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Studies

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Ideology and/in Music: Music in Zagreb Salons and Gatherings in the First Half of the 19th Century

Keywords: Illyrian movement, ballroom dances, rousing songs, Vatroslav Lisinski, Sidonia Erdödy

he diary of the Zagreb bishop Maximilian Vrhovac (1752-1827) gives evidence of regular music making at his court: firstly, by his hired musicians; and secondly, by guest performers. In 1808, his musicians also played at the house of the Croatian Ban (viceroy) Gjulay for his daughter's birthday-party, as well as in the house of the Count Amadé de Varkonyi, in whose palace a theatre was arranged (Vrhovec 1987: 306-307). He also occasionally organised gatherings with music in his own palace (Vrhovec 1987: 147). During the 1820s, in his salon, a group of musicians performed chamber pieces by Georg Karl Wisner von Morgenstern, who in 1819 became the citizen of Zagreb, and his Viennese contemporaries. Further, in May 1815, the Austrian pianist and composer of Czech origins, Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), arrived in Zagreb upon the invitation of the Bishop himself, and gave a concert in the Zagreb theatre. The next day he and his wife were invited to the bishopric palace for lunch and in the evening he performed at the home of the bishop's sister, in front of a gathered noble company (Goglia 1930: 7).

However, the Zagreb citizens had their smaller and exclusive meeting-points. According to the late 19th-century musicologist Franjo Ks. Kuhač, during the mid-1820s, the composer and guitar virtuoso Ivan Padovec arranged meetings with his fellow musicians at his home in Zagreb. They practiced with the sextet that Padovec had founded and played in front of their friends, performing their own compositions – by Padovec himself and by Wisner von Morgenstern, who also often visited his home. Padovec and Wisner von Morgenstern also regularly frequented the house of the merchant Đuro Popović where they performed chamber music with some able *dilettanti*, later members of the *Musikverein*. It seems that such gatherings of music professionals and *Liebhaber*, resulted in the foundation of this society that brought substantial changes to the musical landscape of Zagreb. Many of their members will later, during 1830s and 1840s, start to support the national movement, whose pre-phase was prepared by the activity of the bishop Vrhovac himself (Tuksar 2012: 91-92).

Similar intimate musical gatherings (besides theatre performances and representative balls) were also organised in palaces of the local high nobility since the last decades of the 18th century and continued well into the 19th century. Such musical events received additional impulses and new value by two phenomena. One was the growing musical culture (public and institutional) and musical professionalization demonstrated by the foundation of the Music society (Musikverein, 1827) and its school (in 1829), and the other was the National revival or the Illyrian movement, acquiring its formal basis in the 1830s by the publication of the Croatian grammar and the foundation of the newspaper in the Croatian language. Some members of the nobility joined the movement, for example, the countess Sidonia Erdödy, born in 1819, and her brother, but above all, the Count Janko Drašković, sometimes named as "the oldest Illyrian" (he was born in 1770). This politician, one of the best-educated members of the Croatian nobility, published pro-Illyrian texts, such as the essay Ein Wort an Illyriens hochherzige Töchter (1838), claiming the necessity of speaking the Croatian (at that time called Illyrian) language, because the girls were mostly reading German novels of low quality (Župan 2016: 281). He also acted as the founder and the first president of the Illyrian reading room (1838) which became one of the cultural centres of the movement. He himself organised gatherings in his palace in Zagreb that included political and cultural discussions as well as music and dance. One such event was described in the cultural supplement Danica to the Croatian daily newspaper *Novine horvatzke*. On April 5th, 1839 he invited the nobility, including political, military and church dignitaries, as well as the members of the bourgeoisie, with poets and musicians; they combined discussions with patriotic reciting and music making with a dinner.

