

## SLOVENE CHORAL SINGING, FOLK SINGING, AND LIVED MUSICAL EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>

Maria K. Arko Klemenc

### Introduction

*Kakšna je ta naša pesem? Povprečen Slovenec jo presoja pač po tistem, kar pozna. V najboljšem primeru so to pesmi domačega kraja, v najšlabšem pa tisti maloštevilni primeri, ki jih v bolj ali manj posrečenih priredbah brez konca in kraja prepevajo zbori in posamezni pevci na koncertnih odrih ali v radiu.*

What is this, our song? For the average Slovene, it is simply that with which he is familiar. In the best case, they are the songs of his home environs; in the worst case, they are those relatively few examples that, in more or less successful arrangements, are sung endlessly by choirs and individual singers on the concert stages or over the radio. (Kumer 1975: 9)

### Choral singing, arrangements, and the decline of folk song

Among the diversity of musics expressing Sloveneness, from Alpine-style polka ensembles to historically informed folk revival groups, the practice of choral singing and the repertoire of folk song arrangements stand out in particular. In Slovenia today, these are literally a repertoire and practice of the nation. Slovene choral activities involve thousands of choirs and a vast network of organizations and institutional support. According to Mihela Jagodic, director of choral activities for the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities, there are an estimated 2,000 amateur choirs in Slovenia's population of 2 million (p.c. 2002). A complex system of funding, administration, and music education supports these activities at both the state and local levels. Forming the core of these activities is a historical and continuing canon of folk song arrangements.

The widespread performance of Slovene folk songs in choral arrangements corresponds to their popular reception as expressions of Slovene national and cultural identity. This musical practice and repertoire have stemmed from various attempts to unify Slovene culture since the 19th century, and were widespread long before the effects of communist-era activities. Their performance also raises a fundamental debate about the relationship between Slovene folk singing and choral practices.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is adapted from the author's dissertation (Klemenc 2004).

In stark contrast to the supportive attitude of state and other institutions toward choral activities, many Slovene scholars ascribe what seem to be negative values to choral singing. In their view, choral singing and folk song arrangements have contributed to an irreversible decline of folk singing practices, styles, and repertoire. The prominent Slovene ethnomusicologist Zmaga Kumer, as quoted above, expresses apparent disdain towards the Slovene public's favorable reception of choral singing of folk song arrangements. In her view, arrangements represent the "worst case" of what might be considered "Slovene song." In her article on Slovene music in the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Mira Omerzel-Terlep charges that choral singing—and arrangements—are to blame for the disappearance of a variety of song repertoire and styles:

Though the old types of singing have been preserved in some places, most types have been replaced by arranged four-part choral music. (Omerzel-Terlep 2000: 913)

Several musical trends have affected folk music adversely. . . . Three- and five-part singing has mostly been replaced by four-part singing, promulgated by choral singing groups that started in the cities. (Omerzel-Terlep 2000: 920)

Much of this contempt for choral singing and folk song arrangements has arisen from the circular relationship between Slovene choral practices and village or folk singing. Songs have been collected from the "folk" to be used as the basis for a new repertoire—one that is perceived to remove folk song from the folk—and to shape it for formal performance and the concert stage. However, this new, arranged form of folk song has eventually returned to the folk from whom it was originally collected.

As a result, folk song arrangements and choral singing have led to changes in rural village singing practices. For example, the Slovene choral repertoire, including arrangements, has penetrated the repertoire of folk songs, creating a new classification of songs for Slovene scholars: *ponarodele pesmi*, or art songs that have become accepted into the folk repertoire (cf. Šivic 2002; Klemenc 2004). Without question, the structure and organization of choral singing has influenced performance practice as well. For example, Marjetka Golež-Kaučič, a ballad scholar and the director of the Ethnomusicology Institute (GNI) in Ljubljana, informed me that on several occasions when her institute has organized performances of folk musicians, "folk" singers have arrived dressed in matching concert attire, with notation in hand (p.c. 2002). Such perceived changes in folk singing practices as a result of arrangements and choral singing have accordingly led to concerns over the decline of folk songs; at some point, the songs and practices might cease to be "folk."

