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Defining Nostalgic Musicscape: *Starogradska muzika* in Skadarlija (Belgrade) as Sound Environment*

Definiranje nostalgične glasbene krajine: *starogradska muzika* v beograjski Skadarliji kot zvočno okolje**

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IZVLEČEK

Ulica Skadarlija v Beogradu, ki jo zaradi številnih gostiln uradno kličejo »boemska četrt«, je zaznamovana z nostalgičnim diskurzom. Zvočna krajina Skadarlije temelji na izvedbah *starogradske muzike* (stare meščanske glasbe). Prispevek analizira ustvarjanje in poglobljenje tega zvočnega okolja, s posebnim poudarkom na vlogi nostalgije v tem procesu.

ABSTRACT

Skadarlija Street in Belgrade, officially called a "bohemian quarter" because of its numerous taverns, is characterized by the discourse of nostalgia. Performances of the *starogradska muzika* ("old urban music") genre create Skadarlija's musicscape. This paper deals with process of construction and commodification of the sound environment, particularly examining the role of nostalgia therein.

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Introduction

This paper presents ethnomusicological research in urban settings, which is related to the sonic ecology of Belgrade (Serbia), particularly to a part of the city that is considered representative and officially promoted to tourists in Belgrade. Specifically, the soundscape is created by means of a popular folk musical genre – *starogradaska muzika* (in Serbian, “old urban music”), typical of the towns in the Balkans and originating in global popular music of the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, but at the same time the soundscape is achieved by the performances of *starogradaska muzika* in Skadarlija, the “bohemian quarter”. Skadarlija itself is conceived as a central cultural-spatial unit shaped by the discourse of nostalgia, and musical performances constitute an important part of its presentation of “real, old Belgrade”. Here will be presented aspects of the concept of Skadarlija as well as the genre of *starogradaska muzika* performed there, which constitutes and commodifies the nostalgic musicscape of Belgrade. This exemplary musical practice is considered here for the first time, since ethnomusicology in Serbia is predominantly concerned with rural musical practices of a supposed archaic and/or ritual origin. It should be added that the auditive environment of Belgrade has recently become the topic of (ethno)musicological research which, aside from Skadarlija, also problematizes the soundscape of Savamala, as well as a particular policescape of protests.¹

Belgrade has been the capital of several states during the course of history. Its political position has also influenced its music/sound, since it was the meeting place of urban musical practices of both the southern and northern parts of Serbia (marked by a predominance of historical influences of Ottoman or Austro-Hungarian culture), a centre of music broadcasting (the year 1929 was the beginning of broadcasting by Radio Belgrade, where both popular and urban folk music occupied large portions of the programme /Dumnić 2013a/)², and the place for performances by elite musicians from different areas – these have influenced the music and performance with their migrations towards Belgrade and also by means of networking, since they were the carriers of urban folk music (Dumnić 2013b: 86–87).³ A special interest in Belgrade is based on the current state of the field as well: as the capital city, Belgrade has cultural-spatial units that constitute a highly representative authentic/folk/traditional environment for tourists and a special place for domestic visitors. Music has an important role in the process of constructing that representation, and so do the taverns where, according to the average listener/consumer, “real folk music” can be heard. Belgrade nowadays has numerous taverns where *starogradaska* and *novokomponovana narodna* (in Serbian,

1 See: Ivana Medić, “Reculturalization Projects in Savamala,” *Muzikološki zbornik* 52/2 (2016); Srđan Atanasovski, “Towards Vita Democratica: Urban Soundscapes and the Ruptures of Subjectivity,” in *Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe: A Renewal of Protests and Democracy*, eds. Geoffrey Pleyers and Ionel Sava (Bucharest: University of Bucharest, 2015), 196–202; the trilateral project “City Sonic Ecology: Urban Soundscapes of Bern, Ljubljana and Belgrade,” Accessed on July 1, 2016, <http://citysonicecology.com>.

2 Marija Dumnić, “The Creation of Folk Music Program on Radio Belgrade before World War Two: Editorial Policies and Performing Ensembles,” *Musiology* 14 (2013): 9–29.

3 Marija Dumnić, “Muziciranje i muzičari u kafanama u Beogradu od početka emitovanja programa Radio Beograda do Drugog svetskog rata,” *Zbornik Matice srpske za scenske umetnosti i muziku* 49 (2013): 77–90.

“newly-composed folk”) music are performed, but the taverns in Skadarlija have a special value for city life, because *starogradska muzika* is traditionally performed there. In this street there are numerous taverns with their own orchestras who perform urban folk music repertoires for tips, thus creating a specific sonic environment.

