

## Music, Politics, and War: Views on Croatia Two Decades Later

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UDC: 78:32

355.01(497.5)''199''

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21857/m3v76teovy>

Original Scientific Paper / Izvorni znanstveni članak

More than two decades have passed since the publication of the edited volume *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*,<sup>1</sup> which brought together contributions by ten Croatian scholars specialized in musicology, ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology. The volume received considerable attention in the international scholarly arena and became a standard reference point for studies about music and conflict.<sup>2</sup> Sanja Majer-Bobetko contributed to it with an important article about the national identity and nationalism in music, with a focus on Croatian opera.<sup>3</sup>

My article in the current, celebratory volume dedicated to Sanja, expands my earlier work on music, politics, and war in Croatia in the 1990s and can be seen as an updated version of my article published in the edited volume *Musik in Fremdwahrnehmung und Eigenbild*.<sup>4</sup> It focusses on selected musical phenomena, both processes and products, from a temporal distance of two decades. These are: Musical Unity,

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<sup>1</sup> Svanibor PETTAN, ed., *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See in Philip V. BOHLMAN, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2004; J. Martin DAUGHTRY, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq*, New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015; David A. McDONALD, *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*, Durham – London: Duke University Press, 2013; John Morgan O'CONNELL – Salwa el-Shawan CASTELO BRANCO, *Music and Conflict*, Urbana (Champaign): University of Illinois Press, 2010; Jonathan PIESLAK, *Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War*, Bloomington – Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009; Timothy RICE, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction*, New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Jonathan RITTER – J. Martin DAUGHTRY (eds.), *Music in the Post-9/11 World*, New York and London: Routledge, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Sanja MAJER-BOBETKO, The Question of National Identity and Nationalism in Music: The Example of Croatian Opera, in: *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan, Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998, 79-90.

<sup>4</sup> Svanibor PETTAN, War, Music, and Ethnomusicology at the Break-Up of Yugoslavia: Notes on Croatia, in: *Musik in Fremdwahrnehmung und Eigenbild*, ed. Michael Schramm, Bonn: Militärmusikdienst des Bundeswehr, 2008, 107-24.

Diversity, and Communication; Repertoire; Diaspora; Production, Transmission and Mediation; and War, Music, and Scholarship.

### **Musical Unity, Diversity, and Communication**

The 1990s were marked by radical political changes in Croatia. After winning the first multi-party elections since World War II in May 1990, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) organized a referendum in May 1991, in which 94% of voters chose independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Proclamation of independence in June 1991 triggered the Serbian minority in Croatia to start its armed insurrection, backed by the Yugoslav Peoples' Army and volunteers from other Serb-populated parts of what was SFRY. The years that followed were marked by a level of violence not seen in Europe since World War II. Crucial to the final military outcome were the operations known as *Bljesak* (Flash) and *Oluja* (Storm), both in 1995, while the celebratory event which concluded the United Nations' mandate in Croatia took place as late as January 1998.<sup>5</sup>

The war-related circumstances brought together the proponents of disparate musical genres and generations to an unprecedented extent. The shared necessity to neutralize the source of immediate danger stimulated folk musicians, opera singers, rockers and rappers to perform at the same occasions, on the same stages, on the same records. Even within a single song one could hear the otherwise hardly compatible traditional singing from the mountainous Dinaric region of Croatia followed by Schlager-type music (*Treća bojna* – »The Third Brigade«) or a combination of a march and rap (*Himna Tigrova* – »Hymn of the Tigers«). It was fascinating to experience the promotional concert in January 1993 of the double LP-album dedicated to the musical activities of the 101st Zagreb Brigade. The performers who used to be popular decades ago and those who just started their careers were appearing one after another on the stage of the prestigious Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall in Zagreb, performing music ranging from folk-like tunes for *tamburica* / *tambura* plucked lutes all the way to hard rock.

Since there was a need for patriotic music for the sake of broadcasting, the Croatian Radio–Television (HRT) announced a public call for new songs and contributed considerably to their popularization. The increasingly repeated appearance of patriotic songs in the media programs during periods of ceasefires was usually interpreted as a musical sign that fighting was or would soon be renewed or intensified. The songs frequently reflected current events and political relations. For instance, one song suggested, following the end of war in the neighboring Slovenia,

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<sup>5</sup> The development of the events was in a sharp contrast to the Croatian expectations summarized in a 1991 video clip, showing the rise of national consciousness in 1990 (musically accompanied by the Croatian national anthem), the war in 1991 (accompanied by the sounds of shooting), and Croatia's diplomatic recognition by the European Union in 1992 (accompanied by the Union's anthem, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*).

that *Kekec je slobodan, red je na nas* - »Kekec is free, it is our turn now« (to achieve freedom).<sup>6</sup> Yet another song called on Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) to join forces with the Croats against the common enemy: »Let's defend the homeland, Huso, take a rifle, give me your brotherly arm, we will fight together and defend Herceg Bosna and beautiful Croatia.« If any, the *Other* most often approached in the songs was the Serbian enemy.

