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ZagrebMUSIC IN THE DALMATIAN THEATRE
OF THE 16TH CENTURY

The complexity and stratification of the Dalmatian culture throughout its history is the result of different influences which have been active on this territory throughout the centuries. Among them, the one especially strong was the interaction between the Italian and Slavic (Croatian) elements arising from the political situation not only in Dalmatia but in the whole of this part of Middle and Southwest Europe.

During the period preceding the one we are referring to — starting with the end of the 14th century — a feudal war broke out in inner Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia, in which a divided feudality backed two pretenders to the Croatian throne — Sigismund of Luxembourg and Ladislaus of Naples. Venice made use of this dynastic rivalry and bought Dalmatia from Ladislaus for 100.000 ducats in 1409. Up to 1433, Venice had gradually stabilized its position in the province, and stayed there as a supreme political power until its decline in 1797 (ŠIŠIĆ: 225—226). So, the eastern Adriatic coast would be divided for the next four centuries (15th—18th) into three territorial and political jurisdictions: firstly, the Venetian Istria and stricter Dalmatia with the islands; secondly, the so-called Croatian Littoral between the rivers Rječina and Zrmanja under the Hungaro-Croatian kings; and thirdly, the independent Republic of Dubrovnik. Beside this 'acquisto vecchio', Venice — after the Ottoman wars — partially expanded into the Dalmatian inland territory by the so-called 'acquisto nuovo' in 1699, and by the 'acquisto nuovissimo' in 1718. Only the Napoleonic military descents and socio-political reforms at the turn of the 18th to the 19th centuries (the foundation of the 'Illyric Provinces') brought substantial changes which would last up to the end of the World War I.

While the whole of the sphere of socio-political and economical relations on the eastern Adriatic coast could be characterized predominantly as a sphere of confrontation, especially in earlier periods, the sphere of intellectual relations — encompassing the fields of sciences, philosophy, arts and culture in general — can be described mostly as a zone of contacts and mutual influences between the Slavic and Romanic worlds, unique as such in the European history. A considerable part of the Dalmatian intelligentsia of Slavic origin (mostly philosophers, theologians and artists) was oriented towards the cultural circles of Western and Middle Europe — Spanish, French, Swiss, English, German, Austrian, Polish, Czech and Hungarian, but, because of the specific political and geographical situation, the dominant orientation was permanently towards the neighbouring Italian towns. Additional reasons — the absence of uni-

versities and printing offices — also caused the schooling of a great number of philosophers and scholars in Italian centres, especially in Padua, as well as the printing of their works, mostly in Venice. Among them, the most prominent were e.g. philosophers Faustus Verantius / Faust Vrančić, Nicolò Vito de Gozze / Nikola Vitov Gučetić, Michele Monaldi / Miho Monaldi, Antonius Medo / Antun Medić, scholars Federicus Grisogono, Benedikt Kotruljić, Georgius Sisgoreo / Juraj Šižgorić, writers Marcus Marulus / Marko Marulić, Vincentius Priboevus / Vinko Pribojević, Brne Karnarutić, Nikola Nalješković. Boninus de Boninis, Andrija Paltašić, Juraj Dalmatinac, Blaž Baromić and Grgur from Senj mastered the art of printing in Venice, and during the 15th and 16th centuries many Dalmatian painters, sculptors and architects worked in Italy, mainly in Venice and Padua: Don Giulio Clovio Croata / Julije Klović, the most famous miniaturist of the Renaissance, Giorgio Schiavone / Juraj Čulinović, Andrea Meldola Schiavone / Andrija Medulić, and others. At the same time, foreign, mostly Italian artists worked in Dalmatia, so that, e.g., the Šibenik Renaissance cathedral is a masterpiece of an international team: Bonino from Milan, Nicolò from Florence, Juraj Dalmatinac and Andrija Aleši from the Albanian town of Durazzo.

