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# Serbian Romantic Lied as Intersection of the Austro- Hungarian and Serbian (con)texts

Srbski romantični samospjev kot presek avstro-ogrskih  
in srbskih (kon)tekstov

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## IZVLEČEK

Avtorica se v članku posveča opazovanju znamenovanosti samospevne ustvarjalnosti srbskega skladatelja Josifa Marinkovića z vplivi dunajske kulture druge pol. 19. st., znotraj katere se je izobraževal, in značilnimi elementi srbske glasbene kulture, znotraj katere je ustvarjal.

## ABSTRACT

The authoress focuses on detecting Viennese cultural influences of the second half of the 19th century upon the composing of Josif Marinković's solo song, the culture in which he educated himself, and on revealing elements characteristic of Serbian culture within which he composed.

Nineteenth-century Serbian history was very tempestuous because of numerous liberating uprisings and wars against Ottoman, Austrian and Austro-Hungarian invaders. After the three great migrations of the Serbian people retreating before the Ottoman conquerors from Kosovo and Southern Serbia northwards since 1690, the centers of Serbian culture had been formed in the cities under the Austrian rule, and later on in free royal cities on the territory of Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Sombor, Subotica). Consequently, Serbs were divided between two empires, Austrian and Ottoman, and Serbian culture thus developed in the two very different contexts. By his life itself as well as by his work, Josif Marinković shows presence of two lines of Serbian music Romanticism.

Bridges between Serbia and Habsburg monarchy were established in the first place by Serbian merchants, who were traveling and trading between Vienna, Innsbruck, Paris, Pest, Novi Sad, Belgrade. Students from Serbian rich families attended the Vienna University and became the first professional state administrators, teachers, professors.

Among themselves, they circulated European periodicals, decorated the interior design of European houses in a way similar to what they have observed in European centers, followed European fashion and brought music instruments as a sign of urban culture and education as well as practiced music performances of salon piano compositions, which they brought from the mentioned cities.

Those were the geopolitical conditions for Serbian bourgeois culture, as the future representative of the romantic program, to establish either in the Habsburg Monarchy, or due to impulses coming from there. The first Serbian intellectuals gained their education in Vienna, then in Pressburg, Pest, and Prague. In these cities the ideology of Serbian Romanticism was formed, and the Serbian cultural identity was profiled. Even reformed Serbian language, being the most important signifier of the national identity, was formed precisely in that circle. Also, the first representatives of Romanticism in literature, fine arts, and music were Serbian students who received their education in Vienna, such as Laza Kostić (leading Romantic poet and drama writer, who wrote his early works in German), Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Đura Jakšić, Milan Milovuk, Kornelije Stanković. A very important role in creating the profile of Serbian culture, as well as the political life and social order, belonged to Serbian students from different European cities.

The basic form of musical life used to be dominated by performances in homes. The practice of gathering in homes, which included all sorts of political debates, talks about society and art, as well as music performances, was present during the whole 19th century. The signs of this part of life of the middle class were, for instance, collections of piano pieces, as a kind of light music, written often by the daughters of the wealthy citizens. Marinković's family was one of Serbian families living in Habsburg Monarchy, firstly in Kikinda, then in Novi Bečej, and his biography includes data typical for bourgeois families at that time. Namely, from his childhood, he played several instruments - tambura, guitar, accordion, and piano. He attended German primary school in Petrovaradin, and continued to deal with piano playing since his teacher was a cantor.

Social discourse of the Habsburg world meant in the first place Biedermeier urban life and culture, with music as one of the most important signifier of the status. Serbian citizens also shared this social and cultural concept, spreading it as a network via their influence more and more prominently in Serbia. In that way, bourgeois culture developed and was gradually accepted in Serbia, starting from certain city institutions, such as literal and choral societies, where they were able to meet each other. Thus, contemporary houses, paintings, clothes, social gatherings with music, start to be adopted in Belgrade, Kragujevac, and other Serbian cities.

Obviously, the unification of cultural and artistic societies contributed a lot to the process of establishing a unique Serbian cultural space, or, of defining national identity during Romanticism with stressed elements of Enlightenment. Two main interdependent strategies in the process of networking in political, social, and cultural discourses were unification (establishing cultural societies), and public manifestation and revealing through artistic societies and newly-established media - music journals. Both strategies demanded determined circumstances, what means that before they became strategies at all, there were independent lines connecting the Habsburg monarchy and Serbia, mainly through Serbs from Vojvodina and Hungary.