Musicians verbalized their involvement in the war-related events in a range from enthusiasm to desperation. The following quotations, selected from Croatian newspapers and journals from the period 1991-1993, point to a variety of opinions:

- Isn't politics what we do? ... My bullet is my song. It hurts Chetniks (Đuka Čaić on his song *Hrvatine*, »Great Croats«).<sup>7</sup>
- We do Croatian agit-prop, Croatian pop-art... The melody expresses our emotions, and the lyrics are the emotional propaganda message (*Montažstroj* group on its and HC Boxer's song *Croatia in Flames*).
- We recorded the true punk piece with which I hope to stimulate the blood of the guardsmen on the front lines to circulate faster, to upgrade their morals (Davor Gobac, singer of the punk group *Psihomodo Pop* on its song *Hrvatska mora pobijediti*, »Croatia has to win«).
- We should not be asking Europe to deal with our worries. Europe likes the strong ones and that is why I tend to raise the morals of the Croatians with my songs (Ivo Fabijan on his song *Kreni gardo*, »Move on, Guards«).
- The power of my song lies in the lack of weeping and crying. It, not surprisingly, stimulates fighting since it was born on the front line, and not in a warm room, next to piano and whiskey (Marko Perković-Thompson on his song *Bojna Čavoglave*, »The Čavoglave Battalion«).
- You cannot prosper if you do not sing 'move on, guards' and 'chase the gang'. I know that it should be chased, but I do not want to sing such a song. And that's why there is no work for me (singer Tereza Kesovija, with references to songs of Fabijan and Thompson).
- All I had to say I said with this song. Any violence is alien to me, it makes me feel frustrated, and then I prefer to sit at my piano (Zrinko Tutić on his song *Moja domovina*, »My Homeland«, performed by the Croatian Band Aid).
- It was not easy for me to write *Vukovar* for I did not want it to be banal. I used the musical motif from a well-known Steven Spielberg movie as a kind of symbolism. We would be able to communicate even with the aliens, but not with the Serbs (Hrvoje Hegedušić on his song *Vukovar*, named after the Croatian besieged city at that time).

<sup>6</sup> Kekec was a leading character from the Slovenian film, popular all-over Yugoslavia, directed in 1951 by Jože Gale.

<sup>7</sup> Chetniks (»Četnici«) is the pejorative name used by Croats for the Serbian enemies, historically rooted in the period of World War II.

- If we want to live together with people from Herceg Bosna or Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have to be tolerant towards the music they like (singer Zlatko Pejaković).<sup>8</sup>

The war made many musicians face the dilemma of which side to take or how to avoid taking sides. For instance, singer Zlatko Pejaković who made most of his career in Belgrade decided to return to his native Croatia while another singer, Neda Ukraden from Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose success was largely linked to the Zagreb-based record industry decided to proceed with her career in Serbia. The Sarajevo-based musician of mixed (Croatian and Serbian) parentage, Goran Bregović, was repeatedly criticized in parts of the Croatian media for his persistent avoidance of partisanship. The group *Zabranjeno pušenje* from Sarajevo split into two branches: one based in Zagreb and the other in Belgrade. The same problem was reflected in the ownership of songs. Record companies on the opposed sides were issuing songs during the war years for nostalgic consumers and claiming the rights, which would be subject to court processes in peacetime.

The 1990s were bad years for the recording industry in Croatia. The loss of a much larger market (SFRY), the economic decline which forced people to use their money to purchase more substantial things than music recordings, and the appearance of music piracy in a market which used to be regulated by law in the period of SFRY were considerable challenges to the recording business in Croatia. The established labels, such as *Croatia Records* (former *Jugoton*) and *Suzy*, had competitors in *Orfej*, the label of the Croatian Radio–Television, and in some newly established private companies (*Croatiaton*, *Euroton*). The worst nightmare for all were the pirates. They supplied the market with three basic types of recordings which were offered for sale on street stands: (a) illegal copies of the »regular« recordings; (b) their own selections of the most popular songs from the »regular« recordings; and (c) their own repertoire which was not available in registered record stores. Free from taxes, these products were cheaper in comparison to the recordings offered in the stores. In spite of the occasional bitter protests of the musicians and record companies, the government seemed reluctant for quite a long time to impose the law in the music market.

### Repertoire

By far the most numerous compositions related to the war in Croatia belong to the domain of popular music. Many Croatian pop musicians sympathized with the song claiming *Pjesma je jača od minobacača* (»A Song Is Stronger than a Mortar«) and felt proud for participating in the war with »the weapon« of their own. Those to whom they called for help in their songs in most cases included God (the most pop-

<sup>8</sup> This quotation is taken from the 1996 HTV program *Latinica*.

ular example was *Bože, čuvaj Hrvatsku* – «God, Keep Your Eye on Croatia»), The Virgin Mary (proclaimed queen of the Croats in the traditional religious song *Zdravo djevo, kraljice Hrvata*, which was particularly popular at that time), various saints (in *O, sveti Vlaho* – «Oh, Saint Blaise»; *Sveti Jure* – «St George»), the European Union (in *Stop the War in Croatia*), and Croatian historical figures (viceroys Josip Jelačić in *Ustani, bane* – «Wake Up, the Viceroy»). The fighting was portrayed as the unavoidable defense of *Croatia in Flames* where the Croats live *Od stoljeća sedmog* («From the 7th Century»). The song *Kreni gardo* – «Move on, Guards» made clear that *pravda je na našoj strani* («justice is on our side»). The message was as clear as *Hrvatska mora pobijediti* – «Croatia Has to Win» and *Hrvatska mora biti slobodna* – «Croatia Must be Free». These thoughts were expressed in either Croatian or English language; some songs were recorded in Croatian and English versions (e.g. *Moja domovina* – «My Homeland»), yet the others combined Croatian and English sections of the text (e.g. *Sloboda i mir* – «Freedom and Peace».<sup>9</sup>

Songs calling for peace had no relevance for the soldiers on the front lines; they needed songs that would encourage them to fight. Although the «official» production (available in regular stores and broadcast in the media) included a certain number of such songs, the «alternative» production (available from street vendors and not included in broadcasts) went much further in this direction.<sup>10</sup> Within the latter category, messages such as *Past će bomba na Beograd* – «The Bomb Will Drop on Belgrade» and *Sve ćemo vam prste slomit a ne samo tri* – «We Shall Break all Your Fingers and not Only Those Three» were not exceptional.

