

NEW CONTEXTS, ESTHETICS, AND TRANSFER IN BELL-CHIMING TRADITION

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Introduction

The on-stage presentation of folk music by performers using material from the context that this music was once part of (or still is part of), or by performers that revive it based on oral or written sources, is one of the leading forms of living Slovene folk music today. With the change in context, the esthetic dimension of folk music comes to the fore, which can also create musical change.² This kind of change in music reflects the community's adaptation to social changes because the ability to adapt is also the only way for the tradition to survive; the tradition preserves its vitality only through "adding new elements and accepting the old ones" (Kovač 1990: 56).

Slovene-style bell chiming³ (Sln. *pritrkavanje*; Strajnar 1985) is a Slovene type of folk music activity that today exists in its original (i.e., religious) context because Roman Catholicism remains the dominant religion in Slovenia. Along with the social and cultural changes that have affected all areas of folk music, bell chiming has also undergone major changes in the last decade. Events such as gatherings, competitions, concerts with miniature bells, guest performances in Slovenia and abroad, the establishment of summer courses and regular courses for bell chiming, Internet bell-chiming forums, and online presentations have created a new context for bell chiming. At the same time, the function, form, and means of transferring this tradition, as well as the musical and esthetic aspects of both newly-composed and previously existing music, also change with the

¹ The editor would like to acknowledge Mojca Kovačič's assistance in coordinating the selection of articles for this volume.

² The phenomenon of the change of the functional dimension into the esthetic one has been discussed using the example of Slovene folk song tradition (Golež Kaučič 2005).

³ Bell chiming is a rhythmic performance in which the clapper is struck directly against the rim of a stationary bell. Musical performances are based on synchronized playing by the individuals in a group, in which each individual performer contributes to the rhythmic and melodic whole of the bell-chiming tune. Each performer usually strikes his own bell; it is rare to have only a single performer striking from one to as many as four bells. The rhythmic structure of the tune usually consists of three elements divided into individual strikes: leading strikes, answering strikes, and syncopated strikes, also termed "thickening" (*gostenje*). The bell chimer is referred to as a *pritrkovelec* in Slovene.

context. With new generations that are also musically well versed, the needs and requirements of performers are increasing; new esthetic criteria are taking shape and creative productivity is increasing. By comparing the sources to date and the results of current field research, this article examines the main aspects affecting changes in musical tradition. The article defines the nature of these changes, the reasons for their creation, and their connectedness and influence. In order to understand such changes, examining today's bearers of musical tradition and their attitude towards the past is of vital importance. This study shows how society can "shape the past to fit the present" (Nettl 1996).

Bell chiming and the religious context

Bell chiming takes place in the church tower and the original role of this activity is strongly connected to Christian religious contexts. Initially the bell had a signaling, ritual, and apotropaic function in the Christian world, but gradually its musical function strengthened as well. In Slovenia, this function has remained in the hands of folk musicians up to the present day. Bell chiming combines the signaling, ritual, and musical functions because it is most often used to call the faithful to mass in a musical way, and at the same time to mark important church holidays. This is how the difference between conventional bell ringing and Slovene-style bell chiming as a more solemn form of playing the bells is established.

The frequency of bell chiming depends on the tradition of an individual town or village, and the enthusiasm of local bell-chiming groups or individuals. However, today it is evident that, because of lifestyle changes,⁴ bell chiming is becoming increasingly restricted to certain holidays such as Christmas, the Assumption, Corpus Christi, Easter, Pentecost, and parish holidays, and the celebration of holidays that fall during the week is usually moved to Sunday.⁵ In addition to important holidays, bell chiming is also used to announce certain sacraments in the people's lives; for example, christening, communion, and confirmation. However, bell chiming at weddings and funerals is most often reserved only for the members of bell-chiming groups.⁶

⁴ Because of various work obligations today, bell chimers often cannot mark the holidays that fall during the workweek, whereas this was possible before industrialization.

⁵ We live in a time that has drastically changed the image of traditional folk culture and, especially because of industrialization, restricted the possibilities of practicing ritual folk culture to Sundays (Fikfak 2005: 79).

⁶ In Srednja Vas v Bohinju, bell chiming is also used to announce a newborn child in the parish.