Interestingly, such allegations of the destructive effects of choral music on the repertoire and practices of the “folk” date back to the earliest days of Slovene choral activities. At the same time that Slovene music circles were encouraging singing societies alongside the collection, arrangement, and publication of folk songs in order to preserve and foster a national culture, some noted that rural Slovene singing practices were waning as a result. An anonymous 1899 article in *Cerkveni glasbenik* entitled “Narodna pesem propada” (Folk Song is Decaying) comments on a variety of reasons for such change in folk practices, including the mechanization of working conditions, soldiers’ exploits in foreign lands, and, most significantly, the rise of choral societies (Anonymous 1899). In the author’s view, much to the detriment of folk singing, which previously had flourished abundantly in Slovene regions, choral singing began to limit not only the repertoire of acceptable songs, but also who was qualified to sing:

Today the more educated occupy themselves with writing verses and singing . . . For the most part our folk have lost their healthy, self-made pleasure towards singing; *now the choral societies sing, the folk are silent.* (Anonymous 1899: 12; emphasis mine)

The author’s association of the decline of historic village singing practices with the increasing prevalence of choral singing at the end of the 19th century—and, with this, the popularity of folk song arrangements—is likely valid to an extent. However, the assertion that the “folk” were now “silent” is far from historically accurate. In the same article, the anonymous mourner of village folk singing says: “And even at the end of work our folk sing less than before, and then—I am sorry to say!—mostly only in singing societies” (Anonymous 1899:13). Although this author sensed an overall decline in traditional village singing, he recognized that singing did exist in the village. In fact, the singing societies in some ways substituted for other established singing practices; instead of informal gathering and singing at the end of the workday, Slovenes now gathered at that time to sing in organized choral societies. Considering the spread of choral organizations from urban to rural areas, the “folk” were likely not silent at all. They continued to sing, but just in the more structured context of the choir.

Although many scholars from the late nineteenth century to the present day have lamented the perceived degeneration of rural folk singing, for which they have laid much of the blame on choral singing and arrangements, I argue that it is possible to view these practices not as destructive, but as transformational. The Slovene people—rural, urban, and otherwise—were not suddenly silenced in 1899, and they are not silent today. It is true that certain practices and elements of the repertoire have ceased to exist, or at least are no longer as widespread as they once were. It

is also true that certain musical practices, including choral singing, have influenced previously established village practices in aspects of repertoire, performance context, and musical function. Nonetheless, the perception that folk song is perpetually on the decline, and that choral music is to blame for its demise, depends entirely on one's definitions of who the folk are, and what constitutes folk song and folk singing practices.

### Understanding "folk" singing as social practice

In the introduction to volume one of the folk song collection *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* (Slovene Folk Songs, 1970), Zmaga Kumer and her colleagues<sup>2</sup> use the classifications of "oral tradition" and "anonymous creator" (whether unknown or since forgotten by the people) in an attempt to record only "authentic" folk songs mainly from a past era. Kumer further qualifies her definition of folk song by asserting that these songs must result from an unconscious musical activity:

*As folk songs we define all those which are or were circulating in lesser or bigger social groups and for which a mainly spontaneous, not consciously premeditated or trained, improvisatory activity is characteristic (either at their origin or performance), as distinct from a mainly conscious, organized, and fixed activity at the creation or performance of consciously artistic poetry and music. (Kumer et al. 1970: xiii, transl. by Valens Vodušek, p. 436; emphasis original)*

This definition, particularly the conditions of oral transmission and anonymity, resembles many other attempts to define the elusive folk song. From Herder (1778–79) to Bartók (1976, 1997), and from Sharp (1907) to Wiora (1950) and Kumer, there is a particular line of continuity in the academic conception of folk song as the authentic expression of a rural people, in spite of an acknowledged changeability in the character of such music.<sup>3</sup> However, considering the stipulation that the singing activity be "spontaneous" and "untrained," Kumer's definition tells us less about what folk song is, and more about what it is not. While a range of songs might qualify as folk songs in her open-ended definition, Kumer positions folk singing in clear opposition to choral singing.

