

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”: (RE)CONNECTING SERBIA AND DALMATIA AT CONCERTS OF DALMATIAN PERFORMERS IN BELGRADE

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Abstract: *Less than a decade after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991, some musicians from the former country started giving concerts in new post-Yugoslav spaces, provoking divergent reactions. One particular kind of musician has drawn the attention of audiences in Serbia: musicians from Dalmatia whose music is recognized as “typically Dalmatian”. Even though the texts of many of these songs refer to Dalmatia (and Croatia) itself, to a town in Dalmatia, or to Dalmatian music (such as Dalmatinska lipa pismo moja [‘My Beautiful Dalmatian Song’]), this kind of music was never marked as “nationalistic” or “Croatian” in Serbia and former Yugoslavia. On the contrary, it provokes positive feelings related to universal categories (love, past, youth, summer), and can also trigger specific Yugonostalgic recollections. I here discuss the reception of Dalmatian music in contemporary Serbia by pointing to ways in which the concept of Dalmatian music has changed since Yugoslav times, and by showing how these changes correspond with divergent political contexts that have shaped the ways this music is listened to. I analyse two kinds of concerts held in Belgrade in 2000s: those clearly labelled as Dalmatian, such as More, more: Veče dalmatinskih pesama (‘Sea, sea: An Evening of Dalmatian Songs’), and those given by various singers from Dalmatia.*

This article examines the reception of Dalmatian music and of performers from Dalmatia in contemporary Serbia. By discussing the potential political implications of enjoyment of these concerts, my aim is to show how they provoke multifarious reactions and how they help to encourage a certain (more or less) sentimental remembrance of the past. To understand the relevance of this phenomenon, it is first necessary to explicate the position and the cultural meanings of Dalmatia, especially in socialist Yugoslavia; secondly, it is crucial to define what in fact Dalmatian music is, or what it is supposed to be, and what kinds of associations it can evoke. After discussing Dalmatia and its music, I will examine the reception of this kind of music in Serbia in 2000s.

THE POSITION OF DALMATIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DALMATIAN POP MUSIC

Dalmatia is a coastal region in Croatia bordering on the Adriatic Sea. The Dalmatian coast was one of the main features of a common Yugoslav cultural space, a perfect holiday destination and the centre of many cultural manifestations and musical festivals. However, the process did not happen spontaneously; the development of tourism and culture along the Yugoslav coast was an element of state policy which included a few associated strategies.

In the early 1950s the Yugoslav government introduced a social tourism program designed to “turn workers into tourists” with the help of state-sponsored excursions and the establishment of subsidized holiday centres, most of which were located on the Adriatic coast.¹ This program also reflected an important aspect of the cult of labour: the emergence of leisure practices under the auspices of the state. This leisure aspect was important not only for true leisure activities, such as holidays, but also became a central component of youth experience as well as an object of interest to the planners of voluntary labour activities who sought to attract young people while upholding core Yugoslav communist principles. Social tourism was promoted by means of financial privileges, such as price reductions and annual holiday allowances (paid leave was a constitutional entitlement) and the construction of special holiday centres for workers.² All these elements helped to create and promote the “new socialist man” – a concept that embodied an ideal of the modern worker, who was efficient at work and organized in holiday planning. Additionally, the state tourist development program also recognized that the principle of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* (‘brotherhood and unity’)³ could be realized through the peaceful coexistence of contented workers relaxing at the beach. Hence, the promotion of tourism was seen as a means of creating Yugoslav awareness among the population.⁴ The average Yugoslav was thus given the opportunity to visit the seaside regularly, which almost always meant going to the Croatian Adriatic coast.

1 Igor Duda: “Workers into Tourists: Entitlements, Desires, and the Realities of Social Tourism under Yugoslav Socialism”, in: *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s–1980s)*, eds. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor. Budapest: Central European University Press, pp. 33–68. Cf. Dragan Popović: “Youth Labor Action (*Omladinska radna akcija, ORA*) as Ideological Holiday-Making”, in: *Ibidem*, pp. 279–303.

2 Combined with the European twentieth-century idea that no one should spend holidays at home, and taking Yugoslav living standards and the level of economic development into account, these two stipulations constituted a perfect setting for social tourism. Karin Taylor and Hannes Grandit: “Tourism and the Making of Socialist Yugoslavia: an Introduction”, in: *Ibidem*, pp. 303–334.

3 The concept was at the core of socialist Yugoslav politics, based on the idea that the peoples of Yugoslavia represented one socialist nation (and not just a mixture of a few different national units).

4 Grandits and Taylor, *Yugoslavia’s Sunny Side*, p. 6.

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

Along with this process of holiday promotion, and in fact as a part of it, a Yugoslav popular music culture emerged in the 1950s through the development of local festivals, radio programs and a recording industry.⁵ A number of important music festivals were founded in Yugoslavia in the second half of the twentieth century: *Zagreb* in 1953, *Opatija* in 1958, *Melodije Jadrana Split* ('Adriatic Melodies Split') in 1960, *Beogradsko proleće* ('Belgrade Spring') in 1961, and *Vaš šlager sezone* ('Your *Schlager* of the Season') in Sarajevo in 1967,⁶ all of them labeled as Yugoslav popular music festivals and modelled after the *Sanremo festival*.⁷ Local popular music at that time was usually referred to as *zabavna muzika* (music for fun, "entertainment" or "light" music). Jazz, pop, and by the end of the 1950s, rock and roll were the styles of popular music that were being listened to in Yugoslavia and around the world. The Yugoslav popular music scene was characterized, on one hand, by compositions and performances that were recognized as "typical," "expected," and "appropriate" for Yugoslavia, and, on the other hand, by music disparaged for being under "foreign," "Western," or "inappropriate" influences. Throughout the 1950s, Yugoslavia's cultural and political elites called for the development of a Yugoslav popular music culture with domestically produced songs that would not only meet people's needs for entertainment and better reflect everyday life in Yugoslavia but would also remain in line with the state ideology.⁸

5 By the late 1950s, the institutional foundations for a Yugoslav popular music culture were set: radio and television stations, festivals and record companies were all ready to produce and promote the soundtracks that would accompany the subsequent decades of Yugoslav history. Cf. Jelena Arnautović: *Između politike i tržišta: Popularna muzika na Radio Beogradu u SFRJ*. Beograd: RTS, 2012.