Bell chiming is generally used to mark the holiday a day in advance, at 3 P.M. in the winter and at 4 P.M. in the summer. On the day of the holiday, the bells are played fifteen to twenty minutes before and after mass, and during the procession if it is part of the mass. Bell chiming is primarily intended for the entire parish community because in some places the hour of bell chiming was adjusted to the extended workday of the locals and moved to the evening hours before the holiday.

In comparison to other artistic groups in the local community, bell chimers are not accorded particular attention or acclaim by the locals because they are practically invisible to their eyes. They must be in the church tower twenty minutes before mass, and they are also the last to leave the church. Thus one of the privileges that they have accorded themselves and that defines their musical identity is bell chiming at the weddings and funerals of the members of their group. Bell chiming at funerals somewhat contradicts its primary role, in which the sound of bell chiming symbolizes celebration, joy, and festivity. Within the religious context, bell chiming only rarely extended beyond the boundaries of the local area—that is, the parish community.⁷ Rare opportunities for performing in other churches arose by taking part in the parish holidays of neighboring parishes when the locals allowed the guests to use their church bells, as well as by visiting other churches during pilgrimages. Because of improved communications, contacts between various groups have become more frequent today. By marking certain state holidays such as New Year's and May Day after the Second World War, and Independence Day after Slovenia's independence in 1991, bell chiming was transferred to the secular sphere.

From the musical viewpoint, bell chiming in the roles mentioned above still preserves the same musical image. Its repertoire does not change and differ within different functions; a single exception to the rule is the "flying" tunes⁸ that are not performed during processions and funerals because they are louder. Despite the transfer from the religious to the secular sphere, there has not yet been any major change in terms of music and esthetics. Bell chiming at state holidays is still primarily intended for the people in the parish community. Its signaling function is at the forefront and, at the same time, its sound symbolizes joy and happiness during the festivity. It often complements its ritual function because today state holidays are often marked by masses, which makes the dividing line between the religious and secular contexts less apparent.

⁷ In literary folk culture, the symbolic boundary of a community is often expressed by the sound of bells; that is, the boundary is where the parish bell can still be heard.

⁸ "Flying" tunes (*leteče viže*) is a term used for a bell-chiming method in which one of the bells (usually the largest) is swung with a rope or electronically, and all the other bells, which are stationary, are played by striking the clapper.

New contexts, new esthetics

The first initiatives to organize bell-chiming activity for educational purposes were made by Ivan Mercina (1851–1940)—an official building inspector for the Gorizia archdiocese, teacher, musician, and campanologist—in two books that are considered the first professional volumes on campanology and bell chiming (Mercina 1926, 1930). Although Mercina never carried out his ideas for establishing bell-chiming courses, the principles set down in his books represented the most important guidelines for new initiatives and projects that were not realized until nearly a century later. Simultaneous with the idea of a new functional dimension of bell chiming, Ivan Mercina also set down the first written rules on the playing method, and with the publication of the books these rules reached a broad circle of users. The rules he highlighted in large part criticize certain traditional and deeply rooted performance methods; in other words, this was an attempt to define and separate “correct” and “incorrect” traditional practices. Points of departure for these definitions are to be found in his formal musical education and his knowledge of the acoustic and physical features of bells. Some rules are based on his concern that certain playing methods are not good for the instruments,⁹ which only seem to be solid and indestructible, whereas other playing methods have musical and esthetic grounds.¹⁰ The point of departure for all the criteria—or “embellishments,” as Mercina called them—is the contrast in musical expression that is an important component in the musical and esthetic experience. With contrasts such as repetition/variation, stability/surprise, being/change, continuity/interruption, part/whole, and individual/collective—or with even more specific relations between the tones such as low/high, loud/quiet, and slow/quick—a musical work creates an effect that the listeners perceive as an esthetic component of music. When an individual perceives these contrasts as one in his musical experience, he feels the beauty of this experience (Green 2004).

Mercina emphasizes the well-considered structure of the bell-chiming program. Bell-chiming tunes should contrast with one another in the method of playing, the number of bells used, and the rhythmic and metric structure. Because the bell-chiming tune consists of a repeated

⁹ Mercina strongly condemns playing individual introductory and concluding strikes that demand great strength and speed in striking the clapper against the rim of the bell, and the technique of “catching the clapper” (when the bell chimer catches the clapper of the swinging bell with the rope and tries not to strike it against the rim of the bell) because when the clapper is released it strikes the bell with full force (Mercina 1926: 15–17). However, bell chimers see these two techniques as esthetic components of the bell-chiming tunes’ musical image and they are very proud of such technical skills.

