

# I N S Δ M

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, ART AND TECHNOLOGY



**Review: 13th International Symposium “Music in Society”,  
Sarajevo, December 7–10, 2022.**

Bekir Memišević

*INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*

No. 10, July 2023, pp. 158–163.

**Bakir Memišević**

*Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

## **13TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM “MUSIC IN SOCIETY”, Sarajevo, December 7–10, 2022.**

The Musicological Society of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee in 2022. The fact that the Musicological Society is one of the fundamental and most relevant bearers in all fields of music science is confirmed by the continuity of its International Symposium “Music in Society”. The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the Symposium was made in collaboration with the University of Sarajevo – Academy of Music and the Department of Arts, Artistic Research, Culture and Sports, Gazi Husrev-Bey’s Library, and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was the first post-pandemic edition of the Symposium, and its program of a four-day event gathered 74 experts from 17 different countries in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory, music pedagogy, and other related scientific and artistic disciplines. The program included 18 sessions, three workshops, two keynote lectures, a solemn session, an exhibition and a concert, in four different locations. It should also be noted that, for the first time, the Symposium was hybrid based – it had both live and online presentations.



**Figure 1.** Poster of the Symposium.

The first three days of the Symposium each began with one of three workshops under the common name "Music Research Begins with the Rs", all held at the Academy of Music. The first workshop featured "Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM). Global Music Resources for the Local Music Research", by Zdravko Blažeković. The next day, the second workshop was reserved for "The Musical Press and the Musicologist: Opportunities and Case Studies", presented by Benjamin Knysak. Daniela Castaldo talked about "Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale (RidIM)" in the last of the three workshops.

The Symposium was mainly focused on thematic sessions, which were all, in their own way, based on different aspects of music. So, the first session dealt with contemporary views on old music. The five lecturers, Daniela Castaldo, Michał S. Sołtysik, Rolf Norsen, Alessia Zangrando and Patrick Huang, all demonstrated a study on an old practice in music which extends from music archaeology in Italy, through Greek mythology to Balkan music and Chinese tradition. The session "Revisiting Historic Musical Works" consisted of three studies. The one presented by Srđan Atanasovski addressed a rivalry in music based on Schubert's compositional choices and the concept of the "Beethoven Project". Later, Jan Lech talked about a peculiar mentorship that follows the story of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 1, as told in his letters to Boleslav Yavorsky. The third article, lectured by Sanja Kiš Žuvela, deals with the antiwar music by Gustav Mahler. Later on, the first of two sessions exploring the region's historiographic perspectives on music was held. Some lectures in this session dealt with the work of Alfred Pordes (Maja Vasiljević, Fatima Hadžić). The last session of the Symposium's first day, interestingly named "Music(ology) in expansion", among other things, opened up questions concerning musicology as a modern science of music that follows technological progress trends.

Following an opening speech from Amila Ramović (the President of the Musicological Society of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ališer Sijarić (the Dean of the Academy of Music), Tamara Karača Beljak (Vice-rector for Arts, Artistic Research, Culture and Sports at the University of Sarajevo) and Aleksandra Nikolić (the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Youth of the Sarajevo Canton) the 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium "Music in Society" was officially inaugurated. Later on, the first Keynote Lecture was held. On this occasion, Zdravko Blažeković presented a brief history of the theater curtain and their decorations.

On the second day, four more sessions were held, as well as the second Keynote Lecture given by Amra Bosnić. In her lecture, Professor Bosnić talked about her research concerning the symphonism in Bosnia and Herzegovina between Socialist *Weltanschauung* and *Weltansicht*. As for the sessions, the first one of the day was based on ethnomusicological research. The presenters showed a spectrum of exciting research they made regarding vocal technique in *sevdah*

singing (Damir Imamović), as well as group singing with the accompaniment of *gusle* in Central-Eastern Bosnia (Zorana Guja Dražeta), all the way to the ones regarding a male singing octet from the tiny Serbian village Drmno (Maja Radivojević), and so on. The next session saw a continuation of the historiographic perspectives on music in the region. It was focused on some of the prominent names in the ballet history of Croatia, mainly Franjo Horvat (Tatjana Čunko), and also on the establishment and first years of the Music Institute in Križevci, Croatia (Lucija Konfic). The following session was about music pedagogy and reflections of the presenters on the challenges, advantages and weaknesses of teaching music theory classes or solfeggio classes online, along with the experiences and challenges in implementing the teaching methodology practicum for the future teachers of the musical-theoretical subject(s). One session that raised the most questions and was of significant interest to the gathered crowd was the one held by Amila Ramović, that looked back at the music in Sarajevo under the siege (1992–1995). On this occasion, the significant expansion of the alternative rock scene in besieged Sarajevo was recalled (Aida Adžović); so was the case with the results from analyzing the patriotic songs produced during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Petra Hamer). The critical role of music (and culture altogether) in the war years and why it is important to gather all possible sources on music in besieged Sarajevo was also the topic in this session.



