).

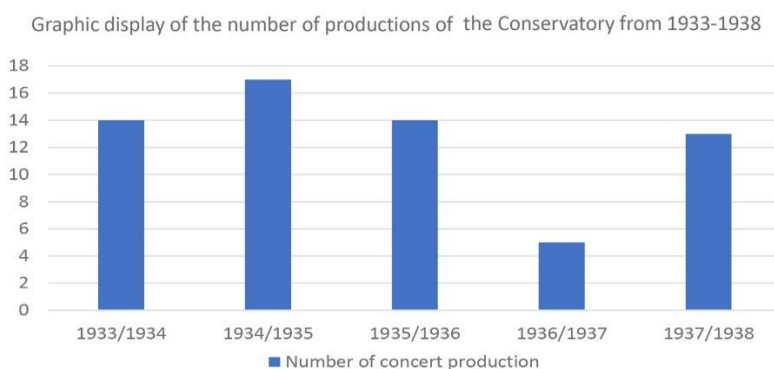
*Program of internal and public performances of students of the State Conservator. Translated into Slovenian it is Sporedi internih in javnih nastopov gojencev državnega konservatorija.* This part contains key information for our work: information about concert schedules, names and surnames of students who performed the programs, their classes, classes of professors, names and surnames of accompanists, conductors. In order to facilitate handling of more detailed and transparent research analysis we combined research data in the computer program Microsoft Excel. Excel helped us to include all the necessary data for compiling the analysis, which we will present later in this test as the *results* section.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Analysis of concert productions

By analyzing the data of the work report in the period from 1933 to 1938, we come to the conclusion that there were several types of public appearances at the Conservatory. Some of them have been reviewed in the daily press<sup>6</sup> and we can see them as more relevant concert productions compared to those types of concerts for which there were no written reviews after the concert. The first group of *relevant* performances includes public opera and closing performances. The group of less relevant productions includes internal, drama, jubilee, orchestral, piano, organ, chamber productions and solo concerts.

Graphic display 1 shows the ratio of the number of productions that took place during the academic years during 1933-1938. It shows that the total number of concerts for that period was 63. However, we notice that the State Conservatory did not perform a constant number of productions, and that the number of performances changed throughout the academic years. The academic year with the highest number of performances was 1934/35 with a total number of 17<sup>7</sup>, while the academic season with the lowest number of productions was 1936/37 with 5 performances.



**Graph 1**

Table 1 shows a significant number of concerts including subtitles. Considering the data from the table, we can conclude that the subtitles determine the theme, character and concept of each concert. Most often, the organizers indicated by the subtitle that the concert

<sup>6</sup> The daily newspapers in which these reviews were published are: *Jutro*, *Slovenec* and *Slovenski narod*.

<sup>7</sup> In this data we count all types of productions, written above.

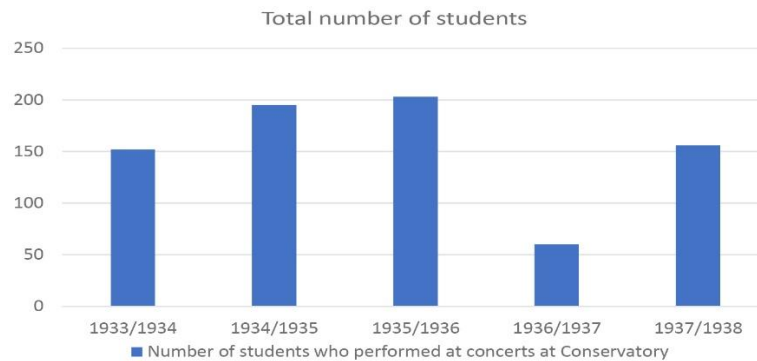
will be: performances of works belonging to a certain stylistic period, works by composers from certain countries dedicated to an instrument or a specific group of instruments, composers (whose works were performed exclusively during the concert program), etc.