---

<sup>2</sup> While the introduction to *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* has several authors, including Kumer, Milko Matičetov, and Valens Vodušek, I attribute this definition primarily to Kumer because it appears repeatedly in her later writings (e.g., Kumer 1988: 98–99, 1996: 13).

<sup>3</sup> Such a definition of folk song extends from the late eighteenth century, when Johann Gottfried von Herder coined the term *Volkslied*.

However, where in such a definition might one position the singing of choral arrangements of folk songs? Is it not possible to understand choral activities, and arrangements, in relation to the village singing from which they emerged—and to which they returned? Kumer's own definition seems to make allowance for structured singing, so long as the repertoire originated spontaneously, or, if it were fixed at the moment of creation, so long as it is performed as improvisatory. Yet she does not include in her definition the important correlation between village singing and choral repertoire and practices.

Other scholars have attempted to define folk song through the relationship between song and the practice of singing. An important study in this vein is German musicologist Ernst Klusen's *Volkslied: Fund und Erfindung* (1969), followed by his *Singen: Material zu einer Theorie* (1989). Klusen argues that "folk song" is an idealized, fictional construct that in reality has never existed, and suggests "group song" as a replacement for that term. He postulates that people sing together as a manifestation of their group identity, and that the sociological, psychological, and even physiological effects of communal singing are more important (and consistent) than aspects of esthetics, repertoire, or performance practice. Viewed in this way, both the repertoire of group song and the performance contexts can be more or less spontaneous, structured, or formal; "group song," in what Klusen calls its "secondary function," can include composed music sung in organized choirs (1969: 204). Although Klusen considers more spontaneous village singing practices to be "primary" group singing (1989: 169), whereas choral singing is "secondary," his recognition of the relationship between choral singing and what others have termed folk singing is significant. Such seemingly different singing practices nonetheless share aspects of social function, and at times also repertoire.<sup>4</sup>

Following Klusen's assertions, I find the most compelling connection between Slovene choral singing and rural village practices in their shared social function and the expression of a group identity. The repertoire of folk song arrangements has enabled and further secures this link. Nevertheless, in my ethnographic experience of informal singing of folk song arrangements, both Klusen's and Kumer's ideas of folk sing are fulfilled.

---

<sup>4</sup> Similar to Hans Naumann and John Meier before him, Klusen takes the stance in the lengthy third chapter of his 1969 book that many "folk songs" are composed (art) songs, variations of which arose due to oral transmission. While I do not agree entirely with this position, I do find his explanation of singing as a social practice compelling.

### **A lived musical experience: After rehearsal with the APZ**

In 1996–97, while conducting research in Slovenia on a Fulbright grant, I had the privilege to sing with the *Akademski Pevski Zbor (APZ) Tone Tomšič*, the internationally recognized student choir of the University of Ljubljana. This experience ultimately inspired my future research interests. Over the past decade, I have worked with other choirs in addition to the APZ Tone Tomšič, including choirs in the village of Črni Vrh near Polhov Gradec, and have attended performances of numerous choirs of various sizes and make-up throughout the country. The following narrative is based on fieldwork that I conducted in Slovenia in spring 2002.<sup>5</sup>

I did not know it at the time, but this was the last time I would attend a rehearsal of the APZ at the Casino Building (Sln. *Kazina*) on Congress Square, a performance space the choir had occupied for more than five decades, because later that year the choir would change premises. My intention was only to stop by at the end of the rehearsal in order to quickly say hello and goodbye to several friends in the choir; my fieldwork in Ljubljana was coming to a rapid end.

