

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

FEMALE PIANISTS OF THE ZAGREB REGION AT THE END OF 19TH AND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY, IN LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY PIANISM AND PIANO PEDAGOGY¹

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This doctoral dissertation presents research based on a study of the role of female pianists in the formative processes of the development and affirmation of pianism in Zagreb. The underlying theoretical framework is drawn from the feminist musicological research of the so-called »New Musicology«, and it aims to reconstruct the history of pianism in Zagreb in order to analyse the roles and activities of women, and to include them in the narrative of the history of Croatian music.

Research on pianism in Zagreb is still rare, apart from a few professional papers previously published. Therefore, this work presents a first overview of the development of pianism from the earliest appearance of keyboard instruments to the first private piano lessons, followed by the institutionalization of piano teaching and, lastly, the formation of the unique school of pianism called the Zagreb piano school, with an emphasis on the development of concert activities and piano pedagogy. The research is based on a study of available primary sources, predominantly the legacies of female pianists, as well as relevant secondary sources

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that were systematized, evaluated, and interpreted as systematic scientific insights into the history of local pianism.

The introductory chapter establishes the theoretical starting points and positions of this research within the framework of feminist musicology. It also provides a literature review, with an emphasis on the rare occurrences of systematic research on pianism in Zagreb, consisting mainly of partial overviews of individual pianists or specific segments of their work. This chapter describes the research methodology used to confirm the initial hypothesis while emphasizing the aim and motivation of the author, who approached this topic from the perspective of her own experience in pianism, as it is common in the poetics of feminist musicology.

Furthermore, to position the research within the context of European pianism, the first chapter examines the most important determining factors in the history of pianism, from the invention of the piano to its golden age, and analyses the contributions of individual European pianists with a focus on the widespread nineteenth-century perception of the piano as a *female instrument*. In this chapter, the author also investigated the characteristics and influence of the development of national schools of pianism, with an emphasis on their founders and most prominent representatives. The last part of the chapter contains an overview of gender topics in the context of pianism, from stereotypes assigned to the piano in the nineteenth century to the theory of phallogentricity present in the pianistic profession even today.

The second chapter contains a review of the development of pianism in Zagreb from the first mentions of keyboard instruments to the end of the nineteenth century, including occurrences such as private piano lessons, guest performances of foreign virtuoso pianists, and finally the institutionalization of piano teaching under the auspices of the so-called Piano classroom (*Klavirna učionica*) of the Croatian Music Institute music school, which eventually developed into the Zagreb Academy of Music in the early twentieth century. A part of this chapter presents the analysis of pianist concert activity in Zagreb and the share of female pianists performing in public concerts.

The development of pianism in Zagreb is presented in this doctoral dissertation in three periods: from the first appearance of keyboard instruments to 1872, when the so-called Piano classroom of the music school of the Croatian Music Institute was founded; from 1872 to 1920, in which it is possible to follow the activities of the Piano classroom; and finally from the founding of the Academy of Music in Zagreb in 1921/1922 until the middle of the twentieth century, in a period marked by the pedagogical activity of the founder of the Zagreb piano school, Svetislav Stančić, and the first generations of his graduates.

Consequently, the author followed the activities of female pianists in each of these periods in two ways; analyzing their quantitative representation at public concerts, as well as their share in the vertical structure of the music education

system, from schoolgirls to students, graduates, and piano teachers. The results of this part of the research show that male pianists dominated the public music scene in the nineteenth century until the establishment of the Piano classroom, with a representation of 57%, after which female pianists took primacy, appearing in as many as 67% of concert performances. An overview of the occurrence of female piano students showed an extremely high percentage of their presence in the educational system, from the lowest level of 72%, and in some years up to 100%.

The resemblances to those results are visible in the case of female piano graduates of the Academy of Music in Zagreb, who represented 76% of the total number of piano graduates and were more numerous among the students of the artistic and pedagogical studies, accounting for 70% of the artistic, and 88% of the pedagogical study programme among the entire student population. Analysing the share of female piano teachers who worked in the *Piano classroom* and later in the Department for Piano, Organ and Harp, the dominance of women is also observed, where it is 83% in the Piano classroom and 69% in the Academy of Music in favour of female piano pedagogues. These results confirm the original hypothesis of this research, according to which the contribution of female pianists and piano pedagogues is indispensable to the development of pianism in Zagreb. The number of women in all segments of pianistic activity is an indicator of their influence, so it could be specified that the majority of the system of musical education and performing practice rests on the contribution of women.

