

THE REVIEW OF THE COLLECTION *MEŠOVITI HOROVI II* BY JOSIP SLAVENSKI

SANDA DODIK

Abstract: This paper presents and gives analytical review of some of the posthumously discovered choir compositions by Josip Slavenski. An important role in their discovery, the following editorship, and also partial reconstructing of newly discovered, unfinished choirs, was played by professor Mirjana Živković, a composer and a theoretician who has studied music of Josip Slavenski from different angles, throughout many years. Out of close to 40 newly discovered choirs, there are 19 mixed *a cappella* choir compositions which were prepared for printing, which lead to publishing of *Horsko stvaralaštvo; Mešoviti horovi of Josip Slavenski*, edited by Mirjana Živković in May 2016. The aim of this paper is to show the importance of these posthumously discovered compositions, and to give the analytical review of some of them. Although simplified and less elaborated, these mixed choirs show an important features of the author's style, and for that reason deserve our attention, and the illumination from the analytical, but also performing point of view.

Key words: Josip Slavenski; mixed choirs; reconstruction; analysis.

There were three reasons for writing this paper and presenting it on 10th International Symposium *Music in society* in Sarajevo. The first reason was the fact that on May 11th, 2016 was the 120th birth anniversary of Josip Slavenski (1896–1955), and for that occasion, Institute of Musicology SASA (Serbian Academy of Science and Arts) organized the round table on the subject “Creative work and opus reception of Josip Slavenski”. On the same occasion the *Horsko stvaralaštvo. Mešoviti horovi of Josip Slavenski* in the new editorship by professor Mirjana Živković (1935) were promoted, and that was the second reason for my lecture. The third reason for choosing Sarajevo as the place for my presentation is the fact the first symposium dedicated to the work of Josip Slavenski was held in Sarajevo in 1975. The symposium was organized within the frame of *Sarajevske večeri muzike* (Sarajevo Music Nights), held from 8th till 11th of December 1975 by music production of Radio-Television Sarajevo, on the occasion of 20th anniversary of the composer's death. Then, in the JNA (Jugoslovenska narodna armija/Yugoslav People's Army) Hall in Sarajevo, four concerts were held, and the ceremonial part was completed with work symposium when six papers about creative work of Josip Slavenski were presented (Živković, 2014a, 139-140).

The following text will present an analytical review on some of the posthumously discovered choir compositions of Josip Slavenski (this time, due to a limited space, it will not be possible to present all the works from the Notebook

II, but only those for which the author feels that represent his style the best). Aforementioned composer and theoretician Mirjana Živković, who studied this author's work ever since the 70's, has played an important role in uncovering and reconstructing his works, approaching it from different angles: from collecting his legacy (which lead to discovery of the unknown works), through editing, to analytical reviewing and writing texts on this composer's music. Working on the legacy of Josip Slavenski, Mirjana Živković and the group of authors have researched and found many sketches, different versions of known works, finished and unfinished choir compositions, transcripts and notes, annotations and comments with his various thoughts on music (Živković, 2014b, 58-59). In the period of 1980–81, a large number of yet unknown choir compositions, written for different ensembles – mixed, male, female, and children's were discovered. At that point, Mirjana Živković, with a full support and suggestions of Petar Bingulac (1897–1990), started her work on reconstructing of these newly discovered, unfinished choirs. The planned printing of music for choirs (the total of two notebooks, the first with his known, and second with his newly discovered compositions, along with six more most important scores of Slavenski), was interrupted by breakup of Yugoslavia, which lead to stopping of the activities of the project on publishing collected works by Josip Slavenski (Živković, 2014a, 112-113). Out of close to 40 newly discovered choir compositions, Mirjana Živković edited 19 previously unknown *a cappella* choirs in the second notebook. In 2011, she reviewed earlier editors notes, considering them usefull for publishing. The collection of *Horsko stvaralaštvo. Mešoviti horovi* had been finally published in May of 2016 (Slavenski, 2016), and the aim of this paper is to analytically review some of these posthumously discovered compositions and pointing out to their significance. Although simpler and less elaborated, these mixed choirs show important features of the author's style, and therefore deserve our attention.

