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Hrvatska glazbena historiografija u 19. stoljeću (Croatian 19th-century Music Historiography)
by Sanja MAJER-BOBETKO; Gorana DOLINER; Zdravko BLAŽEKVIĆ

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International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music, Vol. 43, No. 1 (JUNE 2012), pp.
245-248

Published by: [Croatian Musicological Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41552772>

Accessed: 20/06/2013 01:14

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Sanja MAJER-BOBETKO – Gorana DOLINER – Zdravko BLAŽEKOVIĆ: *Hrvatska glazbena historiografija u 19. stoljeću (Croatian 19th-Century Music Historiography)*, Zagreb: Croatian Musicological Society, 2009.

This book is the result of a combined effort of some researchers who deal with a topic not well-explored in musicology; an attentive work, promoted by Sanja Majer-Bobetko, devoted to collected essays, articles and manuscripts that appeared in Croatia and abroad approximately from the second half of the 19th century to the first decades of 20th century. The different materials in the survey are gathered and quoted in various sections as sources, with the related bibliography. The authors, Sanja Majer-Bobetko, Gorana Doliner and Zdravko Blažeković, have each analysed the bibliography on sacred, folk, instrumental and vocal music, aiming at clarifying the methods of four important historiographers: Franjo Kuhač, Vjenceslav Novak, Vjekoslav Klaić and Franjo Marković. Further, particular attention is given to music periodicals such as *Gusle*, *Glazba*, *Sveta Cecilija* as well as others like *Vijenac*, which published some articles on music, too.

In the first chapter, conceived as an introduction to the music historiography, Majer-Bobetko identifies the field *per differentiam*, marking the borderline which distinguishes the discipline from the other branches of musicology and explaining, at the same time, the differences between the history of music and music aesthetics, sociology of music, ethnomusicology, psychology of music, music theory and music criticism. The floating status of music historiography, intertwined in a complex way with a great number of musical and non-musical human sciences, has obliged the scholar to describe the means and scope of this discipline towards a correct approach in reconstructing the history of histories of music that appeared in Croatia since the second half of the 19th century.

As in other countries of Europe, so also in Croatia, music historiography develops a symbiotic life with systematic musicology. However, any contribution on this matter is involved in an ontological framework. From a historicistic point of view, the musicologist who classifies the methods of history is compelled to accept the different cultural situations that had influenced his colleagues in the past. It is not merely a simple comparison among historians, depending only on the amount of sources recovered till the present time. The modern historiographer is not interested in establishing what is truth or forgery like the historian, but his primary goal is to focus on the structure of the historical thought. In any case, there will be always an irremediable gap provoked by the undeclared conflict between the contemporaneous culture and the ideas emerging from the text written 150 years before. However, no way exists to extricate oneself from this opposition in which *tertium non datur*. The logical premise to enter the subject is to understand »what kind of story is the history of music?«, as Leo Treitler asked, in a provocative sense, some years ago (*Music and the Historical Imagination*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990). As a consequence, the other step is about the vehicular key words and their provenience from musical thought and the humanities. The various meanings of one term are frequently connected with the history of fine arts or literature following two directions. The first is music *vs.* literature. For instance, the lemma harmony covers a great part of our civilization in which several musical and non-musical traits are mixed; furthermore, the semantic history of this word has also relied on many other meanings as metaphors. The second is literature *vs.* music, and at this extent the lexicon of music lists a group of entries grasped from novels

and philosophy as *sensiblerie*, *Empfindung*, *pathétique*, etc. The same happens for the adjectives *nation*, *folk*, *popular*, surcharged by several and contradictory meanings influenced by political events (see the cases of Italy and Germany, which suffered the lack of a state respectively until 1861 and 1871, not to mention Croatia which was for a long time under the Venetian and Habsburg administrations).

Where periodization is concerned, the cultural life of Croatia is linked to the general history of European civilization and the music written and played on its own territory, for which the historians' proposals often collided with the issue of how to define the music ages, as outlined by Majer-Bobetko. At the same time, one can find a discrepancy between an inner point of view, referring to the styles and forms, and an external point of view, often but not always connected to the historical background and cultural policy.

