

Stanislav Binički's Opera *Na Uranku*:
Genesis of Critical Analysis of the First Serbian Opera

by

Jana Minov

A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved March 2011 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Timothy Russell, Chair
Benjamin Levy
David Schildkret
Rodney Rogers
William Reber

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2011

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was the first Serbian opera, *Na Uranku (At Dawn)*. It was written by Stanislav Binički (1872-1942) and was first performed in 1903 at the National Theatre in Belgrade. There were two objectives of this project: (1) a live concert performance of the opera, which produced an audio recording that can be found as an appendix; and, (2) an accompanying document containing a history and an analysis of the work. While Binički's opera is recognized as an extraordinary artistic achievement, and a new genre of musical enrichment for Serbian music, little had been previously written either about the composer or the work. *At Dawn* is a romantic opera in the verismo tradition with national elements. The significance of this opera is not only in its artistic expression but also in how it helped the music of Serbia evolve. Early opera settings in Serbia in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century did not have the same wealth of history upon which to draw as had existed in the rich operatic oeuvre in Western Europe and Russia. Similarly, conditions for performance were not satisfactory, as were no professional orchestras or singers. Furthermore, audiences were not accustomed to this type of art form. The opera served as an educational instrument for the audience, not only training them to a different type of music but also evolving its national consciousness. Binički's opera was a foundation on which later generations of composers built. The artistic value of this opera is emphasized. The musical language includes an assimilation of various influences from Western Europe and Russia, properly incorporated into the Serbian musical core. Audience reaction is discussed, a positive affirmation that Binički was

moving in the right direction in establishing a path for the further development of the artistic field of Serbian musical culture. A synopsis of the work as well as the requisite performing forces is also included.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother Gordana Jevtovic-Minov, who introduced a magical world of music and opera to me. I am deeply grateful to her for who I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I offer profound thanks to Dr. Timothy Russell, whose guidance, mentorship, and support, were invaluable during the course of this project and all of my work at Arizona State University. I also extend sincere and warm gratitude to Dr. William Reber, who unselfishly shared his vast knowledge of musical styles and opera repertoire with me. I would like to thank Dr. Schildkret, Dr. Rogers, and Dr. Levy for their supervision of this project, and for being my committee members.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE FORMATION OF SERBIAN CIVIL SOCIETY	6
3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL LIFE IN NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY	11
4 STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SERBIAN MUSIC	18
5 STANISLAV BINICKI	25
6 THE ORIGINS OF OPERATIC LIFE IN SERBIA	29
7 FIRST SERBIAN OPERA <i>NA URANKU</i>	34
8 CONCLUSION.....	66
REFERENCES	71
APPENDIX	
A LIVE RECORDING OF STANISLAV BINICKI'S OPERA <i>NA URANKU</i> , DIRECTED BY JANA MINOV	74

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The following paper serves as the second part of my final doctoral project. The first part was a live concert performance of Stanislav Binički's opera *At Dawn*, offered on February 20, 2011 in the Katzin Concert Hall at Arizona State University. This paper offers a history and analysis of the work.

Overview and Synopsis of *Na Uranku (At Dawn)*

Opera in One Act

Composed by Stanislav Binički

Libretto by Branislav Nušić

Orchestration by Miodrag Janoski

Cast:

Stanka (young girl), soprano

Rade (young man), tenor

Andja (Rade's mother), mezzo soprano

Aga Redžep (Turkish military officer), bass

Mujezin, (Muslim Priest), tenor

Orchestration: 2 flutes, 2 clarinets, violins, violas, violoncellos, double basses

Mixed Choir

Synopsis:

The opera begins with a short, but suggestive, orchestral introduction that represents the suffering of Serbian population under the Turkish oppression. At

dawn, young women and men begin their habitual duties, which for a moment interrupt Mujezin's chant. Stanka is waiting for her fiancé, Rade, to arrive to their meeting place and sings about her love for her fiancé and her longing for freedom. Rade arrives and together in arms they forgot about all the suffering that surrounds them. Rade asks his mother, Andja, to bless his marriage to Stanka. Turkish aga Redžep observes the gathering from the side. Rade and his mother leave the scene to meet a messenger who is delivering important news.

Stanka dreams about her future and happiness, but is interrupted by Redžep's sudden arrival. Redžep is also in love with Stanka and wants her for himself. Stanka finally breaks away from Redžep and flees toward the village. In his aria (monolog), Redžep sings about his love for Stanka and threatens to retaliate.

As the day of the wedding arrives, young women and men dance and sing to celebrate the happy couple. The women decorate Stanka with flowers, wishing her happiness. Redžep arrives to the wedding and, in front of all guests, humiliates Stanka and Rade. He proclaims that Rade is the son of the whole village, because he is illegitimate.

Confused and humiliated, Rade confronts his mother and demands an explanation. Andja, singing about courage and living under harsh circumstances, finally admits that Redžep is telling the truth. Rade becomes furious and kills his mother. In the background, Mujezin's chant begins again.

The last two decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in European music are characterized by various stylistic developments. A

well-respected generation of composers active in the late Romantic period created many of their best works, despite the arrival of new stylistic trends - Impressionism and Expressionism. New directions were emerging as part of the post-Romantic traditions, and in antagonistic opposition to romantic ideals and aspirations. The coexistence of different styles and directions resulted in a rich repertoire in the concert halls and opera at the turn of the century. Many European cities echoed the works of contemporary opera composers of different stylistic orientations. Among the most prominent post-Romantic compositions, the operas of Verdi and Strauss stand out as do works of the representatives of national schools including Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Korsakov, Dvorak and others as well as Italian veristic composers Puccini, Leoncavallo, Mascagni and others. Treatment of diverse melodies, rhythms, harmony, orchestra, in new themes and sources of inspiration, as well as various relationships between music and text in the works of these composers brought the opera genre to its peak.

The development of operatic life in Serbia progressed more slowly than in the rest of Europe due to various socio-historical circumstances. Specifically, the Yugoslav nations, including Serbs, were under Turkish occupation for many years, resulting in slower development of their culture. The musical language and the different genres of music, particularly opera, settled much later in these parts. Disparities between the operatic lives are noticeable not only in relation to Europe, but also among the South Slavs. While Serbia and Macedonia were living under the darkness of oriental slavery, and the only aspect of their spiritual culture was expressed behind closed doors of monastery walls, Montenegro was mainly

concerned with preserving its independence. In contrast, during the feudal arrangement, in Croatia and Slovenia, especially in the coastal areas, cultural life developed almost in parallel with the life in the West, creating many innovations in the field of art.¹

While the other Slavic nations created and developed national opera, Serbia had only begun to foster theatrical arts in the thirties of the 19th century. However, attempts to write opera date back to the relatively recent past of Serbian music, to the first decade of the twentieth century. In comparison to Croatia and Slovenia, the first attempts at opera in Serbian areas were unsuccessful. The first Serbian opera, *Na Uranku (At Dawn)*, was written by composer Stanislav Binički, and premiered in 1903. This significant achievement of romantic-veristic orientation depicts a story of love between two young Serbs who are living under Turkish rule. In order to properly approach the analysis of the work, it is important to provide background information on a range of topics that will offer a clear insight. Since this work is a classic example of Serbian national operas, the history of Serbian society will be presented first, with an emphasis on the formation of national culture in late eighteenth century. The historical review starts from the time when Serbia fell under Turkish rule, since this theme is woven into the opera libretto for *At Dawn*, and in the overall artistic culture of Serbia. In order to write nationalistic operas, realistic, practical and achievable performing conditions were needed, in addition to spiritual and cultural preparation of listeners. For that reason, I will comment the development of music

¹ Stana Đurić Klajn, *Muzika i Muzičari* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1956), 104.

and the operatic life in Serbia in relation to historical circumstances, as well as the stylistic parameters within which the Serbian musicians created. Additionally, I will assess the creativity of Binički in the stylistic parameters and highlight the segments that are evident in the conception of the opera *At Dawn*. After an explanation of these topics, which I consider to be relevant for the development of the first Serbian opera, I will focus on the musical language of the opera and the possible influences of European music that can be detected.

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATION OF SERBIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

The Ottoman Turks began the conquest of the Balkan states in the mid-fourteenth century, and the first incursions of the Turkish army to the Danube are dated a century later. In the European provinces where the destruction of the local nobility socially equalized the population, the foundation of the Turkish state system was implemented despite the fact that the number of Christians far exceeded the number of Muslims.² European provinces had become a source of Turkey's military potential, and the rural population contributed to the state treasury in money and proceeds from farming. Christians served in the extra squads of the Turkish army, guarded the border and the roads from robbers, maintained the forts and bridges, and produced tents, horse equipment and more for the Turkish army. This was the case in Serbia, which fell to the Turks with the surrender of Smederevo on June 20, 1459. The Turkish Empire was a theocratic Islamic state, in which the Christian Serbs were second-class citizens exposed to violence, humiliation and exploitation. Serbs left developed and urbanized mining and trade centers, retreating to the rugged mountains and concentrating mainly raising livestock. During the process of islamization, some Serbs converted to the Islamic faith, which was a condition for progress in the civil service of the Ottoman Empire.

During this period boys were separated from their families and taken into military training, and converted to Islam. These boys, called Janissaries, became

² Radovan Samardžić, *Jugoslovenski Narodi Pod Tuđinskom Vlašću, XVI-XVIII Vek*, Opšta Enciklopedija Larousse III (Beograd: Vuk Karadžić, 1973), 457.

the strongest and most faithful members of the Sultan's army. Being able to rely on its most faithful slaves, who were admitted to the highest positions, the Ottoman Empire managed to be an inviolable power for a long time. This allowed the Ottomans to rule over the Serbs virtually undisturbed until the beginning of the Serbian Revolution³ in 1804, when the Serbs began to lead the struggle for liberation from Turkish rule.⁴In the eighteenth century the Turks allowed the organization of a dukedom government in Serbia. Consequently, four Dahis⁵ (Aganlija, Ali Kucuk, Yusuf Mulla Mehmed Aga Fočić) divided the Belgrade Pashaluk⁶ into four parts and imposed a reign of terror. When the Turkish border tax became too high, the Serbs secretly began preparing to revolt. After learning of their intentions, the Dahis organized the execution of prominent Serbs, a time in the history that became known as the “Slaughter of the Knezes.” Serbian leader Karadorđe Petrović escaped the slaughter, and along with leaders from Sumadija, organized the first Serbian uprising in Orasac in 1804. The uprising began with a burning of Turkish buildings in Sumadija and the expulsion of Turks from villages. This rebellion against the Dahis turned into a rebellion against the

³ The resistance against the Turkish oppression began before The Serbian Uprising; however, it was only at the beginning of the 19th century that the Serbs achieved significant results.

⁴ Radovan Samardžić, *Jugoslovenski Narodi Krajem XVIII i Početkom XIX Veka*, Opšta Enciklopedija Larousse III (Beograd: Vuk Karadžić, 1973), 506-530.

⁵ Dahis were leaders of Jannisaries’ units in Belgrade Pashaluk, which they ruled independently of the central government from 1801 – 1804.

⁶ The Turks divided their land in Europe into administrative divisions, which they called Pashaluk.

Turkish government and into a national revolution. The first Serbian Uprising abolished the feudal relations and returned the land to farmers. The struggle against the Turkish authorities continued and rebel commanders began to discuss how to eliminate the Turkish oppression. In 1815 the second Serbian Uprising began, under the leadership of Miloš Obrenović. As a result of the rebellion, Serbia was granted autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. In the beginning, the autonomous Serbian territory included only the Belgrade Pashaluk, and then gradually expanded. In 1867 the last Ottoman troops left Serbia; Serbia became an independent state, and Obrenović received the title of Prince of Serbia. In 1878, at the Berlin congress, Serbia won international recognition. After the liberation from the Turks, Serbia embarked on a rapid development, and Belgrade,⁷ the capital of Serbia, developed new individual trades and a stronger commodity economy were emerged; all of this influenced the formation of a Belgrade bourgeoisie. Beginning in the 1860s, Belgrade's middle class strengthened its position and reputation and tended to build their culture reflecting that of the West.

