

**Local Feedback: Slovene Popular Music  
between the Global Market and Local Consumption**

**Feedback on the large scale: An anthropological view**

Popular music is a complex cultural phenomenon. In order to understand it, it is essential to take into consideration different levels of its appearance, range and impact. These levels demand different methodological approaches. It is one thing to begin analysis at micro-level, contextualise the insights at the mezzo-level and theorise the problem at the macro-level. But it is something completely different to start at macro-level and automatically impose the insights from that level to the narrower levels of study. And, again, it is methodologically equally challenging to begin analysis at the mezzo-level and contextualise or compare its specificity with evidence from the micro- and macro-levels.

In times when apparent and hidden flows of "cultural economy" in the "global ecumene" (on this term see Hannerz 1989; 1996), with all its disjunctures, especially concerning ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, finanscapas and ideoscapas (Appadurai 1990), it is becoming increasingly important to draw attention to the issues "of the global within the local and vice-versa" (Slobin 1993, p. 23).

Awareness of this dynamics also demands attentive reflection on political and other conditions which determine historical and current reception, reproduction and production of popular music. Anthropology seems well prepared for such an orientation. Recent critiques of ethnography, especially discussions about "writing culture" (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986) have led to a revaluation of anthropology's basic empirical starting points and "changing conditions of the research project itself" within the

framework of "unexpected contexts, shifting constituencies, and changing agendas" (Marcus 1999, p. 4). Moreover, any anthropological discourse is highly politicised (Jackson 1989). Ethnographic studies of the modern 'consumer culture' reveal culture as the site of antagonisms and competitiveness, the site of struggle for hegemony (Traube 1996, p. 127).

When we study popular music at micro-level, with the inherited specificity of the local habitus (on habitus see Bourdieu 1977), we must not overlook its positioning and functioning within the framework of existing political systems. Tensions between the demands of the local habitus, the existence of individual and collective strategies and perspectives, and the limits of external 'objective' circumstances and conditions are the most important factors in the development and shaping of any cultural phenomenon. The production of culture, construction of identities, and specificities of socialisation are only some of the topics which define current global anthropological orientations.

Throughout the world, anthropologists and other social scientists are trying to understand global cultural transformations, globalisations and localisations, modernisations and traditionalisations (Lash and Friedman 1992, p. 28). Ethnographic observation of the ways in which individuals, groups, families, peer groups and local communities respond to culture, mediated through electronic and other mass media (e.g., McRobbie 1994; Hall et al. 1980), has revolutionised views of current cultural production and reproduction. Before this, views from above revealed only a part of the story, regardless of whether they were trying to observe local, regional or international contexts.

The processes of localisation, regionalisation and nationalisation are apparently opposed to the processes of globalisation. At the same time, they are a part of modern cultural dynamics with simultaneous processes of globalisation and cultural syncretism (Rottenburg 1996; Mlinar and Poštrak 1991), "glocalisation" (Robertson) or "fractal globalisation" (I introduced this term in Muršič 1999).

The present international context is quite clear. The major part of current popular music production is essentially international, with more than 80% of its documented production in only 5 major multinational record companies. However, national and sub-national popular music production is also important. Actually, their rates are much higher than statistically documented. Hidden cassette production is only a part of popular music production in the Third World (see Manuel 1993). In addition, there is substantial amount of hidden home recordings and illegal production and distribution of sound carriers.

Regardless of the size of national popular music production, detailed analyses (incl. ethnographic) of national popular music markets would show a different picture than the documented statistics. Every national economy and political unit has its unique history and specificity. But none is completely isolated.

National cultural and economic spheres are supposedly sovereign and autonomous, but this does not mean that they are homogenous. On the contrary, national states are internally culturally very heterogeneous, whether they are constituted as federations of national republics or if they are apparently multi-ethnic, because ethnic differences are neither the only nor the most important cultural markers. The view from below can not confirm any notion of undivided, integral or indispensable 'national' cultures.

I will briefly present a history of popular music in Slovenia and add observations from my empirical study of popular music activities at the micro-level in Slovenia, based on fieldwork in the 1990s in the village of Trate (see Muršič 1995; 2000). I hope to sketch the interdependence of local, national, regional and global popular music contexts, and, finally, to illustrate not only some local variants of the global cultural flows, but also the national specificities which still matter.

