



UDK 784.4(497.6):78.072(497.11Beograd)

DOI: 10.4312/mz.54.1.89-106

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Sevdalinka as Perceived by Music Performers in Belgrade*

Sevdalinka, kot jo razumejo glasbeni izvajalci v Beogradu**

Prejeto: 13. oktober 2017
Sprejeto: 11. december 2017

Received: 13th October 2017
Accepted: 11th December 2017

Ključne besede: sevdalinka, razumevanje glasbe, glasbeni izvajalci, Beograd

Keywords: Sevdalinka, perception, music performers, Belgrade

IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

S fenomenološkega vidika je sevdalinka – urbana pesem bosansko-hercegovskega prebivalstva – že od nekdaj privlačna raziskovalna tema. Prisotnost te glasbene oblike je mogoče opaziti tudi v Srbiji, izvajajo pa jo bodisi samo vokalno/instrumentalno bodisi kombinirano vokalno-instrumentalno. Pri empiričnem raziskovanju smo v tej študiji uporabljali metodo ocenjevalnih lestvic. V raziskavi smo poskušali izluščiti mnenja priznanih vokalnih in instrumentalnih glasbenih izvajalcev (N=16) iz Beograda, da bi pridobili ne samo podroben vpogled v posebnosti njihovih interpretacij, ampak tudi v glasbene in estetske značilnosti sevdalinke.

From a phenomenological point of view, Sevdalinka – the urban song of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population, has always attracted scholarly interest. The presence of this form is evident in Serbia as well, performed only vocally/instrumentally and vocally-instrumentally combined. In the context of empirical research for this study, a scaling technique assessment scales were used. The study is aimed at sublimating the opinions of renowned vocal and instrumental music performers (N=16) in Belgrade, in order to gain a detailed insight into the particularities of the interpretations, as well as the musical and aesthetic characteristics of Sevdalinka.

* This paper has been written as part of the Project *Musical and Dance Tradition of Multiethnic and Multicultural Serbia* (No. 177024), which is realized at the Faculty of Music Art under the patronage of the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

** Prispevek je bil napisan v okviru projekta *Glasbena in plesna tradicija večetnične in večkulturne Srbije* (Št. 177024), ki ga izvaja Fakulteta za glasbeno umetnost pod okriljem Ministrstva za znanost in tehnološki razvoj Republike Srbije.

Introduction

A unique musical phenomenon, Sevdalinka, appears as a poetic and musical genre, while in practice this term is related more to the vocal-melodic form that made it widely known.¹

The Erlangen Manuscript, dating back to the early 18th century, preserves the oldest textual record of Sevdalinka, whose existence was pointed out by Gerhard Gesemann in 1925.² The first musical notations of Sevdalinka were made by Franjo Kuhač and Ludvig Kuba in the late 18th century.³ Several decades later, more precisely in 1906 and 1907, the first sound recordings of Bosnian traditional singing were made on gramophone records, while Matija Murko made sound recordings of heroic songs and Sevdalinks from the area of Western Bosnia in 1912 and 1913.⁴ The Sevdalinka in Bosnia and Herzegovina was written about by Vlado Milošević, Hamza Humo, Munib Maglajlić, Tamara Karača Beljak, Miroslava Fulanović Šošić, Muhamed Žero and others.

Etymologically, the consonant “h” was added to the Arabic word “sewda” – black bile –, one of the four bodily fluids, which causes the feelings of melancholy,⁵ and Sevdalinka became established as a terminological designation in the 19th century.⁶ The experts who have studied Sevdalinka credit Roma people with spreading Sevdalinka over a wider area,⁷ (as they used to be the only “professional musicians” in Bosnia and Herzegovina).⁸

According to Davor Petrović, the development of Sevdalinka can be observed through three main periods:

1. Ottoman (1463–1878)
2. Austrian-Hungarian (1878–1918)
3. Yugoslav (1918–1992).⁹

According to some researchers, in the Ottoman period Sevdalinka was primarily a female song, sung by Muslim women and girls, but Sevdalinka soon became a song of everyday life of men and women performed to the accompaniment of the saz, a song of courtship of the young in cities and towns.¹⁰ The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy caused part of the Muslim population to

1 Vlado Milošević, *Sevdalinka* (Banja Luka: Muzej Bosanske krajine, 1964), 3.

2 Tamara Karača-Beljak, “Može li sevdalinka biti bosanska solo pjesma?” *Dani Vlade S. Miloševića* (Banja Luka: Akademija umjetnosti, 2004), 55.

3 Miroslava Fulanović-Šošić, “O melodijskim karakteristikama bosanskohercegovačke sevdalinke,” *Folklor i njegova umetnička transpozicija* (Beograd: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 1991), 65.

4 Rašid Durić, “Sevdalinka i Himzo Polovina,” *Behar, časopis za kulturu i društvena pitanja* (2011): 44.

5 Miroslava Fulanović-Šošić, “O melodijskim karakteristikama bosanskohercegovačke sevdalinke,” *Folklor i njegova umetnička transpozicija* (Beograd: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti, 1991), 65.

6 Мирослава Фулановић-Шошић, “Традиционална музика у програмима Радио-Сарајева,” *Зборник Матице српске за сценске уметности и музику* 8–9 (1991): 195.

7 Davor Petrović, “Četiri okvira za jednu pesmu: kratka biografija sevdalinke,” *Etnološko-antropološke sveske* 19 (2012): 26.