The Serbs, since the fifteenth century, fleeing the Ottoman threat, inhabited the area of the Pannonian Plain, which was managed by the Hungarian Kingdom. Hungarian rulers welcomed the Serbs, and allowed them to join the Hungarian army in a fight against Turkish invaders. After the 1848 revolution, however, the national aspirations of the Serbs in Vojvodina were concealed and failed, and a great stillness in the cultural life began. Strong political discipline

⁷ The capital of the Principality of Serbia from 1941.

directed against all South Slavs in the Empire crushed their national rights, creating a strict censorship and bureaucratic management of the entire social life. The period after 1848, following the shipwreck of dreams and ideals, was a period when the whole of Europe submerged into "disappointment, soberness, and, return to cold prosaic reason and practical life. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the era of mercantilism, a rough fight for ensued survival, money, business, jobs, desires, and the cult of material success."⁸ At the same time, it was a time of great scientific discoveries and natural sciences.

After twelve years of reactionary rule and the silenced peace, a strong revival ensued during the creative period in the 1860's, upon the abolition of absolutism. The Serbian youth emerged, scattered from Vienna, Budapest and Novi Sad to Belgrade and Kragujevac. National liberation was one of the aspirations of the Serbian youth, as the result of European liberalism and the general awakening of national consciousness in Europe, which were marked by a strong romantic patriotism. In 1866, the youth officially joined the powerful organization called United Serbian Youth.

The second half of the nineteenth century marked the centralization of Serbia. The capital of Belgrade, which during the nineteenth century experienced a continuous conquest and destruction while going through constant political struggle and even absolutist rule, experienced a great economic boom. As a state center, the center of import and export trade and the halfway crossroad that links

⁸ Andreis Josip, Cvetko Dragutin and Stana Đurić Klajn, *Historijski Razvoj Muzičke Kulture u Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1962), 576.

East and West, Belgrade⁹ became one of the most important capitals in the Balkans. Quickly transforming the rural population into an urban one with stronger development of capitalist relations, Belgrade began to change into a European city, losing its earlier patriarchal character and moving away from rural-oriental primitivism that existed in earlier centuries.

⁹ Sonja Marinković pointed out that the history of Serbian music is generally observed as history of Belgrade's music life. This does not provide the complete overview of the musical development, since it does not include vivid musical events in smaller cities in Serbia.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL LIFE IN NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Liberation campaigns by Karadjordje brought, with great loss of life, an interim period of national freedom. The economic conditions, as they were in a torn country, however, could not provide a higher degree of education, such as the musical arts.¹⁰ Even studying the beginning of music proved to be difficult at that time since written documents, discussing the developmental stages of music, were rare. Only a few records regarding military music, music recordings of folk melodies, notices of church chanting and singing societies, and articles pertaining to musical artists existed providing only scant information which was helpful in interpreting the origins of Serbian music.¹¹ All of these provide a picture of occasional musical efforts that eventually turn into a continual musical flow. With the migration of people to the north to Hungary and Austria, the Serbian culture found refuge in Vienna, Budapest, Saint-Andrea, Arad, Szeged, Bratislava and other cities, “migration of its people to the north through to the middle of the nineteenth century, and after the fall of absolutism, gradually declined in the

¹⁰ Interpreting interrelations between music and society, some musicologists (e.g. Sofina Lissa) state the following: a society has its own infrastructure which represents its base; a musical work, as a result of a specific human activity, acts as upgrading (superstructure) of the base.

¹¹ Mirjana Veselinović Hofman, *Pred Muzičkim Delom (Zavod za udžbenike Beograd, 2007)*, 202.

sixties to their natural ethnic ground, Vojvodina and Serbia.”¹² While the society prepared for a major transformation from an agrarian-feudal system to a future civil-capitalist, Serbian folk songs were printed in Vienna in modern notation for the first time. They were contained in a book of six songs by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić based on the harmonization of Polish musician Frantisek Mirecki.

A collector of folk songs and reformer of the Serbian language, Karadžić initiated the development of modern Serbian literature and art, a patriotic enterprise inspired in part by the folk songs. He published four books: *Serbian Folk Poems*, *Serbian Folk Stories*, *Serbian Folk Proverbs*, and later *Serbian Dictionary*. Karadžić had dedicated followers who were not only writers, but also musicians who composed based on folk music as a testimony of the Serbian culture.¹³ The music, because of its immediacy, permeated and became an integral part of Serbian life in times of struggle for freedom and independence, passing through the amateur and semi-professional development phases.

The first published folk melodies were just indications of the musical culture in Serbia. Vibrant musical life only began after the Second Serbian Uprising during the reign of Prince Miloš. In the initial period of his reign, Serbia was mainly an agricultural country with a primitive economy. Prince Miloš dictated not only the political life of Serbia, but also the cultural life. In 1831, a new era in the musical life of Serbia began when Prince Miloš decided to establish an orchestra with professional musicians, following European trends.

¹² Andreis Josip, Cvetko Dragutin and Stana Đurić Klajn, *Historijski Razvoj Muzičke Kulture u Jugoslaviji* (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1962), 576.

¹³ Ibid.

For this purpose, in 1829, Prince Miloš invited Joseph Schlesinger, a Czech musician, to reside in Serbia. Schlesinger conducted the first orchestral concert in January of 1842.

The 1840s were significant for musical life in Serbia, because, for the first time in the history, the musical life of southern Vojvodina cities and that of Belgrade happened not only in parallel but also mutually supplemented each other. One of these cities, Pancevo, had a widespread culture of choral singing. The First Serbian Singing Society was founded there in 1838. The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a rapid development of choral singing in Serbia, which originated from specific socio-political and national living conditions. Singing societies of that time were organized by social class (labor, trade, typographic, academic), or were tied to an institution, such as a church or theater troupe.¹⁴ For a long time, these types of societies represented the only form of musical practice in Serbia, especially in smaller towns. People connected to music and in singing societies found a way to express their patriotism. Serbia in the nineteenth century, after a cultural awakening from centuries of lethargy caused by a foreign invader, was faced with the educational and staffing difficulties in establishing a number of instrumental groups; therefore, the vocal art of music in its applicability and popularity had precedence over the instrumental.

According to Aleksandra Keserović, “The reason instrumental music had secondary importance was mainly due to the fact that there was no tradition on

¹⁴ Sonja Marinković, *Muzika u XIX veku i prvoj polovini XX veka*, nav. delo, 73.

which the Serbian composers could draw.”¹⁵ Folklore survived through centuries of Turkish occupation and was primarily the foundation for vocal music practice. On the other hand, the development of musical culture on a higher level was impossible because European influence could not penetrate into Serbia. The main condition for the creation of instrumental art music was a gradual opening of Serbia to the rest of the Europe, where this tradition already existed. The legacy of the orient¹⁶ in the form of popular zurla¹⁷ players remained until the mid-nineteenth century. In larger cities, in addition to vocal groups, permanent military bands were formed. At the beginning, the formation of physiognomy of orchestra and repertoire mainly consisted of mastering the technically-simple compositions first, and then performing selected works with more complex demands.

Since Belgrade and other Serbian towns already had established singing societies and orchestras, they were often present in order to celebrate important dates. Concerts were performed on special occasions whenever the opportunity was present. For this reason, musical life expanded not only to meet amateur attempts but also in the pursuit of raising the musical culture to a higher artistic level. Even with such a large number of vocal groups and orchestras, there was a lack of professionally-trained orchestral and choir conductors, so Czech musicians

¹⁵ Aleksandra Keserović, Uvertire Stanislava Biničkog: uticaj stilskih i programskih elemenata na formu, u: Stanislav Binički, zbornik radova, ur. Vlastimir Peričić (Belgrade: Conservatory of Music in Belgrade, 1991), 123.

¹⁶ Word orient and oriental in this paper refers to a music and tradition of Turks.

¹⁷ Zurla is multinational oboe-like woodwind instrument.

were employed.

The 1870s were marked by Kornelije Stanković, a musician educated in Vienna. The composer, who was also a pianist and an author of Romantic virtuoso piano works, documented the Serbian Orthodox church singing and Serbian folk songs and inspired the whole Serbian Romanticism. Although musical activity in Serbia and Vojvodina existed in the first half of the nineteenth century, early writings about Serbian music indicate that it began with Stanković¹⁸ since little was known of the work of his predecessors and because he was far more educated. Thus, Stanković brought not only professionally-produced musical creation, but also a national direction, which will then seem its most developed branch.

With the final liberation of Belgrade and the development of an individual industrial and expanding market economy, some form of Belgrade bourgeoisie emerged. This was due to their economic power, which overtook the leadership of cultural life and improved its conditions. There was a strongly expressed tendency in Belgrade to expand cultural horizons, despite the tumultuous events that shook the city from bombing¹⁹ in 1862 to frequent changes of the rulers and dynasties and mutual disputes of political parties. Even though choral and orchestral music making did not have their roots in Belgrade, there was a record of many aspects of cultural life that did not exist in any other Serbian town. Music

¹⁸ Andreis Josip, Cvetko Dragutin and Stana Đurić Klajn, nav. delo, 586.

¹⁹ In 1862 the Turks bombed the Belgrade Pashaluk; shortly after they abandoned the city.

became an inseparable part of not only public cultural life of the city but also the fine civic education of youth. The individual attempts at teaching music and practices organized by the Belgrade Singing Society²⁰ on several occasions proved insufficient to meet the ever-expanding need for music education. This desire for music education is realized only upon the arrival of the three musically-educated and talented musicians: Stevan Mokranjac, Stanislav Binički and Cvetko Manojlović. In 1899, they founded the first Serbian music school that educated generations of composers, concert and opera artists and musicologists for more than half a century. This year is important for the musical culture for another reason: Dragutin Pokorni directed *Egmont*, the first time that one of Beethoven's works was performed in Belgrade.²¹ That concert program was mostly filled with light, fun music literature and benevolent, romantic-patriotic compositions of domestic origin and enriched with the most important works of classical music. With the shift in this century, the rise of Serbian music, both productive and reproductive, grew lavishly and suddenly.

The last decade of the nineteenth century brought the development of music journalism. Articles about the music were published in daily newspapers, literary publications (*Maple, Flag, Stražilovo, Branko's Round Dance, School Newspaper, Journal of the Orthodox Church* etc.), and music magazines (*Cornelius, Bow, Serbian Music Journal, Gusle*). Until then, there were many perspectives of individual musical events; however, these were views written by

²⁰ The first Belgrade's singing society was founded in 1853.

²¹ Stana Đurić Klajn, *Muzika i Muzičari*, nav. delo, 54.

journalists close to the artists who dedicated most of the text to the disadvantages of music life, intrigue among rivals, and attitudes of the audience. Only later writings offered important records. Although they accepted dogmatic criticism, “the taste and ideas of an epoch were used as an absolute law of the human spirit, as immutable rules of pleasure.”²² It was written in clear, sharp language, insisting on emotions and pathetic bursts of different moods, with the use of established terms and sentence inevitable in the texts of a certain time.

The final form of Serbian civil society was shaped in the early twentieth century. The political struggle stabilized, caused by frequent dynastic changes, and thus a cultural life, based on a more secure economic situation, took definite form. At that time, an increased number of solid and talented local musicians emerged. “The amateur phase disappears, although romantic and enthusiastic composing of exclusively patriotic choral compositions or harmonization of folk melodies still exists based on only the main scale degrees of such compositions or whose expression is reduced only to the application of augmented second as typical of Balkan folk style.”²³

²² Roksanda Pejović, *Istorija srpske muzike*, ed. Mirjana Veselinović Hofman (Zavod za udžbenike Beograd, 2007), 687.

²³ Andreis Josip, Cvetko Dragutin i Stana Đurić Klajn, nav. delo, 611.

