

SAŽECI DOKTORSKIH RADOVA U MUZIKOLOGIJI – SUMMARIES OF DOCTORAL THESES IN MUSICOLOGY

MUSICIANS OF JEWISH ORIGIN IN NORTHERN CROATIA 1815 – 1941¹

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In the doctoral dissertation entitled *Glazbenici židovskoga podrijetla u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj od 1815. do 1941. godine* (*Musicians of Jewish Origin in Northern Croatia 1815 – 1941*), the activity of musicians of Jewish origin in Croatian music culture of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century was registered and systematically studied. The study of their active engagement in Croatian culture on the whole was inspired by the fact that artists of diverse ethnic origins have continually created and enriched the centuries-long musical histories of European countries. Among them, due to historical and socio-political circumstances, musicians of Jewish origin were actively present in diverse cultures and milieux.

Consequently, based on the collected and systematised data, the contribution of musicians of Jewish origin to the development of Croatian musical culture in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries in the territory of Northern Croatia was established. In order to enable an interpretation of the collected data regarding their activity and to position them within Croatian culture at large, the dissertation first outlines the historical and socio-political context of the Croatian lands in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, the history of the settlement of the Jews in the territory of Northern Croatia, and the historical context of Croatian musical culture in the same period.

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Various historical and socio-political events took place during the period in question such as political changes in Europe and in the Habsburg Monarchy following the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna of 1815. These changes exercised considerable impact on the political, social and cultural development of Croatia. In the 19th century, the Croatian population, strengthened by the ideas of the Illyric Movement and the National Revival, endeavoured to resist the attempts at Hungarisation and Germanisation. Croatian society in the mid-19th century ceased to be a feudal one; this was the time when civil reforms were introduced. The first non-class Parliament, which formed the basis for a modern state and civil society, was established. Thanks to processes of modernisation and the strengthening of bourgeois society all across Europe in the 19th century, the Jewish population was gradually granted civil rights, and passed through the process of assimilation and integration into European society. As concerns Croatia, the assimilation and integration of the Jews in the territory of Northern Croatia began to be gradually realised pursuant to the Edict of Tolerance by Joseph II (1782), or rather a separate edict that was implemented in Hungary and Croatia as of 31 March 1783 under the title *Systematica Gentis Judaicae Regulatio*.

Traditionally, the Jews tend to pay special attention to education and culture, and they build their position in society based on their academic level of education. Hence, as early as in the mid-19th century, and increasingly in the first half of the 20th century, in the attempt to shift from the professions they had initially been associated with – trade, crafts and money-making, many Jewish families began stimulating and educating their children for intellectual and artistic vocations. Following their arrival in Croatia, the Jews gradually adopted and studied the Croatian language, a fact which would lead to the third generation of Jews in the territory of Northern Croatia to being engaged in socially well-accepted professions, such as medicine, law, technical sciences and the arts.

In the 1820s, the establishment of civil music societies, which often included music schools, enabled all children, including those from Jewish families, to be musically educated. In music history and culture, it was in this particular period that the first musicians of Jewish origin were registered in Northern Croatia.

As regards the methodological approach, the registered musicians of Jewish origin active in Croatian music history in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century were listed, followed by the establishment of each one's contribution to Croatian music and the assessment of each one's role and place in the building of a multi-layered Croatian musical culture. Simultaneously, thanks to archival research, the names of numerous musicians that had previously not been registered in published systematic surveys of the history of Croatian music were discovered. In this dissertation, a total of 178 musicians of Jewish origin were registered in the domains of composition, performing art, writing on music and music pedagogy. A special chapter has been dedicated to the activity of amateur

musicians, as well as to musicians who were, *inter alia*, actively engaged in the media, in newspapers and on the radio.