8 Cvjetko Rihtman, “Orijentalni uticaji u tradicionalnoj muzici BiH,” *Narodno stvaralaštvo – Folklor* 82–84 (1982), 14.

9 Petrović, “Četiri okvira za jednu pesmu: kratka biografija sevdalinke,” 27.

10 Munib Maglajlić, *101 sevdalinka* (Mostar: Prva književna komuna, 1977), 155.

move from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the area of Sandžak, so Sevdalinka became an identifier of the Muslim population in their new environment.¹¹

In the period between the two world wars, Sevdalinka was performed in taverns to the accompaniment of the accordion or a small instrumental ensemble.¹² It was in this period that Sevdalinka was recorded on vinyl records performed by Sofka Nikolić, Bora Janjić and the brothers Cicvarić.

According to Petrović, Sevdalinka moved from its “natural environment” to the radio, which enabled its wider, Yugoslav popularity. The development of arrangements for folk orchestras contributed to a more stylised performing of Sevdalinka and brought it to a higher professional level.¹³ Especially revealing is the fact that a number of excellent vocal and instrumental performers, who were famous for the manner of their interpretation of this musical form, originated outside of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but came from the wider region of former Yugoslavia. Radio singers, after thorough preparations which included work on improving their diction, developing performing techniques and harmonisation with the ensemble/orchestra, had an opportunity to participate in programmes of traditional music, so Sevdalinka received a professional treatment and became used commercially.¹⁴

During the 1970s and 1980s, Sevdalinka remained part of the musical tradition, but newly-composed and pop-rock music, which was more popular with the younger generation of listeners, got more media presence.¹⁵ It is in this period that numerous songs composed in the spirit of Sevdalinka appeared, which are still present today, several decades later, while the names of their authors have moved to the background. Thus, in the sense of ensuring continuity as a factor in shaping musical tradition, the song as a creation outlives and, by importance, surpasses its creator.

After being identified as a kind of patriotic song, or a song of the Muslim side in a certain sense during the war in B&H, Sevdalinka has slowly but surely returned to the territory of Serbia after the end of the Bosnian war, i.e. it has been reclaiming its former position held before the 1990s. “The Case of Sevdalinka is distinctive in the sense that during the time of Yugoslavia it was honed and recognized as a common, although mostly Bosnian-Herzegovinian song, only to become seen as Bosniak after the breakup of the common state, and upon the completion of the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia it was transformed into the Yugo-nostalgic folklore creation”.¹⁶ However, the late 20th and early 21st century saw the appearance of individuals and music groups who (re)interpret Sevdalinka as a world music form, merging it with other music genres and giving it a new spirit.

11 Hamza Humo, “Muslimani Bosne i Hercegovine posmatrani kroz sevdalinku,” *Gajret kalendar za godinu 1937. (1355-1366 po Hidžri)* (Sarajevo: Glavni odbor društva Gajret, 1936), 177-180.

12 According to Vlado Milošević, Sevdalinka lost its true value by moving to taverns. Milošević, *Sevdalinka*, 20.

13 Davor Petrović, “Čovek peva posle rata: dva koncerta sevdalinke u beogradskom Sava centru kao jugonostalgični rituali pomirenja,” *Antropologija* 19/1 (2013): 113.

14 Petrović, “Četiri okvira za jednu pesmu: kratka biografija sevdalinke,” 32.

15 Vanja Muhović, “Sevdalinka i saz u kontekstu world musica,” *Behar, časopis za kulturu i društvena pitanja* 103 (2011): 85.

16 Petrović, “Čovek peva posle rata: dva koncerta sevdalinke u beogradskom Sava centru kao jugonostalgični rituali pomirenja,” 117.

Methodology

Sample

The sample was formed during the month of January 2017 and it comprised eight vocal and eight instrumental performers (N=16), who gave permission for their names to be presented in the study.¹⁷

Vocal performers	Instrumental performers
Govedarović, Anđelka, b. 1946	Bahucki, Zoran, b. 1946
Grbić, Azemina, b. 1943	Dugić, Borislav Bora, b. 1949
Ilić, Aleksandar Aca, b. 1961	Mijatović, Miloš Miša, b. 1956
Matović, Vera, b. 1946	Milošević, Božidar Boki, b. 1931–2018.
Negovanović, Novica, b. 1945	Mitrović, Slavko Cale, b. 1953
Njegomir, Merima, b. 1953	Stepić, Aleksandar Aca, b. 1931
Obrić, Nada, b. 1948	Višnjički, Borislav Bora, b. 1938
Pavlović, Radoš Raša, b. 1944	Vićentijević, Siniša, b. 1965

Table 1: Names of respondents.

The sample consists of 11 male and 5 female respondents, with the mean age of 69.6, who have been active in the field of music for an average of 49.1 years. The musical talent was shown at home by 68.8% of the respondents while 31.2% showed it at school. Sevdalinka was first heard interpreted by a family member (50%), on the radio (37.5%) and on TV (12.5%). The majority of respondents were self-taught (31.3%), a slightly lower number of respondents acquired their music education at school (25%) and by combining learning at school and with a private tutor (25%), while 18.8% of the respondents learned exclusively through private tuition.