CHAPTER 4

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SERBIAN MUSIC

Starting with the 1830s and proceeding until the mid-twentieth century, Serbian music developed primarily in the romantic style. Marinković recognizes three basic stages in the development of Serbian musical Romanticism:²⁴ Pre-Romanticism²⁵ (through 1880s), Romanticism (Mokranjac time period²⁶ - until 1914), and late Romanticism - the road to modernism (through 1950s). Although this long period is characterized by one stylistic label, Serbian music established “a way of laying the foundation of art music through the formation of a rich and extended musical tradition that is clearly identifiable; a tradition that is actively involved in global development trends of modern music.”²⁷ Not surprisingly, the specific conditions in which Serbian artists created, Serbian Romanticism acted as a moderate variant of the European style, remaining mostly in the frame of early Romanticism, and showing mature characteristics with some musical artists.

Pre-Romanticism in Serbian music exhibited a clear and a comprehensive

²⁴ Sonja Marinković, *Muzika u prvoj polovini XX veka*, nav. delo, 71.

²⁵ Marinković advocates the introduction of the term pre-romanticism into the Serbian music terminology. . Sonja Marinković, *O prednostima uvođenja odrednice predromantizam u periodizaciju istorije srpske muzike XIX veka (Folklor, muzika, delo. IV međunarodni simpozijum fakulteta muzičke uemtnosti, 1997)*, 502-11.

²⁶ According to Marinković, 1880 – 1910 in Serbian music is called The Period of Mokranjac. She points out that Mokranjac’s opus is a collection of the best previous musical experiences of this region; it provides adequate communication with the European tradition, and radiates into the future.

²⁷ Sonja Marinković, *Muzika u XIX veku u prvoj polovini XX veka*, nav. delo, 71-2.

style from the 1830s to early 1880s. Art for the Pre-Romanticism musicians appears as an expression of the spiritual needs of young citizens, their aspirations in the democratization of art and as an important part of their struggle to achieve national-liberation ideals. Typical forms that were cultivated were plays with singing, solo songs and choral music – primarily, vocal and vocal-instrumental forms. Musical ideas of Pre-Romanticism are similar to those of the Serbian literature of the time. Concept and content was developed under the influence of Enlightenment thought, characterized by a new sensibility, interest in the past, the pursuit of the people, folklore, nature and the establishment of new aesthetic standards in the selection of naturalness of expression.²⁸ Among the representatives of these ideas, the most important figure was Kornelije Stanković.

An important reference to Europe, Serbian Romanticism was interested in folklore. The work of Pre-Romantic composers, in this context, was the continuation of interest in the folk tradition, manifested in the eighteenth century. This creativity focused mainly on the newer and hybrid forms of urban folklore, with the task of writing down the score of the oral tradition, which demanded a very good knowledge and understanding, mainly acquired by educated, classical musicians, often foreigners.²⁹ Collections of folk songs composed before the 1880s were primarily intended for private performance with the melodies often in arrangements for voice and piano or choir. Instrumental treatments were also popular in the form of a potpourri or a variation on popular themes. The

²⁸ Ibid, 73.

²⁹ Ibid, 76.

musicians of this period, however, were observing music from a classical prospective and their interest was limited to a melody as the only element of the folk tradition they worked with. For others, the harmonic language of the distinctive color of folk instruments and the characteristic performance, vitality, and unusual rhythmic elements were not prerequisites for the identification and adoption. Even when implementing the one element of a melody, there are discernable limitations. Melody in the musical notation fits the characteristics of classicism providing the tonal direction (not only in harmony, but also in melodic notation abstract, free of tones that do not fit the scientific criteria criteria, artistic filter and harmonic progression). Therefore, older folk songs, which did not follow these rules, remained unidentified in their time. Folklore was approached selectively, searching for the best songs (according to the aesthetic criteria of the time); thus, this activity has no scientific, but primarily an artistic sense.

Stevan Mokranjac and Josif Marinković are considered founding fathers of the national Romanticism of Serbia. Mokranjac is a typical representative of first-generation Romantics, the founder of the national tradition, by the treatment of folklore as the dominant approach to the folk melody and, therefore, stylization of the original folk material. Mokranjac's knowledge and understanding of folklore was essentially different from the Pre-Romantic tradition; the folk tradition was present from the sound impressions of his childhood. His work continually expressed his artist-romantic tendencies, "stylizing folklore and abandoning important principles of living folk tradition - moving folk melody from its original form to a new, artistic context and freely changing the genre and

the original function of melody, styling it in accordance with the ideals of classical beauty."³⁰ Aestheticism imposed some limitations on cognition and assimilation of folk tradition, but it opened the way for fruitful influence of folklore on the development of all parameters of the musical language - melody, rhythm, musical form, harmonic thinking and genre enrichment. With respect to the transformation of folk materials and the degree of professional skill demonstrated in the treatment of choral ensembles, Mokranjac set a model for his successors that stood on the threshold of current events in Europe. What he could not provide was the composer's experience in instrumental and vocal-instrumental forms. This task depended on younger contemporaries and successors, who had started their activities in the late nineteenth century.

Influences on the musicians in Belgrade at the turn of the century were numerous, with diverse roots and origins. This period intersected creative works of three generations of composers. These three generations included: Marinković and Mokranjac, as representatives of the oldest age group; followed by Binički, Petar Krstić, Vladimir Đorđević, Milena Paunović and Bozidar Joksimović, as a generation in full creative force; and Petar Konjović, Miloje Milojević and Stevan Hristić, as young artists. Precise stylistic determination of composers of this period was not really possible. For example, Binički and Krstić distinguished themselves from Mokranjac not only by composing new and complex musical forms but also by their relationship to folklore, and a certain affection towards the oriental sensuality rooted in the Serbian melody (such as frequent use of

³⁰ Sonja Marinković, *Muzika u XIX veku u prvoj polovini XX veka*, nav. delo, 83.

augmented seconds, the Gypsy and Balkan scale, and widely-deployed melismas and *sevdalinka*). Mokranjac, unlike them, looked for the motifs in the original, rural forms. Even though the generation of composers included Binički- and Krstić remained advocates of the *National School*, they are considered to be composers of the *Belgrade School*.³¹ At the same time they were creators who bridged the next generations with the European style as fostered by Konjović, Hristić and Milojević, who were then developed further by later generations. Marinković highlighted three important innovations that emerged from the creative composers of *the Belgrade School*: contributing in the field of instrumental, especially symphonic music, and more complex vocal and instrumental genres. They also contributed to a new attitude towards folk music and the convergence of European style, a breakthrough that the next generation of composers would make after The First World War.³²

In their approach to folklore, the *Belgrade School* of composers reverted back to Pre-Romanticism experiences. Specifically, these composers did not follow Mokranjac's experience in his approach to folk music; rather their interests were directed at the so-called urban folklore and, especially popular at that time, the *sevdalinka*.³³ For that reason, Milojević rightly compared them with Stanković, and not with Mokranjac, noting that they stood out by concentrating on

³¹ The name *Belgrade School* refers to the centralization of Serbia, as previously mentioned. *Belgrade style* also existed in the literary language of that time.

³² Sonja Marinković, Binički i Folklor, *Zbornik Matice srpske za scensku umetnost i muziku* (Novi Sad, 2007), 9.

³³ Sad and longing love song, with oriental music motifs.

“outside of melody, its rhythm and its melody.”³⁴ For Milojević, this kind of approach to the folklore belonged to the era of simple classicism, formulaic harmonizing of folk songs and folk dances. In Classicism and Pre-Romanticism, the folklore themes were set in the general European style and processed according to its norms, while during the Romantic period, the composer attempted to evoke the atmosphere, and assimilate or develop in same “national” way. Since the use of folklore by the composers of the *Belgrade School* could be classified as Pre-Romanticism,³⁵ the Serbian music during the Mokranjac era had two distinct developmental lines. The first was an upward path of stylistic evolution from early to late Romanticism (Mokranjac - Konjović), while the other can be labeled as regressive because in comparing composers and folklore, one sees that a return to a pre-romantic experience occurred.

Creative contributions of the composers of the *Belgrade School* were important for Serbian music as a shift in genre. In their works, the first operas and symphonic works appear while their organizational, performing and teaching activities, as well as the collections of folk melodies, were based on sound professional foundations which they had gained during their studies at leading European music centers - Munich, Prague and Vienna. These composers, at the beginning of the century, contributed in a number of ways to instrumental music,

³⁴ Sonja Marinković, *Vidovi ispoljavanja muzički nacionalnog u srpskoj muzici Mokranjčevog doba*, nav. delo, (Negotin: Simpozijum Mokranjčevi dani 1994-1996, 1997), 173.

³⁵ This is illustrated in the collection of folk melodies that Vladimir Đorđević published in the period, as well as Binički's overture *From my Homeland* or Krstić's *Dances no. 4*.

expressed in piano, violin and orchestra compositions, oratorios works, and finally in the opera as a more complex vocal and instrumental form.

CHAPTER 5

STANISLAV BINICKI

The most prominent representative of the *Belgrade School* of composers was Stanislav Binički; he was born in the village of Jasika near Krusevac on July 27, 1872 and died in 1942. He first acquired musical knowledge during high school and continued his education by enrolling in the University of Belgrade, School of Philosophy. Even as a student, he began arranging Serbian folk songs for two and three instruments, and at that time composed songs for solo voice and choir. He studied his studies in Munich between 1895-1899; he attended classes in composition (with Josef Rheinberger) and solo singing. Upon return to Belgrade, Binički expanded his activities in several areas: organizing and conducting concerts, composing, and pedagogy. In 1899, he founded the Belgrade Military Orchestra - the first symphony orchestra in Serbia. He also conducted choirs of *Obilic* and the typographic choral society, *Jaksic*. In 1899, along with Mokranjac and Cvetko Manojlović, he founded the Serbian Music School, where he worked as a teacher of singing. That year, he was also appointed Kapellmeister and Director of the Military Music at the Military Ministry. While Belgrade was still characterized by traces of the Ottoman Empire, Binički created and educated musicians and audiences by holding frequent concerts. “With the extraordinary sense of occasion for that time and excellent gifts as an educator,”³⁶ he often organized popular concerts, where music of light genres was performed. For those

³⁶ Museum of Theatrical Arts in Serbia, The exhibition dedicated to Stanislav Binički, the founder of the opera in Belgrade, author Veroslava Petrovic, Belgrade, Srbostampa, December 1973.

in Serbia who were ready and willing to accept something new, he gave symphonic concerts featuring works by old masters.

Although he achieved the most significant results in the organizational and creative field as a composer, Binički took an important place in the history of Serbian music. He inspired the transition of vocal music for a group of artists (Konjović, Milojević, and Hristić) who started fostering greater instrumental stage forms. His work is mainly based on folk melodies (often with traces of Belgrade), sentimental and *sevdalinka* understanding of folklore, which is why he enjoyed great popularity. He wrote music for several theatrical works, including *Lilly and Spruce*, *Ekvinocio*, *Around the World*, *Tašana*; the most prominent was *At Dawn*, which served as the libretto for the same opera. His other significant works include *From my Homeland*, melodramas *The Death of Pericles*, and *The Last Guest*, and military marches (the most popular is the *March on River Drina*). The choral works that stand out are the cycles *Peasant Girls and Tetovke*, and *The Songs from South Serbia and Mijatovo*, spiritual compositions *Liturgy* and *Requiem*, and solo songs: “Bracelet,” “If I Had Your Eyes,” “Under the Linden Tree”. He also composed solo songs to the verses of Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Aleksa Šantić, Jovan Ilić and others which, looking at art poetry, emphasizes the individuality of Binički.