6 The above-mentioned are just the most representative. The complete list includes numerous festivals founded in the 1960s across the whole Yugoslav territory, among them *Slovenska popevka* ('Slovenian song'), *Skopje* ('Skopje') and *Akordi Kosova* ('Chords of Kosovo'). Furthermore, there were many regional festivals, such as: *Melodije Istre i Kvarnera* ('Melodies of Istria and Kvarner', not located in one place) and *Festival dalmatinskih klapa* ('Dalmatian *klapa* festival' in Omiš). For a complete listing of the festivals in Yugoslavia cf. Ana Perinić: "Galebovi umiru pjevajući: stereotipi dalmatinske zabavne ljubavne pjesme", in: *Split i drugi: Kulturnoantropološki i kulturnoistorijski prilozi*, eds. Ines Prica and Tea Škorić. Zagreb: Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, 2007, pp. 82–83.

7 Cf. Dean Vuletić: "Generation Number One: Politics and Popular Music in Yugoslavia in the 1950s", *Nationalities Papers* 36 (2008), p. 871.

8 *Ibidem*, p. 861. The development of a Yugoslav popular music culture at this time was not only rooted in international cultural trends but also shaped by the domestic and foreign policies pursued by the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav communists' behavior in international affairs was politically decisive for the development of Yugoslav popular music in the 1950s. Most important was their split with the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites in 1948, when the Communist Information Bureau expelled Yugoslavia from its ranks and withdrew all of its economic and technical aid after Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito refused to submit to Soviet political domination. Soon after, the communist party abandoned a Soviet-style cultural politics that had condemned popular music as a cultural, political, and social threat from the West; now that it sought economic and political support

Some of the most prominent festivals of Yugoslav popular music took place in coastal towns and were usually named after them (*Split*, *Opatija*). The *Opatija Festival*, launched in 1958 and conceived as the premier showcase for Yugoslav popular music, attracted composers, musicians, singers and songwriters from all over Yugoslavia, and thus came to be seen as the first pan-Yugoslav popular music festival. Opatija had long been one of the most glamorous destinations on the Adriatic, and before World War I it was a popular coastal resort for the Austro-Hungarian élite. In 1958 it brought together a new élite for a new purpose; the *Opatija Festival* was conceived by its organizer, the state broadcaster Yugoslav Radio and Television, as an event designed to promote domestic pop. The first popular music festival in Yugoslavia was the *Zagreb Festival*, which began in 1953; but the *Opatija Festival* was the first to be conceived as a pan-Yugoslav event. The location of the festival also suggested that it had not only a cultural but also a geopolitical significance: situated in a region that had been part of Italy during the interwar period, the *Opatija Festival* symbolized the intensification of cultural relations between Yugoslavia and the West in the 1950s, and it was even modelled on Italy's leading popular music festival in Sanremo.⁹ The Split festival also helped to create music stars in Yugoslavia, some of whom hold this status even today. Dalmatian music, heard at the seaside and usually during the summer, was promoted as an acceptably Yugoslav music and celebrated in the festivals organized in the coastal region, especially in Split, which was clearly designated "the sea festival".¹⁰

DALMATIAN STEREOTYPES: WHAT MAKES MUSIC SOUND "DALMATIAN"?

There are specific links between geographical regions and the kinds of music they produce, and Dalmatian music was shaped from the very beginning to

from the West, it opened up Yugoslavia to Western cultural influences. Thus, during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s Yugoslavia was deemed more open to Western culture than other socialist countries, going through a process of "Americanisation", and producing a very specific culture that seemed to make it "the West of the East". Radina Vučetić: "Rokenrol na Zapadu Istoka. Slučaj *Džuboks*", *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* 13 (2006), pp. 71–88. Cf. Ana Petrov: "A Window towards the West: Yugoslav Concert Tours in the Soviet Union", in: *Serbian Music: Yugoslav Contexts*, ed. Melita Milin and Jim Samson. Belgrade: Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2014, pp. 127–142.

- 9 Dean Vuletić: "The making of a Yugoslav popular music industry", *Popular Music History* 6 (2011) 3, p. 270.
- 10 Many Croatian coastal festivals helped to promote *klapa* singing, as well as constructing the concept of the Mediterranean. Cf. Nevena Škrbić Alempijević and Rebeka Mesarić Žapčić: "Croatian Coastal Festivals and the Construction of the Mediterranean", *Studia ethnologica Croatica*, 22 (2010), pp. 317–337.

reflect specific elements. The development of tourism and the promotion of the Dalmatian coast as a perfect holiday destination were founded on certain stereotypes associated with this region, referring to gender, landscape and soundscape. In addition to the obvious natural beauty and cultural landmarks that could be found in all tourist guides in the second half of the twentieth century, there was also a very popular myth that supposedly helped in the promotion of the region: the myth of Dalmatian lovers, known as seagulls. This stereotype was strong enough to be found in most of the texts of the Dalmatian songs, as well as in the image of Dalmatian male performers. For instance, the Split festival was instantly recognizable by the image of the performers, who were dressed casually, in accordance with the identity of the vagabond or Mediterranean lover they were singing about, with obligatory characteristics that included dark, usually longer hair, moustaches, and sometimes golden jewellery.¹¹ The actual seagull (the bird) became a symbol of the freedom, loneliness, and wandering intangibility of the lyric subject in the songs, i. e. the singer himself.¹²

Another stereotype refers to the landscape. The cover photos of most of the Dalmatian performers' albums regularly depict landmarks and symbols of Dalmatia. There is no difference between the albums that actually include songs about Dalmatia and those that just have love songs. The love of a woman is thus firmly connected with the love of one's country. In other words, love songs are rarely just love songs; they usually have at least implicit national connotations. The plots of the texts often deal with love for the *zavičaj* (homeland), for a specific place, a town or an island, or for the whole Dalmatian region in general. If not about a concrete location on the Dalmatian coast, then the songs address the Mediterranean landscape, the sea and its related lifestyle. There are so many songs about Split that it is considered the most sung-about city in Croatia.¹³

Additionally, Dalmatian music is itself imbued with musical stereotypes that date from its inception. Modelled after Italian music, it contains *canzone*-like melodies; these are sometimes accompanied, or performed solo by a group of a *cappella* singers called *klapa*;¹⁴ the texts are either about love or about Dalmatia

11 Majda Vojniković: “Galebovi”, in: *Leksikon yu mitologije*, <http://leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/galebovi/> (accessed on May 30, 2015).

