

FOLK MUSIC BETWEEN POPULAR CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMING

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Introduction

The revitalization of folk music proceeds in various directions, and this article concentrates on two forms of this revitalization: gatherings of folk singers and musicians, and pop music adaptations of folk songs. Although both cases deal with a revitalization principle, the directions differ in their conceptual principles, social context, and structural or sound images.

The museological and conservational principle that forms the basis for collecting and maintaining folk music material falls within the domain of numerous institutional and non-institutional organizations' and individuals' activities.¹ Their mission is not only to document and/or present, but also to establish and disseminate knowledge, which means that to a certain extent their mission is also to popularize folk music. Popular music parallels these organizations in the popularization process because it accepts folk music as an adaptation in its environment. However, its principles do not include a conscious and planned revival or preservation of its content. Because of the language of musical expression and its volume, the impact of popular music on the popularization of folk music is considerably stronger than the impacts of persons formally and ethically committed to its preservation.

This article seeks the reasons for the differences between the goals achieved on both sides, first of all in the musical language of popularizers. Among other things, the Institute of Ethnomusicology functions as the central research institution in Slovenia to collect and preserve material, as well as present and disseminate scholarly findings about folk music. With its language of communication, it reaches experts and amateurs: that is, a selective but relatively narrow population. Folk music in the form of an archive recording or presented in its original (not "performed") form remains music for a minority. On the other hand, in the environment of a mass audience, popular music carries out an unconscious and unplanned museological mission. Through adaptation it transforms the ascetic (in

¹ Institute of Ethnomusicology of SRC SASA, Radio Slovenia Folk Music Section (editor: Jasna Vidakovič), The Public Fund of the RS for Cultural Activities, Folklore Activities Section (Bojan Knific, head), and amateur collectors of folk material: Ljoba Jenče, Tomaž Rauch, Emil Zonta, Marino Kranjac, Dario Marušič, and others.

terms of sound), formally undynamic, and interpretationally static “original” folk music into an attractive and acceptable music form, which it then reintroduces to people. In other words, this music becomes “folk” again in the primary (sociological) sense of the word.²

Pop music adaptations of folk songs

The main idea that popular music creates by revitalizing folk music is to bring a subject into a new artistic and social environment. In the form of popular music, folk music changes its function, content, idea, performer, and audience; that is, it enters into artistic and social environments that were previously unknown to it. This form is only one of the revitalization and popularization methods that complement or/and substitute for the oral method of transmitting folk songs that was dominant in the past. Today it is complemented but also replaced by technical media, which create “trans-cultural communication” (Rösing 2002: 21) in public and private spaces by performing music live or transmitting it via radio, television, the Internet, and various audio media and audio players.

Directions of interaction between popular and folk music

A three-stage scheme of oral communication as one of the basic features of folk music can be used in a comparative demonstration of popular music communication. In folk music, the first stage is represented by the “current communicational event” as “narration within a small circle of listeners” (Bausinger 1982: 15; cited in Kumer 1988: 16), which in popular music is replaced with audio media, mass media, and live concert performances. Contacts through these media enable the formation of the second stage; that is, “diffusion” or “expansion” to other environments (Bausinger 1982: 15; cited in Kumer 1988: 16), and discovering, reinforcing, and fixing the song repertoire. Tradition as the third stage, or “transfer for a long period of time,” means that a stage is reached in which folk songs are firmly grounded in the population’s general consciousness (Kumer 1988: 16). In addition to oral communication methods, there are also other connections between folk and popular music. Both are mass cultural phenomena and the acceptance modes of each are also comparable, although these involve different media and numerical relations. In terms of methods and repertoires, they both represent a continuity between the past

² The section on the popularization of folk music in popular music is based on the author’s doctoral dissertation (Šivic 2006). The study includes adaptations that use folk songs as quotations of melodic material; popular musicians discussed include Vlado Kreslin, Andrej Šifrer, Robert Pešut (Magnifico), Milan Pečovnik (Pidži), Aleksander Mežek, Milan Kamnik, Irena Kogoj (Regina), Brina Vogelink, Miha Blažič (N’toko), and Mitja Vrhovnik Smrekar; bands include Orlek, Zmelkoov, Indust-bag, Katalena, Sestre, and Fletno.

and the present; both the listeners and creators take part in deciding on the repertoire of both music forms and the formation of a genre (Muršič 1995: 187–203).