The data presented in this dissertation were acquired by studying archival material, using historiographic sources, analysing musical works, as well as applying standard methods of the theory of music on the one hand, and musicological and culturological ones on the other; they were consequently gathered to form a scientific whole of synthetic character. The dissertation comprises the complete records of musicians of Jewish origin in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. Having taken into consideration the fact that so far music literature has not registered the majority of the artists studied, the scientific contribution of this dissertation lies in the compilation of the data originating from the sources not studied until today, as well as from the known existing documentation of the life and work of musicians of Jewish origin, who had been active in Northern Croatia in the period between the years of 1815 and 1941. In addition to biographical elements, the study includes data on their engagement in music, and an assessment of their contribution to the Croatian musical culture of those times, and – indirectly – of ours too.

The study of the aforementioned musicians as active participants in Croatian musical culture of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries considered their overall presence on the Croatian music scene and enabled an evaluation of their contribution to Croatian culture.

This dissertation presents a two-level hypothesis of the activity of musicians of Jewish origin in Northern Croatia in the period between the years of 1815 and 1941.

The first level covers the systematic engagement of these musicians in Jewish societies and in the framework of Jewish temples, while the second level covers individual artistic creations in the areas of composition, performing arts and musicology within the wider context of Croatian society.

Based on the data presented in the dissertation and related to the established hypothesis, the following conclusions regarding musicians of Jewish origin within the framework of their engagement in Jewish societies and Jewish temples may be reached:

- (1) They systematically operated within institutions and associations that primarily gathered members of Jewish community. Nevertheless, these institutions have at all times been open to members of other religious and ethnic groups. Examples of cultural organisations of this type are the following: the singing choir *Ahdut* from Zagreb; the national academic society *Judeja*; the Jewish cultural and artistic society *Omanut* from Zagreb; Jewish reading-rooms offering diverse cultural activities in Osijek; *Židovska omladina*; *Židovsko gospojinsko društvo*; *Židovsko športsko gombalačko društvo Makabi* with a cultural section; *Židovska ferijalna kolonija*; *Međunarodno*

udruženje cionističkih žena (World International Zionist Organisation); *Jevrejsko gospojinsko dobrotvorno društvo*; and synagogue choirs in Zagreb, Koprivnica, Križevci, Varaždin, Sisak, Bjelovar and Vukovar;

- (2) In the Edition *Omanut*, musicians of Jewish origin published music by Jewish composers from Northern Croatia, as well as by other Jewish composers of the »new wave« from Central and Eastern Europe. They furthermore issued writings on the roots of Jewish music, with the aim of raising awareness of and nurturing Jewish musical tradition, and questioning the features of Jewish elements (tropes) in music.
- (3) Within the framework of Jewish temples, the important activity of cantors and singing artists in the territory of Northern Croatia, as well as the active engagement of synagogue choirs which included non-Jewish organ players and choir members in Jewish religious rituals, have been registered.

The second level covers individual artistic creations in the areas of composition, performing art, music pedagogy, musicology and music criticism, as well as individual contributions in the formation and operation of civil cultural, artistic and music societies and music schools, orchestras, philharmonic societies and theatres (those performing operetta in particular), and especially in broadcast engagement. Individual contributions of each and every musician within the musical domains they were engaged in have been stated. As regards the scope and quality of their operation, biographical details offer beyond any doubt the conclusion that the contribution of musicians of Jewish origin to the musical culture of Northern Croatia has been of exceptional value.

In this dissertation, musical artists of Jewish origin were studied with regard to various segments of their musical engagement. One group exercised essential influence on the development and characteristic features of Croatian music of the historical period in question owing to their musical education (either foreign or domestic) and powerful personalities. Another group, which had acquired its musical education throughout Europe, introduced features of European styles into Croatian music through their musical engagement. A third group transferred the stimuli of Croatian musical culture, which they had adopted during their education and brief stay in Northern Croatia, to other countries, where they promoted the specific features and qualities of the Croatian cultural circle (for instance in Israel, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Argentina, etc.). This particular type of active involvement and engagement is referred to as cultural transfer.