After explanation of the methodology and theoretical definition of the musicscape, the article focuses on the problem of Skadarlija’s soundscape. Special attention is devoted to its main marker – commodified nostalgic music, the genre of *starogradska muzika*. Finally, the performance of *starogradska muzika* in Skadarlija is analysed in order to describe the functioning of its representative musicscape.

Methodology of the Research of Musicscape

For the research into the soundscape of Skadarlija, several types of material had to be analysed. Core methodology involved field research, consisting firstly of participant observation and later of audio and video documentation (soundwalks and recordings of performances) and conducting ethnomusicological interviews with several performers. Participant observation was used as a “process in which the observer’s presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation” (Schwartz and Green Schwartz 1955: 344)⁴, so it actually positions the researcher (i.e. the author of this article) as a member of the audience who occasionally interacts with the musicians during their performance. Aside from a typical ethnomusicological documentary recording of music performance, this research also examined *soundwalks* – a listening method originally established in the 1970s by the group gathered around Raymond Murray Schafer. The soundwalk was chosen to be recording method, in order to provide the listeners of the archived material with the most accurate impression of the Skadarlija soundscape. Also, music performances in Skadarlija were unravelled with the help of selected musicians, with whom are conducted several in-depth, semi-structured interviews about *starogradska muzika* and their experience of performing in the taverns in Skadarlija. Because of the historical reference which is immanent to this nostalgic musical phenomenon, numerous sound editions and collected printed scores of *starogradske pesme* (in Serbian, “old urban songs”) also served as important sources.⁵ Other significant material included promotional touristic publications devoted to the taverns and the entire ambience of Skadarlija, where the most performances of *starogradska muzika* take place, because they present the cultural politics of a particular soundscape’s discourse. To complete the picture of a representative sound environment, the next step in soundscape research will be an investigation of the reception of performances of *starogradska muzika* by the audiences, especially the tourists in Skadarlija, and mapping particular sound places in this street.

4 Morris Schwartz and Charlotte Green Schwartz, “Problems in Participant Observation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 60/4 (1955): 343–353.

5 E.g. Miodrag Bogdanović, *Noći i zore Beograda: Sećanja, romanse, šansone, evergrin večiće melodije, instrumentalna verzija* (Beograd: FIN&EK, 2005); Ljubiša Pavković, *Gradske pesme i romanse* (Knjaževac: Nota, 2011); [Various artists], *Skadarlija at Night* (Belgrade: PGP RTB, 1976 (LP)).

The term *soundscape* is based primarily on the theory adumbrated by the Canadian composer Raymond Murray Schafer, who had been conducting research in the field of sonic ecology since 1969, “concerned with raising public awareness of sound, documenting environmental sound and its changing character, and establishing the concept and practice of soundscape design as an alternative to noise pollution” (Westerkamp et al. 2014).⁶ Soundscape is conceived as “the acoustic manifestation of ‘place’, in the sense that the sounds give the inhabitants a ‘sense of place’ and the place’s acoustic quality is shaped by the inhabitants’ activities and behaviour” (*Ibid.*). The representation of soundscape is shaped by the listener’s perception of it, and it is made of: *keynote* (ubiquitous and prevailing sound), *signals* (foreground sounds in listening, often encoding certain messages or information), *soundmarks* (analogous to landmarks, these are unique sound objects, specific to a certain place), *sound object* (according to Pierre Schaeffer, ‘an acoustical object for human perception’, the smallest self-contained particle of a soundscape), *sound symbols* (sounds that evoke personal responses based on collective and cultural levels of association) (*Ibid.*). When it comes to the present research, signals, soundmarks and sound symbols are of the utmost importance, because they are factors that distinguish this soundscape as representative. Contemporary sound research also recognizes the importance of ambience for the realization and meaning of a sound (La Belle and Martinho 2011),⁷ as well as the capability of sound and auditive experience in reconfiguring the space (Born 2013: 3).⁸ In this article, musicscape refers to soundscape with musically (i.e. aesthetically and socially) organized soundscape, accepting that music is sound with these aspects (see more in Sakakeeny 2015: 115–120).⁹ Also, the existence of projects dealing with *urban musical landscapes* (Cohen 2011) must be mentioned.¹⁰ The problem of *nightscape* is also isolated sociologically, and therefore implies research of city landscapes as places of production and consumption by night, with specific regulation and spatial location, in relation to mainstream, residual and alternative practices (Chatterton and Hollands 2003: 6).¹¹ Especially important for this research were the writings on music played in specific environments with an emphasis on the aspect of commodification (e.g. shopping), which largely rely on Tia de Nora’s concepts of social uses of music – as she puts it, music is constitutive of agency, a medium with a capacity for imparting shape and texture to being, feeling and doing.¹² So the role of music in production of place can be explained thus: “It is proposed that all music is capable of transforming perceptions of the environment in which it is heard, and eliciting immediate emotional and behav-

6 Hildegard Westerkamp, Adam Woog and Helmut Kallmann, “World Soundscape Project,” *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, last modified July 16, 2014, accessed on March 20, 2016, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/world-soundscape-project/>.

