

EDITORIAL

MEDITERRANEAN, OUR OWN: (POST-)YUGOSLAV POP MUSIC

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In one episode of the popular British TV series *Midsomer Murders*, Inspector Barnaby and his assistant Troy are puzzled by the murder of a woman and her lover. When Troy expresses his opinion that the woman's husband must be the murderer, the inspector surprisingly asks him what could be the motive. When Troy answers, "Jealousy. A crime of passion. He kills his wife, then he kills her lover," Inspector Barnaby doubtfully concludes: "Sounds very Mediterranean, Troy."

According to this stereotype, "Mediterranean" means passion, excitement, the expression of intense feelings and, as against British reticence and understatement, a "Southern mentality" as depicted in *verismo* operas. However, any attempt to define the Mediterranean in a precise way remains incomplete, or even leads to the conclusion that it does not exist at all.¹ The lack of a unique definition results from the hybrid identity of the Mediterranean; as Predrag Matvejević points out, this mosaic includes

Europe, the Maghreb, and the Levant; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; the Talmud, the Bible, and the Qur'an; Athens and Rome; Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Venice; Greek dialectics, art, and democracy; Roman law, the forum, and the republic; Arab scholarship; Provençal and Catalan poetry; Italy in the Renaissance; Spain in various periods, glorious and inglorious; the Southern Slavs on the Adriatic; and many more.²

Everyone has a Mediterranean of their own, and the topic of this issue of TheMA is the last mentioned – the South Slavic or Yugoslav. Yugoslavia belonged partly

- 1 Takis Theodoropoulos: "Alcune storie sul Mediterraneo, mare senza misteri", in: *Raccontare il Mediterraneo: Lo sguardo Greco*, eds. Takis Theodoropoulos and Rania Polycandroti. Messina: Mesogea, 2002, pp. 17–43.
- 2 Predrag Matvejević: *Mediteranski brevijar*. Zagreb: Graficki zavod Hrvatske, 1987, quoted here from the English translation: Predrag Matvejević: *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape*, trans. Michael Henry Heim. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999, p. 10.

to central Europe, partly to southeast Europe, and partly to the Mediterranean world. Dalmatia and Istria are, however, not at all in the focus of Mediterranean Studies, at least not so often as the Eastern Mediterranean or the Near East. In other words, Mediterraneanism is understood as a cousin of Orientalism.³ For instance, at one website where the sounds of the Mediterranean are offered for sale or collection, one can access seven sounds: 1) a traditional Mediterranean or Middle Eastern percussion loop played on a darabuka, dumbek or Arabic tabla drum; 2) a traditional Mediterranean or Middle Eastern Arabic tabla percussion loop; 3) squeaky calls from a flock of Mediterranean gulls; 4) a melody loop plucked on a traditional Mediterranean mandolin; 5) a percussion loop played on a traditional Mediterranean or Middle Eastern darabuka drum; 6) a traditional Middle Eastern darabuka, dumbek or Arabic tabla drum rhythm; and 7) a traditional Mediterranean or Middle Eastern darabuka, dumbek or Arabic tabla drum rhythm.⁴ These sounds are obviously related to Near East and Arabic cultures, but only one is a part of Adriatic culture: the mandolin. Interestingly enough, in spite of the presence of the Ottoman legacy in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia, it is not a part of the South Slav's Mediterranean pop music vocabulary, which is inspired by the sounds and images of the Adriatic sea, seagulls, the Dalmatian or Istrian breeze, and the sunshine.

Many incongruities have marked Mediterranean civilizations, old and new: from the Greek and Roman to the Byzantine, and on to the Italian, French Provençal, Spanish Catalan, Arabic (in a number of regions), Croatian (from Dalmatia to Pannonia), Slovenian (from the coast to the Alps), Serbian and Montenegrin, Macedonian and Bulgarian, Albanian, Romanian, Turkish, and most likely others as well, either preceding Greco-Roman times, parallel to them, or following them, together and separately. Mediterranean cultures are not merely national cultures.⁵

As can be seen, the continental parts of Yugoslavia have their own perspectives on the Mediterranean, especially through popular music – or more precisely, *zabavna muzika/glazba* (“light” or “entertainment music”).⁶ As a matter of fact,

3 William Vernon Harris: *Rethinking the Mediterranean*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 2.

4 <http://www.soundsnap.com/tags/mediterranean> (accessed on September 15, 2015).

