

IN MEMORIAM JERKO BEZIĆ (10. 06. 1929 – 9. 01. 2010)

The academician, Professor Jerko Bezić, the Nestor of Croatian ethnomusicology and long-term senior research fellow at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research passed away in Zagreb in his 81st year on January 9, 2010. He was intricately woven into the lives of many of us, freely giving of his knowledge and experience, never withholding advice and help, and always doing so in a quiet and calm manner. He was a distinguished colleague at the Institute with an extraordinary breadth of knowledge, the curiosity of a true researcher dedicated to his profession, while also being uncomplicated and modest and, in a word, a dear and noble human being.

Professor Bezić was born in Kranj in Slovenia on June 10, 1929. The Croatian-Slovenian marriage of his parents had a major influence on his life, particularly during his childhood and youth that he spent between Slovenia and Croatia. He was educated in Zagreb, Zadar and Ljubljana, where he studied Law, the piano, ethnology and musicology. He showed an early interest in ethnomusicology – and was engaged in field research already as a pupil of secondary music school.

When he had completed his education, he worked as an assistant at the Institute of the Yugoslav (today Croatian) Academy of Arts and Science in Zadar, doing field research and recording folklore music and Glagolitic singing in the broad Zadar area. One of the outcomes of that research was his dissertation *Razvoj i oblici glagoljaškog pjevanja u sjevernoj Dalmaciji* [Development and Forms of Glagolitic Singing in Northern Dalmatia]; published in 1973.

In 1964, he moved permanently to Zagreb and took the position of ethnomusicologist at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, where he was on the staff until his retirement in 1999. In close co-operation with folklorists and ethnologists, he continued research into folklore music in the individual Croatian regions. That research gave rise to a capital monograph on the folklore music of the Sinj area, the islands of Hvar, Brač, Zlarin and Šolta, the Donja Stubica vicinity, the Požega Valley and on the music of the Burgenland Croats. In his research work, Academician Bezić collected extensive and valuable folklore

music material, by which he contributed to the safeguarding of Croatian cultural heritage, while he went into a whole series of ethnomusicological themes in his numerous scholarly papers. He edited numerous proceedings and collections of material from the legacy of other researchers. He was also a member of the editorial boards of leading scholarly journals.

The year 1980, when he was elected as an Associate Member of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Science, marked the beginning of his collaboration with that respected institution. In 1988, he was promoted to Extraordinary Member, and in 1991 to Full Member, and he was the Secretary of the Academy's Department for Music Art and Musicology from 1997 to 2003. He initiated and was the editor-in-chief of the Academy's series *Spomenici glagoljaškog pjevanja* [Monuments of Glagolitic Singing]. As an author, he also contributed to the Academy's major project on Croatia's comprehensive comparative history, *Croatia and Europe: Culture, Science and Art*.

From the outset of his scholarly career, Academician Bezić developed close co-operation with experts from Croatia and the other republics of the former Yugoslavia, acting – from time to time as president – of the Croatian Folklorists Society, the Croatian Ethnological Society and the Croatian Musicological Society. He worked with colleagues from abroad within the International Council for Traditional Music and the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology. He participated at numerous conferences and symposiums, some of which he himself organised.

Parallely with his scholarly work he was also dedicated to teaching. From 1966 to 1993, he lectured in Ethnomusicology at the Department of Musicology of the Academy of Music in Zagreb, and the Department of Ethnology at the Zagreb Faculty of Philosophy. He headed up post-graduate study of Ethnomusicology at universities in Zagreb and Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania, USA, 1974/75), and was periodically Guest Professor at other universities abroad. He was mentor on more than one occasion to Master's and PhD candidates at universities in Skopje, Sarajevo and Ljubljana.

He made a great contribution in the field of applied scholarship. He was a long-term associate of the *Međunarodna smotra folklor*a [International Folklore Festival] in Zagreb (from 1966), in the framework of which he conceived independent performances and concerts of folklore music; he took part as a member of expert committees of the *Festival dalmatinskih klapa* [Festival of Dalmatian Klapa-singing Groups] in Omiš and *Smotra "Međimurske popevke"* [Festival of Međimurean Songs] in Nedelišće. Professor Bezić also wrote commentaries and selected the folklore music for several discographic editions. He shared his broad knowledge with radio editors and leaders of amateur folklore groups, both at professional seminars and on many informal occasions. Easily approachable and

ready for conversation, Academician Bezić also gained many respectful admirers outside of scholarly circles.

The scholarly prestige of Academician Jerko Bezić is witnessed to by specially conceived editions dedicated to him by scholarly journals from Croatia and abroad: *The World of Music*, 1998 and *Narodna umjetnost* [Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research] 1999 and by the collection of papers *Glazba, folklor i kultura – Music, Folklore and Culture*, which was published in his honour in 1999 by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research and the Croatian Musicological Society. The work of Academician Jerko Bezić has been analysed in special units of the leading world encyclopaedias of music, and he received recognition for his prolific scholarly and teaching work from the Croatian Musicological Society with the *Dragan Plamenac* Life Achievement Award in 2008.

With his multifarious activities, Academician Bezić left an indelible mark on Croatian ethnomusicology and contributed to the creation of its standing as a scholarly discipline. He introduced significant innovations in methodology, revived research into neglected themes, trained new professionals and contributed to the preservation and popularisation of Croatia's folklore music heritage. In so doing, he also obligated us, his continuators, but also Croatian society and culture as a whole. He also showed us that a scholar of great erudition can and should remain communicative, modest and self-effacing.

As an *homage* to Academician Bezić and testimony to the importance of his scholarly legacy, we are publishing below an article that was originally published in Croatian in *Narodna umjetnost* 14, 1977. The only change in it refers to its adjustment to the system of citation that is used in *Narodna umjetnost* nowadays. This is one of the papers with which he paved the way for a new paradigm in ethnomusicological research in Croatia.

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