The respondents-vocal performers single out as influences familiar names of Bosnian-Herzegovinian traditional music such as Zaim Imamović, Safet Isović, Zehra Deović, Beba Selimović, Nada Mamula, Himzo Polovina, Zora Dubljević. The respondents-instrumental performers single out as influences Ismet Alajbegović Šerbo and Jovica Petković, who are excellent accordion players, experts in Sevdalinka and its interpreters. Moreover, the respondents-instrumental performers mention the names of vocal performers, such as Zaim Imamović, Safet Isović, Meho Puzić, Nedeljko Bilkić.

As Sevdalinkas selected due to the beauty of melody and textual content, and as the most popular and favoured by both vocal and instrumental interpreters, the respondents mention: By a Clearwater Spring (Kraj potoka, bistre vode), A Tiny Grain of Wheat (Pšeničice, sitno sjeme), In the Rose Garden by the Boxwood (U đul bašti, kraj šimšira), Snow Has Fallen on Blooming Trees (Snijeg pade na behar, na voće), By a Subtle Fountain (Kraj tanana šadrvana).

¹⁷ See Table 1.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for the purposes of this study. One instrument was a *General Data Questionnaire*, which was used to collect general socio-demographic indicators, as well as data on the duration of the respondents' activity in music, the method and place of learning music, the names of their influences and titles of songs that respondents prefer performing. The other instrument was designed especially for this research to examine the attitudes of vocal and instrumental performers about Sevdalinka. *The assessment Scale for Sevdalinka Attitudes* contains a total of 52 items which are divided into several areas: Association of certain elements when listening to Sevdalinka (7 items); Frequency of performing different musical genres (9 items); Method of learning Sevdalinks (6 items); Goal of learning Sevdalinks (5 items); Qualitative characteristics of Sevdalinka (5 items); Social aspects of performing Sevdalinka (13 items); and Position of Sevdalinka and Sevdalinka performers in Serbia (7 items).¹⁸ Cronbach's alpha for this instrument is $\alpha=.789$ indicating an acceptable reliability of the instrument.

Research results

The first area that was focused on using *The Assessment Scale for Sevdalinka Attitudes* was associating certain elements while performing Sevdalinka. Within this area the respondents assessed their agreement with given statements on a five-point scale.¹⁹

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
Hearing a Sevdalinka reminds me of the performer who recorded it in the past.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	4.875	.3416	1.528	.170
When listening to a Sevdalinka, I think of the type of its rhythmic system (distributive/in beat, "in tempo", parlando-rubato/"stretched").	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	6.3%	75.0%	4.563	.8139	-.298	.770
When listening to a Sevdalinka, I think of the song lyrics.	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	81.3%	4.625	1.0247	.475	.642
When listening to a Sevdalinka, I pay attention to the singer's diction.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	4.875	.3416	1.528	.170

18 Using elements of the statistical methods quantitative results were obtained for the parameters: mean value, standard deviation, t-test, statistical significance level.

19 The respondents' responses are shown in Table 2.

When listening to a Sevdalinka, I think of the melodic motion.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100,0%	5.00	.000	-	-
When listening to a Sevdalinka, I pay attention to the harmony.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	93.7%	4.937	.250	-1.00	.351
When listening to a Sevdalinka, I think of the relationship between the introduction and the sung verse, chorus.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.7%	81.3%	4.813	.4031	.607	.554
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = statistical significance level									

Table 2: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for Associating certain elements when listening to Sevdalinka.

All the respondents expressed complete agreement with the statement that while listening to a Sevdalinka, they are thinking about the melodic motion. 93.8% of the respondents strongly agree and 6.3% agree that when listening to a Sevdalinka, they pay attention to the harmony.²⁰ An equal percentage of the respondents, 87.5%, strongly agreed and 12.5% agreed that when listening to a Sevdalinka, they pay attention to the singer's diction²¹ and that when listening to a Sevdalinka, they remember the performer who had previously recorded it. When listening to a Sevdalinka, 81.3% of the respondents think about the song lyrics,²² and 81.3% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement referring to thinking about the relationship between the introduction and the sung verse, chorus, while 18.7% agree.²³ Three-quarters of the respondents strongly agree that when listening to a Sevdalinka, they think of the type of the rhythmic system (distributive/in beat/"in tempo", parlando rubato/"stretched"), and 3.6% agree, while 18.8% of them neither agree nor disagree.²⁴

The results of the t-test were not statistically significant at $p < .05$ and $p < .01$ for any of the statements, that is, there is no statistically significant difference in responses between the vocal and instrumental performers.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to estimate how frequently they perform different genres of music by assessing the frequency of performing certain genres of music on a five-point scale.²⁵

20 "The choice of intonation, key, is important for vocal interpretation" (Nada Obrić). "I pay attention to the tonality, key" (Borislav Bora Višnjčki).

21 "If you don't understand what it sings about, then songs are to no avail" (Nada Obrić). "Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac, too, emphasised a singer's proper diction" (Zoran Bahucki).

22 "One considers the attractiveness of the textual content" (Nada Obrić). "Sevdalinka Has a Story" (Radoš Raša Pavlović).

23 "The melody of the introduction should possess details and particular elements of the sung song" (Novica Negovanović). "If the introduction stands out from the sung part, then it is no Sevdalinka" (Nada Obrić). "Introduction and song must be close, be closely akin to one another" (Aleksandar Aca Stepić). "Chorus is of the utmost important for its meaning; that is why it is repeated" (Božidar Boki Milošević).

24 "Rubato is more emotional" (Božidar Boki Milošević).

