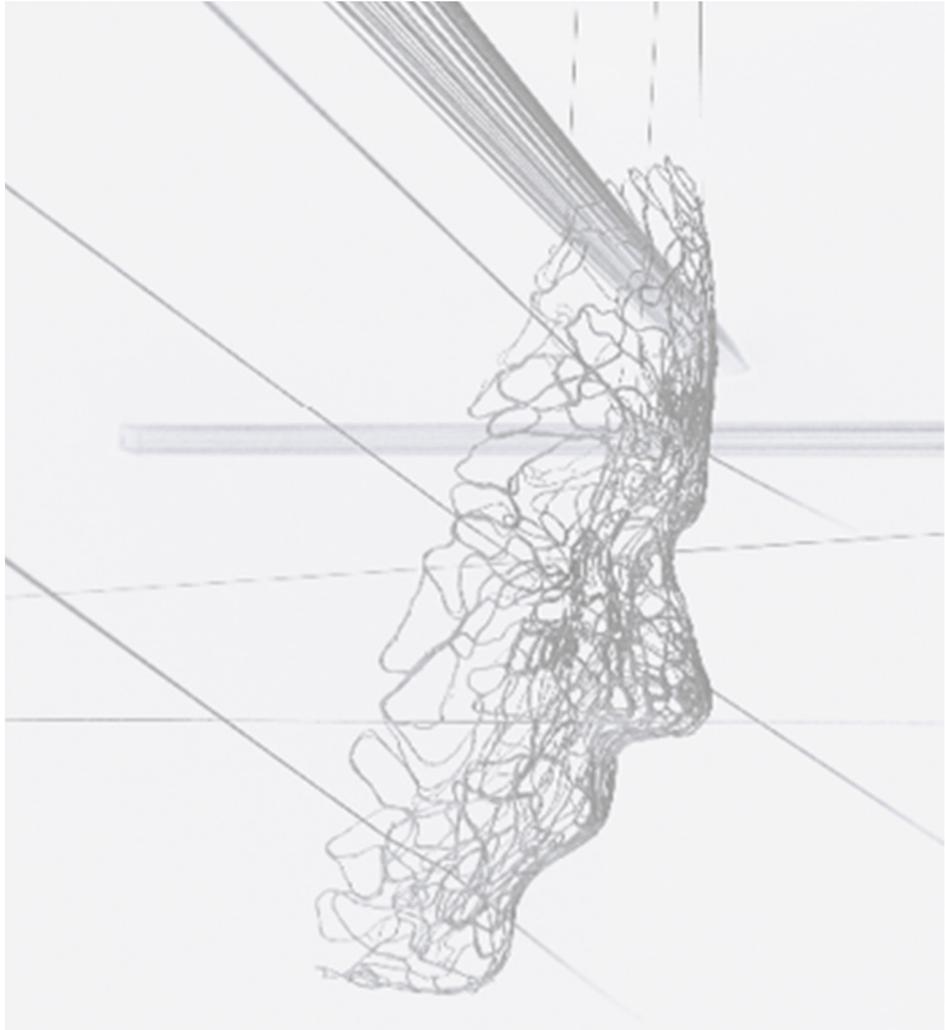


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**Book Review: Milan Milojković, Ira Prodanov, Adriana Sabo, and Ljubica Ilić,
Vodič kroz pank kulturu u Novom Sadu [A Guide to Punk Culture in Novi Sad]
Aida Adžović**

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**MILAN MILOJKOVIĆ, IRA PRODANOV,
ADRIANA SABO, AND LJUBICA ILIĆ,
VODIČ KROZ PANK KULTURU
U NOVOM SADU**

