

**REGIONALNI CENTAR ZA TALENTE VRANJE**

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**THE DEATH OF SERBIAN MUSIC**

**SMRT SRPSKE MUZIKE**

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### ABSTRACT

With this essay, I want to present music styles from 19<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays and the most popular composers who represent every music style I mention. Also, I want to say something more about Serbian traditional music what perhaps is not known. This essay proves that traditional music is our national and culture treasure and we need to save it from disappearing and becoming forgotten because we do not have another traditional music. I want to write about one of the most popular music style which threatens to suppress our traditional music and it is 'turbo folk'. This style brings many new things which affect young people in a bad way. I think it is important to know what a music expert, a music teacher in my Grammar school, thinks about this phenomenon so I asked him a few questions about it. He is not pleased with the the extent Serbian traditional music is listened to by young people.

**Key words:** Serbian traditional music, turbo folk, music styles, composers, young people, rukovets, sevdalinka

### REZIME

Ovim radom sam želeo da prikažem muzičke pravce od 19. veka do danas i najpoznatije muzičare iz svakog pravca kog sam pomenuo. Isto tako, hteo sam da napišem nešto što možda nije poznato o srpskoj izvornoj muzici. Ovim radom sam želeo da dokažem da je naša izvorna muzika nacionalno i kulturno blago i da treba da ga sačuvamo od nestajanja i zaborava, jer mi samo nju jedinu imamo. Pisao sam i o jednom muzičkom pravcu koji preti da potisne našu izvornu muziku i taj pravac se zove „turbo-folk”. Ovaj pravac donosi mnoge novitete koje utiču na omladinu na loš način. U želji da saznam šta muzički stručnjak, profesor muzičkog vaspitanja u mojoj srednjoj školi, misli o ovom fenomenu pa sam mu postavio nekoliko pitanja u vezi sa temom o kojoj pišem. Ni on nije zadovoljan činjenicom o zastupljenosti srpske izvorne muzike kod današnje omladine.

**Ključne reči:** srpska izvorna muzika, turbo-folk, muzički pravci, muzičari, omladina, rukoveti, sevdalinka

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## INTRODUCTION

During 19th century, Serbian music reached its peak. This period in music and art in general is called romanticism. There are 3 basic stages in the development of Serbian music in romanticism and they are: pre-romanticism, romanticism and post romanticism. In this epoch, Serbian traditional music was varied, because of the countries which Serbia was influenced by, such as Austria and The Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, Serbia had its own traditional music, known in Europe.

### *Pre-romanticism*

Pre-romanticism lasted from 1830s till 1880s. Before this movement, Serbian music consisted just of spiritual music, intended for playing in churches during the festivities. During pre-romanticism, Serbian music changed. There were many innovations, such as more emotions in music, interests for national history, nature, folklore, which was depicted in the literature of that period. This epoch was at the same time when Serbia wanted to become independent from The Ottoman Empire and Serbian composers was motivated by many revolutions and the freedom of Serbia. Typical forms of music in this epoch were vocal or instrumental-vocal forms like solo-songs, dramas with singing, choral music. The most popular music in public was choral and theatre music. The development of these types of music started when theatres started to be popular in Serbia and when the first theatres and choral groups were established. This music grew in popularity when the first concerts were promoted in public.

Choral groups could be related to estates, nationalities or they could be related to some of institutions, like churches, theatres etc. The aim of these choral groups was to connect people who loved music and singing. It did not matter if they were amateurs or professionals. An interesting fact is that the first teachers of music, and first notaries, were Czechs and later they had a great influence on Serbian music. Also, choral groups were the only institutions were people, interested in music like their occupation, could be musically educated, because at that time there were no musical schools nor any other similar institutions, but churches. First schools for music appeared later in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Richer citizen families could afford to educate their children and some of them became first Serbian professional musicians, but they could not become famous because the public at that time did not understand the importance of music. The first Serbian professional musicians were Joseph Schlesinger, who was well known and who composed the music for “Wedding of Emperor Dusan” drama and this composition was so famous that some called it first Serbian opera. Another one, but not less important musician, was Nikola Đurković. He was a conductor of Serbian Church Choral Group in Pančevo, one of the

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oldest Serbian choral groups. Also, he was one of first Serbian musicians who composed a polyphonic church music.

The songs, where singing was included, were the most popular music in 19<sup>th</sup> century. But, most of these compositions cannot be used because they are either lost or in a bad condition. The oldest saved compositions were the covers of traditional songs. For the first time, these songs were published by Vuk Karaždić, in his book of traditional songs.