Revitalization of folk music in popular music represents (interrupted or unbroken) continuity that involves an intercultural transfer; it is borrowed from folk music, transformed into popular music, and then can (but need not) return to folk music again. The transfer of a song can be passive, which means that the folk song remains unrecognized at the level of adaptation and lacks further response (folk music → popular music). Folk songs obtain an opportunity to expand when the listener becomes an active participant in the communication process. With the creation of new versions, folk songs enter continuity and tradition (folk music → popular music → folk music). The popularization process reaches its broadest stage (and from this point on it can go through further transformations) when folk music returns to its original form through popular music; that is, when it becomes part of the folk music repertoire again. Although in popular music “the audience is supposed to be uncreative and function primarily as a user” (Muršič 1995: 191), the case of music dealt with in this article indicates the participants’ creativity. This is because, when popular music employs folk music, it interferes with the folk music space. Furthermore, because the features of its processes are also reflected in the schemes of their mutual influence, the creators of popular music can be seen as creators of new folk song versions. In this process, the variance is already established at the stage of adaptation and develops further into an individual’s creative variation (the selected folk version → performance in popular music as a new version → variation of the borrowed material). The initial selection is made by the creator, whereas the selection principles of a community (users of music) are similar when selecting the popular music repertoire and folk songs (individual → community). They are close to the people “both formally and in terms of content” (Golež Kaučič 2003: 40) because the criteria of style, structure, the selection of instruments, popularity, the frequency of public performance, and so on are observed everywhere.

Popularization of music contents

Because of popular music adaptations, numerous folk songs, melodies, performance methods, regional musical and linguistic features, and the selection of instruments have stepped across the threshold of museologically archived heritage. Thus, Slovene popular music takes credit not only for the popularization of Slovene folk songs and melodies, but also certain folk instruments and other structural special features. Thanks to Vlado Kreslin and his Beltinška banda (Beltinci Band), the group of musicians typical of Prekmurje that is referred to as a “band” is now generally recognized and popular. It has become a “true national

phenomenon, the first (and only) Slovene ‘world-music attraction’” (Juvančič 2002: 67). The popularization of folk instruments such as the cimbalom and violin (e.g., Vlado Kreslin), as well as the tamburitza (e.g., Robert Pešut, a.k.a. Magnifico),³ can be added to this. Folk singing in its “original” form was brought into popular music by the women’s vocal group Katice⁴ at the initiative of Magnifico. Two-part singing in thirds (or sixths) as a typical feature of Slovene folk singing is one of the segments of tradition that performers (including Fletno, Katalena, Brina Vogelnik, Vlado Kreslin, Milan Kamnik, Milan Pečovnik a.k.a. Pidži, and Zmelkoow, among those considered here) have been preserving more or less consciously. As two musicians from Fletno put it, “One of our points of departure is to make people sing, and in some way we continue or wish to continue the tradition of folk singers” (Štefančič & Žnidaršič 2005).

The research hypothesis of this article proposes that, through communication media and musical and expressive means, popular music adaptations create folk songs as recognizable contents within those social frameworks in which folk music as an “oral” tradition is more or less excluded. The goal was to establish the success of folk music popularization that is assumed of popular music. A survey conducted for this purpose aimed to establish if and to what extent popular music contributes to recognizing folk music. The respondents⁵ had to decide whether they knew a certain folk song from (a) popular music adaptations,⁶ or (b) family and educational environments, as well as various social occasions.

In general, the results led to two conclusions. Today generally known folk songs⁷ most often still circulate in everyday situations, whereas popular music adaptations (despite numerous examples) do not provide them a considerably higher percentage of recognizability. It seems that these

³ In “Zeleni Jure” (Green George), an adaptation of the folk song “Prošel je, prošel, zeleni Jure” (Green George Has Come) from White Carniola.

⁴ In “Zeleni Jure” and “Da pa Čanynu sednu dow” (When Clouds Cover Mount Kanin), an adaptation of a Resian folk song with the same title.

⁵ The survey was conducted in 2005 with a group of 201 secondary-school and university students (fifteen to twenty-six years old) from various Slovene towns (Maribor, Ljubljana, Nova Gorica, Ormož, Ravne na Koroškem, Velenje, and Koper).

⁶ Here the following popular music genres were given: rock, pop, hip hop, punk, and country; i.e., the genres in which the folk song adaptations under discussion were made.

⁷ The author divides folk songs into generally known and older, and defines them according to their position in the repertoire of folk singers and the position they hold in general consciousness. The ones that most people know today are classified as “generally known songs;” primarily these are the songs that different generations get to know through the educational process throughout Slovenia. Songs that are still sung by some folk singers and that have fallen out of the stream of continuity in singing tradition are classified as “older folk songs.”

songs are so deeply rooted in modern general consciousness that people mainly become acquainted with them through education and various spontaneous occasions.