7 See more: Brandon La Belle and Claudia Martinho, eds., *Site of Sound: Of Architecture and the Ear 2* (Berlin: Errant Bodies Press, 2011).

8 Georgina Born, “Introduction,” in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–69.

9 Matt Sakakeeny, “Music,” in *Keywords in Sound*, ed. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Duke University Press, 2015), 112–124.

10 Sara Cohen, “Cavern Journeys: Music, Migration and Urban Space,” in *Migrating Music*, ed. Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck (London – New York: Routledge, 2011), 235–250.

11 Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands, “Introduction: Making Urban Nightscapes,” in *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power* (London – New York: Routledge, 2003), 1–16.

12 Tia De Nora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 152.

journal responses, regardless of whether it is passively heard as a background element or actively listened to as a live performance in a dedicated venue” (Oakes 2013: 41).¹³ And finally, some cities have music (or even particular songs) stereotypically associated with them (e.g. *bossa nova* and Rio de Janeiro, *fado* and Lisbon etc.), and these soundscapes are conjured not only by recordings, broadcasts and movie/television soundtracks, but they can also be heard in the streets, hotels, bars and clubs frequented by tourists (Long 2014: 48–49).¹⁴

Skadarlija as the Nostalgic Ambience of Belgrade

In the nineteenth century, Skadarska Street was Gypsy *mahala* (in Serbian /Turkish loanword/, “neighbourhood”) where a stream flowed, making this small street a border between two Belgrade neighbourhoods, Dorćol and Palilula (Dimitrijević 1983: 22–23).¹⁵ In the second half of the nineteenth century, it slowly became the place of gathering of poets, actors and painters, so in the middle of the century numerous breweries, taverns and inns (nowadays, “restaurants”) were opened there. Since the National Theatre of Serbia is nearby, in 1901, when the most famous tavern in Belgrade (*Dardaneli*) was closed, Skadarlija became the main bohemian place in the town during the period before World War II (Dimitrijević 1983: 19). The programming of Radio Belgrade in that period even included a folk music show, *Skadarlijsko veče* (in Serbian: “An Evening at Skadarlija”), as well as live broadcasts of folk music performances from those taverns, which testify to the historical prominence of music in this area. Even to the present there are radio and television shows, sound and score editions, and even particular songs that promote *starogradska muzika* from Skadarlija.

Skadarlija was scheduled for protection as a “Belgrade monument”, because several famous poets and artists lived there (Đura Jakšić, Milorad Gavrilović, Čiča Ilija Stanojević, Dimitrije Ginić etc.) (Dimitrijević 1983: 26). In 1966, the restoration of Skadarlija started as an architectural project (by Uglješa Bogunović, published in 1957 in newspaper *Politika*) (Dimitrijević 1983: 115). As can be seen from his urbanist project adopted in 1981, Skadarlija was imagined as an ambience for leisure (with music as a part of that), which “suits a man”.¹⁶

13 Steve Oakes, Anthony Patterson, Helen Oakes, “Shopping Soundtracks: Evaluating Musicscape Using Introspective Data,” *Arts Marketing: An International Journal* 3/1 (2013): 41–57.

14 Philip Long, “Popular Music, Psychogeography, Place Identity and Tourism: The Case of Scefiefield,” *Tourist Studies* 14/1 (2014): 48–65.

15 Kosta Dimitrijević, “Skadarlija – Povratak ljudskoj meri,” in *Skadarlija*, ed. Nebojša Bogunović (Beograd: Jugoslavijapublik - SIZ „Skadarlija,” 1983), 16–116.

16 The concept was: “Skadarlija is not only an architectural or urbanist museum monument protected by law. It is an alive and necessary part of a huge organism of the city, which contributes to its activity and variety. It is a pedestrian zone in the city centre built to suit a man, with little shops, terraces, gardens and small catering objects, which are mostly ground floor, sunk in green and flowers. It is an lively and attractive walking zone always full of events – there is acting in taverns, gardens and improvised outdoor spaces, people are sitting on benches and stairs, and there is music-making and reciting in passing. By this act, the ambience, houses, street, existing ensembles are protected, as well as the habits of Belgrade inhabitants (a family going out to a tavern and theatre, gathering in the street, visiting an exhibition, partying in gardens at small spontaneous street happenings etc.) are cherished. (...) But the Skadarlija that we build does not only rely on catering and Bohemian tradition. It is a contemporary, modern and human centre aimed exclusively at pedestrians and their relaxation, cultural uprising, amusement, meetings and activities related to tradition and habits of Belgrade people. After many years of verifying the interests of Belgrade