12 Perinić: “Galebovi umiru pjevajući”, pp. 88–89.

13 Ibidem, p. 87.

14 Ethnomusicologists usually define *klapa* singing as a traditional Dalmatian group singing, whereby it is possible to distinguish two types of *klapas*: a traditional folk *klapa*, an informal group of friends, usually brought together by similar interests, age group or occupations; and a festival *klapa*, a formally organised group with regular rehearsals and performances. Cf. Joško Čaleta: “Klapa Singing, a Traditional Folk Phenomenon of Dalmatia”, *Narodna umjetnost* 34/1 (1997), p. 127. *Klapa* singing has also undergone many transformations, becoming a part of the pop music

itself, as well as about loving Dalmatia. Although the ‘sea-like’ sound is most closely associated with the music’s lyrics, it is not just the words of the songs that matter, but also the qualities of the vocals and the very language used in them. In addition to the texts, the sea stereotype is modelled with the language idiom, since a specific kind of Croatian language was expected. Unlike *Zagreb* or even *Opatija Festival* (which was organized on the seaside), *Split* was a festival strictly connected thematically with the sea, which led to a specific linguistic stylization, i. e. the sea idiom.¹⁵ The songs were regularly sung in Dalmatian dialect, whether or not the performer was in fact from this region. Even the diction, the accent and the timbre were expected to be imitated.¹⁶

Despite their direct link to a part of Croatia, *klapa* singing and the songs about Dalmatia were never considered nationalist, nor were they ever forbidden or even controversial in socialist Yugoslavia, even though at that time the promotion of a national (as against a Yugoslav) identity was highly problematic. At a time when Yugoslav identity was promulgated elsewhere, including in music, the words ‘Croatia’ or ‘Croat’ were stigmatized as being chauvinist and nationalist, and Croatian national culture was fragmented into various regional ones. As the Croatian singer Vice Vukov put it, “You were then allowed to be a Dalmatian or a Zagorac,¹⁷ but not a Croat”.¹⁸ The same attitude to nationalism was present

arrangements. On the transformations of this type of singing cf. Maja Povrzanović: “Dalmatinsko klapsko pjevanje, promjene konteksta”, *Etnološka tribina* 12 (1989), pp.89–98.

15 On the language politics in the music festivals in Croatia cf. Ivo Žanić: “Kako govori more? Jezična konstrukcija Dalmacije u hrvatskoj zabavnoj glazbi”, in: *Aktualna istraživanja u primijenjenoj lingvistici: Zbornik radova s 25. međunarodnog skupa HDPL-a održanog 12-14. svibnja 2011. u Osijeku*, ed. Leonard Pon, Vladimir Karabalić, and Sanja Cimer. Osijek, Hrvatsko društvo za primijenjenu lingvistiku, 2012, pp. 185–197.

16 The rule concerning the proper language idiom was regularly followed. Many singers from other parts of Yugoslavia performed many times at the Split festival (Miki Jevremović from Belgrade and Kemal Monteno from Sarajevo, to mention only two), always changing their accent accordingly.

17 Zagorac is an inhabitant of Zagorje, the northern Croatian region.

18 Vice Vukov: *Tvoja zemlja: sjećanja na 1971*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice Hrvatske, 2003: p. 70. Vukov was involved in *Hrvatsko proljeće* (‘Croatian spring’, a 1970s movement that tried to gain more independence for Croatia within socialist Yugoslavia), both with his music and as a member of the editorial board of *Hrvatski tjednik* (‘Croatian Weekly’). One of his performances that was marked as nationalist happened at the Split festival in 1967 when he appeared dressed in a traditional costume from Zagorje and addressed the audience with comments about this “beautiful Croatian national costume of ours”. He continued to perform during Croatian Spring, but was soon prohibited from most national radio and TV stations in Yugoslavia, remaining, however, popular in Croatia. For more on the subject cf. Dean Vuletic: “The Silent Republic: Popular Music and Nationalism in Socialist Croatia”, in: *EUI Working Papers, MWP* 20 (2011); http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/18635/MWP_Vuletic_2011_20.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed on September 1, 2014).

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

with regard to Serbian (musical) identity. If in Croatia love for Dalmatia was construed as acceptable, in Serbia it was Vojvodina. It is thus noteworthy that in 1979 the famous Serbian musician and lyricist Đorđe Balašević (from Novi Sad, Vojvodina) was a rare exception at the *Split festival* for singing in Serbian dialect (and not in Dalmatian, or even Croatian). In the “Evening of Dalmatian chanson” he won the first prize with a song entitled *Panonski mornar* (‘A Sailor from Pannonia’),¹⁹ which signalled that Vojvodina (as a part of the territory that used to be Pannonia) was another acceptable region that would not be associated with national connotations.²⁰ Thus, the potentially problematic national categories of Serbia and Croatia were dealt with by fragmenting these national entities into their constitutive regions.²¹

DALMATIAN CONCERTS IN BELGRADE IN THE 2000s

Less than a decade after the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, musicians from the former country started giving concerts in new post-Yugoslav spaces, provoking a variety of reactions, some affirmative (warm welcomes and acceptance) and others that included protests and petitions against the resurgence of the Croats in Serbia.²² One specific profile of musician drew the attention of the audience in Serbia – musicians from Dalmatia whose music is recognised as “typically Dalmatian”. As one of the most popular holiday destinations for tourists from Serbia in the period of socialist Yugoslavia, the Dalmatian coast was also one of the main elements of a common Yugoslav cultural space, and it has been transformed into one of the crucial sites for producing a common post-Yugoslav cultural memory.²³

Dalmatian music is one of the Yugoslav cultural products that has survived its contested historical past and is now incorporated into the cultural context of

19 Pannonia was an ancient province of the Roman Empire extending over what is now north-western Serbia, western Hungary, northern Slovenia, northern Croatia, eastern Austria, western Slovakia and northern Bosnia and Herzegovina.