Table 1. Folk songs known through family, school, and social occasions

Folk song	Source of familiarity (%)		
	Family, school, and social occasions	Popular music	Popular music, family, school
“Marko skače” (Marko Leaps)	88.6	3.0	3.0
“Čuk se je oženil” (The Screech Owl Has Married)	83.1	0.5	0.5
“Na planincah sončece sije” (The Sun Shines in the Mountains)	82.6	1.0	0.5
“Lisička je prav zvita zver” (The Fox Is a Cunning Best)	79.6	0.0	0.0
“Moj očka ima konjička dva” (My Daddy Has Two Horsies)	78.6	19.9	13.4
“Dekle je po vodo šlo” (A Girl Went to Fetch Water)	77.6	20.9	12.4
“Sijaj, sijaj, sončece” (Shine, Shine, Sun)	75.1	0.0	0.0
“Tam dol na ravnem polju” (Down There on the Plain)	67.7	4.0	1.5
“Moje dekle je še mlado” (My Girl is Still Young)	63.2	8.0	6.5
“Vsi so venci vejli” (All the Wreaths are Withered)	52.2	28.4	16.4
“Mamica je kakor zarja” (Mommy is Like Dawn)	51.7	4.0	1.0
“Jaz sem si pa nekaj izmislil” (I Came Up with Something)	50.7	3.0	1.0
“Adijo, pa zdrava ostani” (Good-Bye and Be Well)	49.3	4.0	1.0
“Lepa Anka kolo vodi” (Beautiful Anka Leads the Dance)	46.3	0.5	0.0

It is typical that in these songs the ratio between the two sources of knowledge is high; for example, one of the most well-known songs, “Marko skače,” was known in popular music by only 3% of the respondents, and “Čuk se je oženil” by only 0.5%. Often these songs were not known at all in

popular music (e.g., "Sijaj, sijaj sončece," "Lisička je prav zvita zver," etc.). It can be claimed that, in general, popular music did not bring considerable popularization to these songs or, in other words, that popular music is just one of its popularization factors, but definitely not the most important one.

The results in connection with recognizing older folk songs were completely different. Here, the results for individual sources were closer:

Table 2. Folk songs known through multiple sources

Folk song	Source of familiarity (%)		
	Family, school, and social occasions	Popular music	Popular music, family, school
"Prošel je, prošel pisani vuzem" (Colorful Easter Has Come)	42.8	29.9	13.4
"Daj mi Micka pejneze nazaj" (Micka, Give My Money Back)	24.9	27.9	7.0
"Prav lepa je koroška fara" (The Carinthian Parish is Beautiful)	18.4	9.5	3.5
"Pastirče mlado in milo" (Little Shepherd, Young and Sweet)	15.4	13.9	5.5
"San se šetau gori, doli" (I Strolled Up and Down)	10.0	5.0	1.5
"Zrejlo je žito" (The Grain is Ripe)	9.0	5.5	2.0
"Stoji, stoji mi poljece" (There Stands My Little Field)	1.0	1.5	0.0

The first category of sources of familiarity includes many segments,⁸ so it is logical that there are only a few cases in which popular music contributed a higher percentage of recognizability to folk songs. However, the results convincingly confirm the proposed hypothesis that popular music is an important medium of introducing folk music into modern culture (Table 3).

Recognizability of the performer was one of the additional questions in the survey. The findings are more indicative of the popularity of the adaptation or the performer than of the popularization itself (Table 4).

⁸ Family, preschool, school, choir, scouts, spontaneous socializing, and so on.

Table 3. Folk songs known through popular music

Folk song	Source of familiarity (%)		
	Family, school, and social occasions	Popular music	Popular music, family, school
“Daj mi Micka pejneze nazaj” (Micka, Give My Money Back)	24.9	27.9	7.0
“Kata, Katalena”	7.5	15.4	3.5
“Da göra ta Škarbinina” (Mount Škrbina)	4.5	0.8	1.5
“Pobelelo poule z ovcama” (Field White with Sheep)	4.0	6.0	1.5
“Stoji, stoji mi poljece” (There Stands My Little Field)	2.5	2.0	0.0
“Široko more i Dunaj” (The Wide Sea and Vienna)	1.5	5.5	1.0
“Črno vino sem točila” (I Poured Red Wine)	1.0	2.0	0.0
“Tomaž nabija sodič nov” (Thomas Hoops a New Barrel)	0.0	1.0	0.0

Table 4. Recognizability of the performer

Performer	Folk song adaptation	Respondents that know performer (%)
Robert Pešut (Magnifico)	“Zeleni Jure” (Green George)	27.9
Vlado Kreslin	“Vsi so venci vejlj” (All the Wreaths are Withered)	25.4
Vlado Kreslin	“Daj mi Micka pejneze nazaj” (Micka, Give My Money Back)	23.9
Zmelkoow	“Dekle je po vodo šlo” (A Girl Went to Fetch Water)	19.9
Milan Pečovnik (Pidži)	“Moj očka ima konjička dva” (My Daddy Has Two Horsies)	17.4
Katalena	“Katalena”	12.9
Robert Pešut (Magnifico)	“Pastirče mlado” (The Young Shepherd)	11.4
Andrej Šifrer	“Zagorski zvonovi” (The Bells of Zagorje)	10.9