**Table 1**

Academic year	Type of production	Program or subtitle of the concert
1933/1934	3. Public production	Komorni večer
1933/1934	Orchestral evening	Večer ruske glasbe
1933/1934	Public production	V počastitev spomina Bedřicha Smetane ob 50 letnici njegove smrti
1933/1934	Internal production	Gojencev kompozicijskega oddelka g. prof. Slavka Osterca
1934/1935	1. Public production	splošno slovanskega značaja: v proslavo sv. Save
1934/1935	2. Public production	Romantika
1934/1935	3. Public production	Romantika
1934/1935	6. Public production	Klavirski večer
1934/1935	7. Public production	Predklasika in klasika, G. F. Handel in J. S. Bach
1934/1935	8. Public production	Impresionizem in moderna
1934/1935	9. Public production	gojencev orgelskega oddelka Mons. Stanka Premrla
1934/1935	1. final production	gojencev klavirskega oddelka
1934/1935	Drama production	Liliom
1935/1936	1. Public production	Francoska glasba
1935/1936	2. Public production	Angleška glasba
1935/1936	3. Public production	Klavirski večer gojencev prof. Janka Ravnika: Ruska glasba
1935/1936	4. Public production	Klavirski večer originalnih štiriročnih skladb gojencev prof. Antona Ravnika
1935/1936	5. Public production	Spored obsega izključno skladbe orgelske literature
1935/1936	Piano evening	Reinholda Gallatie, absolventa visoke šole, oddelka prof. Janka Ravnika
1935/1936	1. jubilee production	ob priliki 100letnice podržavljenja konservatorija
1935/1936	2. jubilee production	ob priliki 100letnice podržavljenja konservatorija
1935/1936	3. jubilee production	ob priliki 100letnice podržavljenja konservatorija
1936/1937	1. Public production	Češka glasba
1936/1937	2. Public production	V počastitev spomina ravnatelja Mateja Hubada
1937/1938	3. Public production	v počastitev 88. rojstnega dnevu prezidenta Češkoslovaške republike T. G. Masaryka
1937/1938	4. Public production	Poljska glasba
1937/1938	5. Public production	Slovenski skladatelji
1937/1938	1. final production	Skladbe J. S. Bacha
1937/1938	concert performance	Osterc-Valjalo Marte, absolventke visoke šole prof. Janka Ravnika

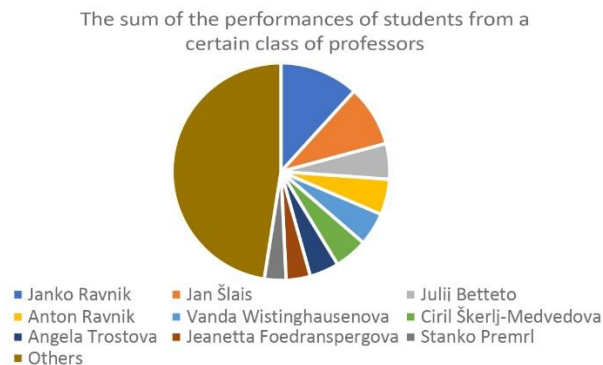
### 3.2. Statistical analysis of the number of students and professors

Graph 2 shows the ratio of the number of students who appeared at the performances of the Conservatory in the period from 1933-1938. It shows that the academic year with the largest number of students at performances was 1935/1936 with a total number of 203. The smallest number of students participated during the academic year 1936/1937 when 60 of them performed.<sup>8</sup>



**Graph 2**

The following chart shows the number of student performances according to the classes of professors employed by the Conservatory. Most students at the concerts performed in the class of Professor Janko Ravnik (a total of 62 students belonged to the class of Janko Ravnik in the five-year period, which is 12% of the total number of students). In this statistical parameter, Ravnik is followed by professors Jan Šlais (total of 48 students, 9%), Julij Betteto (28 students, 5%), Anton Ravnik (28, 5%), Vanda Wistinghausenova (26, 5%), Ciril Škerlj -Medvedova (26, 5%), Agela Trostova (23, 4%), Jeanetta Foedrantspergova (19, 4%), Stank Premrl (17, 3%).