Most of the war-related repertoire was created in Croatia itself, but the contribution of ethnic Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere was also noticeable. In this all-Croatian music market there was a deeply felt sense of common ethnic roots and the Croatianness was emphasized in many songs regardless of their origin. Some well-known war-related tunes were taken from non-Croatian authors and adapted for local use, such as Norbert Schultze's *Lili Marlen* (in Croatian *Čekajte*), Pete Seeger's *Where Have all the Flowers Gone* (in Croatian *Iznad polja makova*) and Mark Knopfler's *Brothers in Arms* (in Croatian *U oružju brat*). There were instances of tunes shared with the enemy, obviously with different lyrics. For instance, the Croatian song *Korak ide za korakom* («Step after Step») resembled the Serbian song *Marširala kralja Petra garda* («The Guards of King Peter Were Marching»). Or, the music for the Croatian song *Past će bomba na Beograd* («The Bomb Will Drop on Belgrade») was taken from a popular Serbian film *Ko to tamo peva* («Who is Singing Over There») by Slobodan Šijan, which ended with the bombardment of the Serbian capital in 1941.

A part of the war-related music repertoire was distinctive in regional terms. Many songs considered Slavonia (eastern Croatia), which was most directly under

<sup>9</sup> The authors of the 1992 song *Danke Deutschland* expressed their gratitude to Germany for its role in the international recognition of Croatia in German.

<sup>10</sup> More detailed comparison between the «official» and «alternative» repertoires can be found in S. PETTAN, ed., *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*.

attack: *Pjevati će Slavonija* – »Slavonia Will Sing«, *Budi sretna Slavonijo* – »Be Happy, Slavonia«, *Želim biti Slavonijo s tobom* – »Slavonia, I Want to Be with You«, *Slavonski dom* – »Slavonian Home«, *Slavonska balada* – »Slavonian Ballad«. Particular settlements from this region, both rural (*Pokraj Karašice selo malo* – »A Small Village Next to Karašica«) and urban (*Moji Vinkovci* – »My Vinkovci«) appeared in songs. A particularly large number of songs were, for obvious reasons, devoted to the town of Vukovar.<sup>11</sup> Some small settlements in various parts of Croatia became known for war-related events as much as for their inclusion in the songs. The best-known examples are the villages of Kijevo and Čavoglave.

Not surprisingly, the textual motif of giving one's life for the homeland was quite common. In one example the singer offered his life to God in return for the life of his homeland: »If needed, my Lord, here is my vow / take the life from me and give it to her« (*Bože, čuvaj Hrvatsku* – »God, Keep Your Eye on Croatia«). Another singer claimed, in *Pjesma branitelja* – »The Defenders' Song«, that he was dying »for you, my beloved homeland, for the freedom of your children.« In *Bili cvitak* – »White Flower«, yet another singer explained that he already gave his life »for my people and for you.« In some songs the warning addressed to the enemies suggested that »the graves will keep the memory« of their crimes (*Pjesma branitelja* – »The Defenders' Song«) and will never forgive them (*Grobovi im nikad oprostiti neće* – »The Graves Will Never Forgive Them«).

A number of songs portrayed an intimate atmosphere related to family members bidding farewell. »I am leaving for the battle, mother / with prayer I will defend the land, my Croatian home / and for freedom, mother, I will give my life / the Croats are fighting with a song in their hearts« (*U boj krećem, majko* – »I Am Leaving for the Battle, Mother«). In another song a son was persuading his mother that her tears could not prevent him from reacting to the call of their homeland (*Odlazim ti majko* – »I Am Leaving You, Mother«). Elsewhere a child was addressing his departing father (*Moj japek* – »My Dad«). Self-critical songs were rather exceptional. One of them, *Pobjegulje* – »Runaways«, condemned those individuals who escaped from their endangered settlement, the city of Osijek, instead of defending it.

Croatian historical persons depicted in the songs lived within the range of a millennium, from the first Croatian king Tomislav in the 10th century all the way to the first Croatian president Franjo Tuđman. Their enemies differed: in the 16th century Nikola Šubić Zrinski fought the Ottomans, in the 17th century the aristocrats Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan confronted the Habsburgs, the 19th-century politician Josip Jelačić sided with the Habsburgs against the Hungarians, while the 20th-century politician Stjepan Radić, political emigrant Bruno Bušić,

<sup>11</sup> Contrary to the well-known fact that Vukovar was heavily damaged by the Serbian forces, there was at least one Serbian ensemble (*Beli Orlovi*) claiming, in the song dedicated to Vukovar (*Vukovare grade*), that the town was destroyed by the Croatian president »Tuđman's hordes and ustashes«. Ustashes (»Ustaše«) is the pejorative name used by the Serbs for Croatian enemies and refers to Croatian radicals from the World War II period.

policeman Josip Jović and cameraman Gordan Lederer had in common that they were victims of the Serbs. Historical persons from the enemy side were addressed rather exceptionally. Among them, the lyrics most often referred to Slobodan Milošević, next to the other contemporary political and military leaders, such as Radovan Karadžić, Biljana Plavšić, Ratko Mladić, Vojislav Šešelj, and (Montenegrin) Momir Bulatović. Their appearance in songs was, for the most part, limited to the cassettes available exclusively from street vendors. The lyrics contained dirty words and were never included in broadcasts in the government-controlled media.