20 In the 1990s the concept of Mediterranean identity developed from a typically region-based identity to become an important factor in the formation of the national identity of today’s Croats. As Čaleta argues, most of the Croats “see their identity rather as part of Mediterranean identity – Adriatic – or Central European identity – sub-Alpine, Pannonian – than as Balkan identity – Dinaric”. Joško Čaleta: “The Ethnomusicological Approach to the Concept of the Mediterranean in Music in Croatia”, *Narodna umjetnost* 36/1 (1999), p. 186.

21 Cf. Vuletic: “The Silent Republic”.

22 On the issues related to the former Yugoslav musicians’ concerts in Belgrade cf. Ana Petrov: “The Songs We Love to Sing and the History We Like to Remember: Tereza Kesovija’s Come Back in Serbia”, *Southeastern Europe* 39/2 (2015), pp. 192–214.

23 Cf. Stef Jansen: *Antinacionalizam: etnografija otpora u Zagrebu i Beogradu*, trans. Aleksandra Bajazetov-Vučen. Beograd: XX vek, 2000, p. 229.

post-Yugoslav times. Its 'come-back' was rather spontaneous and unproblematic, unlike the recent history of certain other musical genres and musicians in Serbia.²⁴ Focusing on the cultural politics of nostalgia, I argue that in the production of an idealized past, Dalmatian music sounds like the sea; former Yugoslavs hear it in this way, and their post-Yugoslav collectivity is produced and strengthened by what they hear. I do not wish to claim that there is a certain 'natural' sound of Dalmatian music that provokes positive reactions; I prefer to explore how Yugoslav culture has shaped the ways in which certain kinds of music is heard, i.e. how culture makes the music 'sound' Dalmatian by provoking associations with the sea and specifically with the Adriatic coast. Thus, I want to show the relevance of a theoretical consideration of the ideological potential of sound in certain cultural politics. Furthermore, although of great importance, such regional associations are not the only factors that makes this music work as it does. I here draw on research that deals with the ways certain kinds of music sound (supposedly 'naturally', i.e. due to the intrinsic characteristics of the music itself) in accordance with their cultural backgrounds.²⁵ In my research, I do not deal (or at least not only) with the ways in which music reflects a particular cultural politics, but rather focus on the productive ideological functions of this sort of music, arguing that the common Yugoslav background contributes to the formation of specific kinds of post-Yugoslav collectivities.²⁶

24 In contrast to the artists who strove to transgress the borders of national music markets, many other famous musicians adamantly refused to perform in Serbia after the wars, the best known of them being Oliver Dragojević, Tereza Kesovija, and Dino Merlin. All of them declared publicly that they did not plan to give concerts in Serbia ever again. Their statements about refusing to perform in Belgrade were often covered in the Serbian press, which led to the creation of a latent but clearly expressed negative attitude towards these musicians in public discourse. However, some of them eventually decided to give concerts in Belgrade, including Tereza Kesovija (from Croatia) and Dino Merlin (from Bosnia and Herzegovina). Not surprisingly, their change of mind provoked strong public reactions, marking the concerts as high-risk events. The most controversial were the musicians who were actually or supposedly politically engaged during the war, or those who were on some other level politically marked, regardless of their extreme popularity in Serbia. Petrov "The Songs We Love to Sing".

25 Geof Mann shows how "raced sound is surely among the more effectively imposed 'obviousnesses' that constitute ideology's 'effects': there is little in contemporary American popular culture more 'obvious' than the 'colour' of music". Because of the complex cultural and historical background, it is now literally possible to 'hear', as the author asserts, "the blackness of hip-hop or soul, the whiteness of heavy metal or country". Geof Mann: "Why does Country Music Sound White? Race and the Voice of Nostalgia", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31/1 (2008), p. 77.

26 Rather than using the terms 'community' or 'collective', I choose the term 'collectivity', which implies the flexible and non-permanent nature of a specific group of people. Cf. John Urry: *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge, 2000.

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

An important segment of my analysis (in addition to the research on the official media discourses) concerns the role of the audience, understood not as a passive mass but as an active, volatile, and transient group of individuals joined together by the act of listening to the same music.²⁷ The collective feelings experienced by the audience make it possible to identify the individual’s experience of place, which arises in part from the capacities of his or her body to produce and sense the atmosphere around it through the music that is performed. This kind of analysis, in which concerts as sites serve to shape collective feelings through a collective body, is based, on the one hand, on an understanding of the capacity of the body to sense, and, on the other, on the capacity of all bodies to affect others through gestures, bodily movements, and voice.²⁸ Since we are moved by the “proximity of others” and “we feel with and for others”,²⁹ my analysis prompts me to pose the following questions: if emotions are sociable, what is the role of music in the process of being sociable in a concert space, and how does the music affect the remembrance of the past and the experience of (past) places? I analyse the ways in which such collectivities are formed in a concrete space, at a certain time, as a result of listening to the same music.³⁰ Considering the narrative about the past according to which concerts have constituted a sort of continuation of Yugoslav culture, I argue that concert spaces can be construed as channels for reconnecting collectives, although not all of them function in the same way.

I will single out two kinds of concerts held in Belgrade in the 2000s: those clearly labelled as Dalmatian, the most typical being *More, more: Veće dalmatinskih pesama*, and those given by various singers from Dalmatia. It should be emphasized that within both groups there are different kinds of performances. In the first group there were actual concerts, held in proper concert halls, such as the aforementioned *More, more* (held in the concert hall Sava centar in 2010), or the concerts of certain *klapa* groups (such as the concert of Klapa Cambi held in Dom sindikata in 2013); but there were also evenings of Dalmatian music in restaurants, including a menu and the atmosphere of a town in Dalmatia or some other part of the Croatian coast.³¹ In the second group, similar

27 My research involved participant observation, combined with in-depth interviews, as well as the investigation of media reports related to the events.