¹⁰ The musical and esthetic criteria are described in the chapter “Olepšave v pritrkavanju” (Embellishments in Bell Chiming; Mercina 1926: 43–45).

rhythmic motif, he recommends dynamic and agogic changes to enliven the monotony of the performance. For interpretational marking, he uses the terminology of Western European art music, which he calls “definitions taken from music” (Mercina 1926: 43). He also draws some of his esthetic interpretational instructions from the bell-chiming tradition of his birthplace.¹¹ Initially, these criteria had a stronger influence on the performance technique and musical esthetics in the area where he worked—that is, the Littoral region—whereas today a broader circle of Slovene bell chimers use them. A typical feature of the Slovene folk song is its static nature of interpretation and its emotive lack of engagement (compared to methods of interpreting art and popular music). Similarly, a distinctive interpretation in terms of dynamic and agogic contrasts is also not typical of bell-chiming tradition. The discrepancy between traditional bell-chiming methods that are marked by local musical esthetics (introduction to bell chiming, playing with hammers, *accelerando*, catching the clapper, or one bell chimer playing several bells) and Mercina’s idea of esthetic performance is thus present even today. The work of numerous individuals¹² of key importance in the process of the transfer of bell chiming from the religious to the secular context was based on Mercina’s criteria. In addition to relying on books and articles by Mercina, bell chimers also use foreign professional literature and may not agree with local bell-playing customs. They communicate their ideas at roundtables, in bell-chiming courses, and in periodicals (e.g., *Klenkarski glas* and *Cerkveni glasbenik*).

Ivan Mercina’s educational work, which laid out certain guidelines in the first half of the twentieth century, was followed by other organized events. In the 1960s, competitions¹³ were organized by Slovenes living across the border in Italy, and these are still being held today. Since 1984 there have been regular bell-chiming gatherings at the regional and national levels organized by the Bell-Chiming Society of Slovene Theologians (*Pitrkovaški krožek slovenskih bogoslovcev*).¹⁴

¹¹ Mercina writes: “Nowhere else but in my native village (Goče near Vipava) have I heard them perform this way, and as a schoolboy I also took part in it myself. This has always been a great pleasure to me, and also to other people from Vipava; the late Dean and Canon Erjavec called the bell chiming from the Goče region “the wonder of the Vipava Valley” (Mercina 1926: 44).

¹² Marko Česen—who initiated and was the chief organizer of bell-chiming competitions, courses, on-line forums, magazines, and societies—came from the area near Mercina’s native village. After moving away from his native Littoral region, he shifted his activities to Lower Carniola.

¹³ It is said that the first bell-chiming competitions were held before the Second World War, but there is no reliable evidence to support this.

¹⁴ It is noteworthy that the first president of the society and the organizer of the first bell-chiming gatherings, Andrej Vovk, also came from Goče, Ivan Mercina’s birthplace.

However, these gatherings do not fully meet younger bell chimers' needs. They have directed their activities even more strongly to the secular sphere, where bell chiming is gaining an independent esthetic function, surpassing what is folk in music, and "fighting" for its place in art music. As one of the leading artists in the field of new bell-chiming techniques put it: "this is the only way for bell chimers to become church musicians . . . Many bell chimers believe that, until that day comes, we will unfortunately remain mere folk musicians" (Mehle 2006: 14). Younger performers accept the instrument with great enthusiasm as a means of expressing their own musical creativity or ability.

In addition to new contexts, changes are also emerging in the composition of bell-chiming groups regarding age and sex. Bell chiming was once a predominantly male activity. Children could not perform it before they reached a certain age; they were physically unable to do it because the clappers were too heavy for them. Today many church bells have a new type of clapper that is much lighter. Many bell chimers have also attached a lever made from a chain or rope to the clapper to bear some of the weight. Simultaneous with the changes in the division of roles in modern society, female groups and children have become more active within new organized events (cf. Fig. 1).