## Feedback in the medium scale: A short history of Slovene popular music

Although it is difficult to define popular music in the past, it is possible to claim that the story of Slovene popular music begins soon after World War I, when the first jazz orchestras were established. But before then? Local town musicians in Slovenia were documented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and after. The 19<sup>th</sup> century *kazina* movement – dances for the highest (predominantly German speaking) social strata in the town – and the Slovene *beseda*, regular public performances of military bands, operettas and occasional visits of variety and cabaret shows, are worth mentioning. However, it is impossible to speak about the development of local popular music before World War I, because Slovenia was a rather provincial and agricultural land.

Things changed with the availability of recorded music at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first permanently open cinema in Ljubljana, the Edison (1907; the first films were shown in 1896), German Schlager (popular songs) were heard. Not surprisingly, German popular songs remained very popular long after World War I.

The history of popular music in Slovenia starts in 1922 with establishment of the first jazz band, NEGODE JAZZ BAND or ORIGINAL JAZZ NEGODE, with a well-known saxophone player named Janko Gregorc and under the leadership of Miljutin Negode. It was supposedly the first jazz ensemble in the former Yugoslavia (and in the Balkans) (see Amalietti 1986; Tomc 1989). In 1925 Ernest Švara established a band called ODEON.

During the 1920s many bands claimed that they played jazz, although they mainly played Central European dance music with jazz elements. Several groups played dance music in the local inns, coffee houses and other venues. In the 1920s and 1930s, other larger dance jazz bands appeared in Ljubljana, e.g. Sonny-boy jazz, Odeon jazz bar, Falkon jazz, Ronny jazz, etc. (see Ovsec 1979). In the late 1930s Bojan Adamič established a bigger band, BROADWAY. NEW STARS and VESELI BERAČI (with Oto Jugovec) also

started to play. Similar jazz orchestras soon started to play in other Slovene towns (Maribor, Celje, Murska Sobota, Laško etc.).

These bands mostly played in local venues, but many times they also organised home parties (*hauzbal*, *čajanke*, *žurfiks*) or parties for special occasions in public houses and inns. Until World War II dance events were socially clearly divided: there were elite, ordinary and common dance parties (*veselice*). In Ljubljana, for example, such parties were organised in Arena, Kazina, Narodni dom, coffee houses, hotel halls, restaurants and inns (Pri Kozlarju, Zvezda etc.). Youths went to the Zalaznik or k Fajmoštru is OK with k inns. Bands with tamburitza, guitar, violin, piano, accordion and clarinet would play popular melodies and tunes like "Ramona", "Valencia", "Donna Clara", German Schlager and jazz.

Many musicians played both traditional and modern material. After World War I many new ('modern') dances were introduced: the English waltz, four-step, polka, polonaise, etc. American dances became popular in the 1920s (Charleston, black-bottom, blues, foxtrot, one- and two-step) and in the 1930s (tango, rumba, samba, bump-a-daisy). Jazz records were available at the Banjaj record store.

The audience admired popular songs of the time, the so-called *kupleti* (Fr. couplet), the traditional repertoire, and the emerging German Schlager and Italian canzona. In addition to sheet music, musicians used records as a source of their interpretation.

The Slovene national radio company was established on October 28, 1928 (Bezljaj-Krevel 1998). In the 1930s, it had some impact in larger towns, but it still didn't substantially influence Slovene popular music. Before World War II younger people were more and more attached to jazz and popular music. They went to dance schools, especially with 'Master' Jenko (Plesni zavod Jenko) in Ljubljana. Good manners were taught along with dance. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that in the 1920s and 1930s jazz was not widespread among the general population. It was rather limited to higher social strata and the student population.

The group VESELI BERAČI (The Happy Beggars) had quite a substantial impact on the local popular music scene before and after WWII. Bojan Adamič established a new jazz big band in June, 1945 (later named PLESNI ORKESTER RTV LJUBLJANA; since 1982 the RTV SLOVENIA BIG BAND). During the first post-war years, jazz records were virtually non-accessible.

The new authorities were extremely suspicious towards imported "capitalist" (i.e. American) music (see Tomc 1989). They were striving to control and suppress the so-called "decadent", "asocial", and "degenerate" influences from the West. The authorities differentiated between "suitable" (tango, foxtrot, one-step) and "obscene" or "improper" dances (boogie-woogie and troking). Some people were charged and even punished because they played or danced to outlawed music, for example boogie-woogie. Nevertheless, the authorities, naturally, failed in their repressive intentions. The appeal of jazz proved to be much stronger than the efforts of the authorities to replace it with Russian brass and other "Soviet" music. The socialist state eventually recognised the power of music and its appeal to build the new world, so it didn't only tolerate particular popular music genres, but also encouraged them.

