

ENCULTURATION OF THE TRADITIONAL HERITAGE OF SYRMIA DISSEMINATED BY PLUCKING INSTRUMENTS

Mirko Lukaš

Filozofski fakultet
Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku

Marko Damjanović

Oš Davorin Trstenjak Posavski Podgajci

Abstract

Traditional music is associated with certain geographical areas and the culture of the region, which in these areas resists globalization processes and manages to survive thanks to enthusiasts, the will of caregivers, and today more and more the work of educational institutions. This paper interprets the role of traditional percussion instruments from historical discourse as part of the enculturation and socialization factor of the young people of Syrmia. The paper points out the purpose of tamburitza music in Syrmia and the opportunities that traditional musical instruments provide to young generations. The historical analysis of the content of the literature and the interview of the transmitters of the traditional heritage of Šokac indicate the attitude towards the picking instruments in their traditional heritage and customs. Attention is paid to the dominant disseminators of musical heritage culture and its folk protectors who by popularizing certain forms of folk tradition, transmit tamburitza music in the area of Syrmia. Tamburitza music pedagogues Pajo Kolarić and Pere Tumbas Hajo, who raised the tamburitza to the artistic level of music, have also been briefly presented. No less merit should be attributed to the lesser-known village tamburitza players who worked in the villages of Syrmia, entertaining the people and thus acting to preserve the heritage of their region.

Keywords: heritage, folk culture, solitary confinement, rural tamburitza players, socialization

Sažetak

Tradicijska glazba vezuje se uz određena geografska područja i kulturu toga kraja koja se na tim prostorima odupire globalizacijskim procesima i uspijeva se održati zahvaljujući entuzijastima, volji njegovatelja, a danas sve više i djelovanju odgojnoobrazovnih institucija. U ovom se radu interpretira uloga tradicijskih

trzalačkih glazbala iz povijesnog diskursa kao dio enkulturacionog i socijalizacionog čimbenika mladih u Srijemu. Radom se ukazuje na tamburaško glazbovanje na području Srijema i mogućnosti koje tradicijski glazbeni instrumenti pružaju mladim generacijama. Povijesnom analizom sadržaja literature i intervjuom prenositelja tradicijske baštine Šokaca prikazuje se odnos prema trzalačkim glazbalima u njegovanju tradicijske baštine i običaja. Pozornost se pridaje dominantnim pronositeljima glazbene baštinske kulture i njezinim narodnim zaštitnicima koji popularizacijom određenih oblika tradicije njeguju tamburašku glazbu na prostoru Srijema. Ukratko je prikazan doprinos tamburaškoj glazbi pedagoga Paje Kolarića i Pere Tumbaša Haje koji su svojim radovima uzdigli tamburu na umjetničku razinu. Ništa manje zasluge ne treba zaboraviti pripisati i malo poznatim seoskim tamburašima koji su djelovali po Srijemskim selima uveseljavajući narod i čuvajući baštinu svog kraja.

Ključne riječi: nasljeđe, narodna kultura, samica, seoski tamburaši, socijalizacija

INTRODUCTION

The traditional heritage is, in all of its richness, an integral part of national culture. A culture is defined as a way of life of a member of society, a collection of ideas and habits which members of a particular society learn, share, and pass down from generation to generation (Haralambos and Heald, 1980, 16). Culture is marked by technology, patterns of behaviour, and includes shared values, beliefs, and rules. Because contemporary culture is a diverse, pluralistic, and variable heritage, a few different types of cultures are distinguished in today's society. This paper will put special emphasis on the so-called folk culture of the common people, which includes plucked instruments, folk songs and texts passed down from generation to generation. Compared to high culture, folk culture is often looked down upon as less valuable, but its main features include originality and authenticity, which reflect the experience and the spiritual richness of a nation. In today's mass culture, a person takes the role of a mere consumer, while in folk culture, a person takes on an active role of a maker (Fanuko, 2005, 71).