**Graph 3**

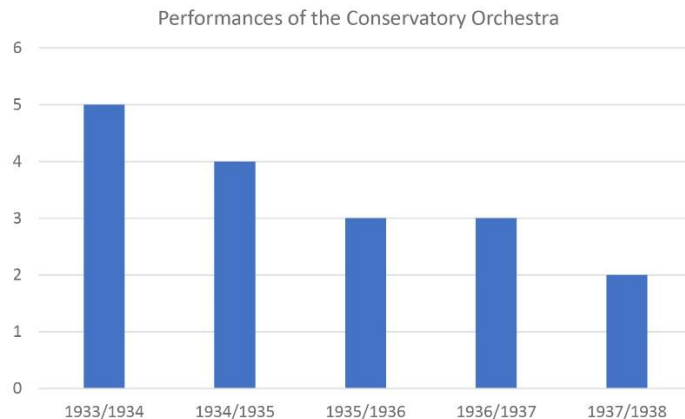
<sup>8</sup> These data include the total number of students who performed within a single academic year. This means that students who have recorded numerous performances are included in this sum. Drama productions recorded one performance each, with a large number of students. All student names are included in this aggregate quotient except the names of students who were members of the Conservatory orchestra because in the work reports, we do not find all the names of the orchestra members.

Piano students appeared not only as soloists, but also as accompanists. Looking at the accompanists in individual academic years (Table 2), we can see that not only the students were accompanists but also the professors of the Conservatory. The highest number of accompanists (72 in total) performed during the academic year 1934/1935, and the lowest number (17) during the academic year 1936/1937.

**Table 2**

Academic season	Total number of accompaniments during the academic year	The largest number of accompaniments
1933/1934	57	Gallatia Reinhold (12), Hrašovec Silva (10), kapel. Anton Neffat i dr. Danilo Švara (13)
1934/1935	72	prof. Leskovic Bogomir (11), Osterc Marta (8), prof. Janko Ravnik (13)
1935/1936	47	Gallatia Reinhold (5), Kumar Vladimir (15), Seifert Herta (7), prof. Lipovšek Marjan (5)
1936/1937	17	Gallatia Reinhold (2), Osterc Marta (7), Seifert Herta (4)
1937/1938	62	Seifert Herta (15), prof. Lipovšek Marjan (7), Osterc Marta (10), Bojan Adamič (8)

Graph 4 shows that the Orchestra of the State Conservatory had numerous performances during the academic seasons in the period from 1933-1938. Considering the total number of performances during the turbulent academic years, we notice a decrease in the number of performances of the Orchestra. The Orchestra had most of the performances during the academic year 1933/1934 (5 in total), while the smallest number of concerts (2) was held during the academic season of 1937/1938.

**Graph 4**

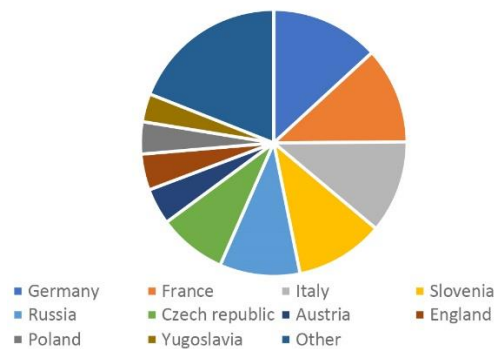
Considering the results and data of the work report in the period from 1933-1938, we find occasional performances of the String Orchestra, String Quartet and the State Conservatory Choir. The string orchestra had 5 concerts at the Conservatory during the academic 1935/1936, and performed twice in the season of 1937/1938. During the academic years of 1933/1934, 1934/1935, 1936/1937, we do not find concerts of this instrumental ensemble.

In the period from 1933 to 1938, two string quartets performed at the Conservatory. The difference between these two ensembles is obvious in the names of members of the quartet. The string quartet named *the Ljubljana Quartet* is composed of Leon Pfeifer, Franjo Stanič, Vinko Šušteršič and Gustav Müller. The second quartet appears in the work report only under the name *the String Quartet*. This ensemble consisted of performers: Uroš Prevoršek, Kajetan Burger, Albert Dermelj, Gustav Šivic. Concerning the work reports, the performances of these two quartets can be found only in the academic year 1935/1936. *The Ljubljana Quartet* performed twice during the mentioned academic season while the string quartet played once. The performances of the Choir of the State Conservatory are recorded only during the academic seasons 1935/1936 (when they performed twice) and 1936/1937 (one performance).