28 Cf. Ana Petrov: “Popular Music and Producing Collectivities: The Challenges of Audience Research in Contemporary Musicology”, *Musicology* 18/8 (2015), forthcoming.

29 Sara Ahmed: “Sociable Happiness”, in: *Emotion, Space and Society* 1 (2008), p. 10.

30 For details regarding audience research from the above-mentioned perspective, cf. Petrov: “Popular Music and Producing Collectivities”.

31 In the prominent old Belgrade restaurant Šaran (‘Carp’), located on the riverbank, a traditional *Hvarski dani* (The Days of Hvar) has been held annually, during which a restaurant from the Dalmatian island of Hvar is the guest in the restaurant’s kitchen usually for the whole month. During this time, the usual musical ensemble from Šaran switches from its regular repertoire to

differences can be noticed – on the one hand, there were concerts in concert halls, on the other in clubs.³² Additionally, it should be emphasized that the performances in Belgrade were given both by old Yugoslav stars (musicians who had built their careers in Yugoslavia)³³ and by new, post-Yugoslav stars from Dalmatia, whose appearance and music were apparently imbued with connotations and implications similar to those attached to their older colleagues (such as Goran Karan and Petar Grašo). With this in mind, it is clear that rather divergent types of performances and performers can be grouped under the label ‘Dalmatian music’. However, all of them are connected with Dalmatia (with all its possible historical, cultural, and musical meanings), the very place that marked this kind of music from its beginnings, i.e. from the moment it was promoted as a sort of Yugoslav popular music. I will focus on two representative examples, one from each of the groups mentioned.

THE CONCERT *MORE, MORE: VEČE DALMATINSKIH PESAMA*

The concert under the title *More, more: Veče dalmatinskih pesama* was held in the prominent Belgrade concert hall Sava centar in December 2010.³⁴ It was a themed concert that included the well-known *klapa* groups Kampanel and Kumpanji along with some very popular musicians, some of them being old Yugoslav pop music stars such as Meri Cetinić, or well-known performers of Dalmatian music (Tedi Spalato, Vinko Coce), as well as those who were popular in the last two decades in the territory of the former country (such as Goran Karan, one of the musicians imbued with the typical image of the Dalmatian seagull). The repertoire was focused on music recognized as ‘traditional’ Dalmatian music, including many

Dalmatian and Croatian (and even general pop) music.

- 32 Popular musicians usually perform in both places: they give concerts usually once every two years, while performing in clubs meanwhile. For instance, Goran Karan, a very popular post-Yugoslav musician from Dalmatia, has given concerts regularly since 2005 in the concert hall Sava centar, but he also performed in the small Belgrade club *Kasina*. Even though his music is not of the traditional Dalmatian kind, he is recognized as a Dalmatian pop music singer, with songs that sometimes refer to this region, some of which include *klapa* singing. He has often given concerts on the occasion of March 8 (Women’s Day), some of them advertised as connected to Dalmatia. For instance, in 2010 his concert was announced in a popular Serbian newspaper as “The Sounds of Dalmatia for its Ladies”. Cf. “Zvuci Dalmacije za sve dame”, *Blic Online*, 8 March 2010, <http://www.blic.rs/Zabava/Vesti/179804/Zvuci-Dalmacije-za-sve-dame> (accessed on May 30, 2015).
- 33 One of the most famous among them is Tereza Kesovija, whose big come-back concert in 2011 was controversial since she had sworn never to perform in Belgrade, that is, in Serbia after the wars. However, the concert was a success and an extremely emotional event for both the singer and the audience. Since then she has performed many times in Belgrade in divergent solo or group concerts, and she is present in the press and on TV shows in Serbia. Thus, for her the situation has been completely normalized and reconstructed as it was before Yugoslavia broke up.
- 34 The concert was named after a famous song by Meri Cetinić.

songs about Dalmatia itself. The concert was labelled in the press as “a huge event”, announced as a performance of “authentic creations from former Yugoslavia”.³⁵ Tedi Spalato and Vinko Coce, both known as ‘typical’ Dalmatian singers, were announced as the “giants of Dalmatian music”,³⁶ and their performance was especially singled out for comment, together with Meri Cetinić, one of the so-called “Yugoslav divas”.³⁷ The *klapa* groups were also hailed as “the proof of the authenticity of Dalmatian atmosphere” and the makers of the “true sea festivity”.³⁸

The atmosphere that evening can be described as follows: the audience gave a warm welcome to the Dalmatians, obviously remembering Dalmatia itself and its music. Since Dalmatia was popular tourist destination in Yugoslavia and Dalmatian music was promulgated at the festivals on the Croatian coast, it is not surprising that many members of the audience recalled the past. Although the texts of many of these songs refer to Dalmatia itself, to a town in Dalmatia, or to Dalmatian music, this kind of music has never been marked as ‘nationalist’ or ‘Croatian’ in Serbia. On the contrary, it evokes positive feelings involving universal human categories (love, the past, youth, and summer).³⁹ The audience was in a nostalgic mood, remembering their own past holidays in Dalmatia, but also the past as characterized by love among people from different (ethnic, religious, or regional) backgrounds. This specific (historical) link made possible the “affective atmosphere” at the concert,⁴⁰ namely the link constructed between real past experiences in Dalmatia and the ‘sound’ of that

35 “Zvezde dalmatinske pesme u Beogradu”, *Blic Online*, 26 November 2010, <http://www.blic.rs/Zabava/Vesti/219977/Zvezde-dalmatinske-pesme-u-Beogradu> (accessed on June 1, 2015).

36 *Idem*.

37 In May 2012 a concert called *Dive* (‘Divas’) was given in Sava centar by Gabi Novak, Meri Cetinić, and Tereza Kesovija. In the press the event was described as the come-back of the “Yugoslav divas”. Aleksandar Nikolić: “Gabi, Meri i Tereza: povratak jugoslovenskih diva”, *Blic Online*, 29 April 2012, <http://www.blic.rs/Zabava/Vesti/319641/Gabi-Meri-i-Tereza--povratak-jugoslovenskih-diva> (accessed on June 3, 2015).