Musicians from Dalmatia were oriented in the same manner as those of the western Adriatic coast. The Dubrovnik composer Secundo Brugnoli (c1528—?), whose works have not been found yet, was a descendant of an Italian family who settled down in Dubrovnik in the 15th century; the Dubrovnik musician and organist Benedikt Baba / Babić (?—1591) died in a monastery near Alessandria; the Dubrovnik composer Nikola Gaudentius (1564—1601) studied in Bologna. The 1528 tombstone of the Split composer Michael Bogothitius / Mihovil Bogotić witnesses to his death (and activity?) in Venice. The Istrian Andrea Antico de Montona (?—p1537), incisor, printer, publisher and composer, was active in Venice and Rome. Madrigals by Andrea Patrizi da Cherso / Andrija Petris were published in Venice by Antonio Gardano in 1550 (in: *// primo libro de Villotte...*), as well as madrigals, motets and greghescas by Giulio Schiavetto / Julije Skjavetić from Šibenik at G. Scotto in 1563 and 1564, and A. Gardano in 1564 respectively. The Hvar patrician Petar Hektorović (1487—1572) was the first to note the music of Croatian folk melodies in his work *Ribanje i ribarsko pri-govaranje* (Fishing and Fishermen's Talks), published in Venice in 1568.

Thus the whole corpus of the music preserved and composed by the Dalmatian authors of the late Renaissance, including those of Franciscus Bossinensis / Franjo Bosanac, a Croat from Bosnia by origin, was published in Venice!

Furthermore, beside the sphere of music, the sphere of literary production by the Dalmatian Renaissance authors has also been in various ways mostly bound to the neighbouring Italian countries.

In the 16th-century Dalmatia, several generations of writers were active, concentrated in the most important urban cultural centres. Beside the most developed one, Dubrovnik — outstanding because of its status as an independent Republic and showing a typical Renaissance profile, these are: Hvar, Split, Šibenik, Zadar, Korčula and some others. Writers promoted the whole scale of literary-scenic genres in Croatian, Latin, Italian and Greek languages: verses in the spirit of Petrarca's sonnets or in the manner of folk lyrics, historical epics, epistles, chronicles, moralizing verses and prose, Biblical stories, legends, masquerades, tragedies (of which some were original, others translated or recasted), mysteries, comedies, dramas, pastorals, mythological dramas, and finally, the first novel. Some works belong to neighbouring genres and thus cannot be attributed to only one genre: there are several mysteries with pa-

storal elements, some epics are so close to drama that later stagings are logical and justified, and sometimes it is difficult to draw the line between comedy, farse, and pastoral.

Stage genres, as typical urban products, are scattered all around Dalmatia irregularly, depending on the stage of development of a town as an economic, cultural and political centre on one side, and on the presence of the relevant cultural materials preserved on the other side. Here we are concerned with the so-called art literature, although some genres were leaned against the parallel folk literature phenomena, containing some of their elements (topics, type of verses, personalities, and similar). Thus Carnival plays can be found both in non-urban folklore as well as in urban masquerades by well-known writers; similarly, church processions with dramatic elements can be found in smaller towns and villages (e.g. even today in villages on the island of Hvar) parallelly with the mysteries in churches and monasteries in bigger centres.

As, however, the archival heritage in Dalmatia has not been preserved completely, and not being clarified in all its aspects, especially concerning the musical material, the account of stage works and the role of music in them represents only a segment or an aspect of the musico-literary history in Dalmatia. Many results and conclusions can be derived only from secondary sources, because the primary ones — especially those from the periods previous to the 18th century — were often destroyed, lost, plundered or stolen during the stirring and turbulent times of Dalmatian history.

In the town of Korčula, data have been found showing that the community in the 16th century has supported “a group who has performed some Carnival festivities in the middle of January 1514”, while in February and March 1583 a comedy was performed on the stage of the community palace (BATUŠIĆ: 83—84). It is very probable that these stage performances included musical numbers.

