

CRAFTING AUTHENTICITY. FRANCE MAROLT, FOLK SONG, AND THE CONCERT STAGE*

MARI K. ARKO KLEMENC

Choral singing and arrangements of folk songs have been a popular musical practice and repertoire in Slovenia since the mid-19th century. Among composers of such folk song arrangements, France Marolt (1891–1951) is exceptionally significant. As a composer, choral conductor, and ethnographer, Marolt sought to craft authentically Slovenian music. Although he supported his arrangements with alleged ethnographic scholarship, evidence suggests that Marolt manipulated resources in order to present a particular sound identity. Nevertheless, his works remain an important contribution to Slovenian music and cultural identity.

Keywords: folk song, choral singing, France Marolt.

Zborovsko petje in priredbe ljudskih pesmi so v Sloveniji popularna glasbena dejavnost in repertoar že od sredine 19. stoletja. Eden od najpomembnejših skladateljev priredb je bil France Marolt (1891–1951), ki je kot skladatelj, zborovodja in etnolog skušal ustvarjati avtentično slovensko glasbo. Čeprav je svoje delo podprl z domnevnim etnološkim raziskovanjem, dokazi pričajo, da je Marolt prikrojil vire z namenom oblikovati posebno slovensko zvočno identiteto. Kljub temu predstavljajo Maroltove priredbe pomemben delež k slovenski glasbi in kulturni identiteti.

Ključne besede: ljudska pesem, zborovsko petje, France Marolt.

In Slovenia today many types of music are popularly recognized as *folk* or *national* – from commercialized, Alpine-style dance music ensembles, to folk revival groups that perform on historically reconstructed instruments. Among the various types of musics expressing Slovenian-ness, I have observed that one practice and repertoire particularly mark Slovenian national music: choral singing and folk song arrangements. My research and field experiences have underscored the validity of the common saying, *Trije Slovenci – pevski zbor* – *Three Slovenians make a choir*. In this small, recently formed nation, there are over 2,000 amateur choirs.¹ At the heart of these choirs' performed repertoire stand choral arrangements of Slovenian folk songs. These two aspects of music – the practice of singing in choirs and the repertoire of folk song arrangements – have long been vital to the creation of a sense of Slovenian identity in ever-changing political and cultural circumstances.

Folk song arrangements and choral singing have stemmed from various attempts to unify Slovenian culture since the 19th century, and were widespread long before the effects of Communist-era activities. Already in the mid-1800s, alongside the development of Slovenian music education and organizations such as the *narodne čitalnice* (national *reading rooms*) and Glasbena Matica (Slovenian Music Society), choral singing and the composition of folk song arrangements were encouraged as an expression of Slovenian national

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¹ Estimate given by Mihela Jagodic, Director of Choral Activities, Republic of Slovenian Public Fund for Cultural Activities (personal communication, 2002).

culture. Motivated by hopes for the emergence of a Slovenian national art music as well as the unification of Slovenian culture, nineteenth-century cultural advocates deliberately drew upon the popular music practices of village singing and folk songs, and shaped them into the formal practice of choral singing and a national repertoire of folk song arrangements. Subsequent Slovenian cultural organizers, music educators, folk song collectors, and composers enthusiastically continued this process, which resulted in a variety of choral arrangements ranging from simple »harmonizations« of folk songs (often conceived as a type of musical bridge between folk and choral singing) to large-scale compositions based on folk material.²

By the early 1900s, there existed a plethora of arrangements of »Slovenian songs« published in songbooks and music journals, and performed by choirs both rural and urban. However, few arrangements at this time overtly distinguished what was »Slovenian« in the music so consciously labeled as such. Because a primary goal of 19th-century cultural advocates was Slovenian cultural (and, in turn, political) unity, many composers intentionally toned down regional distinctions in their arrangements, a practice that often resulted in a certain musical homogeneity in the harmonization of Slovenian folk songs.³ Yet even in the decade after the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918), which allowed for the semi-autonomy of the Slovenian lands, many collections of arrangements continued to emphasize Slovenian cultural unity and failed to identify what was »Slovenian« in the process. This resulting repertoire sparked a musical identity crisis. For instance, such arrangements were sharply critiqued as lacking »Slovenian-ness« and being »Germanic« in style and content.⁴

Over the course of the 1930s, the creation of a distinctly Slovenian sound identity through folk song arrangements became the highest priority for a few particular composers. While innovative arrangements, such as those by Marij Kogoj (1892–1956), appeared sporadically, it was the diligent work of France Marolt (1891–1951) that signified a defining moment in Slovenian choral music. Marolt's exceptional approach to folk song arrangements, purportedly based on ethnographic folk song scholarship, created a niche for arrangements as art in their own right, and, moreover, defined them as characteristically and authentically Slovenian. Perhaps more so than the work of any other Slovenian choral composer, Marolt's compositional techniques and attitude towards Slovenian national identity had a lasting impact on the Slovenian choral scene.

² Examples of folk song harmonizations include the early arrangements by Janko Žirovnik (first published 1883–1885) or Marko Bajuk (1882–1961), whereas more complex choral compositions have been created by the likes of Emil Adamič (1877–1936), France Marolt (see below), or contemporary composers Lojze Lebič and Uroš Krek.

³ For example, the arrangements of Matej Hubad (1866–1937) seem to favor the conventions of homophonic chorale composition rather than the unique harmonies and voice distribution in the various styles of Slovenian folk singing.

⁴ See, for example, the biting critique of Slovenian music by an anonymous Croatian critic, and the ensuing discussion among Slovenian composers, in *Zbori* 3, 1927: 9–12.

This paper examines France Marolt's contribution to choral arrangements of Slovenian folk songs and his shaping of authenticity through such music. I first introduce Marolt's approach to and method of arranging, as was presented in his collection *15 Slovenskih ljudskih pesmi* (15 Slovenian folk songs) [Marolt 1930], and then demonstrate how he carried out these musical and ethnographic ideals in two important choral concerts. Through further examination of two examples of arrangements, I argue that Marolt at times may have exaggerated his idea of »authenticity« in Slovenian music, possibly manipulating resources to craft his version of a Slovenian musical identity.

FRANCE MAROLT AND NEW DIRECTIONS IN SLOVENIAN FOLK SONG ARRANGEMENTS

Without question, France Marolt stands as an icon of Slovenian music and folk culture. Possessing a shrewd vision of Slovenian national identity at a time (between the two World Wars) when Slovenia was experiencing political and cultural transition, Marolt worked passionately to validate Slovenian folk music and dance through both scholarship and performance. His name and legacy remain connected with the many organizations that he single-handedly established: the University of Ljubljana Student Chorus (*Akademski pevski zbor*) in 1926, the Folklore Institute (*Folklorni inštitut*) in 1934 (at first funded by *Glasbena Matica* and now called *Glasbenonarodopisni inštitut – GNI*, the Ethnomusicology Institute), and the Student Dance-Folklore Group in 1948, which today bears his name as the France Marolt Student Folklore Group.