The time after rehearsal was known to be a social hour. This was when choir members marked birthdays, graduations, new jobs, weddings, or any other such celebratory events by treating the rest of the choir to a generous array of beverages, snacks, and pastries. However, on this occasion I did not anticipate much socializing. I was told that the choir had been experiencing problems with the building management, which now insisted that the rehearsal spaces be cleaned and vacated by 11 P.M. With rehearsals typically lasting until 10:30, this only left time to stack the chairs, sweep the rooms, and usher everyone out the door. Thus, not expecting to stay for longer than thirty minutes or so, and also not planning to catch any of the rehearsal itself, I made the mistake of leaving my recording equipment at home.

In spite of the 11 P.M. curfew, a couple of singers had decided to “treat” the choir after rehearsal—one in honor of his birthday, another for the birth of his son—bringing plenty of food, soft drinks, beer, and wine to share while an appointed few swiftly swept and tidied the rooms. The merriment felt hurried; we chatted, downed a drink or two, and were encouraged to take cookies and pastries home with us, since the 11 o’clock hour was approaching. Close to 11, a group of us slowly worked our way into the hallway, jackets on, backpacks packed, cookies “to go,” and one last drink in hand. However, no one got past the top of the stairway, where a small crowd of predominantly male singers had begun to amass.

---

<sup>5</sup> Funded by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX).

I am not quite sure who started it or how; from previous experiences, I could imagine that one tipsy singer suggested, “Hey, let’s sing one more before we go!” In the midst of their goodnights and parting conversations, several singers had put down their bags, taken up their drinks, and—in spite of having just completed three hours of grueling rehearsal—began to sing. At first possibly just a quartet, the group slowly grew as others joined in rather than departing down the stairs. In total, twelve to fifteen men stood in a circle to sing in the resonant hallway, wine and beer in hand, while several women (myself included) listened intently around them.

Singing in a circle, not arranged by voice parts and with no designated conductor, the group took requests for songs and at first performed quite a challenging repertoire. For example, someone had suggested a poignant Serbian Orthodox liturgical piece, and after a few failed starts some singers pulled out their notation, as it was too difficult to sing from memory. They huddled closer, and one even attempted to conduct (Fig. 1). However, they sang perhaps only two or three such pieces with notation, all from a broader European choral repertoire, before they moved on to what was clearly a more comfortable, more personal repertoire for all of them—arrangements of Slovene folk songs.

Fig. 1. Several of the male APZ singers gathered to sing in the hallway of the Casino Building after rehearsal, April 2, 2002. Note the close circle and impromptu conductor (at left) as they sing from notation.



After laboring through those first few pieces, someone called out, “Sing some Marolt!” With immediate grins, they decided on an arrangement by France Marolt, the choir’s founder and contributor of many of the pieces in the APZ’s “iron repertoire” of must-learn songs. The tone of the singing changed irreversibly. Abandoning the sheet music, the circle opened up a bit; a few more singers, still lingering in the next room, quickly came out and joined in. I am not sure how many songs they sang (and I will always regret not having recording equipment on hand), but the singing that ensued for the next hour still resounds in my ears (Fig. 2 and 3).

Fig. 2. The same APZ singers performing Slovene folk song arrangements in the hallway after rehearsal. Note the lack of notation, expanded circle, and the closed eyes or upward gazes of several singers. The lead tenor is first from the right.



There was a distinct change in the singers’ posture, interaction, and singing style when the circle widened and they shifted repertoire. Although the songs were all fixed compositions, not a single person needed to refer to notation, and no singer raised arms to conduct the group. Instead, a prominent tenor, Janez (see Fig. 2 and 3), was asked to begin most of the songs, but only to the extent that he intoned the piece. Interestingly, the men did not look at each other much as they sang. In sharp contrast to the studied gazes they held while performing the earlier repertoire (Fig. 1), several now sang with their eyes closed, or raised to the vaulted ceiling



(Fig. 2 and 3). Their posture relaxed, they moved with the music, swaying their glasses and beers, and several privately conducted themselves.