38 “Veče dalmatinskih pesama u Centru Sava”, <http://www.rts.rs/page/magazine/sr/story/431/Muzika/801838/Ve%C4%8De+dalmatinskih+pesama+u+Centru+%E2%80%9ESava%E2%80%9C.html> (accessed on June 6, 2015).

39 In Croatia, Dalmatian music can be (but it is not necessarily) labelled as implicitly nationalist. As I pointed out, it was not regarded as such during the time of the socialist Yugoslavia, but its connotations changed in the 1990s when, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, there was a need to redefine national (musical) identity. Cf. Miroslav Mavra i Lori McNeil: “Identity Formation and Music: A Case Study of Croatian Experience”, *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5/2 (2007), pp. 1–20.

40 I draw on Teresa Brennan’s concept of “affective atmosphere”. According to Brennan, atmosphere is the same as ‘environment’ and it literally ‘gets into the individual’ – something becomes present that was not there before, but that did not originate *sui generis*: it was not generated solely or sometimes even in part by the individual organism or its genes. Teresa Brennan: *Transmission of Affect*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2004, p. 1.

region. Thus, the music significantly contributed to this ‘loving atmosphere’, since it was the kind of music that people had heard during their time in Dalmatia in the Yugoslav era. ‘Love discourse’ thus played a role in the re-narrativization of the past, according to which the concerts represented a continuation of the Yugoslav ‘Golden Age’ through a kind of Yugonostalgic narrative.⁴¹ This narrative is characterized by the promulgation of a love discourse and extremely affective reactions, sometimes involving ignorance about the wars, as well as clearly expressed pleasure in the songs, and a common link with love for the former country. This was often verbalized by the performers and the audience and displayed somatically with tears of joy. Additionally, people commented on the past by connecting certain songs with their youth and their lives in the former country, often mentioning specific holidays (the season, the year) in Dalmatia, which were specifically recalled when I asked certain members of the audience why they found this music so emotional. These associations were fully justified and evoked by the music itself.⁴² In addition to their comments, I also noted that the people in the audience were mostly middle-aged and older, obviously belonging to the generations that had actually lived most of their lives in Yugoslavia, which meant that they had almost certainly spent their holidays on the Adriatic coast. From this perspective, it is quite clear that the contested (war) past was not relevant for this audience.

The event’s nostalgic atmosphere can be seen as consisting of two parts. On the one hand, there was certainly an escapist dimension: it was a performance of divergent recollections of the past, since the concert space served as a place for producing memories of past summers in Dalmatia; on the other hand, it can be said that it was a specific site of a “projection of hope”,⁴³ since it was also a means

41 There is extensive research debating the concept of Yugonostalgia. Although highly controversial and full of contradictions, the term can be generally understood as “nostalgia for Yugoslavia” and for the lost “golden age”. Monika Palmberger: “Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia for Yugoslavia as Potential Vision for a Better Future”, *Sociologija* 4 (2008), p. 359. Regarding musical practices in post-Yugoslav spaces, Yugonostalgia can refer to the capacity of (ex-Yugoslav) music to construct and (re)interpret the Yugoslav past (cf. Petrović 2007). Some authors have a more critical approach to the Yugoslav musical past, interpreting it as manipulation of this nostalgia. Zala Volčič: “Yugonostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia”, *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24/1 (2007), pp. 21–38.

42 The talk among the people in the audience during the singing at such events (most of the former Yugoslav performers provoked such reactions) included comments on the past as a time when they had enjoyed life, since in those days there was more traveling, socializing, and love than there is today. Their discourse was characterized by formulations such as “remember the time when” or “those were the times of”. They often gave very precise details about friends in Dalmatia or old loves from the youth.

43 Miško Šuvaković: *Umetnost i politika: Savremena estetika, filozofija, teorija i umetnost u vremenu globalne tranzicije*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012, p. 223.

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

for remembering the “good old times” which in fact could be brought back simply by returning to Dalmatia. I here concur with the approach to nostalgia as a potent agent of change. In positing a “once was” in relation to a “now”, nostalgia can create “a frame for meaning, a means of dramatizing aspects of an increasingly fluid and unnamed social life”.⁴⁴ Thus, songs from our past lives are nostalgic since they conjure up images of “the love we once had”,⁴⁵ but they also testify about new collectivities made on the spot, produced by listening to the same music together.⁴⁶

The idea of transnational values was deeply embedded in the concept of Dalmatian music from the start of its promotion as a kind of Yugoslav pop music. Thus, even songs with explicitly Dalmatian lyrics, such as *Dalmatinska lipa pismo moja* (‘My Beautiful Dalmatian Song’) would never be considered controversial when performed in Belgrade. However, together with other products of Yugoslav cultural space, popular music underwent political recontextualizations during the dissolution of the country. One specific song performed that evening, a typical traditional Dalmatian *fešta* (festivity) song, was subjected to a symptomatic recontextualization during the war years. This is a famous song entitled *Večeras je naša fešta* (‘Our festivity is tonight’), often sung during festivities in Dalmatia, and even nowadays often performed when a festival atmosphere is desired. However, during the war, the song gained a new version: it was reappropriated by sport fans and became a traditional song for the matches played between the teams of the former Yugoslav republics. The song is about a party with wine and songs, and the text stresses that anyone who does not join in the singing is not a Dalmatian:

Večeras je naša fešta
večeras se vino pije
nek’ se igra nek’ se piva
jer ko ne piva Dalmatinac nije.⁴⁷

The song sung in the 1990s by supporters of the Serbian national sports teams kept the same melody, but the verses they sang referred to their pleasure at the

44 Kathleen Stewart: “Nostalgia – a Polemic”, *Cultural Anthropology* 3/3 (1988), p. 227.

45 For a similar analysis of nostalgia in music, cf. Mann: “Why does country music sound white?”, pp. 73–100.

46 For an approach to nostalgia as a potent category rather than an escapist tendency, cf. Tanja Petrović: *Yurop: Jugoslovensko nasleđe i politike budućnosti u postjugoslovenskim društvima*. Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2012, pp. 122–154.