25 See Table 3.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
Serbian traditional music	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	81.3%	4.813	.4031	-2.05	.080
Traditional music of other ethnicities in the territory of Serbia	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	31.3%	43.8%	4.125	.9574	-2.39	.037
Original newly-composed music	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	4.500	.7303	.672	.515
Urban music from the territory of Serbia	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	4.125	.8062	-6.07	.554
Sevdalinka - urban song of Bosnian-Herzegovinian population	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	31.3%	56.3%	4.375	.8850	1.141	.273
Domestic pop music	31.3%	6.3%	56.3%	6.3%	0.0%	2.375	1.0247	-1.53	.149
Domestic rock music	50.0%	18.8%	25.0%	6.3%	0.0%	1.875	1.0247	-.974	.346
Classical/Art music	50.0%	18.8%	6.3%	12.5%	12.5%	2.187	1.5152	-2.49	.033
World music	68.8%	6.3%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	1.687	1.1384	-2.99	.020
Jazz	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%			-	-
Country music	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%			-	-

1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = often, 5 = always, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = level of statistical significance

Table 3: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the frequency of performing different musical genres.

The type of music that the respondents perform most often is Serbian traditional music (M=4.8). It is followed by original newly-composed music (M=4.5), Sevdalinka - urban song of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population (M=4.37), traditional music of other ethnicities in the territory of Serbia (M=4.12), and urban music from the territory of Serbia (M=4.12), with somewhat lower average values. Sevdalinka is always performed by 56.3% of the respondents, while 31.3% of the respondents perform it often. The selected respondents perform other types of music significantly less often, so the mean values are much lower for domestic pop music (M=2.37) and classical/art music (M=2.19), which are never, very rarely or rarely performed by half of the respondents. The mean values for the domestic rock music (M=1.87), which is never performed by half of the respondents, and world music (M=1.69), which is never performed by 68.8% of respondents, range between the values never and very rarely. The respondents had

an option to indicate other types of music, and one respondent indicated that he/she included jazz music in the repertoire, and one respondent stated that among other things he/she performed country music.

A statistically significant difference in the responses about the frequency of performing certain types of music is evident in regard to traditional music of other ethnicities from the territory of Serbia ($t=-2.39$, $p<.05$), classical/art music ($t=-2.49$, $p<.05$) and world music ($t=-2.99$, $p<.05$), which are performed by instrumentalists more often than vocalists.

The third part of the research instrument referred to the opinion of the respondents on how important certain learning methods are for learning Sevdalinka. Vast musical and personal experience of the respondents is of great importance for understanding the choices, which have proven to be the best method for learning Sevdalinka.²⁶

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
From printed sheet music	18.8%	18.8%	31.3%	31.3%	0.0%	2.750	1.125	.882	.397
By ear	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5.00	.000	-	-
Using personal notes of the lyrics/melodic lines and harmonies of Sevdalinka	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	18.8%	62.5%	4.125	1.4548	.675	.511
Combined - using notes/printed sources and by ear	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	25.0%	56.3%	4.187	1.223	.198	.846
Listening to recorded music on cassettes and records	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	6.3%	87.5%	4.750	.7746	.632	.537
Listening to recorded music posted on the Internet	6.3%	0.0%	12.5%	18.8%	62.5%	4.313	1.138	.646	.529
1 = completely unimportant, 2 = unimportant, 3 = moderately important, 4 = important, 5 = very important, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = level of statistical significance									

Table 4: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the method of learning Sevdalinka.

All the respondents agreed with the statement that learning by ear is very important for learning Sevdalinka ($M=5.0$).²⁷ Listening to recordings on cassettes and vinyl records was ranked as the second most important method for learning Sevdalinka ($M=4.75$), where 87.5% of the respondents indicated that this is very important for

26 See Table 4.

27 "It is easier to learn by ear" (Azemina Grbić). "When one learns by ear, the soul of Sevdalinka can be felt" (Novica Negovanović). "Sevdalinka is carried in one's soul, in one's heart" (Anelka Govedarović). "Sevdalinka is learned by ear, from the heart" (Borislav Bora Dugić). "Emotions are expressed by the entire orchestra, the accordion and violin are dominant, as a guitarist you must squeeze yourself into the orchestra" (Borislav Bora Višnjički).

learning Sevdalinka. According to the assessment of importance, these are followed by listening to recordings posted on the Internet, which 62.5% of the respondents consider a very important learning procedure, while 18.8% consider it important for learning Sevdalinka.²⁸ 56.3% of the respondents assessed combined learning (using printed sources and by ear) as very important, and 25% of the respondents assessed that this is an important method of learning Sevdalinka. The use of personal notes of lyrics/melodic lines and harmonies of Sevdalinka was assessed by 62.5% of the respondents as very important, and 18.8% consider that it is important for learning Sevdalinka. Learning from printed sources and sheet music was ranked as the least important method of learning Sevdalinka with the mean value of $M=2.75$.²⁹

The difference in responses between the vocal and instrumental performers is statistically insignificant in the context of this research segment, as the values of the t-test are not statistically significant at $p<.05$ and $p<.01$ for any method of learning, so it can be concluded that there is an agreement among vocal and instrumental performers on the importance of certain methods for learning Sevdalinka.