Apart from musicians many other artists found their inspiration in Serbian national history or folklore. This phenomenon is called “National schools”.

Many Serbian musicians were interested in folklore. Also, they were trying to make music which would consist of Serbian traditional music and modern European music of that time. The aim was to introduce modern European music to Serbian people. One of many Serbian musicians who supported this idea was Kornelije Stanković, the most educated Serbian musician. He was very important for Serbian music because he was collecting old Serbian church songs. Also, he was a pianist, composer and chorister. His work was known not just in Serbia, but in Europe, too.

Another very important musician for Serbia was a conductor and composer Davorin Jenko from Slovenia. He made a big progress in drama with singing. His masterpiece, “Vračara”, became known as the first Serbian operetta. But his most important work of art was the song “Bože pravde” (Lord, give us justice), which became Serbian national anthem when Serbia became a monarchy at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and at beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, it stopped being Serbian anthem and it came back in 21<sup>st</sup> century and continues up to now.



### ***Romanticism***

This epoch in Serbian music started in 1880 and lasted until 1914. Some of the most popular Serbian composers in Serbian history of music lived and worked during this period. They were: Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, Josif Marinković, Stanislav Binički, Isidor Bajić. At

this time, music was created with the characteristics of pre-romanticism, romanticism and post romanticism. All genres of music were composed.

### ***Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac***

Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, one of the most popular and known musicians of this period, was born in Negotin. He had many occupations during his life, like a conductor, a professor in high schools, and a collector. He was a collector and note taker of Serbian traditional songs. His work of art was a basis for the development of Serbian music. His compositions were based on folklore

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and he was particularly interested in singing, which was often part of folklore, was used in different genres of music. His masterpieces were related to choral singing and *rukoveti*, Serbian for garland or splice. The idea for the name *rukovet*, Mokranjac had got by the notation of flowers on a meadow. Flowers looked like the splice of Serbian traditional songs. *Rukoveti* is a musical piece, consisting of fifteen musical rhapsodies. *Rukoveti* is the covers of traditional Serbian songs. Mokranjac was not the first composer who covered traditional songs, but he did it in a different, more beautiful way and the covers, which had not been interesting to people, became the pieces which are still popular today. It proves how talented Mokranjac was. The most popular of his *rukoveti* are: *The Fifth*, *The Sixth*, *The Tenth* and *The Fifteenth*. There are 5 themes songs and the countries they come from. They are:

1. *Iz moje domovine* (from *The First* to *The Sixth* and *The Thirteenth*. In these *rukoveti*, the songs are from the central Serbia);
2. The songs from Stara Srbija (*The Seventh* and *The Eleventh*);
3. The songs from Kosovo (*The Eighth* and *The Twelfth*);
4. The songs from Montenegro (*The Ninth*);
5. *The songs from Macedonia* (*The Tenth* and *The Fifteenth*).

Mokranjac wrote spiritual compositions, which were popular, too. The most known spiritual compositions are: *Opelo u fis moll-u*, *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Liturgija sv. Jovana Zlatoustog), *Dve pesme na Veliki petak*, *Tebe Boga hvalim*, *Tri statije na Veliku subotu*, and others. These spiritual compositions were for choral singing with polyphony, too. These Mokranjac's spiritual compositions are used in churches today.

Josif Marinković, like Mokranjac, was one of the most popular composers at that time. He was a presenter, too. His compositions were meant for the solo singers and choirs. Marinković's solo songs were composed after the lyrics by Serbian romanticists or traditional songs. He made this genre of music popular. His most popular solo songs are: *What a sight, this world's so bright* (Ala je lep ovaj svet), *Oh, how the sun shines* (Oh, kako sunce sija), *The stream gurgles* (Potok žubori),. He composed one special genre of music called *sevdalinka*. *Sevdalinka* is a love song with sad and longing emotions and it has oriental music background. His most known *sevdalinkas* are: *Shana, dear Stojanka* (Šano, dušo, Stojanke), *From town to town* (Iz grad u grad). Marinković's choir songs are often composed pieces for a choir and the piano, like music background. His famous songs of this genre are: *A content river* (Zadovoljna reka), *On Good Friday* (Na Veliki petak),. He made eleven *kolos*, weave of covers of traditional songs, and many people consider these songs to have been an idea which Mokranjac used to compose his *rukovets*. Marinković also composed the spiritual music and his well-known composition is *Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom* (Božanstvena liturgija sv. Jovana Zlatoustog). His other popular songs are instrumentals: *Sonatina* (composed for piano in four hands), *Two Serbian dances* (Dve srpske igre). He also made stage music for drama with singing, *Sudžaje*.