In the 1950s the pressure waned. American movies reappeared in the cinemas. The first jazz festival was started in Bled in 1960 (First Yugoslav Jazz Festival). Jazz fans won and many jazz bands and orchestras began playing dance music (mostly swing and Dixieland, jitterbug, jive and boogie-woogie with some rock'n'roll) for the young audiences in Ljubljana, Maribor and other towns. These were mostly small jazz combos, but among them there were several big bands.

In the 1950s the Ljubljanski jazz ansambel was established under the leadership of Urban Koder, along with the ANSAMBEL MOJMIRA SEPETA and AKADEMSKI PLESNI ORKESTER (later JAZZ ORKESTER 'AD HOC') lead by Franc Kapus. At the same time, in Maribor played various dance ensembles, e.g. AMOR, 7 DIXIES, HALISKO, SWING 7, KUD JOŽE HERMANKO, KRAMER, ORKESTER USSARJA WERNERJA, ORKESTER BERTIJA RODOŠKA, ANSAMBEL PETRA HREŠČAKA, etc.

The lively jazz scene was only a part of the post-war Slovene popular music history. Two important domestic popular music genres developed soon after the war: *slovenska popevka* (the Slovene popular song) and *narodnozabavna glasba* (ethno-pop – literally "national entertainment music"). In the late 1940s the first Slovene popular songs were written. Singers were mostly accompanied by larger jazz ("dance") orchestras (especially the PLESNI ORKESTER established by the national radio company). In the 1950s, the popevka became the leading genre, along with the so-called narodnozabavna glasba.

One of the first domestic popular songs (sung in the Slovene language) was "Cinca Marinca", written by Bojan Adamič (music) and Frane Milčinski-Ježek (lyrics) in 1948. The first recorded song was Bojan Adamič's "Beli kurir" (1955). Under the influence of American jazz and European production of popular songs (especially Italian and German), many important jazz composers wrote music (e.g., Bojan Adamič, Jože Privšek, Mojmir Sepe, Ati Soss and others). Some well-known Slovene poets wrote lyrics. Since the 1950s, some very successful singers have appeared, especially during the golden times of the annual Slovene popular song festival Slovenska popevka, held between 1962 and 1977: Marjana Deržaj, Stane Mancini, Jelka Cvetežar, Lidija Kodrič, Majda Sepe, Rafko Irgolič, Nino Robič, Oto Pestner, etc. The popevka is still present, though not as important part of the Slovene popular music scene as it once was. There are some great stars worth mentioning, like Helena Blagne and Simona Weiss.

Parallel to the development of jazz and the popevka was emergence of narodnozabavna glasba (ethno-pop). Before the WWII established group VESELI BERAČI successfully combined traditional styles (polka, waltz), popular songs and jazz. In the 1940s, on the national radio programme, accordionist Avgust Stanko started to accompany traditional polyphonic singers in a modernised (i.e. rhythmicised) style. However, it was the group GORENJSKI KVARTET, established in 1953, later famous as ANSAMBEL BRATOV AVSENIK (the Avsenik Brothers Ensemble; in Germany known as SLAVKO AVSENIK UND SEINE ORIGINAL OBERKRÄNER), who paved the way for narodnozabavna glasba. The group was not important

only for Slovene popular music, but was also successful internationally. The Avseniki ensemble soon became very popular in Germany and other parts of Central Europe. In less than 50 years this extraordinary successful group has sold more than 30 million records. Avsenik's polka "Na Golici" (known in Europe as "Trompetenecho") is one of the most frequently broadcast melodies on European radio stations (Sivec 1999; on the genre see Sivec 1998).

Several hundred groups in Slovenia still play *narodnozabavna* or *domača glasba* (domestic music). Since its introduction in 1953, a show called *Četrtekov večer domačih pesmi in napevov* (Thursday Night Domestic Songs and Tunes) on the national radio station has had an enormous impact.

