

## CHURCH CHORAL SINGING IN HISTORICAL BANAT

If some very well-documented treatises have been written about Romanian choral church music from Banat, which will also support the scientific research of some of the works that will be born according to this plan, instead of Serbian church music, an integral part of church choral music from Banat, we have too little data on in the Romanian language, thus feeling, over time, the lack of specialized discussions (be it biographies or analyzes of the work of Serbian composers, musicologists or systematizers) that would become bigger and more acute, deals in depth with this important aspect of church choral music in Banat.

Moreover, about how the two branches first evolved separately, then together, and again separately from the 19th century, how they influenced each other, how they passed on to their descendants an almost unchanged heritage, there are too few writings and specialty studies, which led to the decision to address this topic.

Studying the work of the first known musicologists, composers and systematizers of Serbian choral church music in the 19th and 20th centuries. century (I. Marinković, Kornelije Stanković and especially St. Stojanović Mokranjac) we believe that the academic treatment of the personalities and activities of these musicians as well as the scientific presentation of their contribution in the reading, saving, preserving and transmitting all data related to Banat church music, up-to-date from the point of view of musicological research, is more than desirable.

The beginnings of the choral activity of the Serbs in the Romanian Banat can be found in the fourth decade of the 19th century, first in Timisoara (1836), with the establishment of the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral Choir and the Serbian Singing Society, then in 1876. (according to some authors in 1896) Society of Serbian songs from Arad.

*Key words:* Church choir singing, historical Banat, composers, musicologists, systematizers, Serbian singing societies.

This paper aims primarily to answer questions about the importance of studying the sacred music of the Romanian and Serbian Churches in historic Banat, a study both theological and musicological, including an academic treatment of the personality and activity of some Romanian and Serbian musicians, as well as the scientific presentation of their contribution in collecting, preserving, storing

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and transmitting all the data related to the Banat church choral music, updated from the point of view of musicological research. All this information gives a certain scientific dimension to the research of the materials in the museums and diocesan libraries of the Serbian and Romanian Churches, especially those in the Republic of Serbia.

By achieving the stylistic profile of the religious creation of the most representative Serbian and Romanian composers of the XIX<sup>th</sup>-XX<sup>th</sup> centuries and the comparative analysis of their most important liturgical creations that entered the universal repertoire, the result is a scientific research work for musicology and also an important work as content of historical data and examples of unexplored fragments of church music for the field Liturgical theology. The national spirit of the Romanian and Serbian ethnicity in this land, reawakened in the 19th century, is found not only in the patriotic choir, but also in the sacred pieces from Banat.

And if some well-documented treatises have been written about the Romanian church music in Banat, they will also support the scientific research of a part of the work that will be born respecting this plan, instead about the Serbian church music, an integral part of the church music from Banat. We have too little data in Romanian, feeling that way, over time, more and more acute the lack of specialized treatises (either biographies or analyzes of the creation of Serbian composers, musicologists or systematizers) to deal in depth with this important aspect of church music in Banat.

More than that, regarding the way in which the two branches evolved first separately in the first centuries of our era, then together in the medieval period, and from the 19th century again separately, after the canonical separation of the Serbian and Romanian Churches, regarding the way in which they were influenced by each other, as they passed on the inheritance received almost unaltered to their descendants, there are too few writings and specialized studies, which led to the decision to address this article.

We have, in Romanian, some available updated treatises on the activity of collecting, systematizing, storing and transmitting data of capital importance in the field of church music of some famous Banat composers and musicologists (Ion Vidu, Sabin Drăgoi, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Trifon Lugojan, Atanasie Lipovan and others), as well as the fact that we have so much data of great importance for the treatment of this subject in Serbian, having the opportunity to research directly from the source and not through little information found in the specialized dictionaries about the entire activity in this direction of some famous musicologists, composers and systematizers of Serbian church music from the 19th-20th centuries (I. Marinkovic, Kornelije Stanković and especially St. Stojanović Mokranjac) we consider that an academic treatment of the personality and activity of these musicians as well as the scientific presentation of their contribution in collecting, preserving, storing and transmitting all the data regarding the Banat church music, updated from the point of view of musicological research, is more than desirable.

