

Reports from
the Centre for
Swedish Folk Music
and Jazz Research

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Bosnians in Sweden – Music and Identity

Jasmina Talam

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SWEDISH FOLK MUSIC AND JAZZ RESEARCH 52

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Bosnians in Sweden – Music and Identity



Svenskt visarkiv/Musikverket
Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien
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Preface

In 2018, associate professor Jasmina Talam was awarded a scholarship from the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture. Her scholarship was a part of the Bernadotte-program, which was founded in 2016 as a gift to His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf on his 70th birthday. The program is a collaboration between five royal academies in Sweden. The Royal Gustav Adolphus Academy rewards non-Nordic scholars who want to spend at least half a year in Sweden, doing research at a university department or a scholarly archive or library.

Ethnomusicologist Jasmina Talam normally works at the Academy of Music, University of Sarajevo. During her stay in Sweden, Svenskt visarkiv (The Swedish Centre for Folk Music and Jazz Research) functioned as host institution and the director of the archive, professor Dan Lundberg acted as her mentor. However, most of the time she was travelling around the country, energetically doing field work among the many Bosnian-Swedes. The focus of her project was the Bosnian associations and their organized music-making.

Through this work, Jasmina Talam has produced a comprehensive description of Bosnian music and dance in Sweden regarding musicians, styles, genres, music groups and arenas. By applying a broad understanding of Bosnian music, an interesting and valuable approach, she avoids being trapped in a definition of “the Bosnian” as a purely ethnic category. Talam includes both “music from Bosnia” and “music practiced by Bosnians”, which also means that the first category comprises Bosnian music practiced by non-Bosnians, and that the other includes music that is not presented as “typically” Bosnian.

An essential observation in her research is how important music and dance have been in the establishment of Bosnian associations in Sweden. Talam notes that the formation of music and dance groups were among the first common social activities that Bosnian refugees started with when they arrived in Sweden. The groups formed around

these activities still are the core of the Bosnian associations and also what has kept them together over the years.

Another important reflection is that the music genre *sevdalinka* has become a superior and inclusive music category in Sweden that seems to symbolize “Bosnianness” in a much stronger way than it has ever done in Bosnia.

*Dan Lundberg, Director of The Archive and Library Department,
The Swedish Performing Arts Agency
and
Gunnar Ternhag, Secretary of The Royal Gustavus Adolphus
Academy*

Stockholm & Uppsala, June 2019

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Foreword

The book *Bosnians in Sweden – Music and Identity* was created as a result of the postdoctoral research “Bosnian refugees in music-making and cultural organizational activities in Sweden” which I conducted at Svenskt visarkiv from August 2018 to February 2019. The focus of this research had been solely on the musical activities of Bosnians who were forced to leave their homes and start a new life in Sweden in the early 1990s due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the framework that I set for this research, I had conducted field research and established contacts with singers, musicians, dancers and other informants who could give me useful information about the music of Bosnians in Sweden. At the same time I had found, catalogued and classified literary sources, manuscripts, photos, audio and video recordings and other materials relevant to the subject of the research. The collected material and scientific curiosity led me to broaden the scope of my research and additionally explore the musical activities of Bosnians who came to Sweden as working migrants in the second half of the 20th century. The main aim of the research was focused on different forms of musical activities of the Bosnians in Sweden, which are not only seen in music making, but also in listening to it. Listening to music, and very often its performance, is connected with the past, with their life in the old homeland. Through their transnational activities, including those that are musical, the Bosnians continually connect their place of origin and place of residence. Thus, they managed to preserve their local identities as well as a general Bosnian identity, whilst at the same time successfully integrating into Swedish society.

Bosnian refugees and their “new” life in Sweden were the subject of ethnological, anthropological and economic research that mainly focused on the experience of refugees, translocal identities, and the potential of the Bosnian diaspora. Since this book is result of my research which is presented for the first time, it mainly contains

unpublished information that is chronologically and tematically presented along with explanations of terms specific to traditional folk and popular music in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photos, handwritten materials and other archival documents contained in this study have an illustrative function and complement the textual content.

I want to thank my informants, as without their help it would not be possible to carry out this research. I sincerely appreciate Kenan Jašarspahić's help in organizing the research. Great thanks to Zikreta Jašarspahić, Nazmija Konjević, Slavica and Anto Pejinović, Enes Omerdić and his family, the priest Mladen Vuk, Nedžad Mulazimović, Fatima Veladžić, Haris Tucaković and Enes Žiga. I give my special gratitude to Raza Mehinović for the hospitality and the help she gave me during the research. I also owe gratitude to my young colleague Lejla Čaušević Karačić for her help with translations.

