

JERKO BEZIĆ

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb

**THE DALMATIAN ISLANDS —
— A GEOGRAPHICALLY RECOGNISED
MEDITERRANEAN REGION — SHOWING
OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES IN THE MUSICAL
EXPRESSION OF THEIR INHABITANTS**

Besides pointing out musical differences among Dalmatian islands this paper wants to answer the following question: what are the causes, that is the reasons of those differences — historical, socio-economic and other. Among other reasons one finds contacts between Croatia and other Mediterranean countries in the area of music.

Keywords: music, the Mediterranean, Dalmatian islands

The *Mediterranean* and *Mediterranean*, as an adjective, have not yet become clear and indisputable operative terms in Croatian scholarship about music. So it is not possible to answer the question on where the Mediterranean begins in Croatian music by concepts customary at a particular time, in a particular political context, among particular authors, or, in other words, by concepts which could then be analysed or redefined. Therefore I will endeavour to reveal the fundamental characteristics of traditional music from Croatia's Dalmatian islands, geographically recognised as being part of the Mediterranean region. In so doing, I will concentrate on music as an organised sound for the very reason that the musical phenomena of that region have, by a combination of circumstances, remained outside of the research policies of scholarly and professional re/definition. I do not intend to burden the musical phenomena of the Croatian Mediterranean region with definitions which could limit or even invent them. One of their fundamental characteristics could even lie precisely in the fact that they resist being put into a mould, a trait I shall attempt to demonstrate in this paper.

The islands of northern, central and southern Dalmatia belong to the (north)eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea and, geographically speaking, are

obviously part of the Republic of Croatia's Mediterranean region. Apart from belonging geographically to the Mediterranean, over the last two thousand years the islands, from the cultural and historical perspective, have lived in a more or less Mediterranean atmosphere — from the time of the Roman Province of Dalmatia, the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia; and on through the centuries under various rulers from the Croatian — and later, Magyar — kings, Byzantium, and then the almost four centuries of uninterrupted Venetian rule (1409-1797). The one hundred years of Austrian rule in the 19th century, and in the 20th the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, did little to change the Mediterranean characteristics in the lives of these Croats from the Dalmatian islands.

Still there were certain changes. These changes were caused by alterations in the demographic make-up of the island population when, for example, inhabitants from the broad Dalmatian hinterland took refuge on the Dalmatian islands during the 16th century, fleeing from the Turkish incursions.

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate and explain the differences in the musical expression of the Dalmatian islanders. The available material — collected over the last one hundred and twenty years or so — presents to an interested researcher a relatively high number of types and modes of music-making. The notations, audio-recordings and descriptions of performances and their context — and, from more recently, video films — have been made by researchers with diverse possibilities and capabilities, and they date from various times. Four monographs about the music-making on four of the Dalmatian islands — — Brač,¹ Zlarin,² Šolta,³ and Hvar⁴ — have been published over the last twenty years.

Among the various characteristics of the musical phenomena, listeners will find the different tonal frameworks particularly noticeable. I have been able to identify three basic styles in the available material in the orally transmitted music of the Dalmatian islanders. These styles are: 1) the narrow interval style with chromatics and unstable tonal pitch; 2) the diatonic interval style in melodies of small scale in which the tonal centre is not always clearly and powerfully indicated; and, 3) a tune style which unfolds in the major tonal key or in tonal interrelations which obviously tend towards the major.

The differences in tonal interrelations of the individual examples of music-making can also appear in examples from one and the same locality or from one and the same group of islands. There are also differences, of course,

¹ See: Rihtman-Šotrić 1975:235-299; Bezić 1975:301-315; Ivančan 1975:317-363.

² See: Bezić 1981:27-148; Ivančan 1981a:149-157.

³ See: Bezić 1991:9-48; Ivančan 1981b:291-302.

⁴ See: Bezić 1995:351-361; Ivančan 1981b:167-243.

between the individual islands and between the groups of islands. These diversities in the collected material also came about because the singer-informers came from all generations throughout the age-scale, and because the musical phenomena were noted down at various times.

I shall first indicate those examples from the collected material which were performed by a relatively small group of singers, while their singing was intended to be listened to by a relatively large number of listeners. These are the *kole(n)da* songs, sung by members of a greeting procession which visits individual households, usually only in the local areas in which the *kolenda*-singers live. The texts of their songs express good wishes for the health and general well-being of the householders. Some professionals have linked this custom with similar ones which existed in the Mediterranean region of the Roman Empire.