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In this period, there was a group of artists from Belgrade, and they were called the Belgrade school. The composers of the Belgrade school based their music on folklore and they made their music during pre-romanticism. These musicians composed first operas and symphonies. Also, they were collecting traditional songs. They were really professional musicians because they were studying in big European cities, which were also musical centers, such as Munich, Prague and Vienna.

Stanislav Binički was a member of the Belgrade school, a conductor and one of the establishers of the Serbian music school. His opera *At Dawn* (Na uranku) was first performed Serbian opera in one act, composed after pre-romanticism. He composed orchestral overtures *From my homeland* (Iz mog zavičaja) and army marches, too. The most popular army march was *March on the Drina* (Marš na Drinu), where Binički was motivated and impressed by Serbian army in First World War. Other well-known compositions are made for dramas with singing, choirs, spiritual compositions and solo songs.

### ***Post romanticism***

Post romanticism lasted from 1914 to 1945. Post romanticism was a period between two wars, which slowed down the progress of music in Serbia. But, in this period, there were many new things in Serbia, which were related to music, such as: Belgrade opera, Philharmonic and First High Music School. The groups of musicians increased in size and first magazines related to music were established. In post romanticism, there were some new composers such as the musicians who continued Mokranjac's work and who composed in that manner. There were some composers who were still composing, such as Josif Marinković and the musicians of the Belgrade school, like Binički.

In 20<sup>th</sup> century there were many styles of music, which lasted for a short period of time and the old style was changed by another one which was totally different and in contrast with the old style. In that way, during the '30s and '40s, there were two styles, music which remained from the period of pre-romanticism and romanticism, which was about Serbian nation and tradition (the representatives of which were the musicians Marko Tajčević, Milenko Živković etc), and the expressionists (Miloje Milojević, Petar Konjović, Josip Slavenski). These two styles existed at the same time. Later, there were musicians who studied music in Prague, so they belonged to the Prague school. Well-known composers of this school were Vojislav Vučković, Ljubica Marić, Dragutin Čolić etc. There is another composer, who was also different. He was Predrag Milošević, a neoclassical musician, whose compositions were slow and calm. His most famous compositions were *Sonatina for piano* (Sonatina za klavir) and *Sinfonietta* (Simfonijeta).

At the end of the First World War, Serbian music reached its culmination and started to connect with other countries, like Czechoslovakia. Also, three biggest Yugoslav cities became closely connected with each other.

Miloje Milojević is one of well-known musicians who lived between two wars. He was a composer, a conductor, a pianist and a musicologist. His work of art was affected by German

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post romanticism, French impressionism and Serbian folklore. He was known by his miniatures and solo songs, such as *Before the Magnificence of Nature* (Pred veličanstvom prirode) and *Three Songs for High Voice and Piano* (Tri pesme za visoki glas). He composed many of his compositions for piano and choir and compilations of piano compositions. His most popular piano compositions are: *Four piano pieces* (Četiri komada za klavir), *Cameos* (Kameje), *My mother* (Moja majka). These compositions are the mixture of all styles that Milojević used in his work. Milojević also composed some symphonies, such as: *The Death of the Jugović mother* (Smrt majke Jugovića) and *The Village motives* (Seoske scene). His music is listened to even today.

Stevan Hristić was a musician who composed many important Serbian pieces of music. He was a composer and a conductor. His most popular compositions are: opera *The Dusk* (Suton), ballet *The legend of Ohrid* (Ohridska legenda), oratorio *Resurrection* (Vaskrsenje). He composed orchestral pieces, works of sacred music, concert pieces, choral compositions, and chamber vocal lyrical pieces. His well known sacred works are *Liturgy* (Liturgija) and *Opelo*.