As regards the entire period in question, the intensity of the active engagement of musicians of Jewish origin in the Croatian musical scene, as well as their number, was at its greatest in the 20th century during the years between the two world wars. This conclusion may be reached through the mere listing and comparison of biographical data on the birth, education and beginnings of their active

engagement. In this, in the 19th century, the composers Antun Schwarz and Jacques Epstein, and the music critic Heinrich Hirschl are especially worth mentioning. All of the other musicians studied were mostly born after 1870, and were active at the beginning and in the first half of the 20th century, or more accurately, until 1941.

On the basis of structured lists, it may be concluded that in addition to their primary musical activity, they were very often engaged in other aspects of music as well, which means that they exercised influence on more than one segment of musical culture.

This dissertation offers – as one of its major scientific contributions – the first ever systematisation of the data on musicians of Jewish origin in Northern Croatia between the years of 1815 and 1941. These data include the following: a chronological list of musicians of Jewish origin as concerns the type of their engagement in music; a list of all their major works; data on their artistic involvement; and data on the acceptance of their activity in public life. The dissertation lists their original works, comprising composition and interpretation under the influence of new styles and tendencies occurring in the arts. It moreover includes the promotion of modern interpretation techniques, which individual musicians had adopted from first-class European pedagogues and consequently used in their pedagogical activities. The creation of autochthonous (Croatian) operettas (Srećko Albini, Žiga Hirschler) may be considered a particularly great contribution in this respect.

By analysing the production of musicians of Jewish origin on the whole and thereby their contribution to the development of Croatian music and culture, as well by the means of examining all the available sheet music, the conclusion may be reached that these authors mainly composed chamber and orchestral music, along with operas and operettas. These works include various features of style, depending on the preferences and the place of education of every individual author. As instrumentalists who had been educated in domestic and had specialised in foreign institutions, they contributed to quality, quantity and diversity in performing the standard repertoire on Croatian musical scene. They often initiated and stimulated the presentation of works by domestic authors, performing them either in concerts or theatres or at salon concerts or other private musical gatherings. As first-class instrumentalists, regardless of whether they were born in the area of Northern Croatia or migrated to the territory of Croatia from various parts of Central and Eastern Europe due to existential and cultural transfer, through their activities they managed to enhance almost all branches of music pedagogy; the result thereof was that they nurtured new top-class instrumentalists and pedagogues, whose influence may be sensed even today. In the domain of musical writing, it is particularly noteworthy that Dragan Plamenac, descendant of the Jewish family of Siebenschein, which has contributed considerably to the development of the civil and cultural milieu in Zagreb at the beginning of the 20th

century, is considered one of the founders of modern Croatian musicology. Musicologists and music writers of Jewish origin were active throughout Northern Croatia; they supported the production of new Jewish music and helped raise awareness thereof. This met with response (and still does today) in Jewish intellectual and music circles worldwide. In this context, the activity of A. M. Rothmüller is particularly noteworthy. The Jews, who were members of distinguished educated bourgeois circles, stimulated the establishment and supported the operation of civil cultural societies, as well as taking active part in amateur music making. Salon music, which was characteristic of the process of modernisation and the development of civil society in Croatia and worldwide, was nurtured in individual Jewish households. A number of Jews, having taken an active part in both the production and reproduction of musical culture in Northern Croatia, played active roles in the media by writing newspaper articles and following music events. By producing critical texts of high quality and essays on musical topics, they exercised an impact on the creation of public opinion, and raised both the quality of musical culture and the awareness of the general public. Musicians of Jewish origin participated in the work of Croatian radio in Zagreb from its earliest days (since 1926); they were often creators of programmes, hosts in music production and active musicians, that is to say, holders of music broadcast programme. Though they actively worked to the benefit of the culture they were integrated in, they did not forget their origin; therefore they were at the same time involved in supporting Jewish associations that nurtured and preserved Jewish culture and tradition.

In general, Jewish musicians have – as equal members of Croatian society in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries – through their active involvement in Croatian musical culture managed to stimulate the rise of its quality. By cultural transfer, they have helped position Croatian musical culture in the Central-European cultural circle.