Increasingly more bell-chiming groups are becoming part of local cultural societies, or they have established their own societies because this enables them to attain recognition in the local cultural area and to finance certain activities. For several years now, the most active Slovene society has been the Bell-Chiming Society of Lower and White Carniola (*Pritrkovalsko društvo Dolenjske in Bele krajine*), which was established in 2000 and has around two hundred members, 60% of whom are under twenty-six. The society organizes competitions, as well as summer and regular courses in bell chiming. These courses offer systematic education for young bell chimers and, in addition to practical education, provide theoretical knowledge in bell casting, the history of bells, bell electrification, bell statics, and music theory. The courses and competitions also reveal a new esthetic dimension of bell chiming, which has come in contact with Western art music culture and theory and adopted numerous features. Younger bell chimers in particular, the majority of whom have had elementary musical education or have acquired it in part through bell-chiming courses, adopt its esthetic aspects and incorporate them into their performances and creations. Competitions organized by the society have a great influence on the shaping of concepts because success in the competition can only be achieved by taking into account all the criteria. Some of the criteria that the judges take into account in their evaluation are the following: clarity of the beginning (points are taken off for any strikes before the beginning of the competition, repetitions, stops, and rhythmically irregular beginnings), rhythmic regularity of the performance, quality of strikes (points are taken off for

muffled playing—i.e., if the clapper is held too long on the rim of the bell—or if the strikes are too strong), appropriate performance speed, use of dynamics and agogics, emphasizing weak and strong beats (additional points for syncopation), adding trills, solo passages, smooth transitions between various rhythmic patterns, a clear and synchronous ending, the repertoire (the most points are given to groups that perform new pieces), the difficulty and “correctness” of the tune created, and the accuracy of its transcription. Groups that provide scores for original pieces receive more points, but performing with a score is marked down (cf. Fig. 1). Criteria that clearly contrast with some local bell-chiming traditions are the following: points for joint strikes, prohibition of concluding strikes (except when prescribed in the score), prohibition of one bell chimer playing multiple bells, and “flying” tunes.

Fig. 1. A female performer using musical notation during a bell-chiming competition



New transfers of tradition

In terms of communication, today local groups of bell chimers have greater access to the events mentioned than in the time of Ivan Mercina. In addition to their influence on the musical and esthetic attitude towards bell chiming, they are also producing changes in the method of transferring tradition that preserves the musical life of bell chiming today.

Musical transfer is an integral part of cultural transfer between generations. For the most part, it takes place in childhood and adolescence (McCarthy 1999: 2). In addition to the transfer of the music itself, it also includes a variety of values and beliefs connected to the social, cultural, and political structures and ideologies of a nation (McCarthy 1999: 3). The turning point in the transfer of tradition is clearly the transfer from oral to written tradition because, "of the various ways of stabilizing change in oral tradition, none is more effective than the written tradition" (Bohlman 1988: 28). In folk music, however, written tradition is often only the first stage that introduces new repertoire to the domain of oral tradition. For example, in the past the songs of mountebanks that were distributed on leaflets presented a new repertoire to people, which was transmitted in written form, but this soon became part of oral tradition and continued to change. Another example is folklorized songs that, in the process of creating variations, were transferred from the domain of art music into the domain of folk music. Nonetheless, text has always been the basic component of the written transfer of tradition, whereas tune has been of secondary importance.¹⁵ Written transfer of folk music depends on the literacy of its users, and this is why in the past only the lyrics of folk songs were transmitted among the bearers of tradition in the cultures that "have lived (and still live) in symbiosis with literacy" (Leydi 1995: 185). Written transfer was initially reserved for the lyrics of folk songs with no accompanying musical notation, whereas oral transfer was of key importance for the transfer of the melodic component, as well as instrumental music.