In the 16th-century Hvar, three writers were active who wrote stage works: Hanibal Lucić with his drama *Robinja* (The Slave Girl), Mikša Pelegrinović with the masquerade *Jedupka* (The Gypsy Girl) which was recited (FRANIČEVIĆ: 398) or sung (DEMOVIĆ: 154) outside of Hvar too, and Martin Benetović — the author of one comedy (*Hvarkinja* [The Girl From Hvar]) and, probably but not yet proved, of two farses in the tradition of Ruzzante-style “*commedia erudita*” (FRANIČEVIĆ: 622—633). No music has been mentioned in these works, except for a serenade sung ‘pod leut’ (with the accompaniment of a lute), and a mention of a ‘bugarščica’ (in *Hvarkinja*). In direct stage instructions, however, there could be seen that musical numbers could have occurred more often, e.g. at the end of comedy ending in a feast. As in most cases, the author of the music in *Hvarkinja* is unknown, but it may have been Benetović himself, who was also a painter and a musician (since 1575 he was a community “Sonator”, and between 1598 and 1601 the organist of Hvar cathedral; FRANIČEVIĆ: 622). The author of *Hvarkinja* informs us in the prologue that this comedy is only one in a series of others which were regularly performed not only for the Carnival in Hvar, but also in Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik at the time and later (up to the end of the 18th century, V. K.). If we compare this comedy with its models, it can be stated that in out of five Ruzzante’s comedies (*Anconitana*, *Moschelta*, *Piovana*, *Rhodiana*, *Vaccaria*) only one, *Anconitana*, does have stage instructions which point out the presence of music.

The most interesting centre for the purpose of this topic is certainly Dubrovnik, a town in which the art of theatre was able to be developed freely and in optimal conditions. Among tens and tens of Dubrovnik writers, who, promoted almost all genres of

poetry and prose, mostly in Latin and Croatian, four of them can be pointed out in whose stage works instructions for musical numbers have been found. They are:

1) *Mavro Vetranović Čavčić* (c1482–1576), a versatile writer of lyrical, dramatic and epic texts, an original poet, too;

2) *Nikola Nalješković* (c1500–1587), a poet, comedy writer, mathematician, and astronomer;

3) *Marin Držić* (c1508–1567), a priest, musician, poet of love verses, and the most important comedy writer in the history of Croatian literature. He studied in Siena, spent some time in Constantinople and Vienna, contrived a plot against the Dubrovnik senators, his sudden death in Venice remaining unexplained forever. In the time span of 11 years (1548–1559), he wrote 13 stage works, which were all performed during his time in Dubrovnik, forgotten afterwards, and then revived during the thirties of the 20th century;

4) *Antun Bratosajić Sasin* (c1520–1595) spent most of his life in Ston, a small peripheral town of the Dubrovnik Republic. Some of his lyrical songs, masquerades, two pastorals and one comedy have been preserved.

The Ragusan writers and theatre amateurs did not live isolated from the popular contemporary works by European dramatists. In the library of Antonio Odolis de Bixi in Dubrovnik, for example, one could find “almost all Ariosto’s comedies, Cinzi’s tragedies, as well as commented editions of Terencius, perhaps exactly that famous Venetian one from 1518” which “through its illustrations so fundamentally influenced the scenery of European Renaissance stage” (BATUŠIĆ: 49). Only in 1549, as a second example, there came more than seven hundred books (BATUŠIĆ: 50) to Dubrovnik from Venice. Additional information about phenomena in the European theatre was provided by foreigners, as well as by younger people from Dubrovnik returning from Italian towns where they studied and did business, in most cases. This was the case with Marin Držić in Siena, where, besides other activities, he got well acquainted with the specificities of the “*commedia erudita*”, with the realism of the Ruzzante-style theatre, and the principles of the Renaissance scenic design, which experiences he afterwards applied in his stage works: pastorals, comedies and farses.

Patorals. Besides Držić, pastorals were written by Mavro Vetranović, Nikola Nalješković and Antun Sasin.

In two Vetranović’s pastoral scenes (probably written before 1507), rich stage instructions demand the use of music instruments, while in his mythological-pastoral play *Orfeo* the main personality “comes in front of the doors of Inferno searching for Euridice, sadly plucking his lyre” (BATUŠIĆ: 35).

Out of the seven comedies by Nalješković, the first four are, in fact, pastorals with numerous stage instructions mostly about the singing and dancing of the fairies, satyrs and shepherds; the author gives the verses which were sung. Some songs have a refrain, so it can be supposed that they were sung alternately by soloists and a small choir, or by two groups of singers. The third “comedy” is almost completely written in “*ottava rima*” like the masquerades, so that it is supposed that it was sung from the beginning to the end (DEMOVIĆ: 151).