Cultural heritage is a heritage passed down by ancestors to younger generations, and which can be recognized in language and literature, architecture and art, theatre, film, music, science, and other areas which make up the totality of a culture (Marasović, 2001, 9). Folk art and tradition, in which music takes on the lead role, can also be included in the aforementioned list. The process of enculturation is the educational activity in which family members or the members of one's immediate circle pass down values by nurturing local customs and elements of heritage. Through enculturation, we pass down values – abstract ideas about what is right and desirable during a young person's formative years. Values do not directly prescribe what type of behaviour is or is not acceptable; they are a means of evaluating people, phenomena, and events, and they differ from culture to culture (Fanuko, 2005, 63). The process of enculturation includes the patterns of behaviour, values, and all of the cultural content of a community, which a person takes on through experience, observation, and instruction. It is a

process of intergenerational dissemination of culture which lasts throughout a person's entire lifetime.¹ It is a crucial process for the preservation of heritage, especially non-material heritage, whereby, along with customs, tunes, and other forms of passing down tradition, certain educational values are passed down. Children will start to adopt behavioural patterns and universal rules fairly early, firstly in a familial setting, and later in a school and communal setting.

Traditional heritage is an integral part of the national cultural heritage and manifests itself through many regional and local variants. It is also subject to change and even prone to die out; however, it is also a stronghold for the preservation of identity (Šojat-Bikić, 2011, 103). Slavonia and Srijem (Syrmia) are riddled with many folkloric elements which are marked by fondness towards the tambura (tamburitza), singing, and dancing. The tambura is the favoured stringed instrument among Šokci and has been a part of various customs throughout their history. The term Šokac cannot be found on any geographical map, yet it exists and is in common usage. The term Šokadija was coined by authors living in the area of the former Military Frontier to describe not only a geographical term but a human factor as well (Rem and Rem, 2009). Music and dance are in line with the mentality and the lifestyle of those who create them, perform them, teach them, and pass them onto younger generations. They are integral parts of many customs and are performed during public ceremonies or other important events in a person's life (Rem, 1993).

The Traditional Heritage of Srijem (Syrmia)

Culture, as the totality of heritage of a group of people or a society, includes traditional music as well. The importance of traditional music lies in its folk dances, folk tunes, and traditional instruments characteristic for specific musical regions. Traditional music is a symbol through which members of a community, city or even a whole country can be recognized. Croatia has a rich cultural identity that includes a rich and recognizable musical expression. Folk music is a part of Croatian cultural history and has been spread out and embellished in rural communities. It is learned and remembered through listening and oral transmission. Rural traditional music is marked by mostly vocal performances, while urban centres are known for their rehearsed instrumental bands (Ferić, 2007).

In the area of the Pannonian folklore zone, people would usually meet in open spaces, on crossroads, squares, or riverbanks, and usually, break into dance spontaneously. They would usually perform a circle dance, or *kolo*, which was done at a walking pace and was accompanied by a vocal performance, without any instruments. Young people would usually meet in front of a church after mass to gather into a circle dance, either without the company of an instrument or accompanied by tambura, bagpipes, or *samica* (a type of tambura). The

1 enculturation. Hrvatskaenciklopedija, online version. "Miroslav Krleža" Institute of Lexicography, 2020. Accessed 19th October 2020. <<http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=17994>>

traditional musical instruments specific to this region are the *diplice* and *dvojnice* (types of wind instruments made from wood) which were played accompanied by no other instrument (Miholić, 2009).

Tradition in Syrmia is still strongly present today, precisely because of the people who had always lived there while never abandoning the tambura, kolo, or folk song. Today, we can observe the richness and diversity of the culture of this land during marriage ceremonies, kermises, carnivals, or spontaneous gatherings. Šokci have rarely been without work, and those who are willing to work will always find something to do. Still, people would always find enough time for fun. When there is no work during religious holidays, older people always gather around each other, while younger people gather outside homes, or sometimes in front of a church or a municipal centre after mass. “Those who can play the flute, *dvojnice*, bagpipes or a tambura do so, while the others gather in a circle – both the older people who know how to dance and the younger people who, at the same time, learn how to dance” (Lovretić, 1990, 444). During parties, people could put aside their everyday problems and relax in the presence of their family and friends. Fun was always present with a tambura, which was accompanied by a *bećarac*², that is, a song with a cheerful tune and usually obscene content, mostly sung in a ten-syllable verse. *Bećarac* is usually tied to Slavonia (Kolenić, 2007, 195) and Syrmia.