Fig. 3. See commentary to Figure 2. The lead tenor is third from the left.



One song in particular lingers in my memory, perhaps because I had heard the men of the APZ perform it several times before in rehearsal, concert, and on recordings.<sup>6</sup> Yet this time, Marolt's arrangement of the Littoral love song "Kaj b' jaz tebi dav" (What Would I Give to You?, 1930)<sup>7</sup> sounded better than ever. The opening was spirited, emphatic, and faster than I was used to, the singers' loud shouts reverberating through the Casino Building. Immediately, and in tandem, they slowed tempo for the remainder of that opening phrase (mm. 2–4), only to take up the initial brisk tempo again (m. 5) and end the verse in an exaggerated, rubato-like *oj vsaki dan!* 'oh, every day!' (Fig. 4). Janez, the tenor, sang the solo second verse, a part he had sung lyrically countless times. This time, however, he sang with

<sup>6</sup> The men of the APZ performed this arrangement at the 1997 Naša Pesem National Choral Competition, in which I also participated, and is on the recording *APZ v živo* (The APZ Live, CD 1, track 23). Immediately after hearing this after-rehearsal performance, I jotted down notes on their free rendition of this song in comparison to other performed and recorded versions.

<sup>7</sup> Contrary to his own claims, Marolt based his arrangement of this, and other songs, on Hraboslav Volarič's earlier arrangement. See Klemenc (2004, chapter 5; 2005).

extraordinary expression—disregarding any set tempo, he stretched out and increased tempo practically with each note, word and phrase, employing emotive dynamic contrasts and accents.

Fig. 4. Musical example: Marolt's "Kaj b'jaz tebi dav" (What Would I Give to You), 1930 (reproduced from Marolt 1976: 39).

**Kaj b'jaz tebi dav?**  
 Alla scherzando (♩ = 90) (Primoraka)

Ten.  
 1. Te, te, te da- bru pažndm bte ra- da vi- de- la, bte ra- da vi- de- la!  
 3. Nač, nač, nač men ti na dej, samo te prid še kej, samo te prid še kej!

Basi  
 Te, te, te da- bru pažndm, bte ra- da vi- de- la, aj vsa- ki dan!  
 Nač, nač, nač men ti ne dej, sa- mo le prid še kej, aj vsa- ki dan!

Andante sostenuto (♩ = 68)

Ten. solo  
 2. Kej, kej, kej b jest te- ba daw, de ba te lú- bu sām, de ba te lú- bu sam,

Zbor  
 pp<sup>2</sup>. Kej, kej b jest daw, de bte lú- bu, bte lú- bu sam,

Ten. solo  
 kej, kej, kej b jest te- ba daw, de ba te lú- bu sam, aj vsā- ki dan!  
 kej, kej b jest daw, de bte lú- bu sam — vsā- ki dan!

riten.

Such free interpretations of tempo, rhythm, dynamics, and phrasing, which I noted in that evening's performance of other songs as

well, deviated from formal executions of the very same choral pieces performed by the same singers. In this context, it seemed, the music was not conceived as entirely fixed or determined, something that required controlled rehearsing. Instead, it poured from their bodies in almost unconscious union.

They did not limit this freely-interpreted repertoire to Marolt, but seemed intimately drawn to a century-spanning repertoire of folk song arrangements—songs arranged by the likes of Oskar Dev (1868–1932), Ambrož Čopi (b. 1973), and Pavle Merku (b. 1927). From song to song, it was clear that they cherished each note, the acoustics of that high-ceilinged hallway resonant indeed, and it occurred to me that each singer was no longer singing as an individual part of a choir. They sang for the sake of singing, for the sound of each note, for the lingering echo of every chord, for the opportunity to make music as a unified whole. Somehow, it was past midnight before the time was brought to our attention, and the doorman finally insisted on locking the building.