Milojević depicted his work as a reflection of the time in which he created it.³⁷ There was a great demand for his music, a lot of music, and he was urged to compose forms beyond his creative domain. Creating in Serbia at that time, he

³⁷ Ibid.

was expected to be a "sentimental lyricist in the fairy tale *Lily and Spruce*, a poet in *The Death of Pericles*, an impulsive romantic in *Ekvinocio* and a folksy composer in the opera *At Dawn*."³⁸ Milojević points out that Binički is primarily a lyricist who expresses his lyricism in the melodic line, popularly-painted, often sentimental to obligate the effect of oriental melismas. From the modern musicologists' perspective, Binički is a representative of the *National Schools*, which gives a more complex musical form to folk music with characteristics of oriental pathos and sensuality associated with urban folk melody. For his contemporaries, "he was one of our musicians who penetrated the soul of our folk songs, sang it himself, loved it, and enjoyed it all his life."³⁹

Binički was a member of vocal groups, and he witnessed the top performing choir achievements in Serbian music. He had the opportunity to listen to the authentic interpretation of choral works of Marinković and Mokranjac, until then the most important composers of Serbian compositional thought. He wholeheartedly accepted the music of his youth, becoming its representative and successor. He did not settle for only choral conducting; he realized that the Belgrade audience demanded orchestral and vocal-instrumental works and was among the founders of the Academic Music Society. The direction Binički went was accepted by other former Belgrade conductors, performing popular pieces and gradually introducing symphonic, vocal and instrumental repertoire. He

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Branislav Nušić, from the conference about life and work of Stanislav Binički, composer and conductor, held at the Evening Academy dedicated to Binički, February 3, 1924. *Comoedia*, February 4, 1924.

started modestly, and with continued success because Binički became was the first Belgrade conductor who showed persistence in preparing concerts. In the history of Serbian performing, Binički's achievements were in the field of orchestral conducting and performing vocal and instrumental compositions, especially in his efforts to initiate performance of intensive operatic repertoire.



Picture 1: Binički during his studies in Munich.

CHAPTER 6

THE ORIGINS OF OPERATIC LIFE IN SERBIA

Many of the aspirations of earlier generations of musicians and music lovers in Belgrade were intensively developed by the 1890s. There had been a strong desire for a more comprehensive musical life. Therefore, the concert and theatrical performances gained new dimensions. Theatre played a significant role in the constitution of Serbian society. "Considering the theatre highly influential in educational mission in society, the Serbian cultural educators, through different understanding of the concept of theater repertoire, interpreted the way the process should be developed."⁴⁰ Without a doubt, however, many agreed that theatrical life was the key social factor in a society where the middle class was formed on the model of other European countries, most notably those in the Habsburg monarchy. As a result, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century theatrical plays indicated the start of a new era. Thus, we can follow the establishment and development of various forms of theatrical life from school theater through the amateur traveling theater troupes, to the permanent professional theater in cities' cultural centers.

Theatrical life in Serbia started with the activities of Schlesinger. He organized plays that began with overtures, and intermissions that were filled with music. Even the dramatic text was interspersed with vocal and instrumental numbers. Thus, with Schlesinger begins the birth of Serbian musical literature,

⁴⁰ Tatjana Marković, Muzičko-scenska dela: komad s pevanjem, opera, u: *Istorija srpske muzike*, ed. Mirjana Veselinović Hofman (Zavod za udžbenike Beograd, 2007), 441.

known as *plays with singing*, which was cultivated by most Serbian composers of the nineteenth century. This genre was popular at that time and music played an important role. This part of Serbian musical heritage, is however, generally unavailable because the manuscripts and scores were in poor, often unreadable condition or lost. “With idyllic content and naive plot, these plays were popular for two reasons. First, the audience mostly originated from the countryside and such plays were reminiscent of rural life. Second, the plays were accompanied by the folk tunes selected and arranged for mixed choir, soloists and orchestra.”⁴¹

Plays with singing can be classified into two main groups according to the subject: patriotic and folk tales from rural life. The domain of vocal music had been expanded and enriched with the *plays with singing*, in the direction of solo voice or various combinations of smaller two-, three- and four-part vocal ensembles, accompanied by choir or without it. Additionally, in unity with various scenes, “the music is enriched in the expression, the characterization necessary for each scene creation, through all the emotional scales, from the pathetic to the comic.”⁴² The national elements in the *plays with singing* demanded that composers rely on folk melodies.

The composers of that time had modest means available to effectively join vocal and instrumental music. These means corresponded to modest musical demands and the modest educational level of the audience. The *play with*

⁴¹ Raško V. Jovanović, *Operne predstave u starom Beogradu, Pro Musica*, no. 19 (1966), 7.

⁴² Jovan Bandur, *Poglavlja iz istorije srpske opere, Zvuk*, no. 11-12 (1934), 417.

*singing*⁴³ was the best learning experience for composers and for the audience. The musical folklore experienced its first vocal-instrumental stylization in connection with the stage, and without it Serbian operas could not have evolved creatively nor even been produced. The most successful *play with singing* was *The Wedding of the Emperor Dušan*, by Schlesinger (based on the text of Atanasije Nikolić). This represented the first attempt at creating a Serbian opera.⁴⁴ Nikola Djurkovic expanded on Schlesinger's work, and contributed to the evolution of opera in Serbia. He was familiar with the Italian operatic style. The other composers who significantly contributed to this musical genre included: Kornelije Stanković, Davorin Jenko, Isidor Bajić, Josif Marinković, and Stanislav Binički.

In addition to the *plays with singing*, the repertoire of the first permanent professional theater in Serbia also featured music from European operas. These included such works of Italian opera as Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, adapted to the performers' abilities. Because of the lack of professional singers, instrumentalists, and orchestral ensembles necessary for the performance of integrated opera, works like Rossini's operas were presented more like *plays with singing*. Most of the libretto was spoken, as in drama, interspersed with selected musical numbers from the opera. In addition, excerpts from operas and operettas

⁴³ Bandur compares *plays with singing* to German Singspiel and believes that: „as German Singspiel influenced the development of the German opera, play with signing had a significant influence on our opera ... especially in interpolation of citation of folk songs and dances in opera or music-drama repertoire.“ Jovan Bandur, *ibid*, 416.

⁴⁴ Stana Đurić Klajn, *Muzika i Muzičari*, nav. delo, 114.

were performed before the start of the main play and between the acts. Individual selected numbers were performed, while the remaining part of the libretto was spoken, as in a drama. Thus, excerpts from operas and operettas were performed before the start and during intermission of plays. These excerpts⁴⁵ included overtures, certain arias and duets, and larger ensembles.

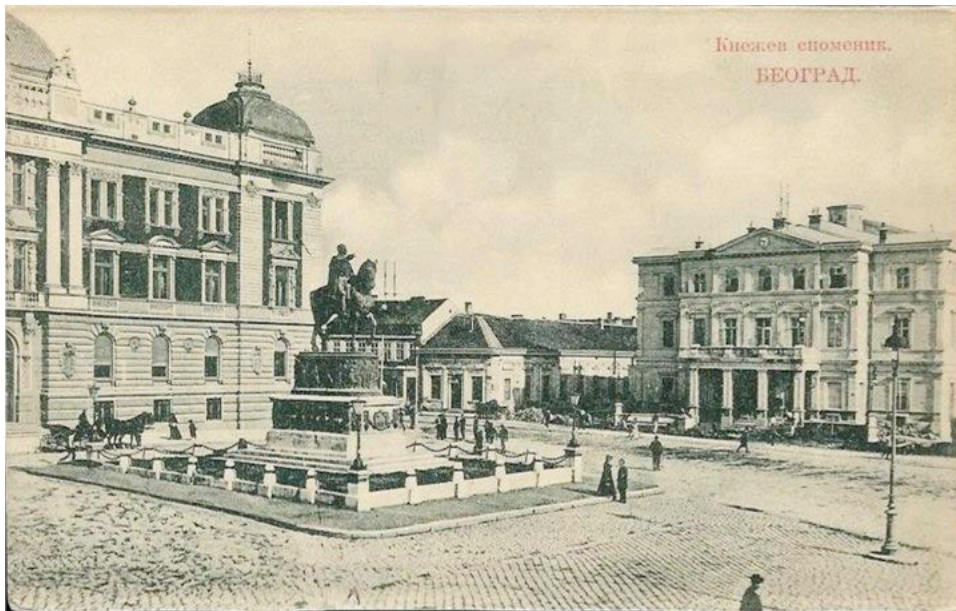
The desire of Belgrade intellectuals to establish a professional theater was strengthened by the frequent visits of the Pancevo Theater, German theater troupes, and the Serbian National Theatre from Novi Sad.⁴⁶ The National Theatre in Belgrade was founded in 1868. Immediately after its establishment, it was necessary to form a choir and an orchestra. Operatic performance at the National Theatre went through two phases: the first phase from 1882 to 1903 and the second phase from 1903 to the beginning of the World War I.⁴⁷ The first period began with the debut of the operetta *Fortune Teller*, by Davorin Jenko. Other operettas and various comic operas followed, with the exception of the serious opera *Faust*, by Charles Gounod. The first operas were performed under modest conditions at the National Theatre, featuring works by lesser-known composers. The comic opera *At the Well*, by Vilijem Blodek, which opened on November 29,

⁴⁵ Singing societies usually organized orations. These were popular gatherings; the first part began with a diverse cultural program – choir performances, solo singers and instrumentalists, narrators and orators – all ending with a ball. Orations were public events, organized by the singing societies as an opportunity to showcase their work.

⁴⁶ Roksanda Pejović, *Srpska muzika 19. veka, Izvođaštvo. Članci i Kritike. Muzička pedagogija*, nav. delo, 135.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 143.

1894, was the first performance of a complete opera in Belgrade. A decade earlier, the comic opera *Jovanka's Wedding Guests*, by Victor Masses,⁴⁸ was performed on February 28, 1884, although not in its entirety. The second period, which began with the performance of the opera *At Dawn* by Binički, introduced public discussions⁴⁹ as a way of popularizing opera as a music genre.



Picture 2: Old Belgrade, The Republic Square. The building on the right is the National Theatre.

⁴⁸ Raško V. Jovanović, nav. delo, 7.

⁴⁹ It is debatable whether it was suitable to approach the complex task of introducing an opera to an audience that only recently began accepting art music.

CHAPTER 7

FIRST SERBIAN OPERA *NA URANKU*

The opera *At Dawn* has a prominent place not only in the works of Binički, but also in the history of Serbian music. Binički began writing the opera shortly after his return from Munich, around 1899, completing his work in nine months.⁵⁰ Upon completing the opera, he offered it to the National Theatre, but it first needed to be considered by Mokranjac and Marinković, two significant names in Serbian music. Since the opera was received with skepticism, Binički withdrew his offer only to submit it again later, this time successfully. Binički performed the overture of the opera with the Belgrade Military Orchestra on March 24, 1903; the entire opera was first performed later that year on December 20, 1903.⁵¹ The opera was performed six times before the First World War, by three generations of singers. Jovan Dimitrijević points out that even though the production was not technically difficult, it presented a great challenge. Due to "untrained singers, it was not successful and therefore, rarely performed."⁵²

Writing this one-act opera,⁵³ based on the text by Branislav Nušić, Binički

⁵⁰ Stanislav Binički, The creation of the first Serbian opera, *At Dawn* (interview), Radio Belgrade, no. 27 (1936), 2-3.

⁵¹ Dragutin Pokorni conducted the premiere of the opera, and the soloists included Raja Pavlovic (Rade), Desanka Đorđević (Stanka), Luiza Stanojevic (Anđa), and Dobrica Milutinovic (Redžep).

⁵² Jovan Dimitrijević, Prvi počeci Beogradske opere, *Vreme*, 12. II 1930.

⁵³ The original score of the opera *At Dawn* was lost. Kresimir Baranovic orchestrated the opera again for the 100th anniversary of the National Theatre performance (1968).

brought considerable experience in composing music and stage works. Serbian musicologists interpreted his operatic debut as a work composed in the spirit of romantic opera tradition with influences of *verismo*, but in a national context. Binički based his opera libretto on the model of Italian operas with veristic direction. Veristic-flavored content, placed in a national setting, caused a certain duality in music: the effects of Italian *verismo* intertwined with elements of Serbian folklore. Binički infused his work with the conflict between Turkish and Serbian characters, in line with the inherent characteristics of drama, and with folk motifs or melodies in the folk spirit, and oriental melismas. The opera *At Dawn* is a youthful attempt by a literary author in the field of national drama, and the music creator in the field of opera.