Marolt was the son of schoolteacher Fran Marolt, who also served as a choir director, singer, folk song collector (working with the OSNP project⁵), and arranger. Thus, the younger Marolt's work as a choral conductor, folk song arranger, and music ethnographer were all activities in which he engaged since childhood [Kumer 1991: 10]. Having no formal music education beyond gymnasium, Marolt proved to be a talented musician indelibly influenced by his childhood upbringing and cultural surroundings. After serving in World War I and being severely wounded, the self-educated Marolt began his musical career in 1919 as director of the *Primorska Quartet* (*Primorski kvartet*), later called the *Slovenian Quartet*, and then as assistant conductor of the *Glasbena Matica* (*Music Society*) Chorus in Ljubljana before establishing his own *University of Ljubljana Student Chorus* (*APZ*) in 1926. Using these performance ensembles as well as the later-established Folklore Institute as his tools, Marolt became one of the most influential architects of Slovenian musical and cultural identity.

During his lifetime, Marolt was in fact more celebrated for his phenomenal success with APZ than for the establishment of the Folklore Institute, which remained for many

⁵ *Odbor za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi* (Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs), a project which was initiated in 1905.

years a one-man operation [Kumer 1991: 11]. However, all the facets of his work were deeply interrelated. One cannot discuss his work with the APZ chorus without taking into consideration his transcription and arrangement of folk songs, nor can one look at his Folklore Institute without acknowledging his involvement in choral activities. His ethnographic collection and studies of folk songs from all regions of Slovenia, activities that were evidently intensified after he worked briefly with ethnographer Stanko Vurnik⁶ in 1929–1931, inspired his choral performances. Already with the Primorska Quartet he focused on a repertoire of folk song arrangements, several of which he composed himself. He took the performance of folk song arrangements to new heights with his APZ men's chorus and its mission of serving Slovenian music. His ethnographic work, most of which was conducted after 1930, not only inspired his choral performances and folk song arrangements, whether his own or commissioned, but was also shaped by these pursuits.

What sets Marolt apart both from his predecessors and from contemporaries with similar pursuits was his unwavering commitment to Slovenian folklore in his quest for cultural authenticity in Slovenian music practices. Coupled with this, he possessed an enrapturing, charismatic and nationalistic-minded personality. As ethnomusicologist Zmaga Kumer concludes,

As these were the years in which the black clouds of the Second World War and the Nazi tyranny began to gather, the Slovenian consciousness [zavest slovenstva] that was one of the strong elements of Marolt's character grew into the glorification and overestimation of all things Slovenian, into the search and emphasis of Slovenian authenticity at any cost, into the desire to prove that the small Slovenian nation, through its folk culture, is equally important as its large neighbors. [Kumer 1991: 16]

The combination of Marolt's passion for the Slovenian nation and, as Kumer notes elsewhere, his persuasive and emotional character, with his talent for choral music and dedication to folk song scholarship resulted in unparalleled contributions to Slovenian musical culture. However, at times he pushed his ideas to the extreme, particularly in his quest for »authenticity« and »Slovenian-ness« in folk songs. Although no one can deny his many lasting achievements, in certain significant instances Marolt seems to have carried them out at the expense of faithfulness to fact.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF COLLECTION: 15 SLOVENSКИH LJUDSKIH PESMI (1930)

Marolt composed and published only a few dozen folk song arrangements in his lifetime, yet they all were deliberately crafted to evoke authentic Slovenian culture and made last-

⁶ Vurnik worked at the Ethnographic Museum (Etnografski muzej), which at the time managed the OSNP collection of folk song transcriptions, something to which Marolt undoubtedly had access and studied.

ing impressions. Some of the earliest appeared in the musical supplement of the journal *Zbori*, and were probably arranged originally for the Primorska Quartet.⁷ Written for and published by APZ, Marolt's first collection of folk song arrangements was issued in 1930.

In title alone – *15 Slovenskih ljudskih pesmi* (15 Slovenian folk songs) – the collection signified a new direction in Slovenian choral arrangement. Marolt used the more specific term *ljudska pesem* – literally meaning »song of the people« – instead of *narodna pesem*. Up to that time, *narodna pesem* was the common expression for *folk song*, but it could also mean *national song* and include popularized art songs (*ponarodele pesmi*).⁸ Further differentiating this thin collection from most other arrangements of the time was Marolt's deliberate inclusion of songs from almost every region of Slovenia, representing Koroška (Carinthia), Gorenjska, Dolenjska, Štajerska (Styria), Primorska and Prekmurje. Moreover, he was not only careful to indicate each song's regional origin, he also credited the melody's original transcriber – Oskar Dev, Ivan Kokošar, Stanko Vraz or himself, collectors all known to have actively engaged in field work (Figure 1).

The subtle terminological shift from *narodna* to *ljudska pesem*, careful attention to regional representation, and conscious awareness of each song's field transcription were all hallmarks of Marolt's critical approach to both folk songs and their arrangement. These undertakings did not go unnoticed. An anonymous reviewer (signed only »V.«) in the newspaper *Slovenec* took note of all of these subtleties, as well as of their significance:

We Slovenians have an exceptional ethnographic position in Europe; through the

⁷ These include »Jaz 'mam pa konjča« (1926), on Primorska Quartet's 1921 concert program, as well as »Kukavica« (1926) and »Ljubi konja jaše« (1925).

⁸ Because of Marolt's work, Slovenian scholars of folk song continue to use the term *ljudska pesem* in specific reference to folk song. While *narodna* and *ljudska pesem* are used interchangeably in lay speech, scholars have defined *narodna pesem* more broadly than *ljudska pesem*; the former might include »folklied« popular songs whereas the latter is more restricted in its repertoire and performance practice. In addition, the use of *ljudska pesem* avoids the association of »folk song« with the political or nationalistic connotations of the term *narodna pesem*.

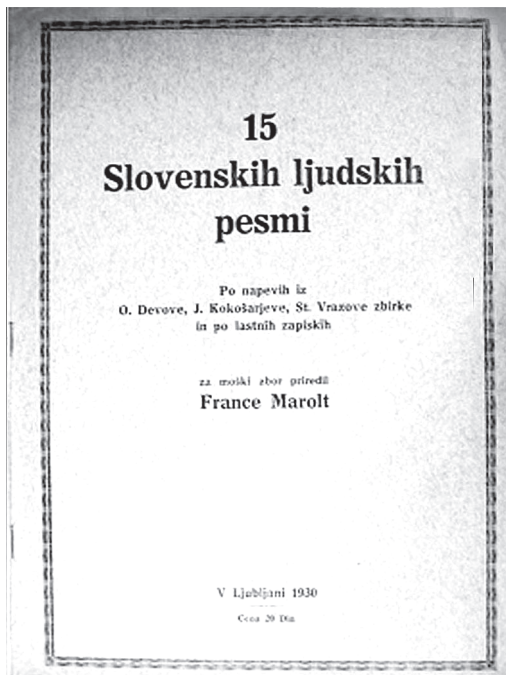


Figure 1: Title page and contents of Marolt's 15 slovenskih ljudskih pesmi (15 Slovenian folk songs) [Marolt 1930].

territory in which Slovenian is spoken run the borders of the European west and east, and the Alpine and Mediterranean cultures also grasp hands here. It is because of this that our folk [ljudska], or as they incorrectly call it »national« [narodna] song is so variegated and heterogeneous. For the same reason, those who seek the authentic Slovenian essence, whether in Gorenjska or Bela Krajina, Primorska and Štajerska, and do not find it in one corner or another, are despondent...