Taking into account the lack of recent materials that deal exclusively and in detail with aspects of the origin, appearance and development of church music in Banat, as well as its systematization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this paper aims to reach the major fields of research that must be contained, according to the rigors of the science of Music, by such material. Thus, each chapter of this paper is based on a specific objective, the totality of these objectives having the mission to outline the importance and role that both in the Romanian Orthodox Church and in the Serbian Orthodox Church had in the history of the Banat church choral music.

The article follows from the objective of highlighting as accurately as possible the framework in which the Romanian church choral music appeared and developed in Banat, including in this chapter all the data provided by the Romanian Orthodox Church. But there are also statements about the singing of the pew, or at least about the church life that involves it, as well as its transformation into a sacred choral repertoire due to the work of some famous Roman composers.

Church music or singing is closely related to Theology, the Incarnate Word. The beauty of the dogmatic, liturgical texts is highlighted by the church singing of pews or chorale, monodic or harmonic. This complex system is found in divine worship in the Church. The church has never disregarded music as a spiritual manifestation of the faithful. The theological aspect of church music gives it the power to bring man closer to God, raising his soul to contemplation. The artistic-liturgical element involves the soul in a mood of emotion, in search of new existential meanings, of turmoil, but at the same time, in a spiritual fulfillment, in the vicinity of eternity.

The essence of our religious music, as it has been preserved by the Orthodox tradition, is, first of all, the sincerity of the emotion that runs through it and the melodic nobility. That is why it is a special purification instrument of the faithful man participating in the liturgical act, over the small daily preoccupations, having the gift of great transports in the deep regions of existence, beyond the world of surface dissonances.

Church singing has always emphasized a theology of love, a saving theology. Christ, the Incarnate, the Crucified and the Risen, represents the confession of the people in His Church, through church singing. Expressing in such specific forms our musical thinking, it must be kept unaltered in all the originality and authenticity of its traditional and genuine spirit, through its speech interpreting the very collective soul of our people. The main object of our study is liturgical music and its place in the sacred space. The way in which the author integrates himself into the musical tradition of the Church is the style in which he interprets liturgical music. The form and style of interpretation of choral church music give the composer his place, as an integrated part of the Orthodox musical tradition.

When we talk about style in musical interpretation, it is imperative to establish the object of artistic interpretation, this being the musical work. For an

author of church choral repertoire, most often his main musical work is the Holy Mass. Liturgical integration should be for all of us the participation in the Holy Mass and not a passive one, but an active participation, through prayer, singing and culminating in the communion with the Holy Sacraments.

The sacred characterizes the object of religious experience and is revealed within the limits of this experience. The spiritual message of the services must reach the human soul through all the instruments of Theology, one of these being sacred music in all its forms. The ancient musical tradition in historical Banat favored, starting with the end of the 19th century, the appearance of numerous urban and village choirs, church and secular, but also of authors of textbooks of pewter music and notable composers, such as Trifon Lugojan, Dimitrie Cusma, Ioan Teodorovici, Ion Vidu and Sabin Drăgoi, who enriched the treasure of the musical culture of our nation, with all kind of works with a special artistic value.

Trifon Lugojan, Dimitrie Cusma, Ion Vidu and Sabin Drăgoi, authors of selected compositions of church and secular music, are among the most important representatives of the sound art of Byzantine tradition in western Romania (Brediceanu, 1972: 94-95). Together with other Serbian composers, following the reflection of the invaluable Nicolae Steinhardt on the power of music to resonate souls, they searched into the resources of the monodic national church song, those valences that make the oriental, greek or slavic vein and the romanian and serbian creation a food of the human soul.