5 Matvejević: *Mediterranean*, pp. 11–12.

6 In order to understand the complex terminology in the Serbo-Croatian language and the ways in which the genres of popular music, including *zabavna* and *narodna*, were defined in Yugoslavia, cf. Catherine Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010, pp. 2, 82. These terms are related also to evaluation of the popular music/s in accordance with Communist aesthetics; cf. Miša Đurković: “Ideološki i politički sukobi oko popularne muzike u Srbiji,” *Filozofija i društvo* 25 (2004): 271–284.

popular music includes two ideologically, aesthetically, and socially opposed genres: the aforementioned *zabavna*, and *narodna* (folk) music. The latter includes *izvorna* (“authentic”)⁷ and neo-folk (neo-traditional, newly composed) or turbo-folk music.⁸ *Zabavna* music means “something positive, modern, urban and international,” while the neo-traditional *narodna* is dismissed as a “degeneration of genuine folklore” and kitsch.⁹ Consequently, the former music was popular among the urban educated middle class, and the latter among the less well-educated working class.¹⁰ *Zabavna* music was promoted through annual festivals, in Belgrade, Zagreb, and especially in coastal Croatian cities such as Split or Opatija; this was the so-called “festival period” in the 1950s and the 1960s, followed by the “recording period” of the 1970s.¹¹ These songs or schlagers, such as those from the LP *Mediterranean Sound* (Croatia Records, 1972), composed and arranged by Stipica Kalogjera, constructed *Mediterranean, Our Own* throughout Yugoslavia in the first decades after World War II.

The repertoire of Mediterranean *zabavna muzika* has not generally been included in popular music studies, neither in the context of its highest popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, nor in the post-Yugoslav revival as a prominent form of Yugo-nostalgia, in a strongly politicized context. For instance, one of the significant studies dedicated to this topic, *The Mediterranean in Music*, includes contributions on Turkish, Albanian, Palestinian, North African, Greek, Spanish and Italian music, but Yugoslavia – and more precisely, Croatia – is omitted.¹² In the study *Mediterranean Mosaic: Popular Music and Global Sounds*, Croatia is included along with Spanish, Moroccan, Tunisian, Egyptian, Israeli, Turkish and Greek

7 Uroš Čvoro calls it “source” music. Uroš Čvoro: *Turbo-folk Music and Cultural Representations of National Identity in Former Yugoslavia*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014, p. 38.

8 “Although the boundaries between *narodna* and *zabavna* music have been firmly in place since the early days, traditional folk sources did define the festival aesthetic to some degree,” as in the case of *klapa* polyphonic singing by a group of men. Ljerka V. Rasmussen: *Newly Composed Folk Music of Yugoslavia*. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 44.

9 Ljerka Vidić Rasmussen: “From source to commodity: Newly-composed folk music of Yugoslavia”, *Popular Music* 14/2 (1995): 241–256.

10 Čvoro: *Turbo-folk music*, p. 16. Contrary to Čvoro and Vidić-Rasmussen, Peter Manuel’s explanation of Yugoslav popular music remained rather confused. He mentions *zabavna* music only once, as “mainstream Western popular music,” and equates popular music with traditional and *novokomponovana* (neo-traditional, literally “newly composed”) music. Peter Manuel: *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World. An Introductory Survey*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 136–140.

11 Dražen Vrdoljak: “Zabavna glazba”, in: *Diskografija u SR Hrvatskoj*, eds. Nena Franičević and Mata Bošnjaković. Zagreb: Zavod za kulturu Hrvatske, 1984, 28.