So what is »Slovenian« in our folk music? What is »Slovenian« is that we are partly western-oriented, partly eastern, and partly Mediterranean oriented. Slovenian is everything that the Slovenian soul either constructed or adapted from foreigners and molded...

Marolt combined Koroška, Gorenjska, Dolenjska, Štajerska, Prekmurska, Goriška and Primorska songs into a bouquet and gave them the name »Slovenian,« by which he perhaps wanted to say that he is not among those short-sighted people who regard only Koroška-Gorenjska songs as »Slovenian.« [Slovenec, September 20, 1930]⁹

By means of these subtle details – calling the songs *ljudske* rather than *narodne pesmi*, including a variety of Slovenian regions, and indirectly acknowledging the folk from whom the melodies were originally transcribed – Marolt presented his arrangements as embodying genuine Slovenian folk song. The Slovenian music public of the time, apparently thirsting for such direction and authority of »Slovenian-ness« in their folk songs, enthusiastically received his efforts.

However, Marolt's arrangements were unique not only because of their façade of authenticity. His musical treatment of folk song was unprecedented among Slovenian composers up to that time. As the reviewer in *Slovenec* continued,

This is one distinction of this collection, the other is its artistry. Let me immediately emphasize that no Slovenian [nihče pri nas] has treated folk songs for (men's) choir in the manner that Marolt has at present. Marolt exhumes from each song its rightful core [zrno] and gives it either a harmonic or a linear, contrapuntal character in his treatment..

These arrangements reflect an excellent judgment of choral expression. The collection also gained from the fact that Marolt furnished phonetic transcriptions of the texts in original dialects; the strength of Marolt's work lies in his ability to access the proper essence of each song, to think in its local style and spirit, and in this sense to craft it completely independently and artistically, creating for it a highly artistic vessel.

None of our arrangers have yet attained artistry so high or so original. [Slovenec, September 20, 1930]

⁹ Some of the language in this review, such as the phrase *the Alpine and Mediterranean cultures also grasp hands here*, is similar to Marolt's own writings, such as his essay on Slovenian folk songs in APZ's 1934 concert program (see below). However, I am otherwise unable to determine whether Marolt himself wrote this astute review of his arrangements.

Praised many times over for its innovative and skilled arrangements, Marolt's work was received, in the words of another reviewer, as *Slovenian music and music of the present time (slovenska glasba in glasba sedanjosti)* [*Cerkveni glasbenik* 53, 1930: 157]. Not only in their labeling and selection, but somehow also in their musical stylization, Marolt's arrangements exuded Slovenian-ness.

What made the arrangements of this 1930 collection so much more »Slovenian« than any others that appeared before them? Marolt was certainly not the first to credit the song's origin or even transcriber. This was something several of his recent predecessors and even contemporaries, collector-arrangers such as Oskar Dev (1868–1932), Zdravko Švikaršič (1885–1986), and Marko Bajuk, not to mention the pioneering Janko Žirovnik, had also done. While it could be argued that these arrangers were concerned more with dabbling in simple harmonizations than with the formation of folk songs into new compositions, it is also the case that Marolt was not the first to move creatively beyond block-like homophony or diatonic harmonies, as seen in the work of Emil Adamič or Marij Kogoj. Furthermore, Marolt was also not the first to attempt to remain true to certain aspects of Slovenian folk singing practices, and break away from the perceived »German chorale« style of composition. Zdravko Švikaršič and Marij Kogoj, and in a few instances Janko Žirovnik as well, also emphasized the peculiarities of Slovenian folk singing practices, for example by placing the melody in an inner voice part. Švikaršič and others also attempted to capture spoken dialects as well.

What distinguishes Marolt is the fact that he simultaneously combined all of these techniques in his arrangements. Although he arranged some songs that had also been frequently arranged by others, Marolt sought out what he considered to be »typical« examples from the various Slovenian regions. Backed by ethnographic authority, Marolt's arrangements demonstrate notable musical artistry and claimed painstaking faithfulness to folk practices, all of which resulted in the assertion of an unambiguous Slovenian identity.

Over the course of the decade, Marolt continued to stylize his technique of fusing allegedly authentic folk singing practices with well-crafted musical artistry. More and more adamantly, he supported his folk song arrangements with ethnographic and historical authority, something he particularly could assert as founder and sole researcher of the Folklore Institute. However, an examination of Marolt's process of constructing the authenticity of folk songs through choral arrangements, and his connecting them to indisputably Slovenian practices and identity, raises more questions about the accuracy of his work. It seems probable, at least in certain instances, that Marolt fabricated folk material to conform to his own vision of Slovenian musical identity.¹⁰

¹⁰ Even some of the songs in the 1930 volume may not be what Marolt claimed. In my analysis of several of them, I discovered that, for example, he based his versions on transcriptions by collectors other than those he explicitly credits. For example, »Barčica« and »Kaj b'jaz tebi dal« were not taken from the collection of Ivan Kokošar as he indicated, but were almost certainly copied from earlier arrangements of those songs by Hraboslav Volarič [see Klemenc 2004].

TWO ETHNOGRAPHIC CHORAL CONCERTS

The development of Marolt's method of arranging and his dedication to APZ's performance of Slovenian music reached their apex in spring 1934 and fall 1935. Working closely with composer and priest Matija Tomc (1899–1986), from whom Marolt commissioned several arrangements for APZ, Marolt's chorus presented two landmark concerts consisting entirely of folk song arrangements. The first, performed in May 1934, was entitled *Slovenska narodna pesem. Korotan – Bela krajina* (Slovenian folk song, Korotan – Bela Krajina),¹¹ and included songs exclusively from those two regions. The 1935 concert divided the rest of Slovenia into four other regions – Pannonia (Prekmurje and eastern Štajerska), Mediterranean (Primorska), Gorenjska and Dolenjska. Marolt had dual motives with these concert presentations. He meant not only to entertain with the musical performance, but also to educate his audience about their own folk singing practices.

Marolt laid the foundation for these concerts in the nineteen-page program booklet for the first concert, which premiered in Ljubljana on May 7, 1934.¹² In it Marolt provided a seven-page explanation of the history and characteristics of Slovenian folk music. He based his position, reminiscent of Richard Wallaschek's study of »primitive music« [Wallaschek 1893]¹³ as well as Bartók's later essays, on the understanding that folk and art music represent two developmental strata that continually feed into each other. One is archaic, but continually changing and necessarily informing the other, highest layer. Within this framework, he asserted that the music with which most Slovenians were familiar had lost much of its archaic, or, as he termed it, »primitive« foundations.

According to Marolt, centuries of Germanic and other Western influence, particularly during the Romanticism of the 18th and 19th centuries, obscured this true Slovenian music [Marolt 1934: 6]. For example, the »Bavarian accordion« was, in his opinion, the most destructive influence on Slovenian folk song, ruining the remnants of Slovenian melodies with its *rigidly-major crunching* [Marolt 1934: 7]. Western-style lyrical songs also had made Slovenians forget their own ballads. Yet in spite of such deeply entrenched foreign influences, Marolt claimed to have unearthed the sediments of Slovenian music in certain musical traditions, and found them especially in particular regions.

Marolt's search for the »fundamental layer« of Slovenian music was clearly motivated by a deep desire to reclaim a Slovenian national identity. For him, the discovery of this lowest musical stratum, supported by historical sources and his own ethnographic research, was the best defense against accusations that Slovenian culture was entirely Ger-

¹¹ *Korotan* is an archaic, local term for Koroška.

