

## Grove Music Online Gjakonovski Špato, Dragan

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Gjakonovski Špato, Dragan

(b Skopje, 11 March 1931; d Skopje, 3 Jan 1987). Macedonian composer, arranger, and conductor. He was a shaping force in jazz and popular music in Macedonia, and was a leading arranger in the former Yugoslavia during the 1950s. He came from a musical family and his talent emerged during his early childhood. The performances with his father and brother in Špato Trio, at the live programme of Radio Skopje, symbolized the beginning of the Macedonian popular music scene. He was introduced to jazz while listening to the foreign radio stations. He was the founder of the jazz band Sadzo (1948). From 1950, he worked at Radio Skopje, where he led the Rhythmic Sextet and the Pop Ensemble, and several years later, he formed and conducted the First Big Band of Macedonian Radio Television (MRTV, 1961). Špato adapted the arrangements of foreign composers, which he transcribed the tapes and records. He was recognized as a highly influential composer and arranger, with a wide range of expression based on his solid knowledge of canonic figures in jazz, and with a special inclination towards Latin American rhythms. He left a fascinating opus of arrangements for various ensembles. His numerous enduring jazz compositions, vocal and instrumental, are performed at festivals. Some are considered to be particularly successful in their usage of folklore: 'Molči edna dolina' (A silent valley), 'Dalečen kraj' (Far away), 'Zar vistina e kraj' (Is it really the end), 'Leni'.

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