To the contrary of Nalješković — who is oldfashioned in his ideas of pastoral scenic design, Držić belongs completely to the Renaissance. In his works, fairies and shepherds “sing and dance” (poju i tancaju, [in: *Tirena, Venere i Adorj*]), satyrs fight a battle — “*moreška*” (in: *Tirena*), and it is probable that between the first two prologues of his work *Grižula* there was an inserted instrumental number (REŠETAR: CXII).

Two pastorals by Sasin, *Filide* and *Flora*, are much more complex works with a great number of stage instructions. "More interesting than the poetic value of these pastorals is the fact that Sasin — among the first in Croatian dramatic art — uses interludes between acts. In *Flora*, between the 1st and 2nd acts, 'a song by Andrija Zlatar is sung' in the 'grove' (lug), and in the second 'intermede' (...) again 'the fairy begins to sing that song by Andrija Čubranović Zlatar', while in the third interlude it is only 'sung in the grove'. It is difficult to judge if by this the first step was done towards the later, scenically and musically much more complex intermezzo, but it is quite obvious from the examples mentioned that Sasin has somewhat renewed the traditional stage expression of the pastoral" (BATUŠIĆ: 75). Here too at least two texts of the songs which were sung have been preserved, although these pastorals probably were never staged.

Comedies. In comedies, there can be found fewer stage instructions concerning music than in pastorals. In the three comedies by Nalješković no instructions can be found at all, but only in three comedies and a drama by Držić and in the only comedy by Sasin.

In Držić, music is an inseparable component of the dramatic play, so that the rare musical numbers are adjusted to the scene and the action. In *Dundo Maroje* (Uncle Maroje), which is situated in Rome, the servant Popiva sings an Italian canzonetta (ŽUPANOVIĆ: 214), and in the farse *Novela od Stanca* (Joke about Stanac) maskers are ridiculing the peasant in the town, dancing around him. In the comedy *Tripče de Utočce* a Turk appears who "sings" (začinje) and "sings in Turkish language" (kanta turski). Except for the Italian canzonetta, no words of these songs have been preserved.

In the work *Malahna komedija od pira* (Little Comedy for the Wedding) by A. Sasin, shepherds and peasants begin dancing a reel at the end of the play, while the main personalities animate musicians to sing and play.

The small number of musical numbers in comedies is not unusual: we find the same situation in the Italian authors, e.g. Pietro Aretino, where only in two of his comedies four stage directions are connected with singing (in: *Il Marescalco*, and *Il Filosofo*). Some scholars presume that in Držić's case the relatively small number of musical numbers was the result of the rapidity of writing, and, as he probably wrote music for himself, he could always add it ad hoc.

In Držić's *Hekuba* it is mentioned only once during the action that in a sort of intermezzo (the last scene of the 1st act) satyrs should come out accompanied by the sound of the fistulas, probably running at first among the public, because afterwards "they stand on the place of the dance".

In two additional translations/recastings of tragedies preserved up to now — *Elektra* by Dominko Zlatarić and *Jokasta* by M. Bunić — no musical numbers can be found.

The season for stage performances was the Carnival period, that is the winter period of approximately six weeks. However, pastorals and comedies were sometimes performed at wedding festivities, and being at these occasions presented to a relatively small and closed circle of public, they were excepted from this time restriction. During the Carnival processions, masquerades and the so-called *songs in reel* (pjesme od kola) were also performed.

Masquerades. Masquerades were a very popular form, promoted both by anonymous and well-known and recognized authors, such as Mavro Vetranović (5 in all), Nikola Nalješković (12), Antun Sasin (2) and others; there are about ten masquerades

by anonymous authors that have been preserved. Their topics are different, but usual of that time (gypsies, devils, beggars, but there are some obscene too — e.g. Nalješković's *Nagi vrag* [The Naked Devil]). Most usually they were written in a series of "ottava rima", with frequent insertions of strophic refrains. There are no stage instructions in masquerades so it has to be presumed that they were sung polyphonically as in Italy (GROVE: Vol. 11, 745). They were performed with the accompaniment of musical instruments. The musicologist Miho Demović has found out that some mythological personalities (masques) were accompanied by the musicians of the Duke's chapel. It has been noted that one performance of *Jedupka* in Dubrovnik in 1580 was sung with the accompaniment of the instruments "lauto, cithara et uiolone" (DEMOVIĆ: 156).