Within the domain of art music, only a few individuals created compositions in which the war was reflected. None of them did more in this respect than Josip Magdić (1937-2020). Magdić received education in Zagreb and Ljubljana, and taught at the Music Academy in Sarajevo between 1970 and 1995, and later on at the Academy of Music in Zagreb. Magdić reacted in a humorous way to the early sparks that were announcing the war in Croatia in the years 1990 and 1991. At that time ethnic Serbs were expressing their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the elections in Croatia by blocking the roads with beams. What became known as the *balvan revolucija* (»the beam revolution«) found a reflection in Magdić's composition *Vae silvis* – »Woe to the Forests« for 15 instruments and electronics, which was performed in 1991 at a major international festival of contemporary art music *Muzički biennale Zagreb / Music Biennale Zagreb*. The constant crescendo in the course of this 22-minute piece reached its climax when the performer grabbed an electric saw and divided the beam on which he was previously sitting into two pieces. The first-hand experience of life in the besieged city of Sarajevo inspired Magdić to compose numerous pieces for various instruments. All of them were performed soon after their creation and the composer often participated in performances – most often as an organ soloist or conductor. Several compositions bear self-explanatory titles, such as the 1992 *Prkosni preludij s gelerom* – »Spiteful Prelude with a Grenade Splinter« for organ and the 1993 *War Picture Postcards of Sarajevo*, a suite in ten movements for organ. Magdić's scores from the period between 1992 and 1995, entitled *Ratne kajde '92* – »Notes of War '92«, were published by the *Croatian Cultural Society Napredak* in Sarajevo. After returning to Croatia, Magdić was inspired by the military action *Oluja*, which enabled the Croatian government to regain control over much of Croatia's state territory, and composed the piece *Oluja '95* – »Storm '95« for organ.<sup>12</sup>

Silvio Foretić (b. 1940), a Croatian composer who lives permanently in Germany, commented on his composition *WarPeace* (*Songs of War, Destruction, Fear and Politics*), performed at the 1993 *Biennale*, as follows: »I envy those colleagues of mine who are capable of composing at all times, regardless of the circumstances (even the direst) which directly or indirectly surround them. (...) They are the true full-blooded thoroughbreds, full-fledged artists, at all times aware of the importance of their noble vocation and their contribution to world culture, never experiencing a moment of doubt. (...) How can I fiddle with 'serialism' when people die in countless series,

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication, Zagreb 2001.

how can I compose 'twelve-note' rows while the European Twelve play with the lives of my family and friends...«.<sup>13</sup> At the same Biennale, the works of the Croatian composer Frano Parać (b. 1948) *Donna nobis pacem*<sup>14</sup> and of the Austrian Dieter Kaufmann (b. 1941) *Requiem in A*<sup>15</sup> referred to the war.

The only composition related to the war at the 1997 *Biennale* was *Zouk i bijes* – »Sound and Fury« by Stanko Horvat (1930-2006). This orchestral piece, completed in 1996, is thematically related to an earlier composition for piano, *De diebus furoris*, which was the composer's »direct reaction to the happening and terrors of the war, an expression of anger and fury because of the attack on Croatia in 1991.«<sup>16</sup>

### Diaspora

The role of the Croats living abroad was important in several respects and should not be underestimated in any attempt to throw light on the events linked to Croatia in the 1990s. It was they who organized many fundraising concerts and festivals outside of Croatia. One such concert, organized in Munich in 1992 and recorded for commercial cassette sale, was named *Poklon domovini* (»Present to the Homeland«). It gathered popular singers from Croatia performing Croatian patriotic songs. Croats living outside of Croatia, ranging from the neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina to the far-away Australia, also recorded several commercial cassettes with patriotic songs.<sup>17</sup>

In the course of my fieldwork in Australia in 1995, I visited several Croatian clubs. Written sources, observations and interviews supported the notion that the circumstances under which the Croats left their homeland contributed to very different personal attitudes and were crucial in deciding which among the ideologically diverse clubs to join. Some clubs used to be on good terms with SFRY, yet the others considered SFRY a prison for ethnic Croats. Some clubs were the gathering places of ethnically diverse emigrants from various parts of SFRY, while the others attracted ethnic Croats either from a particular region or from the larger territory of Croatia or SFRY. Some Croats in the diaspora mourned the death of Marshal Tito in 1980, while the others celebrated it. The 1991 military aggression

<sup>13</sup> In Ivo JOSIPOVIĆ, ed., *17. Muzički Biennale Zagreb / The 17th Music Biennale Zagreb*, Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo skladatelja – Muzički biennale Zagreb, 1993, 134-35.