The largest number of these *a cappella* choirs are variations of folk songs, often unelaborated, incompletely written, sometimes even as unfinished sketches only. Only three choirs don't have a folk themes, while in other sixteen he had used folk melodies from all parts of former Yugoslavia. "Most of these choirs were written for movies that Josip Slavenski used to write music for: *Fantom Durmitora* (1932), *A život teče dalje* (1935), *Prve svetlosti* (1948), and some are the variations of other Slavenski's compositions." (Živković, 2014b, 63) Taking into cosideration that some of the autographs were incomplete, yet with a clear indications by the author on how to finish them, Mirjana Živković, in arrangement with the professor Petar Bingulac performed the reconstructions and editor's interventions.¹

¹ More in: Živković, 2014a.

For this presentation I have chosen several choirs that, in my opinion, represent this collection the best.

1) *Zelena dobrava*

The first choir composition *Zelena dobrava* has a subtitle *Narodna iz Međimurja*. Its music content almost completely matches the first part of miniature for piano *Iz Hrvatske* (1927) from a collection of songs *Pesme i igre sa Balkana* (editing the four-voice choir issue, the author's manuscript was followed, which was slightly different from printed piano composition).² Simple in arrangement, the composition is shaped in two forms: in the first, the melody was entrusted to female voices, in the second it transfers to male voices. The length of the used text has caused another identical repetition (b. 30-58), and the final bars are analogous to the code of piano miniature (b. 59-63). By following the modality of folk singing, Slavenski avoids traditional western-European tonal base, so harmonization is filled with modal structure cords in free order. The first phrase (b. 1-8) is in Aeolian in C, with cadence on Dorian subdominant (b. 8, Figure 1). At the beginning of the second phrase (b. 9-15), tonal gravity shortly points to/oscillates towards A flat major (b. 9-12), then turns back to initial Aeolian in C with plagal cadence (s-t).

ZELENA DOBRAVA
Narodna iz Međimurja (Hrvatska)
(1927)

Josip Slavenski
(1896 – 1955)

Adagio intensivo

Sopran
Alti
Tenori
Bassi

p 1. Ze - le - na do - bra - va po - ter - pi mi hla - da
mp 2. Kuš-nul bi ti li - ca dra - ga go - lu bi - ca

p 1. Mo - - - - - ja mi - - - - - la dra -
mp 2. Dra - - - - - ga ger - - - - - li - či -

in c:

² The composition is found in two identical autographs, without dating and noted "for three-voice choir, arranged by Slavenski". More in: Živković, 2014a.

8

gde bu me ča - ka - la mo - ja mi - la dra - ga.
a - li da med na mi glo - bo ka vo di - ca.

ga ca Ej. haj. vo - - lim te!

S (As: in c: s t

Figure 1. *Zelena dobrava*, b. 1-152) *Ko bo tebe troštal?*

This choir from 1931, has a shorter and more simple version dated in 1915, as well as its instrumental version in the form of piano miniature printed in the collection *Pesme i igre sa Balkana*, named *Slovenska popevka*. In the manuscript the dynamics wasn't mentioned, from time to time the parts of poetic text are missing, which was filled in according to the earlier version of the song, plus Slavenski's note from the autograph of the earlier variation of the song was taken into consideration: the composition is supposed to be performed with "calm but intensive *crescendo* in dynamics and *accelerando* in tempo" (Živković, 2014a, 114-115)! Somewhat bolder attitude towards dissonance is noticeable, as well as the polyphonic approach. The theme at the beginning of the piece (b. 1-8) is in C major, written for soprano, followed by chromatic line in alto and pedal notes in tenors. The second exposure of the theme material (b. 9-16) is written in A flat major, dedicated to tenors, surrounded by pedal tones in bass – on tonic, and in soprano – in tonic triad. The third strophe is in D flat major and has slightly more chromatic harmonization. The last strophe is in canonical imitation (b. 25-33), written in F major (bass, tenor, soprano, with counterpoint voice in alto, b. 25-33, Figure 2).