> All musical pieces that gladdened the participants were chosen with skill and rare style. The loving song *Will you know where I live, maiden* by our Anacreontic poet Mr. Ljudevit Vukotinović, composed characteristically by Mr. Wiesner-Livadić from Samobor,

and sung by the Countess widow of Franjo Condé with tenderness and in the national spirit, was very pleasing, so that the applause was endless. Special merit goes to Miss Countess Sidonia Erdödy, who never missed the opportunity to please the friends of the national language with Illyrian songs. That night she sang with her beautiful voice, which must touch each heart, the last aria from Bellini's *Sonnambula*; it sounded as sweet in the Illyrian language as it did in Italian¹ so that she enchanted to ecstasy all her listeners.... To the common delight, her voice sounded twice again: in a quartet, translated from the *Czechian Lumir*, by our famous poet Toma Blažek . . .; and in an aria from Donizzetti's opera *Lucia di Lamermoor*, which she performed with such a grace and skill that the hearts of all listeners were taken by unspeakable delight. ("Ilirska muzikalna zabava" 1839: 64)

Further, Stjepan/Štefan Moyses, a Slovakian bishop and member of the National Revival movement, at that time professor of philosophy and Greek language at the Royal academy in Zagreb (the University), performed "a beautiful and to our Czech-Slovakian brethren very dear song: 'Gdě je stanak moj' (*Kde jest domov moj*) by the Kapellmeister Škroup."² The deputy mayor of Zagreb, Henrik Mikšić, and Daniel von Farkaš sang a duet from Donizzetti's *Belisario*³ and another one from Mercadante's *Elise e Claudio*, both translated with much taste into Croatian by the famous Croatian poet Ivan Mažuranić.⁴ The reviewer mentioned the singing of two girls from noble families, Wilhelmine Minsinger and Ljubica (Amalia) Švabelj, as well as piano performances by Pauline von Zernčić and Ivan Cernković. The composer Ferdinand Wiesner-Livadić from Samobor attended the gathering, and his solo-song was also performed there. Finally, the diocesan mayor Franjo Zengeval

¹ The verses "Ah, non giunge uman pensiero" were translated into Croatian by the poet Dragutin Rakovac, and both – the original as well as the translated stanzas – were published in the footnote attached to the article.

² "Kde domov můj" is the title of a song from a theatre piece, *Fidlovačka aneb žádný hněv a žádná rvačka*, by Josef Kajetán Tyl, with music by František Škroup. It was premiered in Prague on December 21st, 1834. This popular song became the Czechian anthem.

³ It was performed for the first time a year earlier at the "First musical-declamatory academy with Illyrian speech and singing" ("Parva muzikalno-deklamatorska academia s ilirskim besědanjem i pěvanjem" 1838a).

⁴ For some information on Mažuranić's translations of theatre pieces see Hećimović 2000: 230.

held a toast to the host of this brilliant patriotic feast. Nevertheless, Janko Drašković organised similar gatherings quite regularly. The guests often came in the Illyrian dress code, both men and women, thus visually supporting the national cause. In an article in the press, the politician, writer and researcher in natural sciences Ljudevit Vukotinović (1813-1893) mentioned some private salons, mostly organized by important politicians and dignitaries. Such gatherings were organised in the palaces of the Zagreb Bishop Georg Haulik de Váralya (1788-1869), an important supporter of artists and of the *Musikverein*, and even more gatherings occurred at the house of chamberlain Mirko Inkey von Palin, whom Vukotinović describes as follows:

This man, very deserving to our country, never gives balls. However, in his house, visited by the most respectable men of the city, he entertains his guests in a special way and, as an admirer of music, he often organises concerts, performed by our best musicians. (Vukotinović 1842: 23)

The repertoire similar to that in Drašković's private soirées was often performed in public, too, even for the festivities in connection with the royal family. The first patriotic meeting with reading in the Illyrian language and with music was on the eve of the birthday of the "Kaiser und König Ferdinand", on April 18th, 1838, a benefit performance in the Zagreb theatre for the Hungarian victims of the flood of the Danube ("Predislovje k velikomu ilirskomu koncertu" 1838b: 61-63), when the royal anthem concluded the performance. Further, the example of patriotic participations of the Countess Sidonia Erdödy influenced some other members of the nobility. Thus, Dragutin Rakovac mentioned in his diary that the Countess Vojkffy got a new *surka* (an Illyrian dress), and that in her home in Moravče near Zagreb Illyrian national songs were sung (Rakovac 1922: 179).