<sup>14</sup> »Prompted by the terrible violence of the war in former Yugoslavia, the work voices a protest against aggression, nationalism and racism...« (in Josipović 1993: 54).

<sup>15</sup> »It is a concise musical setting of the text which has a particularly poignant meaning in our times« (*ibid.*, 91).

<sup>16</sup> In Sanda VOJKOVIĆ, ed., *19. Muzički Biennale Zagreb / The 19th Music Biennale Zagreb*, Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo skladatelja – Muzički biennale Zagreb, 1997: s.p., also personal communication, Zagreb 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Several examples are kept at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb and in the collection of the author of this article.

on Croatia was the point at which differences were put aside and providing help became the common aim.<sup>18</sup>

Following the 1990 elections in Croatia, the part of the diaspora ideologically rooted in the ustasha legacy from the Second World War provided street vendors in Croatia with visual and sound examples which were unimaginable under the previous regime. A map of Greater Croatia was available as a wall-poster entitled *Hrvatski kraljevi i poglavari kroz tisućljetu hrvatske povijesti* («Croatian kings and leaders through the millennium of Croatian history») and on the cover of a cassette containing »patriotic songs«. It maximized Croatian territory to an extent beyond any actual historical borders. Small letters on the bottom of the poster indicated its origin: »art designed and printed in Australia«. Contrary to this product which was obtainable exclusively from street vendors, regular bookstores were offering a booklet prepared by the respected Croatian historian Ljubo Boban, in which several maps and scholarly comments presented the true borders of Croatia in different historical periods.<sup>19</sup>

### Production, Transmission, and Mediation

Among those individuals and groups of people who in early 1991 tried to prevent the forthcoming military confrontation was the *Croatian Chamber Orchestra* («Hrvatski komorni orkestar»). This ensemble was giving *Koncerti mira i nade* («Concerts of Peace and Hope») in the turbulent regions of Croatia. The idea was to promote coexistence by performing one piece related to Roman Catholicism and another to Orthodox Christianity thus pointing to the principal religious affiliations of the Croats and the Serbs.<sup>20</sup> In September 1991, when the war was already going on, the Symphony orchestra of the Croatian Radio–Television gave a concert in the city of Osijek which was under siege and subject to frequent shelling. More than one hundred musicians were escorted from Zagreb all the way to their destination in Osijek. The concert had three principal aims: (a) to show solidarity with the inhabitants of Osijek; (b) to prove that Croatia needs such a large art music ensemble even in hard times; and (c) to force the aggressors to stop shelling Osijek, even for a limited period of time.<sup>21</sup> European TV stations refused a direct broadcast in order to avoid taking sides prior to the international recognition of Croatia and to avoid sharing the responsibility in the case of a massacre. The experiment succeeded and the concert in the Cathedral, filled with an audience from Osijek's shelters, ended up undisturbed.

In what way and to what extent were the war-related events reflected in the two internationally known festivals taking place in the Croatian capital? The one related

<sup>18</sup> More in Svanibor PETTAN, The Croats and the Question of Their Mediterranean Musical Identity, *Ethnomusicology Online*, 3 (1997), <<http://www.umbc.edu/eol/3/pettan/index.html>>

<sup>19</sup> Ljubo BOBAN, *Hrvatske granice od 1918. do 1993. godine* [Croatian Borders from 1918 to 1993], Zagreb: Školska knjiga – HAZU, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> Eva Sedak, personal communication 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Eva Sedak, personal communication 1997.

to art music was the already mentioned *Music Biennale Zagreb*, while the one related to folk music was the *International Folklore Festival* (»Međunarodna smotra folklor«). The war years made both of them experience the lack, or at least highly diminished number, of foreign participants and audiences. However, a comparison between the programs from the 1990s suggests that in the case of the former only occasional references pointed to the fact that there was a war in Croatia, while in the case of the latter the fact that there was a war meant a major issue. The 1995 *Biennale's* program booklet suggests that »Over the last five years the cultural life of Croatia, including music, has been the prime motivation which defies the maxim about the muses being silent while arms speak. Culture and music have thus set their muses in motion, more defiantly than ever before, not allowing harsh everyday events to gain victory over more noble things.«<sup>22</sup> The introductory comment in the 1992 *International Folklore Festival's* program booklet makes clear that the festival in 1991 was canceled due to the war, while the one in 1992 took place »in spite of the suffering and war, as a manifestation of resistance and moral strength of our people.«<sup>23</sup> The topic of the festival in 1994 was the connection between the church and traditional culture, while the one in 1998 had the motto »Reconstructing Heritage« and was dedicated to »the reconstruction of folklore societies in war-stricken Croatian villages.«<sup>24</sup>

The most illustrative case of Croatia's cultural policy in the 1990s is perhaps the case of the *tamburica* plucked lute. It was promoted to the status of a national instrument, and the Croatian Radio–Television *Tamburica* orchestra was popularizing it through its prime-time programs such as *Through Our Beautiful Homeland* – »Lijepom Našom«, which accompanied both local and well-known singers in big sport-halls throughout Croatia. This orchestra documented that *tamburica* is suitable for performance of any music, from medieval to 20th-century folk, art, jazz, and rock. Many professional *tamburica* ensembles achieved national fame in the course of the 1990s, the neo-traditional *Zlatni Dukati* and the rockabilly-inspired *Gazde* being among the most popular ones. Opinions about the »tamburicization of Croatia« were divided, as came out from the panel discussion about *tamburica*, which took place in the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb in the mid-1990s:

- *Tamburica* became the principal musical instrument in elementary schools and strengthened its position at the department of music education at the Academy of Music in Zagreb (Siniša Leopold, conductor of the HRT's *Tamburica Orchestra*)
- It became fashionable among the youth to play *tamburica* rather than electric guitar (Alekselj Pavlovsky, producer of the HRT)

<sup>22</sup> Jagoda MARTINČEVIĆ, ed., *Muzički Biennale Zagreb / Music Biennale Zagreb*, Zagreb: Hrvatsko društvo skladatelja – Muzički biennale Zagreb, 1995, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Zorica VITEZ et al., eds., 26. *Međunarodna smotra folklor*, Zagreb: Koncertna direkcija Zagreb, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Comp. Zorica VITEZ, ed., 32. *Međunarodna smotra folklor*, Zagreb: Koncertna direkcija Zagreb, 1998, 5.

- I was raised surrounded by folklore, but nowadays if I hear *tamburica* players on the radio, I turn it off (Ivan Ivančan, ethnochoreologist)
- In the east-Croatian town Slavonski Brod, people used to listen to the kitsch from Radio-Šabac,<sup>25</sup> but now they listen to the kitsch performed by *tamburica* ensembles (Mihael Ferić, folklorist)

The »syndrome of forbidden fruits« encouraged many young Croats to attend concerts of Serbian pop-musicians in neighboring Slovenia in the course of the 1990s.<sup>26</sup> During the war years, the commercial recordings of Serbian (and Bosnian) performers were available from street vendors in most parts of Croatia. Since 1997 when the Slovene private label *Nika Records* became the official distributor, these recordings started to be available at least in some regular music shops. Speculations in the Croatian printed media about the concerts of Serbian musicians in Croatia and vice versa were commonplace in the second half of the 1990s. The first musician from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), a short-living state consisting of Serbia and Montenegro,<sup>27</sup> who gave a concert in independent Croatia was not Đorđe Balašević, as expected, but Rambo Amadeus. The concert took place almost a decade after the start of war and not in the capital Zagreb, but in the city of Pula. The media coverage was mainly positive. Much more controversial was the coverage of the Croatian performers' concerts in FRY. Doris Dragović had to defend her decision to sing in Montenegro in 1999, claiming that she was invited by the Croatian minority living there, while Alka Vuica, who sang in Belgrade, was ridiculed for being badly received by the Serbian audience. Some popular Croatian musicians told the media that they do not consider invitations to perform in FRY at all. Singer Oliver Dragojević, well aware of his popularity in Serbia, made a public statement that he would never again in his life give a concert in Serbia.

### War, Music, and Scholarship

Prior to the split of SFRY, annual meetings of the Union of Yugoslavia's Folklorist Associations (»Savez Udruženja Folklorista Jugoslavije«) created the principal gathering opportunity for folk music researchers / ethnomusicologists from various parts of SFRY. The last, 37th meeting, which reflected the wider political breakup, took place in the Croatian site of Plitvice in 1990. Political disintegration followed by the war contributed to the sharp reduction of contacts between the scholars from Croatia and those from most other parts of what was SFRY. Scholars occasionally had the chance to meet at international conferences.

<sup>25</sup> The radio station in Serbia, widely known for promoting the newly composed folk music of Serbian and Bosnian origin.

<sup>26</sup> Particularly well attended were the concerts of Đorđe Balašević and Momčilo Bajagić-Bajaga.

<sup>27</sup> Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992-2003) and its successor state State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003-2006) ended up by the independence of Montenegro.

In 1992 the Croatian Musicological Society (»Hrvatsko muzikološko društvo«) was established. Besides its serial publications *Arti musices* and *International Review for the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* and three series of books, the society hosted international conferences that corresponded to the overall political orientation of Croatia towards Central European and Mediterranean circles (e.g., *Off-Mozart. Musical Culture and the Kleinmeister of Central Europe, 1750-1820* in 1992, and *Zagreb as a Bridge between Central European and Mediterranean Music Cultures* in 1994). Within this society particularly active was its ethnomusicological branch, whose members regularly participated in the activities of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). The first symposium of an ICTM study group in independent Croatia took place in Punat in 1995; its title testifies to the war-related focus: *Music, Violence, War and Gender*.

Among the first scholars who creatively responded to the war in Croatia were ethnologists and folklorists. Their articles appeared in three periodical publications in 1992 – in *Dometi* vol. 25/3-4, *Etnološka tribina* vol. 25, and *Narodna umjetnost* vol. 24. The core of these was published in the book *Fear, Death and Resistance. An Ethnography of War: Croatia 1991-1992*,<sup>28</sup> aimed at international audiences. In the editors' words, the authors have »tried to respond to the challenge to a scientist's consciousness,« so they »recorded and systematized the chaos around them and inside them« and searched for »a methodology of war ethnography.«<sup>29</sup> Even though no music scholar participated in the creation of this book, it offered valuable data on music, particularly in the article of Ines Prica. Nevertheless, this book was the first part of the (not officially conceptualized as such) war-related »trilogy« in the English language, published within the 1990s by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

The second book, *War, Exile, Everyday Life: Cultural Perspectives*,<sup>30</sup> was the outcome of an international conference organized in Zagreb in 1995. Music was emphasized in the part of the book entitled »From Therapy to Art«, with contributions by Lada Čale Feldman, Kjell Skjellstad, Svanibor Pettan, Albinca Pesek, and Anne-Marie Miörner Wagner.