23 *ff* *rit* *Allegro vivace* *ff*

nek tro - šta - jo? Ko bo te -

kej po mor - ja pli - va - jo! Nek me tro - šta - ju

Nek me-ne tro šta - ju! Ja pak bum si ko - ou

- ce! Nek tro - šta - jo! Ja pak bum si sa - kee kup - jo,

F:

27

- be, ljub - ca tro - šta? Što bo te - - be pak za-pu - šta?

to - - - - te ru - - - - ši - ce

kup - jo pak ru - ši - ce bum po - sek - jo! I te ru -

pak ri-bi - ce bum po-lov - jo! I te ri - bi - - - ce

30

Naj me tro - šta - - ju to-te ru - ši - ce kej po po-lju cve - te jo!

le - - - - pe, to-te le-pe ru - ši - ce nek tro - - - šta - - ju!

- ši - - - ce bum po - ko-si - jo, kej te na-du tro - šta - le! Ej! Haj!

bum po - lo - vi - jo kej te na-du tro - šta - le! Ej! Haj!

Figure 2. *Ko bo tebe troštal*, b. 23-33

3) *Oj, javore*

Poetic text from this folk song from Serbia is found in *Ribarska pesma* of Josip Slavenski, composed for a male choir with instrumental accompaniment within music for the film *Fantom Durmitora* from 1932, which helped the editors to complete the text of the discovered autograph. This choir composition is short (there is only 15 bars in the autograph, with a signed text for all four voices). It is organized in two clusters – in first, the melody is written for soprano, and on the proposal of Petar Bingulac, the second part of the choir is shaped with the exchange of male and female voices, which he says is a common method in Slavenski's music (compare to: Živković, 2014a, 116). The harmonization is very simple, in G major, with cadence on dominant.

4) *Igraj kolo*

The discovered autograph for choir *Igraj kolo* has 26 bars. The final shape of this unfinished choir composition had been reached with interventions of Petar Bingulac and Mirjana Živković, shown in repetitions of phrases. The features of the composition are polyphony and simple harmonic flow in A major with cadence on dominant. Mirjana Živković states that the autograph is in F major with a note of Slavenski that the music flow is transposed in A major, with tempo and dynamics markings.

5) *Oj, more duboko*

The mixed choir *Oj, more duboko* is reconstructed from 18 bars sketch. It is visible from the autograph that Slavenski had planned to exchange places of male and female voices, which was done in the second strophe, while the third is the same as the first. In the autograph, the choir is in D flat major, while the editors had transposed it to E flat major. The harmonic language is also very simple, followed by double pedal (perfect fifth), typical for folklore. It is assumed that this folk song from Dalmatia was an inspiration for the creation of music for the film *A život teče dalje*.

6) *Blagoslov mora*

This choir composition is based on the Croatian folk song from Komiza, arranged with canon imitations. The frequent changes of mixed and complex bars are emphasized (7/8; 9/8; 10/8; 8/8; 12/8...). The composition is written in F major area, with the beginning and an ending on the second note of F major scale degree (Super tonic), which is the fifth of dominant (b. 1-8, Figure 3). Mirjana Živković, in her editor's notes, states that the autograph was made out of a two-voice inscription of a Dalmatia song and planned to be a double canon, whose beginning was marked with a star in the score (subtitled as: *Chor mixt per Canon*, while at the bottom of the manuscript it was noted: "Kanon zwischen

Fraüen und Männer Chor/as libitum/"). According to the author's notes, the editors have finished score by adding the canon and completing the dynamics. She also writes that the manuscript had been found in the materials for the film *A život teče dalje* for which the song was recorded, with a complete text, but without canon imitation.

