
REVIEWS

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Historija muzike u Bosni i
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[History of Music in Bosnia and
Herzegovina], by Ivan Čavlović
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To write a comprehensive history of a particular art is a scientific engagement that requires years, even decades of work. Apart from all the other exclusively professional difficulties, this endeavour is also under the pressure of a certain *Zeitgeist*, i.e. the burden of various social-political upheavals

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taking place in such a long period of time. It is exactly this ‘transitional space’ where the book *Historija muzike u Bosni i Hercegovini* [*History of Music in Bosnia and Herzegovina*] by Ivan Čavlović was being created for almost three decades. The title already suggests something more than a history of an art and points to a study where, from a supranational aspect (hence the ‘in’ in the title!), the author writes about the history of music, but also about the history of that history. This study is so far the most comprehensive view of the development and scientific thinking of ‘the most beautiful of all the arts’ in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, Ivan Čavlović, one of the most renowned musicologists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, already at the beginning – with his acute scientific responsibility and personal modesty – points out that the reader is facing rather an *introduction* to the history of music and that future generations are left with the task of publishing a more comprehensive, multi-volume publication. Thus, this scientist suggests the complexity of such a project, as well as the trust he places in those who are still paving their way through his science, but whose scientific results, in the author’s words – with the indispensable older literature (a total of over three hundred printed sources, apart from the archive material, manu-

scripts, numerous reference books, encyclopaedias, catalogues, bulletins, lists, sifjills) – have been an important support for creating such an large edition.

Although readers are facing a history which is, as the author stresses, written chronologically, and not problematically as a case study, the concept of this edition still successfully networks different methodological approaches; hence the history of music is followed in a clear and logical way, from the general to the special. In the introductory chapter, the author gave the basic explanations about such a concept, emphasizing key problems as well: from methodology, terminology – which is particularly meticulous about folklore and confessional music – to the issues of history and aesthetics, and finally periodization. It is meanwhile important to note that the periodization applied in the book greatly relies upon the timeframes conditioned, almost without exception, by political circumstances. Time and again, this confirms that music must be perceived in the context which ‘marks’ it forever. For that exact reason, the chapter *Bosna i Hercegovina – geografsko-državni okviri* [*Bosnia and Herzegovina – Geographic and State Setting*] first deals with the general historical summary of the emergence of the state whose history of music is the main subject.

The chapter *Prahistorija i stari vijek* [*Prehistory and Antiquity*] points to the possible beginnings of the development of music art in Bosnia and Herzegovina and comments on those terms used for music-making which are common for the Slavonic peoples who migrated to the Balkans. Although it is emphasized that the term ‘Bosnia’ was first used as late as in the 10th century, the chapter *Srednji vijek* [*Middle Ages*] deals with the period beginning in

the 5th century. It first provides general remarks on the dates crucial for the state itself, and then gives the basic division of music (by Dragotin Cvetko) into spiritual, secular artistic and secular popular. Due to the scarcity of the sources which deal with music, the author rightfully refrains from all valuation. Hence the conclusions about the music art in this period are actually drawn by considering the documents where the music is written about (as is the case, after all, with other Balkan territories). The next chapter, *Osmanlijski period* [*The Ottoman Period*], is very precisely determined in time (1463–1878), but it is emphasized that the years stated only reflect the key moments in the Turkish conquests. The author here again consults the sources where music was written about, and meanwhile first of all he solves the dilemma about the ‘permitted’ and ‘forbidden’ music in Moslem practice, pointing to the fact (akin to the notion of music in Antiquity) that the music was *accepted* if it had ethical or educational value. This is the period when *sevdalinkas* were first mentioned, and they are undoubtedly the most popular form of (folk) music in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the sources, the music was nurtured and passed on orally, and the first officially printed composition, *Hajde, hajde pod barjak* [*Come, Come under the Flag*], was created most likely to the melody of Friar Grgo Martić, which was written down and then arranged by a captain of the Sarajevo military band, Fuadaga. The subchapter on spiritual music deals not only with Christianity, but with Islam and Judaism as well. This is the time when composers began to acquire a reputation and the first among them – no matter how paradoxical that may seem for such a conservative en-

vironment as Bosnia – most probably was Ida Latas, the wife of Omar Pasha Latas! Among the most significant names, apart from Franciscus Bossinensis, are mostly Catholic priests who educated the first musicians in the Bosnian monasteries. Not without reason, a separate subchapter is dedicated to Islamic music. Detailed explanations are given of its characteristics, manners of performing and main formal patterns primarily because the research until recently has been very scarce. Special attention is also paid to the music in the theatre, military music – *mekterhana* – and folklore music practice.