Reasons for recognizability of adaptations

The survey results lead to the question of which factors account for the recognizability of songs; these include various values, such as their musical and lexical means of expression, their instrumentation, and also fame and mass media. The adaptation of “Zeleni Jure” by Magnifico as a formally typical pop song performed in rock style and supported by an engaging rhythm of electronic dance music confirms the hypothesis about the importance of the music genre for the popularity of the adaptation. However, even at the next step the hypothesis substantiated by the case of Magnifico is rejected. Popularization is achieved not only by the genre of the selected arrangement, but the popularity of performers “that are also successful and recognized outside the folk circles marginalized in the media” (Juvančič 2002: 67), which is often of key importance. This is true in the case of the exceptionally popular folk song adaptations by Vlado Kreslin, which are, however, not aimed at transformation and almost fit within the realm of revival music; that is, they are almost literal transfer of folk music.⁹

Zmelkoov’s adaptation of “Dekle je po vodo šlo” ranked high in terms of popularity, but this cannot be ascribed to musical innovation and stylistic impact, but rather to daring ironic and brutal transformation of a folk text; a swearword in the lyrics—that is, in public—also played a considerable role in its popularity. Brina Vogeltnik and the group Katalena are often compared because of their relatively similar concepts of content and contemporary performance. The percentage of adaptation recognizability is higher with Katalena than Brina Vogeltnik, which could be the result of stylistic features (Katalena’s music includes a rock style, especially rock instruments, whereas the music of Brina Vogeltnik relates to jazz, various world musics, etc.) on the one hand, and the presence of certain music in the media both aurally and visually (through a music video) on the other, with which Katalena has presumably gained greater public presence and recognizability.¹⁰ Two basic popularization channels are thus ensured for the songs that are both broadcast on radio programs and included in the performers’ concert repertoires.

⁹ Of the ninety-one cases discussed, the majority of Kreslin’s adaptations are among the thirty most recognizable pop adaptations of folk songs: “Vsi so venci vejli,” “Daj mi Micka pejeze nazaj,” “San se šetau gori, doli,” “Marko skače,” “Nede mi več rasla” (May it Grow No Longer), “Zrejlo je žito,” “Ringlšpil” (Merry-Go-Round), “Nocoj je edna luštna noč” (Tonight’s a Jolly Night), and “Če bi jes bijla fčelica” (If I Were a Bee).

¹⁰ For the adaptations “Da gōra ta škarbinina,” “Dober večer, mamica,” and “Katalena” the band produced music videos that “were regularly broadcast on Slovene TV stations” (cf. *O skupini, Katalena*).

One of the reasons for poor recognizability of songs could be the music genre; compared to some rock songs for instance, country adaptations by Pidži are less generally known. Similarly, certain performers or individual adaptations do not achieve broader exposure in the media (for example, Fletno from Cerknica, Indust-bag from Metlika, etc.). If the results of the survey showed that some of the songs (cf. Table 3) are generally popular and well-known, for numerous songs, however, the regional aspect is decisive; among the respondents from the Littoral (from Koper and Nova Gorica) the adaptation “Dekle je po vodo šlo” by the band Zmelkoov from Koper is well known (in most cases it was also the only one that the respondents recognized). Similarly, only respondents from Velenje and Črna na Koroškem knew the other adaptations by Pidži in addition to his “Moj očka ima konjička dva,” as well as the adaptation “Koroška fara” by Milan Kamnik, who comes from Prevalje, Carinthia.

Based on musical tradition, it can be claimed that a certain music form exists for as long “as the people need it” (Muršič 1994: 24). Therefore, its future destiny depends on the functional or esthetic need. Folk music adaptations that are incorporated in pop music esthetics and context are one of the forms of this need. If tradition is “something that is alive; an open system that recursively completes and changes itself as a whole” (Muršič 1994: 25), the adaptation of folk music can represent a new form of folk music tradition. Folk music that is incorporated in pop music forms belongs to the field of revitalization, but its form is partly revitalized and partly museological. What is addressed here are gatherings of folk singers and musicians¹¹ as a form of folk music institutionalization and a conscious shaping of its content and esthetic features.