### **Choral singing and folk song arrangements as extensions of “folk” singing**

The after-rehearsal singing that I experienced that spring evening with the APZ was no anomaly. On many occasions—after rehearsals at the Casino Building or relocated to a nearby pub, and especially after concerts—the singing continued until dawn (Fig. 5). In my experiences, singers gathered and initiated the singing without the aid of the conductor, who often did not participate.<sup>8</sup> While many of the APZ’s activities and rituals have a deep social basis, from intensive weekend-long rehearsals to the “christening” of new members (cf. Klemenc 2004), this kind of impromptu group singing is one of the most patent communal expressions. Although they perform composed (or at least arranged) repertoire, the free singing outside of the formal rehearsals and concerts is a clear indicator of the overall function and purpose of singing in such a choir: to gather and form a group, and to engage in singing as an expression of that group.

I witnessed such singing for the sake of social experience in all of my choral encounters in Slovenia. On some occasions, the spontaneous group singing and socializing seemed to mean more to the singers than their concert performances. For example, I attended rehearsals of the 12-member mixed choir from the tiny village of Črni Vrh near Polhov Gradec as they prepared for the regional choral revue, a gathering and performance of all of the area’s amateur choirs that is part of the process of a choir securing

---

<sup>8</sup> Although in my experiences the APZ conductor did not participate in the informal group singing, I have witnessed conductors of other, particularly smaller choirs, join in.

public cultural funds. The directors and singers made frequent comment about the “real” goal for that evening: the after-revue dinner with all participating choirs. Singers quipped that they only needed to survive the official performance in order to make it to the inn, where the food and wine would be flowing, and the singing—in what they remarked would be a much more relaxed and pleasurable context—would continue.

Fig. 5. After the APZ’s 1997 annual concert. The choir reserved a restaurant for the after-concert dinner, and the ensuing group singing (and drinking) continued until dawn (photo taken at approximately 2 A.M.).



Is this kind of communal musical experience not what Kumer describes as “folk” singing? In emphasizing the social importance of singing in historical Slovene village life, practices that began dying out in the early twentieth century, she writes:

Singers from Podkoren in Upper Carniola asserted that people sang from the heart, for themselves, out of pleasure, not for any audience and not for want of profit. Because Slovene singing is multi-part, in Zgornji Tuhinj in Upper Carniola they said: “For singing you have to have company, you can’t sing alone like a rooster.” (Kumer 1996: 26; 1975: 20)

Such comfortable, un-intellectualized singing within the context of organized choral groups attests to the important social function of choirs, and in turn to the evident connection between choral singing and the village practices from which it emerged.

Aside from such manifest social experience, further similarities abound between choral and village singing practices in spite of definitions claiming the opposite. For example, Kumer and others have argued that choral singing differs from folk singing especially in its practical function (1975, 1996). Yet urban and village choirs alike sing for many holidays, feast days, and celebrations that were historically accompanied by informal group singing.<sup>9</sup> Choirs today might organize house-to-house caroling for Christmas and New Year's (nowadays an increasingly popular revival of that village tradition), or perform in local cultural events for the Midsummer Eve bonfire, church feast days, and other holidays. I have witnessed organized choirs sing at wedding celebrations, sometimes reenacting village wedding practices, and they are an integral part of funerals. In fact, some choirs, such as those in the village of Črni Vrh, function mainly to serve their local community by singing on these very occasions that were traditional venues for "folk" singing.