I wish to use this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and respect to Gunnar Ternhag and Dan Lundberg for very useful information, suggestions and advice. Finally, I would like to thank the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish folklore studies for the Bernadotte scholarship for my postdoctoral research. I hope this book will fulfill the expectations of the readers and will be an incentive for further research in the fields of ethnomusicology and other related sciences.

Jasmina Talam

Stockholm, January 2019

1. Introduction

THE FIRST MIGRATIONS of Bosnians to Sweden can be traced in the context of migrations from other parts of former Yugoslavia. Those were working migrations, which had started after the World War II and increased in intensity in the 1960's. Wishing to preserve and confirm their national, in this case, Yugoslav identity, migrants had been connected with each other in clubs and associations. Formal and informal gatherings within the clubs and associations gave rise to different cultural activities. As stated by Ronström, the Yugoslav associations had organised "two types of dance and music events: folklor – rehearsals and displays of choreographed folk dances performed on stage by specially trained dancers – and zabava, parties with songs, dance, and music in which everyone is expected to take part. In both folklor and zabava people highlight phenomena and behaviours which they regard as characteristically Yugoslavian". (1992:1) Music was a medium that connected them together, a their link to their homelands and a means of recalling times past.

The war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (1991–1995) had its culmination in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result of politically motivated violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide, more than a million inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina were forced to leave their homes. Bosnian refugees have found their new homes in the countries of Western Europe, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Together with the migrants who went to other countries searching for work and better life conditions in the second half of the 20th century, refugees today make up numerous and well-organised Bosnian diasporas¹. "Thanks to multicultural

1 According to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees data from 2015, the number of persons born in Bosnia and Herzegovina living today in other countries is 1,671,177, while with the descendants, the second and third generation, this number reaches two million. In the period from 1948–1991, 77,434 inhabitants moved

policies in many of their new countries, members of the diasporas were in a position to express their identities in a variety of ways, often with emphasis on traditional music and dance.” (Pettan 2008:94) Through cultural and artistic societies and other cultural associations, the Bosnian diaspora nurtures the folklore heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and organizes various music programs for more than two decades.

The musical activities of Yugoslav working migrants, and later of Bosnian refugees, are very rich and as such deserve to be researched. Nevertheless, they were not in the sphere of interest of researchers. For the last two decades, a small number of ethnomusicologists have been active in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although they occasionally showed interest for in the musical modes of expression of the diaspora, a lack of financial resources did not allow for this type of research. Also, ethnomusicologists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighboring countries did not fundamentally study the work of cultural and artistic societies, but were more often focused on the protection of the national music heritage, which implied the practical application of the results of their research. “Ethnomusicologists assumed various roles in these processes: providing the ensembles with musics and dances collected in the field, writing musical arrangements and/or choreographies, singing, playing instruments and/or dancing, leading the ensembles and touring with them.” (Pettan 2008:86) This should be added to the fact that ethnomusicologists were regularly members of the professional jury at folklore festivals and other events that included traditional folk music and dance.

Research into the musical activities of Bosnians in Sweden and other activities that include music represents a great challenge, especially from the perspective of researcher insider/outsider, which

out of Bosnia and Herzegovina, during the war (1992–1995) more than a million, and from 1996–2001. 92,000 – mostly young people. (http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/aktuelnosti/Slike/FEB_510.pdf, Accessed: June 12, 2018)

I have experienced for the first time. “Ethnomusicologists from what was Yugoslavia showed only peripheral interest in studying their diasporas. One of the reasons may be that musical universes of these territorially uprooted people were of no particular interest to the researchers whose focus was ‘old, rural, and local’ folk music in its original context”. (Pettan 2008:94) The fact that ethnomusicologists of the middle generation, to which I belong, are followers of “Rihtman’s school”² which argued for such research, as well as that the war has had large consequences for traditional art in general³, had directed us to conducting research within the boundaries of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The centre of modern ethnological research is “not geographical localities and their cultures/cultural appearances, but people and social spaces which they create”. (Čapo Žmegač, Gulin Zrnić and Šantek 2006:28) Locality is still a constitutive part of the research, but it no longer assumes that social and cultural spaces are bounded by physical areas. Therefore, it is understandable that ethnomusicological researches are no longer tied only to the localities in which certain musical practice is bounded by social and geographical space, but also to the certain groups of people who have transmitted their local and national musical practice outside their national and geographical area. Gerda Lechleitner believes that “empirical methods (like field work) have not been static but have advanced due to experiences and necessary adaptations concerning the respective cultural contexts”. (2014:12)

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- 2 Cvjetko Rihtman is well-known Bosnian ethnomusicologist. He founded the Institute for folklore research (1946) and the Academy of Music in Sarajevo (1955).
 - 3 A major population exodus took place, which greatly changed the demographic landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Disappearance of some ethnic groups from certain sites, particularly of Bosniaks, Croats and other minority ethnic groups from the territory of the present Republika Srpska resulted in the disappearance of their tradition in these regions.