Gatherings of folk singers and musicians

The beginnings of folk singers’ and musicians’ gatherings reach back to early 1970s, but the current format and structural organization of these events is hardly reminiscent of their beginnings. The first such gathering took place in 1973 in Ribnica and combined dance and music culture; it was called “The Gathering of Folk Singers, Musicians, and Dancers.” Later, events were created separately for singers and musicians and for folk dance groups. The organizers of the initial gatherings and the state Association of Cultural Organizations (Sln. *Zveza kulturnih prosvetnih organizacij, ZKPO*) based their work on the conservational idea and the

¹¹ Today the gatherings of folk singers and musicians are officially called “Gatherings of Folk Song Singers and Musicians Playing Folk Melodies” because this also allows the inclusion of performances by “new” bands as well as the “originals.” The author uses the old name of the event in the text because in her opinion the new name does not solve terminological dilemmas and does not provide a more accurate description of all the participants.

idea of consciously drawing up a program that would present (“original”) singing,¹² music, and dance culture. Of course this project did not just spring up overnight; similar presentations had already been included at the Yugoslav folklore festival in Koper in the 1960s, and those content selection decisions had also been made by researchers at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, who in making these decisions relied on their field-knowledge of singers, musicians, and dancers¹³ (Ramovš 2006).

The indirect successor to the original ZKPO, the Public Fund of the RS for Cultural Activities¹⁴ (Sln. *Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti, JSKD*), has been organizing regular gatherings with a large number of participants since its establishment in 1996. The selectors choose performances and groups at three levels: local, regional, and national.¹⁵ The gatherings do not have a competitive character, but the method of selection according to the criterion of representativeness is not far from the competitive concept, and the groups try their best to be selected for participation at the next gathering.¹⁶

Today, more than thirty years since the first gathering, the gatherings’ influences on the image of folk music can be observed with the appropriate chronological distance. The beginnings of what was at first a representational and preservational activity could not have envisaged today’s constructed organizational scheme and such drastic interventions into the shaping of folk singing, whereas today the presentation of folk music on the stage is generally accepted and considered one of its forms.

¹² The article focuses on the singing part of the gatherings.

¹³ The first gatherings were organized by Mirko Ramovš, an ethnochoreologist from the Institute of Ethnomusicology and member of the expert committee of the Association of Cultural Organizations, or today’s JSKD.

¹⁴ In addition to the Union of Cultural Societies (*Zveza kulturnih društev*), the JSKD is an institution that, through branch offices throughout Slovenia, creates a cultural network and handles amateur activities in film and video, folklore and ethno, theater and puppet shows, music, fine arts, inter-media, literature, and dance (cf. www.jskd.si).

¹⁵ Six regional gatherings take place in Slovenia: in Upper Carniola, in the Littoral and part of Inner Carniola, in Prekmurje and part of Styria, in Western Styria and Carinthia, and in Lower Carniola, White Carniola, and part of Inner Carniola. Every regional gathering is divided into a different number of local gatherings, although the Carniolan and Littoral gatherings do not have preliminary local meetings because of the small number of groups.

¹⁶ Within the JSKD, the selection is also carried out every year in other areas (in folklore and amateur cultural activities). In addition to the gatherings of folk singers and musicians, these include the meetings of adult and children’s folk dance groups, revues of choirs and smaller vocal groups, meetings and competitions of tamboura bands and brass bands, etc. (cf. www.jskd.si).

The JSKD (with expert guidance from the Institute of Ethnomusicology) gradually became involved in the process of natural changes to folk singing and moving away from its traditionally understood subject and definition.¹⁷ It committed itself to preserving a certain image of folk music; it began to form increasingly conscious and detailed instructions and criteria that groups or their leaders should use and that should be transmitted by the selectors. The selectors still took part in the gatherings unsystematically during the 1990s. In 1996, the selection system was made uniform for all the participants and the presence of selectors at gatherings has been obligatory since 2000. Each selector covers one region; that is, all the local gatherings of a region. After the gathering, he meets with the group leaders and informs them how he has evaluated their performance. His evaluation includes the song program, the singing or playing technique, and the stage performance.¹⁸ Several features that define today's folk singing are described below and observed from the viewpoint of instructions and criteria of the selectors (or the JSKD). The criteria discussed are used as the point of departure that folk music, which has gone through a long process of change, should follow today.

Eight areas where folk singing has changed

(1) Initially, the associates of the Institute of Ethnomusicology invited folk singers (and musicians) to gatherings based on their own experiences in the field with singing groups that had come together spontaneously for field recordings. Because these events demanded preparation or at least minimal organization, this led to the formation of groups with permanent members.¹⁹ Most often these are fixed groups that rarely accept new members (groups in existence for shorter periods are more likely to do this), which excludes one of the most important communication criteria in folk singing; that is, transmitting methods and material to other singers (Kumer 1996: 10). Intergenerational mixing, which usually ensures the transmission of traditional norms and the simultaneous introduction of new ones, is thereby hindered.²⁰ Spontaneous singing groups

¹⁷ It is difficult to define which historical period of folk music this occurred in because the processes of change are slow and differ from one region to another.