The church ale or kermis was of special importance to young people. This ceremony is tied to church ceremonies celebrating a certain saint, or the patron saint of the village. As far back as a fortnight before the marking of a kermis, life in the village becomes more hectic and lively. On the day of the celebration, younger people gather in front of a church dressed in their best attire. A large circle is formed around the church, accompanied by tambura players, with the celebration lasting throughout the day. On this day, the church was a starting point for the celebration which would continue all over the village. One such gathering was enough to incite celebrations that would be so remarkable that marriage celebrations would follow soon after. Songs accompanied by traditional instruments would echo through village squares, pubs, and bars (Duić-Dunja, 1996).

The tambura has always been a faithful companion to all carnival traditions that involved adults. They would disregard all traditional manners, with women putting on men’s clothing and vice versa. It is not customary for women of this area to enjoy alcoholic beverages, but this rule would not be followed during carnival times – this is encapsulated today in a *bećarac*: „*poklade su i ludi su dani, pa se nađe i žena pijani*”³. Horseback riding through the village is a tradition that has almost entirely died out – however, in recent years, the people of Slavonia, Baranya, and Syrmia have worked to bring it back. New elements have been added to the celebrations throughout the years, but tamburas and related instruments have always been faithful companions of those who participated in carnival celebrations (Ćosić Bukvin, 2019).

2 In 2011, UNESCO has added *bećarac* to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List

3 “let’s have fun, the carnival is under way, on such a day you might even find a woman in disarray”

Plucked instruments in Croatia

The word *tambura* can be etymologically traced all the way to the Persian word *tn*, meaning *string*. The Arabic word – *tambur*, can be traced to this root. *Tambura* spread from the Bosnian regions, where it was brought by the Ottomans, all through Slavonia, Sylvania, and Bačka via the settling of Šokci and Bunjevci, where it became a favoured instrument (Ferić. 2011).

Plucked string instruments are among the oldest instruments in the world and are a subgroup of stringed instruments (chordophones), that is, instruments that are played by plucking or rubbing the strings with a bow. Depending on how they are played, chordophones can be divided into stringed or plucked instruments. The stringed instruments are played with a bow, while the plucked instruments are, of course, played by plucking. Plucked instruments are divided into four subgroups: harps, lyres, zithers, and lutes (Andrić, 1962, 3).

Tambura falls under the subcategory of lutes and is the most widespread instrument in Croatia. Bagpipes and fiddles are now rare or appear in the forms of flutes or small lyres and have, in a way, stopped being used. In these regions, the *tambura* has been used in solo performances, up until the middle of the 20th century, but today it is used in group performances too, which ensured its survival and a rise in popularity (Andrić, 1962).

Tambura, the Russian *balalaika*, the Italian *mandolin*, and all other similar instruments all share the same roots and can be traced to four thousand years ago, to a Sumerian instrument that had a long neck and a pear-shaped body. The Arabs brought the short-necked lute to Spain and the south of Italy, from which the Spanish guitar and the Italian *mandolin* evolved. The lute soon turned into *tambura*, and as such can be found in some parts of Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece. The first written trace of a *tambura* in Bosnia can be traced to the year 1551 (Andrić, 1962, 3). *Samica* is mentioned as an instrument by Nicolas de Nicolay, a travel writer who accompanied a French diplomat to Turkey, and who described young Bosnian Janissaries being taught to play it by the Ottoman conquerors (Leopold, 1995).

Up until the 20th century, it was not customary for Šokci to play *tamburas* in groups, so they usually played *samicas* – the favourite instrument of shepherds – along with bagpipes. To see a Slavonian shepherd taking his herd out to pasture in the early morning without some food and his *samica*, which he played to pass the time while looking after the herd, was simply unimaginable. Every village had several experts, masters of this instrument. As for the educational aspect, the unwritten rule became that the experts would pass their musical expertise down to the elated children and youth (Njikoš, 2011).