In her book *Ljudska glasbila in godci na Slovenskem* (Folk Instruments and Musicians in Slovenia), Zmaga Kumer described various oral transmission methods of bell-chiming skills that bell chimers described to researchers in the second half of the twentieth century. Most often bell chimers started learning bell chiming in their childhood, when they were twelve to fifteen years old; some started even earlier, but not before the age of eight. Some groups of bell chimers did not permit children to enter the bell tower until they reached a certain age; elsewhere children were allowed to observe older bell chimers, but they could not take hold of the clapper before a certain age. Children were often expected to have already mastered the skill when they came to the bell tower. This is why they practiced on old horseshoes, pickaxes, scythes, wheel rims, empty mortar shells, grenade fragments, and bottles filled with various amounts of water.¹⁶ They usually used hammers to play on these and tried to imitate the more experienced bell chimers by ear. It was less common to allow the children practice by striking pebbles against the rim of the bell. Such playing was allowed

¹⁵ Mountebanks also sang songs to well-known tunes; their leaflets, which contained only the lyrics, indicated which tune they should be sung to.

¹⁶ Various metal objects even replaced the bells in church towers after these had been requisitioned for military needs during the First and Second World War.

because it was inaudible outside the bell tower. Namely, bell chiming was not allowed outside church holidays and other occasions mentioned below. Experienced bell chimers often assigned an easier role to the new member, most often simple ringing.¹⁷ In this way, the bell chimer learned how to play in an even rhythm, which is one of the most important components of a good performance. In other cases, bell chimers first took over the role of making response strikes (*odbijanje*), and later on they took on the most demanding role in the group—that is, filling out the tune using syncopation. The more experienced bell chimers often allowed newcomers to make their first performance in May, when it was customary to perform every evening for May devotions (Kumer 1983: 45).

Integration of the written transfer of instrumental folk music into the community was enabled by the introduction of a musical notation system in a more understandable musical language because the Western European notation system was usually accessible only to individuals that had a formal music education. Slovene folk music thus did not use a written system for transferring other forms of instrumental music; such a system was developed only in bell chiming. All transcriptions are based on the system of marking the consecutive order of bells, whereas the melodic component was secondary or not even written down.¹⁸ The basic motivations for using a notation system in bell chiming are the need for a memory aid and the need to communicate. The first enables the bell chimer to perform an extensive repertoire in terms of quantity, as well as to perform more complex formal structures within a particular tune. Notation can function as an aid for reading the musical work, or simply as an aid for refreshing one's memory of the work. In terms of communication, the notation system enables the preservation of musical works and offers a chance to perform for those that are not in contact with the composer; an even broader communication spectrum is offered by the publication of this notation.

A pioneering achievement in bell chiming by Ivan Mercina was the introduction of a notation system in the form of numerical notation (Fig. 2, example 1), with which the published repertoire of 243 bell-chiming tunes became accessible to a broader circle of users. This numerical system enabled bell chimers to make out and transfer the basic rhythmic structure of bell-chiming tunes without knowledge of the Western European musical notation system. Some individuals later developed other forms of notation

¹⁷ Bell chiming is also categorized according to the method of using bells. Thus we distinguish between “standing” or “stationary” tunes (*stoječe viže*), in which all the bells are stationary and the performers strike the clapper against the rim of the bell, and “flying” tunes (cf. note 7).

¹⁸ Melodiousness is relative in bell chiming because the same tunes can be played on differently tuned bells.

using colors, letters (example 2), graphic notation (example 3), or a mixture of graphic and western European musical notation (example 4), but to date numerical notation has remained the most widespread form of notation. Today Mercina's numerical notation is primarily used in the area where he was active (the Littoral), whereas in other parts of Slovenia a more simplified form of numerical notation¹⁹ is used (example 5). Because the rhythmic structure of tunes in traditional methods of bell chiming consists of notes of equal duration²⁰ and changes in tunes are created by changing the sequence of strikes, there was no need for a more accurate notation. This emerged simultaneously with different expressive needs of the creators of new bell-chiming tunes. One of the reasons the Bell-Chiming Society of Lower and White Carniola decided to use a simplified Western European musical notation (example 6) system was their desire to integrate bell chiming into the formal system of music education.²¹

From musical notation to musical innovation

Many non-Western traditions have developed musical notation systems with the aim of archiving or preservation (Nettl 2005: 30). However, the development of notation system is also often connected with musical creativity. Most bell chimers still use musical notation as a mnemonic device, while its use as a tool for writing music and manipulating structural musical elements is only typical of certain individuals that create new bell-chiming compositions by combining tradition and Western European musical concepts. These compositions usually remain part of the existing musical system and do not influence it to an extent that would change the structure of the system itself. These are evolutionary adaptations in music that can be referred to as "innovations in musical sound" (Blacking 1995: 150) or "musical change" (Nettl 2005: 271–82).²²



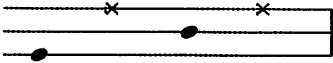
¹⁹ Julijan Strajnar, an associate of the Institute of Ethnomusicology, has issued a CD that includes transcriptions of bell-chiming tunes in Western European notation, as well as numerical notation. This has enabled many bell chimers to expand their own repertoires with material from the CD (Strajnar 1985).