BLAGOSLOV MORA
Narodna iz Dalmacije (Hrvatska)
(1933 – 35)

Josip Slavenski
(1896 – 1955)

Lento

Soprani
Alti
Tenori
Bassi

f Bla-go-slo - vi na - še mo - re, bro-de, o - to-ke i još go -

f Bla-go-slo - vi na-še mo - re, bro-de,

f

4

-re! Pun bla-go-slov vrh nas — pu - sti,

— o-to-ke i još go - re! Pun — bla - go - slov vrh nas —

7

do kon - ca nas ne za - pu - sti! *mf* O, I - su - se

pu - sti, do kon - ca nas ne za - pu - sti! *mf*

Figure 3. *Blagoslov mora*, b. 1-8

7) *Žetelačka*

Edited and published as a mixed choir, *Žetelačka* got its final form after reconstruction and editor's interventions on two discovered versions of the song: as a female choir (recorded for the film *A život teče dalje*), and as a mixed choir. It is based on a folk song from Croatian littoral. It is shaped as a song with the refrain. The first strophe is in F major (b. 1-12) and contains two parts whose content are singing male and female voices alternately. In the refrain (b. 13-22) all the voices sing together, and the bass doubles pedal tones. The second strophe (b. 22-34) brings the variation in the material and an exchange of male and female voices, while the refrain (b. 35-44) stays unchanged. The harmonic flow of both strophes is moving from F major at the beginning (b. 1-6; b. 23-28) to Dorian in D (b. 7-12; b. 29-34), and back to F major for the refrain (b. 13-22; b. 35-44). The folklore sound is underlined with pedal notes, perfect fifths (empty sound), as well as the finalis on the second degree of F major scale.

8) *Tri tičice*

The mixed choir composition *Tri tičice* is based on a traditional song from Serbia, organized as a canon of male and female voices. In the simple harmonization of F major, the relation between "empty" perfect fifths – incomplete triads is emphasized. This canon was also used for the purposes of film *A život teče dalje*, while is described in the autograph as an "eight bar diphthong, with a poetic text, and the author's note it is a mixed choir, canon of male and female voices, starting from bar 5" (Živković, 2014a, 117). For this choir, Slavenski had foreseen an orchestral accompaniment, but since it was incomplete in discovered materials, the choir composition was printed *a cappella*.

9) *Ubava devojko*

This voluminous choir composition is actually an arrangement of a traditional song from around Leskovac. In her editor's notes, Mirjana Živković writes that the manuscript has a certain insufficiency and mistakes that were fixed during editing for publishing, that in b. 54-55 there are indications for performing of viola and violoncello, and was also found that the first 25 bars was used as the beginning of a string quartet. The first 40 bars were meant for the male part of the choir, and after that the whole mixed choir performs. Six parts go across different sound spaces that can be interpreted through the following tonality plan: b. 1-40 Aeolian in A, b. 41-47 Aeolian in F; b. 47-60 A flat major; b. 61-67 again Aeolian in F; b. 68-83 Aeolian in D and b. 84 till the end in G minor with an ending on the dominant (initial and a final tones are on the second degree).

10) *Pileto pejet*

This choir came to existence based on a Macedonian folk song. It has a simple formal organization and a simple D flat major harmonization (the editor says that the autograph is in C major, and according to the note and the instructions of the composer, when transcribing the composition, it was transposed in D flat major).

11) *Imala je majka tri jedine kćerke*

This choir composition of modal sounding was based on the text of a folk song from Međimurje. In its character, there is a simple form of a song with the refrain with literal repetition through all three strophes. The melody of the soprano section has a Pentatonic sounding. The beginning is meant for a female choir, and male voices are joining from the fifth bar with very simple accompaniment based on the tones of tonic and dominant. In the autograph, Josip Slavenski writes that the composition is meant for a mixed choir and a piano, and above the title there is written *Pesme moje majke III*, which implies the identical content of III movement of the composition for voice and a string quartet from 1940.

12) *Tu za repu, tu za len*

Another folk song from Međimurje that Josip Slavenski has arranged and adapted as a composition for the choir, but also as a base for II movement of the composition *Pesme moje majke* for voice and string quartet (1940). The first two strophes are formed by the exchange of male and female voices, and in third and fourth, the theme is brought by sopranos and tenors. In the vertical of this composition, the dissonances can be noticed, and sporadically relations in fourths.