12 David Cooper and Kevin Dawe (eds.): *The Mediterranean in Music: Critical Perspectives, Common Concerns, Cultural Differences*. Lanham, Md. : Scarecrow Press, 2005.

music.¹³ However, the term “popular” here includes both folk and pop music, so that Croatian popular music is considered through *klapa* singing (folk traditional music) and not through *zabavna* music.¹⁴

The papers in this issue consider one of the most popular Yugoslav groups since the 1960s, *Dubrovački trubaduri* (Trubadours of Dubrovnik), along with the magazine *Metronom za Vas* (Metronome for You), which promoted *zabavna muzika* by making available scores of the hits, the gender perspectives of the most popular female singers, as well as post-Yugoslav revival of this genre. Anita Buhin shows how the group *Dubrovački trubaduri* based their popularity on regional traditional music, that is, *klapa* singing and playing the mandolin. Due to the numerous awards they won at the festivals in Split and Opatija, the group was chosen as the Yugoslav national representative at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1968 with the song *Jedan dan* (‘One Day’). The group won seventh place and the song became popular in almost twenty countries in translated versions; this was “the first big break-out for Yugoslav popular music onto the international music scene”.¹⁵

Pop music in Yugoslavia was promoted also through a specialized magazine for publishing popular song scores. Schlagers were chosen from movies, radio stations, and LPs and arranged for violin, guitar, accordion, and singing. The magazine *Metronom za Vas*, edited by Dragomir Ristić and published by the Udruženje zabavnih i džez muzičara Srbije (Union of *zabavni* and jazz musicians of Serbia), is the subject of Milan Milojković’s study. Numerous songs came from the *Sanremo Festival*, which influenced the establishment of Yugoslav *estrada* and festival practice (Opatija, Split, Zagreb, Belgrade and others). Along with the *Sanremo* repertoire, the magazine *Metronome* disseminated popular tunes from Spain, Latin America (especially Mexico), Germany, and Belgium. The author traces this network constructed through a process of acculturation.

Since Socialist Yugoslavia belonged neither to the Western nor to the Eastern bloc, but initiated the third union of non-aligned countries and was politically rather liberal, Western (American) influences were present as early as the 1950s, immediately after Josip Broz Tito’s break with Iosif Vissarionovič Stalin and the Soviet Union in 1948. One of the results of this “Americanization” of Yugoslavia was the assimilation of pop, rock, and jazz music, including also *zabavna muzika* inspired by Mediterranean (Dalmatian, Istrian, Italian) sounds. Among the

13 Goffredo Plastino (ed.): *Mediterranean Mosaic: Popular Music And Global Sounds*. New York. Routledge, 2003.

14 Joško Čaleta: “*Klapa* Singing and *Ča-val*: The Mediterranean Dimension of Popular Music in Croatia,” in: *ibidem*, pp. 241–267. The term “Mediterranean mosaic” here is taken from Matvejević.

15 Cf. Anita Buhin’s paper in this issue.

representatives of this genre were three female singers – Tereza Kesovija (b. 1938), Ljiljana Petrović (b. 1939), and Zorana Lola Novaković (b. 1935); Adriana Sabo examines their performance practice in the framework of gender performativity as defined in the writings of Judith Butler.

Tereza Kesovija, for decades one of the most popular Yugoslav performers of “entertainment” music, together with other Dalmatian singers repaired the broken connections between Serbia and Croatia (or, Bosnia and Herzegovina). In a challenging and intriguing political context marked by both euphoric acceptance and complete denial, Dalmatian song became a (beloved) part of the pop music repertoire beyond the new state borders in the 2000s. This transformation of the perception of Dalmatian *zabavna muzika* perception in the second half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century is the focus of Ana Petrov. Finally, Leon Stefanija analyzes the post-Yugoslav (Slovenian) schlager music signified by Mediterranean music since 1991 in a broader theoretical framework.

Given that this kind of popular music has not received much attention in the international literature, the five articles included in this 2015 issue of *TheMA* by young musicologists affiliated with universities in Florence, Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Ljubljana, represent a significant contribution to popular musicology by exploring the music of *Mediterranean, Our Own*. Yugoslavia may no longer exist as a state, but it still lives on through its music.