²⁰ In the case of one bell chimer playing several bells, greater improvisation is possible and the ratio of the rhythmic beats is less uniform.

²¹ So far three folk instruments have been included in formal music education in Slovenia: the diatonic accordion, zither, and tambura.

²² John Blacking claims that musical change must represent a significant change that is unusual for the existing musical system and change it radically. It is not simply a consequence of social, political, or economic changes. He refers to all other changes as "innovations in musical sound" (Blacking 1995: 150). Bruno Nettl also sees minor changes in the musical system as part of musical change and refers to Blacking's idea of musical change as "radical change" (Nettl 2005: 279).

Fig. 2. Various notation examples of the same rhythmic pattern

1) Numerical notation		2) Letter notation	
I.	II.	III.	A C B C
1	3	2 4	
3) Graphic notation		4) Western European notation	
			
5) Simplified numerical notation		6) Simplified Western European notation	
1 3 2 3			

In the oral process of acceptance and change, bell-chiming patterns are somewhat more rigid than folk songs, whose performance often encompasses a broader community. In order to enable its performance, the entire bell-chiming group must accept the new tune because an individual cannot insert major changes in the musical structure without the prior consent and cooperation of all the bell chimers. As one bell chimer expressed the meaning of group performance, "all four of us need to work as one." Without the group's consent, only small changes are possible within the time limits allocated to the bell chimer for performing his role.²³ These changes are usually expressed as double strikes, triplets, or pauses. Because of the oral mode of transfer, the intentional creation of new tunes only enabled the creation of different versions of existing tunes, or creation of tunes with a simple form that, through changes over time, gradually changed their structure and became more complex. Notation and today's increasingly popular use of computer music programs accelerates the creation process because the visual presentation of musical material makes possible intentional or conscious creation and the performance of new and more complex bell-chiming patterns. During a much shorter period, bell chiming has experienced processes similar to those that affected art music, in which all notation systems developed gradually, based on expressive needs in music. Through various forms of notation, the search for suitable music notation led to the need to use notation with all of its interpretative

²³ One of the most important rules in bell chiming is that two tones can never be played at the same time. Nonetheless, there are some exceptions to this rule.

marks (tempo, dynamics, agogics, and so on), as well as the need to use the Western European notation system. Musical notation also began to encourage musical innovation. It enabled the creation and performance of longer compositions that were more demanding in form and interpretation. New compositions today often follow the rules of the musical morphology of art music. Musical forms are longer, they contain an introduction and a conclusion, and they adopt features such as variations, sonata forms, and choruses. Bell chimers that have a formal music education or have gained basic knowledge through the regular primary or secondary school music education program, or through bell-chiming courses, build their own creations on the basis of the rules they have learned.

Conclusion, or what the present can tell us about the past

“If ethnomusicology (and all folklore studies in the broader sense) does not want to regress and go back to its original interest in ‘antiques,’ it must take into account the new circumstances that are marked with constant change” (Leydi 1995: 204). Movements or changes in music can be studied on the basis of events that we notice as observers in the historical and ethnographic sense. They can be studied and compared to other social changes that sometimes do not match our observations. Changes can also be observed by taking an individual’s views of the past into account because this aspect plays the most important role in shaping his present (Nettl 1996). Thus, with the publication of his book and instructions for “correct” performance, Ivan Mercina tried to eradicate the “old-fashioned and foolish striking of the bells” (Mercina 1930: 71), in which he criticized traditional bell chiming. The Bell-Chiming Society of Lower and White Carniola bases its need for competitions on the reason that they “nurture and improve the bell-chiming tradition” and enable young people to “prove themselves and present their expertise and work” (Česen 2000: 15), as well as express the need for musical and contextual changes. The organizers of bell-chiming gatherings also see these as an opportunity to “encourage everyone, especially young people, to take up this Slovene custom,”²⁴ in which they emphasize that the original context of this activity does not meet the needs of younger generations. The creator of bell-chiming tunes defends his own efforts in order to “turn bell-chiming into real music” and claims that it is necessary to “introduce certain rules and order” into bell chiming (Mehle 2003). “The rules and order” are based on Western European musical concepts, and when these enter the bell-chiming tradition they influence the importance that bell chimers ascribe to music performativity, creativity, notation, and competitiveness. The changes observed indicate that the concepts of folk and Western European art music—which are now