What made the *samica* special was that, in the beginning, every individual who would play the instrument would be the very one to construct it for themselves, adjusting it to match their own voice, which resulted in a great diversity of this people's creative heritage. In the beginning, there were no standards prescribing the proper shape and look of *samica*, nor a stand-

ardized way of tuning the strings, which made it easy for even the youngest to play samica for its simplicity and interesting form (Ferić, 2011). To play a tambura, a pick is usually used, rarely a finger. The pick was at first made from a cherry tree, and later on from a cow's horn – today, they are usually made out of plastic (Leopold, 1995).

The tambura in the shape of pear was the most used tambura up until the First World War – these belonged to the Farkaš system of tamburas. This system is the oldest in Croatia, named after Milutin Farkaš, and it belongs to a two-note system of tamburas, with four strings, tuned in two pairs. Tamburas with six strings, tuned to fifth intervals (g-d-a) belong to a triple note system. This system was advocated by the musician Slavko Janković, so it bears his name today. The system used today has many names: the Syrmian system, the Bačkan system, the system of Vojvodina, or the Slavonian system. It is a four-note system where the first string is tuned to a *g* or a *d* note, and another system exists where the first string is tuned to an *a* or an *e* note. The G-D system was widespread in Slavonia and the north of Bosnia, whereas the A-E system was used in Syrmia and Vojvodina. The latter spread more widely and was adapted better to fit modern music.

Playing the tambura in an ensemble (in an orchestra, in groups, or choirs) diverged in two ways. The first way was played in Vojvodina, whereby a smaller group of professional musicians plays without a conductor – usually, they play folk songs, marches, or circle dances, and so on. Most of the professional bar players, popular in Bačka, later in Syrmia and Slavonia, belong here. The second way, named the Slavonian way, was established by Pajo Kolarić. It nurtures amateur playing. It was carried on by Mijo Majer through establishing a first concert choir lead by a conductor. Osijek became the place where the way played in Vojvodina and the Slavonian way are brought together (Andrić, 1962).

Methodological approaches in the paper

The subject matter of the research of this paper is popularity of plucked string instruments in the enculturation and educational tradition of Syrmia. In this paper, the popularity of plucked string instruments is observed through a historical discourse, enculturation factors, and promoters of plucked instruments music, as well as through different forms of cultural heritage cultivation and sustainability in contemporary conditions. Plucked string instruments have always had a strong educational role. The young would come into contact with plucked string instruments in all sorts of situations, thus enculturating the heritage of their region by adopting and immersing into the traditional culture of their local community and of the people that surround them while growing up.

The aim of this paper is to interpret the contents of analyzed reference works on the role of tambura instruments as a part of an educational effect on the cultural tradition of Syrmia, in which tambura is one of the main symbols of the village and traditional heritage. Therefore, it is important to determine its historical and enculturation role in the community in which it

is nurtured.

The village remains the centre of tambura music. There the art of playing tambura is passed on in an informal way of learning. In the past, older tambura players in the family or the village had an educational role, since they would pass on their knowledge to the young. Hence, the research questions that are to be answered in this paper are the following:

1. Who are the bearers of the tambura legacy and its dominant educational function?
2. Which forms of educational and enculturation actions nowadays serve as the means of disseminating and nurturing the sustainability and popularity of plucked string instruments?

For research purposes, the authors analyzed pedagogical-musical and traditional reference works from the area of Slavonia and Strymnia. Also, an interview was conducted with Alojzije Husnjak, a longtime member of “Ogranak seljačke sloge” Cultural and Artistic Association Drenovci.