13) *Hata sjedi*

The folk song from Bosnia, *Hata sjedi*, in the sketch is titled as *Džanum aman*. After an introduction in four bars, there are two strophes – melismatic melody of the first was given to soprano, and the second one to tenor along with a simple accompaniment. The tonal base is melodic F major.

14) *Hanikina pjesma*

This arrangement of the Bosnian folk song is found in two versions. The theme with an oriental sounding is brought by sopranos and tenors, and harmonic accompaniment is simple, based on the pedal tones. In the first section (b. 1-4), the melody goes through Balkan minor in A, while the refrain is in harmonic A minor, with the dominant at the end.

15) *Sve ptičice zapjevale*

The folk Song from Montenegro has four strophes. This choir composition is in Aeolian mode in e (natural e minor) with turns that belong to folklore (for example the plagal cadence a–e, b. 30-35, Figure 4). As in other choir compositions, the usage of “empty” fifths is emphasized, and this interval appears as the closing sounding (Živković, 2014a, 120). She says that in the legacy of Slavenski, there were three versions of the same song discovered in the manuscript: 1) unfinished four voice choir; 2) two voice arrangement of the folk song from Pljevlja along with a note explaining that the inscription of Miodrag Vasiljević (1903–1963) had been used, and 3) triad harmonization of this melody. The score in all three autographs is in D minor, and the autograph of the first four voice version suggests transposing into E minor, therefore it was done so for the purpose of publishing.

30

poco rit.

za - što ne le - će, za - što ne le - će, a - man za - što ne le - će!

za - što ne le - će, za - što ne le - će, a - man za - što ne le - će!

pje - - - smu ve - - - se - - - lu, ej!

pje - - - smu ve - - - se - - - lu, ej!

(in e:)

Figure 4. *Sve ptičice zapjevale*, b. 30-3516) *Ustani Redžo* (Çou more Rexho)

The arrangement of Albanian folk dirge is found in the materials for the film *Prve svetlosti* (1948) in two versions: the autograph of an *cappella* choir, and the autograph for the choir with unfinished orchestral accompaniment. The diphthong of the first strophe is aimed for male voices (b. 1-14) – a tenor is singing the theme, while bass is in charge for ostinato, while the female voices have double pedal tones (pedal on I and V). In the second strophe (b. 15-28) male and female voices exchange places – the melody is in soprano, ostinato bass is in alto, and the pedal tones are brought by male choir (this time the pedal is on I and III), while in third strophe (b. 29-42) the diphthong is taken over by alto who sings the melody and tenor that has a new ostinato figure, while outside

voices are making pedal surrounding on subdominant. It happens in the Aeolian mode, while in the third strophe in the accompaniment, Dorian and Aeolian sixths are multiply exchanged. The very ending is marked with a plagal ending s–S–t (b. 39-42, Figure 5).

39

ff

O!

ff

O!

ff

O!

ff

O!

(in f) s S t

sot ma i mirë po m'du - kesh - o.
jer da - nas iz - gle - daš naj - bo - lje.

Mo - re Re - xho! Mo - re Re - xho!

Figure 5. *Ustani Redžo* (Çou more Rexho), b. 39-42

17) *Vožnja*

The choir *Vožnja* doesn't have a base in folklore. It was written in 1946 for the text of Desanka Maksimović (1898–1993). It is in the sound space of Dorian scale on C (in autograph it is in D minor, with a note to be transposed in C minor or B minor).

18) *Himna slobodi*

This choir also isn't based on folklore. It is created to the text of Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638). The tone base is natural F minor.

19) *Ej, život teče dalje*

Josip Slavenski intended this choir composition for the movie of the same title (1935), with orchestral accompaniment and occasional participation of children's choir. Although it is not noted, it is assumed that Josip Slavenski is the author of the text. Since the orchestral accompaniment is incomplete, based on duplication of choir parts, the composition is published as the mixed choir *a cappella*. Although there wasn't a signature key, the music content of the choir is in sound space of G major, or Mixolydian in G – this dilemma comes out of the fact that throughout the flow, the Leading tone was avoided (f or f sharp?), and the dominant is always represented by fundamental note and a fifth. As in earlier

mentioned choir compositions from this group, in the music flow incomplete triads and “empty” fifths are dominating at the end of phrases, as well as in double sustained pedal.