In the opinion of visitors (and also the inhabitants of Belgrade, including the author of this article), Skadarlija nowadays represents a very pleasant place in Belgrade because of its architecture, restaurants and music. *The General Urbanist Plan of Belgrade* prescribed that the central city zone should be cared for in terms of preservation of historical buildings, which should be restored and conserved in order to be integrated into contemporary architecture (Roter Blagojević and Nikolić 2012: 123).¹⁷ The present-day look of the Skadarlija street as an “ambiental nook” of Belgrade preserves the original connection with its appearance from the past in the part around the tavern *Tri šešira*. The rest of Skadarlija is adapted: traffic was banned (as well as sound pollution, a regular keynote sound in the streets nearby), a fountain was erected, candelabra were added, interiors of the taverns were redesigned in an old style (lately some of them also as “ethno”), artists started working in the streets, and special actors such as drummer (a kind of messenger) and fortune teller started to work there.¹⁸ Also, Skadarlija became a “sister street” with Montmartre in Paris, and, after that, some clear references to similar urban places were made (Plaka /Athens/, Grinzing /Vienna/, Bašaršija /Sarajevo/, Debar-malo /Skopje/, Old Arbat /Moscow/, Ilot Sacre /Brussels/). Some of the earlier taverns were reconstructed and some new ones opened, so today there exist: *Dva bela goluba* (in English: *Two White Pigeons*), *Zlatni bokal* (*Golden Jar*), *Mali vrbac* (*Little Sparrow*), *Skadarlijski boem* (*Boheme of Skadarlija*), *Dva jelena* (*Two Deers*), *Šešir moj* (*My Hat*), *Šešir moj 2* (*My Hat 2*), *Putujuć glumac* (*Travelling Actor*), *Tri šešira* (*Three Hats*), *Velika Skadarlija* (*Great Skadarlija*) as traditional taverns, and *Kuća Đure Jakšića* (the house of a famous poet Đura Jakšić is nowadays a cultural centre of the municipality Stari Grad /Old Town/ and there are various concert programmes), as well as several modern cafes (where global popular music is played).¹⁹ It is interesting that another spatial entity appeared recently in the vicinity of Skadarlija (the former building of the Belgrade Beer Industry, with an entrance from a parallel street), where one finds cafes which play contemporary popular music (partly similar to Savamala).

Starogradska muzika is performed in a specific urban environment, in the ambient of the city center, consisting of specific street architecture, landmarks such as a monument (of the poet Đura Jakšić), a fountain, a flag during the summer season, and bohemian sign-posts. In the street there are art and craft exhibitions and stores. The aura of Skadarlija’s greatness and authenticity of “soulfulness” is also achieved by the narratives on its famous inhabitants who were prominent participants in the local Bohemian lifestyle, as well as the namechecks of famous visitors from all over the world. But what actually constitutes “the spirit” of Skadarlija are the taverns. Skadarlija has its inner diversity which can be mapped and it is mainly based on music played in the

citizens and guests of Skadarlija, as well as consideration of shows, this part of the city presents a possibility for response to touristic demand which is not to be missed.” (Uglješa Bogunović, *Urbanistički projekat Skadarlije*, Beograd, 1981, according to: Nebojša Bogunović, ed., *Skadarlija* /Beograd: Jugoslavijapublik - SIZ „Skadarlija,” 1983/, 118-119.)

17 Mirjana Roter Blagojević and Marko Nikolić, “Značaj ouvanja identiteta i autentičnosti u procesu urbane obnove grada: Uloga stambene arhitekture Beograda s kraja devetnaestog i početka dvadesetog veka u građenju karaktera istorijskih ambijenata,” *Nasleđe* 9 (2012): 117-128.

18 [Anonymous], *Everlasting Skadarlija: Tourist Guide* (Belgrade: Tourist Organization of Belgrade, 2010), 20.

19 See: “Skadarlija,” Touristic Organization of Belgrade, accessed on April 2, 2016, <http://www.tob.rs/what-to-see/attractions/skadarlija>.

taverns, each slightly different from the other (as sound objects) and thus creating soundmarks. The taverns play an important role in Serbian society. The tavern (Serbian: *kafana*) is an institution between the private and public space, with important cultural contents and communication places; a space for entertaining the audience, but also for networking and professionalisation of musicians. In the musicians' oral narratives, Skadarlija's taverns have been singled out as elite places for folk music performances. The most celebrated ones are the taverns with Romani orchestras, but also a tavern which hosts a *tamburitza* band with the longest tradition ("Tamburica 5" in *Dva jelena*), where all performers are in costume.