### *Petar Konjović*

Petar Konjović was the most important Serbian opera composer, a conductor and a music teacher



in Serbian music school. He was a member of Serbian Academy of Science and Art and a foreign member of Academy of Science and Art in Prague. Most of Konjović's compositions were related to music for dramas and stage music. His most popular compositions for dramas are: *The vila's veil* (Vilin veo) also known as *The Marriage of Milos Obilic* (Ženidba Miloša Obilića), *The Prince of Zeta* (Knez od Zete), *Koštana*. The image of the most important Serbian opera composer, Konjović got because of the operas he composed in different genres and all of which became popular. Konjović's compositions were affected by expressionism, which had been introduced by Mussorgsky and Janacek. Konjović

composed symphonies, chamber music and vocal lyrics. He combined folklore into his pieces of music and created a new school, folklore expressionism of national schools in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Folklore was very important to Konjović, so he based many of his pieces on it.

The beginning of World War II and the occupation of Yugoslavia brought many changes in Yugoslav and Serbian music. During this period, music was connected with the National Liberation Army and partisans. After this period, the new school called Socialist realism developed.

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## *Serbian music in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century*

During this epoch, there were many styles of music and compositions. There were different generations of musicians and every generation had its own style of music. Some of these styles were similar, but some of them were not. This was not the characteristic just for Serbia, but for the whole Europe. Some of the styles in Serbian music were: the Prague school, Neoclassicism, Socialist Realism, the avant-garde, Post-modern.

*The Prague school* is the name for all composers who studied music in Prague. Well-known musicians from this group were Ljubica Marić, Stanojlo Rajičić, Milan Ristić, Dragutin Čolić, Mihovil Logar and Vojislav Vučković. These musicians were a very talented generation of professional composers, who were creating in the avant-garde style. Their music brought new music, a new sound that people had not heard before, and that new music stopped the romanticism and they wanted to bring modern European style in Serbia. Back then, the popular style was expressionism. Their style was not accepted by the people who loved the old music. The expressionism that the Prague school musicians were composing was atonalistic with dodecaphonic technique, which had been the idea of a Czech composer Alois Haba. The known pieces of this style were: Vučković's *Gudački kvarter*, *Tri za dva klarineta i klavir*, Rajičić's 11 motor songs etc.

**Socialist realism** was the period after World War II but before the neoclassicism and lasted up to 1952, when the congress in Ljubljana was held. This style did not last long. The music which was composed during this epoch had to satisfy two conditions. First condition was a democratization of all music life. The second one was to negate the work of the Prague school musicians and new composers had to adapt their music to the people, whose education was not so well. New generations of composers studied music in Music academy in Belgrade.

### *Neoclassicism*

Neoclassicism is a musical style which was inspired by the culture of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. The difference between neoclassicism in music and classicism in music is that classicism was inspired by the music which appeared in the Late antique period. Characteristics of neoclassical music were: keeping the form, precise expression without feelings, supporting the intelligence, style in harmony. In Serbia, neoclassicism developed after Socialist realism. The main theme of neoclassicism was the war and events after the war. The Prague school musicians tried to join neoclassicism and that inclination had been shown even before the war. Well-known composers of that time were: Krešimir Baranović, Josip Slavenski, Jovan Bandura, Mihailo Vukdragović, Oskar Danon, Nikola Hercigonja. At that time, there were some students of music, such as: Rudolf Bruči, Dragutin Gostuški, Vasilije Mokranjac etc. who made many variations of neoclassicism, depending on what they inserted into their pieces and because of that, there are many variations of neoclassicism. But a small number of composers remained true to neoclassical style. The neoclassical variations are: the neo-baroque, the neo-romanticism, the neo-expressionism and the neo-impressionism and the neoclassical objectivism.

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**Neo-baroque** is a type of neoclassicism with some elements of baroque. In this type of neoclassicism, there are typical baroque compositions (fugue, oratorios), typical baroque musical principles (polyphony technique, motored rhythm) and specific orchestra for playing a baroque music. Some composers were inspired by some popular foreign composers, but some of them were inspired by music from the past, not just baroque, but with renaissance music, too. Some of the representatives of neo-baroque in Serbian music were: Nikola Hercigonja, Rudolf Bruči, Josip Slavenski.

**Neo-romanticism** was also a type of neoclassicism with romanticism elements. Various pieces in all genres were composed in this type of neoclassicism. Composers were affected by expressionism, too. The representatives were Stanojlo Rajičić and Vlastimir Peričić.

### **Neo-expressionism and neo-impressionism**

The neo-expressionism is a type of neoclassicism where expressionistic elements in some pieces could be noticed. The representatives of the neo-expressionism have already been mentioned Vasilije Mokranjac, Rudolf Bruči, Dragutin Čolić, then Mihail Logar, Dušan Kostić, Aleksandar Obradović and Dejan Despić.