In the next segment of the *Assessment Scale for Sevdalinka Attitudes*, the respondents were presented with five statements related to the objectives/purposes of learning Sevdalinka; the respondents were asked to rank the level of their agreement or disagreement with the statements on a five-point scale.³⁰

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	T	p
I express my emotions through performing Sevdalinka.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	93.7%	4.937	.2500	-1.00	.351
By performing Sevdalinka, I promote my technical interpretation skills in the form of distinctive ornaments.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	4.812	.5439	.447	.662

28 "When choosing examples for listening on the Internet, one has to be careful, because they are not equally worthy" (Azemina Grbić). "One should be careful and choosy, which means that one should listen more to the interpretations by older performers" (Novica Negovanović). "Learning through the Internet is justified by the lack of vinyl records and audio cassettes" (Aleksandar Aca Ilić). "One should hear a lot of them, get enough of listening" (Miloš Miša Mijatović). "Learning from sheet music is an aid" (Slavko Čale Mitrović). "Learning by listening to examples from the Internet is more accessible than cassettes and vinyl records, but one should choose the right versions" (Zoran Bahucki).

29 "Presence of a teacher/instructor is necessary when learning by use of notation" (Aleksandar Aca Ilić). "Although there have been attempts, Sevdalinka cannot be mastered completely from notation, which, quite often, records only the skeleton of the melody, without proper notes on ornamentation, articulation and other elements characterising a proper performance. This is the reason why a learner relies on a teacher who plays slowly, and the student repeats a section by section with appropriate ornamentation, and then merges the parts into a unique whole, adding the proper emphasis to particular notes, with dynamic nuances, bellows technique and choice of register". Vesna Ivkov, "Sevdalinka in the Performing Practice of Accordionists in Serbia," *Music in Society, The Collection of Papers* (Sarajevo: Musicological Society of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Academy of Music, University of Sarajevo, 2016), 404.

30 See Table 5.

By performing Sevdalinka, I promote my personal maturity in interpretation.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	93.7%	4.875	.5000	-1.00	.351
By performing Sevdalinka, I imitate the performing style of my influences in interpreting Sevdalinka.	25.0%	0.0%	18.8%	18.8%	37.5%	3.437	1.631	-.148	.884
I seek to create a personal style of performing Sevdalinka.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	4.812	.5440	1.426	.197
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = statistical significance level									

Table 5: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the goal of learning Sevdalinka.

All the listed goals are quite highly ranked by the respondents. Expressing emotions while performing Sevdalinka was singled out as the most important goal ($M=4.94$), with which 93.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and 6.3% agreed. It is followed by the promotion of personal maturity in interpretation ($M=4.87$), with which 93.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and 6.3% neither agreed nor disagreed.³¹ Two goals with mean value of $M=4.81$ were ranked the third, with which 87.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, namely the promotion of their own technical skills of interpretation and creation of a personal style of performing Sevdalinka.³² Ranked last is imitating the performing style of influences in interpreting Sevdalinka ($M=3.44$), with which a quarter of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 37.5% strongly agreed, while 18.8% agreed and the same number of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.³³

The differences in the responses between the vocal and instrumental performers were not statistically significant as the t-test values for each statement exceeded $p > .05 / p > .01$.

The respondents in the study have been active in music for 49.1 years on average, so it is important to look at which qualitative characteristics of Sevdalinka they perceive as significant.³⁴

31 "When Sevdalinka is sadder, it can be sung better" (Azemina Grbić). "You sing, and weep" (Anđelka Govedarović). "Sevdalinka in major scale is cheerful, and in minor scale it is sad" (Novica Negovanović).

32 "Sevdalinka is played with more zest in Serbia, 20% faster than in Bosnia, and dynamics is of importance for the performance" (Borislav Bora Dugić).

33 "Imitating the performing style of one's influence, a predecessor, is the first step in learning, but forming one's own performing style is a condition for career development" (Azemina Grbić). "I seek to contribute to the beauty of Sevdalinka, it should be delivered in the right way" (Novica Negovanović). "I try to add something of my own, such as timbre as such" (Vera Matović). "I try to create a personal style, but not to overdo it" (Radoš Raša Pavlović). "Imitating the performing styles of one's influences is the first step, and creation of a personal style is the second step in learning" (Zoran Bahucki).

34 See Table 6.

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
Sevdalinka is to be played in the same way as it is sung.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	12.5%	81.3%	4.750	.5773	.858	.405
Sevdalinka is to be played in a more complex way – with more technical additions and ornamentation than it is sung.	18.8%	0.0%	6.3%	18.8%	56.3%	3.937	1.5692	-.154	.880
The colour of voice, the colour of instrument, the register on the instrument are of importance for performing Sevdalinka.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	4.812	.5439	.447	.662
The beauty of melodic motion is important for evaluating Sevdalinka.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	93.7%	4.937	.2500	1.000	.351
Beautiful and meaningful lyrics are important for general value of Sevdalinka.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	93.8%	4.937	.2500	1.000	.351
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = statistical significance level									

Table 6: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the qualitative characteristics of Sevdalinka.

As many as 93.7% of the respondents agreed that beautiful and meaningful lyrics are important for the general value of Sevdalinka (M=4.94)³⁵ and that the beauty of the melodic motion is important for the evaluation of Sevdalinka (M=4.94).³⁶ A somewhat smaller percentage of the respondents, but nevertheless with a high mean value, strongly agreed (87.5%) and agreed (6.3%) that for performing Sevdalinka the colour of voice,³⁷ the colour of the instrument and the register of the instrument are important (M=4.84), while 81.3% strongly agreed and 12.5% agreed that Sevdalinka is to be

35 "Sevdalinka lyrics are to be picturesque, to have an appropriate relationship to the melodic motion. Each song is supposed to tell a story, and the chorus to contain the main message" (Azemina Grbić). "Sevdalinka lyrics spur a desire to listen" (Nada Obrić). "Sevdalinka is difficult for listening – the listener becomes melancholic ("falls into sevdah"), so those who are disappointed don't need it" (Vera Matović). "In its 3-4 stanzas Sevdalinka contains a film" (Merima Njegomir). "Sevdalinka is a beautiful song, a song that speaks of love" (Božidar Boki Milošević).