Commodification of Nostalgia

It is already noted in ethnological literature that the function of Skadarlija today is to contribute to the tourist presentation of Belgrade as a "city of leisure" and that the main mechanism for that is the construction of the aura of authenticity with taverns, Bohemians and music: "Taverns and Bohemia, because that is the milieu in which the construction was invented, and music, because the selection of a song reflects an atmosphere and attitude, and because (today's) *starogradska muzika* additionally legitimates the construct" (Vukanović 2008: 141).²⁰ As Vukanović noticed, the construction of Skadarlija evolved: "To construct today's Skadarlija, more than a desire of Belgrade bohemians to have 'their republic' is necessary. With the revitalization in 1960s and 1970s, Skadarlija has transformed: from the place where artists and (other) Belgradians spend days and nights, to the place mostly intended for tourists." (*Ibid.*).

In the 1970s, there was a manifestation *Skadarlijske večeri* (in Serbian, "Evenings in Skadarlija"). The interlocutors in the ongoing research, i.e. the Skadarlija musicians, had positive memories of these events – there was an open air stage, in front of the house of Đura Jakšić where a makeshift festival took place, with selected musicians who performed folk (and particularly *starogradska*) music, right next to the exhibitions of paintings and theatre performances. In Vukanović's opinion, it was the beginning of changing the importance of the taverns in Skadarlija (Vukanović 2008: 151).

These ethnological facts lead us to conclude that the music performed in Skadarlija is meant to be commodified. Specifically, music has a special connection with tourism: "Music provides an important and emotive narrative for tourists, as an expression of culture, a form of heritage, a signifier of place and marker of moments. (...) Music both defines and transcends the borders of destinations, while it emphasizes and challenges notions of tradition, provides opportunities for liminal play, transgression and resistance, and helps define the identities of visitors and the visited." (Lashua, Spracklen and Long 2014: 5–6).²¹ But what is most important in the process of commodification is that music in Skadarlija is paid for, before it is performed.

20 Maša Vukanović, "Konstrukt na 44°49'14" & 20°27'44"," *Etnoantropološki problemi* 2/3 (2008): 139–160.

21 Brett Lashua, Karl Spracklen and Phil Long, "Introduction to the Special Issue: Music and Tourism," *Tourist Studies* 14/1 (2014): 3–9.

The process of commodification is also related to the discourse of *nostalgia* in this soundscape. Nostalgia is a notion highly relevant for ethnomusicological observations of various cultures, and in Serbia there are many phenomena which reflect nostalgia via music.²² It is considered here as emotional memory, which is based on melancholia and utopia. Slovenian cultural studies scholar Mitja Velikonja regards it as a “(non) instrumentalized story that binarily laments and glorifies a romanticized lost time, people, objects, feelings, scents, events, spaces, relationships, values, political and other systems, all of which stand up in sharp contrast to the inferior present. Although nostalgia refers to the past, it also indirectly speaks of the present, especially if promises and expectations for the better future were not actually realized. (...) In sum, the more disappointment with unfilled wishes and promises, the more nostalgia” (Velikonja 2009: 538).²³ Nostalgia makes *starogradska muzika* regressive and “retro” and desirable for the audience who go there. At the same time, *starogradska muzika* is just one layer and part of the politics called “industry of nostalgia” (which is opposed to the bottom-up “culture of nostalgia”, as Velikonja puts it /Velikonja 2009: 539/) in Skadarlija.

Theoretical interpretation of this article is grounded in the foundational work of Svetlana Boym. “Nostalgia (...) is longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy” (Boym 2001: XIII).²⁴ It has specific relation to place, but even to time: “At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time (...) In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress” (Boym 2001: XV). Boym is reflecting on nostalgia and its existence in modernity: “Modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the edenic unity of time and space before entry to history. The nostalgic is looking for the spiritual addressee” (Boym 2001: 8). Technological and social progress contributes to nostalgia: “The rapid race of industrialization and modernization increased the intensity of people’s for the slower rhythms of the past, for continuity, social cohesion and tradition” (Boym 2001: 16). Boym’s statement that can be confirmed is that, at the end of the twentieth century, “nostalgia became a defense mechanism against the accelerated rhythm of change and the economic shock therapy” (Boym 2001: 64). In that time, what was “old” (“retro”) became popular and profitable – “‘old’ here refers to an ahistoric image of the good old days, when everyone was young, some time before the big change” (Boym 2001: 65). This is also how Skadarlija functions now. Boym’s major innovation was that she divided nostalgia into two types – *restorative* (longing for place) and *reflective* (longing for time): “Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and

22 So far, the most prominent are ethnomusicological research of rural music in socialist Yugoslavia, journalist writings about “yugonostalgic” aspects of local rock music after World War II.