¹⁸ This article does not discuss the clothing culture that also results from putting folk singing on the stage: uniform clothes in the sense of choir uniforms, folk costumes such as the ones used by folk dance groups, and the esthetic image of the clothing culture of folk-pop bands and other musical genres.

¹⁹ Especially groups of folk singers that have been newly formed (without a strong singing tradition in the past) are somewhere between traditional and revival groups because their creation involved at least a minimally conscious decision to preserve musical heritage (cf. Komavec 2003: 489–90).

²⁰ In Adlešiči, White Carniola, for instance, there are two groups of women's folk singers (older and younger) that operate both publicly and privately as two

(whose number and composition generally shifted freely) thus turned into concert performers that in the functional sense are close to choral groups, although in terms of content they are still more like spontaneous folk singing groups. Thus, since the 1990s, groups of folk singers have been emerging that are organized into relatively permanent ensembles and operate within the framework of cultural, artistic, and tourism societies, or farm women's groups (cf. Komavec 2003: 489).

(2) The format of gatherings of folk singers and musicians changes the position of folk singers. They still perform in line with the traditional definition, according to which they should sing spontaneously and in more intimate environments. However, these gatherings turn the role of these singers into the role of performers, which consequently introduces changes and new rules into folk singing, such as stage fright, the need to begin songs simultaneously, and planning the program selection. This planning also has a significant impact on the reshaping of folk singing.

(3) The lack of vocal technique and the pressure of stage performance has resulted in artificial tuning and the use of various aids such as pitch pipes, melodicas, and even accordions. Artificially giving the pitch is unknown in spontaneous singing and it hinders the "taking the lead" technique, when one singer starts singing first and the others then join in.

(4) Group singing in most Slovene regions is typically (traditionally) part singing, usually three-part but also four- and (rarely) five- or even six-part (Fig. 1). Two-part singing is typical of eastern parts of Slovenia because of the influence of Hungarian traditions. The textbook example of folk singing, used for men's, women's, and mixed choruses, is the lead voice (*naprej* 'lead'), the higher accompanying voice (*čez* 'upper') in parallel thirds (or sixths), and the bass voice beneath (*bas* 'bass').²¹

Today the form of folk singing is already noticeably different especially because of the lack of singing opportunities; that is, singing practice. Two-part singing in thirds (or sixths) is not yet endangered because its performance is not so demanding, but singing the bass part is already stagnating considerably among singers, and this is also one of the main deficiencies of today's folk singing. Now that groups of folk singers are more organized and there is often no longer any connection with the

separate organizations. The group of younger singers is thus creating its own manner of singing borrowed local songs and changing the form of local Midsummer Night caroling.

²¹ In addition to these basic parts, the baritone is added; this is a voice just above the bass. In the past more often than today, there was a "descant" part (Sln. *na iber*) that doubled the bass line at the octave above all the other parts. In Carinthia and the Savinja Valley, the "third" and "fourth" parts (Sln. *na tretko*, *na črtko*) are also known.

traditional way of singing (the singers do not originate from traditional singing practice, but more from secular or church choirs), singing bass is the first part lost because it demands a completely different style of musical thinking than singing the lead or accompanying lines. Singers believe they are singing three or four-part harmony, but they actually sing as in the example shown below; this is in fact two-part singing with an added octave doubling of the upper voice, or the false bass (Sln. *šuštar bas* 'cobbler's bass'; Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Score of typical three-part singing

$\text{♩} = 120$ GNI M 20.661

1. E - no drev - ce mi bo zra - slo, drev - ce ze - le - no,
c - no drev - ce mi bo zra - slo, drev - ce ze - le - no.

Fig. 2. Score of two-part singing with false bass

$\text{♩} = 63$ GNI DAT 407

1. Zra - slo mi je e - no drev - ce, drev - ce ze - le - no, zra - slo
mi je e - no, e - no drev - ce, drev - ce ze - le - no.

(5) Today, singing to the accompaniment of an instrument, primarily accordion, but also tambouritza, zither, and other musical

instruments used for special occasions,²² is becoming increasingly frequent. Here the influences of folk-pop music, which is based on vocal and instrumental performance and greater accessibility to instruments, cannot be overlooked, but the tendency to add accompaniment also originates from poor vocal technique; that is, a loud and harmonically full instrument such as an accordion effectively covers any inability to sing clearly and harmoniously. A further change influenced by the accordion accompaniment is the transformation of sung songs into dance songs; the accordion is such a dominant instrument that singers subordinate themselves to it. Meanwhile, the accordionist, who is naturally accustomed to playing for dances, performs the song in a dance style. Songs that are characteristically meant to be performed in a natural vocal manner now acquire the characteristics of a waltz or polka. Selectors warn groups that the JSKD instructions “explicitly reject singing with instrumental accompaniment” (Knific 2005: 2), but these warnings yield only negligible results; accompaniment by accordion (and the accordion itself) has become so firmly rooted in the sound image that it has already become collectively accepted in musical consciousness.