Promoters of plucked string instruments

Up until the middle of the 19th century, tambura was a rural, solistic instrument, and playing samica was an integral part of musical folklore. Tambura soon became well-received in urban areas as well, so it started to occupy an important position in amateur music societies. During this period, the first tamburitza bands started forming in Bačka area. Based on their work, Pajo Kolarić, an Illyrian musician, founded the first tamburitza club in Osijek in 1847. Pajo Kolarić was born in Osijek in 1821, where he finished gymnasium and was a city senator, musician, and a fierce supporter of the ideas of the Illyrian movement. He promoted his patriotic ideas in the Croatian Parliament during his two parliamentary mandates. As the most prominent Illyrian musician and composer of *tamburitza* music, his tambura is stored in the Museum of Slavonia in Osijek. Due to his efforts, tambura, as a traditional instrument, soon became an orchestral concert band instrument, and Osijek deserved to bear the title of the cradle of tambura in Croatia (Njikoš, 2011).

The endeavors of Pajo Kolarić initiated rapid findings of many tambura choirs in cities. There the tambura was no longer intended for adult people only, but, as it entered schools, it became popular with the younger population as well. An important year for the development and popularisation of tambura is 1865 when the Tamburica Choir “Javor” was founded at the Classical Gymnasium (hr, Klasična gimnazija) in Osijek. Another choir, “Prosvjeta”, was founded at the Real Gymnasium (hr, Realna gimnazija) and the Commercial Academy (hr, Trgovačka akademija), and Tambura Choir “Marulić” was founded at the Royal Male Teachers School (hr, Muška učiteljska škola). Apart from the aforementioned choirs, many students’ tamburica choirs were formed, most prominent being “Napredak”, founded in 1892 (Leopold, 1995).

Further development of orchestral music evolved rapidly after Mijo Majer, a student of Pajo Kolarić, departed for Zagreb with his tambura and gathered 12 university students who founded a tamburitza choir called “Hrvatska lira” in 1882 (Andrić, 1962, 12). The literature emphasizes that dual-fifths system tambura of a so-called Farkaš system were used in Croatia prior to the First World War. After the war, the four-quart system from Syrmia and Bačka began spreading across the entire Slavonia. The best tamburitza players come from these areas, and Pere Tumbas Hajo, a great tamburitza player, composer, music arranger, and music pedagogue who has taken the art of playing the tamburitza to a higher level, is one of them.

Pere Tumbas Hajo was born in Subotica in 1891 to a family of musicians. His father was a professional musician who played berde, so it is no wonder that his son entered the world of music early on. He completed his musical studies in a music school and under various private music teachers, only to continue his music education in Budapest. He joined a military tambura orchestra during the war and often performed publicly. He started playing tambura at taverns after the war and simultaneously belonged to several Subotica tambura orchestras. As a great tambura expert, he became a member of the Radio Beograd orchestra in 1938. During his lifetime he played numerous traditional songs and kolos, as well as writing other arrangements. In Subotica, he served as the choir director of *Bratstvo-jedinstvo* (eng, *Fraternity-Unity*) Tambura Orchestra, with which he achieved enviable results (Ferić, 2011).

Influence of tambura on the Syrmian area in the 20th century

Group playing of tambura in the villages of Slavonia, Syrmia, and Bačka began in the 18th century, where smaller amateur groups of tambura players of five or six members started forming. Village musicians would most often play folk tunes and dances. Despite Šokci being the ones most associated with the sounds of the tambura, back in the days, in this area, it was not customary for them to play the instrument themselves. In the area of the Military Frontier, troopers from among Šokci did not play tamburas, but rather they played samicas and bagpipes, whereas playing tambura was characterized as something only Gypsies do. Precisely this perception prevented Šokci from teaching their children how to play the tambura. As a matter of fact, they would punish them for learning how to play it (Ćosić Bukvin, 2007). That is why young boys would have to use every opportunity they had to secretly go and see some of the “tambura playing gangs” play. They would sneak out of their family homes and spend time peeking through the windows of old taverns or listening to tambura players roaming around the village playing music. Tambura playing was thus often learned in secrecy.

The twentieth century brought along new outlooks on this way of expressing musical creativity. In 1957 a tambura choir was formed in Vrbanja as a part of its elementary school, and at that time it performed without any proper competition in the Vinkovci area. During that period, the choir director was Zlatko Čučuk, who made sure that the young musicians show their talent at 15 organized event performances (Ferić, 2011, 139).

