

Matjaž Barbo

## Slovenska muzikologija: Kratek prelet po zgodovini

Matjaž Barbo. *Slovenska muzikologija: Kratek prelet po zgodovini*. [The Slovenian Musicology: A Brief Historical Overview.] Historia facultatis. Ljubljana: Založba Filozofske fakultete, 2019. 134 pages. ISBN 978-961-06-0152-4.

Although *The Slovenian Musicology* by Matjaž Barbo only promises a quick overview, it is significantly more than just that. It is an outline of what was taking place in Slovenian musicology during the past 800 years, but also an extraordinary source of data and interesting facts that have been mostly unknown until now. The author notes already in the foreword that his discussion is not focused on musicology from the perspective of point zero (that is, its inclusion among the seven muses of the Faculty of Arts), but that his aim is to study the sources of Slovenian musicology. He begins in the fourteenth century, with the Cistercian monks of Stična, the centre of the world for the nascent Slovenian people.

The Slovenian contribution to musicology in the modern era is presented through a range of different authors – Janez Schönleben, Janez Krstnik Dolničar and Janez Gregor Dolničar – all three related. The two Dolničars were nephews of Janez Schönleben through their mother Marija Ana. In his analysis, Barbo mentions Janez Schönleben's work *Carniola antiqua et nova sive Annales sacroprophani* (p. 12), which in his opinion (also) represents an excellent source of the musical past of the Carniola region. Furthermore, Barbo highlights the significance of Janez Gregor for the development of (secular) music, as he advocated for the construction of a theological seminary so that “clerics would also be [...] engaged as musicians” (p. 13). In this chapter, Barbo also foregrounds the historic booklet with musical notations of the organist(s) from Novo Mesto (*Noten-Buch darinnen die Fundamenta zu dem Clavier oder Orgel enthalten*) (p. 14) which is not recognized enough by the broader musical community. However, it should be promoted more effectively, due to its motifs of statehood.

The nineteenth century was the century of the Slovenian nation's emergence. It is thus logical that the author devotes a large part of his analysis to this period, clearly stressing that Carniolan music of the nineteenth century was largely shaped by the Czechs, to mention only the most famous: Franc Sokoll, Gašpar Mašek, Kamilo Mašek, Anton Nedved and Anton Foerster (pp. 17–21). If we also include the later important Emerik Beran and Hans Gerstner, we get a complete corpus of the Czechs who created Slovenian national music at the end of the nineteenth century. Mašek's *Cäcillia*, Foerster's *Church Musician* and Nedvěď's *Teachings on Music* are breakthrough pieces that contributed to Slovenian national autonomy, which later – with Josip Mantuani

– also gained its structural image and started to attain independence from the history of music, paving its way towards the Ljubljana university. Unfortunately, this was not successful, but the foundations were laid at least. And as the parable from the Gospel of Matthew teaches, there is no such storm that could carry away a house if its foundations are built on rock: Mantuani put this rock in place and although everything else that followed was indeed difficult, it was done with the knowledge that sooner or later it would come to fruition.

But Mantuani is not credited only for setting the foundations for the Chair of Musicology at the University of Ljubljana, but also for the publication of Gallus' *Opus musicum*, which was published as part of the collection of his friend and foremost musicologist Guido Adler. However, Adler did not influence only Mantuani, but another important musician and musicologist as well, Josip Čerin, who obtained his doctorate under Adler with his thesis on protestant chants in 1902. Barbo (p. 37) provides a tiny, but highly significant piece of information about this, namely that Čerin was the first doctoral graduate in musicology in Slovenia. This is not only important, but exceptional for the analysis of Slovenian musicology, which arguably grew from two pillars (Mantuani and Čerin), linked by a common denominator – Adler. This means that not only did Slovenians *pro forma* gain scientists working in the field of musicology, but above all that already at the beginning of the twentieth century, Slovenian musicology was established and mature enough to compete with experts worldwide.

Another name from Barbo's analysis has so far been overlooked and unexplored, that of Anton Dolinar, even though he was "one of the indisputable authorities in the field of music during the war" (p. 53) according to Barbo. The reason may be attributed to the fact that he became a political emigrant after the war, and as such was erased from national memory. The injustice he suffered was not rectified by the newly founded state in 1991, nor by the experts from the field. Today, 29 years after the attainment of independence, he would remain largely unknown had Barbo not dedicated a comprehensive chapter of his book to him. I should stress that there is still a lot of work to be done, but the sole fact that someone resurrected a name that was declared *damnatio memoriae* is a great achievement and a huge step forward for Slovenian musicology.<sup>1</sup>

The last part of the monograph focuses on the inclusion of musicology in the university. Here, the author points out the gradual, relentless pressure of Dragotin Cvetko, who managed to take the big step and achieved the inclusion of one of the seven arts and sciences into the system of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. The analysis is based on previously published articles, which are supplemented and critically assessed by the author himself, but he also provides new data that is of great importance and highlights how important musicology is as a science for the development of Slovenia and its national system. At the end of this opus, Barbo also briefly presents the biographies and works of some of the first institutional musicologists,

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1 From the musicological point of view it would make sense to further examine the fact that prince bishop Jeglič sent Anton Dolinar to study in Vienna instead of composer/priest Jože Klemenčič, which caused the latter to hold a deep grudge towards the prince bishop. This area remains unexamined: Barbo mentions it briefly (p. 55), and so does Polona Gantar in her BA dissertation "The Life and Work of Josip Klemenčič" (Academy of Music, 1997).

whom he names “Cvetko’s Students and Successors”. It is a pity that he did not include in this section the musicologists of the younger generation who are – even if they had not been Cvetko’s students – his successors and the carriers of his idea of musicology as a scientific discipline.

The book *Slovenian Musicology: A Brief Historical Overview* by Matjaž Barbo is more than just an interesting read. It is a self-questioning study about how well we know the history that created us as a nation; how loyal we are to it and, above all, how we can learn from our past for a better tomorrow. But the book is also a reminder that Slovenian musicology is not some kind of dispensable research project, but a crucial part of university studies. Without its holistic dimension, the study of the humanities is, *volens nolens*, simply unimaginable.

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