23 Mitja Velikonja, “Lost in Transition: Nostalgia and Socialism in Post-Socialist Countries,” *East European Politics and Societies* 23/4 (2009): 535–551.

24 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2001).

delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.” (Boym 2001: XVIII). So, nostalgia is not only a longing for a lost home, but longing *per se*, and as reflective nostalgia it is highly present in *starogradska muzika*: “The object of romantic nostalgia must be beyond the present space of experience, somewhere in the twilight of the past or on the island of utopia where time has happily stopped, as an antique clock” (Boym 2001: 13).

When it comes to Skadarlija’s soundscape, the second type of Boym’s nostalgia is highly applicable. People from Belgrade or Serbia have in mind the “old Belgrade”, which some of them never saw, and they want to distance themselves from the present, but also to preserve their suggested cultural identity. Even some of songs performed when the genre of *starogradska muzika* emerged and which were not part of that repertoire are nowadays nostalgically observed as the legacy of previous time, so they are performed as “old urban songs” in the context of Skadarlija. Moreover, reflective nostalgia can be noticed with respect to the tourists who visit this quarter. They often come to Belgrade in order to experience nightlife, food and music played by the Romani, and common representations are the same as for the domestic audience. What is interesting is that for tourists who have never visited Belgrade before, nostalgia is based on positive stereotypes about the Balkans, aimed at its presentation as the region of Europe which is situated between East and West, with its specific culture and “wild”/“authentic” entertainment.

Also, there is the potential of the concept of restorative nostalgia. Namely, Skadarlija is often visited by people from Serbian diaspora. According to the data collected from the interviews with musicians, their longing for their “true” homeland can be observed in the repertoire they order – often that is *starogradska muzika*. Except for that, nostalgia for homeland is obvious with foreign tourists – after the band plays one song from their country, they order more of the repertoire familiar to them.

The Genre of *Starogradska Muzika*

In order to understand soundscape of Skadarlija, its musical essence must be presented. *Starogradska muzika* is a form of folk music, but also a part of regional popular music. Namely, the status of this musical genre fluctuates in different contextual frameworks. First of all, its existence as urban folklore is influenced by urban cultures of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. The emergence of this genre was caused by the activity of national romantic composers and poets, which was typical for the art of nations constituted at the end of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, and that was a part of the construction of the bourgeoisie. The history of some prominent songs was associated with the global popular music of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, so there are compositions of *schlager*, *nota* and songs from other traditions with lyrics adapted to Serbian (translated or rewritten). Production,

copying, spreading and consumption of this music became possible because of the media, i.e. printed text songbooks and sheet-music and, later, records (from 78 rpm gramophone records to present-day digital formats) and broadcasting (beginning with radio). The popularity of the genre also increased because of the general urbanization of society. The result is that there are similarities among urban folk music practices in all contemporary Balkan countries and that they are a mixture of juxtaposed Ottoman and European cultural influences in general. But it is important to emphasize that this music is folk too, due to its specific performance practice which takes place in taverns; this has contributed to its common perception as “folk” and facilitated its absorption into tradition. Also, until the present research, this type of music was observed but marginalized in ethnomusicological and musicological research in Serbia, because it was “other” in comparison to both rural folklore and high art music; in other words, it was popular music.

The musical genre investigated here is profoundly related to the discourse of an idealized earlier time, even in its name. This particular term *starogradska muzika* implies a musical practice that was performed a long time ago, but also that it has been named recently. Musical forms of this genre which had existed from the middle/late nineteenth century until World War II can be labeled as *gradska narodna muzika* (in Serbian, “urban folk music”) to emphasize their folk status which was different from rural musical folklore, and to highlight the contemporariness of the genre in previous times. In a narrower meaning, *starogradska muzika* refers to the way these songs are labelled nowadays (those songs that were popular before World War II), and in an expansive scientific interpretation according to emic discourse, to newer songs performed in a specific context (that is, in taverns and Skadarlija). According to the data collected so far, this term became a part of common knowledge because of a need to make an alternative to the genre which became popular in the end of 1960s and was marked as kitsch – the so-called *novokomponovana narodna muzika*. The social meaning of this genre has been discussed by many authors, mostly accentuating its controversial nature in relation to aesthetic values of poetic and visual aspects (e.g. Vidić Rasmussen 2002).²⁵ What is important here, “old” opposed to “new” is an axiological statement and symbolizes good vs. bad musical taste in local folk music. Interestingly, earlier performances of *gradska narodna muzika* had carried the same level of scorn, but the passing of time gave a special aura to this repertoire. Moreover, even the songs of *novokomponovana narodna muzika* performed at taverns in Skadarlija, a typical place for the *starogradska muzika*, are acceptable. In other words, the discourse of nostalgia helped create a genre.