Concluding words

Mešoviti horovi II consists of very simple, more or less elaborated choir compositions in which there are no colorful impresionistic effects, expressive and rich rhythms, polyrhythms, bitonality and polytonality, or long effect of sharp dissonances, innovative procedures, or inventive relation towards modernistic tendencies, as in many other works of Slavenski. Nevertheless, they show an important characteristics of the author’s style, especially the part related to his interest in folklore and the elements taken from it. Those characteristics relate to following:

- most of the choir compositions are arrangements of folk songs;
- repetition is the basic principle for building a form;
- same compositions or same themes are processed on various ways and for various performing ensembles (most of these choirs was written for the purpose of music for the film, for some there are an instrumental versions of compositions – piano, chamber);
- most of the choir compositions are shaped by the exchange of voices (for example the two-part form, where in the first part melody is in soprano, while other part of the choir is shaped by the exchange of male and female voices), which Petar Bingulac sees as common in music of Josip Slavenski;
- the tendency for linear way of thinking and applying polyphonic procedures is emphasized;
- applying of modal and specifically built scales which are characteristic for the folklore;
- as well as simple, mostly diatonic harmonic flow;
- one of the characteristic is application of incomplete triads – leaving out the thirds, Leading notes, using so called “empty” fifths;
- an important role is given to the pedal, single and double tones, as well as “bagpipe” fifths.

For all the reasons written above, these choirs deserve our attention, both from analytical and performing point of view.

1.	<i>Zelena dobrava</i> – Folk song from Međimurje, Croatia (1927)	Aeolian in C	modified strophic form
2.	<i>Ko bo tebe troštal?</i> – Slovenian folk song from Međimurje (1915)	C major	modified strophic form
3.	<i>Oj, javore</i> – Folk song from Serbia (1932)	G major	modified strophic form
4.	<i>Igraj kolo</i> - Folk song from Serbia (1932)	A major	modified strophic form
5.	<i>Oj, more duboko</i> – Folk song from Dalmatia, Croatia (1933–35)	E flat major	modified strophic form
6.	<i>Blagoslov mora</i> – Folk song from Dalmatia, Croatia (1933–35)	F major	strophic form
7.	<i>Žetelačka</i> – Folk song from Primorje, Croatia (1933–35)	F major	strophic verse-refrain form
8.	<i>Tri tičice</i> – Folk song from Serbia (1933–35)	F major	strophic form
9.	<i>Ubava devojko</i> – Folk song from Serbia (n.d.)	Aeolian in A	modified strophic form
10.	<i>Pileto pejet</i> – Folk song from Macedonia (n.d.)	D flat major	modified strophic form
11.	<i>Imala je majka tri jedine kćerke</i> – Folk song from Međimurje, Croatia (1940)	E flat minor	strophic verse-refrain form
12.	<i>Tu za repu, tu za len</i> – Folk song from Međimurje, Croatia (1940)	F major - (D minor)	modified strophic form
13.	<i>Hata sjedi</i> – Folk song from Bosnia and Herzegovina (n.d.)	Miksolidian in F	modified strophic form
14.	<i>Hankina pjesma</i> – Folk song from Bosnia and Herzegovina (n.d.)	Balkan minor in A	two part song
15.	<i>Sve ptičice zapjevale</i> – Folk song from Montenegro (n.d.)	Aeolian in E	modified strophic form
16.	<i>Ustani Redžo (Çou more Rexho)</i> – Folk song from Albania (1948)	Aeolian in F	modified strophic form
17.	<i>Vožnja</i> – Desanka Maksimović (1946)	Dorian in C	strophic form
18.	<i>Himna slobodi</i> – Ivan Gundulić (n.d.)	F minor	three part song
19.	<i>Ej, život teče dalje</i> – Josip Slavenski? (1935)	G major	modified strophic form

Table 1. J. Slavenski, *Mešoviti horovi II* – schematic representation of the formal and tonal plan

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