The crucial factor for the development of Slovene popular music was domestic production and the reproduction of sound carriers. The first domestic record companies in the former Yugoslavia were established in the 1950s in Zagreb (Jugoton) and Belgrade (RTV Beograd). The first recordings of Slovene popular music were released in 1958. The Slovene domestic recording industry began in 1963 when the Mladinska knjiga publishing house released its first records. In the late 1960s, another publishing house, Založba Obzorja from Maribor, started two record labels, Helidon and Suzy. The former specialised in domestic production, while the latter had been releasing foreign records under licensing agreements with some major western labels. Finally, in 1973, the label ZKP RTV Ljubljana was established. At the beginning it specialised in cassette production, but later it gradually became the leading domestic record company.

All the above-mentioned companies were market-oriented socially-owned enterprises, established in accordance with the specific economic legislation of "self-management" socialism with a substantially developed market economy. Selling of the products was the primary motive of these larger record companies. In that regard, it was the market which determined the development of domestic popular music. Thus the need arose for alternative methods of popular music production.

The first independent record label in Slovenia was the student label ŠKUC. Its first record was released in 1974 (Tomaž Pengov's album *Odpotovanje*). In the eighties and the nineties, many small labels were established: FV Music, Vinilmania, Nika, Dallas, Kif-Kif, Stripcore, etc. Although the above mentioned local majors still exist, many of above-mentioned small and independent labels have developed into important players. The major multinational record companies obviously weren't interested in the small Slovene popular music market, therefore domestic enterprises are in charge of both domestic production as well as the import and local distribution of international production.

After the late 1950s, the domestic recording industry encouraged the rapid development of local popular music. In the early 1960s, the country liberalised the regulations on border crossing. Under the influence of incoming cultural products, a very vital and heterogeneous popular music scene emerged and developed. The Slovene popular song (*slovenska popevka*) and domestic ethno-pop (*narodnozabavna glasba*), which had already become the dominant popular music genres in the 1950s, started to bloom. Although limited, the Slovene popular music market allowed the appearance of stardom. After all, since its beginning, glamour has always accompanied popular music.

The long post-war struggle for jazz resulted in its domination within the framework of Slovene popular music for at least two decades. However, younger people managed to get the latest rock'n'roll records, mostly from Italy, and played them at house parties. Live music was played at public dance parties. Up to the beginning of the 1960s, Dixieland and the Italian canzona were the most popular dance-hall genres.

For the general audience, the first visual information about rock'n'roll came with films with appearances of rock musicians (Cliff Richards and THE SHADOWS). Soon after, the first rock groups started to play in dance halls. In the early sixties, electrified 'pop' bands appeared in larger industrial towns. At the beginning, Slovene rock was characterised by specific regional 'sounds'. The groups from Ljubljana (ALBATROSI, THE CHORUS, SVETNIKI (the Saints), HELIONI, THE FELLOWS, etc.), Maribor (THE OUT, THE HOMEMAKERS,

GENERACIJA, BISERI and RDEČI DEČKI) and Koper (KAMELEONI, FARAONI) sounded quite different. They were competitors at the so-called *kitarlade* (guitar contests, or 'battle of the bands', at which audience voted for the best group on the stage) and otherwise. At the beginning, they mostly played dance music at high school dances, but later the scene developed and moved to larger halls (e.g., Hala Tivoli in Ljubljana) and the student campus. In the late sixties, some bands began writing their own material: MLADI LEVI, BELE VRANE, THE GENERALS, etc.

Strong local sentiments were present among the fans of these groups. However, rock was, so to say, 'nationalised' much later, when national radio (and television) started to play and present it as an integral part of Slovene popular music. Appropriation of particular popular music genres starts at local levels, but ends within the framework of the common economic and cultural space which corresponds to the coverage of the national media. Finally, it develops and again fragments within its local frameworks, following the live music activities in the venues and under the influence of local media. One such important local media was the independent student radio station, Radio Študent, established in 1969. Its alternative broadcasts had an enormous impact in and around Ljubljana on the development of domestic alternative genres, especially rock.

Between 1966 and 1968, KAMELEONI (the Chameleons) from Koper, for example, were supposed to play "coastal rock", whatever that meant. They took their Mediterranean residence as the part of their self-promotion. KAMELEONI were among the first professional rock groups in Slovenia, although they actually started as high school students. Their marketing in the times of socialism was excellent. They initiated carefully designed promotion and advertising activities. The professional approach was fruitful: they soon became the most popular rock group in the former Yugoslavia, with regional success comparable to their idols, the BEATLES (see Hmeljak 1995).