Noblemen and citizens met on more intimate occasions, participating in national entertainment in reading-rooms, where declamation, conversations, singing and performing instrumental music alternated. Such entertainments were called "sĕdiljke" or "besĕde",⁵ modelled after the pattern of similar soirées in Prague⁶ or Slavic meetings in Vienna (Franković 1992). The

⁵ In addition, the term "diwan" was used, but such Turkish expressions had to be avoided, because there were too many already, explained the author of an article in *Danica* ("Sědiljke ili Besěde u Zagrebu" 1844a: 53).

⁶ The Zagreb Croatian press – above all *Danica* at that time – brought occasional reports from similar gatherings in Prague.

reading-room was the place where "all male and female friends of our nation" could exchange ideas, learn something new and enjoy a pleasant company in music and literature, spontaneously, without a fixed programme. The idea was - as written in the newspapers - to prolong the pleasant gatherings organised during the carnival season. The first one took place on February 26th, 1844. The plan was to continue regular meetings twice a week (on Mondays and Fridays) in the new hall of the Shooting Club, the oldest society in Zagreb. There, amateurs and professionals, noblemen and citizens, stood side by side, enjoying the more relaxed atmosphere. Not only "national music" - as, for example, piano variations on some national song – was performed there but also "masterpieces by Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt etc. were pleasantly entertaining the attentive listeners" ("Glazbena zabava u Zagrebu" 1844b). Smaller groups played chess and the time passed too quickly so that the people who parted already longed for the next meeting. The participants mostly remained anonymous in the newspaper report because, as it was claimed, everybody knew them. Some well-known writers attended as well, but - regrettably to the audiences – only few of them were prepared to participate actively.⁷

Locals were not the only ones to participate in such events. A representative of the itinerant German theatre company, Mr. Reissland, a good trumpet player, organised such an *academia* with reciting of Schiller's poems, Livadić's solo-songs and his performances on the trumpet. Taking into account that the accent was on the Croatian language, this "artistic musical garland" filled the hearts of the audiences ("Glazbena zabava u Zagrebu" 1844b). On September 8th, 1844, with great enthusiasm the performance of arias was greeted, when - after the overture to Mozart's Magic flute - the Countess Erdödy and some amateurs performed selected parts from the national opera *Love and malice* by Vatroslav Lisinski, at that time still in progress, along with Bellini's music and Livadić's songs (D. G...c 1844). Such presentations of arias from the future national opera were useful in two ways: on the one hand, they prepared the audiences for an important national event heating up the atmosphere, and, on the other hand, they tested their pulse considering the reception of the future integral piece. Thus, with the same eagerness and warmth, the performance of the Lisinski's opera Love and Malice on March 28th, 1846 was accompanied not only by a thorough report in the same newspaper, but also in the Zagreb German press ("Pàrva izvorna ilirska opera" 1846).

⁷ In the report the name of Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski can be detected as the sole member of the literati to present a poem ("Sědiljke ili Besěde u Zagrebu" 1844a: 54-55).

Yet, the Shooting hall and the theatre were not the only locations connected with the composer Vatroslav Lisinski and his opera. However, let me say a few initial words on Lisinski in order to clarify his private situation and his compositional output. Born in Zagreb in 1819, after finishing the normal school (i.e., school for teachers with basics in music), he studied law and took private music lessons. He conducted a students' choir, composed choral music, solo-songs and piano music for the Illyrian gatherings. Stimulated by the news of performances of Glinka's operas *The Life for the Tzar* and *Ruslan and Ludmila*, his friends gave him an unenviable mission to compose a national opera in order to prove the Croatian language to be suitable for the musical stage. In the first monograph on Lisinski in 1887, Kuhač described the initial attitude of the Illyrians towards this difficult task. Thinking on the Croatian opera,

> they did not think of a *grand opéra* that would have been sung in the theatre, but of a smaller piece, accompanied by the piano or a sextet, to be performed in the salon of the diocesan mayor ["comes episcopalis"] Mr. Zengeval, a great admirer of the Croatian music and of Lisinski himself. (Kuhač 1904: 36)