The third book, *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*,<sup>31</sup> was entirely dedicated to music. The ten authors (Jerko Bezić, Zdravko Blažeković, Ruža Bonifačić, Naila Ceribašić, Miroslava Hadžihusejnović-Valašek, Koraljka Kos, Sanja Majer-Bobetko, Svanibor Pettan, Stanislav Tuksar, Tvrtko Zebec) approached the subject from a variety of perspectives common in ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology and historical musicology. The articles include themes in a range from the military music of what was the Ottoman/Habsburg border (Kos) all the way to the music in the

<sup>28</sup> Lada ČALE FELDMAN – Ines PRICA – Reana SENJKOVIĆ, eds., *Fear, Death and Resistance: An Ethnography of War – Croatia 1991-1992*, Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, i.

<sup>30</sup> Renata JAMBREŠIĆ KIRIN – Maja POVRZANOVIĆ, eds., *War, Exile, Everyday Life: Cultural Perspectives*, Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1996.

<sup>31</sup> S. PETTAN, ed., *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*.

besieged city of Osijek in the 1990s (Hadžihusejnović-Valašek). In this publication the written word is complemented by representative recordings (attached CD and internet site <http://www.lavsa.com/ief/>).

Other books published in Croatia that can, in various ways, help to throw light on music in the context of political change include *Lijepa naša: Pripovijest o hrvatskoj himni* by Andrija Tomašek (1990), *Tambura u Hrvata* by Siniša Leopold (1995), and *Prevarena povijest: Guslarska estrada, kult hajduka i rat u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini 1990.-1995. godine* by Ivo Žanić (1998). The first one deals with the Croatian national anthem, the second one with the *tambura* (*tamburica*) as the widely recognized »Croatian national instrument«, while the third one examines the sociocultural background of the war through the repertoires of epic songs to the *gusle* bowed lute accompaniment.

Among the periodicals, one should consider *Arti musices* vol. 24/2 (1993) with articles by Jerko Bezić on religious songs, Ruža Bonifačić on connections between *tamburica* music and patriotic songs, Naila Ceribašić on the changes in wedding repertoires in eastern Croatia, and Svanibor Pettan on challenges of the war for insider ethnomusicologists. In *Bašćinski glasi* vol. 3 (1994) one can find a discussion on whether *tamburica* is a »more Croatian« instrument than the mandolin or not by Nikola Buble. The *Collegium Antropologicum* vol. 19/1 (1995) brings three articles relevant for the present discussion: R. Bonifačić's on *tamburica* as a political and cultural phenomenon, Naila Ceribašić's on gender roles in Croatian and Serbian war-related popular music examples, and Tvrtko Zebec's interpretation of a dance event as a political ritual.

Besides the already mentioned scholars, the present topic attracted musicologists Eva Sedak and Zdenka Weber, who presented their findings at some conferences. An important novelty was the research into the music related to the defeated side in World War II, which was not allowed in SFRY.<sup>32</sup> The statement of the Slovenian musicologist Dragotin Cvetko, who wrote that (in the 18th century) »Regarding art music, the Eastern (Serbian and Macedonian) and the Western (Croatian and Slovenian) areas were two mutually different worlds«<sup>33</sup> was further emphasized by the Croatian musicologist Stanislav Tuksar:

»On the basis of taking into account real historico-political, economic and socio-cultural facts in all pre-Classical musico-stylistical epochs, and especially that of the Baroque, the musical cultures of Polish, Czech/Moravian, Slovakian, Slovenian and Croatian lands form – in the entirety of their substance and forms of their products, organizational

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Tamara TOMAŽIĆ, *Veze glazbe i politike u Zagrebu u razdoblju od 1940. do 1952: Elementi za socijalnu povijest glazbe 20. stoljeća u Hrvatskoj* [Relationships between Music and Politics in Zagreb between 1940 and 1952: Elements for Social History of Music in 20th-century Croatia], Zagreb: Muzička akademija (B.A. thesis), 1996; Naila CERIBAŠIĆ, *Heritage of the Second World War in Croatia: Identity Imposed upon and by Music*, in: *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan, 109-29.

<sup>33</sup> Please note that in Cvetko's article the word »Slovenian« in the quoted sentence was – obviously by mistake – changed into the word »Serbian« (comp. Dragotin CVETKO, *Historical Relations Between Musical Folklore and Art Music in Yugoslavia*, *The World of Music*, 25 (1983) 2, 17).

frames and consumption – *an integral part* of West-European musical culture. Thus, they should not, in general, be considered as being parts of an imaginary and unified 'East-European musical culture', in which only elements of West-European cultural circles should be traced and, from case to case and from epoch to epoch, submitted to processes of 'westernization' and 'easternization'.<sup>34</sup>

Political changes and war in the territories of what was SFRY raised interest in the new states in the international arena. The theme of the prestigious scholarly journal *The World of Music* 40/3 (1998) was music and music research in Croatia. The contributors were ethnomusicologists (Naila Ceribašić, Grozdana Marošević and myself as guest editor), musicologists (Nikša Gligo, Ennio Stipčević and Zdravko Blažeković who provided an extensive annotated bibliography) and an ethnochoreologist (Tvrтко Zebec).