36 "The connection between the lyrics and melody in Sevdalinka has to be great" (Novica Negovanović).

37 "The colour of female mezzosoprano or alto is the most appropriate for performing Sevdalinka" (Azemina Grbić). "A darker voice colour is more gentle" (Zoran Bahucki).

played the same way it is sung ($M=4.75$). 56.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that Sevdalinka is to be played more complexly – with more technical additions and ornamentation than it is sung ($M=3.94$) and 18.8% of the respondents agreed, while also 18.8% of the respondents did not agree strongly with this statement.³⁸

No significance was determined between the responses obtained from the vocal and the instrumental performers ($p>.05$, $p>.01$ respectively for each of the statements).

In the segment of Social aspects of performing Sevdalinka, the respondents were asked to assess the importance of 13 items on a five-point scale. The items from this segment refer to the presence and value attributed to Sevdalinka in Serbia and across the world.³⁹

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
Sevdalinka is sufficiently represented in Serbia.	6.3%	0.0%	18.8%	50.0%	25.0%	3.875	1.0247	.475	.642
Sevdalinka – a form of urban Bosnian-Herzegovinian music should receive better promotion in Serbia.	6.3%	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	56.3%	4.250	1.1254	1.932	.074
Sevdalinka, as a demanding form for performance is a challenge for performers in Serbia.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	4.875	.3415	1.528	170
Sevdalinka can only be performed by a performer of extraordinary interpretative skills.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	87.5%	4.875	.3415	1.528	170
People like hearing Sevdalinka being performed in solo concerts in Serbia.	0.0%	6.3%	25.0%	18.8%	50.0%	4.125	1.0247	.974	.346

38 "When an accordionist plays alone, he/she can play more complexly, but when playing accompaniment, one should adjust to the singer's performance" (Azemina Grbić). "Jovica Petković was more inclined towards improvisation, and Ismet Alajbegović Šerbo's playing was closer to the singer's performance" (Anđelka Govedarović). "Sevdalinka can be played more complexly than it is sung, but one should be careful not to lose too much, not to go astray" Aleksandar Aca Stepić. "One can play with more complexity in intermezzo" (Miloš Miša Mijatović). "The accordion can improvise, the violins cannot, the wind instruments – clarinet and flute, should play as the voice sings, instrumental performance of Sevdalinka gets a better reception, because the lyrics can hurt feelings of members of certain ethnicities" (Slavko Čale Mitrović). "The violin and clarinet come close to human voice" (Božidar Boki Milošević). "Sevdalinka is full of ornamentation, it cannot be played by just anyone, and it can be performed stylistically by Ismet Alajbegović Šerbo, Srbošlav Srba Ivkov, they play it with soul" (Borislav Bora Višnjicki). "It can be played in a more complicated manner than it is sung, but without overdoing it" (Zoran Bahucki).

39 See Table 7.

People like hearing Sevdalinka being performed in restaurants in Serbia.	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	31.3%	43.8%	4.187	.8341	2.411	.300
Sevdalinka is sufficiently represented on the radio and in other musical programmes in Serbia.	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%	31.3%	18.8%	3.562	.9639	-.251	.805
Sevdalinka is sufficiently represented on television and in other musical programmes in Serbia.	12.5%	18.8%	50.0%	12.5%	6.3%	2,812	1.0468	-.231	.821
Sevdalinka performances receive good reception in Bosnia and Herzegovina.	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	93.7%	4.875	.5000	-1.00	.351
Sevdalinka performances receive good reception in ex-Yugoslav countries other than B&H and Serbia.	6.3%	6.3%	43.8%	37.5%	6.3%	3.312	.9464	1,357	.196
Sevdalinka performances are well received by our diaspora in the countries of the Western Europe.	6.3%	12.5%	18.8%	37.5%	25.0%	3.625	1.2041	.821	.425
Sevdalinka performances are well received by our diaspora in the USA and Canada.	6.3%	12.5%	25.0%	18.8%	37.5%	3.687	1.3022	1,384	.188
Sevdalinka performances are well received by our diaspora in Australia.	6.3%	18.8%	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	3,562	1,3647	1.313	.210
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = statistical significance level									

Table 7: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the social aspects of performing Sevdalinka.