This article is based on the objective of bringing up to date information about Serbian church choral music in Banat. The topic we will present will consist, on the one hand, in historical information about Serbian church music, and, on the other hand, in information about choral religious music from the modern period, represented distinctly towards the end of the chapter, about which we will bring news, unpublished or less researched.

There are some important facts about Serbian singing that we need to know. Medieval monophonic vocal practice in Serbian churches has been transmitted exclusively orally, as it has happened in recent history. It is certain that the song of the Serbian church was derived from Byzantine, as in the case of other church songs in the Balkans. Consequently, it is certain that, despite some similarities, the singing of the pew in the Serbian church is obviously different from the monophonic vocal practice still used in the Greek, Bulgarian and Romanian churches (Boba 2020: 28).

After 1850, in accordance with the prevailing tendencies to favor everything that is supposed to represent the Serbian nation, the term *sprsko narodno crkveno pojanje* was officially adopted to support the chanting of the Serbian church. Some authors of studies on this way of singing, dating from the end of the 19th century, without any well-founded argument, claimed that this vocal tradition was authentic. The most modern ones tried to prove that this tradition was in its roots related to the Byzantine psalmody, but later it went through independent transformations, adapted to the vernacular language and to the national feelings.

Serbian musicology has adopted a theory that has not been fully proven that the practice of singing in the Serbian church was established in its current form after the great migrations of Serbs to the northern region of the Sava and Danube, from the Ottoman Empire to the Habsburg one. However, up to now, no systematic research has been conducted to indicate or denote the connection between the singing of the Serbian church and the monophonic tradition of Byzantine singing in the recent history of religious music of the Balkans in the 20th century.

A scientific study had as its theme Karlovacki Pojanje church singing and its influence on the first attempts to harmonize the liturgical hymns in the Serbian Church, but also the study of the relationship between the Romanian sacred choral repertoire and the Banat chant, presenting certain influences and confluences between Romanian and Serbian choral music, but also from the universal musical repertoire, which outlined the structural composition of Banat church choral music.

Serbian church music includes, in addition to the church compositions of Serbian composers, the folk song of the church. The song of the Serbian church is, according to its characteristics, acquired during the historical development, an original work, created with the help of the church and people influence. The long-term influence of folk singers in the long stages of history is much stronger than the effect of occasional church measures in regulating church singing. Even the well-established song of the Serbian church today, which is quite well established, did not find its origin, as the Vatican editions of Gregorian chant did, through long-term notation studies, but through the recording of live singing among the people. Thus, the folk line is the main feature of this song. Another feature of this is the great independence of today's singing, according to its former Byzantine model. Serbian church folk song raises many issues because it has not been sufficiently scientifically researched so far.

In the thirties of the nineteenth century, polyphonic choral singing was introduced in some Serbian dioceses, requiring the existence of adequate musical material, that means a certain number of choral compositions, at least for the Liturgy. A similar process began in the Russian Church in the mid-seventeenth century and ended in the eighteenth century, while in Bulgaria and Romania it took place only in the mid-nineteenth century. Choral singing has been never accepted and did not enter the liturgical cult of the Greek Church up until the present

In the Romanian churches from the historical Banat one could hear at the beginning of the 20th century the Liturgy composed of hymns and liturgical answers composed by several authors such as: Iacob Mureșianu, Eusebie Mandicevski, D.G. Kiriac, Augustin Bena, Gheorghe Cucu, Francisc Hubic, Nicolae Lungu, Gheorghe Dima, Nicolae Ursu, Filaret Barbu, Sava Golumba, Dimitrie Cusma, Ioan Teodorovici, etc. As it can be seen, among these names

there were not only Banatians. Also, in the Serbian churches from the historical Banat one could hear the Liturgies made of fragments of independent Masses composed by several authors such as: Kornelije Stankovic, Tihomir Ostoic, Stevan St. Mokranjac, Isidor Baic, K. P. Manojlovic, etc.