Arguments distinguishing choral singing from village practices have also pointed to issues of selectivity (choirs are selective, whereas everyone might participate in folk singing) and formal organization (choral singing is fixed, whereas folk singing is "unconscious").<sup>10</sup> However, among Slovene folk singing practices, particularly the young men's village singing, there are instances of selectivity and formal organization that readily compare with choral singing. For example, in most villages the young men established social cliques primarily for group singing. Significantly, not just anyone could join such a group; good voices and musical skills were highly valued. According to Kumer herself, singers were auditioned and initiated, and many prospective members rehearsed in secret, some taking clandestine voice lessons, in order to be accepted into the social-singing group (Kumer 1975: 20-21; 1996: 26). In addition to selective auditioning, most such village men's groups had a fixed location where they gathered to sing, although they also would sing while wandering through the village or under their girlfriends' windows. Furthermore, the village men's groups usually had a regularly scheduled meeting time. In most places, this was Saturday evening, and the singing could last all night long. The abundant similarities between the group singing and the structure of organized choirs—auditions, practices, and scheduled meeting times—no doubt facilitated the swift adoption of choral singing and its popularity among Slovenes.

The social practices of choirs today, from group rituals and resulting social networks to the communal, out-of-choir singing, stem from these village practices in many further ways. In terms of gender, choral practices are also linked to village practices. Kumer writes of historical

---

<sup>9</sup> For descriptions of tradition village singing practices, see for example Kumer (1975: 19-43; 1996: 27-40) and Omerzel-Terlep (2000).

<sup>10</sup> See Anonymous (1899) and definitions in Kumer (1975, 1988, 1996).

village practices: “In mixed company, for example at weddings or in the tavern, men and women could sing together. Otherwise, for the most part men sang for themselves” (Kumer 1996: 26; also 1975: 20). The fact that the men of the APZ gathered for informal singing after rehearsal was surely a remnant of the social importance of men’s singing in Slovene village culture. Although women often join the men in such informal, after-choir singing (see Fig. 5), it is very rare for a group of women to sing alone, and very ordinary for the men to initiate it. I would also argue that the large number of men’s choruses in Slovenia is further testimony to the continuation of village men’s singing in Slovene choral practices.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the chosen core repertoire is yet another unmistakable indication that choral singing (formal and informal) is a direct extension of village singing practices. Whether in male, female, or mixed choirs, or in informal choral contexts, Slovenes repeatedly turn to their village song traditions for their material—in this case, songs transformed as choral arrangements.

The connection between choral and “folk” singing practices is thus distinctly circular: the structure of village social singing resembled choral singing, and the social role and function of choral singing today represent the continuity (with change) of historical village practices. I argue that the overwhelming success of choral singing in Slovenia is due to this mutual connection with “folk” or village singing—in both practice and repertoire. Choral singing in Slovenia would not be what it is today had it not been based on the Slovene people’s most common musical practices—social singing—and rooted in their own vernacular song repertoire. Rather than replacing folk singing, choral singing and the repertoire of arrangements have augmented it, empowering folk practices for a position in modernized culture.

University of New Mexico

### WORKS CITED

- Anonymous. 1899. Narodna pesem propada. *Cerkveni glasbenik* 22: 12–13, 21–22.
- Bartók, Béla. 1976. *Béla Bartók Essays*, selected and ed. Benjamin Suchoff. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

---

<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, I do not have statistics on the number of men’s choruses in comparison to women’s and mixed choirs, but based on my field experiences I can assert that men’s choruses greatly outnumber women’s groups.

