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**Zdravko Blažeković: *Glazba osjenjena politikom. Studije o hrvatskoj glazbi između 17. i 19. stoljeća* [Music in the Shadows of Politics. Studies on Croatian Music between Seventeenth and Nineteenth Century], Zagreb, Matica hrvatska, 2002, 312, ISBN 953-150-672-8**

More than seventy studies<sup>1</sup> extending to very different topics and methodological concepts present the main part of the rich musicological opus of Zdravko Blažeković.<sup>2</sup> Writings on Croatian history of music and historiography, cultural politics as a context of musical life, on the *credo* of individual composers, performers, and music writers, as well as on iconography questions from the middle ages to the 19th century and first half of the 20th century, testify to Blažeković's manifold interests.

In the fifty-seventh book of the Mala knjižnica Matice hrvatske edition, among the publications dedicated to a wider audience, the musicological writings of Zdravko Blažeković or, rather, part of them are presented in fifteen papers related to the different topics of Croatian musical heritage from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ten papers, written between 1983-1996 and published in the Croatian, English and German in music journals (*Zvuk*, *Zadarska revija*, *International review of the aesthetics and sociology of music*, *Musikethnologische Sämmlbande*, *Studia musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, *International Journal of Musicology*, *Dance research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*) and collections of works (*Glazbeni barok u Hrvatskoj/ Music Baroque in Croatia*, ed. Enio Stipčević, Osor, 1989) have been revised and extended with new conclusions for this edition. Five papers, in addition to the foregoing, have been published for the first time and they include those dedicated, on one hand, to Croatian music (*Politika u hrvatskoj operi druge polovice devetnaestog stoljeća/ Politics in Croatian opera of the second half of the 19th century*) and, on the other, to Zagreb's musical life (*Prva dva desetljeća Hrvatskog pjevačkog društva "Kolo", 1862-1880/ The early decades of the Hrvatsko Pjevačko Društvo Kolo /1862-1880/; Narodni zemaljski glazbeni zavod, 1860-1880; Zaboravljena pjevačka i glazbena društva u Zagrebu, 1860-1880/*

<sup>1</sup> Among them are three monographs: M.A. thesis *Društveni i politički aspekti muzičkog života u Zagrebu, 1860-1883* (Social and political aspects of music life in Zagreb, 1860-1883), defended at the Music Academy in Zagreb in 1983; Ph.D. thesis *Music in Medieval and Renaissance Astrological Imagery*, defended at The City University of New York in 1997, forthcoming; and the book written on the basis of archival research, *Katalozi muzikalija u Historijskom arhivu i Muzeju grada Dubrovnika 1 (Catalogues of Music in the Historical archive and the City Museum in Dubrovnik 1)*, Zagreb, Zavod za muzikološka istraživanja JAZU, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Beside papers, the results of author's musicological activity include numerous comprehensive book reviews of different topics, then units for Croatian, German, American encyclopedias, archival research, radio and TV broadcasting. It is necessary to mention also various editing work: Blažeković is executive editor of the *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature* (International Center, New York), then the main editor of the leading iconography journal, *Music in Art* (New York), the editor of the units related to the Southeastern Europe in significant *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik begründet von Friedrich Blume* (Kassel, Basel, London, New York, Prague, Stuttgart, Weimar), of numerous collections of papers, and international research projects, to mention only the most important.

Forgotten choral and instrumental societies in Zagreb /1860-1880/; Kućno muziciranje u Zagrebu/ Music making in salons of Zagreb).

In spite of the fact that the publication contains papers written in different times, the author's exceptionally meticulous selection of texts established not only general unity at the micro-structural level, but also links within the structure itself, and the result of it is the unity of the monograph as a whole. Except for the first paper, which has a specific role in the dramaturgy of the entire book, other papers are arranged in two groups within synchronic-diachronic coordinates: namely, the first part includes panoramic views of specific problems such as the musical life of the city or individual compositions like patriotic songs or dances, while the second one is based on a consideration of different forms of Zagreb's musical life, such as the activities of individual institutions (the *Kolo* Choral Society, Narodni zemaljski glazbeni zavod, The Zagreb Opera, choral and music societies, folk ensembles), salon music-making and the activities of musicians in the context of their professional guest appearances Zagreb, or their social status. All papers in the second group are given within the contextual frame of the first paper of the second part of the book, *Na razmeđu hrvatske, mađarske i austrijske politike (1860-1883)*/ On the crossroads of Croatian, Hungarian, and Austrian politics (1860-1883).

Beyond this synchronic order, however, it is possible to reveal a diachronic one, too: as noted in the preface, the first group of the papers is related to a study of Croatian music of the first half of the 19th century, including a retrospective view of the previous centuries, while the texts from the second group deal with the same issues in the second half of the century, more precisely from 1860, when the October Diploma came into effect, to 1883, when Khuen-Héderváry was appointed Croatian *ban*. This is yet another dramaturgical strategy of the author, which achieves unity of the entire book.

The publication is focused on 19<sup>th</sup>-century Croatian, mainly Zagreb musical life – on music “in the shadows of politics”. Such a conception of (Croatian) music emerged from the author's musicological *credo* expressed in the first paper, *Anonymus vs. onymous ili Kada će hrvatska muzikologija prepoznati svoga neznanog skladatelja*/ Anonymus vs. onymous, or, When will Croatian musicology remember its unknown composer. In it, Blažeković not only constituted a thesis about the new, fully embracing history of (in this case, Croatian) music, but subsequent papers directly embody this idea. The author, namely, tends to replace “the structures of Croatian music's historical continuity based on concatenating individual composers” with a consideration of the “features of musical phenomena” (p. 12), so that the writing of a national music history “should begin by defining its canon” (p. 9). He did this himself, taking into account Croatia's political and social history defined by overlapping circles, which were variously presented (the Mediterranean cultural circle, Austrian-Hungarian, German-Franco area, Ottoman cultural circle). By decoding the signs of these circles, the author re/constructed the history of Croatian music as a manifestation of a much wider cultural and social-political context, that is, of culture studies, showing his professional orientation toward new musicology.

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Bearing in mind this orientation, and especially because of the obvious connections between Croatian and Serbian cultures, not only regarding 19th-century musical life and music but also the music writings of this period, this book by Zdravko Blažeković is a precious indicator to Serbian musicologists in their consideration of the music of past centuries, in the shadows of politics.

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