### 3.3. Concert repertoire of the Conservatory students

During the period between 1933 and 1938, compositions by 205 different authors were performed during the programs. Concerning the work reports data it can be clearly concluded that the most common works were performed by composers from Germany (works of 27 different composers were performed from those areas, which is 13% of the total number of authors), France (24 composers, 12% ), Italy (23, 11%), Russia (22, 10%) and the Czech Republic (17, 8%) (Chart 5). Compositions by Yugoslav composers were performed in a significantly lower coefficient (a total of 7 composers were performed, i.e. 3%) compared to Slovenian authors (22 composers, 11%).

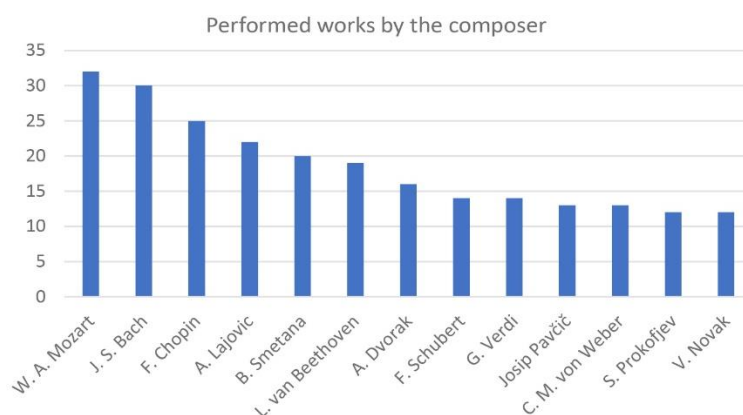
States of composers, whose works were on the program of performances of the Conservatory



Graph 5

The following chart shows the results of composers whose works were most often performed in the programs of the students at the Conservatory. The largest number of compositions (32 in total) in the concert program were composed by W. A. Mozart. A large number of works were also authored by J. S. Bach (a total of 30 compositions by this author were performed), F. Chopin (25 works), A. Lajovic (22), B Smetana (20).



**Graph 6**

The students' program was additionally enriched by the works of not only foreign, but also domestic students of the Department of Composition (Table 3). During the interval of 3 years, 6 students of the Conservatory were the authors of 12 compositions that were performed as part of the performance. Table 3 shows that the compositions were written for solo or minor instrumental and vocal ensembles (the exception is the work *Concerto grosso*, by Uroš Prevorsek, written and performed by the Conservatory Orchestra).

**Table 3**

Date of performance	Author	Composition	Performed by
16.5.1934	Mihelčič Alojzij	Mala klavirska suita	Gallatia Reinhold
16.5.1934	Hrovatin Radoslav	Iz lepih časov	Iglič Jelka
16.5.1934	Mihelčič Alojzij	Večerna pesem	Iglič Jelka
16.5.1934	Prevorsek Uroš	Cvili možek	Iglič Jelka
16.5.1934	Drmota Anton	Eros - Thanatos	Drmota Anton
16.5.1934	Prevorsek Uroš	Meditacija za godalni kvartet	Prevorsek Uroš; Ornik Francka; Dermelj Albert; Est Joža
16.5.1934	Drmota Anton	Jesenska	Gnus Mira
16.5.1934	Drmota Anton	Moment na morju	Gnus Mira
16.5.1934	Drmota Anton	Ne šumi klasje	Gnus Mira
16.5.1934	Žebre Demetrij	Pihalni trio	Čampa Viktor; Raubar Miljutin; Loparnik Gustav
28.1.1935	Prevorsek Uroš	Vizija	Prevorsek Uroš
27.5.1935	Prevorsek Uroš	Vizija	Prevorsek Uroš
24.6.1936	Prevorsek Uroš	Concerto grosso v treh stavkih za godalni orkester	Conservatory Orchestra and Orchestra society of Glasbena Matica (cond. Uroš Prevorsek)

### 3. CONCLUSION

The founding of the Conservatory in Ljubljana in 1919 enabled the acquisition of professional musical (and ballet) knowledge and skills in Slovenia. The research of this institution so far has completed the (relatively little known) history of the Conservatory. This study deals with the work of the Conservatory with an emphasis on the concert activity of students. It elaborates on some of the following issues. How many students performed during the academic years? How have or have not the aspects of the Conservatory's work changed in connection with concert activity throughout the academic years? During the research, we received numerous answers concerning not only the concert activity, but also the general activities of the Conservatory in the period from 1933-1938 concerning the work of individual students, as well as the entire professors chair, principals, etc.