¹² The program for the 1935 concert was 42 pages in length, and included critical essays and literary excerpts by several known scholars and literary figures (Boris Orel, Božo Vodušek, Rajko Ložar, Anton Skubic, France Marolt, and Izidor Cankar).

¹³ Although Marolt's concept of archaic survivals in folk music is very similar to Wallaschek's and other turn-of-the century evolutionary theories of music, the only work of this nature that he cites is by French sociologist Lévy-Bruhl.

manic, as well as against the statement that *Slovenians have no history*, charges made frequently especially by foreign scholars when comparing Slovenian music with that of its South Slavic neighbors [Marolt 1934: 6].¹⁴ While Slovenians might not have had a living epic tradition, as did Serbians, Marolt showed that their national roots could be traced within the context of Slovenian cultural and geographic history.

Accordingly, Marolt pieced together a distinctly Slovenian cultural identity, not based on Slovenian cultural unity, but instead fashioning it from Slovenia's variegated ethnographic position and substantiating it with both historical and ethnographic scholarship. Because Slovenians are geographically the westernmost Slavic people, Marolt emphasized that, *Slovenia is a bridge over which pour the cultural waves of the Occident and the Orient* [Marolt 1934: 8]. Thus in order to understand Slovenian identity, one must look simultaneously towards both East and West – from Pannonia to Friuli – as well as from the Alps to the Mediterranean.

To illustrate this unique diversity of Slovenian culture, Marolt purposefully focused this first concert on folk songs from Koroška and Bela Krajina – the regions, he argued, that represent the cultural extremes of Occident and Orient. Marolt claimed further that these two regions hold the »sediments« of Slovenian music, especially in ritual traditions. To defend his stance that these are the most authentic Slovenian songs, as different as they may sound, he provided historical and ethnographic descriptions of each song's origin and performance practice.

Although Marolt claimed the alleged authenticity and Slovenian-ness of the music presented in this concert, the folk songs were all composed arrangement for men's chorus. Including songs arranged by Oskar Dev, Matija Tomc (under Marolt's supervision), and Marolt himself, the program indeed pointed out that these were not folk songs in their original form:

The purpose of our concert is to sing the song of Koroška and Bela Krajina. It is not intended to be a restoration of folk songs, as the restoration of »folk« necessarily leads to art song and its creator. It also is not some sort of »occasional« or »concert form« [‘PRILOŽNOSTNO’ ALI ‘KONCERTNO OBLIKO’] as our critics would like to say. THE ARRANGERS WISH TO PRESENT TYPICAL EXAMPLES THROUGH STYLISTICALLY CORRECT ARRANGEMENTS. [Marolt 1934: 9; emphasis mine]

Marolt's language and arguments are somewhat obscure, but his rhetoric is unambiguous in implying that this concert and these arrangements were attempting something exceptional. He was very careful to distinguish his program from reconstructed folk music, and also to distance it from other concertized folk songs, presumably ones not ground-

¹⁴ Because of its western-sounding melodies, Slovenian music was frequently criticized for being »Germanic« and therefore devoid of specifically Slovenian archaisms, a charge that led to the accusation that Slovenians lack their own cultural history. Such an attitude towards Slovenian music was also maintained by Béla Bartók, who referred to Slovenian music as *the entirely Germanized – in the strict sense of the term – folk melody of the Slovenes* [Bartok 1997: 178; originally published 1937, in *Hungarian Folk Music and the Folk Music of Neighboring Peoples*].

ed in historical and ethnographic authority. However, Marolt's intriguing notion of »stylistically-correct« arrangements and how he authenticated this warrants examination of some of his musical examples.

FRANCE MAROLT: »VISOKI REJ« (PERFORMED 1934)

To represent the oldest musical traditions from Koroška, Marolt presented his arrangement of *Visoki rej* (High dance) from the Zilja Valley.¹⁵ Transcribed by collectors before Marolt, including Oskar Dev and Matija Majar (1809–1892),¹⁶ the »high dance« is a couple's dance typically performed under the shade of a large linden tree, and contains alternating sections of chorale singing, lyrical verses sung while dancing, and instrumental dance interludes.¹⁷ In the program notes for this song, Marolt stated that this high dance is *one of the oldest Slovenian ritualistic remnants and is still performed in the Zilja Valley each year on the Sunday after the Nativity of Our Lady*^[18] [Marolt 1934: 12]. Marolt deduced the ancient Slavic origins of the dance from the fact that it is normally performed under the linden tree: *This ancient custom originally must have had the meaning and character of collective, ritualistic courtship under the linden, where the ancient Slavs carried out all of the most important ritualistic gatherings*. Furthermore, he asserted that *old records suggest that »Visoki rej« was prevalent and in practice throughout all of Slovenia up until the Turkish invasions of the 15th century* [Marolt 1934: 12]. Although bold and lacking substantial proof, Marolt's assertion of the dance's ancient, ritualistic origins is not entirely without foundation. In fact, transcriptions by Majar and Dev, who wrote at the top of his transcription that the dance-song is *very old (zelo stara; see Figure 2)*, as well as sketches and descriptions of similar dances in Valvasor's history from 1689, all might support the idea that the »High Dance's« tradition is long.

However, Marolt's claim that this arrangement, along with all of the others on the concert program, was a »stylistically-correct« example of a »typical« song practice demands close scrutiny. His arrangement of this allegedly ancient dance, an extended form of Oskar Dev's 1912 arrangement,¹⁹ is a medley of tunes and variations. Marolt first presents an opening chorale (not included in Dev's versions) then the dance-song (*visoki rej*) and

¹⁵ Marolt also featured this dance-song ritual in *Tri obredja iz Zilje* (Three rituals from the Zilja Valley), [Marolt 1935]. It is also spelled *visoki raj*.

¹⁶ A description of this Zilja dance-song by Matija Majar, who was from the Zilja Valley, as well as several versions and verses collected by Majar or published in Scheinigg's 1889 collection, appear in Štrekelj's compilation: songs 5212–5226 (vol. 3). A version collected by Oskar Dev is in the GNI archives.

¹⁷ A variety of customs surround this dance, including horse-riding contests and the selection of dance partners. According to scholars, the »high dance« is no longer performed, although a slower, similar dance (*prvi rej* – »first dance«) still is [see Ramovš 1988 and 2000].

¹⁸ *Mala Gospojna*, September 8.

¹⁹ Published in *Slovenske narodne pesmi s Koroškega* (Slovenian folk songs from Carinthia) [Dev 1912], Dev's four-part arrangement for men's chorus is expanded from his transcription, though he states that both versions are from Bistrica. It is a straightforward, homophonic harmonization.

4856.

VII. Ples pod lipso.
(zelo stara)

Bistrica.
O. Dev.

ETNOGRAFSKI MUZEJ
V
LJUBLJANI

Big nam daj on do-ber čas ta pr-vi raj za-če-ti, be-
 kaj da smo ja-če-li še ne-hat ne bme me-li. Ter
 Zi-li nož-ce ra-pta-jo pro gi-mi noj po le-te: tur
 mo-če nož-ce br-ga-te mu-je-ti k gi-li po nje. Ter po nje.