Here I would like to draw attention to three mutually differing forms of musical expression in the *kolenda*-singing which existed in practice on the Island of Hvar in the period between the 1920s and the 1970s. The differences were not insignificant. Antonin Zaninović published two different tunes, one from Brusje in the mountainous hinterland of the island and the other from Stari Grad, the island's harbour town. The first notation is older, and the tune is recitative without a developed melody line. The second shows a newer developed melody curve, sung in two-parts in parallel thirds. The first recitative tune emphasises the ritual character of the custom, with the text of the song placed in the forefront. The second already shows a certain independence in the musical component of the song (Zaninović 1931:22, 25). The third song was recorded in 1965 —

— also in Stari Grad — and is an example of more recent musically developed three- and four-part singing performance (Bezić 1995:357-358). The performers — the singers — aim for a musically more demanding performance of greater richness. They attain this by an effective solo introduction sung by the first tenor and a largely four-part performance of the tune in major chords. Chordal part-singing of the tunes, in this manner and similar ones, is found in the newer love songs which are sung by small groups of singers in the so-called *klapa* groups in Dalmatia. Although this has led to evident growth in the significance of the musical components in the performances of customs, there has been no consequent loss in the importance of *kolenda*-singing as a custom. (Music Examples 1, 2 and 3)

Brusje, 1920.

1 First group:

 Na da - lek se o - ganj svi - tli, ve - se - li - mo se!

Second group:

 I - su - kar - stu Go - spo - di - nu po - klo - ni - mo se!

Stari Grad, 1930.

2 Allegretto

 Do - šli smo von ko - len - da - ti, do - šli smo von ko - len - da - ti.

Stari Grad, 1965.

3 $\text{♩} = 120$ $\text{♩} = 40$

 Solo
 Do - bra ve - čer u bar - ba Si - be - ta o - o - ov - de

Tutti
 i na do - bro mu Mla - do li - to doj - de

Solo
 Do - bra ve - čer u o - vom stanu o - - ov - - de

Tutti
 i na do - bro jin Mla - do li - to doj - de

At the end of the 19th century, *kolenda*-singing on the Island of Hvar was given specific features by the instrument accompanying the singers. Even as late as 1958, the *kolenda*-singers were accompanied by a musician playing a *lira*, or *lijerica*, [a three-string bowed chordophone], a very well-known instrument in the Mediterranean.⁵ (Mus. Ex. 4)

Grad Hvar, 1968.

4

Voice

Lira

I mi je - smo zdra - vo do - šli ko - len - da - ti ov - de. ____

Na do - bro vam Mla - do li - to doj - de. ____

In contrast, in Ugljan on the island of the same name in northern Dalmatia, the author managed to make a tape-recording in 1960 of *kolenda*-songs performed by a small group of women of advanced years. In its musical expression in the diatonic small interval style, the tune was very similar to the older⁶ stratum of music-making in the Dalmatian coastal hinterland. As similar forms of music-making have been noted on other northern-Dalmatian islands (for example, on the islands of Olib and Iž),⁷ we can interpret such musical phenomena as examples of musical expression brought to the islands by refugees from the Dalmatian hinterland, who abandoned their homes to escape Ottoman occupation. (Mus. Ex. 5)

⁵ See: Stojanović 1966:59-84; Plastino 1994; Bezić 1995:358.

⁶ From the 1930s until the 1970s, professionals working in Croatian ethnology and ethnomusicology were oriented particularly to research of the older strata, both in customs and in singing, and in music-making and dance. This method led to the accumulation of material which stressed and proved the autochthonous nature of their own national culture. As the author of this paper conducted his research in the 1950s and 1960s with a similar orientation, he later retained particular interest in the earlier, or older forms of music-making.

⁷ See: Bezić 1960:299, and Bezić 1966:47.

Nar. umjet. 36/1, 1999, pp. 157-172, J. Bezić, *The Dalmatian Islands – a Geographically...*

5 Ugljan, Island of Ugljan, 1960.

The musical score is in G major and 2/4 time. It consists of four systems. The first system has a tempo marking of ♩ = 82 and lyrics: "Do - bro ju - tro ku - ćni do - ma - ći - ne," with vocal ornaments above the notes. The second system has an *accel.* marking and lyrics: "do - bro ju - rto ku - ćni do - ma - ći - ne," with downward arrows indicating piano accompaniment. The third system has tempo markings ♩ = 116-120, ♩ = 232-240, and ♩ = 155-160, with lyrics: "ho - ho - ho ho - ho ho - ho ho - ho". The fourth system has lyrics: "ho - ho - ho ho - ho - ho ho - ho ho - ho - ho - ojl!" and "ho - - - - - o - ojl!".