Jovan Bandur points out that Serbia opera composers at the turn of the century were faced with three stylistic possibilities:⁵⁴ 1) Romantic National Opera, where national melodies in music and myths are expressed; 2) New Romanticism and Wagnerian musical drama with the dominant and complex styling of all elements (poetry, music, acting and painting); and, 3) Post-Wagnerian musical drama set in a wider musical and psychological base. Romantic opera with the national style had all the conditions for its development in Serbian music due to the richness of folk music, poetry, decor and costume. Bandur believes, however, that at the time of its foundation romantic enthusiasm had long ceased in the Serbian opera. He also believes the temperament and sense of melody “corresponds to the type of veristic opera, realistic-naturalistic in

⁵⁴ Jovan Bandur, nav. delo, 413.

content, which is again caused by a large wave of realism,⁵⁵ a strong spiritual movement at that time.”⁵⁶ Then again, all of the art created could not be completely free of the romantic idea of nationalism. The people, the peasants, and their lives in all its forms had become the subject of art. Romantic ideology is woven into the creation of realism, while the beginning of the opera is veristic. This is well suited to the spiritual situation of the time, pointing to contemporary and recent conditions in which Serbs lived. For that reason, Marija Masnikosa sees the synthesis of elements of the two opera styles, verismo and romantic, in the opera *At Dawn*.⁵⁷

In the late nineteenth century, veristic opera marked the musical life of Italy, the cradle of opera. A major feature of operatic verismo is the selection of dramatic actions from everyday life, which usually occur in the middle of primitive, folk, and sometimes in high societal circles. The audience is subjected to a bloody drama of heightened passions, which results in a murder. Veristic theatre features people of flesh and blood who passionately love and experience jealousy and revenge, conspiracy and murder. Veristic librettos feature a simplified plot and are reduced to the most important scenes. The vibrant and concentrated dynamics of short operas, some of which have only one act, were also a reaction to Wagner's monumental musical drama. The world of amazing

⁵⁵ Realism in Serbian literature brought radical reaction the Romanticism and defeated the positive thought of Western Europe.

⁵⁶ Jovan Bandur, nav. delo, 414.

⁵⁷ Marija Masnikosa, Opera *Na uranku* Stanislava Biničkog, sinteza elemenata dvaju operских stilova, in: Stanislav Binički, zbornik radova, ed. Vlastimir Peričić (Beograd: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti u Beogradu, 1991).

Wagnerian myths and gods disappears, and the main characters become real people as in Verdi's works.

Highlighting the passion and spontaneity of feelings is an important characteristic of verismo opera. These works often possess broad elements of lyrical singing and intimate instrumental effects that have nothing in common with the brutal cries of passion typical of Italian veristic originals. Veristic vocal lines carry the broad terms of popularity, thrill with brilliant width and a perfect match of words and tone. Veristic followers found elements of their vocal style in Verdi's operas, as sung word gave a new function and deepened the sense of realism in a sung phrase. As a true Italian, Verdi used the human voice as the primary medium of expression, and his orchestra was rarely the independent expressive factor, though it became more so in his later works (except *Aida*). But this instrumental dependence never affects the sonority and the richness of harmony that frame the vocal parts of the score. Melodic and harmonic inventions of Verdi always go side-by-side. All the composers of verismo feature "a lush and a new harmony, which is masterfully placed at the service of dramatic expression, as one of the most descriptive elements of the mental state and affective tension of veristic opera."⁵⁸

At Dawn is considered an attempt to synthesize national and veristic drama as well as Nušić's attempt at writing tragic plays. None of the composers at the turn of the century in Serbia had specifically written librettos for their music. The ready-made drama of Laza Kostić, Branislav Nušić, Bora Stanković and Ivo

⁵⁸ Rikard Švarc, Veristic opera, *Zvuk*, no. 11-12 (1934), 163.

Vojnović served as dramatic foundations, which they adjusted to the specific demands of the opera music and musical dramas. Binički composed in the period when Nušić acted as a librettist. The most inspired works of this writer were used in Binički's musical works, which responded to his cheerful spirit and sense of comic music. Binički used Nušić's librettos for his music including: *Lily and the Spruce*, *Around the World*, and *Corporal Miloje*. Within Nušić's literary creations are deeply embedded features of the life of the late nineteenth century, the period of Romanticism and Realism in Serbian literature. Nušić was one of the most prolific and diverse Serbian writers: a playwright, a storyteller, a travel writer, an ethnographer and a satirist. Binički, in his works, especially appreciated Nušić's critical attitude towards social problems. Nušić lived in Belgrade, and in his view, it was a small Balkan town with oriental, primitive and patriarchal character. According to Nušić, public life in Belgrade was manifested in the coffee houses that by their types and their names indicate the influence of the Ottoman Empire. Nušić and those who were closer to town searched through the ancient oriental fantasies of primitive patriarchal traditions of the Turkish times as a source of national spirit.

Set during the first half of the nineteenth century,⁵⁹ in a Serbian village under the Turkish rule, a boy, Rade, and a girl, Stanka, fall in love. They first

⁵⁹ On July 7, 1936, in an interview at the Belgrade Radio Station, Binicki announced that story was set about 100 years ago. At that point, musicologist concluded approximate timeline of the story, since more accurate record does not exist. Stanislav Binicki, *Ibid*, 2-3.

meet at dawn,⁶⁰ declare love for each other and promise to be together. Rade's mother, Anđa, blesses the young couple and approves of their marriage. The Turkish Aga, Redžep, however, is also in love with Stanka. After she rebuffed him, he decides to thwart her marriage to Rade. Redžep knows Rade's secret – that he is illegitimate - and decides to tell everyone at the wedding. During the joyous celebration, Redžep interrupts the wedding announcing that Rade is “the son of sin and the son of the whole village.” Nobody believes him, and Rade tries to kill Redžep because he has disgraced his mother's name. Anđa admits that Redžep was telling the truth, and in anger and desperation, Rade kills his mother.

This opera is one in a series of artworks created in the early twentieth century that speaks of the period when the Serbs were living under the Turkish rule. From the brief historical review and within the framework of the Turkish Empire, the Serbs lived for centuries without basic human rights and under the harsh living conditions. For this reason, the events of this period, especially from the First Serbian Uprising, had an effect on the arts.⁶¹ Many literary works dealt with this subject including theater pieces, such as *Black George*, and *Conquest of Belgrade from the Turks* (1812, Pest) by Istvan Balog. In the opera *At Dawn*,

⁶⁰ It is customary in Serbia to celebrate Djurdjevdan (on May 6). On May 1, at dawn. The Serbian youth gathers and celebrates the religious holiday with song and dance.

⁶¹ In addition to this opera, the opera *Knez Ivo od Semberije* by Isidor Bajić, was performed at the National Theatre before the World War I. The plot of this opera also describes the oppression of the Serbs under the Turkish rule. It is a story about Kulin-beg, a Turk leader, who leads a group of Serb slaves through the land of the Duke Ivo. The Duke and his aides try to free the slaves. In this opera also there is a conflict between the two worlds, Serbian and Turkish, and the similarities can also be found in the musical language.

patriotism is used to portray the political situation and is presented through the romantic plot. This is evident when all wedding guests stop singing on Redžep's command, indicating that the Serbs were oppressed and lived in constant fear. Furthermore, Rade and Stanka, in addition to expressing their love for each other also sing about their love for the homeland and longing for freedom. Thus, the Serb-Ottoman antagonism is "The motive and cause of the tragedy and exoticism."⁶² The final culmination of the opera, as in many verismo dramas is a murder—Rade, unable to forgive her sin, kills his mother.

On the whole, the content of this one-act opera is written in a verismo style. Unfortunately, despite the verismo plot, the opera remains dramatically unconvincing. The characters are clear-cut, the events are predictable and the message of this piece is that everyone pays for their sins. A story of people of flesh and blood, the plot ends in murder, a simplification of actions stored in one act. These are all elements of veristic opera.

The one-act conception of the opera *At Dawn* consists of through-composed and closed sections.⁶³ The existence of closed (rounded) sections is the characteristic of early Romantic⁶⁴ opera, and the romantic and ethnic elements are

⁶² Tatjana Marković, nav. delo, 448.

⁶³ Closed section (scene) features formal structure. There are certain repetitions of the text and the music. The sections have symmetry, and the beginning and the end can easily be defined. Unlike closed sections, through-composed sections do not have repetition or symmetry; every new text brings new music. In these sections, the beginning and the end are not defined.

⁶⁴ The opera *Der Freischütz*, by Carl Maria von Weber, is a typical example of an opera from Pre-Romantic period.

found primarily in the musical language of the opera. The relationship between the music and drama is almost linear, “Dramatically static positions in the presented actions are closed scenes, while the more intense events are designed as broad through-composed passages.”⁶⁵ In the closed sections in this opera, the music of Binički shows the traditional form, thematic completeness, a certain symmetry and expressive melodies. Therefore, the closed and rounded fragments adhere to the tradition of *plays with singing* and the pre-romantic national opera.

At Dawn begins with an overture in a slow *Lento* tempo, and transitions to the main part with the folk dance motif (*A Little Peasant Girl*). Separated from the drama with fresh sound and well-crafted orchestration, the overture provides a complete composition, although the musical content is less suitable for a musical drama. Mujezin’s chant (a Muslim call to prayer) follows the overture (example 1), and ends the opera. This adds an interesting feature to the opera and contributes to its oriental sound and local flavor. The Serbian-Ottoman dichotomy is introduced at the beginning of the opera; Mujezin’s singing occurs in succession with motifs that indicate a Serbian folk dance.

Example 1. *Mujezin’s Chant*, Measures 70-75.

⁶⁵ Marija Masnikosa, nav. delo, 87.

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff, labeled '8 Mujezin', is a vocal line for 'Mujezin' with lyrics in Cyrillic: 'АЛ - ЛАХ ЕК-БЕР А - ЛАХ ЕК - БЕР АЛ - ЛАХ ИЛ'. The second staff, labeled '9 Andante', shows the instrumental accompaniment for Violin (Vla.), Viola (Vc.), and Cello (Cb.), with dynamics like *pizz.* and *arco*.

Among the closed scenes in the opera are arias, choruses, genre scenes and ensembles. There are two traditionally-designed arias in this opera. Stanka's aria "*There, Behind the Hill*" depicts a virtuous, gentle and loving girl. It consists of two major sections. Section *A* is written in the form of two-part songs with slightly altered and repeating parts. The first part of the song (*a*) is idyllic and lyrical, with the dominant presence of Slavic folklore and minor characteristic of oriental melody (example 2). Section *B* (example 3) shows the characteristics of oriental folklore to a greater extent than the previous one: the melodic phrases are now shorter, with the alterations of the fourth and sixth scale degree. The second part of this aria, section *B*, is thematically different from the first, and fits the three-part form with a shortened reprise *ABA*. The melody in section *A* features the Serbian folklore theme. In terms of harmony, the whole aria is very simple and Romantic in style. In certain segments of the musical flow, the harmonic language of this aria offers bolder, essentially elliptical harmonic solutions that represent the impulse for further development of form. The ends of the sections,

when found on the dominant of the final key, represent typical style of the treatment of folklore. This is based on the view that melodies with folklore flavor, ending on the second scale degree, should be harmonized with a dominant harmony (example 3). The orchestra is treated as a harmonic accompaniment in the whole aria, except in section *B*, in which a flute doubles the vocal line. As part of the overall musical expression of this aria, the effect of “lightness-darkness” (joy-major, sorrow-minor) is present, whose origin dates back to the Baroque period when the convention applied to the musical representation of certain affection.⁶⁶

Example 2. The first part of Stanka’s aria *There Behind the Hill*, Measures 123-128.

⁶⁶ During the Baroque period, the affect theory was popular, which posits that music should imitate and challenge mental excitements (stimulation). According to the theory, there is a possibility that music means can evoke specific emotional states.

123 14 *Tempo I*

Fl. I. 2.

Cl. I. 2.

Sta.
ДИВНО СР - ЩЕ А - ЛЕМ ДРАГ ТА - МО ЗА ТОМ ГО - РОМ ТА - МО ГДЕ НО СЛАТ - КИ ЧУ - ЖЕМ

Vin. I

Vin. II

Via.

Vc.

Cb.

128

Fl. I. 2.

Cl. I. 2.

Sta.
ПОЈ ГДЕ МЕ СРЕТ - НА РА ДОСТ - СА - МО И ГДЕ ЛЕП - ШЕ СУН - ЦЕ ГРИ - ЈЕ ТА - МО МИ ЈЕ

Vin. I

Vin. II

Via.