The main characteristic of music discussed in the chapter *Austrougarski period (1878–1918)* [*Austro-Hungarian Period (1878–1918)*] is the ‘favouring of West-European values’. It was systematically implemented, mostly because of the Austro-Hungarian immigrants in Bosnia, but was soon accepted even by the domicile population. The awakening of national consciousness, whose focal points were numerous cultural clubs established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, took place alongside with musical modernization, although it was contrary to the Austro-Hungarian political views. The largest musical centres were Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka (where, as it seems, the first concert of artistic music was organized), and the author, as separate activities, deals with concert activities, theatre music, many choral associations and orchestras, musical education and publishing, compositional activities (by Aleksa Šantić and Bogomir Kačerovski) and ethnomusicological research (initiated with the written records of J. Bajamonti, F. Kuhač, L. Kuba and others).

In the section *Između dva svjetska rata (1918–1941)* [*Between the World Wars*

(1918–1941)] the author, after a short digest of key political changes and the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Yugoslav state, stresses three areas where the development of musical life became comparable to the more advanced musical circumstances in Croatia and Serbia: musical education, performing practice and compositional activities. In the area of musical education, he stresses the existence of the Regional School in Sarajevo (1920) – up to 1946 the only institution of musical education, which practically produced all the significant artists of the time – and similar private musical ‘establishments’ and music schools in other cities, which significantly strengthened the domestic musical personnel. In a subsection dedicated to performing, not only individuals stand out but also institutions, mostly the National Theatre in Sarajevo, the Sarajevo Philharmonic and other orchestras, as well as the ‘multimedia artistic society’ *Collegium artisticum* (1939) in Sarajevo; then the National Theatre of Bosanska Krajina in Banja Luka and various choral associations. After that, the names of the first composers are given: F. Matejovski, J. H. Bohinjski, J. Majer and others.

Although very short, the section entitled *U Drugom svjetskom ratu (1941–1945)* [*In the Second World War (1941–1945)*] was utilized by Čavlović as a convenient space for emphasizing the extent of the destruction of the territories and population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose ‘biološku destrukciju nisu doživjele ni zemlje koje su iznijele najveći teret Drugog svjetskog rata u Evropi i svijetu’ [‘biological destruction was not experienced even by the countries who carried the heaviest burden of the Second World War in Europe and the world’]. These devastating facts, in a cer-

tain way, are a justification for the stagnation of the general cultural and artistic life. It is stressed, however, that music life nevertheless kept its sporadic pulse: the operatic performances in Sarajevo were noted, and O. Danon, M. Prebanda, Z. Nalić, F. Silajdžić and others, together with various kinds of partisan ensembles, had important activities within the armed resistance.

The chapter *Poslije Drugog svjetskog rata (1945–1992)* [*After the Second World War (1945–1992)*] deals with ‘zlatno doba razvoja bh. kulture i umjetnosti’ [‘the golden age in the development of culture and art in Bosnia and Herzegovina’]. This was contributed to by the cultural politics which, as the author underlines, doubled the budget for culture every five years. This chapter too is divided into compositional activities, musical science (for the first time!), musical institutions, education and performing practice, and music festivals. Detailed biographies of the most significant authors, performers, musicologists and ethnomusicologists are supplemented with precise data on institutions, with special emphasis on the Music Academy founded in 1955, societies and festivals, which contributed to the overall advancement of musical culture in the five post-war decades. Thus, the most dynamic period of musical life within the Bosnian coordinates is presented using various methodological approaches.

The national idiom stands out as the key agent of the artistic activities presented in the chapter *Muzika u ratu (1992–1995)* [*Music in War (1992–1995)*]. However, the basic idea was not the general notion of national unity characteristic for ex-Yugoslavia, but the Bosnian identity realized in patriotic songs in the style of the famous ‘Sarajevo pop-rock school’, with anti-war messages.

Apart from the statistical overview of concert activities, data is given about the most committed institutions and ensembles.

The final chapter, *Muzika poslije 1995 – postratna kulturna tranzicija* [*Music after 1995 – Post-war Cultural Transition*], deals with the most immediate musical past. The introductory remarks map the basic social and historical facts, state division of the territory and other data relevant to the current Bosnian state. As the main quality of musical art in this ‘new time’, the author stresses the pluralism stemming from the ‘transitional character’ of the entire period, pluralism in all the areas: composing and performing, style, aesthetics, national and religious. After general remarks, this chapter too gives the biographies of significant composers, the names of renowned performers, music theoreticians, musicologists and ethnomusicologists. The work of older institutions is summarized, along with the ‘biographies’ of newly-opened ones (especially the Music Academy in Ilidža/Lukavica and the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka), and ‘identification cards’ of the festivals currently organized with the aim of nurturing the art of music.

Historija muzike u Bosni i Hercegovini is an exciting read which – as if in a novel, but completely in a scientific spirit – presents the history of the nations which lived in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the history which inevitably conditioned the developmental dynamics of the music of those nations. An unexpected book, but a good one. Unexpected because all of us, because the scars of the political changes in the last decades are still fresh, hesitate slightly in dealing with such subjects.

Translated by Goran Kapetanović