Such changes, arising from various issues and problems, have opened new spaces for research, especially in the field of music and minorities. The term minority generally refers to a group of people that is far lesser than the dominant one in a community. Within the International Council for Traditional Folk Music (ICTM), the study group music and minorities (2000) developed, defining minorities as “communities, groups and/or individuals, including indigenous, migrant and other vulnerable groups that are at higher risk of discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, social or economic deprivation”. With the minorities, Pettan, lists four other types of marginalized communities:

- diaspora, that includes a widespread group of people abroad,
- ethnic group – a concept of “a group of people who identify with one another, especially on the basis of racial, cultural, or religious grounds”
- immigrants – defined as persons “who leave one country to permanently settle in another” and
- refugee – a person “outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group”. (Pettan 2008:85–99)

According to Halilović, “the goal of every anthropologist is to experience, record and transmit (not) ordinary human stories and to disclose some ‘laws’ in which social groups investigated – whether local tribal communities or members of global elites – maintain and construct their own group identity”. (2008:166) Anthropology had a critical influence on the determination of ethnomusicology and made ethnomusicologists sensitive “for cultural contexts in which music is composed, performed and accepted”. (Pettan 1995:218) Therefore,

the role of the ethnomusicologist is to experience, record and describe music as a means of human expression which exists in everyday life and all of the cultural events in which music is performed as an inherited experience in the life of an individual and the community. In this case, the aim was also to record the circumstances in which Bosnian cultural associations were created, the work of their amateur folklore ensembles which perform artistically processed folklore material, as well as the work of other musical clubs. The research mainly involves associations which are integrated in the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden under which the most continuously organised musical activities occur such as performances of ensembles at folklore festivals and festivals of choirs and folklore of the Union.

In the initial phase of the research I already concluded that, apart from the above-mentioned, it is essential to research and describe other musical activities outside of the associations but in the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden and the contexts in which they are undertaken. This is primarily related to the musical ensembles whose founders and/or members are from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Orientexpressen, Bosnia Express Band, Etna, Sevdalini, Ritam srca), celebration parties (Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina, New Year and Religious Holidays), organised musical manifestations in which Bosnian musicians take part (Balkan Cruise, Göteborg Balkan Festival), concerts with popular musicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries (Riksteatern, APU network, private agency Kaponi) and programmes of Bosnian radio stations in Sweden (Bosnian radio – Malmö, BH media – Radio Gbg in Göteborg, Radio of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden).

Research on current musical activities of Bosnian refugees inevitably had to include a reflection on the past. Namely, a large number of cultural and artistic societies and other cultural and nongovernmental associations were formed already in the first years of their stay in

Sweden. The musical activities of Bosnian refugees within societies were mainly related to the musical tradition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is interesting to note that in those years the first musical ensembles of Bosnian musicians were formed, as well as ensembles with Bosnian and Swedish musicians together. In those first years, music turned out to be “an effective means of helping overcome war and refuge”. (Andree Zaimović 2003:56) And in the years that followed, music activities had their own goals. Music is a symbol of individuals and groups expressed by preservation and confirmation of their individual, cultural and national identity, and a means of communication and socialization. Therefore, it is essential to return to the past, or the beginnings of their work. Therefore research of musical activities of refugees who now make up a very large diaspora in Sweden is a process which involves the study of relevant sources, field compilation of material, presentation of research results and in the end use of the knowledge acquired. Using the knowledge gained in this kind of research inevitably involves the social engagement of the ethnomusicologist. “Social engagement is a central component of applied ethnomusicology, which at present prevails in international ethnomusicological circles as a kind of ethical imperative.” (Ceribašić 2015:191–192) According to the definition established at the 39th World ICTM Conference, applied ethnomusicology is an approach driven by principles of social responsibility that broadens the common academic goal of spreading and deepening knowledge and understanding to address specific problems and actions within and outside typical academic contexts. The applied ethnomusicologist uses his knowledge to “influence social interaction, to maintain or change social institutions, or to direct the course of cultural change”. (Pettan 2008:90) This was especially demonstrated by the example of several projects in which ethnomusicologists used music as a means of helping refugees who, by arriving in other countries, managed to escape from immediate war danger, but because of the passive way of life in refugee centers were exposed to a new traumatic experience.