Majer-Bobetko and Doliner engage in the theme of teaching history of music. A course was introduced in Zagreb by Vjenceslav Novak at the Music Institute, *i.e.* the former *Musikverein* which later became *Hrvatski glazbeni zavod*. Novak studied at the Conservatory of Prague and he started his career as pedagogue and critic from 1887. He collaborated with many music magazines, especially with *Gusle* and *Glazba*, and embraced Hanlick's aesthetics without refusing the Wagnerian *Musikdrama*. In about 1894, he prepared a synopsis for the students of Zagreb inspired by the books of Fétis, Ambros, Riemann and also based on the works of Bernhard Kothe, Robert Paul Musiol and Emil Naumann. Unfortunately, his short history is an unfinished manuscript, and some documents kept in the Academy of Music Library probably reveal a controversial judgement of his promoters.

Novak divides the history of music in three ages in which both the canon of chronology and the canon of musical styles occur: 1) the music of ancient peoples before Christ, 2) the music of Christianity up to 1600, and 3) the time of the flowering of dramatic and classical music, and the newest tendencies from 1600. According to the historian's thought, ruled by a pragmatic evolutionism (Darwin or Spencer?), the music art develops from the simpler to the complex, as it is testified to by the ancient polyphony of Hucbald's *discantus*, which does not vanish but is transformed into the counterpoint of Bach at least. Apart from the fanciful theory, the handbook is a very important source for a series of musical words translated into Croatian.

A different approach to the periodization is shown by Franjo Marković, author of some librettos written for Ivan Zajc, the well known composer of national drama. Marković, as a student in Vienna, had contacts strictly with the circle of Croatian intellectuals who promoted opera in their mother tongue. His scientific engagement on music appears in the book *Razvoj i sustav obćenite estetike* (*Development and System on General Aesthetics*, 1903), in which the criteria of aesthetics are applied to the musical epochs. Without any element of objective history, he argues that the essence of music lies only in the instrumental language. However, Marković considers that music has acquired its autonomy, becoming a language since Palestrina's time, after a long period in which the sound was submitted to the power of the word. He rejects Hanslick's formalism, embracing the suggestions of programme music, and the narrative plot of his book has some analogies with Wagner's *Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849). For this philosophical scheme, Marković traces a progression concerning five genres as categories: sacred vocal music (religious age), Classicism (from Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach to Boieldieu), lyric Romanticism, including Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann and others, colour Romanticism or programme music, and Naturalism as a heritage that emerges from an innovative group of composers.

Blažeković in some chapters articulates the interpretation of the difficult and numerous works of Franjo Kuhač, the pioneer and founder of musicology in Croatia and in other South Slavic regions. A German native of Osijek, but a Croatian by choice, Franz Koch/Franjo Kuhač is the first researcher who, before Guido Adler, defined the comparative character of musicology, naming it *muzikologija*. As outlined by Blažeković with acumen, Kuhač's historical canon is biographical and ethnic at the same time. Subsequently, the answer to the question »what is Croatian?« has produced the dilemma related to Croatian music *vs.* music in Croatia among the followers of Kuhač. In fact, the construction of the collective south-Slavic identity during the nineteenth century, in which national or popular music plays an important role, is the core of Kuhač's work. This dualism (or binarism) promotes a dialectic discourse in which local, national and supranational phenomena, such as the *kolo* dance or the *guslar* song are conveyed. All these elements are a common patrimony of Croats, Bosniacs and Serbs. As Benedict Anderson's imagined community (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1991), Kuhač's contribution relied on the traditionalism of authentic folk and popular music, the latter having been created by professional performers and composers. For this reason, he organizes the biographies of the Illyrian musicians, active at the time of the National Revival such as Vatroslav Lisinski and Ferdo Livadić (*Ilirski glazbenici. Prilozi za povijest hrvatskoga preporoda, [Illyrian musicians. Contributions to the History of the Croatian National Revival]*, 1893), in which he maintains that peoples are different by natural predisposition, and even if a man was born outside his own country his innate national behaviour remains indelible. Some years before, in his *Osnova za uređaj naših glasbenih i dramskih odnošajah (Basis for the Classification of the Musical and Dramatic Relationships*, 1887), he writes that the Slavic race is more prone to music than others, particularly the Croats and Slovenes. Their ability to improvise and sing is peculiar to the low classes of peasants and workers.