- . 1997. *Essays: Béla Bartók Studies in Ethnomusicology*. Selected and edited by Benjamin Suchoff. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Golež-Kaučič, Marjetka (Director of Ethnomusicology Institute). 2002. Interview by author. Ljubljana, Slovenia, April 29.
- Herder, Johann Gottfried. 1968 [1778–79]. *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (= Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 336). Leipzig: Reclam.
- Jagodic, Mihela (Director of Choral Activities, Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities). 2002. Interview by author. Ljubljana, Slovenia, March 29.
- Klemenc, Maria Kristina Arko. 2004. *Arranging the Nation: Slovenian Choral Singing and Folk Song Arrangements*. Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley.
- . 2005. *Crafting Authenticity: France Marolt, Folk Song, and the Concert Stage*. *Traditiones* 33: 47–70.
- Klusen, Ernst. 1969. *Volkslied: Fund und Erfindung*. Cologne: Hans Gerig.
- . 1989. *Singen: Materialien zu einer Theorie*. Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag.
- Kumer, Zmaga. 1975. *Pesem slovenske dežele*. Maribor: Založba Obzorja.
- . 1988. *Etnomuzikologija: razgled po znanosti o ljudski glasbi*. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, oddelek za muzikologijo, Univerza Edvarda Kardelja.
- . 1996. *Vloga, zgradba, slog slovenske ljudske pesmi*. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU.
- Kumer, Zmaga, et al., eds. 1997 [1970]. *Slovenske ljudske pesmi*, vol. 1. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica.
- Marolt, France. 1976. *Priredbe ljudskih pesmi za moški zbor* (= IDSS 16). Ljubljana: ZKOS. [originally composed 1920s/30s].
- Omerzel-Terlep, Mira. 2000. Slovenia. In *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: Europe*, vol. 8, ed. Timothy Rice, James Porter, and Chris Goertzen. Garland: New York and London, 911–24.
- Sharp, Cecil James. 1972<sup>4</sup> [1907<sup>1</sup>]. *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, prepared by Maud Karpeles, with an appreciation of Cecil Sharp by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Yorkshire, UK: EP Publishing Limited.
- Šivic, Urša. 2002. *Muzikološki vidiki preobražanja umetne pesmi v ponarodelo v 2. polovici 19. stoletja*. Master's thesis, University of Ljubljana.
- Wiora, Walter. 1950. *Das echte Volkslied*. (= Musikalische Gegenwartsfragen 2). Heidelberg: Muller-Thiergarten.

## POVZETEK

SLOVENSKO ZBOROVSKO IN LJUDSKO PETJE TER ŽIVO  
GLASBENO DOŽIVLJANJE

*Zborovsko petje in priredbe slovenskih ljudskih pesmi sodijo med najbolj razširjene glasbene dejavnosti v današnji Sloveniji. Med poznavalci je bilo že veliko polemik o vplivu zborovskega petja na zaton ljudskega petja.*

*V nasprotju s podporo države in drugih glasbenih ustanov veliko slovenskih znanstvenikov zborovskemu petju pripisuje negativne posledice. Po njihovem mnenju so zborovsko petje in priredbe prispevale k neustaljšivem zamiranju ljudskega izvajanja, stila in repertoarja narodne pesmi.*

*Avtorica tega članka dokazuje, da lahko gledamo na zborovske priredbe ne le kot na razdirajoče, ampak kot na preobrazovalne. Res je, da so nekatere izvedbe in elementi ljudske pesmi prenehali ali so bolj redki kot v preteklosti. A res je tudi, da so nekatere glasbene izvedbe, med njimi zborovsko petje, imele velik vpliv na vaško izvajanje glasbenih prireditev, na njihov spored in na vsebino. Opažanje, da ljudska pesem umira in da je za to kriva zborovska glasba je v celoti odvisno od definicije besede ljudstvo in od tega, kako utemeljujemo ljudsko pesem ter ljudsko izvajanje.*

*Na podlagi etnografskega raziskovanja med zbori v Sloveniji avtorica trdi, da je zborovsko petje v veliki meri podobno vaškemu izvajanju. Povezava med zborovskim in ljudskim petjem je jasno zaokrožena: struktura vaškega družabnega petja je podobna zborovskemu petju in družbena vloga zborovskega petja predstavlja nadaljevanje starih vaških navad. Še več, zborovsko in ljudsko petje imata skupno jedro – čeprav stalno spreminjajoči – repertoar. Namesto nadomestitve ljudske pesmi sta zborovsko petje in priredbe okrepila in umestila ljudsko izvajanje v moderno kulturo. Zborovsko petje je v resnici podaljšanje živega, družabnega glasbenega doživljanja.*