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## The Short History of Multilingual Radio Drama Production at Radio Novi Sad

Radio drama (Audio drama) is an artistic media artifact that has a technology-dependent history development cycle, starting with the early broadcasting audio media origins, developing through the turbulent context-based proliferation with significant popularity oscillations, and contemporarily successfully coexisting in the multi-media broadcasting space [1]. This article presents the short history of multilingual Radio Drama production at Radio Novi Sad. We cover several development periods: from its origin (1951), through expansion, the Golden Age, the Dark Age, the Gray Age, and the contemporary stage. The radio drama broadcasting program at Radio Novi Sad began on January 20, 1951, as a new step in Radio Novi Sad's broadcasting, which started two years earlier on November 29, 1949 (Figure 1).



Figure 1 The first studio of Radio Novi Sad

The first emitted production was the Hungarian language radio drama Marshal, the radio adaptation of a drama of the same name, authored by Hungarian writer Ferenc Molnar. In January

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1952, the first radio drama for children continued the starting stream. These activities led to the official formation of the professional Hungarian-language acting ensemble in 1953 (Figure 2).



Figure 2 The acting ensemble (1954)

Up to 1956, all of the production was live. After that time, the professional production starts. Radio dramas were at first professionally recorded on magnetic tapes, emitted regularly, and safely deposited in the Public media institution "Radio-television of Vojvodina" archive department. Currently, the department deposits over 4000 recorded radio dramas produced in five languages [2-6].

In 1957, under the organization of Radio Novi Sad broadcasting emitter, the first festival of adult radio drama in former Yugoslavia was held. Immediately after that, in 1958, the first Festival of Radio drama for children arose. In 1976, the bilingual history of radio drama at Radio Novi Sad started with the parallel production of children and adults radio drama programs in Hungarian and Serbian languages organized in separate language-based Editorial Broadcasting Program Boards [2-6].

1978 represents a turning point in the history of the radio drama program at Radio Novi Sad. On January 1, 1978, the Editorial Board of the speech-art program concatenated two drama programs from the separated Program Boards into one. The celebration of 30 years of Radio Drama at Radio Novi Sad approved further directions in broadcasting diversification (Figure 3).



Figure 3 30 years of Radio Novi Sad celebration Studio M (Dorman Laszlo photo)

The primary aim of this organizational transformation was to establish the quintuple-language radio drama production in Hungarian, Serbian, Romanian, Slovakian, and Rusyn languages. It took nearly ten years to fully achieve the expected integration of multilingual speech and art production. The main development mile-stones are as follows [2-6]:

- 1982 - starts the Slovakian language radio drama for children and adults, while the Hungarian language experimental drama program joins the existing two terms of children (radio fairy tale, and children drama) and one term of adults drama;
- 1984/85 season - starts the Rusyn language radio drama for adults and children and the Serbian language experimental drama;
- 1985/86 season - starts multimedia theatre "Scene 13" establishing the first theatre in the context of Radio Novi Sad emitter;
- 1987 - starts the Romanian language radio drama for adults and children;
- 1988 - starts the short form of radio drama program in Hungarian and Serbian languages;

By rounding up the development circle, in 1988, the golden age of the radio drama program at Radio Novi Sad started. From 1988 to 1990, the Integrated Drama Editor Board produced up to 140 drama program artifacts annually. Through productions in five different languages and supporting different drama forms, these activities have significantly contributed to sustainable cultural diversity in the region [2-6] (Figure 4 - left).

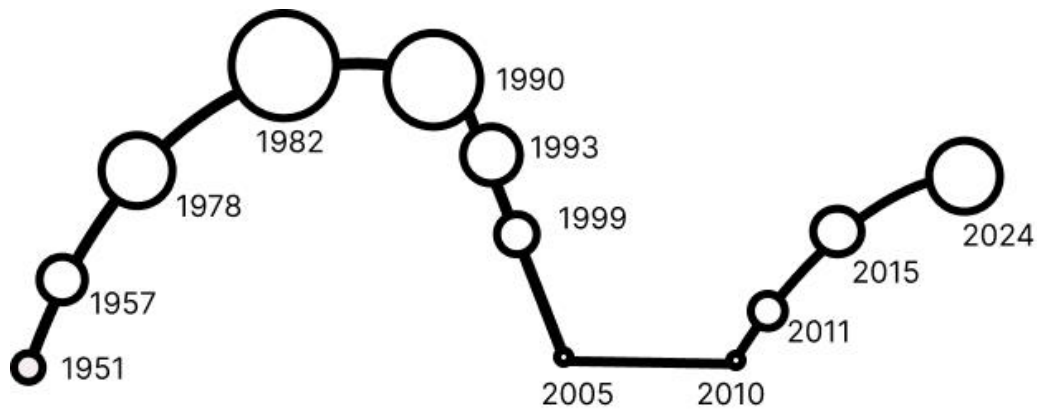


Figure 4 The Radio Drama Production History Time Line

- 1990 - 2005 (the Dark Age) - In 1990, starts the crisis period due to the regional war conflicts in former Yugoslavia. In 1993, the acting ensemble stopped working, while a further reduction of other staff members (especially the program editors and producers) followed almost immediately. The main characteristics of the period from 1994 to 1999 are the survival of only two language programs, Hungarian and Serbian, and the rare emissions in other languages. In April 1999, the first abolishment of the Editorial Board of the Speech-Art Program occurred. After five months, only a small group of members continued the work with a reduced production budget. In 2005, the entire Speech-Art Program in Radio Novi Sad stopped working as a final management decision. Drama stuff is incorporated in individual language boards and continues to emit previously produced materials in all five languages but without new production [3-6]. The Dark Age continued until 2010 (Figure 4 - middle).;
- 2010 - 2014 (the Gray Age) - In 2010, the radio drama in Hungarian and Serbian languages was re-established within individual Language Editorial Boards. 2012 - 2014, the gradual reestablishment of radio drama production in all five languages lasts [3-6].
- 2015 - 2024 (the New Age) - In 2015, the Public media institution Radio-television of Vojvodina constituted the Department for Film and Drama. It established the integrated framework for audio and visual drama production. The quintuple languages radio drama production has been started again and continues until now [6] (Figure 4 - right).

Considering the turbulent history of radio drama production in Radio Novi Sad, determined by the periodical raises and falls, the main conclusion is that radio drama is not dead. Throughout its complete history, due to the quintuple-language foundation, the Drama Editorial Board has significantly contributed, and still contributes, to the sustainability of cultural diversity at the national and international levels. The new perspective in technical and organizational aspects has been supported by moving the whole production and emitting units to the new environment (new building), with up-to-date technical support (Figure 5).



Figure 5 The new drama studio

Besides the production and program broadcasting activities, Radio Novi Sad has regularly participated and often won awards at prestigious radio drama festivals and events worldwide. The intensive interchange of radio drama artifacts, authorized texts, directors, actors, and producers fostered regional cultural connections. The progress continues slowly but aids the preservation of radio drama cultural heritage.

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