The second group of examples I would like to bring to your attention, demonstrating the differences in the musical expression of the Dalmatian islanders, is made up of wedding songs which are directly linked to individual phases of wedding customs.

Two wedding songs, widely different in their tonal frameworks, were recorded in 1978 (Bezić 1981:32, 82, 85) in Zlarin, on the northern Dalmatian island of Zlarin, off-shore from Šibenik. The first example presents a very drawn-out tune with vocal inserts in the second style. The song was performed at the moment when the bride was departing from the home of her parents. The second example with the same content and role in that custom, was performed in the newer two-part tune which tended towards the Major (the 3rd style). The great difference between these two tunes can be explained by the extended interval of time which separates them. The first song was in living use during the 1920s, while the second one was sung some fifty years later. The second song provides an example of a tune which was used as one of the patterns for Dalmatian island and coastal (mainland) tunes. (Mus. Ex. 6 and 7)

Nar. umjet. 36/1, 1999, pp. 157-172, J. Bezić, *The Dalmatian Islands — a Geographically...*

6

Zlarin, Island of Zlarin, 1978

Ho - di zbo - gun, dra - go di - te mo - oj,
o - oj, mo - o - oj. Na pu - tu ti do - bra sri - ća
be* - ej, e - e, jo - o - oj, te - bi, di - te
i dru - gu tvo - je ej, e - e, o - o - oj.

* Very loud "i", pronounced "e".

7

$\text{♩} = 75$

Zlarin, Island of Zlarin, 1978

1. Zbo - gon, o - će, zbo - gon, mi - la maj - ko,
zbo - gon, o - će, zbo - gon mi - la maj - ko
zbo - gon, o - će, zbo - gon, mi - la maj - ko,
sa' od - la - zi va - še mi - lo zla - to.

The singing of formal toasts on the Island of Hvar — our example was recorded at a wedding in Velo Grablje on January 27, 1968 — is one of the forms of wedding music-making which should be mentioned. Unlike the more simple tunes of wedding toasts in the Major key from another central-Dalmatian island, Šolta, (commenced by a soloist, with the verse sung by members of the wedding party) the formal Grablje wedding toast is performed by a small group of male singers. The first tenor soloist commences the toast and continues to lead the group. The tune develops to the upper registers of the tenor voice, sung powerfully and from time to time in chordal three- or four-part singing in free rhythm. This performance is marked by the visibly emotional engagement of the singers. Notations of such or similar part-singing are fairly rare in the material available (Bezić 1995:356). (Mus. Ex. 8)

8 Velo Grablje, 1968.

$\text{♩} = 60, \text{♪} = 120$

1. tenor (solo)
2. tenor

Bariton
Bas

0 mla - do - že - nja, na Va - še je po -
- šte - e - e - e - e - e - nje - e
da mu Bog ođ zdra - vje ve -
- se - e - e - e - e - e - je - e

A characteristic of the music-making of the Dalmatian islands is their openness towards forms of musical expression which originate in other social communities, other regions, and even other lands.

An example of this openness is seen in the wedding song *Nevjestice, d'jeli nama vina* [Little Bride, Serve Us with Wine], recorded in 1959 in an outlying part of northern Dalmatia on the island of Premuda. The song is performed according to a variant of the tune of the well-known Italian song from western Istria called *Varda la luna come che la camina* (Radole 1968:192-193, 202). This song originally belonged to the northern continental, and not the southern Mediterranean region of Italian folk music (Leydi 1973; Sorce-Keller 1994). The same basic tune with a love song text was also noted down in the same year on the island of Šolta, in a variant of the Italian melody referred to. Its tune belongs to the third style, with a Major melody performed in two parts in parallel thirds.⁸ (Mus. Ex. 9, 10 and 11)

9 $\text{♩} = 60$ Premuda, island of Premuda, 1959

Ne - vje - sti - ce, d'je - li na - ma vi - na

10 *Larghetto* Buie, 1966

Var - da la lu - na co - me che la ca - ni - na:

11 $\text{♩} = 60$ solo Grohote, Island of Šolta, 1959

Mi - la maj - ko, ša - lji me na vo - du

9

da pi - jem ja, da pi - jem ja,

10

la pas - sa j mon - ti, la pas - sa j mon...


11

gdje me moj drag', gdje me moj drag',

⁸ See: Radole 1968:192, 193, 202; Bezić 1977:44-45, 50-51.


⁸ See: Radole 1968:192, 193, 202; Bezić 1977:44-45, 50-51.

9




ša - laj(!) da pi - jem ja i sva tvo - ja dru - ži - na.

10



la pas - saj mon - ti, le va - li, la ma - ri - na.