²⁴ From a letter to the bishop of the Koper Archdiocese (13 April 1983), Archives of the Bell-Chiming Society of Slovene Theologians.

becoming increasingly closer and which exist in the same cultural environment—will not be able to maintain their own identity and will become increasingly intertwined.

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POVZETEK

NOVI KONTEKSTI, ESTETIKA IN PRENOSI V PRITRKOVALSKI TRADICIJI

Avtorica na primeru pritrkovalske dejavnosti problematizira pojav kontekstualnih, funkcijskih in vsebinskih sprememb, ki je danes prisoten v vseh segmentih slovenske ljudske glasbe. Močna prisotnost pojava v današnjem času omogoča primerjavo izsledkov preteklih terenskih raziskav in virov z današnjimi, sledenje smernicam, katere so pripeljale do oblikovanja novega konteksta, opazovanje in obravnavo sprememb načinov prenosa tradicije ter funkcijskih in glasbenoestetskih dimenzij pritrkovalske dejavnosti. Upoštevanje kritičnih pogledov nosilcev pritrkovalske dejavnosti nam razkriva vzroke za težnje po spremembah tako konteksta, kot tudi glasbe same. Poleg izvirninega – religioznega konteksta, v katerem ima pritrkavanje signalno, obredno in glasbeno funkcijo, namreč pritrkavanje danes vse bolj prehaja v posvetno sfero, kjer predvsem mlajše generacije vidijo nove izzive in priložnosti za izražanje lastne glasbene ustvarjalnosti in sposobnosti. Spremembe ali inovativnost v glasbenem smislu je spodbujala organiziranost dejavnosti, katere zametke najdemo v izdanih publikacijah glasbenega pedagoga, kolavdatorja, zvonoslovca in pritrkovalca Ivana Mercine (1851–1940). Z uvedbo številčne notacije za zapisovanje pritrkovalskih viž, obširnim pritrkovalskim repertoarjem, navodili za njegovo izvajanje ter priporočili za vzdrževanje in uporabo zvonov, je prvi zajel širši krog uporabnikov in posredno vplival na pritrkovalsko dejavnost na Slovenskem. Kritičnost do tedanjega stanja na področju pritrkavanja in njegovi predlogi za izboljšanje so posegli tudi na glasbenoestetsko področje in predvsem vplivali na, za slovensko ljudsko glasbo tako značilno, interpretativno statičnost. Kriteriji so se v okviru manifestacij kot so tekmovanja, srečanja in šole še bolj izoblikovali in vplivali tudi na formiranje podobnih osebnih estetskih vrednot posameznih pritrkovalcev. Takrat sicer še neuresničena ideja Ivana Mercine o izobraževalnem sistemu na področju pritrkavanja pa se je udejanjila v zadnjem desetletju, saj se v okviru društev ali posameznih iniciativ odvijajo številne pritrkovalske poletne in redne šole ter tečaji pritrkavanja. Integracija notacije v pritrkovalsko dejavnost povzroča spremembe tudi na področju prenosa znanja, ki je bilo v preteklosti z ustno tradicijo, starostnimi ter spolnimi omejitvami ožje determinirano. Posameznikom

pomeni spodbudo pri glasbeni ustvarjalnosti, omogoča tudi načrtno in zavestno glasbeno ustvarjanje, uporabo kompleksnejših in časovno daljših glasbenih struktur in skupaj z danes v ta namen uporabljenimi računalniškimi glasbenimi programi ponuja vizualni in avditivni predogled glasbenih kompozicij. Te postopoma prehajajo v repertoar vse številčnejših pritrkovalskih skupin in s tem razširjajo okvire do sedaj prevladujoči ljudsko-glasbeni podobi dejavnosti.