Samica thus became an instrument characteristic for the diligent Šokci, which is corroborated by the statements of Marko Zečević-Vidov, a player of samica from the village of Drenovci. As a little boy, while herding swine, he would observe older herders playing. Because of the interest, he was showing in the instrument, they would let him play it a little. Ever since then, samica was Marko's faithful companion to every gathering. The songs he played he would learn from older men from the village (Njikoš, 1997).

In the 20th century, one of the most prominent experts in samica playing in this part of Syrmica was Josip Ivakić, better known as Joka, also from Drenovci, who recorded many traditional songs together with Marko Zečević.

In the second half of the 20th century, samica almost slipped into oblivion. However, Marko Zečević and Josip Ivakić would pass on their knowledge of samica playing and folk songs to younger generations in the same way that knowledge was passed onto them. They would teach curious boys about the beauties of the Slavonian and Syrmian folk songs, which, thanks to their contribution, are still cultivated and cherished as the traditional heritage of Drenovci and other parts of the region. Samica has thus yet again become a popular musical instrument, which is why every family with several children had at least one samica in its possession. Especially due to the efforts of the village samica players, its rich musical and traditional expression can still be seen and heard to this very day.

The work of many tambura players from the Cvelferija⁴ region was rescued from oblivion thanks to the records and publications of Julije Njikoš, a renowned musicologist, who preserved the memories of many recognized tambura players, including "Kolundžije" from Drenovci. One can read about their work in the minutes of the meetings of "Ogranak seljačke sloge" Cultural and Artistic Association Drenovci from 1971. The choir was led by Mijo Kulundžija, who passed on his knowledge of playing plucked string instruments, but his special contribution was teaching younger generations how to play. Together with them, he founded a tambura ensemble without whose presence no major festivity in Drenovci and surrounding villages would take place. Many generations of people from Drenovci danced their first kolo steps to the sound of music played by The Kolundžije, and many people grew fond of tamburitza music precisely thanks to them. Đuka Galović, a poet, would often perform together with The Kolundžije. With his poems, he conveyed the character and influence of folk poetry of eastern Slavonia and Syrmia (Erl, 2007).

Since people did not have enough money to pay for the performance, The Kolundžije often agreed to perform free of charge and thus amused the gathered folk with their tambura art-

4 Cvelferija - ger. zwölf = 12, twelve). The name *cvelferija* originates from the Military Frontier period, when the river Sava served as a border with the Ottoman Empire. In order to guard the border, the Brooder Grenz Infantry Regiment Nr. 7 (its original name in German being Brooder Grenz Infanterie Regiment Nr. 7 - translator's note) came to this area, and Drenovci became the centre of the Twelfth Company of the Frontier - better known as *Cvelferija* - in 1807. Cvelferija consisted of villages Drenovci, Đurići, Gunja, Posavski Podgajci, Račinovci, Rajevo Selo, Soljani, and Vrbanja. He was named after his father.

istry. Regardless of their rising popularity, they did not disregard their engagement in the activities of the Cultural and Artistic Association “Ogranak seljačka sloga”. Sons Franjo and Mijo were especially prominent with their longtime involvement and activity in the “Ogranak seljačka sloga” Cultural and Artistic Association. Renowned *begeš* player Mijo Cenić from Drenovci, nicknamed Cendura, and a superb *bugaria* player Miško Pekov were also playing with the ensemble. Other members of this well-known ensemble from Drenovci were often replaced. The Kolundžije remain in the memory of the people of Drenovci, and many years after they continue to inspire young tambura players across the Cvelferija.