11



gdje me moj dra - gi na vo - di - ci če - ka.

During the 1950s, a very well-known popular song was the dance tune *Sjećaš li se Splita grada / divnog grada na Jadranu* [Do you remember Split Town / a wonderful town on the Adriatic] (Tralić 1965:70-71), which had elements of Italian melodics. At that time, a young woman, who had been deserted by her fiancé, left the island of Šolta to go to America. In her distraught emotional state, she adapted the melody of the song referred to, simplifying it somewhat for her performance. In the text she called down curses on those who meddle in and destroy the love of others. Some thirty years later, that sad event and the tune of the song performed by the young woman had still not been forgotten by the villagers of Grohote on the island of Šolta (Bezić 1991:12-13).

Individual examples of orally disseminated popular ecclesiastical songs adopted by the inhabitants of the Dalmatian islands in their musical world are found among phenomena showing the adaptation of the music-making of others. They include melodically highly developed final parts of what are otherwise recitative tunes for *čitanje* [reading]: for example, what was formerly the 12th reading for Easter Saturday, *U dni one Nabukodonosor kralj* [In the days of Nebuchadnezzar the King], noted down in 1968 in Sućuraj on the island of Hvar. Indirect help in solving the question of the highly probable Italian origins of such melodic curves can be found in a notation of the tune of that 12th reading, made on the island of Lošinj in the Gulf of Quarnero. It was found and published by the Austrian musicologist Robert Lach in the first years of the 20th century (Lach 1904-1905:339).

A major part of popular church singing on the Dalmatian islands is connected with the Roman Catholic Western Christian liturgy which was conducted in the Church Slavic (Old Slavic) language, and also in the ancient Croatian vernacular. One of the forms of this type of musical expression was the singing of songs in octosyllabic verses. Lay members of the congregation regularly took part in such singing. Because of the relatively free formation of

the melodic curves and rhythmical patterns, evident differences gradually developed in the tonal interrelations of tunes from diverse localities, either on the same island or on different islands.

We will mention two examples from the older tradition. The first is a couplet with a short text rendered in very drawn-out melismatic singing, becoming a relatively long fragment from *Gospin plač* [Our Lady's Weeping] which is sung in procession on the night between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. These particular processions set out simultaneously from 6 settlements on the Island of Hvar, visiting churches in the remaining five — the melodic curve of the tunes they sing are from the first style with elements of chromatics. The tune from Jelsa performed by two singers in one part is carefully co-ordinated so that it seems as if only one performer is singing, the tune gradually increases in intonation and strengthens dynamically, then to fall and become weaker (Žganec 1965:452). (Mus. Ex. 12)

12
Largo con espressione Jelsa, 1962

0 0 | - - | su - - - - | su - - - - | se - - - - e - - - - , Bo - - - - | bo - - - - žji - - - - ji - - - - | si - - - - si - - - - ne - - - - | e - - - -

The second example from the older tradition is sung on the northern Dalmatian islands. It is found in the singing of longer songs in symmetrical octosyllabic verses performed by two groups of singers alternating simple two-part tunes and certain constant metrorhythmical patterns. Particularly from the 17th century onwards, *Our Lady's Weeping* and other songs were shaped in the same manner. An example of simple music-making of this type with evident characteristics of local secular traditional singing is found in the two-part tune of *Blagoslov puka* [Blessing of the People], which called down a blessing on the ecclesiastic and secular authorities and on all the inhabitants of a particular area. The recording from the island of Ist dating from 1958 presents a tune in small scope in the second style (Bezić 1965:572-574, 580). (Mus. Ex. 13)

13

Ist, Island of Ist, 1958

♩ = 120

Po - slu - šaj - te svi kr - šća - ni ki ste ov - de na sve stra - ne. _____

Po - slu - šaj - te ra - di Bo - ga bla - go - slo - va sa - da mo - ga. _____

A completely different manner of musical expression is reflected in the tune for the song *Pismu novu svi pivajmo* [Let Us All Sing a New Song] performed in the nine-day devotions — the novena — sung before Christmas. It comes from Grohote on the island of Šolta. (Mus. Ex. 14)

14

Grohote, Island of Šolta 1959

♩ = 96 Soloist - male (Molto libero) ♩ = 120 (♩ = 60) soloist - female ♩ = 132 (♩ = 44)

Pi - smu no - vu svi pi - va - aj - mo! Pi - va - juć se iz - mi - ni - mo!

♩ = 60
Women
Mi od Sin - ka za - pi - va - aj - mo!

♩ = 60
Male soloist and men
Mi od Sin - ka za - pi - va - aj - mo!