Obviously, Mr. Zengeval used to invite musicians to his house in order to support the Illyrian movement and its young, often poor representatives, either literati or composers. On the other hand, a lady-supporter of the Illyrians, who was a real and generous salonnière, was Josipa Vancaš (1821-1910), the spouse of the Zagreb main physician Aleksa Vancaš. They both often donated respectable sums for various events and institutions and in their salon they gathered members of the national movement. In Lisinski's case she helped him to stand on his feet after his father's death and in the moments of his poverty and illness, finding him a suitable room for renting next door to her, as well as providing him with warm meals. After her husband's death in 1884, she continued to keep her salon until her later years. Although she experienced many troubles during her life, she never ceased to help the others. Being a beautiful and refined woman she was named "the rose of Zagorje", "our national fairy", but she was primarily known as "the mother of the Illyrians", who all felt a deep respect for her. There is a plate on her house in the Zagreb Upper Town which confirms that: "In this house of Dr. Vancaš and his wife Josipa met Croatian revivalists. Here, Vatroslav Lisinski composed the first Croatian opera *Love and Malice*, performed in 1846."

A meeting point of the Illyrians was also the house of the lawyer and writer Dragutin Rakovac (1813-1854), who regularly collaborated with

Croatian newspapers and journals. However, according to his Diary (published in 1922), there were mostly politicians and writers that frequented his home, and music is mentioned only sporadically, in connection to various meetings in public or in the reading-room.

Music that was played on all mentioned occasions was not strictly nationally oriented but included pieces by European masters as well as that by local musicians. The older generation of composers, like Ferdo Wiesner Livadić from Samobor (1799-1879) and the migrant from Arad/Oradea Carl Georg Wisner von Morgenstern (1783-1855), as well as pieces by young Padovec (1800-1873) were of general early Romantic style or that of Romantic Classicism (Wisner). Some of them were by nature compositions that could have been performed in the salon, like Livadić's Notturno (1822), or Wisner von Morgenstern's chamber music. Only later, after 1830, they started to demonstrate their inclination towards the national orientation. That was obvious above all in vocal lyrics, when they set to music poems by Illyrian poets, or, in instrumental music, with variations or fantasies on national/folk songs. Only rarely did they declare their intentions in the titles of the pieces themselves: Ferdo Wiesner Livadić did so only once, in his Salon Walzer, but some of his piano compositions and the solo-songs, as well as those by Ivan Padovec, were at their core intended for "Hausmusik".8 On the other hand, Padovec composed virtuoso pieces for guitar solo, as well as fantasies or variations, mostly on popular operatic arias by Bellini, Donizetti or Meyerbeer, which he himself performed in public, but could also present him as a virtuoso in a salon, as did Liszt and other virtuosi on similar occasions. The representative of the next generation, Lisinski, did both: his early pieces intended for chamber music making (piano pieces and vocal lyric) either at home or in smaller public circles were different in style from the heroic rousing songs intended for larger national gatherings.

To conclude: the representative rooms and halls in the homes (both civil and ecclesiastic) of Zagreb citizens and nobility housed circles of musicians, writers and intellectuals during the first half of the 19th century. However, the initial period witnesses the continuation of the representative enlightened salons, while the gatherings during the 1830s and 1840s were, to a large part, declarations of a growing national identity. Of course, some salons did have a different, more international flair, like the presumably virtuoso show of Franz Liszt in the Oroslavlje castle of Denis Sermage, on his way from Sauerbrunn

⁸ For more on Livadić's style in his *Lieder* see Kos 2003: 60-66; and on Padovec see Kos 2006: 199-207.

to Zagreb on July 26th, 1846, or on his way back two days later. It is also said that all important musicians visited Ferdo Wiesner Livadić at his mansion in Samobor and were invited to play for him. However, these indications have to be proved, and the proofs could rarely be found in newspapers, but rather in "subjective writings", such as diaries, memoirs or letters which should be considered as the principal sources for the issue of salon music. Yet, not only private entertainment with music was called a "salon", but also semi-private ones in some public places, like the Shooting Club hall. It usually had a host, hostess and invited guests, and therefore Vukotinović described it as "Salon in Zagreb" (Vukotinović 1842: 23).