In short, the general musical specifications of the songs of the *starogradska muzika* genre are derived from sentimental lyrical romanticism and they are characterized by: major/minor scales, diatonic harmonies, a wide melodic wave-shaped range (usually a fifth up to a tenth), predominantly single-part singing (with the possibility of arrangement with accompanying voices), *parlando rubato* or distributive rhythmical system associated with popular dances (guild or couple dances), or a combination of

25 Ljerka Vidić Rasmussen, *Newly Composed Folk Music of Yugoslavia* (London – New York: Routledge, 2002).

these systems, as well as acoustic instrumental accompaniment (*tamburitza* ensembles; *ad hoc* orchestras consisting of violin, clarinet /melody/, accordion, guitar /harmony/, double bass /bass/ – with the possibility of doubling parts), and a stable form of strophes (with possibility of choruses), with rhymed texts based on lyrical themes (mostly about love).

Soundmarks and Signals of Skadarlija: Analysis of Performances

There follows an analysis of the performance practice of *starogradska muzika* in Skadarlija nowadays, as an example of the construction of the sonic ecology of a particular place, achieved through the discourse of an earlier time. After observation of performance context and characteristics of the music performed, attention is directed to the process, in order to reveal how signals and soundmarks (which later become sound symbols for a nostalgic audience) function in the environment of Skadarlija.

Very important for making sound and the “atmosphere of ambience” of taverns is dramatization of music performance. Performance process in collected material can be observed from the aspect of performance studies, as Richard Schechner proposed (Schechner 2002),²⁶ because it contributes to important functions of performance: entertains, marks/changes identity, makes community, educates. Here performance in a tavern is described as the most characteristic for this music (as opposed to festivals or media stage performance, typical for other popular music practices). Schechner further divided performance: proto-performance (practicing, workshop, rehearsal), performance (warm up, public performance, contexts of public performances, calm down), results (critical response, archiving, memories). In the data collected so far, the period of proto-performance is very short and not so important in the perception of the musicians. The period of performance in the narrower sense is rather complex. During the warm up, the orchestra stands in one place and plays the repertoire that they themselves describe as *starogradska muzika*. They consider it traditional, valuable, “posh” and they love to perform it. After approximately half an hour of playing, they start to play for the audience in several one-hour sessions until the end of the evening. This public performance is realized in interaction with the audience – they “order” songs will be played and pay for them, i.e. they commodify the music. The dynamics of this are very complex and conditioned by temporary coordinates of listeners, so different forms of folk music are often part of it. At the same time, this is the part of programme which commodifies *starogradska muzika* and musicians need to respond to the affects of the guests. There are songs which evoke nostalgia in lyrics (some of them even devoted to old Belgrade and Skadarlija). Also, there is a special interaction with older audiences and visitors from diaspora who have a special affinity towards *starogradska muzika* and Skadarlija (and who mostly refer to restorative nostalgia, thus giving it a dimension of a longing for their “true”

26 Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London - New York: Routledge, 2002).

and lost home). Thus, it is not only *starogradska muzika* as a broader genre, but specifically these nostalgic songs that function as *signals* and later on *sound symbols* of Skadarlija's soundscape. Finally, the reflection on the outcomes of the performance is the period when nostalgia increases in the reception of the audience; not only by informal impressions, but also thanks to their memoirs and tourist publications based on this discourse.

A typical example of Skadarlija's soundmark is the performance of the contemporary ensemble that has performed for thirty-five years in one of the most prominent taverns, *Dva jelena*. The renowned ensemble "Tamburica 5" (nowadays lead by Mi-odrag Obradović)²⁷ performs every evening an opening medley, in a highly typical context of the existence of *starogradska muzika* today – in the tavern and at the beginning of the programme, with a specific mixture of songs and dances which are not ordered by the visitors. In the afternoon or evening, they start with popular classical music pieces (e.g. an arrangement /by Zoran Bahucki/ of Johann Strauss's "Blue Danube"), as a marker of the old as universal, classy and educative, and then they move on to the actual repertoire of *starogradska muzika* ("Tiho, noći", "Fijaker stari" etc.). After this introduction, they play songs requested by the audience (even "evergreen", "newly-composed folk music" and folk music from the countries of foreign guests), which represents soundscape signals.