(va _____)

Mi od Maj - ke ot - pi - va - aj - mo!

Slower ♩ = 48

Sin - ka s Maj - kom sla - vi - mo

Sin - ka s Maj - kom sla - vi - mo

It, too, was performed by two groups of singers, singing alternatively, in two parts, and sometimes in three parts in the Major (Bezić 1991:18, 34). The text of the song was published in Venice in 1805 in a collection called *Pisne duhovne različne sastavljene od neki mnogo poštovani carkovnjakov za većju slavu Božju ... razređene i na svitlost date od pripošt. Don Matija Čulića, kanunika splitske carkve* [Various spiritual songs composed by certain highly respected men of the Church for the greater glory of God... classified and brought to the light of day by Don Matija Čulić, Canon of the Split Church]. The tune from Grohote is one of the variants of the tune sung by lay singers from the town of Split.⁹ It should be mentioned along with this example that individual church tunes also came to the Dalmatian islands from other diocesan centres, from Zadar, and also from Šibenik to the nearby islands.

⁹ Kalogjera 1920:76; in 1983, Ljubo Stipišić made a gramophone record — *Puče moj: Starohrvatski crkveni pučki napjevi iz Splita (Veli Varoš) i okolice (Stobreč, Vranjic, Solin)* [My People: Old Croatian Popular Church Songs from Split (Veli Varoš) and its Surrounding Area (Stobreč, Vranjic, Solin)] (Jugoton, LSY-63201, A/2) — with a variant of that Split tune.

Presenting these selected examples of diversity in the musical expression of the Croats from the Dalmatian islands, I wanted indirectly to put forward the assumption that this very diversity in their music-making and a certain connection with the musical expression of the neighbouring Italian people can be regarded as being Adriatic-Mediterranean, and, in a broader framework, as showing partly Mediterranean characteristics.

It was because of these characteristics that the music-making of the Dalmatian islands was virtually ignored within the *folk music* research framework, that is, within the framework of research concentrated on Croatian, peasant, old and domestic, between the 1920s and the 1970s. The paradigm, *folklore music*, introduced in Croatia during the 1970s, was directed at the process of musical communication in small human groups (also including the communities of the geographically Croatian Mediterranean region). Consequently, the question of global definitions remains outside the scope of the narrower scholarly interest (Ceribašić 1998:54-57).

Recent interpretative ethnomusicology tries to comprehend music *in culture* or even *as culture* (Herndon & McLeod 1990), that is, as a symbolic expression of a particular culture. Within this framework, the question of *where the Mediterranean begins in Croatian music* becomes even more intriguing. In our opinion, the specificity of the mixture and diversity in the music of the Croatian Mediterranean is one of its essential features. It is in this aspect that the music of the Croatian Mediterranean region complies with the universal human objective of developing and improving relations between different countries and different cultures. Perhaps for that very reason the question — *Where does the Mediterranean begin in Croatian music?* — is becoming a relevant theme in ethnomusicological scholarly research.

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DALMATINSKI OTOCI — GEOGRAFSKI PRIZNATO
MEDITERANSKO PODRUČJE — KRAJEVI OČIGLEDNIH
RAZLIKA U GLAZBENOM IZRAŽAVANJU
NJIHOVA STANOVNIŠTVA

SAŽETAK

U nastojanju da pokaže temeljna obilježja tradicijske glazbe dalmatinskih otoka —
— geografski priznatoga hrvatskoga mediteranskoga područja — autor je krenuo od
dostupnoga glazbenog gradiva, prikupljenoga u proteklih stotvadesetak godina. Pokazali su se
različiti stilovi glazbovanja, i u istom kraju i na različitim otocima, zabilježeni u različitim
razdobljima. Međusobno različitih bilo je i među primjerima koji su bili zabilježeni otprilike u
isto vrijeme. Rad izlaže primjere različitih oblika glazbenoga izražavanja u napjevima
koledarskih pjesama, kao i u napjevima svadbenih pjesama i primjerima crkvenog pučkog
pjevanja.

Glazbovanje dalmatinskih otočana odlikuje i njihova otvorenost prema oblicima
glazbenoga izražavanja što potječu iz drugih društvenih sredina, iz drugih krajeva, tako i iz
susjedne Italije. To vrijedi i za zabavno plesne melodije i za poneke napjeve tradicionalnoga
otočkog crkvenog pučkog pjevanja. Autor smatra da su upravo miješanje stilova i raznolikosti
u glazbi dalmatinskih otočana jedno od njezinih bitnih obilježja.

Ključne riječi: glazba, Mediteran, dalmatinski otoci