**Figure 2.** Amra Bosnić's keynote lecture. © Bakir Memišević.

At the end of day two of the Symposium, for the occasion of marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Musicological Society of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the solemn, special session was held, where Mirza Dautbašić (Vice-Rector for Research of the University of Sarajevo), Tamara Karača Beljak (Founder of the Musicological Society), Amila Ramović, Ališer Sijarić, Senad Kazić (one of the Presidents and Founder of the Musicological Society), Fatima Hadžić (former President of the Musicological Society), Branka Vidović (Founder) and Maja Baralić-Materne (Founder) all talked about the beginnings, work, importance and influence of the Musicological Society.



**Figure 3.** Special session of the Musicological Society of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. © Bakir Memišević.

Sessions on the third day began with a discussion on popular music, where presenters talked about a variety of music phenomena, such as the American guitarist, singer, songwriter, and political activist Tom Morello (Samuel Murray) as well as the Dutch alternative rock band De Staat (Marcel Bouvrie) and ultimately the music used in the series *The Flash* (Marc Brooks). The next session was called "Artistic Research in Music". It was based on performative art music practices, including the amateur choir in an operatic dialogue and the study of wearable body instruments. Before resuming the sessions, the participants of the Symposium had a guided tour around the Nation Museum of Bosnia and

Herzegovina and a chance to see the exhibition "Sevdalinka – Picture, Word and Sound", all led by Nirha Efendić, the author of the exhibition and curator of oral poetry at the Ethnology Department of the National Museum where the next two sessions were held. The first demonstrated the contributions to the research of music at the intersection of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where presenters talked about the works of people involved in making a difference in music history, one being Ilma de Murska as presented by Vjera Katalinić, another being Julius Fučik in the thesis of Darina Svobodova. Also, some of the most famous theater forms in the regions of Catalonia and Switzerland in that specific time frame were revisited. Damir Imamović, the moderator of the next session, opened up a topic named "Concepts of Otherness in Musical Practices", and in the following five lectures, the audience heard a lot of interesting facts about the music, language, generational shift, and assimilation in the Bosnian-American Diaspora (Tanya Merchant). Two topics addressed the Roma musicians and their music and culture. Two were concerned with the pioneers of African American musical theaters and the Chinese perspective on racism in music studies.

The end of the third day was reserved for the Concert of Traditional Music from Bosnia and Herzegovina performed by the Etnoakademik ensemble, which gathered three young sevdah musicians – Alma Subašić, Damir Galijašević and Zanin Berbić. On this occasion, the delighted audience could hear famous and lesser-known traditional sevdalinka songs accompanied by accordion and saz.

On the last day of the Symposium, the first session raised a question of current research in applied musicology in which a few topics were discussed. Music festivals and the process of making them, their problems and perspectives, along with ideas concerning contemporary strategies of music festivals, were just some of them (presented by Marija Maglov, Vanja Grbović, Bojana Radovanović and Teodora Trajković, Miloš Bralović, Miloš Marinković). Afterward, an exciting session was ongoing with talks on historical views of popular music in Yugoslavia, mainly based around the well-known music bands Bijelo Dugme and Indexi, in addition to research concerning one of the most famous jazz trumpeters Duško Gojković (Sead S. Fetahagić, Nikola Komatović, Ognjen Tvrtković). The next session was centered on studies in musical analysis. The presenters had a chance to show their reflections on the orchestral works of Jug Marković (Radoš Marković), elements of the harmonic language in the cycles of solo songs for voice and ensembles by composers from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sabrina Đulančić-Fejzić), and to talk about the musical language of Gustav Mahler (Silvana Jakupović Bečei). It was time for the last session of the symposium. Domagoj Kučinić opened it with his views on the work of Croatian musicologist and composer Pavao Markovac. Later on, new music phenomena in the streaming era and the politics of music in the film *Battle of Sutjeska* were all questioned. In conclusion, in the closing session, Amila Ramović reminisced about the im-

portance of keeping the symposium going, thanked all the participants and organizers and stated the official end of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Symposium "Music in Society".

Now, when we look back, we can conclude that the Symposium was excellently conceived and executed. It offered thematic variety, showcased the depth of musical research, and created a spark that could inspire both musicians and scientists to begin new research, as well as a glimpse of what the science of music is all about to the general public. As it is a biennial symposium, for now, we can only anticipate the ones that will be organized in the coming years.

Article received: May 15, 2023  
Article accepted: May 20, 2023