The neo-impressionism is present in most of already mentioned musicians and it represents the neoclassicism with the elements of impressionism, especially French impressionism. The most known composers of neo-impressionism were: Mihovil Logar; Mihailo Vukdragić; Zlatan Vauda and Vlastimir Trajković.

**Neoclassical objectivism** means renewing old styles and combining them with neoclassicism. This 'trend' came to Serbia from Europe. The representatives of this type of neoclassicism are Dušan Radić and Dejan Despić, Ivan Jevtić etc. Neoclassical objectivism depends on a composer's preferences.

### ***Avant-garde***

Many younger composers, who studied neoclassicism like the basic style of music, began to compose their compositions in the avant-garde style. This style developed in 1960s. This term ~ the avant-garde was used for troops which were going in front of an army. In art, the avant-garde represented the artists who were the leaders of social layers and they were going ahead of their time and they were elite. Serbian composers of the avant-garde style usually made their pieces modeled on European avant-garde composers. The representatives of Serbian avant-garde were: Petar Bergamo, Zoran Hristić, Rajko Maksimović (the first composer who made first aleatoricist note in Serbia), Vladan Radovanović (one of the first Serbian composers who used electronic music). The composers from the Polish school style used expressionistic elements in the avant-garde, which was very controversial. The composers of the avant-garde were: Berislav Popović, Petar Ozgijan,, then Slobodan Atanacković, Vojin Komadina, already mentioned Vlastimir

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Trajković and Srđan Hofman. Also, some new composers, whose music was very aggressive, appeared in the avant-garde, and they supported the avant-garde behavior. They called themselves *The New generation*, and this movement lasted until the 1980s. The musicians of *The New generation* were: Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, Vladimir Tošić, Milimir Drašković, Miloš Petrović etc. They were the musicians of minimalism.

*Zoran Hristić*

### ***Postmodernism***



Postmodernism was a new music style in Serbia, which began in the 1970s and continues during the 80s. Postmodernism is related to culture, art, philosophy, architecture. The characteristics of postmodernism were that postmodernists wanted to make progress, to be objective; then criticized the mass media and talked about it in ironical and satiric way. They upgraded their avant-garde style to postmodernism.

Postmodernism in Serbia is represented by music which is opposite to neoclassicism. The difference between postmodernism and neoclassicism is that composers in postmodern music did not use a historical music style because they wanted to express themselves through that music. They used historical music styles to make a better description of something they wanted to express. Postmodernists' could use different music styles and to combine them as they wanted. But, their music was not just cluttering up the styles from history; it was the expression of that time. The most famous representatives of postmodernism in Serbian music were: already mentioned Petar Ozigijan, Vladan Radovanović. During the second half of the 70s and in the beginning of the 80s, it was popular to use the elements of the *Polish school* in postmodern compositions and composers of that period were: Vitomir Trifunović, Slobodan Atanacković, Zoran Hristić, Berislav Popović, Srđan Hofman, Milan Mihajlović and Rajko Maksimović.

### ***Ethno and folk music***

The very first Serbian ethno and folk singers became famous after World War II. The most popular musicians of ethno and folk music were the orchestra Cicvarići, then the singers Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac and Vule Jevtić, whose most popular song, which is still sang nowadays, is *Još litar jedan*. During that period, ethno and folk songs, starogradskas (roughly translated as old-town songs) and sevdalinkas were popular. The most popular folk performers were: Danica Obrenić, (*Moj dilbere*), Ksenija Cicvarić (*Leti, leti, pesmo moja mila*), Nada

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Mamula (a sevdalinka performer, *Kad pođoh na Bembašu*). Later, two probably the best Serbian folk performers of all time appeared. They are Predrag Cune Gojković (*Kafu mi draga ispeci* etc) and Predrag Živković Tozovac (*Violino ne sviraj* etc).

During the 60s and at the beginning of the 70s, two women singers, whose music is still listened to even today appeared, and their names were Lepa Lukić (*Čaj za dvoje*, etc) and Silvana Armenulić (*Šta će mi život bez tebe dragi*, etc). Also, during the 60s, many more singers who are still popular appeared. These singers are Šaban Šaulić (*Dva galeba bela*, etc), Staniša Stošić (who was a singer from the south of Serbia and who sang traditional songs from Vranje) and Miroslav Ilić (*Pozdravi je, pozdravi* etc).