Residents of Gunja can take pride in their prime tambura players just as well. Tambura ensemble “Romanca” from Gunja released the album “Tamburaške priče”, which features the song *Svirači iz Gunje*⁵: „Priča kruži još i danas, ostali su pojam za nas, dobri svirci, ljudi dragi, svirali su ko’ po špagi...“⁶. Tambura players from Gunja, such as Pero Nikolić, a violinist and the ensemble leader, are mentioned in this song. Renowned Slavonian composer Krešimir Stipa Bogutovac grew up listening to these tambura players. In the inceptions of his profuse/abundant musical career, while he was just a boy, he learned his first chords by observing and listening to old tambura players of Gunja: “*Nastavismo putem vašim, Opet ori šorom našim, Tambure se opet čuju, Davni snovi opet snuju, Vaša pjesma živi u nama...*”⁷

Tambura players such as The Kolundžije as well as senior players from Gunja left an enormous impact on younger generations of players. Had there not been for them, perhaps today we would not be able to witness the abundance of plucked string instruments playing at numerous folklore manifestations. Thanks to them, many young people nowadays decide to join some of the numerous tambura choirs and cultural and artistic associations, with many of them opting for tambura playing as an extracurricular activity.

The process of socialization begins in the family home, where a child meets other people and forms social contacts, thus developing the habits of well-mannered and acceptable behaviour. Soon enough, other factors enter the child’s life, most prominently its peers and school. The impact of the family as a natural living and educational community does not fade, despite the influence of other educational institutions and elements growing stronger. A community’s actions and strong influence helped pass the skills of playing traditional instruments from one member of the family onto another, or even among members of the local community. A father would teach his son (or a grandfather his grandson) how to play a certain traditional instrument, at first usually a solo instrument of quick and simple production. Teaching and learning how to play an instrument was not a separate activity, but rather during everyday labor and rest time as a side activity. If there was no one in a certain family who knew how to play an instrument, the children would be taught to play by expert players from their village. This way

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz7Aupp4GQ8>, accessed on 10 December 2020.

6 „The story still circulates, they are an epitome to us, great gigsters, nice fellas, their performances have always been top-drawer...”

7 „We have followed in your footsteps, In our village, The sound of tambura reverberates, Forgotten dreams are dreamt once again, Your song lives on in us...”

of teaching and learning remains present to this day, especially when it comes to amateur music-making, so it is not uncommon for families in Slavonia and Sylvania to have several generations of tambura players (Njikoš, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Inhabitants of the area between Sava and Drava have always lived surrounded by kolo, tambura, and songs, and the traditional heritage is an indispensable element of their lives. In the area, manual labor is held in great esteem, but even the most diligent laborers would find the time to relax to the sounds of tamburitza and folk songs. Tambura spread from village surroundings to urban settings and there it became an orchestral instrument. Even though the Illyrians, such as Pajo Kolarić, appreciated the tambura as a national instrument, it took the Šokci from rural areas a lot of time to embrace tambura as an instrument. In the beginning, they were loyal to samica, but later they began playing other plucked string instruments as well.

Pajo Kolarić and Pere Tumbas Hajo, artists and promoters of tambura music, laid the groundwork for the modern-day orchestral playing of tambura. Villages were of crucial importance for the development of the group, amateur folklore music-making, and playing which contains the spirit of tambura. In rural areas, older tambura players would teach younger generations in order to keep the knowledge that was passed on to them from their ancestors from oblivion. Nowadays, in many villages across Sylvania, sounds of tambura can still be heard on various occasions, which can be attributed precisely to the village tambura players. Apart from the obvious musical value, tambura has also had a spiritual value, especially in villages. The young do not only learn how to play a certain instrument but also listen to the accompanying stories that portray in detail the tradition and the customs of their region. Every new folklore song they would learn how to play came with its own story. Tambura had a stronger educational role in villages because old tambura masters had a stronger bond with their students. Apart from numerous cultural and artistic associations that cultivate the traditional heritage of plucked string instruments, many cultural and folklore manifestations also help to save it from oblivion. Plucked string instruments have become traditional Croatian instruments and have seen a true renaissance in the last two decades, as they are starting to enjoy equal status as other musical instruments. Teaching how to play plucked string instruments, which was previously done in familial and less formal settings, has now found its place on all levels of formal education - from primary and secondary music schools all the way to academies.

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