In this regard, in the case of the liturgies used by the choirs from the historical Banat, this model of compiling compendiums containing liturgical hymns composed by different authors, but taking into account especially the human factor, respectively the number and quality of members of mixed choirs. or on equal terms working in the parishes, it is a model used since the establishment of the musical societies in the historical Banat, both the Romanian and the Serbian ones.

The research model includes a stylistic and musical analysis of the most important works in the sacred choral repertoire composed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, comparative analysis of harmonized liturgies and sacred hymns that will present certain occidental influences on Romanian and Serbian religious compositions in historic Banat and will highlight the contribution and importance of church choral music in preserving our Orthodox tradition and faith in Banat. These composers, Romanian or Serbian, have given birth to memorable and extremely useful works even today in the cult of the Orthodox Church in historic Banat, works that are available for future studies and research of special interest or general interest.

The large amount of information obtained, as well as the works discovered during the archival research gave us the opportunity to make a comparative study between the Liturgies of Romanian and Serbian composers of this period, recalling data about the author, making an overview of the used document and analyzing only a liturgical hymn in each liturgical composition, representative for the Orthodox Church, which I considered appropriate and edifying, namely the hymn Axion or "It is truly fitting," as it is called by Orthodox believers. All the objectives listed above have the role of a gradual approach to the subject, ensuring a pyramidal approach that avoids speculative mistakes and also creates a complete picture, according to the requirements of Music when it comes to dealing with a topic of this nature, being the main purpose of the paper as well.

Through this presentation we will follow the establishment of the creative route on the territory of the Banat region, as well as the classification in the Romanian or Serbian value hierarchy of the representatives coming from this area. The course of becoming a musician proved the composers need to appeal to the ethnic strand, and the paths opened by it, even in the field of one single genre or exploring a single principle of creation, led to a natural evolution, but achieved only by a small number of representatives from Banat.

The declared desire of the Banat composers to engage in shaping a specific musical art was achieved through the contribution of Sabin Drăgoi, Nicolae Ursu, Zeno Vancea, I. Marinkovic, Kornelije Stanković and especially St. Stojanović



Mokranjac, to whom a wider exposure is dedicated at a certain point during this work (Ilić 1978: 17).

The research of the discovered sources and archival evidence on the subject of Banat religious music is particularly important, as it proves the existence of a continuity and transformation of the singing of the pew into the sacred choral repertoire used today in the Church worship. Based on the ancient Byzantine religious music and the centuries-old tradition of our Orthodoxy, it will link the past of the Banat Orthodox Church to its future, by creating a local religious musical style that bears the imprint of Eastern Christian spirituality in all its glory.

The study of the musical values left in time thus completes the liturgical treasure of which the analyzed musical works are part, as an annex of the process of formation and cultivation of the national consciousness. This undeniable truth has been demonstrated by all the great cultures of all nations with ancient church traditions in Eastern Europe.

Musical art in Banat has been asserted since the nineteenth century by its originality, an expression of the philosophy of the inhabitants of this region, accompanying their existence in socio-historical periods, mirroring their aspirations, being transposed into art through thoughts or messages, according to the folk ethos.

The national spirit of the Romanian and Serbian population of Banat - historically under the rule of the Habsburg Empire - will be reborn in the second half of the nineteenth century by the establishment of peasant societies and choral reunions, which especially explains the flourishing choral music in this area.

From the beginning of this study, we can specify that the Serbian church music from the researched period, namely that of the sec. XIX-XX, includes, in addition to the church compositions of Serbian composers, the folk song of the church, often harmonized in two voices. The song of the Serbian church is, according to its characteristics, acquired during the historical development, an original work, created with the help of the influence of the church and the people. The long-term influence of folk singers in the long stages of history is much stronger than the effect of occasional church measures in regulating church singing. Even the chant of the Serbian church today, which is quite well established, has its origins in the recording of live singing in the village. Thus, the folk line is the main feature of this song.