The existence of this musical genre has actually turned Skadarlija into a sonic oasis in Belgrade: nostalgia as an escape from "fast presence" is obvious in the case of *starogradska muzika*. From the end of the twentieth century it has existed as an alternative to the *novokomponovana muzika*, by means of alluding to the past and urban tradition, and enhancing the collectivity typical for the tavern. Aside from the verbalization of this in the lyrics of many songs that constitute this repertoire, the music itself is subordinated to this goal: e.g. with the slow tempo in some songs, acoustic and live performance, as well as old songs that are dominant. It can be said that these are main characteristics of Skadarlija's musicscape.

Aside from the taverns, music is also played in the street itself, thus making Skadarlija's keynote soundscape which can be revealed by recording soundwalk sessions. In previous years, the actor Radomir Šobota was the long-standing drummer-messenger, who recited specific poetry. The tradition of street amusement of its visitors by means of an reenactment of the "authentic" characters of old Belgrade is continued by the actress Ljiljana Jakšić, who nowadays performs as the Lady of Skadarlija, going from one tavern to another and joining musicians with her reciting and singing programme. Today there are also orchestras who perform on the open-air terraces of the taverns and participate in the soundscape of Skadarlija by contributing to a specific music mixture altogether, overlapping with sounds of talking and the clinking of glasses and plates in taverns.

27 See: "Biografija," Tamburica 5, accessed on April 2, 2016, <http://www.tamburica5.rs/>.



Figure 1: Orchestra of Romani musicians performing in the garden of the tavern Šešir moj, 2015, photo by M.D.



Figure 2: Orchestra "Tamburica 5" performing at the tavern Dva jelena, 2015, photo by M.D.

Conclusion

In the soundscape of Skadarlija, the nostalgic musical genre of *starogradska muzika* creates a specific urban sonic environment, in terms of signals, soundmarks and sound symbols (as R. Murray Schafer proposed). As a nostalgic practice, it is often perceived by the wider audience as *authentic*, which usually means “indescribable”, with a strong impact of the performance moment and the “soul” of a listener, so it is explained from the aspect of performance studies. It contributes to the perception of the environment; it fosters an emotional interaction with the audience and, last but not least, it functions as a commodity in the promotion of the city. All of these make it an important part of the Belgrade sound map and by discussing music in the “Bohemian quarter”, this paper has aimed to reveal how a particular musicscape functions, especially influenced by the concept of nostalgia. The article has also demonstrated that field research of musicscape has results in connection with the consideration of the whole performance process of *starogradska muzika*.

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POVZETEK

Prispevek se osredotoča na glasbo, ki se izvaja v Skadarliji (Skadarski ulici) v Beogradu, ta pa velja za posebno urbano zvočno okolje. Skadarlija je turistična četrt srbske prestolnice, ki jo zaradi številnih gostiln (*kafan*) imenujejo "boemska", za to študijo pa je pomembno dejstvo, da v omenjenih gostilnah nastopajo meščanske tradicijske glasbene zasedbe. Že od začetka dvajsetega stoletja glasba tukaj ima izrazit pomen; v gostilnah kot javnih prostorih za druženje so nastopali številni znani glasbeniki.

Konstrukcija zvočnega prostora Skadarlije temelji predvsem na izvedbah *starogradske muzike* (dobesedno "stare meščanske glasbe"), ki prispeva idealizirano podobo "starega Beograda". Ta pri domačih obiskovalcih zbujata nostalgijo, pri turistih pa dodatno prispeva k privlačnosti okolja. V prispevku sta posebne pozornosti deležni tako nostalgija kot tudi poglobljenje.

Jedro repertoarja *starogradske muzike* sodi v začetek dvajsetega stoletja in se od takrat do

današnjih dne kontinuirano dopolnjuje. Pesmi temeljijo na durovskih/molovskih lestvicah, imajo širok melodični obseg, gre za večinoma enoglasno petje, dominirata *parlando rubato* ali distributivni ritmični sistem v povezavi s popularnimi plesi, kdajpakdaj v kombinaciji, značilni instrumentalni spremljavi sta tamburaška zasedba ali pa *ad hoc* ansambli, v katerih so violina, klarinet, harmonika, kitara in kontrabas, dosledna kitična oblika (ponekod z refrenom), v besedilih dominirajo lirične teme. Značilni sodobni izvajalski konteksti vključuje uvodni del, po katerem publika postane odločilna pri izbiranju pesmi. Torej, interakcija je ta, ki ustvari glasbeno dogajanje in na širši ravni tudi določi "staromeščanskost" repertoarja. Prispevek *starogradske muzike* k zvočni krajini Beograda je predstavljen skozi analizo izbrane skadarlijske zasedbe iz zornega kota performativnih študij. Namen je razlaga gradnje zvočnega okolja, oziroma identifikacija zvočnih signalov, zvočnih znakov in zvočnih simbolov.