47 Tonight is our festivity,
The wine should be drunk
Let’s dance, let’s sing
Because the one who doesn’t sing is not a Dalmatian.

killing of Croatian president Franjo Tuđman:⁴⁸ “Večeras je naše večer, / Večeras se Tuđman peče”.⁴⁹ The song gained popularity after an incident during the European basketball championship in 1995 when the Yugoslav team won a gold and the Croatian team a silver medal. During the final ceremony, when the hymn *Hej, Sloveni* (‘Hey, the Slavs’)⁵⁰ was played, the Croatian team left the hall in protest. A few days later, during the official reception organized in Belgrade to honour the Serbian winners, one of the players on the Serbian team, Dejan Tomašević, while addressing a crowd in front of the City Hall who had come to welcome the winning team, sang the altered Dalmatian song, which was greeted by cheers from the audience.⁵¹ This, however, was not the only performance of the song – it was regularly used when necessary to provoke the opposing team during sport matches in the 1990s and later.

Given this re-contextualization of the song, it could be expected that its performance in Belgrade might be interpreted as a provocation. This presumption is confirmed by the fact that Vinko Coce actually tried to change the text, avoiding any mention of Dalmatia. However, he did not succeed in this intention because the audience in the hall was loudly singing the original text, having no problem enunciating the words: “the one who doesn’t sing is not a Dalmatian”. Although Coce started to sing “Ko ne piva taj za društvo nije”,⁵² the audience was simultaneously singing the original words, so that one could hear both the words “is not for company” and the words “is not a Dalmatian”.⁵³ The audience’s singing was accompanied by the *klapa* finally leading to Coce singing alone his version of the text, which he eventually changed, going back to the original song. Some members of the audience even laughed because of this alteration, continuing to sing the verses they knew. With the war context in mind, I wondered if it were possible that the altered song was actually not so well known. However, since both sports and the war received intense media coverage during the 1990s, it is very unlikely that people were not aware of the re-contextualization of the song.

48 There is also a Croatian version with the name “Sloba” (referring to Slobodan Milošević) instead of Tuđman.

49 “Tonight is our night, / Tonight Tuđman is burned”.

50 The hymn of the former socialist Yugoslavia, still used by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – as Serbia and Montenegro were known until 2006. Even though it was still in use rather long after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, it was officially considered highly inappropriate since its text promotes the unity of the Slavs.

51 The event is available on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZExsJ9fI88> (accessed on June 3, 2015).

52 The one who doesn’t sing is not for company.

53 The scene is available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eImlJvPu1o> (accessed on June 6, 2015).

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

Still, they simply did not connect these two versions, associating the fan version only with the problematic sports fans. This was exactly what I was told when I discussed the issue with some of the people in the audience: even those who had heard about it did not connect the original song with the problematic sports incidents, nor would they have any problem singing the song that evening in Sava centar. It can be concluded that in the audience there was a (re)production of the stereotypes (the sea, love, Dalmatia, the music), and there was also a clear reference to the past (here meaning the Yugoslav past and not the 1990s war past). Also, it is evident that the real contexts of the songs were neutralized and the audience was transported into an ideal, imaginary realm. By imaginary realm I mean that the obviously Yugonostalgic audience understood the music in the context of bygone days which were no longer possible in any context other than an event such as a themed concert of Dalmatian music.

DALMATIAN PERFORMERS IN *BAŠTA KOD JUGE* (‘THE GARDEN AT YUGA’S’)

The term ‘Juga/Yuga’ is a kind of a pet name for Yugoslavia, mostly used in nostalgic narratives according to which everything was once better than it is now. The ‘Juga’ in the present instance is the Hotel *Jugoslavija*, one of the oldest luxury hotels in the former country and a symbol of the Yugoslav era. It opened in 1969 as one of the grandest hotels in the region, and hosted celebrities and high officials visiting Belgrade. During the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, the hotel was hit by missiles, damaging the west wing. Part of the hotel was used as a barracks for paramilitary forces during the 1990s. One wing was reopened as the Grand Casino Beograd, and a part of the former main hotel entrance is now a place called the Intergalactic Diner. The venue *Bašta kod Juge*, placed directly at the Danube bank, was opened in 2013 as a restaurant during the daytime and a club at night, in the style of a typical Mediterranean club in the coastal region. It has a very specific position, being almost a part of the spooky building of the hotel *Jugoslavija*. The performers in this club have often been Croatian stars, especially Dalmatian ones, which can be connected to the club’s distinctive ‘sea’ atmosphere. One of the performers was a Dalmatian singer who gained popularity in the 1990s and has embodied the stereotypical seagull image: Petar Grašo, who performed there once in 2013 and again in 2014.

Reflecting on the atmosphere he was bringing to Belgrade in an interview given for the organizers of the event in 2014, the singer stated the following:

Donosim Dalmaciju, odnosno dalmatinsku glazbu, možda bolje rijeći mediteransku, jer ja nisam klasična dalmatinska glazba, ne, ja sam, zapravo,

više more, ja sam more. Postoji uticaj Italije, ali, da, ja donosim more u Beograd. Dakle, večeras, osjetićete more. Ima dovoljno sunca u Beogradu, ali nema mora, tako da ja donosim more sa sobom vječeras.⁵⁴

He continued to produce this ‘sea discourse’ in abundance during his performance. The atmosphere, which for me was highly intriguing, had a very specific latent Yugoslav connotation (with the hotel in the dark behind the singer), that was different from the one I mentioned in my first example. There were many younger people in the audience, and some of them told me that they simply did not relate this place or the music to Yugoslavia. For them, it was just regular Belgrade clubbing. For others, on the other hand, recollections of both ‘Yugoslavia’s’ (the country and the hotel) were rather vivid. Thus, this happening was a spot for intertwined and mixed collective feelings. There was less cultural memory involved during the performance and more real contemporary Serbian clubbing culture. However, the stereotypes were certainly present, especially in the singer’s discourse and in the official media discourse (for instance, in the reviews of Grašo’s performance) – this singer connected himself explicitly with Dalmatia, which for him mostly meant the sea. Dalmatia in this context could not be understood as a holiday destination in the same way it could in socialist Yugoslavia, but rather as a destination that is nearby and very attractive.