Figure 2: Oskar Dev's transcription of »Visoki rej,« or as he titled it, »Dance under the linden tree,« from Bistrica [from GNI archives].

melodic variations for its additional verses, and finally two more tunes (Musical Example 1). Harmonically straightforward, the piece develops through changes in tempo and texture. As the melody is passed to different voice parts with each variation and new melody, and laid out over droning open fifths in the bass,²⁰ the dance slowly builds momentum until reaching the final »Vivo« tune (quarter = 126). Musical Example 1.

Marolt carried out his own fieldwork in Koroška, and his arrangement was apparently based on his own transcriptions. A draft of the dance-song's melody, which differs from Dev's but matches the arrangement, appears in Marolt's field notebook dated 1931.²¹ Further transcriptions of this song appear in the collection of Marolt's typed and *clean* transcriptions (*čistopisi*) from Koroška, dated both 1931 and 1934 (figures 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Because Marolt had no access to recording equipment, his transcriptions raise much suspicion. Of these three transcriptions, only the solo versions by Franc Pip seem realistic and match the quick sketch of the melody in Marolt's field notebook (at GNI). The level of detail of the other two arrangements makes it implausible that they could have been

²⁰ Dev's arrangement also employs open fifths in the bass line of the initial dance-song.

²¹ At GNI archives, folder Korzop. I. Marolt's edited transcriptions from Zilja are dated as early as 1931, although Zmaga Kumer notes that his first reliably documented field excursion to that valley was not until 1933 [Kumer 1991: 12].

Visoki rej pod lipom
(iz Ziljske doline)

Moki zbor pripr.: France Marolt

♩ = 22 Koral *pp*

Za - kaj bu jsi kti - njan ba - sieu ma - biu. K'iev 'hoo

por sve - ta me - ša biu. tav sav bi - du Je - žu -

ša loo nie - go - va Ma - ter za - va - sna

Andante solenne (*♩ = 66*) *mp*

Bug nan dej ta duo - bor čes, ta
čes ta pr - va rej za -

pr - va rej za - če - la smo. Tur je z Bu - gen. Bug je žnin, san
če - ta, tur je z Bu - gen. Bug je žnin san Je - žes

poco riten.
mf

Je - žes je Ma - ri - jan sin, san Je - žes je Ma - ri - jan
je Ma - ri - jan sin, san Je - žes je Ma - ri - jan,

sin. *pp* Più mosso (*♩ = 66*)
Ste kej vi - djo ja - zbo - ca na
je Ma - ri - jan sin. Ste kej vi - djo ja - zbo -

oo - na stra - ma hra - bon - ča al tam je ko - pu ja - mo - co, do
ca na oo - na stra - no hra - bon - ča, kje ko - pu

Musical Example 1: Marolt's »Visoki rej« [High dance], 1934: opening chorale (mm. 1–14), initial dance-song (mm. 15–21) and beginning of first variation (mm. 22–24). [From M. Gobec, ed. *Ljudske iz ziljske doline* (Ravne na Koroškem, 1993), p. 78–79].

74. 249
FI mapa Ms. Ma. 91 Korzps. I. / prp. (91/1 – 91/63) zprd. št. 15. fol. 91/34

Kraj in čas zps.: Bistrica na Zilji, 1931 sgn. zpsv. III.

Pel (a): Franc Pip, izvrsten basist v konti. Zpsv.: France Marolt

Zbor rejevcev. Varianta.

Buh nan dej te dober česte prvi rej za - če - ti, tuo je z Bugan Buh je
Zaigra.

ž nin san Ježeš je Ma - ri - jan sin.

Figure 3: Marolt's transcription of »Visoki rej,« performed by Franc Pip, an exceptional bass in the group, in the village of Bistrica, Zilja Valley, 1931 [from GNI archives].

FI mapa Ms.Ma.91 Korzps.I./prp. (91/1 91/63) zprd.štv. 14. fol. 91/30
 Kraj in čas zps.: Bistrica na Zilji, 1931 sgn. zpsv. b)
 Pel(a): France Pip Zpsv.: France Marolt

Zbor rejevcev

$\text{♩} = 56$

Bug nan daj te dober čas te perve raj za - čeli smo, kdor je z Bugom
 sam Ježeš
 Bug je žnjim je Ma-rijin sin sam Ježeš je Ma - ri - jin sin.

Figure 4: A second transcription of »Visoki rej,« performed by Franc Pip in the village of Bistrica, Zilja Valley, 1931 [from GNI archives].

FI mapa Ms.Ma.91 Korzps.I./prp. (91/1 91/63) zprd.štv. 16. fol. 91/40
 Kraj in čas zps.: Bistrica na Zilji 1931 sgn. zpsv. -
 Pel(a): Konta iz Bistrice na Zilji Zpsv.: France Marolt

Zbor rejevcev

$\text{♩} = 56$

Būex nan dēj te duober čas, de pērbe rej za - čēle smo, tūet iē z Būegan,
 Būex iē žnjn, sēn Iēžēš iē Ma - rījen sin, sēn Iēžēš iē Ma - rī - jēn sin.

Figure 5: Marolt's transcription of »Visoki rej,« performed by a group of young men (konta) in Bistrica, Zilja Vally 1931 [from GNI archives].

FI mapo Ms. Ma. 92 KorzD. II. / drp (92/1 — 93/63) zprd. št. 3. fol. str. 349 Kor. zb.
 Kraj in čas zps.: Zahomec v Zilji, 1934 (orim. Kor. zb. str. 357) sgn. zpsv. KorzD. II. / 310b
 Pe/(a): Rejevci in rejke Zpsv.: France Marolt

Visoki rej pod lipo

♩ = 56

Bueh nan dei te duober ces, da per-be rei za - zfe-le smo.
 Tuer ie z Buehon, Bueh ie z nfn, san Ie-zes ie Ma - rijen sn, san
 Ie-zes ie Ma - ri - jen sn. (Prehod iz korakanja v ples)

Figure 6: Marolt's transcription of »Visoki rej,« performed by male and female singers (rejevci in rejke) in the village of Zahomec, Zilja Valley, 1934 [from GNI archives].

transcribed from live performance by even the most trained ear. Not only are the transcriptions in harmony, but Marolt added precise grace notes and slurs, indicated the exact tempo, and meticulously transliterated the text into phonetic dialect. Raising even more questions is Marolt's statement in his transcriptions that he heard the song performed almost exactly the same way, three years apart and in two separate villages (Figures 5 and 6). Moreover, the 1934 transcription is identical to the first and second tenor parts of the first iteration of the dance-song in Marolt's arrangement.

In short, Marolt's transcriptions of »Visoki rej« appear already to be arrangements. He quite possibly worked and reworked his material, which he may or may not have entirely collected himself,²² to fit his personal notions of what this dance-tune should sound like. In the same manner, he appears to have stylized his composed arrangement so that it, too, would fit this idea of »stylistically-correct« and authentic Slovenian music. Such doctoring of primary source material to correspond to his assertions of authenticity and Slovenian-ness clearly occurred with other arrangements as well.

²² In the field notebook, Marolt only sketches one verse of the song. In the clean copy of his transcription, he includes sixteen more lines of text, all of which (plus two additional) are also in the choral arrangement. Interestingly, more than half of this text can be extracted from the several versions and verses in Štrekelj's compilation (5212–5226), most transcribed by Matija Majar.