(6) Taste is a changeable domain that is particularly rooted in the present, where “there is nonetheless more musical and sound material than there has ever been” (Komavec 2003: 483). Therefore, in addition to folk songs the song repertoire also includes art songs, pop-folk songs, and other music genres. Singers often choose songs that are recognized as contemporary in terms of their textual and melodic structure; the media through which they are transmitted into the song repertoire are radio, television, and festival celebrations, which means these most often involve pop-folk music in addition to newly created semi-folk songs (anonymous or written by a particular person). The motifs typical of these songs include love of one’s home village, mother, local church, flowers, and so on. In terms of melodic and harmonic contours, they are close to pop-folk songs. The songs are a reflection of “expressing the folk language” (Kumer 1996: 10) of today, which also means a reflection of experiencing and helping influence the content of the surrounding world. The criterion according to which selectors should “encourage the performance of older songs and melodies, but also approve of the performance of newer songs or melodies to which folk character can be ascribed” (Knific 2005: 2) is more or less relative. However, it is precisely due to the evaluators’ orientation that narrative, dialect, and caroling songs, as well as songs with a large number of stanzas and a local theme, are returning to these gatherings; in short, this

²² Traditionally, Slovene folk music is in principle only vocal or only instrumental (intended for dancing). Information on singing to an instrumental accompaniment in the past, such as an accordion, is rare; most often this occurred at celebrations of special occasion and this was how songs for special occasions were sung.

is a selection that should revive and preserve the songs that most singers do not know (anymore) or find uninteresting because of today's esthetic criteria.

(7) Interpretation in terms of adding agogic and dynamic changes during performance is not typical of folk songs, but the performing and interpretational methods of pop-folk music, pop songs, and choral music are also transferred into folk music. Evaluators warn that folk singing is interpretationally "static" and that using gestures with individual words is inappropriate;²³ this is a recent domain that is primarily a behavioral mannerism of pop-folk bands and folk dance groups.

(8) Choral singing (both secular and church) is the most widespread amateur music activity in Slovenia;²⁴ therefore, folk singers are people that jump from the role of choral singer to the role of folk singer and vice versa. The methods and esthetic criteria are thereby also continually transferred, despite the fact that this involves—more in theory than in practice—two different genres. In places where choral singing is a dominant music form (e.g., in the Littoral), folk singing possesses a noticeable and very distinct feature of quick singing without the pauses that in normal folk singing are measured freely and outside the metric sequence. In this kind of folk singing, the choral sound of the women's voices (especially sopranos) is also noticeable; it is a light color influenced by high intonation, whereas in the older folk singing style this intonation is more natural and lower, and the color is warmer.

What is "correct" folk singing?

Finally, how does the intervention of an institution affect folk singing changes—or, to be more precise, the changes of these changes? The process of changing a certain folk music culture is turned into an idealized form of folk music, but only to a certain extent. Within a certain segment, singers that receive comments and instructions from selectors also still perform music in spontaneous situations (primarily at festival celebrations, on excursions, at weddings, etc.), but institutional influences do not reach them there. There are also groups that do not take part in "official" gatherings, which means they are never "subjected" to the comments of a selector on what is considered folk and what is not from the viewpoint of

²³ Some examples of verses accompanied by gesticulation include the hand circling the head with *men se po glavc vrti* 'my head is spinning'; showing three fingers with *kikle tri, nobene cele* 'three skirts, none complete'; rubbing the face with *kaj mi nuca lepota* 'what do I need beauty for'; pointing to the heart with *sno zapeli iz srca* 'we sang from the heart'; and so on.



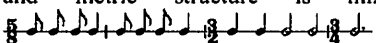
²⁴ In Slovenia, which has a population of just over two million, there are around 2,300 vocal groups (cf. www.jskd.si/dejavnosti/glasba/dej_glasba_vokalna.htm).

the central institution. In addition, the institutional orientation policy has only a small range of effects because there are numerous similar but privately organized events in the field, which are usually extremely mixed from the conceptual viewpoint (folk singers and musicians, pop-folk bands, sketch comedies, etc.) and offer a wide selection of the “folk” to the people.

Observing folk music through the eyes of the selectors’ remarks about “errors” precisely indicates the characteristics of today’s folk music conceptual and esthetic image—those elements that one is not aware of during the normal process of changing tradition, but which become clearly evident and systematic through the evaluation criteria. Slovene folk singing has changed significantly (in some segments and regions) from the state that the institutions embalm, preserve, or try to restore.