The (Yugo)nostalgia promulgated in the former case had no place in such an atmosphere. It could be said that there was an idea of music as a ‘universal’ category, together with an idea of ‘universal’ love that transcends meanings attached to the Yugoslav past. The comments on this event were significantly different, since the people in the audience claimed that they were interested solely in the music, and attached no other historical meaning to the songs. Most of them were in their early twenties, and did not even recognize the issue I was interested in – they were unfamiliar with the symbolic value of the place where the garden was located, and even with the existence of Dalmatian music as such. They seemed reluctant to acknowledge any connections between this music and contested historical events. Instead, they claimed and behaved not only as if nothing (bad) had happened in the past, but also as if the music they were listening to that evening did not signify anything beyond itself. In other words, this event, even though connected with the sea and with Dalmatia, represents an example of the new post-Yugoslav atmosphere that rejects any potential connections with either socialist Yugoslavia

54 “I am bringing Dalmatia, that is Dalmatian music, maybe better to say Mediterranean, because I’m not the classical Dalmatian music, no, I’m actually more the sea, I’m the sea. There is an influence of Italy. But, yes, I’m bringing the sea to Belgrade. So, tonight, you will feel the sea, there is enough sun in Belgrade, it’s hot enough, but there is no sea, so I’m bringing the sea with me tonight”. Cf. <https://www.facebook.com/bastakodjuge.official> (accessed on July 1, 2014).

“MY BEAUTIFUL DALMATIAN SONG”

or with the wars that broke up the country, since the audience referred ‘just’ to the music without any ideological implications, enjoying it from a position of ‘nonparticipation’ in political issues.⁵⁵ Thus, they did not think that they were giving their support to a Croatian singer who might be a symbol of the continuity between Yugoslav and present times; they simply wanted to enjoy listening to “good music” and “have fun”.⁵⁶

CONCLUDING REMARKS: (RE)PRODUCING (POST-)YUGOSLAV COLLECTIVITIES

In conclusion, I would like to explore some of the possible interpretations and implications of these phenomena. I asked a simple question: Dalmatia in Serbia? What is it today? Is it a sort of nostalgia, a reinterpretation of the past, or a symptom of a new era? As I have tried to show, it is, or can be, depending on the context, all of the above. My second case study is even more provocative to discuss within the (post-)Yugoslav context. The concept of Dalmatian music has been continually changing over time, but its latest transformation appears to illustrate the current state of (post-)Yugoslav cultural memory. Even though the people in the audience admitted that there could be vague Yugoslav implications related to this music (however, the ‘sea’ or ‘Mediterranean’ atmosphere was mentioned), one cannot escape the problematization of a new phenomenon: the afterlife of Dalmatian music. Having been promoted in Yugoslav times, this kind of music requires positioning within the context of Yugoslav culture. Despite the absence of a nostalgic mood, the Dalmatian sea atmosphere was still present at *Bašta kod Juge*, the same atmosphere this music evoked a half century ago, which finally calls into question the existence of all the stereotypes embodied in this kind of music.

I would like here to summarize the characteristics that unite all performances of Dalmatian music (whether those of traditional *klapa* singing or by performers from Dalmatia): firstly, “the language carries nostalgic weight”, with “language” including both the vocal and musical qualities of the singing as well as the content,

55 Talking about “nonparticipation”, Greenberg notes how it has been an expression of complex and sophisticated reactions to the changing sociopolitical context in postsocialist Serbia. Jessica Greenberg: “‘There’s Nothing Anyone Can Do about It’: Participation, Apathy, and ‘Successful’ Democratic Transition in Postsocialist Serbia,” *Slavic Review* 69/1 (2010), p. 41.

56 I was also faced with a revealing comment by a girl who was 26 at the time (just six years younger than me) about the relevance of the phenomenon I was researching. Commenting on what I had called the “intriguing transformation” of the hotel *Jugoslavija*, she stated that she did not see what I found so interesting and problematic about “a new clubbing space opening in front of some old hotel that just happened to be there”. This interview was conducted before the performance discussed here, which took place on June 5 2014.

i.e. the lyrics. Vocal and instrumental qualities can thus function as “markers of nostalgia”, not because they are recognized as such and verbally expressed, but because of “the political-historical-geographical context through which they are inescapably communicated”.⁵⁷ Even though Yugoslav connotations were not commonly recognized in the reactions to Grašo’s performance, the ‘sea’, ‘Mediterranean’ and even a ‘Dalmatian’ sound was mentioned. This very sound of Dalmatia was created at the coastal festivals at a time when Yugoslavs went on regular holidays to Dalmatia. These new generations are at least old enough to remember the sound from their childhood, if not heard live then on tapes and CDs. Since Dalmatian music shares certain acoustic qualities that are always conceived of as the ‘sea sound’, they posit themselves as from another time, a ‘once was’. Thus, an acoustic relation is constructed with the present that is implicitly retrospective and displaced, that is ‘not assimilationist but revivalistic’.⁵⁸ To conclude, Dalmatian music, at least the type that was produced and promoted within popular music culture (mostly at festivals), is certainly one form of the cultural heritage of Yugoslavia, since Dalmatian music itself, including all its stereotypes, was at least partly a Yugoslav brand which, seems not to have vanished along with the country in which it was made. Furthermore, it is certainly important to identify the new (acoustic and architectural) phenomena of the current post-Yugoslav era: the construction of a ‘sea’ venue presenting the sound of Dalmatia right in front of an old hotel representing the former country in which this sound was constructed, next to the *Grand Casino* and the *Intergalactic Diner*. Nostalgic or not, the *Bašta kod Juge* phenomenon is most certainly a symptom of current post-Yugoslav cultural transformations.

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57 Mann: “Why does Country Music Sound White?”, p. 87.

58 Stewart: “Nostalgia – a Polemic”, p. 239. Cf. Mann: “Why does Country Music Sound White?”, p. 87.

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