Till the late sixties rock (or beat as it was then called) was predominantly dance music, performed in dance halls and youth clubs which were established in the sixties. The first disco club was

established in Maribor in 1969. Two years later, in the same town, the first larger Slovene rock festival was organised. In 1972, it was moved to Ljubljana and was named the Boom Festival. It was organised annually till 1975 and came to have national importance. At the beginning, the authorities were suspicious of rock music, but their reactions were predominantly moralistic, and not exactly repressive, as in the case of jazz. On the contrary, in the 1970s they invited rock groups to play at state-sponsored youth work camps and the celebrations of Youth Day, i.e. Tito's birthday.

In the early 1970s, Slovene rock groups began to compose and play their own music. The most important and creative among them was the underground group BULDOŽER, who recorded two albums in the 1970s: *Pljuni istini u oči* and *Plakatirati zabranjeno*. There were other more or less successful groups: BOOMERANG, ZOFKA IN LEDENI MOŽJE, AVE, SRCE, IZVIR, SEPTEMBER AND JANEZ BONČINA, PREDMESTJE, PRELOM, HORIZONT, NA LEPEM PRIJAZNI, JUTRO, OKO, etc. The most successful of those groups (BULDOŽER and SEPTEMBER) sang in the Serbo-Croatian language in order to reach the audience in the Yugoslav market (cf. Cjuha 1996). With some exceptions (e.g., Tomaž Domicelj), it was the punk rockers who started to sing in the Slovene language.

When we talk about Slovene popular music, we must not dismiss the importance of the songwriters and performers, the so-called *kantavtorji*, who appeared in the 1970s and 1980s and always sang their songs in Slovene: Tomaž Domicelj, Marko Brecelj, Tomaž Pengov, Jani Kovačič, Andrej Šifrer, etc. Marko Brecelj's "Cocktail" (with Bojan Adamič's arrangement) is one of the greatest Slovene recordings ever.

The innovative group BEGNAGRAD (1976-1983) was the first Slovene group with significant international success in avant-garde and underground circles. However, punk rock confirmed the maturity of the domestic rock scene.

In 1977 PANKRTI had their first concert in the Moste High School (Gimnazija Moste). Punk rock soon became the starting point for innovative domestic rock production, especially in Ljubljana,

backed up by Radio Študent. The political dimensions of the punk movement were enormously important. The struggle for places to socialise (rock clubs) and freedom of speech led to open clashes with the authorities. Punk energy was channeled into the Novi Rock festival, which has been held every year since 1980. PANKRTI, GRUPA 92, BULDOGI, BERLINSKI ZID, LUBLANSKI PSI, VIA OFENZIVA, NIET, 2227 and other groups profoundly marked the development of the Ljubljana punk scene. Ljubljana, full of punk graffiti, soon became one of the most important centres of alternative rock music in the former Yugoslavia. Punks renamed one of the main squares Johnny Rotten Square. Police oppression started in 1981 with accusation of four young people of being members of the (in fact non-existent) Nazi band ČETRTI RAJH (the Fourth Reich). Repression only gave another push to the scene.

The Slovene alternative (i.e. punk) scene brought many interesting and innovative groups, who performed only original music. The post-punk boom and hardcore scene followed in the 1980s. LAIBACH (a group from the small industrial town of Trbovlje who use the old German name for Ljubljana) and BORGHESIA became the most innovative, internationally known and successful Slovene groups. BORGHESIA combined dance music with an expressive rock style. Soon after, STRELNIKOFF shocked with voice and noise and DEMOLITION GROUP and CZD with rough-edged energy.

In the 1980s Lačni Franz led the Slovene new wave/mainstream rock movement. In the 1980s the popular music scene in Ljubljana developed in different directions. On one side, there were younger pop singers and groups, like VIDEOSEX, Anja Rupel and U REDU. There were also some jazz, funk, pop and alternative rock groups like MILADOJKA YOUNEED; the most interesting metal group was POMARANČA and the most successful mainstream rock band was MARTIN KRPAN. The jazz group QUATEBRIGA appeared after the split of BEGNAGRAD.

Economic liberalisation in the 1990s provided new opportunities for development of Slovene popular music. Many new groups appeared in the towns and many of them found Ljubljana as the most promising place in Slovenia to make a professional career. In the 1990s electronic, techno, ambient and experimental

projects came to the fore: RANDOM LOGIC, APRIL NINE, BEITTHORN, DJ UMEK, etc.