Half of the respondents agreed and one quarter strongly agreed that Sevdalinka is sufficiently represented in Serbia, but 56.3% of them strongly agreed and 25% agreed that Sevdalinka should be promoted more in Serbia.⁴⁰ An equal percentage of the respondents (87.5% strongly agreed and 12.5% agreed) considers that Sevdalinka, as a demanding form to perform, is a challenge for performers in Serbia, as well as that Sevdalinka can only be performed by a performer of extraordinary interpretation skills. Half of the respondents strongly agreed and 18.8% agreed that people like hearing Sevdalinka being performed in solo concerts in Serbia, while 43.8% strongly agreed and 31.3% agreed that people like hearing Sevdalinka being performed in restaurants in Serbia. In regard to the radio, television and other musical programmes in Serbia, the respondents expressed less agreement, so the mean value for Sevdalinka's presence on the radio and other musical programmes is $M=3.56$, and for Sevdalinka's presence on television and in other musical programmes is $M=2.81$.⁴¹ Naturally, 93.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that the performance of Sevdalinka is well received in Bosnia and Herzegovina ($M=4.87$).⁴² Performance of Sevdalinka is slightly less well received by our diaspora, with the mean values ranging from neither agree nor disagree to agree: the USA and Canada ($M=3.69$), Western Europe ($M=3.62$), Australia ($M=3.56$), and other ex-Yugoslav countries ($M=3.31$).

Based on the obtained results, no statistically significant differences were determined in the responses between the vocal and musical performers in terms the assessment of Sevdalinka's social significance.

Finally, it is important to look at how the respondents evaluate the way of performing Sevdalinka and the position of Sevdalinka performers in Serbia. For these purposes, 7 items were formulated for the respondents to express the level of their agreement/disagreement on a five-point scale.⁴³

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD	t	p
If I include Sevdalinka in my repertoire, I will be better paid as a performer.	43.8%	25.0%	18.8%	6.3%	6.3%	2.062	1.2366	.196	.848
If I have Sevdalinkas on my repertoire, I will get more professional engagements.	43.8%	25.0%	18.8%	6.3%	6.3%	2.062	1.2366	.593	.562

40 "It is a song people used to grow up to" (Novica Negovanović). "In my hometown of Čačak, people liked listening to Sevdalinkas" (Vera Matović). "Sevdalinka stands for true values, it represents a value in comparison to music today" (Merima Njegomir).

41 "In television shows such as *It's Never Too Late*, Sevdalinka is usually performed by those who compete in performing" (Azemina Grbić). "Sevdalinka has an insufficient media presence" (Merima Njegomir). "Presence of Sevdalinka in the media is politically influenced" (Slavko Čale Mitrović) "In the 1990s there were no Sevdalinkas in the media" (Zoran Bahucki), "It all depends on the will of editors" (Božidar Boki Milošević).

42 "Sevdalinka flourishes in Bosnia, and in Serbia older generations listen to it more, while the young are thrilled when they hear it" (Merima Njegomir).

43 See Table 8.

If I include Sevdalinka in my repertoire, I will receive more media promotion.	43.8%	12.5%	18.8%	25.0%	0.0%	2.250	1.2909	1.177	.259
If I include Sevdalinka in my repertoire, I will be seen as a performer of extraordinary interpretative skills.	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	18.8%	62.5%	4.437	.8139	1.616	.128
Sevdalinka should be performed as it used to be – signing to the saz.	18.8%	25.0%	31.3%	0.0%	25.0%	2.875	1.4548	-1.85	.092
Sevdalinka should be performed today as it has been performed by singers accompanied by a heterogeneous ensemble/orchestra (radio orchestras from the middle of the 20th century till this day).	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	87.5%	4.812	.5439	-.447	.662
Sevdalinka should be performed in contemporary arrangements, covers.	56.3%	12.5%	25.0%	0.0%	6.3%	1.875	1.2042	.403	.693
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, M = mean value, SD = standard deviation, t = t-test, p = statistical significance level									

Table 8: Results of the t-test and descriptive statistics for the way of performing Sevdalinka and the position of Sevdalinka performers in Serbia.

It is interesting to single out the fact that more than half of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Sevdalinka should be performed in contemporary arrangements, covers (M=1.87), namely 56.6% of them strongly disagreed with this statement and 12.5% of them disagreed with it, while 25% neither agreed nor disagreed.⁴⁴ The majority of them (87.5% strongly agreed and 6.3% agreed) that Sevdalinka should be performed today as it has been performed by singers accompanied by a heterogeneous ensemble/orchestra (radio orchestras from the middle of the 20th century

⁴⁴ "Those who make alterations cannot play well, they have found a form that goes by" (Zoran Bahucki). "Such a performance is still not a mass phenomenon" (Borislav Bora Dugić). "Cover is OK, if it does not distort too much and if elements are not inserted that deviate away from the original" (Božidar Boki Milošević). "This is an abomination, ear-sore" (Azemina Grbić). "I wouldn't spoil it, experiment with it" (Borislav Bora Višnjčki).

till this day).⁴⁵ Moreover, the observation is worth noticing that 68.6% of the respondents expressed disagreement (43.8% strongly disagreed and 25% disagreed) that if they include Sevdalinkas in their repertoire, they will be better paid ($M=2.06$) and will get more professional engagements ($M=2.06$). Consistent with the two previous statements, 43.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 12.5% disagreed with the statement that if they included Sevdalinkas in their repertoire, they will receive more media promotion. However, 62.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and 18.8% agreed that if Sevdalinkas are included in their repertoire, they will be observed as performers of an extraordinary skill.

The differences in the responses between the vocal and instrumental performers were not statistically significant, as the t-test values are not on the level of statistical significance, being $p<.05$ and $p<.01$ respectively.