Marinković attended famous Učiteljska škola (Teachers' College) in Sombor (1870–1973), collaborating with his professor of music, Dragutin Blažek. During his school years, he led a school choir and composed his first pieces as well. After that, between 1873 and 1881 he spent in Prague three years studying with Zdeněk Skuherský at Prague (1873/4, 1876/7, 1880/81) with interruptions, since his father did not allow him to dedicate himself entirely to music. Later he attended Eduard Hanslick's lectures on music aesthetics at the Vienna University (1886–1887).

Exactly since his studies, Marinković started to compose songs and was dedicated to that during next five decades (1880–1931), and 26 of them are known. One number of songs as well as choral compositions were revised in his last period of work, mainly in coordinates of music Romanticism. All songs are inspired by lyric poetry, mainly love or poems describing nature, landscapes, with a very few exceptions of patriotic songs (*Rastanak, Grm*).

If we map Serbian music Romanticism according to the three main discourses (discourse of folklore, patriotism, lyric sentimentalism), we can conclude Marinković contributed immensely to the second and third ones: his patriotic choral songs are among the most significant in Serbian 19th-century music as well as his lyric songs and choirs. Moreover, Marinković introduced Lied in Serbian music during the last decades of the 19th century, following some means of Schubert's Lieder. While he embodied his fervent patriotic ideas in some of the most significant choirs of that kind in Serbian music (*Na Veliki petak, Hej, trubaču*), in Lieder he expressed his lyrical, introspective, and sensitive nature. His highly refined choice of poetry might be understood as an anthology of Serbian romantic poetry, including poems by leading romantic poets such as Branko Radičević, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Đura Jakšić – namely, his own romantic poetics is expressed exactly in inspiration by lyric poems about nature and love songs by Branko Radičević (*Gde si dušo*), Mita Dimitrijević (*Iz grad u grad*), Ljubinko Petrović (*Uspavanka*), Dragutin Ilić (*Šano, dušo, Šano; Stojanke*), Jovan Grčić (*Oh, kako sunce sija*), Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (*Ala je lep ovaj svet; Oj, meseče; Pod prozorom; Kaži mi, kaži; Rastanak*), Đura Jakšić (*Potok žubori*), Gerasim Bakalović (*Čežnja*), Vojislav Ilić (*Grm, Molitva*).

It is worth saying that some of these poets make a circle of Serbian poets from Habsburg circle, since exactly publishing poems by Radičević, Jovanović, and Jakšić in reformed Serbian language in Vienna in 1847 meant official beginning of Romanticism in Serbian literature. Marinković was praised by, both his contemporaries and later music writers, not only for his distinguished choice of poems, but also for his very careful attitude to its musical settings. For that reason, Marinković's lyricism, expressed in his Lieder and some choirs, caused the opinion that he is only one, unique, the first and the last real Serbian romanticist, creator of "original" inspiration.<sup>1</sup> The lyricism connected with Schubert's expression in the same genre. In that way, music of both romantic composers resonates with ideology determined by Friedrich Schelling, whose theory of the link between lyricism and music<sup>2</sup> show the fact that the theory of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. M. M. "Koncert posvećen delima Josifa Marinkovića." *Politika* 30. I 1938. - Đurić-Klajn, Stana. "O stogodišnjici Josifa Marinkovića." *Knjižebne novine* 27. X 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Cf.: Schelling, F. W. *The Philosophy of Art*. Transl. by D. W. Scott. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

lyricism for the first time was included in a complex philosophy system.<sup>3</sup> Thus nature was understood as a “revelation” and for that reason many romanticists, such as Hölderlin, Novalis, Byron, Shelley, Schubert, Weber “sang and thought about the nature, were filled by nature, and felt themselves mystic and pantheistic”.<sup>4</sup> In a similar way, the late eighteenth century music “gave landscape literally a new dimension and allowed the revolutionary conceptions of Nature”, so that the songs of Beethoven and Schubert “inherited the new sense of time and found the most striking musical expression for it”.<sup>5</sup>

Feeling of nature was equaled with personal feelings of joy, delightfulness, melancholy, sorrow. Musical topics of lyric expressions, as it was stated regarding both Marinković's and Schubert's Lieder are homophonic, with stressed melodic aspect, chromaticism, rich harmony,<sup>6</sup> as well as certain marks of tempo, dynamics, agogics. Thus Jurij Hohlov mentioned *Langsam* und *Leise* as a sign of lyricization of music.<sup>7</sup> Considering Marinković's songs, it has been confirmed, for instance: *Adagio espressivo* (*Oj, meseče*), *Adagio ma non troppo* (*Uspavanka*), *Lento ma non troppo* (*Kaži mi, kaži*), *Andante* (*Oh, kako sunce sija; Stojanke, Iz grad u grad, Grm*), *Andante espressivo* (*Ala je lep ovaj svet*), *Andante religioso* (*Molitva*), *Andantino* (*Potok žubori, Pod prozorom*), *Moderato* (*Gde si dušo*), *Allegretto tranquillo* (*Čežnja*).