In the second half of the 1990s rock again became popular. The most important (and internationally successful) group is DICKY B HARDY (who have toured twice in the USA), plus mainstream rockers like BIG FOOT MAMA, DRUŠTVO MRTVIH PESNIKOV, SIDDHARTA, etc.

This brief history of Slovene popular music shows that the major part of its production has always been placed on the market. Furthermore, the most popular singers and performers were professionals or at least semi-professionals and earned enough money. Records have been sold in large numbers, especially if we take into consideration sales per capita. The popular music market was much more Slovene than 'Yugoslav'.

And this history of Slovene popular music also demonstrates that popular music studies can not ignore national frameworks. National markets and regional specificities in the cultivation of taste differ. They are situated within global flows of current cultural production, but they also determine specificities in their mezzo range. National frameworks are thus legitimate analytical frameworks of study. However, they are not homogenous. The local – and even individual – levels of the study of popular music also matter.

### **Feedback on the small scale: The view from below**

I will now briefly sketch the situation in the village of Trate, where I conducted fieldwork in the second part of the 1990s. The local framework may be very illustrative in the understanding of popular music, its role and meaning in the everyday life of the people in a particular location within the framework of micro-, mezzo- and macro-cultural areas and flows. The view from below is essential to an understanding of modern cultural dynamics.

The village of Trate is a very special place. It has 320 inhabitants, 60 houses, three blocks of flats, two castles, a huge deserted former mill and oil-mill, two grocery shops, a large store selling

construction equipment, a bakery, an asylum, an international border crossing, and four pubs. Trate is a small village which lies on the Austrian border, some 25 km from the nearby city of Maribor, which is the second largest city in Slovenia with some 150,000 inhabitants. The village sprawls over small hills on almost 5 km<sup>2</sup> of land. It is well connected with roads in all directions, especially the road along the border. Thus intensive local communications connect some seven to ten thousand people. Nearly 2,000 of them work in the nearby paper mill. Only two or three households in Trate are still predominantly agricultural. At least one member of most families is employed either in Sladki Vrh or in industrialised Maribor. Therefore, the majority of people from Trate and its surroundings are working people.

Up to World War I, when the border between Austria and the first Yugoslavia was established, the village was predominantly inhabited by German-speaking farmers and castle servants. During World War II, a large majority of them supported the Nazis, and therefore, in February, 1946, they were expelled to Austria. Only a third of the pre-war inhabitants remained in the village. Newcomers from different parts of Slovenia were settled on the homesteads of former villagers. They were supposed to become socialist farmers, but not many of them actually did. In the 1950s they either moved out of the village or found jobs in the nearby factory or elsewhere.

With such a historical background it was possible to see the post-war period in Trate as a kind of a "natural experiment". Furthermore, its geographic position (lying at a regionally important crossroads), administrative organisation (being not only a border village with Austria, but also at the border of two other administrative units), political destiny (ambivalently suppressive and "soft" socialist system) and economic situation (the more than hundred-year-old paper mill in the neighbouring Sladki Vrh was one of the first factories built in that part of the country) were also important factors which finally led to the emergence of an unexpectedly creative local alternative rock scene.

During the post-war period, three consecutive youth clubs (village cultural centres) were established in the village. Each was

important in the socialisation of a particular generation, and each of these consecutive generations grew up with different kinds of music. The history of the village clubs is also – by and large – a history of Slovene popular music itself.

In the late 1940s, the local chapter of the Anti-Fascist Women's Front – i.e. younger women – voluntarily renovated the hall in the 'Upper Castle' and established the so-called *Zadružni dom* (The Community Centre). The opening ceremony was held on April 27, 1948. *Zadružni dom* held village festivals and celebrations, amateur theatre plays, occasional dance events and took care of educational activities, as well as public listening to radio programmes. In many ways it also functioned as a youth club.

Local traditional musicians (accordionists, fiddlers and clarinet players) would occasionally be invited to play – or it simply happened spontaneously, especially after more 'official' events were over. The activities of the centre gradually declined in the late fifties.

At that time, a new generation of musicians appeared in the village. They started to play under the influence of the then very popular new musical genre, the above-mentioned 'national-entertainment music' or 'domestic music'. This music, basically Central European polka music, was regularly played on the radio in the times of the first mass purchasing of radio receivers. Initially, the national radio programme didn't broadcast much of this new style, but the audience demanded it and got it. In the fifties, especially in remote villages, people would often listen to the radio programme communally, because only a few people had radio receivers. And it often happened that they would spontaneously start to dance to the broadcast music. Naturally, talented individuals started to imitate it.