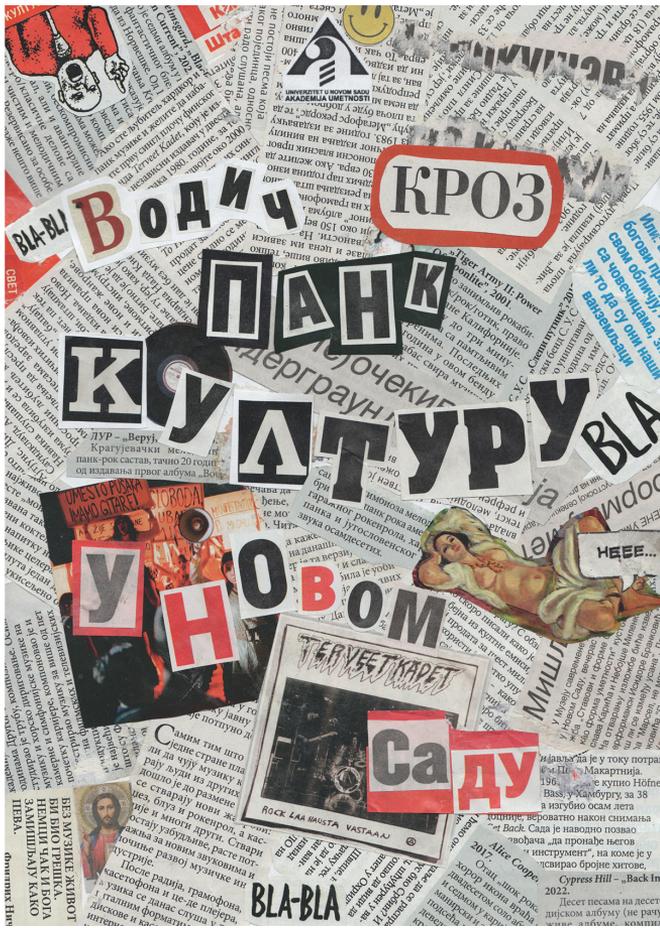
[A GUIDE TO PUNK CULTURE IN NOVI SAD]

The fame of the “rock and roll legacy” of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), as a symbol of better times, is a significant aspect of collective memory and general history, like no other field of social activity in the former country. While this phenomenon has been considered in various media formats and in books and articles on both local and international levels, these representations often reflect a nostalgic personal perspective. Among the “cacophony” of individual standpoints and revival of the “golden era” of rock and roll, there is an increasing shift toward an academic discourse that tends to provide an objective and multidimensional interpretation of the history of popular music in ex-Yugoslav countries, taking into account all its complexities and avoiding diminishing its significance.

A notable publication that offers an overview of decades of punk culture in Novi Sad, as a significant aspect of popular music in former Yugoslavia but also the contemporary scene in our region, is *A Guide to Punk Culture in Novi Sad*,¹ published in 2023 by the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. This interactive electronic edition, written by Milan Milojković, Ira Prodanov, Adriana Sabo, and Ljubica Ilić, is divided into six chapters that include links to music excerpts. Through insights into the micro and macro context of development of punk in Novi

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1 The original title of the book in the Serbian language is *Водич кроз панк културу у Новом Саду*. It is published as an electronic edition available at: <https://akademija.uns.ac.rs/pdf/vodic-kroz-pank-kulturu-u-novom-sadu/>.



Sad, as one of the leading “generators” of Yugoslav alternative music from its initial steps to the present days, this multi-layered book presents a comprehensive analysis of the (sub)cultural phenomenon. The authors “dissect” and systematize various primary and secondary sources about music and performers, including discography, audio and video recordings, academic editions and journals, and problematize its media impact and representation in the local community in correlation with other punk centers regionally and globally, examining its expressive and social transformation through different (a)political levels.

In the opening chapter, *Review of Literature, Methodology, and Terminology* [*Osvrt na literaturu, metodologiju i terminologiju*], Milan Milojković provides an intersection of relevant literature, where he defines the terminology, scope and methodology of this research in relation to the specificities of Novi Sad punk, conditioned by the political and social environment and transitions. The author notes that the term “punk” in general is examined within the academic paradigm from diverse perspectives, with most studies focusing particular geographic and time frames, which is also the starting point of this publication. Through an analytical review of the literature and various interpretations, Milojković emphasizes its multiple definitions and meanings, primarily encompassing the genre determination (often identified with the term “punk-rock”), as well as its identification and distinction from various, usually contrasting, (sub)genres such as post-punk or new wave. Furthermore, he presents the perspective of punk as a broader style consisting of many elements such as fashion, art, and specific fanzine culture based on the *do-it-yourself* principle (DIY), but also recognizes

its social and political connotations that oppose the mainstream establishment, commercialization, and collective norms of the specific environment.

Considering the multi-layered essence of this term, Milojković finally defines punk in Novi Sad as an encompassment of musical, political, and artistic ideas with evident expression and tangible manifestations in popular music, visuals, and written formats (more or less) connected to specific political inclinations and social orientations. In terms of its genre characteristics, “punk” (or “punk-rock”) refers to an aggressive musical style rooted in classic rock and roll tradition, but it is also described as a “cultural” rather than a “subcultural” phenomenon in Novi Sad, according to its institutional recognition.