Vc.

Cb.

Example 3. The second part of Stanka's aria, *There Behind the Hill*, Measures 115-118.

114 **13** *Poco meno*

Fl. I. 2. *p* *mf* 1.

Cl. I. 2. *p* *mf*

Sax. АХ СЛАТ-КА СУ О-НА УС-ТА ПО-ЉУ-БАЦИ ЈЕ ТА-КО БЛАГ

Vln. I.

Vln. II.

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

The second traditional aria is Redžep's aria, "*If You Only Knew Lovely Stano.*" It also consists of two parts. The first part corresponds to the traditional pattern of a three-part song, but the form is freely treated. The melody of Redžep's aria, especially at the beginning, is a synthesis of classical arias and *sevdalinka*. With allusion to oriental folklore (again alteration of "raised fourth and sixth"), Binički depicts the representative of the Turkish people (example 4). This is also achieved by: 1) using punctuated rhythm in the first part of the melody; and, 2) syncopated rhythm in the accompaniment in the second part of the aria. In the first, lyrical, part of the aria, Binički shows the love Redžep feels for Stanka. This part of the aria shows only the positive traits of Redžep's character. The turning point, the moment when Redžep curses Stanka for unrequited love is marked with a harmonic connection of the third: between tonic

triad of c-minor and e-flat-minor. After that follows the second part of the aria in a faster tempo (*Allegro affetuosso*). It contains the dramatic core of this aria, which is stronger in a melodic sense with no ornamentation, and ends within 'a curse motif' (example 5) in the orchestra. The harmonic language of this aria, as well as the previously described aria is very simple. The musical-dramatic development of Redžep's character is achieved by a gradual increase of harmonic tension. Some similarities between these two arias are also noticeable in the treatment of text: the words that are emphasized, almost as a rule, are reinforced with the leap to a long note (example 6). Additionally, the orchestra is dependent and mainly doubles the vocal parts in both arias.

Example 4. The first part of Aga's aria *If You Only Knew Lovely Stano*, Measures 497-501.

494 48 *Andante sostenuto*

Fl. 1.2
Cl. 1.2
RE
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb

И О-ПЛА-КА-ЬУ ВО - ЛЕ СВОЈЕ КАД БИ ЗН-ЛА ДИЛ - БЕР - СТА - НО -

499 Fl. 1

Fl. 1.2
Cl. 1.2
RE
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb

КО-ЛИ-КА ЈЕ ЉУ - - БАВ МО - ЈА - - КО-ЛИ-КО МЕ ПЛА - - - МОМ ПЕ - КУ -

Example 5. The second part of Redžep's aria *If You Only Knew Lovely Stano*, with the curse motif appearing in the orchestra, Measures 552- 565.

547

1.2

1.2

RE

НЕ СТИ-НЕИ' ТЕ НЕ ЗГО-ДНОИ' ТЕ СТ-ВН-РЕ ТЕ СТА-ВН ТА О

Vln. I

n. II

Via.

Vc.

Cb.

553

54

RE

CBE TA

Vln. I

n. II

Via.

Vc.

Cb.

dim.

ppp

pizz.

Example 6. Redžep's aria *If You Only Knew Lovely Stano*, The words that are emphasized are reinforced with the leap on the long note, Measure 517.

516

Cl. I. & II.

RB

ЗНА-ДЕШ ПА МЕ И ПАК МУ-ЧИШ О ПРО-КЛЕ-ТА ЗА-ТО-ДА СИ

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

The harmonic language of these arias remained within the framework of early Romanticism. Certain sections end on the dominant of the original key, which is the conventional treatment of folk traditions in art music. Here, the approach described as Pre-Romanticism is evident and incorporated in the folk melodies. While the folk melodies are used to evoke the atmosphere, assimilate, or process in the 'national' way in Romanticism, during the Pre-Romanticism period they are integrated in the already accepted European style and used according to its norms. Composers of the *Belgrade School* demonstrated their interests in the so-called urban folklore and especially the popular old folk song of the time, *sevdalinka*. The entire opera is rich with a sentimental tone, and the presence of folk elements in the melody is national in characteristics. Analyzing the relationship between the text and the music in this opera, Tatjana Marković indicates that the themes of folk songs or folklore used in the work have the

meaning of patriotism and its opposite, subjugation to the orient.⁶⁷ These themes are clearly defined in the narrative on the semantic level, but not quite precisely on the musical level. This is due to the fact that Serbian folk melodies are often based on Balkan and Gypsy minor or those scales that contain augmented seconds. At the same time, this is one of the clearest associations to oriental music.

In this opera we find the ensembles of agreement and ensembles of disagreement that are typical of Pre-Romanticism operas. The first involves a joint appearance of the characters in homophonic style, the section in which the characters speak the same musical language with the same emotion. In contrast to that, the second refers to the joint appearance of the characters that are in agreement, and one usually goes against them. These moments represent the major conflict in the plot. The duet of Stanka and Rade in this opera is a typical example of the ensemble of agreement (Example 7). The duet begins with Stanka, followed by Rade, and is homophonic. The lyrical melody of this duet, “Reconciles the musical language of *sevdalinka* and traditional opera *bel canto*.”⁶⁸ The orchestra primarily doubles the vocal parts and duet ends in parallel sixths, celebrating the love, as is typical of the traditional operas of the nineteenth century (Example 8). The effect of “lightness-darkness” has found its place here as well: a duet that began in d-minor finishes with the glorification of love in F-major. The clear harmonic plan of this duet is not beyond the scope of the

⁶⁷ Tatjana Marković, nav. delo, 448.

⁶⁸ Marija Masnikosa, nav. delo, 92.

harmonic language of early Romanticism.

Example 7. Stanka's and Rade's love duet, Ensemble of agreement ends with parallel sixths typical of *bel canto* style, Measures 297-301.

297

Fl. 1.2. *ff* *rit.* *sub. p*

Cl. 1.2. *ff* *sub. p* *rit.*

Sta. *ff* *rit.* *p*
Я - ВИ И СРЕД - СНО - ВА ОД ПО - ЧЕ - ТКА - ДО СКОН - ЧА - ЊА ОД ВЈЕ - КО - ВА - ДО -

Ra. *ff* *rit.* *p*
И - НА ЈА - ВИ И СРЕД СНО - ВА ОД ПО - ЧЕ - ТА - ДО СКОН - ЧА - ЊА ОД ВЈЕ - КО - ВА - ДО -

Vln. I *ff* *rit.* *p*

Vln. II *ff* *rit.* *p*

Vla. *ff* *rit.*

Vc. *ff* *rit.*

Cb. *ff* *rit.* *sub. p*

The image shows a page of a musical score, page 27, starting at measure 300. It features a quartet of vocalists (Stanka and Rade) and an orchestra. The vocal parts are marked with 'a tempo' and 'f' (forte). The instrumental parts include Flute 1 & 2, Clarinet 1 & 2, Saxophone Alto, Saxophone Baritone, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is in 2/4 time and features a section marked 'a tempo' and 'Agitato'. The vocal parts have lyrics 'BJE - KO BA'.

In contrast to the previous example, the quartet of Rade, Stanka, Redžep and Anđa is a typical example of the ensemble of disagreement. This section contains three parts (*ABA*): a quartet; an instrumental interlude; and the quartet, where section A is an imitational–designed trio opposed by Redžep’s line which utilizes ‘the curse motif’. This is the composer's obvious attempt to show action on two planes. Disagreement is especially noticeable in the section *a tempo* in which the trio is singing the spiritual tune “*May the Lord Bless Us*” (*Neka nam Gospod da Blagoslov*) (Example 8), while Redžep’s line features variations of the “curse motif” in the metrically-even intervals. By placing the positive characters of trio in opposition to with the Redžep’s curse motif, Binički foreshadowed the accident that will follow.

Example 8. *May the Lord Bless Us*, ensemble of disagreement with Redžep's "curse motif," Measures 371-375.

371 **Tempo I**
legatissimo
mf

Fl. 1.2. *legatissimo*
mf

Cl. 1.2. *legatissimo*
mf

STA. НЕ - КА НАМ ГО - - СПОД - - ДА - - БЛА - ГО - СЛОВ СВОИHE - - - - -

AN. НЕ - КА НАМ ГО - - СПОД - - ДА - - БЛА - ГО - СЛОВ СВОИ

BA. 371 НЕ - КА НАМ ГО - СПОД - - БЛА - ГО - СПО - - ДА - - - ДЕ СВОИ

RE. ПРО - КЛЕТ - СТВО МО - JE И ТЕ - БИ И

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

Vla. *p*

Vc. *p*

Cb. *p*

A genre-scene, "The Choir of Peasants," takes the central place in the second part of the opera (example 9). "Examined as a part of the opera, it is a delay in the events, and as such serves as a dramatic and psychological rest."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Marija Masnikosa, nav. delo, 95.

The scene begins with an instrumental introduction, followed by a chorus (*A*), then a tenor solo with the choir singing sustained chords (*B*), and, from chorus again (*A*). The choral section itself is written in the tradition of folk choirs, which has two possible directions. The first is a typical Mokranjac's choir style, mostly homophonic in texture with free imitation. The second model is taken from Glinka's operas in which the style is based on folklore and shaped as a closed scene within a through-composed flow. Therefore, this scene can be interpreted as a typical genre-scene found in traditional operas from the composers of the *National School*.⁷⁰ Often, parallel thirds and sixths in neighboring voices are present, as well as dialogue between sections as characteristic of the great choral scenes in traditional Italian or Russian folk operas. The simplified harmonic basis of the choral sections in this scene is a result of the use of dancing folk motifs, both in the accompaniment and the choir. The vocal lines rely heavily on the tradition of folkdance, and this accounts for the simplicity of these lines. In the middle part (*B*) of this section, however, the tenor solo melody is very oriental, using a highly melismatic style similar to the Mujezin's prayer from the beginning of the opera. The tenor soloist is a man from a group of Serbian peasants (example 10). This compositional style is rooted in the propensity of the composer to the *sevdalinka* manner - an outlet in which he wrote solo songs. This is another example of the lack of musical clarity between folk and oriental themes.

⁷⁰ Tatjana Marković, nav. delo, 448.

Example 9. *The Choir of Peasants*, Measures 43-53.

9 *Moderato*

1.2. *f*

Cl. 1.2. *f*

S *f*

A *f*

3OR *f*

T *f*

B *f*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc. *f*

Cb. *f*

41 БУР - БЕВО ЛЕ - ТО

41 БУ - БЕ - ВО ЛЕ - ТО ПРО - ЛЕ - ТО БУР - БЕВО ЛЕ - ТО

41 БУРБЕВО ЛЕТО ПРО - ЛЕТО БУРБЕВСКО ЦВЕЋЕ ЦВЕ - ТАЛО БУР - БЕВО ЛЕТО

ОЈ ОЈ ОЈ

48 ПРО - ЛЕТО БУР - БЕВКО ЦВ - ЋЕ ЦВЕ - ТА - ЛО БУРБАГАМСМА БЕ - РА - ШЕ МАЈ - ЦИГА НА СКУТ

48 ПРО - ЛЕ - ТО БУР - БЕВКОЦВЕЋЕ ЦВЕ - ТА - ЛО БУРБАГАМСМА БЕ - РА - ШЕ МАЈ - ЦИГА НА СКУТ

48 ПРО - ЛЕ - ТО БУР - БЕВКОЦВЕЋЕ ЦВЕ - ТА - ЛО ОЈ МАЈ - ЦИ ГА НА СКУТ

ОЈ ОЈ МАЈ - ЦИ НАСКУТ ГА

The choir number that opens the second part of the opera also represents an exposition of its own. Through-composed sections in the first part are rare, brief, and generally have the function of linking the two scenes. In the second part of the opera, the situation is reversed: through-composed sections dominate, while some closed sections serve only as short, essential rest points. The procedure of forming the musical material in through-composed sections is different from the previously analyzed closed sections. Specifically, the orchestra in arias, ensembles, and choirs mostly doubles rich melodic vocal lines in closed sections, while in the through-composed sections serves as an interpreter of dramatic situations. The harmony in closed sections is simple; in through-composed sections it is bolder and in some places almost expressionistic. For example, during the wedding rehearsal scene, Rade and his mother, Anđa, leave the stage and Stanka is alone. Redžep approaches and the orchestra plays a folk motif followed by a *Bordun* interval⁷¹ (Example 9). The *Bordun* interval, in C major, abruptly interrupts the appearance of the chromatically-altered seventh chord (on the fifth scale degree g-b-c#/d-flat-f), which depicts Stanka's surprise. Shortly after, this chord becomes the second seventh chord with a 4-3 suspension in b-minor. Stanka's surprise turns into tense anticipation of events. The orchestra takes over and has the role of psychological interpreter of this situation, while the vocal parts are short and concise. In this section, the dominant factor of expression is the harmonic language, homogenous in texture (orchestration) and

⁷¹ *Bordun* interval is a repetitive interval or single tone. It plays a role of the *ostinato* and is found in the low register of the orchestra.

in *ff* dynamics. (See Example 9, Measures 41-42 in cellos and double basses).

