

**Jerko Bezić**

## URBAN FOLK SONGS FROM DALMATIA AS A SUBJECT OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH

### Summary

The paper begins with a description of the main musical characteristics of the Dalmatian urban folk song and with an explanation of the term itself. The adjective 'urban', admittedly, conceals the fact that these songs have been sung also in villages ever since the early part of the twentieth century, but it is justified by the urban or suburban origins of the majority of these songs. Characteristically, some of them come from small townships in which urban and rural ways of life exist side by side. The development of musical culture in Dalmatian cities and towns, coupled with more developed tonal relationships, resulted in the nineteenth century in the appearance of the major key in folk singing. In this sense, the adjective 'urban' indirectly points to musically more developed tunes.

A survey of works and collections shows that all researchers, from the end of the nineteenth century, till 1977 (F. K. Kuhač, L. Kuba, V. Bersa, B. Širola, A. Dobronić, V. Žganec, S. Bombardelli, J. Bezić) have considered the Dalmatian urban folk song as a valid subject of ethnomusicological research. Since the material already collected contains a number of different strata, some of the above-mentioned researchers have emphasized the multilayering properties of Dalmatian urban folk songs.

Dobronić classified the folk music which he had recorded in his native town of Jelsa on the Island of Hvar (cf. manuscript collection No. 71 N kept at the Institute of Folklore Research, formerly Institute of Folk Art). Bombardelli noted the multilayering properties of the Dalmatian urban folk song in accordance with its different sources. He supposed these sources to have influenced the development of the Dalmatian urban folk song: the Gregorian chant, the song-books from the National Revival period in mid-nineteenth century, various Italian (or Mediterranean) influences, popular songs, and hits with the characteristics of folk songs. J. Bezić — working with Lj. Stipišić, E. Tudor, and J. Veršić — classified the 'klapa songs' (Dalmatian urban folk songs sung by 'klape', i. e. groups of 5—8 singers) into the following prominent types: (1) traditional Dalmatian 'klapa songs', (2) Dalmatian 'klapa songs' with elements of church singing, (3) Dalmatian 'klapa songs' with elements of Italian or, more broadly, Mediterranean tunes, (4) composed Dalmatian 'klapa songs', (5) songs originating from northern parts of Yugoslavia, and eastern Central Europe.

The diversity of Dalmatian urban folk song can be illustrated by the musical examples given in this paper. Illustrations 2 and 3 are examples of 'klapa songs' with local musical features from the region of Split and Trogir. Illustrations 5a and 5b give two almost identical tunes with different texts written in the same metre. An Italian song

recorded at Piran and versions of the same tune with Croatian lyrics recorded on the Islands of Solta and Premuda and in the city of Split are given in illustrations 7, 8, 9 and 10. Illustrations 11 and 12 are examples of successful compositions from the inter-war period, which are sung freely even today without relying on the composers' original score. Illustration 13 is a song which reached Dalmatia from the northern parts of Yugoslavia, and 14 is a 'klapa song' with elements of long-drawn folk church singing.

Why the Dalmatian urban folk song constantly was a subject of ethnomusicological researches? The reason is that — in the past as well as in our time — the Dalmatian urban folk song was viewed by researchers as a musical phenomenon performed freely and spontaneously, listened to and accepted by others in the same free manner, and then transmitted to new listeners. Throughout this process there appeared and are still appearing variants of tunes, mutual adaptations of local and new, foreign imported musical elements, sometimes even entire tunes.

Dalmatian urban folk songs, with their diverse origins, offer to the ethnomusicologists very interesting material which is able to prove certain up-to-date theories of folklore and folk music (D. Ben-Amos, M. Bošković-Stulli, Alan P. Merriam, V. Vodušek). According to these views, folk music should be studied first from the point of view of its life, acceptance and dissemination, and then from the point of view of its content and form.

(Translated by Vladimir Ivir)