In Kuhač's »imaginary museum of musical work«, inspired by Ivan Kukuljević-Sakcinski's *Slovník umjetnikah jugoslavenskih (Dictionary of Yugoslav Artists*, 1858-1860), one can find three leading paradigms of his astonishing ideology, namely the paradigms of identity, exclusion and assimilation. Blažeković points out Kuhač's exclusive interest in the vocal music of the Illyrian period, which stimulates and helps the growth of national feeling in a similar way to that of the Czech patriot, František Palacký. In view of this strategy, he leaves out instrumental music and omits the composers who are not engaged with Croatian poetry, as well as the composers whose origins are not Croatian. This is an eccentric opinion, confirmed by the absence of the German maestro Georg Karl Wisner von Morgenstern and the Hungarian Đuro-György Arnold, both committed to sacred music. The third paradigm, the fruit of a naïve project of inclusion, concerns the famous composers Giuseppe Tartini, Franz Joseph Haydn and Franz Liszt, claimed by him to have been Croats. Nevertheless, the chauvinistic attitude of this eminent scholar must not misguide our attention towards his theory of popular music.

In 1859, after the death of his uncle Philipp, he inherited the respectable sum of 12,000 forints, which he spent in collecting folk tunes as the main task of his life. Thus, from that year and during the next ten, he undertook an incredible series of journeys, mostly on foot, through Hungary, Croatia, Istria, Dalmatia, the Adriatic islands off the coast of Dalmatia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria! He selected 2316 items, 1600 of them published from 1877 to 1882 in four volumes under the title *Južnoslovenske*

narodne pjevke (South Slavic Folk Songs). In Kuhač's writings, over forty years, the term folk changes meaning. Despite the first appearance of this word, translatable as national/popular *via* Goethe's *Weltliteratur* – the revolutionary idea of the German poet is quoted in the article *O narodnoj glasbi i njezinu značenju u svjetskoj muzici* (*On National Music and its Meaning in World Music*, 1869) – in 1909 the musicologist specifies that *narodna glazba* is the music which contains artistic elements and is played by all people. Instead, *pučka glazba* is the music which spontaneously comes from the oral tradition of the peasant and urban areas.

Kuhač's ethnicity in music, deriving from his national feeling, can be explained through a concept of Johann Gottlieb Fichte. In the last of five lessons held at the University of Jena in 1794 and printed in the *Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*, (Jena: Gabler, 1794, see *Prüfung der Rousseauschen Behauptungen über den Einfluß der Künste und Wissenschaften auf das Wohl der Menschheit*), the German philosopher affirms that what we shall be is imagined through the mystification of what we were, this depicted as a lost essential quality (»Es ist – im Vorbeigehen sei dies erinnert – überhaupt eine besonders in der Vorwelt häufig vorkommende Erscheinung, daß das, was wir werden sollen, geschildert wird, als etwas, das wir schon gewesen sind, und daß das, was wir zu erreichen haben, vorgestellt wird als etwas Verlorenes; eine Erscheinung, die ihren guten Grund in der menschlichen Natur hat«). Obviously, in the period of the birth of national pride, this sentence could also be applied to the other European musicologies. The Italian one, which draws in the Renaissance spirit of its own culture, emphasizes the role of frottola (e.g. Oscar Chilesotti, *Sulla melodia popolare del Cinquecento*, Milano: Ricordi, 1889). The Spanish one, which recognizes in the ancient popular romance the roots of zarzuela, because, as asserted by the liberally oriented Francisco Soriano Fuerte in the 1850s, the official musics in the churches and the palaces of the nobility were the Flemish polyphony and the Italian opera, both used in place of the neglected Iberian songs (*Historia de la música española desde la venida de los fenicios hasta el año de 1850*, I-II, Madrid and Barcelona: Carrafa and Ramirez, 1855, 1856; III-IV, Madrid and Barcelona: Martin y Salazar and Ramirez, 1859). Likewise, the figure of the blind *guslar* who sings the ancient Balkan epic, shared by the Croats, is compared to the blind Homer, whose poems are based on the similar patterns or so called formulae. The romantic discovery of the ancient Slavic peoples and their folklore is the red thread that connects the *Morlacchismo di Omero* (1797) of the Dalmatian Giulio Bajamonti to Kuhač's *Narodna glazba Jugoslavena* (*National Music of the Yugoslavs*, 1869). In other words, the anonymous *pjesme* are the meeting point of the local, national and supranational Panslavic idea for the unity of South Slavs. The ideological war fought by Kuhač is an extraordinary example of this trend. It was a struggle that had been harder in countries not yet as politically emancipated as Croatia, which had to show its *slawische Wesensart* to Europe. So the work of the triumvirate Majer-Bobetko, Doliner, Blažeković is a milestone both for the reader of musical essays and for the historian of culture, too. Anyone who aspires to know why modern music historiography was born in Europe also in the shadow of national mythology, in which truth and mystification co-exist, will find an excellent answer in this book.

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