Redžep's recitative monologue is similarly structured in the moment when Stanka refuses him and runs away. In desperation, Redžep goes after her, but changes his mind at the last moment. At the very beginning, this passage is highly dissonant. This is the influence of newer European music from the end of the nineteenth century which Binički may have heard while studying in Munich. In this part, the orchestra appears with two interesting motifs (examples 10). Both are characterized by the leap of diminished fifth that is very often present in Redžep's part. The vocal part is recitative in style with phrases that are interrupted and generally follow the logic of the text. The orchestra plays the first motif four times in the strings. This frequent repetition and thickening of the motifs, gradually builds up tensions that started at the beginning of the recitative and brings it to its peak. Redžep's psychological state is achieved primarily with the specific motivic treatment. The result of this psychological climax is Redžep's tranquility which the music shows with a clear return to the tonal link in c-minor. This recitative is very different from the one in the first part of the opera. The melodies in the previous recitatives were arioso-like; here, "The melody is fragmented and declamatory, similar to the musical language of realist Russian operas. Tonality that in arioso recitatives is dominant in this case serves as psychological effects and loses its primary role."⁷²

⁷² Marija Masnikosa, nav. delo, 100.

Example 10. Measures 437-488.

The image shows a musical score for measures 437-488. The score includes parts for Piccolo (Picc.), two flutes (1.2.), a bassoon (RE), two violins (In. I and In. II), a viola (Via.), a violin (Vc.), and a cello (Cb.). The Piccolo part starts at measure 487 with a *p* dynamic and a five-measure rest. The vocal part (RE) has lyrics: "А МЕ-НЕ МР-ШИ И-БИ БУ ЗА". The string parts (In. I, In. II, Via., Vc., Cb.) play a passage in octaves, moving from dominant to the tonic of G Major. The score includes dynamics such as *f*, *ff*, and *p*.

A large and significant through-composed section exists only in the finale of the opera. When Redžep interrupts the cheerful song of peasants his part is declamatory. The orchestra plays a passage in octaves moving from dominant to the tonic of G Major. Unexpectedly, a short passage of thirty-seconds landing on a single g # with *ff* dynamics in strings follows. At the end of the phrase, the familiar diminished fifths that have repeatedly characterized Redžep's section reappear. Surprised, the choir responds in unison and the orchestra plays parallel diminished seventh chords in succession, achieving a dramatic effect. The tension breaks with diminished seventh chord a#-c#-e-g, which replaces V/V of E Major. Then, when a solo tenor (a singer from the choir), proclaims that Rade has proposed to Stanka, Redžep stops astonished. The orchestra introduces an

unexpected harmonic connection - E-flat Major: IV- vii/v (a#-c#-e-g), and then the chord, now as a c#-e-g-b, becomes vii/v of g-minor, supporting this emotion.

The element of symbiosis of different operatic styles brings a new quality to this opera. Musical-dramatic synthesis is characteristic neither of any traditional opera nor the veristic musical drama. This is a deviation from the classic black and white character development, especially in implementation of certain developmental treatments to Redžep's character. Parts of other characters are uniform in their appearance without any complex development. Lyrical and melodic sections, as we saw in Stanka's aria "*There, Behind the Hill,*" feature all the characteristics of a delicate girl in love. These characteristics are evident when Stanka refuses Redžep's proposal and also when she refuses to believe that Rade is illegitimate. The vocal line is, however, less melodious and concise, and does not allow for deeper psychological character analysis. Rade's character transformation is noticeable when he learns that he is illegitimate. It is a manifestation of an affected state with frequent pauses interrupting his vocal line.

Unlike Stanka's and Rade's character, Redžep's vocal line, in the through-composed sections, contains a large number of stable (diatonic) and labile (chromatic) alterations. This is expressed through the psychological portrayal of his character. Redžep's figure is the most developed throughout the opera, and we can easily follow his various character variations. Redžep's first aria is melodic and lyrical, which is typical of positive opera characters. The second part of the composition is highly declamatory, pungent, contains harsh dissonance and is therefore characterized in a negative light.

The dramatic moment when Redžep decides to reveal Anđa's secret is interesting for its texture and expression that are typical of the musical language of verismo. Redžep calmly begins his phrase in triplets, gradually passing through all notes of the e-flat minor tone structure. Meanwhile, a tremolo on the tonic pedal creates tension in the situation. When he decides to tell the truth, his line becomes fragmented and interrupted by the orchestra. The orchestra depicts the dramatic situation by pulsing on one tone. The harmonic relationship (i-N6-i) represents the crucial dramatic moment. The flow continues with a chord on the second scale degree in e flat minor, followed by the tonic chord of e -minor, dominant seventh chord, and arrive on a tonic chord in e-minor. The moment of expectation lasts for two bars and is presented by extended modulatory process.

Finally, Redžep reveals Anđa's secret. In the *Andantino* section that follows, the orchestra doubles Redžep's line. His phrase begins with descending sequences, and finishes with a diminished fifth interval down. A Phrygian triad then appears in the orchestra on the pedal on the dominant of e minor (as the dominant double suspension of the seventh chord below). Strong dissonance from the Phrygian chord, in relation to the fifth scale degree, acts as a silent echo of Redžep's harsh words, which indicate their fateful meaning. Two measures in the *a tempo* marking have the effect of a dramatic pause in the musical flow. The chorus of peasants responds in octaves (which underlines the drama) and the orchestra plays 'the curse motif.' The spiritual tune, "May the Lord Bless Us," in the *Andante religioso* section, serves as a dramatic, ironic response that Redžep directs towards Stanka. This motif is first heard in the quartet at the beginning of

the opera. This extremely tonal section, folk in character, contrasts with both the previous and the next segments of music. Several parallel diminished seventh chords follow and create tension. The choir sings the line “The Truth Was Revealed” (*Rec je pala*) and Rade, without knowing what has happened, comes into the scene. The orchestra evokes the atmosphere based on Redžep’s statement: the pedal on the tonic of d minor, in the double basses and cellos, is reinforced with intense melodic line created by a constant pulsation of the sixteenth notes in the first violins, and syncopated figures in the second violins and violas. Through recitative incursions of characters, Rade learns what has happened. The characters increase in number, which is typical for the finale of a traditional opera; vocal lines are very short, almost as interpolation.

In a bout of rage, Rade attempts to kill Redžep for disgracing his mother; but Anđa stops him. In the finale, a large number of non-chord tones create free harmonic solutions in order to achieve dramatic tension. The culmination of the act, which in this opera coincides with the tragedy, is the moment when Anđa admits the truth, and Rade kills her in desperation. As Anđa struggles to tell the truth, her part consists of fragments which rise by a semitone in every cue that follows. At the same time this also presents the most dramatic appearance of her character (example 12). Descending fragments of exclamation begin only after Anđa’s confession. The orchestra stops on the diminished seventh chord (v/v in c-minor), anticipating Rade’s reaction. For nine measures the orchestra plays the same chord, until Anđa corroborates the accusation “Yes, It’s My Fault.” The

orchestra then begins the new chord g#-b-e-flat (d#)-f – Tristan chord⁷³ in c minor. This harmonic situation is yet another confirmation of expressionist treatment of harmony in some places in this opera.

Example 11. Finale, Anda's highest dramatic point in the opera when admitting

⁷³ Tristan's chord is the chord used by Richard Wagner in the opera *Tristan and Isolde* as a Tristan's leitmotif. The chord consists of: augmented fourth, augmented sixth and augmented ninth above the root, it's a minor chord with a non-harmonic bass note which is an augmented second below the tonality of the chord.

the truth “Yes, It’s My Fault,” Measures 483-491.

The image displays a musical score for measures 483-491. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 483-486) includes a vocal line with lyrics: РА-ДЕ ЧУЈ МЕ СИ - НЕ ЈЕД-НУ РЕЧ ЈОШ ЧУЈ СКЛО-НИ СЕ БЕ-ЖИ СКЛО-НИ СЕ. The piano accompaniment features a prominent motif in the right hand, marked with dynamics like *p* and *sfz*. The second system (measures 487-491) continues the vocal line with lyrics: РЕ-БЕП ЈЕ СИН-КО ИС-ТИ-НУ РЕ-К'О ИС-ТИ-НУ. The piano accompaniment becomes more complex, with multiple layers of texture and dynamic markings such as *pp sub.*, *f*, and *ff*.

At the moment when Rade kills his mother, 'the curse motif' is played twice in the orchestra, revealing the underlying secret of the motif. The motif appears frequently in the opera, both in Redžep’s vocal line and in the orchestra. The leitmotiv also serves as a confirmation that this opera has a romantic aspect.

The curse motif for the first time heard in the quartet at the beginning of the opera. Somewhat altered, the motif appears in Redžep's line of his duet with Stanka, and finally turns into an independent motif in the orchestra. The orchestra plays the motif in suspenseful scenes that might reveal Anđa's secret. The leitmotif of the curse has two main functions. From a musical standpoint, the constant occurrence of this motif presents a thematic connection as a heterogeneous musical whole. But it also serves as an insinuation of the tragic ending and Redžep's malicious thoughts. This motif fits into the form of traditional opera, although this is not its typical feature.

The folk motifs have a leitmotivic meaning, which act as an expression of national character. From the analysis, we can conclude that the melodies in the folk spirit are particularly present in closed sections. Most of the melodies are dance-like and are related to the appearance of Serbian characters. The harmonic language can be divided into two categories. The harmonic language is profound when motifs are in the style of vocal tradition, while the harmonic language is simplified with dance-like melodies. All segments related to the wedding of Rade and Stanka contain at least one of the folk motifs. The weaving of these motifs throughout the opera represents thematic reminiscence. These motifs, "Typically Serbian in melody and rhythm contrast the oriental motifs and 'the curse motif', representing polarity in the presentation of the Serbian and Turkish population in this opera, frequently recurring trough the opera."⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Marija Masnikosa, nav. delo, 94.



У Београду, у четвртан, 15. априла 1904.

(3-ћи ПУТ)

НА УРАНКУ

Опера у једном чину, написао Бернардо Ђ. Нунџи. Музика од Станислава Ђинџићког. — Гедетска с. Н. Станојевић. — Капелник с. Бинички.

Лица:

Раде г. Поповић	Станка г-ца Д. Ђ. рџевић
Алија, Радеова мајка г-ца Марковићка	Ружица, њена сестра г. Мелугиновић
Мурези (глас споља), Освајачи и селанке. Догађа се пре сто година у једном сиромашном селу под Турцима.	

ПРВИ ПУТ**НА СЛАВИ**

Опера у три чина, написао Симо Матавуџа. — Гедетска с. Тодоровић.

Лица:

Трипуца Ристић, чиновник г. Тодоровић	Јованка, његова жена г-ца Јурковићка
Петра, његова жена г-ца Јовановићка	Ангелина, њенова кћи г-ца Ђорђевићка
Петра, ристије, млад човек, његов рођак и ученик г. Поповић	Мирко Митковић, лекар, Опалица
Маја Анастасјевић, Трипуцова друг по служби г. Н. Станојевић	Џеко, његов син г. Рудић
Раста Опалић, начелник г. Газариновић	Таса, калдекарски послужитељ, Ђековић
	Мара, служкиња код Ростића г-ца Павловићка

Мушке и женске званнице код Опалића. — Догађа се у Београду, на Никољ-дан и на којутарје тога празника

ОРКЕСТАР

Капелник с. БИНИЧКИ.