The results of the research show that the Conservatory did not have a constant number of productions during the academic years, but that the number of performances changed. When analyzing the total number of students who performed during the academic years, we find out those things are also variable. Considering the total ratio of the number of productions and students in the given period, we find approximately equal results. The difference in the ratio of the number of productions and students is evident only in the academic years 1934/1935 and 1935/1936, when there were more students at performances than on average. In the further course of data processing, the teaching staff or, more precisely, the individual teacher class from which the students *came* was examined. According to the analysis of data, most students were from the class of Janko Ravnik (piano teacher), Jan Šlais (violin) and Julij Betteto (solo singing), which in some way confirms the stated position that the most active (and most numerous) students at the Conservatory was from the piano, violin and solo singing departments. When studying the number of accompanists, we come to the conclusion that a significant number of professors rehearsed at performances, too. The results of the research of the performances of the Conservatory Orchestra show a decrease in the number of performances during the selected period of academic years. However, when considering the results of the performance of the Conservatory Orchestra in the five-year period, we cannot draw clear conclusions whether this orchestra performed in smaller numbers during the wider period of time. Looking at the results of the concert repertoire, which was performed by students from the Conservatory, we can see that most of the authors came from Western countries (Germany, Italy, France, etc.).

Accepting the position that the period of work of the Conservatory from 1933-1938 was chosen for this research, as well as that the statistical data collected from the Work Report in this study, we can draw the following conclusions:

- a) According to their artistic engagement, the most colourful and the most engaged in terms of the number of performances were the sections of the Conservatory for piano, violin and solo singing.
- b) The number of students at the performances is approximately equal to the number of productions during the academic year.
- c) Professors were a significant share of accompanists.

Having in mind the specificity and complexity of the topic, with the desire for personal contribution in defining and considering various issues that this topic deals with, this text should be a modest contribution towards a more comprehensive study of the general (historical, institutional, national) importance of the Ljubljana Conservatory. Numerous issues related to this topic require broader areas of study. Those issues are the additional value and, as such, will be the subject of further research and consideration.

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## KONCERTNA AKTIVNOST STUDENATA KONZERVATORIJUMA U LJUBLJANI OD 1933. DO 1938. GODINE

*Od formiranja 1919. godine do osnivanja Muzičke akademije 1939. godine, Konzervatorijum u Ljubljani je vodeća obrazovna ustanova u Sloveniji. Rad konzervatorijumu u periodu između dva svetska rata doprineo je ne samo razvoju muzičkog obrazovanja, komponovanja i izvođaštva, već i postavljanju stručnih osnova na kojima se zasniva današnji muzičko-pedagoški rad u Sloveniji. Cilj ovog rada je da rasvetli delatnost ove ustanove i da prikaže aktivnosti studenata i profesora u periodu od 1933. do 1938. godine. Relevantni podaci za proučavanje delatnosti u navedenom periodu dobijeni su istraživanjem godišnjih izveštaja o radu Konzervatorijuma, kao i naučnih publikacija čiji je predmet istraživanja povezan sa temom rada. Dobijeni rezultati ukazuju na značajne činjenice vezane za rad ove ustanove koje nismo našli u konsultovanoj literaturi. Rezultati prikazuju ne samo umetnički razvoj u izvođaštvu i stvaralčku aktivnost učenika koji su pohađali katedru za kompoziciju, već i rad Konzervatorijuma u pomenutom periodu.*

Ključne reči: *Konzervatorijum, muzičko obrazovanje, koncert, Janko Ravnik, koncertna aktivnost, Ljubljana*