Songs in reel. Songs in reel were performed parallelly with the masquerades. Only those written by the poet Dinko Ranjina (1536—1607) have been preserved. "These are shorter epic-lyrical songs, written in fourteen-syllable verse in the pattern 8 + 6, as many folk dance songs." Many dancers were skilful in improvising texts whose content was sometimes offending, so that the occasional enjoyment often ended in court (DEMOVIĆ: 158—159).

All these stage genres were mostly performed in open or in private houses and palaces by acting groups (societates) of aristocrats and townsmen, who acted, sung, played, and danced. A witnessing has been preserved of the Dubrovnik Duke Nicolò Vito di Gozze about the role of music in theatre performances: as a boy he personally participated in performing Držić's and other authors' works (TUKSAR: 130).

Church mysteries. Young aristocrats also participated in performing works of spiritual character, such as church mysteries. This genre, originating from the Middle Ages, continued to live in some places up to the 19th century. In Dubrovnik the first documented performance of a mystery play was dated Christmas 1537, at the Franciscan church: it was *Od poroda Jezusova* (About the Birth of Jesus) by Mavro Vetranović, of which numerous instructions on music have been preserved, various instruments are mentioned, and words of some songs are known. There are musical instructions to be found in two further Vetranović's mystery plays, although in a much smaller number. Church mysteries were very popular in the whole of Dalmatia, and from the 15th century on were present both as art and folk tradition. They were performed for Christmas, Easter and other great holidays on public piazzas and in churches. They were transmitted orally, and some of them were noted in the 19th century.

Unfortunately, except for the texts and the data from secondary sources, nothing else — music included — has been preserved. Nevertheless, an effort in the reconstruction of these plays could perhaps be undertaken, using the material preserved: texts and the musical terminology in stage instructions explaining the manner and means of performing the musical parts. For example, taking into account the oldness of the terminology, some interpretations could be given using the dictionary of the early 17th-century Dubrovnik music terminology by Jacobus Micalia, *Blago jezika slovenskoga* (The Treasury of the Slavonic Language), printed in Loretto 1649—1651: beside the most frequently used terms connected with singing (pojati, pjeti, začinjati, popijevati, kantati) and dancing (tancati, kolo igrati), there can be found terms bound to some instruments (pod vijolun [viellā], zvoniti u liru [lyra], diple [cjaramelle], surla [zampogna], svirala [piffaro], trumbeta [tromba], etc.) (TUKSAR: AM).

From all that has been mentioned above it is obvious that musical activity existed within the stage literary forms in the whole of Dalmatia, especially in towns, in rela-

tion to their social, economic and political circumstances. Thus it is not unexpected that the most intensive musico-scenic activity was concentrated in the capital of the Dubrovnik Republic, considering its farthest degree of urbanization. Finally, it can be stated that in Dalmatia, and especially in Dubrovnik, this activity was developed in proportion to the objective possibilities, the "Zeitgeist" of the period concerned, the strength of the prevailing Italian influence, and their own creative and artistic sensibility. Through all this they have prepared the social and cultural climate for the promotion of the new musico-scenic genre of the 17th century — the opera.

SOURCES

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POVZETEK

Iz dokumentarnega gradiva je razvidno, da je bila v 16. stoletju glasba prisotna v literarnih odrskih oblikah na celotnem dalmatinskem ozemlju, posebno v mestih, kar je bilo odvisno od družbenih, gospodarskih in političnih dejavnikov. Zato ne preseneča, da je bila najmočnejša glasbenoodrska dejavnost v prestolnici Dubrovniške republike; to pa je tudi v zvezi z najvišjo stopnjo njene urbanizacije. Seveda je še treba poudariti, da se je v Dalmaciji in še zlasti v Dubrovniku ta dejavnost razvijala glede na objektivne možnosti, torej, glede na „duha dobe“, moči italijanskega vpliva ter lastnih ustvarjalnih in umetniških zmogljivosti. Tako se je tudi pripravljala družbena in kulturna klima za razvoj nove glasbenoodrske oblike 17. stoletja, to je – opere.