For almost three decades no representative compilation of Croatia's folk music accompanied by extensive comments followed the LP-album *Da si od srebra, da si od zlata* (»Were You of Silver, Were You of Gold«), prepared by Jerko Bezić, Ivan Ivančan and Dunja Rihtman-Šotrić in the late 1960s. Then, in the second half of the 1990s three CD-compilations appeared at about the same time. *Croatia: Musique d'autrefois* (prepared by Grozdana Marošević, Ocora 1997) presented folk music of the dominant ethnic group in Croatia; *Croatia: Traditional Music of Today* (prepared by Svanibor Pettan, UNESCO 1998) included ethnic minorities and connections with modern influences, as well; while *Ovo je naše najbolje* (compiled by the opera singer Dunja Vejzović with comments by Jerko Bezić, Vero Vision 1998) centered on ethnic Croats in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. These three were followed by the fourth compilation, *Hrvatska tradicijska glazba* (prepared by Naila Ceribašić and Joško Čaleta, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 2000) with new recordings of folk music (made between 1997 and 2000) on two CDs within a booklet.

Within the realm of music education, the Yugoslav framework became obsolete in the 1990s. In the textbooks for elementary schools the songs from the former federation became rare and their treatment resembled the treatment of any other foreign songs. The features common to most textbooks were the inclusion of Croatian patriotic songs, folk songs of the Croats from abroad (mainly from Austria), and songs with religious contents (Ivanović and Tavčar 1998; Ećimović and Kršek 1999; Brlobuš 1999). The approaches to teaching at secondary schools and universities considered Croatia on one hand and the rest of the world on the other. While I was the only responsible teacher in ethnomusicology at the Academy of Music in Zagreb (1993-1996), the themes of the seminars included music in various religious communities in the Zagreb area and work with refugees as a part of the project in applied ethnomusicology. Efforts of the colleagues who succeeded me resulted in a theoretically strong and well-balanced study.

<sup>34</sup> Stanislav TUKSAR, Some Historical and Socio-Cultural Determinants Concerning the Place and Role of Western Slavs in European Musical Baroque, in: *The Musical Baroque, Western Slavs, and the Spirit of the European Cultural Communion*, ed. Stanislav Tuksar, Zagreb: Croatian Musicological Society, 1993, 27.

## Conclusion

It is common that a country formulates its cultural policy in a way to stimulate integrational processes within its borders. SFRY and independent Croatia introduced different solutions while attempting to achieve the same goal and their attempts were clearly reflected in the musical domain. The lyrics of a popular song from SFRY that praised the beauties of Yugoslavia »from Vardar<sup>35</sup> all the way to Triglav«<sup>36</sup> were succeeded by the lyrics from Croatia suggesting that »we play the same songs, sweetheart, you on mandolin and myself on tamburica, the love songs are the same in Dalmatia and in Slavonia.«<sup>37</sup>

While SFRY was taking advantage of its geopolitical position between East and West, Croatia clearly defined the West as its historically grounded preference. Croatia's cultural policy was pushing aside the soundscapes seen as Eastern, including the Balkan folk-pop music, a living proof of its ties with the eastern neighbors. This folk-pop music gradually became present in live performances in clubs and available on recordings, like any other commercial music for which there is a demand.

People in the directly endangered parts of Croatia during the war years often looked at the capital Zagreb as a remote center of political power with an insufficient sense of compassion for their immediate war-related experiences. Comparison between the two major musical events taking place in Zagreb, the *Smotra* and the *Biennale*, showed that the former, perhaps due to its firm connections with the rural population from all Croatia's regions, strongly reacted to the war, while the later, centered on music as an (elite, urban) art, barely responded to it. Musicians within the folk, art, and popular music domains agreed that the question of whether to react and how to react to the unfortunate circumstances was immensely personal.

Political changes affected music scholarship in Croatia by broadening its themes and approaches. The war stimulated research into the phenomena that can be seen as a valuable contribution of insider scholars to international scholarly forums. Finally, it was the war and its emphasis on the popular music domain that created conditions for a paradigmatic shift within Croatian ethnomusicology, leading from folk music research towards legitimization of studying any music in its sociocultural context.

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<sup>35</sup> River in Macedonia in the southeast of what was SFRY.

<sup>36</sup> Mountain in Slovenia in the northwest of what was SFRY.

<sup>37</sup> The southern and northern parts of Croatia.

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## Sažetak

**Glazba, politika i rat: pogledi na Hrvatsku nakon dva desetljeća**

Članak se nadovezuje na autorov raniji rad o glazbi, politici i ratu u Hrvatskoj tijekom 1990-ih (objavljen u Institutu za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Zagreb 1998.), a može ga se shvatiti i kao ažuriranu verziju njegova članka objavljenog u svesku *Musik in Fremdwahrnehmung und Eigenbild* (u nakladi Militärmusikdienst des Bundeswehr, Bonn 2008.). Rad se koncentrira na odabrane glazbene pojave kao procese i produkte s vremenskim odmakom od dva desetljeća. To su: glazbeno jedinstvo, različitost i komunikacija; repertoar, dijaspora; proizvodnja, prijenos i posredovanje; te rat, glazba i znanost.

**Keywords:** music, politics, war, Croatia, communication, repertoire, diaspora

**Ključne riječi:** glazba, politika, rat, Hrvatska, komunikacija, repertoar, dijaspora