Around 1958 the first group of young boys from the village started to play this new kind of music. They called themselves VESELI FANTJE S TRAT (the Happy Fellows from Trate) and would occasionally play around in the pubs and private homes or at local festivities. But they obviously needed a place where they would play more regularly. The local 'scene' was then mostly located in pubs. VESELI



FANTJE S TRAT had some impact in the area, but didn't last for long. Some members stopped playing soon after their marriage, others would find engagements elsewhere, but the new musical style apparently became a marker of their socialisation and the socialisation of their generation.

In the early sixties, when many other 'domestic' groups appeared in the area, the scene finally got its venue. At that time, a campaign was started within the Socialist Youth Organisation to provide for the leisure activities of the youths (in order to prevent them from becoming hooligans like the BEATLES). Thus, after attending some introductory seminars, local youth activists established the so-called *Klub mladih Trate* (The Youth Club of Trate). It was located in the same rooms as the former Community Centre, but operated differently. The main activities of the Youth Club were leisure-time activities: everyday socialising of the village youth, organisation of their sport activities, watching television, listening to records and, of course, dancing. By then, just about everybody could afford to buy a record player, so the Yugoslav record industry started to boom. Records soon became the main source of music played in the club. Not only 'domestic' music was played, but also pop songs and even early rock.

If the generation from the early sixties called exclusively for 'domestic' music, the generation from the late sixties also enjoyed pop. There was a very strong pop scene in Slovenia, and in the whole former Yugoslavia, with many singers who appeared in the fifties. Croatian pop singers (this genre was called *popevke* or *šlagerji*, derived from German Schlager), especially those who were expressing so-called Adriatic sentiments, became extraordinary popular. This doesn't mean that younger people from Trate were no longer listening to 'domestic' music. At local celebrations and dance parties, bands would have to play both pop and 'domestic' repertoires. The leading groups, who predominantly performed mixed material with an emphasis on Croatian pop songs, were established during the late sixties in the neighbouring local centre Sladki Vrh. But at least one musician from Trate has regularly played in these groups (PALOMA, APOSTROF, etc.).

In the late sixties, along with the records also came rock. Rock records were occasionally played in the Trate Youth Club, e.g., the BEATLES or the ROLLING STONES, but the generation who by then led the club was already too old to accept the new musical style. The club went into oblivion in the early seventies, when the people who had run it got married or moved away. Trate was again lacking a public place for its youth.

In the early seventies, in addition to radio and record players, television became affordable for the majority of villagers as well. The perception of the world had necessarily been changing. New music information was now available regularly. The youth now came into a position where they could follow the most recent trends in popular music. As the late seventies happened to be the times of punk rock, youngsters from this part of Slovenske gorice not only listened to punk rock, but also started to play it. Although, initially, they did so at their homes, they soon found it inappropriate, so they began to seek for a more convenient place to socialise. They had had enough of sitting in the local pubs. Occasionally, due to their punk image, it even became dangerous.

The *Mladinski klub Trate* (The Trate Youth Club, later also *Disko Trate* or *Disko Fotografija M*) was opened on November 29, 1979. It soon became a well-known (punk) rock club. Every week, they held rock and punk dance parties, rock concerts and other (sub)cultural events. Furthermore, several local punk bands had rehearsals in the club. From the very beginning, the punks from Trate and surrounding places became local 'folk demons', known among the villagers as *tratniška klapa* (the Trate gang). In their defence against outside pressures they started to act as a closely tied peer group.

As far as music taste and preferences are concerned, there are still some sharp differences within this generational group itself. They link closer those individuals who started the club, those who were engaged in the core of punk rock activities, especially the members of the groups, and those who would meet in the club in the times of its decline. The club was closed in February, 1994,

when the building of the former mill was returned to its pre-war owner.

The result of this development is the emergence of the nationally important group CZD (Centre for Dehumanisation). Soon after its forming in 1984, it became one of the most interesting, innovative and influential Slovene punk groups. As a matter of fact, it was not just another punk band. They often experimented with different sounds (they would occasionally include some elements of industrial and electronic music, but other times they would also perform acoustically). The leading members of the band are capable of composing completely new material every few months (for more on the group see in Muršič 1995; Center za dehumanizacijo and Muršič 1999).