MATIJA TOMC: »ZELENI JURIJ« (PERFORMED 1934)

Marolt collaborated with composer-priest Matija Tomc,²³ a preeminent composer of sacred choral music and native of Bela Krajina, for all of the arrangements from that region. Tomc's nine arrangements of folk songs from Bela Krajina for APZ's 1934 concert were some of the first arrangements of ritual songs from that region.²⁴ According to Marolt, the region of Bela Krajina *until recently closed to Western influence, preserved its originality* [in musical forms] *the greatest* [Marolt 1934: 9]. Although Marolt possibly misinterpreted the influence of the Uskoki – Serbian or Croatian refugees of Turkish invasions who settled there in the 15th and 16th centuries – on the culture of Bela Krajina²⁵ as evidence of that region's preservation of ancient customs, he maintained that the »Oriental«-sounding music, especially the ritual carols, was among the oldest in all of Slovenia.

Among the examples cited as representative of the antiquity of the region's song culture was »Zeleni Jurij« (Green George), which Marolt maintained was an ancient carol (*koleda*) performed among the rituals for St. George's Day (April 24). To substantiate the authenticity and antiquity of the ritual of dressing up a boy in green birch boughs and singing this song from house to house, Marolt described it in the words of 96-year-old Mara Magdičeva, who he claimed was *the oldest 'vojarinka' [song leader] and who still knows how to sing this song* [Marolt 1934: 15].²⁶ Relying on the authority of an aged, living singer, Marolt concluded that *the Saint George's Day custom [jurjevanje] is a remnant of the well-known, ancient Slovenian kurentovanje [27] ...that preserves and incorporates, in addition to ritual dances, the most mythological sediments of geotropical [sic.] character»* [Marolt 1934: 15].

Marolt's extravagant claims about the historicity of this song are coupled with equally bold interpretations of its musical characteristics, which he asserted as proof of the song's archaic Slovenian-ness:

The melody of our »Zeleni Jurij« is a preserved, typical example of an original, ancient Slovenian melody, its age proven by its consistent isorhythm, simple melodic outline in archaic Dorian style, and [the fact] that the physiognomy [sic.] of this melody is completely different from those of Kajkavian [28] origin from a much younger era. [Marolt 1934: 15]

²³ For more on Tomc's arrangements, see A. Misson 1997. For more on all of Tomc's works, see E. Škulj, ed., 1997. An undergraduate thesis [Vevoda 1997] also explores Tomc's work with Marolt and APZ.

²⁴ Marko Bajuk, from Bela Krajina, and Oskar Dev arranged a few lyrical songs from this region in their pan-Slovenian collections.

²⁵ See Terseglav 1996 for a detailed study of the Uskoki and their song traditions in Bela Krajina.

²⁶ Marolt expanded his description of »Zeleni Jurij« and the St. George's Day ritual in Bela Krajina, quoting Mara Magdičeva at even greater length, in his 1936 monograph *Tri obredja iz Bele krajine* (Three rituals from Bela Krajina).

²⁷ Shrovetide custom in eastern Slovenia.

²⁸ The Kajkavian dialect of the Croatian language, remarkably similar to eastern Slovenian dialects, is spoken in the region east of Bela Krajina.

44 Zeleni Jurij
(Zelohranjček)

Allegro moderato (♩ = 96)

Musical Example 2: Matija Tomc, »Zeleni Jurij« (Green George), 1934, mm. 1–55 [from Tomc, *Priredbé ljudskih pesmi za moški zbor*. Ljubljana, 1977: 44–46].

Marolt's assertions about this authentically Slovenian and ancient musical style are captured in Tomc's arrangement (Musical Example 2).

The claim that this piece is archaic is expressed in the opening tone, with driving repetitions of the exclamation *Haj!*, based on short, repeating melodic motives extracted from the main melody and layered into as many as seven voice parts (mm. 1–25). Only after this rousing, chaotic introduction comes to a whirling end with unison shouts of *Haj!* does the melody enter in the second tenor. At first a solo over the bass's relentless iterations of *haj!* (mm. 26–29), the melody is soon joined by the remaining voices. The repetitive verses (*dajte mu... / give him...*), divided into phrases of four measures, are then passed off into various voices – from the second tenor's opening to the baritone (m. 38), to the first tenor (m. 42), and so forth. The so-called isorhythm, although varied in the original melody, is ever-present in the accompanying voice parts. All the while, the second basses continue their driving ostinato.

Archival documents at GNI suggest that Marolt conducted the fieldwork for Tomc's »Zeleni Jurij« in Bela Krajina in 1931.²⁹ Tomc's arrangement matches exactly what Marolt

²⁹ Zmaga Kumer asserts that Marolt's 1931 fieldwork in Bela Krajina is in fact his earliest documented fieldwork [Kumer 1991: 12].

notated in the *čistopis*, or edited, clean copy (figure 7). Curiously, the melodic fragment of this song that I found in Marolt's field notebook from that 1931 excursion to Bela Krajina differs considerably from the edited copy and arrangement.

The melody in Marolt's typed transcription is slightly more elaborate than what is sketched in his field notebook, with a wider ambitus and greater melodic movement, not to mention detailed expressive markings. In addition, the lengthy text, again written in dialect, appears only in the typed version. Indeed, in comparing Marolt's version of the song to the texts in Štrekelj's volumes (4987 to 4996, vol. 3), I came to the probable conclusion that much of Marolt's text is an amalgamation of several of these printed versions.

Another curious discrepancy is that on the typed transcription Marolt attributed the performance to the 96-year-old Magdičeva from Kal nad Semičem, but her name is not in the field notebook. Above the sketch of the untitled song appearing before »Zeleni Jurij« in Marolt's notebook are jotted the names »Golobič Marija« and »Magdičeva Mina« and in parentheses the village of Štrekljavec. Whether Mara Magdičeva from the village of Kal might be one of these singers is difficult to determine, and Marolt does not note any

FI mapo Ms.Ma. 83 Bkrzp.I./prp (83/1 — 83/81) zprd.št.v. 18. fol. 83/35
36

Kraj in čas zps.: Kal nad Semičem, 6.aprila 1931 sgn. zpsv. Bkrzp.I./18

Pe/(a): Mára Magdičeva Zpsv.: France Marolt

Zeléni Jurij ⁴⁾

Allegro (♩ = 81)

Próšel je próšel písa-ni ví-zem,
dó-šel je dó-šel zé-le-ni Jú-re ná zelénem kónji pò ze-lénem póljí.

Meno (♩ = 81)

dájte mu dáj-te, Júrja da-ro-váj-te, dáj-te mu gróš, da vam dójde
dájte mu mlé-ka, zé-le-na mú-oblé-ka,
dájte mu mé-sa, dá-se né o-tré-sa,
dájte mu ví-na, dá-ga né bo zí-ma,
dájte mu špé-ha, dá-ga né bo kré-ha,
dájte mu já-jec, dá-ga né bo zá-jec,
dájte mu krú-ha, dá-ga né bí mú-ha,
dájte mu só-li, zá-de-bé-le vó-li,
dájte mu pó-ga-če, dá-mu nó-ge pòskoče,
dájte mu má-sti, dá-bo vréden čá-sti,
dájte mu háj-de, dá-se dó-ma náj-de,
dájte mu mé-sa, dá-pójde v nebé-sa,
dájte mu plé-če, dá-vam káj ne ré-če,
dájte mu kráj-car, dá-ga né bo špráj-car,
dájte mu škú-du, dá-ne pójde k sú-du,

još! haj! haj! haj! bó li skó-ro kaj! Júh... júh... jú-hi —!