After defining the research scope, Adriana Sabo in the chapter *The Emergence of Punk and New Wave in Yugoslavia* [Počeci panka i novog talasa u Jugoslaviji] delves into the initial stage of development of punk in the late 1970s and the rise of the new wave in the early 1980s in Yugoslavia, describing the modification of the original (sub)culture movement “imported” from the West to a different social context. The text describes the early activities of the punk scene in Ljubljana, which played a significant role in shaping the first punk generation in Yugoslavia with the band *Pankrti*, and analyzes a similar spread of this punk (anti)aesthetic in Novi Sad led by *Pekinska patka*, but also in other cities such as Rijeka with bands *Paraf* and *Termiti*, and Pula with *KUD Idijoti*. Although Zagreb and Belgrade scenes were influenced by punk, these cities in the chapter are primarily perceived as dominant new wave centers, and their impact is described to provide a broad general context. As the author points out, even though the transition from punk to the new wave happened more rapidly in Yugoslavia than in the West, and despite the tendency of many punk bands towards a pluralism of more melodic (sub)genres, the “myth” of new wave as a liberator from commercialization did not deter many bands (featured in this publication) from returning to their underground punk origin.

In the central and most extensive chapter *Punk Music in Novi Sad* [Punk muzika u Novom Sadu], Milan Milojković provides a retrospective of four decades of the punk scene in Novi Sad. The impact of its representatives is determined by their discography, presence in fanzines or DIY compilations, and their contribution to the music scene in general. In that context, the author explores the diversity of the Novi Sad punk scene, starting with the initial commercial and discographic successes of the first generation of punk bands, highlighting the pioneering role of band *Pekinska patka* in shaping the development of Novi Sad punk, and at the same time its influence in “shifting” towards post-punk and new wave idioms. Analyzing the evolution of the scene through the work of dozens of bands, Milojković identifies a process of genre diversification during the 1980s, reflecting the way the punk movement branched into several directions, and describes the process of affirming the commercially successful new wave

trend, known for its dark, mystical, and melodic music with metaphorical lyrical expression, but also the expansion of more aggressive and explicit tendencies with (sometimes) polarized political connotations such as hardcore (/straight-edge) on one side, and Oi! (/skinhead) on the other. The transition from the last decade of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century is marked as an eclectic “crossover” stage, leading to the emergence of bands with more intricate musical expressions that gained regional and global recognition (such as *Atheist Rap*).² The chapter concludes with a discussion on the recent revival in interest, “canonization,” and institutionalization of punk in Novi Sad and its academic acknowledgment as a reflection of the enduring influence of punk on the city’s sound for over four decades as an integral part of its “urban folklore” alongside other cultural and musical phenomena.

Adriana Sabo, in the chapter *Women in Novi Sad Punk [Žene u novosadskom panku]*, focuses on female punk representation and expression, as well as its public perception in Novi Sad’s scene, predominantly influenced by a male paradigm, examining how female musicians have challenged traditional gender stereotypes and redefined the role of woman in punk culture. In this sense, the author questions their position through the concept of “femininity”, using it to describe women’s lifestyle and ways of self-representation in popular music. By analyzing the approaches of prominent female punk bands and musicians (from the *Boye*, known as a “first real female band” in Novi Sad, Jasmina Mitrušić from bands *Luna* and *La Strada*, Marta Čor, as well as band *Tri kapljice*), Sabo recognizes the similar expression of unique “punk femininity”, emphasizing that punk culture has enabled a platform for articulating the authentic female voice, regardless of whether it reflects individual experiences, or aligns with convention-