Over the years, the group has developed a small but faithful audience and become a "legendary Slovene punk band" (this is how the German promoters advertise their tours in Germany). The members of the band are now, with the exception of the younger drummer, men in their late thirties or early forties. They are still very active not only as amateur musicians, but also as agents on the local scene. They still organise various local events, concerts and festivals, they produce, distribute and release records with their independent small label, they have equipped their own recording studio, and they also publish books and fanzines, organise poetry readings and art and photography exhibitions, and, last but not least, they have also opened their own club in another village, Ceršak.

It is possible to conclude that dynamic interaction between external influences and domestic production on local levels is an important, but mostly hidden aspect of popular music and its unique appeal to audiences.

## Final feedback

Local audiences use and transform homogenised music products which come from the production and distribution centres. But they also produce and reproduce their own musics of heterogeneous variety. Sensibility of place and local images, tradition and heritage (Cohen 1994, p. 130) was only possible with emergence of the ethnographic approach to popular music studies of the past few decades.

The issue is not only global consumerism, but also various ways of resistance to it at local and regional levels. Not only resistance to international pressures and effective ways of appropriation of global cultural production, but also resistance to local and national provincialism. In the history of Slovene popular music, imported music has always been – together with domestic traditions – a means of struggle against local and regional hegemonies (see, e.g. Barber-Keršovan 1989; 1994). We must not overlook the inventive aspects of the processes of "indigenisation" (Appadurai 1990; Hannerz 1996), nativisation or naturalisation, "localisation" (Miller 1995, p. 147), "domestication" (Slobin 1993, p. 90; Stokes 1994, p. 17) or "autochthonisation" (Muršič 1998). After all, domestication is a universal element in any cultural diffusion. And it is not possible to appropriate any cultural material, especially music, without inventing it anew (Appadurai 1990, p. 3).

Furthermore, we have to ask ourselves where the inspiration for dominant popular music products comes from. The answer is simple: from traditions. It is not only on local levels where cultural hybridisation or "creolisation" (Friedman 1994) occurs: by and large, popular music itself is a hybrid form, the "construction of cultural domination within political antagonisms or injustice" (Bhabha 1996, p. 58).

Notions of a one-way flow of popular (or mass) culture products are basically correct. However, ethnographic studies show differences in its impact according to social (class) differences, regional specificities, age and gender differences.

When we speak about the popular music market, we typically have in mind the record market and the market of other sound carriers, and the media market. Within the framework of the market, we would consider only the most visible live music activities. However, even basic musical activities (live music in clubs and other venues) are also part of the same market.

In Slovenia, it is definitely possible to speak about a local popular music market, although this initially comprised only live music. Live music is still an important part of popular music production, although it rarely comes at the fore. After establishment of the national, regional, and other radio (and, later, television) stations and after the establishment of domestic record labels, it was possible to speak about a genuine 'national' popular music market. By 'national', in this context, I have in mind a culturally shaped space, defined by particular national language, culture and history. Such a space can be a part of a nation-state and its economy, especially within federations. At least, such was the case in the former Yugoslavia and, to some extent, the Soviet Union.

In addition to the dynamics of international trends and their local responses, there were also tensions between market-oriented music and other musical activities. In the late 1950s popular music was no longer comprised only of live local activities and media supported 'mass' activities, but also underground activities. The established and shaped market provoked the emergence of local alternative music. Like earlier jazz, rock itself was an alternative, and within these major productions, alternative production appeared.

It was only in the 1970s that Slovene popular music started to produce many alternative responses, e.g. BULDOŽER and BEGNAGRAD. Both groups were only partly influenced by alternative rock from the West (e.g. Frank Zappa or the Rock in Opposition groups), but were also the result of so-called cultural struggles within the Slovene popular music scene. In other words, opposition to the domestic market and its products provoked many innovative responses. And this kind of cultural struggle against both market pressure and the narrowness of the

conservative environment is still an important source of internal diversification and innovative development of local, regional, national, international and global popular music currents.

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## Abstract

*Different levels, or ranges, of the study of popular music – micro-, mezzo- and macro-level – demand different methodological approaches. The author presents anthropological approach to the study of historical and current reception, reproduction and production of popular music in Slovenia. He starts with presentation of historical development of Slovene popular music, compares it with the view from below, presenting experiences of musicians and common people he studied in the field, and concludes the paper with some general remarks concerning the present 'global' situation.*