Figure 7: Marolt's transcriptions of »Zeleni Jurij« [Green George], typed *čistopis* and draft in field notebook. [From GNI archives].

singer for »Zeleni Jurij.« Interestingly, GNI scholar Valens Vodušek also observed similar inconsistencies in Marolt's official transcriptions and his field notebooks, and left handwritten notes in the archival files raising questions about Marolt's accuracy. In his comparison of transcriptions of another song attributed to Mara Magdičeva (»Kaj bomo možem šenkali«), Vodušek noted so many discrepancies that he questioned whether or not the 96-year-old singer ever existed.

Once again, it seems as though Marolt took a song idea – one which he may or may not have heard performed in Bela Krajina – and reworked it to create a more complete and »authentic« transcription that subsequently served as the basis for Tomc's arrangement. Indeed, other pieces on the program for these two ethnographic concerts also reveal instances of manipulating resources, ethnography and history. For example, Marolt's unique process of elaborating folk songs and transforming them into such Slovenian choral pieces is very well documented in a December 1934 letter to Matija Tomc, in which Marolt instructs him on the composition of »Furmanska.«³⁰ But even though Marolt clearly doctored ethnographic sources to validate the »stylistically correct« arrangements presented in both of these APZ concerts, he did so meticulously and carefully, with specific sound images already in mind. Working alone or with Tomc, who was arguably a more skilled and certainly more trained composer, Marolt definitely knew what he wanted, and, more significantly, knew how to capture it in a choral piece. He had a preconceived idea of what and how to present as characteristic of each Slovenian region, simultaneously shaping individual songs as well as regional and national identities.

Both the 1934 and 1935 APZ concerts of folk song arrangements were extraordinarily well received. Reviewers described them as a *triumph* and *holiday* (*praznik*) of Slovenian folk songs. A review in *Slovenec* of the first concert admitted that, *To many who are only familiar with the folk song living among us today, all of this possibly sounded somewhat foreign and surprising* [*Slovenec*, May 9, 1934]. The writer qualified this with Marolt's explanation that the authentic elements of Slovenian music have been buried by foreign influences, and praised Marolt's merger of artistic interpretation with »scientific« folk song scholarship. The reviewer also appreciated Tomc's arrangements from Bela Krajina, noting that these arrangements were all the more worthy because *he* [Tomc] *himself is an authentic Belokrajinec* [person from Bela Krajina], *in whom the characteristic vigors of his land still thrive with sincerity* [*Slovenec*, May 9, 1934]. Even though the accuracy of Marolt's claims of authenticity is certainly suspect, and it is likely that he at least partially based arrangements on his own pre-determined sound ideals, these arrangements were exceptionally convincing – both as authentic Slovenian folk songs and as choral compositions. In effect, they gave Slovenian folk song arrangements a new direction and a new purpose.

³⁰ In NUK, file Matija Tomc. See also Klemenc 2004.

TURNING THE TIDE OF SLOVENIAN CHORAL MUSIC IN THE ART OF ARRANGEMENT

France Marolt carried his passion for Slovenian song and the Slovenian nation into all of his professional pursuits. He brought the same determination to recover the authenticity of Slovenian folk music through concert arrangement to his other public venues, transcriptions and scholarly writings. For example, in line with his desire to present the typical musical image of each Slovenian region, he organized the first Slovenian folklore festivals in the 1930s, such as »Bela Krajina Day« and »Koroška Day.«³¹ In his monographs on ritual practices in the Zilja Valley (1935) and in Bela Krajina (1936), and the posthumously published *Gibno-zvočni obraz Slovencev* (The image of Slovenians in tone and movement) [Marolt 1954a] and *Slovenski glasbeni folklor* (Slovenian musical folklore) [Marolt 1954b], he presented foundations for a distinctly Slovenian music, asserting authenticity through perceived primitivisms in certain practices and associating each region with a unique sound image.

Although many aspects of Marolt's work are marred by evident instances of manipulating facts and sources, his reputation as a major contributor to Slovenian national culture remains overwhelmingly positive to this day. Even those who are aware of his fabrications have tried to rationalize away or ignore his doctoring of folk songs. For example, ethnomusicologist Zmaga Kumer, who worked with Marolt in her student days and was among the first to discover egregious fictions in Marolt's scholarship,³² has pointed to his emotional and quixotic character in addition to his zealous nationalism in an attempt to justify his dubious work. Kumer suggests that, *He was an extraordinary personality, full of artistic and creative impulse, a person with a rich imagination, rashly infatuated with everything Slovenian, more intuitive than rational, more emotionally fired than intellectually cool* [Kumer 1991: 13]. That is, Kumer claims that Marolt's artistic ideals so dominated his work that they overshadowed his respect for exacting scholarship.

The rousing, continued success of his choral arrangements also appears to justify these lapses. Although scholars such as Kumer have recognized the discrepancies in Marolt's work since the mid-1950s, knowledge of his forgeries, hardly widespread,³³ has not affect-

³¹ Marolt began organizing regional folk festivals before the founding of his dance-folklore ensemble in 1948, and socialist-sponsored festivals after World War II.

³² Kumer has noted one of Marolt's most amazing forgeries, the ballad »Lepa Vida« (Beautiful Vida), which he claimed to have transcribed in 1923 as performed by Lenka Šmon from Hraše pri Lescah, Gorenjska. Marolt's transcription, replete with dozens of verses transliterated in dialect and detailed ethnographic descriptions, including Šmon's biography, was used as the basis of Ivan Grafenauer's monumental monograph on the ballad [Grafenauer 1943]. However, after the Folklore Institute acquired recording equipment in 1954, Kumer and others returned to the village of Hraše to discover that the singer Lenka Šmon had never existed [see Kumer 1991: 19–21].

³³ It seems to me that Marolt's doctored scholarship is not a popularly known fact. Although a few of the composers, choral conductors and singers whom I interviewed alluded to it, the majority seemed unaware or at least unconcerned. In the few instances in which I revealed Marolt's forgeries to those

ed the reception of his work. One need only listen to the many performance ensembles that sing reconstructed folk songs, such as the folk revival group Katice, to hear that they frequently rely on Marolt's transcriptions for their repertoire, and that his versions are still considered authoritative. His folk song arrangements are continually performed by choirs of all levels and types throughout Slovenia, and are very much part of the core repertoire. Many of his arrangements also have been arranged again by other composers; his songs are still considered representative of regional sound identities. In practically all aspects of arranging, composers to this day base their work on his.³⁴

Indeed, Marolt's paradigm of »authentic Slovenian-ness« in the concert arrangement of folk songs has prevailed over decades of changing political and cultural circumstances – from the turmoil of the Second World War and the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia to the creation of the independent Republic of Slovenia. The enduring success of his work reflects the fact that, for the first time, Marolt presented choral arrangements of folk songs as something unambiguously Slovenian. Stopping short of inventing entire songs, customs and practices, he manipulated resources and stretched facts in order to realize his artistic notions of what Slovenian music should be and how it should sound. In a time when Slovenians were struggling to define themselves, Marolt gave Slovenian music a unique sound identity – something of which the Slovenian people could be proud. Setting the standards for distinctly *Slovenian* arrangements, Marolt passed on to composers this specific direction and purpose for folk song arrangements. In this manner, arrangements continue to be a medium for the presentation of the Slovenian nation.