These results also testify to the democracy of the Zagreb milieu regarding the approach to the education of female musicians and their performing activities in the public domain, despite the somewhat different situation when it comes to other spheres of society. This partly stemmed from the initial idea of the founders of the Croatian Music Institute about the accessibility of musical education. Although misogyny was undoubtedly present in one way or another, at least in the sphere of pianism, i.e., piano education, its occurrence was somewhat less frequent in Zagreb during a good part of the nineteenth century than in other European cities, where it was reflected in limited access to music education for female students, often under unequal conditions, and difficulties regarding the possibility of performing on public concert platforms.

Furthermore, the original hypothesis was also confirmed by the qualitative research of the individual contributions of female pianists to the development of pianism in Zagreb. In order to outline the character and level of their activity in a broader European context, it was considered according to several criteria, the first of which is their education and the formative influence of European piano schools. For pianists in Zagreb during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, the Viennese piano school, primarily Julius Epstein's tradition, was formatively important. Among the pianists who bring this piano tradition is Emilija Makanec, the first female piano teacher of the Piano classroom, then the

Viennese graduates Anka Barbot Krežma, Dragica Kovačević Häusler and Sidonija Geiger, among whom the last made contact with the Petrograd branch of the Russian piano school, which is the first such case known so far in the context of pianism in Zagreb. Antonija Geiger Eichhorn was one of the first significant female pianists who managed to achieve a multi-year continuity of performing and teaching practice. She brought to the Zagreb pianistic scene the influences of Czech pianism, the Viennese piano school and the so-called *playing with weight*, as a feature of piano pedagogy represented by Leopold Godowski.

Among the other female piano teachers presented in this doctoral dissertation are those who worked in the Piano classroom of the Croatian Music Institute: Marija Boić, Danica Matoš Strzeszewska, Vilma Nožinić and Elvira Marsić, as well as Paula Goršetić, who, after completing her education in Zagreb, began professional activity in Split, which signifies that the influence of the Piano classroom extended beyond the borders of the Zagreb area.

In the second explored epoch, in which the activity of the Piano classroom can be followed, the female pianists included in this research were primarily pedagogues whose performing practice was sporadic. The reason for this should perhaps be sought less in the subordinate position of women, but rather in the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth, the concert scene in Zagreb was not systematically organized; on the contrary, it was erratic and spontaneous. More significant changes can only be noticed in the case of Antonija Geiger Eichhorn, who had an intensive professional pianistic career in Zagreb after 1920.

Through the development of the music school of the Croatian Music Institute into the Croatian Conservatory, and then into the Academy of Music in Zagreb, a decisive period of professionalization of the pianistic profession began in which the Zagreb piano school was founded by Svetislav Stančić. He wove into his piano pedagogy the original characteristics of the early Zagreb pianistic tradition, which he adopted as a student of Emilija Makanec, later enhancing them with the principles of Busoni's pianism and piano pedagogy, which originate from the legacy of Franz Liszt. Although several pedagogues and pianists worked alongside Svetislav Stančić in Zagreb, it was his pedagogical activity that produced the most significant representatives of the Zagreb piano school, among whom Božidar Kunc, Dora Gušić, Melita Lorković, Evgenij Vaulin and Branka Musulin were prominent as the first generation of graduates from the 1930s, followed by Sofija Deželić, Robert Herzl, Ladislav Šaban and Darko Lukić in the 1940s, and then Zvezdana Bašić and Jurica Murai in the 1950s.

Among the aforementioned pianists, Melita Lorković stands out with the most respectable concert and teaching career of all Stančić's students who graduated in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to Stančić's piano pedagogy, Melita Lorković's pianism is also marked by the influence of the French

piano school, with which she came into interaction during her specialization in Paris. Concert performances worldwide and pedagogical work at music academies in Zagreb, Belgrade and Cairo made Melita Lorković the most recognizable representative of the Zagreb piano school.