2 After mentioning the forerunners of punk (as an expression and attitude, not in terms of genre), such as Branko Andrić Andrla and band *Laboratorija zvuka* with its leaders Predrag and Mladen Vranešević, the author presents a few stages of the evolution of the punk scene in Novi Sad, starting with the first generation led by *Pekinska patka: Crkveni pacovi* (later known as a *Neon vojnik*), *Direktor*, *Gomila G*, *Tri crna lista*, *Armija spasa*. The most prominent bands of the new wave/post-punk generation are noted: *Boye*, *La Strada*, *Luna*, *Grad* and *Kontraritam*, as well as long-standing eclectic post-punk band *Obojeni program*. The evolution of the Oi!, hardcore, and melodic punk during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the crossover period in the 2000s, is contextualized through the overview of connections and polarizations among dozens of bands from different generations and ideological positions: *Vrisak generacije*, *Eksplziv*, *Van kontrole*, *Dva minuta mržnje*, *Revolt*, *Ritam nereda* (the most popular Oi! band from Novi Sad), *Fluorel tačkaš* (which evolved into *Atheist Rap*), *Invalidi uma*, *Generacija bez budućnosti*, *Kapetan Leši*, *Katakлизma zvuka (KKB)*, *Provokacija*, *General*, *Pure Impact*, *Jedino rešenje*, *Tamno beli gnušavci iz smrdljive oaze*, *Distorzija motorne testere (DMT)*, *Oni koji gase požar*, *Blitzkrieg*, *Mitesers*, *Zbogom Brus Li*, *Now or Never*, *Max Bunker*, *The Antals*, *Tuška Pauk Oblak*, *Ujed motorne testere*, *Pobesneli usisivač*, *No Speed Limit*, *Bonebreaker*, *Razor 88*, *Red Union*, *Bayonets*, *Ringišpil*, *Shoplifters*, *Tizzies*, *TetraPunk*, *Selfimmolation*, *Reflections of Internal Rain*, *Against the Odds*, *Get Off My Property*, *Vršnjačko nasilje*, etc.

al notions of femininity. Used as a negation of the embodiment of “hyper-femininity” and the superficial interpretation of their music based solely on gender identity, the female perspective has traced the new path, breaking the traditional norms of the popular music industry.

Within the chapter *Printed Publications on Punk in Novi Sad* [*Štampane publikacije o novosadskom panku*], Ira Prodanov explores how punk has been portrayed and evolved in the public discourse of Novi Sad. Analyzing the various written sources, the author concludes that literature on Novi Sad punk mostly belongs to the domain of music journalism and includes different types of publications such as monographs, fanzines, described as “poetry in prose”, then posters, catalogs with the primary role of promoting certain musical events, as well as interviews, presentations, reviews, audio editions, and articles published in local daily newspapers such as *Dnevnik* and *Građanski list*, but also in local newspapers in the languages of other national communities of Vojvodina. Prodanov considers the three editions of the monograph *Novosadska punk verzija* (2006, 2008, 2015), by Sava Savić and Igor Todorović as the most significant publication on this topic, describing it as a subjective “testimony” with the many episodes from the vibrant life of this (sub)culture (from 1978 to 2005). Furthermore, this chapter contains analyses of articles published in various fanzines and other printed media, such as exhibition catalogs, festivals, and other projects, as well as the reports on online portals that provide insight into the “text” and “context” of Novi Sad punk, with a “pictorial style of writing”.

Complementing the previous section, Ljubica Ilić, in the final chapter *Novi Sad Fanzines of the Eighties* [*Novosadski fanzini osamdesetih godina*], describes the establishment of fanzine culture in former Yugoslavia, particularly the rise of fanzine production in Novi Sad during the 1980s, initiated by enthusiasts and amateurs as a means of affirming the cultural phenomena outside of mainstream narratives. Analyzing its “roots”, the author points out the significant growth of the local fanzine scene from 1979 to the first half of 1982, especially in Novi Sad, where the “fanzine expansion” started with the pioneering self-published fanzine *Prkosno udarnički* (1982), which later evolved into the more ambitious *Punk proces*. Ilić also focuses on leading fanzines of that time, such as *Bolji život* (1987-89) and *Tri drugara* (1993-97), discussing their structure, content and musical preferences, but also examining the social influence of fanzines and punk culture in Yugoslavia during the 1980s, highlighting their subversive potential, weakened by widespread acceptance and promotion by the social and intellectual elites of that time.

This multidimensional chronology of punk in Novi Sad took a significant step in strengthening the position of popular music studies in the regional musicological discourse, not only by offering a possible methodological direction for further research, but also providing “academic validation” to the subculture as a

relevant research area. Avoiding the nostalgic tone and glorification, it contains analytical insights into the music and broader social environment of this scene, including the genre and (anti)poetic characteristics, as well as the positive and negative connotations of the bands' expressions, questioning how this phenomenon is perceived at an institutional level. Considering all these layers, and the contribution to "filling the gap" in exploring the historical and current context and the role of contemporary popular music in the region, this publication has accomplished its outlined purpose: it will be a comprehensive and precise guide for scholars from different humanistic disciplines and future research in the field of popular culture in ex-Yu countries (which often share similar background and (sub)cultural experience).

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