The repertoire at such gatherings, as well as at larger patriotic occasions (such as, for example, the Emperor's birthday or name day) consisted of a mixture of vocal and instrumental music and readings. The general intention of the patriots was to present as much vocal pieces in the Illyrian (i.e., Croatian) language, which was only standardized in the mid-1830s (before that, local dialects were in use). Therefore, the lack of "domestic" pieces was initially substituted with translations of popular arias from Bellini's or Donizzetti's operas. Thus, local composers, such as Ferdo Wiesner Livadić, Ivan Padovec, or young Vatroslav Lisinski started to compose songs on Croatian texts, after having gained some experience with German ones. On the other hand, instrumental music, usually for a single instrument (piano or guitar), usually consisted of a virtuoso piece, some sets of variations, or some dance music. It also started with variations on Italian arias, or with mazurkas, to be later substituted with variations on Illyrian themes (by Padovec, for example) and with salon kolo - a dance, similar to a quadrille, which was expected to become the Illyrian trademark, and was musically "patented" by Lisinski (Blažeković 1994). This dance was often performed, although Vukotinović claimed that it was composed of quite boring type of dance figures, lacking any profile and flame (Vukotinović 1843: 40).

According to the information from the newspapers, the gatherings of the Illyrians included all urban estates and no discrimination between them was ever shown. Such were the gatherings and salons of the political type, mostly around Count Janko Drašković, with nobility, clergy and civil servants of all kinds. On the other hand, the entertainment of the high nobility with Franz Liszt was spontaneous and unique, and included only the family and close friends – all members of the same estate. The salon of Mrs Vancaš and Dragutin Rakovac mostly encompassed bourgeois intellectuals and members of the lower nobility – persons gathered around the Illyrian idea, but also those who needed help or support for their daily occupation, career, business, etc. Artists, especially those that were praised either for their success, talent or performance skills, were welcomed in all of them.

Thus, salons of all mentioned kinds were also knots of networks which were necessary and useful for their members to feel anchored in the city and in the political and cultural environment. They knew that their contacts in the salons were not only for pleasure in exchanging ideas, enjoying together beautiful music, dance and poetry, but that their socializing there could bring a kind of security for its insiders. The peak of the political enthusiasm in Croatia was achieved in 1848, with the installation of Banus Jelačić, but the revolution changed the idvllic picture. The activity of the salons would be ended abruptly with the beginning of the revolution, when some of their members were mobilised into the army corps, and some were organizing help for the wounded and impoverished. At that time, only rousing songs and heroic poetry echoed in the newspapers and on the streets. However, the end of the revolution brought a ten-year period of neo-absolutism with an interdiction of national manifestations that meant the end of this stage of the National Revival movement. Yet, this period brought economic and organizational changes that would bear fruit in 1860-61. The change was felt in the concept of the new salons, but that is a material for another story.

APPENDIX OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. Ivan Padovec, a blind guitar virtuoso and composer, with his guitar with added bass strings.

TRI PESI uder Uz Gitaru ali Klavir lagon 11. Becu kod Antun Dia 114. 1

Fig. 2. Padovec composed songs on Croatian and German texts. Three songs presented here were composed on texts by Ljudevit Vukotinović, with guitar or piano accompaniment, published at Diabelli in Vienna.



Fig. 3. *Guitar piece* Poputnica ilirska [An Illyrian farewell song], Padovec's autograph, was preserved in the legacy of Franjo Ks. Kuhač.



Ferdo Livadić.

Fig. 4. Ferdinand Wiesner-Livadić, a landowner and composer in Samobor, studied in Graz. He encountered with many musicians in his house and in Zagreb.



Fig. 5. Ferdinand Wiesner composed Lieder and piano pieces of salon character, such as his Tonskizze für das Piano-Forte, Einmal und nie wieder.

200125% 7:5117 Ciano Forte

Fig. 6. One of the most important and gifted composers in Zagreb in the first half of the 19th century was Vatroslav Lisinski, who also composed piano pieces for the Illyrian gatherings. Among them is the Slavonsko kolo [The Slavonian Reel].



Sidonija Rubido-Erdödy.

Fig. 7. Sidonia Rubido-Erdödy was a member of a prominent aristocratic family. She was an ardent supporter of the Illyrian movement and participated as a well-trained singer on various occasions.

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