Another feature of it is the great independence of today's singing from its former Byzantine model. Serbian church folk song raises many issues because it has not been enough scientifically researched so far. On the other hand, a religious work was developed among the people, not necessarily within the Church, but only inspired by liturgical texts. Creations of this kind, usually in the form of Liturgies, Liturgical Answers or other compositional manifestations, have become more and more present in the divine services, living their existence along with the singing of the pew. However, in many cases, the musical works are entirely a result of the creative talent of the composers.

Nowadays, at least in the Orthodox Church, for the convenience of classification and sometimes expression, when we talk about choral singing we refer, in particular, to the harmonic-polyphonic (or polyphonic-harmonic) singing performed by the choir in several voices, type of songs which have begun to be cultivated in the Romanian and Serbian churches since the 19th century – especially since its second half - and which is usually clearly distinct from the single-voice, monodic chant, such as the so-called “psaltic” song or other regional variants, such as from Transylvania, Banator Bihor.

On the other hand, the ancient musical tradition in western Romania has favored, starting with the end of the 19th century, the appearance of authors of pewter music textbooks and notable composers, influenced by occidental music schools, such as Trifon Lugojan, Dimitrie Cusma, Ion Vidu and Sabin Drăgoi, for Romanians, or Kornelije Stankovic, Josif Marinkovic, Isidor Bajic, Kosta P. Manoilovic and Stevan Stevanovic Mokranjac (Đurić-Klajn, 1972: 145), for Serbs, who enriched the treasure of Romanian and Serbian musical culture in our countries and beyond their borders. These composers, Romanian or Serbian, have given birth to memorable and extremely useful works even today in the cult of the Orthodox Church in historic Banat, works that are available for future studies and research of special interest or general interest.

T. Lugojan was considered one of the most prolific musical personalities, offered by the Arad Orthodoxy in the first half of the twentieth century and a basic exponent of church music in Banat. D. Cusma was a well-known and appreciated music teacher in Banat for over half a century, as a conductor, folklorist and composer. I. Vidu was the founder and president of the “Association of Romanian choirs and fanfares in Banat”. An important personality of the Romanian musical life, the academician S. Drăgoi also inscribed his name in the gallery of worthy conductors of church choirs from Timișoara.

It is also important to note that the entire plethora of Serbian musicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Kornelije Stankovic, Josif Marinkovic (Čolić 1935), Isidor Bajic and Stevan Stevanovic Mokranjac, as well as their successors, Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević and Stevan Hristić were some of the first composers of religious music, but also secular and harmonized folk music in Serbia.

The scientific problem solved in this thesis, which refers to the appearance and development of the Romanian and Serbian sacred choral repertoire from the historical Banat in the 19th and 20th centuries, offered the possibility to substantiate and expand the range of scientific approaches in the field of studying and perceiving evolutionary processes. of the genre in the history and theory of ecclesiastical musical art, as well as its important role in preserving and perpetuating the spiritual and national tradition of the Orthodox Church in this historical region.



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Адријан Боба

## ЦРКВЕНО ХОРСКО ПЕВАЊЕ У ИСТОРИЈСКОМ БАНАТУ

Резиме

Почеци хорске делатности Срба у румунском Банату налазе се у четвртој деценији 19. века, најпре у Темишвару (1836), оснивањем Српског православног саборног хора и Српског певачког друштва, затим 1876. године (према неким ауторима и 1896), оснивањем Друштва из Арада. Рад проучава дела првих познатих музиколога, композитора и систематизатора српске хорске црквене музике у 19. и 20. веку. (И. Маринковић, Корнелије Станковић и посебно Св. Стојановић Мокрањац) јер сматрамо да су академска обрада делатности и доприноса ових музичара, као и научни приказ њиховог усмерења у читању, чувању, чувању и преношењу свих података везаних за банатску црквеној музику, са становишта музиколошких истраживања, више него пожељни. Поред ове систематизације, у раду пратимо развој и укрштаје хорске црквене музике у Банату до данашњих дана.

*Кључне речи:* Црквено хорско певање, историјски Банат, композитори, музиколози, систематизатори, Српска певачка друштва.