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otherwise unaware, the reaction was one of indifference. In their view, Marolt had contributed so much to Slovenian musical identity that his manipulation of resources was insignificant.

³⁴ In my interviews with many contemporary Slovenian choral composers, including Pavle Merkù, Lojze Lebič and Ambrož Čopi, almost all credited France Marolt as inspiring their approach to arranging Slovenian folk songs.

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USTVARJANJE AVTENTIČNOSTI. FRANCE MAROLT, LJUDSKA PESEM IN KONCERTNI ODER

Mnogo glasbenih zvrsti na Slovenskem označujejo za »ljudsko« ali »narodno« glasbo: od skomercializiranih ansamblov, ki igrajo nekakšno alpsko plesno glasbo, do skupin, ki skušajo oživiljati ljudsko glasbo in igrajo na rekonstrukcije originalnih instrumentov. Vendar pa je med vsemi temi vrstami glasbe, ki izražajo slovenskost, še posebno v ospredju ena: zborovsko petje in priredbe ljudskih pesmi. Slovenija ima prek dva tisoč amaterskih pevskih zborov, glavnina njihovega pevskega sporeda pa so zborovske priredbe slovenskih ljudskih pesmi. V spreminjajočih se političnih in kulturnih razmerah vseh obdobj sta oba glasbena vidika, tako način petja v pevskem zboru kot repertoar priredb ljudskih pesmi, že dolgo neobhodno potrebna za ustvarjanje zavesti o slovenski identiteti.

Priredbe ljudskih pesmi in zborovsko petje so sad številnih teženj, da bi že od 19. stoletja naprej poenotili slovensko kulturo. Spodbujali so jih kot izraz slovenske narodne kulture. Na začetku 20. stoletja je že obstajala cela vrsta priredb »slovenskih pesmi,« objavljenih v pesmaricah in publikacijah o glasbi, ki so jih izvajali tako podeželski kot mestni pevski zbori. Vendar pa je bilo le iz redkih priredb razvidno, kaj točno naj bi bilo slovenskega v tej glasbi, ki so jo označevati za slovensko. Naj navedem primer: ker je bila v 19. stoletju glavni cilj tistih, ki so zagovarjali slovensko kulturo, slovenska kulturna enotnost, so mnogi skladatelji v svojih priredbah namerno zmanjševali regionalne značilnosti; to pa je vodilo v določeno glasbeno homogenost slovenskih ljudskih pesmi. Celo v desetletju po nastanku SHS leta 1918 je bila v mnogih zbirkah priredb še vedno zelo poudarjena slovenska kulturna enotnost, manjkala pa je razlaga, kaj naj bi ta »slovenskost« sploh bila.

Marljivo delo zborovodje, skladatelja in etnografa Franceta Marolta (1891–1951) je pomenilo pomembno spremembo v ustvarjanju izrazite slovenske note v priredbah slovenskih ljudskih pesmi. Maroltov izjemni pristop k priredbam, ki naj bi bil sad prejete štipendije za preučevanje ljudskih pesmi, je ustvaril prostor za priredbe, ki so bile same zase umetniški izdelek, poleg tega pa jih je definiral kot značilno in pristno slovenske. Morda sta Maroltova kompozicijska tehnika in odnos do slovenske narodne identitete še veliko bolj kot pri kakem drugem slovenskem zborovskem skladatelju pustila trajen vpliv na slovensko zborovsko dogajanje. Prispevek govori o Maroltovem prispevku k zborovskim priredbam slovenskih ljudskih pesmi in o njegovemu oblikovanju avtentičnosti s pomočjo te glasbe. Po podrobni analizi njegovih metod prirejanja ljudskih pesmi in določenih glasbenih primerov se avtorici zdi, da je Marolt včasih pretinaval pri svojem pojmovanju »avtentičnosti« v slovenski glasbi; verjetno je včasih tudi prikojil določene vire, da bi tako ustvaril svojo verzijo slovenske glasbene identitete.

V prispevku sta najprej obravnavana Maroltov pristop in način prirejanja ljudskih pesmi, ki sta razvidna iz njegove zbirke pesmi z naslovom 15 slovenskih ljudskih pesmi iz leta 1930. Že sam naslov je napovedoval nov pristop k oblikovanju slovenskih zborovskih priredb, saj je namesto do tedaj uveljavljenega izraza narodna pesem Marolt uporabil termin ljudska pesem. Še ena stvar, ki je razločevala ta tanki snopič pesmi od večine priredb tistega časa, je bila Maroltova zavestna vključitev pesmi iz skoraj vseh slovenskih pokrajin. Še več, Marolt je celo navedel ime prvotnega zapisovalca. Zaradi vsega tega in tudi zaradi svojih inovativnih priredb ljudskih pesmi je Marolt trdil, da njegove priredbe odsevajo resničnega duha slovenske ljudske pesmi.

France Marolt je predstavil svoje glasbene in etnografske nazore na dveh pomembnih koncertih zborovske glasbe. Koncerta sta bila izvedena leta 1934 in 1935, v obeh primerih pa je pesmi zapel Akademski moški pevski zbor pod Maroltovo taktirko. Pevci so predstavili »avtentične« ljudske pesmi iz različnih slovenskih pokrajin; mnoge od pesmi je priredil Marolt. Marolt je imel dva razloga za organizacijo teh koncertov: z njima ni želel samo zabavati občinstva, ampak je hotel ljudi tudi poučiti o njihovi lastni pesemski dediščini. Navkljub Maroltovemu namenu, da bi na obeh koncertih predstavil »avtentične« in »stilistično natančne« slovenske pesmi, podrobna analiza njegove glasbe odkriva, da je občasno verjetno prikrojil ali ponaredil vire, iz katerih je črpal snov za priredbe. Naj za zgled navedem njegovo priredbo pesmi Visoki rej, ki naj bi temeljila na njegovih lastnih zapisih s Koroškega. Po podrobnejši analizi zapisov, ki jih brani arhiv Glasbenonarodopisnega inštituta ZRC SAZU, se je pokazalo, da je Marolt morda predelal etnografsko gradivo in ga tako prilagodil svojim lastnim zamislim o tem, kako naj bi se pesem glasila. Podobna protislavlja lahko najdemo tudi v priredbi pesmi Zeleni Jurij iz Bele krajine, ki jo je v sodelovanju z Maroltom zložil Matija Tomc.

Čeprav si France Marolt ni povsem izmislil vseh pesmi, šeg in navad, pa je videti, da je prikrojeval vire in dejstva, da bi tako lahko uresničil svoje umetniške zamisli o tem, kakšna naj bi bila slovenska glasba in kako naj bi zvenela. Vendar pa so kljub temu njegove zborovske priredbe še naprej pomemben del slovenskega zborovskega sporeda, njegov sloves človeka, ki je pomembno prispeval k slovenski nacionalni kulturi, pa prav tako ostaja velik.