*Predrag Cune Gojković*



*Predrag Živković Tozovac*



*Miroslav Ilić*

### ***Turbo folk in Serbian music***

Turbo folk was a new music style in Serbia, which was based on folk and ethno music with some elements of electro and techno music, which came from Western Europe. This music appeared in the 1990s, and was performed by so called folk singers, such as: Lepa Brena, Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović and Dragana Mirković. During that period, many folk singers started to sing in a turbo folk style. During the 1990s, turbo folk was the most popular music style in Yugoslavia, and later in Serbia. Under the influence of turbo folk, some other styles of music appeared, so called pop-folk and techno-folk music. There were similar styles of music in other neighbouring countries like Greece, Bulgaria, Romania etc. In the beginning, turbo folk was a mixture of ethno, folk and techno music, but later some other countries' elements of traditional music, like Arabian, Roma, Turkish or Greek, affected Serbian turbo folk.

During the years that followed, turbo folk became a Serbian brand, but we should not be proud of something like that. The representative singers of turbo folk and all its variations are: already mentioned Svetlana Ceca Ražnatović, Lepa Brena and Dragana Mirković, then Aca Lukas, Šemsa Suljaković, Mile Kitić, Seka Aleksić etc. Many of them started to sing pop-folk and folk based on electro music. They copy the world's most popular singers. That could be seen in a way they dress, the more urban music in the background (with strong beats), music videos they make. In doing so, they are supported by the media (tabloids, the Internet, social networks, television). Turbo folk singers would do everything to be and stay popular.

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Is this the style of music which should represent Serbia in the world? Why do we need to use someone else's tradition in our music? Is that really necessary? These songs do not have any quality. Neither the lyrics nor the music have any artistic quality or value. Many popular musicians do not regard turbo folk as music. And it is not! It sounds like insulting the intelligence of a normal man. Real music should bring some real emotions, from the bottom of the hearth. All you can hear in turbo folk's music is pap, many vulgarisms, too aggressive music, a lot of calls for lovemaking in a pretty disgusting way, the meaningless lyrics. There is no harmony! No romance!

What happened with shy and hidden glances, as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when we were so proud of our music? Back then, none even thought about expressing love in public. It would have been a scandal back then. I do not mean that love should be banned from songs, but it definitely should not be promoted in the way it is promoted by turbo folk singers.

When strangers come to Serbia, they cannot understand the structure of turbo folk music and how people can listen to that. The world's journalists think that the Serbs are idiots because they listen to (and enjoy in) turbo folk. The fact is that turbo folk is connected to criminal. And music like that is listened to by young people. It is said that there is no celebration without turbo folk.

In turbo folk 'lyrics', there is usually a story about 'forbidden love' between an ordinary girl and a guy, who is usually some kind of a criminal or he is a member of a criminal group. These 'loves' usually have a tragic ending. A 'hero' of turbo folk music is a young man, usually from the poor part of a town or from a little village, in his early 20s, who wants to be somebody important, who wants to be rich because it is the only way to be happy and to have some ideal beautiful girlfriend(s). He is often very brave and he thinks the whole world is out there waiting for him to conquer it. Their characteristics are that they are so good-looking, crazy, hot-tempered, ambitious, but on the other hand very emotional. They wear some ridiculous and very magnified fashion details, such as necklaces, golden chains as heavy as they are punished in some monstrous way, then some branded sneakers, a fast car (a popular make of a car is an imperative!), which is usually black and shiny. All these characteristics should symbolize power, wealth and importance. That is not the way some normal young man should look like. That is the look of some gangster and the men that do not have any other possibilities except to wear some expensive things and show off.

Girls have also changed because of turbo folk. They are given some strange characteristics, not seen before. They have too much make-up on their faces and they are trying to make people notice their body parts. If they do not have the size that is wanted, singers increase them by plastic surgery. Some of them exaggerate in their attempt to be more beautiful so they become everything but beautiful. When we talk about fashion of modern women singers, everything is clear. There is no fashion, sometimes there are not clothes at all! They perform almost naked. Turbo folk makes them aggressive, interested in sex only and proud when men fight for their love. The worst thing is that young girls look up to them and want to be just like them. All that turbo folk girl characters want is to be with a rich guy, to have a comfortable life and a lot of

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money without doing anything their life. The only thing they want is to lie down on their beds and do nothing. I think that girls and women should have their rights and should want more from life. They should try to look the best they can, but it should not be so vulgar and so humiliating.