Dora Gušić similarly emerged from Stančić's class and French pianism, although her concert and teaching activities were to a greater extent related to the Zagreb music scene. She was among the first to perform compositions by then-contemporary French composers; however, she also stood out with her interpretations of French harpsichordists, early baroque composers, and compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach, which made her performances unique in the context of pianism in Zagreb at the time.

Branka Musulin, the third in a line of female pianists from Stančić's class, achieved in this period, after Melita Lorković, the most significant international career. Unlike the representatives of the Zagreb piano school who studied only in Paris, Musulin also worked with Alfredo Casella in Rome and Max von Pauer in Germany, thus combining Zagreb, French and classical German traditions in her pianistic formation. Even though she spent most of her concert and teaching career in Germany, she considerably contributed to the affirmation of the Zagreb piano school on the European music scene in the mid-twentieth century.

The pianism of Sofija Deželić also had individual features since, after Stančić and Evgenij Vulin, she also studied piano with her uncle Max von Pauer. She had an exceptionally vibrant concert and teaching career in Zagreb and Sarajevo, and among her students in Zagreb was one of the most important pianists of the twentieth century, Alfred Brendel. She greatly influenced the development of music education in Sarajevo and used her broad knowledge and experience to educate young pedagogues and improve piano teaching curricula.

The final part of this chapter presents the activity of those female pianists and piano pedagogues who devoted themselves to a greater extent to piano pedagogy. Due to their devotion, some of the most important representatives of the Zagreb piano school emerged who later reigned over the music scene in the second half of the twentieth century. The first among those admirable pedagogues were Beata Delić, Margita Matz, Vlasta Debelić, Elly Bašić, Ira Švarc Kohn, Piroška Radauš, Stanka Vrinjanin, Ivana Lang, Eleonora Čalogović, Stella Čolaković, Mira Sakač, Zorka Loos Depolo, Ella Kovačić Murai and Zvezdana Bašić. In addition to pedagogical work, some of them were also distinguished by particular characteristics, so Margita Matz is remembered as the »first concert harpsichordist«, Elly Bašić as the founder of Functional Music Pedagogy, and Ivana Lang as the only composer among them. A few of them worked outside Zagreb, thus significantly influencing the development of pianism in Dubrovnik (Piroška Radauš) and Belgrade (Stanka Vrinjanin), while others, like Stella Čolaković, had a substantial impact on the organization of elementary and high school music education in the Zagreb region.

The results of qualitative research on the individual contributions of certain female pianists to the development of pianism in Zagreb confirm that female pianists significantly influenced the beginning of the professionalization of the pianistic profession, creating the foundations for the development, affirmation, and promotion of the Zagreb piano school in the twentieth century. They promoted and perfected Julius Epstein's and Svetislav Stančić's pianistic principles, merging them with early Russian, French and German pianistic tendencies. Afterward, with concert and teaching activities, they expanded the contours of Zagreb pianism and ensured its recognition on the European music scene. Some of those female pianists also influenced the formation of piano pedagogy practice not only in Zagreb but throughout the country at the time, acting in leadership positions in music education institutions, which they entrusted to future generations. To that extent, it is possible to say that the qualitative part of this research also confirmed the original hypothesis.

The conclusion provides guidelines for systematic future research of local pianistic activity outside the Zagreb area and beyond the limited time frame presented in this doctoral dissertation. The analysis of the contributions of female pianists in music education institutions and the realization of individual artistic and reproductive pianistic performance achievements in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth has revealed their significant influence on the development of Croatian pianism, despite the social circumstances and prejudices that aimed against the intellectual and artistic activity of women at the time.

This research represents only the initial step in a systematic study of Croatian pianism. It remains to analyse the pianistic tendencies in the second half of the twentieth century until the present moment, and it would also be advisable to consider in more detail changes in the characteristic features of the Zagreb piano school during the twentieth century, i.e., its current position in the context of national piano schools. Hopefully, this research will raise awareness of the need to preserve and revalue our pianistic heritage through appropriate archiving, research, and study of legacies, particularly those that decay and are inaccessible to scholars and researchers. Perhaps the results of this work could stimulate research related to the activities of other performing artists and pedagogues, not merely pianists, and ultimately evoke interest in wider European circles for the history and achievements of our national pianism.