1. Увертира за оперу На уранку, од Ђинџићког. — 2. Србска јеница, епиказија од Слободе. — 3. Фрула, потурци од Чекана. — 4. Народна слава: а) Поклоци, илустрија; б) Удварачка песма, од Миколића.

Србота, 17. априла: Епиконт, трагедија у пет чинова, од Густа, превод М. Р. Поповић. Музика од Бетовена.

Недеља, 18. априла: Дневна представа: Ревијатор, 5 чина у пет чинова, од Н. Василевића-Гогоља, превод Ж. Јовичић. — Вечерња представа: Вештица, драма у пет чина, написао Пијаторијен Сарлу, превод с француског.

ЦЕНЕ МЕСТА:

Ложа у партеру и првој галерији 12 динара; ложа у другој галерији 5 динара. — У партеру: остала 3 динара, паркет 2 динара, партер 1.50 динара. — У првој галерији: балкон 3 динара, седнице 1 реда 1.50 динара, седнице II реда 1.20 динара. — У другој галерији: балкон 2 динара, остала места по 1.20 динара. — У трећој галерији: први ред од (1-57) 0.80 динара; други ред 0.5 динара.

ПОЧЕТАК У 8 САХАТА, СВРШЕТАК У 11.

Електрична „Нова Трговица, Штампарница, Београд (Дубров. улица)

Picture 3: A poster for the third production of the opera *At Dawn*, on April 15, 1904.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The opera *At Dawn* is Binički's extraordinary artistic achievement, and a new genre of musical enrichment for Serbian music. While part of Binički's overall contribution to Serbian music history, it has received little attention in the Serbian musicological literature. As one of the most prominent composers of the *Belgrade School*, he gave character to the concert events in the early years of the twentieth century in Belgrade. To study the life and work of this composer, it is important to review a set of texts that are collected in the *Compilation of Works*, a book dedicated to Binički, which highlights the different areas of his work, and various aspects of his oeuvre. All authors of the articles in this compilation distinguish Binički as one of the most important musical figures of old Belgrade whose activities contributed to the development of musical life in Serbia. He certainly deserved this praise, since, "He was a pioneer and a zealous worker, a selfless fighter who knew and loved his audience, and found ways to enrich it with the music."⁷⁵ It was extremely important because, to the public of that time, concerts and opera performances were as important and interesting as comedic and circus performances.

As mentioned before, the majority of authors describe *At Dawn* as a romantic-veristic opera with national elements. Verismo is primarily reflected in the plot of the opera and its one act concept. Verismo is also reflected in the

⁷⁵ Roksanda Pejović, Stanislav Binički kao dirigent i organizator muzičkog života u Beogradu, in: Stanislav Binički, zbornik radova, ed. Vlastimir Peričić (Beograd: Fakultet muzičke umetnosti u Beogradu, 1991), 10.

underlying nationalistic musical style, something the Italian Veristic composers often do. However, verismo echoes in the musical language of the through-composed sections, as well, especially in the bold harmonic solutions and treatment of the orchestra. Pre-Romantic features are manifested in the existence of traditional closed scenes and treatment of harmony and orchestration in much of the musical flow. Characteristics of Wagnerian Romanticism are found in an attempt to establish leitmotif, but many of the verismo operas also use leitmotif, though nowhere approaching the complexity Wagner, Strauss, Berg and other German composers (or Debussy). National elements are found in melodies written in the folk spirit that are recognized on the basis of characteristic melodic or harmonic endings on the second or the fifth scale degree. Treatment of traditional tunes, depending on their vocal or dancing flavor, defines the procedure with ornamentation. The vocal approach demonstrates a nationalistic cantilena which is rich with melismas; these vocal sections are written in the spirit of folk dances and have a somewhat simpler melody.

Pre-Romantic elements can be found mainly in closed scenes in which the melody is broadly conceived and harmony does not leave the pre-romantic frame; the orchestra doubles the vocal line and there is no character development. In the closed scenes of the opera, melody is one of the most important expressions, both in characterization and in implementing national characteristics of the actors in the opera. On the other hand, veristic, through-composed sections interrupt declamatory, psychologically-stronger melodic sections, bolder harmony and the dramatic action is carried by the orchestra. The analysis from the above-

mentioned passages demonstrates that the harmonic language is a crucial tool in the creation of dramatic expression. Therefore, the orchestra, as the sole carrier of harmony in the opera, is also the main interpreter of the situation, as happens in veristic operas. Consequently, the entire melody of the second part of the composition results in the composer's dramatic treatment of harmony also in line with late Verdi and Wagner. Declamatory and recitative in nature, the fragmented melody of the solo vocal sections appropriately follows the psychological state of actors in the opera. Therefore, the observed features of closed scenes and through-composed passages in this opera act as a synthesis of the two operatic styles: veristic and traditional opera with set arias. The significance of this opera, however, is not only in its artistic expression but also in its innovative genre that evolved as the music of Serbia. It is interesting how the development of folk music into art music in Serbia, approximately parallels that of most other European countries.

The opera *At Dawn* had historical significance at the time it was created and years later. First, it brought a new music genre at a time when conditions for the development of musical life in Serbia were not yet established. The first attempts at opera settings in Serbia in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century did not provide a good starting point for the creation of rich operatic oeuvre as it existed in Western Europe and Russia, since Serbian composers had few predecessors to draw from. Also, conditions for performance were not satisfactory; there were no professional musicians, orchestras or singers – due to centuries of Ottoman rule. Additionally, the audience was not accustomed to this

type of art form. It was only with the onset of the Belgrade bourgeoisie and Prince Miloš that classical music was introduced to the audience. Due to these circumstances, Binički initially wanted to cancel the premiere of the opera; however, he felt a great sense of importance in wanting to present his first opera and persisted in his intention to establish a new genre in Serbian music. The opera served as an educational instrument for the audience, not only introducing them to a different type of music but also evolving its national consciousness. It was a foundation on which later generations of composers built.

The artistic value of this opera should also be emphasized. The musical language included an assimilation of various influences from Western Europe and Russia properly incorporated into the Serbian musical core. Compared to Mokranjac, Binički's creativity and that of the composers of the *Belgrade School* is considered regressive by some. The abundance of lyrical melodies, as well as, innovative approaches to the form reflected in combining through-composed and closed scenes, the use of bold harmonic solutions in some places, and the development of Redžep's character were actually innovative ways of composing at that time. Even though this opera manifests a pre-romantic relationship to folklore, Binički did not care about the nature of its thematic material, and did not seek inspiration for its further development. For him, borrowed melody was a "neutral material because it is not bound by the using of special procedures in the further exposure and development of that melody."⁷⁶ In this opera, however, he found a masterful way to polarize the two worlds by using folk motifs and their

⁷⁶ Sonja Marinković, *Binički i Folklor*, nav. delo, 13.

specific treatment. According to Binički, he used Serbian folk motifs, through which he individually arranged and captured the spirit of folk songs.⁷⁷ Binički also alleges that after the premiere of the opera, opinions were divided – from praise to criticism.⁷⁸ The audience, however, welcomed his work and the major songs became quickly popular. This was an affirmation to Binički that he was moving in the right direction in establishing a path for the further development of the artistic field of Serbian musical culture.

⁷⁷ Stanislav Binički, nav. delo, 2-3.

⁷⁸ In order to illustrate the reaction that the opera, Binički in the aforementioned interview quoted one of the critics: “With our Stasa, you hear Wagner, you hear tamburitza players.”

REFERENCES

- Andreis, Josip, Cvetko Dragan and Stana Djuric Klajn. *Historical Development of Music Culture in Yugoslavia*. London: School Book, 1962.
- Bandur, John. "Two Chapters in the History of Serbian Opera", *Sound*. 11-12 (1934): 413-423.
- Binički, Stanislav. "How She Became the First Serbian" (interview), *Radio Belgrade*, no. 27 (1936): 2-3.
- Budden, Julian. "Opera in Italy: The Age of Verismo" *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians XIII*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmill Publishers, 1980), 565-566.
- Comoedia* (New York, 4 II 1924), the number of journals dedicated to Stanislav Binički.
- Dimitrijević, John. "The Historical Development of Opera in Belgrade" *Life and Work*. 32 (1930): 578-583.
- Dimitrijević, John. "The Early Signs of the Belgrade Opera," *Time*, 12 II 1930.
- Djuric Klein, Stana. *Music and Musicians*. London: Prosveta, 1956.
- Đorđević, Vladimir. "Dvadesetpetogodišnjica Stanislava Biničkog," *Saint Cecilia*, 2 (1924): 41-42.
- Jovanović, Raska V. "Opera Performances in the Old Belgrade," *Pro Musica*, no.19 (1966): 7-9.
- Marinković, Sonja. "Binički and Folklore," *Original Serbian for Performing Arts and Music* (Novi Sad, 2007): 7-15.
- Marinković, Sonja. "Methodological Foundations of Analytical Approach to Compositions Based on Folklore," *Dani S. Government Milosevic* (Banja Luka, the Academy of Art, 2004): 136-149.
- Marinković, Sonja. "Music in the Nineteenth Century and First Half of the Twentieth Century," in: *The History of Serbian Music*, ed. Mirjana Veselinović Hoffman (Institute for Textbooks, Belgrade, 2007), 71-106.

- Marinković, Sonja. *National Style Folklore and Its Artistic Transposition*. London, 1991: 157-186.
- Marinković, Sonja, Models of the Music in the Serbian national music Mokranjac Age (Negotin: Symposium Mokranjac 1994-1996, 19 97): 165-177.
- Marković, Tatjana. "Musical and Stage Works: A Piece With Singing," *The History of Serbian Music*, ed. Mirjana Veselinović Hoffman (Institute for Textbooks, Belgrade, 2007), 441-458.
- Masnikosa, Marija. *Opera Na Uranku Stanislav Biničkog, a Synthesis of Elements of the Two Opera Styles*, 83-121.
- Petrovic, Veroslava. The Theatre Museum of SR Serbia, exhibition dedicated to the founder of the opera in Belgrade Stanislav Binički, (Belgrade, Srboštampa, December 1973)
<http://stanislavbinicki.wordpress.com/biografija/>
- Pejović, Roksanda. *Opera and Ballet National Theatre in Belgrade 1882-1941*, London: Academy of Music, 1996.
- Pejović, Roksanda, *Serbian Music 19th century, the performance in general. Articles and reviews. Music Pedagogy* (London: Faculty of Music, 2001)
- Peričić, Vlastimir, Stanislav Binički. *Music Creators*. New York: Prosveta, 1969.
- Samaržić, Radovan, *General Encyclopedia Larousse III* (Belgrade: Vuk Karadžić, 1973):
- Yugoslav Nations in the Middle Ages, 353-371;
- Yugoslav Peoples Under Foreign Rule, the Sixteenth-Eighteenth Century, 457-477;
- Yugoslav Nations in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century, 506-530;
- Yugoslav Nations in the Nineteenth Century, 567-601.
- Skerlić, John. *History of Modern Serbian Literature*. Belgrade: Rad, 1953.
- Stanislav Binički as a Conductor and Organizer of Musical Life in Belgrade, by Roksanda Pejović, 5-54.

Plays with Singing Stanislava Biničkog, by Snezana Đorđević, 55-82.

The Relationship of Traditional and New Music in Choirs - Stanislava Biničkog,
by Kadijevic Ana, 183-209.

Student Compositions Stanislava Biničkog, by Milena Radovanović, 211-248.

Schwarz, Richard. "Veristic Opera," *Sound*, 11-1 (1934): 161-171.

Veselinović Hofman, Mirjana. *Before the Musical Work*. Belgrade: Department
for Textbooks, 2007.

APPENDIX A

LIVE RECORDING OF STANISLAV BINICKI'S OPERA *NA URANKU*,

DIRECTED BY JANA MINOV

[Consult Attached File]