Procedure

After conceiving statements, items and areas of research that this topic envelops, the data collection process included the selection and formulation of the research sample. When choosing respondents whose opinions and views would be of relevance to this work, the criteria taken into consideration were the general public renown of the personal, individual perennial and/or decades long vocal and instrumental practices, Sevdalinka's presence in the performing repertoire of respondents, the person's recognition on the music scene of Serbia and presence in the musical programmes of Radio Television Belgrade and the National Radio Television of Serbia. The research was carried out in Belgrade in January 2017 through personal contacts of the author of this study with the 16 respondents. Although this number of respondents is considered in science to be a small sample, it turned out as sufficient for the purposes of this research, since the views and opinions expressed by the respondents could be sublimated and adequately treated with the intention of eventually extracting relevant results.

Discussion and conclusion

This study was aimed at determining whether there is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes to and opinions about Sevdalinka of eminent vocal and instrumental performers. The results indicate that there is no difference that bears a statistical significance. When listening to Sevdalinka, both vocal and instrumental performers always pay attention to the lyrics, melodic motion, harmony, singer's diction, relationship between the introduction, sung verses and chorus, and listening to a particular song is associative of the singer who recorded it previously, while the majority of the respondents takes notice and considers the type of bar and

45 "That's the original" (Novica Negovanović). "That's the way to cherish the original" (Vera Matović). "One should stick to the original" (Aleksandar Aca Stepić). "When Sevdalinka is sung, it inspires nostalgia for Bosnia and Yugoslavia" (Nada Obrić).

the rhythmic system while listening. The performing repertoire of the respondents mostly features Serbian traditional music and original newly-composed music, while they perform Sevdalinka always or frequently. The respondents consider learning Sevdalinka by ear as the most important, followed by learning based on sound recordings on sound reproduction devices or on the Internet; it is also important to combine – learning by ear with the use of personal notes and/or printed sheet music, while learning Sevdalinka using musical material alone is considered of least importance. The key goal of performing Sevdalinka is to express emotions, then the promotion of personal interpretative maturity, promotion of one's own technical skills in interpretation, creation of one's own style of performance, and, at the same time, the respondents emphasise that imitating the performing style of their predecessors should not be one of the goals of the ultimate achievement in performing Sevdalinka. According to the respondents, the elements of importance for the general evaluation of Sevdalinka include a beautiful and meaningful text, the beauty of melodic motion, the colour of voice and timbre of a singer or the register of the instrument. The majority of respondents agree that Sevdalinka should be played the same way it is sung, while a smaller number agree that it should be played with more complexity, with more technical elements and ornaments than it is performed vocally. Most respondents expressed their agreement with the statement that Sevdalinka is sufficiently represented in Serbia, but they were unanimous that it should be promoted more. It is evident that Sevdalinka is estimated as a demanding form to perform, and that it can only be interpreted by a performer of extraordinary skills. According to the respondents, Sevdalinka enjoys good reception by the audiences in solo concerts, as well as in restaurants. It is insufficiently present in general, yet more present in musical programmes on the radio than on television. The respondents agree with the statement that Sevdalinka's presence is strongest in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while in other Yugoslav territories and in our diaspora in Europe, America, Canada and Australia to a lesser extent. The majority of the respondents do not agree that Sevdalinka should be performed in an adapted form, as covers, in the sense of "however one can and want", which is apparent in performing practices today, but that the performing style of vocal and instrumental performers active within radio stations since the middle of the 20th century should be taken as a standard. The respondents agree with the fact that the performance of Sevdalinka will not bring or guarantee to performers better paid engagements or more of them, but they agree with the fact that fostering Sevdalinka will bring them renown of performers of extraordinary skills in the world of music.

Generally speaking, this study is aimed at looking at Sevdalinka outside of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural context and area. People who are most intimately associated with Sevdalinka are the vocal and instrumental performers whose repertoires feature this form and whose experience allows us to have a unique, unusual, specific, and, above all, direct insight into Sevdalinka. In the future, the results of this research may present a starting point for new empirical and comparative studies of perception of Sevdalinka on a different ethnic, territorial and diachronic level, so that this form is better illuminated as a phenomenon.

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POVZETEK

Z raziskavo smo želeli ugotoviti, ali obstajajo statistično pomembne razlike med mnenji o sevdalinki in pogledi nanjo pri uglednih vokalnih in instrumentalnih izvajalcih. Poskušali smo izluščiti mnenja priznanih vokalnih in instrumentalnih glasbenih izvajalcev (N=16) iz Beograda. Kriteriji, ki smo jih pri tem upoštevali, so: splošna javna prepoznavnost osebnih, letnih in/ali desetletja starih vokalnih in instrumentalnih praks, prisotnost sevdalinke na repertoarjih anketirancev, prepoznavnost oseb na srbskem glasbenem prizorišču in njihovo nastopanje na glasbenih programih Radiotelevizije

Beograd in nacionalne Radiotelevizije Srbije. Za namene raziskave smo uporabljali dva vprašalnika, *Vprašalnik o splošnih podatkih* in *Ocenjevalno lestvico za ocenjevanje pogledov na sevdalinko* z 52 vprašanji, razdeljenimi na več področij: povezovanje določenih elementov pri poslušanju sevdalinke; pogostost izvajanja različnih glasbenih zvrsti; metode učenja sevdalinke; cilj učenja sevdalinke; kvalitativne značilnosti sevdalinke; družbeni vidiki izvajanja sevdalinke in položaj sevdalinke in njenih izvajalcev v Srbiji. Izsledki kažejo, da pri uglednih vokalnih in instrumentalnih izvajalcih ni statistično pomembnih razlik med pogledi in mnenji o sevdalinki.