Songs are mainly strophic as Schubert's, but also, in some cases, through-composed (*durchkomponiert*), following the narrative of the poem.<sup>8</sup> More characteristic is microstructure, one of the main signifiers and, in the same time, signified, of lyric character, since it is based on longer melodic lines, sentences, like *Molitva*, for instance. Melodic aspect is stressed by the homophony that enables developing separate, individual melodic line of balanced rhythmic unities, without syncopated rhythms or accented beats of even time. One of recognizable signs of Schubert's lyricism is chromaticism, as Hohlov stated.<sup>9</sup> Chromatic lines are present in both leading melodic voice and in piano accompaniment of Schubert's songs. The same feature is present in the songs by Marinković: for instance, it is obvious in the song *Ala je lep ovaj svet* in piano line from tonic to dominant of D flat major. In that way, harmony itself was the main mean for the melodic expressivity.<sup>10</sup>

The connection with folk heritage – the tradition of epic poetry, i.e. orally transmitted verse – is characteristic of Serbian literary Romanticism. A new type of verse in the work of the founder of the latter-day Serbian lyric poetry Branko Radičević is based on the oral verse of folk poetry. Namely, whereas European national poetry is characterized by metric norms established by classicists, in Serbia the language reform

<sup>3</sup> Šutić, Miloslav. *Lirsko i lirika*. Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 1987. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Lang, Paul Henry. *The Music in Western Civilizations*. New York: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1941. 737.

<sup>5</sup> Rosen, Charles. *The Romantic Generation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. 236.

<sup>6</sup> Burstein, Poundie. “Lyricism, Structure, and Gender in Schubert's G Major String Quartet.” *Musical Quarterly Spring 1997*/1. 51-63.

<sup>7</sup> “Jedinstvena oznaka ‘lirizacije’ muzike je obraćanje ka napomeni za izvođenje *Langsam und leise* (Lagano i tiho)...” Hohlov, *Strofičeskaja pesnja i ee razvitie ot Gluka k Šubertu*. Moskva: Kunšt, 1997. 211.

<sup>8</sup> The form of lyric songs ranges from *a b c* (*Ala je lep ovaj svet, Pod prozorom, Oj meseče, Čežnja, Potok žubori*), a kind of variations in folk-like style (*Gde si dušo – a 1b c c1*) to the so-called arch-like ones (*Molitva – a b c b a*) and through-composed (*Grm*).

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: Hohlov, 211ff.

<sup>10</sup> Sams, Eric, Graham Johnson et al. “Lied.” *Grove Music Online*. Ed. L. Macy. Oxford University Press, 2006. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

by Vuk Karadžić “wiped out, in a certain sense, the classicistic experience, demanding new foundations rooted in folk heritage”.<sup>11</sup> Thus, among Marinković’s lyric songs there is a separate group of love songs, based on folk-like or folk poetry; moreover, by their musical settings, he founded a new kind of Lied, called *sevdalinka*. It is based on urban folk melodies, and is characteristic after its stressed pathetic expression of feelings, connected with so-called oriental scales, such as Balkan minor, with its characteristic augmented second, as well as typical conclusions of sentences or entire formal sections with typical cadences of dominant chord.

Therefore, as mentioned means show, Marinković’s Lieder are both signifiers and signified by two different contexts, according to the cultural environments where he studied and worked. On the one hand, lyric song of Biedermeier or romantic character resulted from Austro-Hungarian musical world, especially from the Schubert’s and partly Schumann’s influences, and, on the other, songs inspired by folk music are Marinković’s contribution to the audience in Serbia.

## POVZETEK

Vodilni predstavnik srbskega glasbenega romantizma, Josif Marinković (1851-1931), je hkrati tudi najpomembnejši ustvarjalec samospjevov pred I. svetovno vojno. Po rodu iz Vojvodine se je šolal v avstro-ogrskem Somborju, nato pa študiral v Pragi in poslušal predavanja Eduarda Hanslicka na dunajski univerzi. Izobli-

kovan v tem kontekstu, je nato deloval kot dirigent Akademskega pevskega društva Obilić v Beogradu. Zato lahko njegove skladbe opazujemo tudi kot rezultat dveh vplivov: na eni strani so njegove pesmi blizu Schubertovim in Schumannovim, na drugi pa vsebujejo prvine srbske ljudske glasbe, skladno z zahtevami tedanjega srbskega kulturnega konteksta.

<sup>11</sup> Cf.: Petković, Novica. *Ogledi iz srpske poetike*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1990. 184.