Slovene folk singing is no longer only part singing as it is believed to be in a clichéd manner. The frequently-quoted phrase “Three Slovenes make a choir” has long ago ceased to reflect true Slovene folk singing culture. On no account can the numerous groups that engage in part singing (organized or spontaneously) be overlooked, but it has to be emphasized here that Slovene singing also involves unison singing, so this must be added to the list of Slovene singing techniques, even though this is not in line with historical data and general belief. This article also does not wish to overlook the metric diversity and other special features of the Slovene folk musical and metric structure,²⁵ but to stress that these features are disappearing in the universality of two metric patterns; that is, the regular two- and three-beat measures as the results of strong influences of rhythmic techniques used in pop songs, in pop-folk polkas and waltzes, and in art music.

These gatherings’ criteria arouse mixed feelings in folk singers (and instrumentalists) because they promote conceptual and esthetic criteria that are not familiar to people when they transfer the information of today’s musical and cultural environment into their own tradition;²⁶ for example, the singing techniques of pop-folk singers, choral singing, musical, textual, and esthetic contents of pop-folk music, and pop songs, as well as secular and church choral music. By giving instructions at the gatherings, the selectors create an idealized image for further meetings and strive to form

²⁵ One characteristic feature of the Slovene musical and metric structure is five-eight time with the following structure:  as a shortened version of three-four time (). Another frequent feature of the Slovene musical and metric structure is mixed meter structures, such as .

²⁶ Expert commentaries are complemented by educational seminars (also organized by the JSKD) on folk singing, music, and dance.

the purest possible method of presenting (past) folk music culture. The national gathering of folk singers and musicians is the final event after the preliminary elimination rounds, and thus represents a purified, idealized, and typical example of the culture presented. Organized groups are chosen—women’s and men’s, respectively²⁷—and only vocal groups perform; that is, those without instrumental accompaniment, because this is one of the main “prohibitions” of the institution.

Although it seems that folk singing is in steady decline (which is a historical constant in understanding the folk music of any time), the increasing number of performers at gatherings proves that they succeed in achieving one of their goals, which is to encourage people to become involved in this activity. At the gathering of the Littoral region, for example, only four groups participated in 2003 (*2003 Interregional*), but in 2006 the number increased to thirteen groups (*2006 Interregional*). The gatherings do, after all, represent a cultural event in the local environment, but as a rule the audience does not include young people or listeners that are not directly connected with the event (relatives, neighbors, etc.). Sometimes it even occurs that the participants are also the only audience, and thus the transmission flow of the material presented is very quickly closed.

Conclusion

The presentations of pop-music adaptations of folk songs and gatherings of folk singers and musicians are only two images taken from the wide range of modern forms of folk music. The examples of spontaneous and edited cultural forms contradict each other enough to reveal their specifics, genre situation, social range, and musical and structural aspects, as well as the esthetic, structural, and conceptual mutual influence of the genres. Along with their specific functions, they both bring folk music forms, contents, and features into the mass and limited cultural space. This may take the form of establishing an institutionally embalmed folk music style or the reconstruction of a museological exhibit, or on the other hand a folk motif that steals into the scene that has the widest range, popular music.

Respect for the original (also “performed” folk) music is generally accepted and logical; it is manifested in the institutional form and public support as a banner of nation-building and identity-creating preservation of heritage. Various claims and general opinions appear learned, but at the same time they function as beliefs hidden in the subconscious, which, however, in determining folk music popularity reveal themselves much more in theory than in practice. In actuality, the results of the survey conducted for this study indicate the unattractiveness and marginality of the

²⁷ Mixed choruses are usually vocally weaker; they rarely originate from the singing tradition and, because they are new, they lack singing practice.

(“original”) folk music that preserves its form with the conservational help of institutions whereas, in a completely different milieu, popular music gives it vitality with a modern touch as the key to survival in the modern musical, social, and media environment.

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POVZETEK

LJUDSKA GLASBA MED POPULARNO KULTURO IN INSTITUCIONALNIM UOKVIRJANJEM

Revitalizacija ljudske glasbe je stalnica kulturnega dogajanja, pri čemer se v prispevku usmerjam na dve področji, ki jasno slikata možnost spoznavanja ljudske glasbe v širši družbi in pomembno vplivata na njeno ohranjanje. Na eni strani je popularna glasba kot sodobni množični glasbeni medij, ki s priredbami ljudskih pesmi družbo prinaša neznane stare-nove ljudske vsebine, na drugi strani pa konservatorska srečanja ljudskih pevcev in godcev, ki s politiko usmerjajo in spreminjajo tok tradicije ljudskega petja. Čeprav sta v temelju obe kulturni dejavnosti revitalizacijski, pa sta različni tako po idejnih načelih, družbenem kontekstu kot tudi v strukturi, glasbeno-slušni podobi. Iz tega izhajajo ugotovitve o medsebojnem vplivanju sicer diametralnih glasb in o njihovi vlogi pri percepciji in spreminjanju ljudske glasbe.