To conclude, turbo folk is not just bad but evil for young people, who are naïve and trying to find their place under the sun. Can turbo folk represent anything? Of course, no! It is not only because of the songs they sing, but also because of the way the singers dress, the way they look and the way of life they promote. Girls who like turbo folk are all the same. They do exactly what the women singers do. They do everything they can to look like their 'idols', which means too much make-up on their young faces, plastic surgeries and if they overdo it they become a laughing stock. All their characteristics, behavior, the way they dress, the way they look in public, bad things from their private lives, everything is copied by young people, because those 'stars' are famous, and they are idols to young people. Because of that, many young people think that it is an easier way to become famous or to be rich. In that way, they want have a better life, without any difficulties.

*Say no to turbo folk*

### ***The interview with a teacher of music, Mr. Igor Randelović***

In order to find out what educated people think about our traditional music, turbo folk and its influence on Serbian traditional music and if there is a way to save our unique traditional music, as well as if there is any interest in Serbian traditional music by young people today, I

interviewed a teacher of music, Mr. Igor Randelović. The questionnaire is written in *Appendix*.



Answering my first question, Mr. Igor said that the Serbian traditional music was not listened, but he thought that traditional music would be back slowly, step by step. He explains that Serbian traditional music is mixed with other styles, such as jazz, rock etc., but it has not lost its characteristics and authenticity. He thinks it is a good way to present our cultural heritage to young people. Composers who compose under the influence of

traditional music are Slobodan Trkulja, Jelena Tomašević, Zafir and Vasil Hadžimanov etc.

The answer to my second question is that traditional Serbian music is present in very small amount, but the good thing is that some people and music experts want to bring Serbian traditional music back and revive it. To Mr. Randelović, it is important that there are aspirations to return our traditional music to the position it deserves. There have been some attempts and

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help by some media, but it is still not enough, in the opinion of Mr. Randelović. There is a TV series, called 'Šljivik' which supports our traditional music and promotes it. He said that this series was good but not enough if we wanted to save our traditional music from being forgotten.

As far as the quality of turbo music is concerned, Mr. Randelović was very precise, direct and clear. He said that turbo folk did not have any musical or literary quality. He added that the effect of turbo folk was really bad because it did not bring any moral or any other kind of message; a listener does not have anything to learn from a turbo folk style song!

When I asked Mr. Randelović why turbo folk was so popular, he told me that it was too much present in the media. It is everywhere. In his opinion, other music genres are unequally presented on television or radio and because of that there is no place for young people to discover and listen to other music styles and genres. He thinks that turbo folk is a reflection of bad situation in our country, which has lasted for many years. Many bad things have happened in Serbia, wars, crisis, and because of these problems and misfortunes, the system of values has changed (unfortunately for the worse), which affected music and art in general.

I asked him if there were the ways to save our traditional music and he told me that you could not make someone who knows nothing about Serbian traditional music interested in it. That is the main problem. Serbian traditional music is unknown to young people because it is not present in the mass media and in public. In order to understand Serbian traditional music better and learn to appreciate it, young people must be introduced to its importance and the messages that traditional music brings.

To my last question, a music teacher gave me a really disappointing and depressing answer. I asked him if there were a way to save our music from the influence of other music styles and he answered to me that traditional music had already been forgotten in its original, pure form. Serbian traditional music could be saved only if it remained in its original form. We should insist on its uniqueness and authenticity. I wonder if our educational system could be of any help.

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## CONCLUSION

Having finished this essay, I think that Serbian traditional music is in a huge problem and it is sinking deeper and deeper. All that the most famous Serbian composers did in the period between Serbia got its independence from The Ottoman Empire to the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, everything disappeared in just ten years. Everything that Mokranjac and other Serbian important composers collected and composed is almost forgotten. Instead of Mokranjac's or someone else important composer's music some other music which does not have any real qualities has appeared. That is a terrible shame! We should not forget what real Serbian music is, because in that music Serbian history lives. If we forget our traditional music, we will lose part of our own identity. So we must fight for it and save it from disappearance.

### *Appendix*

1. What do today's young people think about traditional Serbian music?
2. How much is Serbian traditional music present in nowadays?
3. What do you think about turbo folk music and about its quality and affection on young people today?
4. Why is turbo folk so popular today?
5. How make young people interested in traditional Serbian music in your opinion?
6. How to preserve Serbian music from the influence of other music styles?

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