The best example is certainly the project “Azra”, which was devised and implemented by Svanibor Pettan in 1994. This project, among ethnomusicologists, is well known as a model, aimed at strengthening and meaningfully conceiving the musical and wider cultural identity of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Norway, and with the help of music to facilitate and promote communication and cultural exchange between Bosnians and Norway. (See Pettan 1995)

The social engagement of ethnomusicologists can also be seen in the research of the diaspora music practice that creates transnational social spaces connecting important elements of its social and cultural practices across national borders as is the case with the Bosnians in Sweden.

As the research is directed to the musical practice of Bosnian refugees which they transmitted from the country of their origin to the country where they went, my research position is between insider/outsider, “engaged native/neutral foreign observer” (Araújo 2008:13).⁴ Theoretically observing, my “insider” position is reflected in that I researched the work of people with whom I share the origin, who speak the same language and who belong to the same folklore tradition. On the other hand, I have the position of an “outsider” as those people live hundreds of kilometres away from their homeland, that they were forced to migrate from, that they have lived in a different environment for years and that they conduct their musical practice in a different cultural context in which there is no interaction between folklore processes determined by tradition with the lives of individuals and communities. I hoped that my “insider” position would have certain advantages that would enable me easier access to the informants. At the same time, I was afraid that my position of an

4 In the mid-2000s, Brazilian ethnomusicologist Samuel Araújo elicited a great deal of attention to his research, based in dialogue, on the “sound everyday life” of Rio de Janeiro’s poor neighbourhood. This concept of research implies that researchers and researched continuously cooperate in all stages of research (defining the object and purpose of the research, collecting and processing the material). (Araújo 2008)

outsider would lead me to a situation in which I would observe and experience their musical creation and interpretations which take place trans-locally from a “Bosnian” perspective, from the position of an insider.

Already the first contacts with potential informants, which I established almost five months before the survey, showed that my “insider” position would really have its advantages. In February 2018, I established the first contacts with the Bosnians living in Sweden. These were persons of different ages, levels of education and interests. It is especially important to mention that they migrated to Sweden at different times. An important meeting with potential informants occurred on June 6, 2018. at the conference “Vision for the future – the trade partnership between Sweden and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018 and in the future”. The conference was organised by the Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Embassy of Sweden, and was attended by entrepreneurs from Sweden of Bosnian origin who generate business opportunities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and are investing in the development of the country, and representatives of the APU network.⁵ There I met interesting people whose life and professional stories are very diverse. Although they did not engage in music or were involved in the work of cultural societies, the information they provided about the cultural life of the Bosnians was very important for my research. The research so far has shown that “insider/outsider” positions are not fixed categories, but that they connect with each other.

5 The APU network was formed by students of Bosnian origin in the early 2000s in order to promote the interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden. APU is a Bosnian acronym of the words academics, entrepreneurs and artists and marks the areas they deal with, and the term network denotes their mode of operation – transparency, dynamism, sociability, flexibility and efficiency. It is a platform for organisations and individuals who want to contribute to positive developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden within education, entrepreneurship, culture and sports. They are active in building and strengthening Swedish-Bosnian identity and building co-operation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden.

Research into musical activities within the Bosnian cultural associations in Sweden actually represents research of familiar into unfamiliar. Organisational structures of cultural associations and the contents of the programmes of their folklore ensembles and musical groups are almost the same as the ones of the societies in the homeland, but understanding of the social and cultural practices which take place outside national boundaries represented the unknown for the researcher/outsider. Also, other musical activities of the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden, which encompass a wide range – from traditional to popular music in all its genres – opened up a space for research of the function of music in a diaspora, as well as the creation of trans-national social spaces in which elements of musical practices are connected across national borders.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Approach

THE AIM OF the research was to determine the musical and other cultural activities of the Bosnians who escaped to Sweden in the period 1992–1995 and how their Bosnian identity is constructed, expressed and maintained in a new environment. In order to achieve the objective of this research, it was necessary to answer the following research questions:

- Which musical and other cultural activities are carried out by Bosnians who migrated to Sweden during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- In which cultural contexts is music created and performed?
- How cultural and, especially, musical expressions affect shaping of Bosnian identity?

With the aim to, through research, offer answers to the questions related to the musical activities of Bosnians in Sweden, I surveyed the literature related to my research and conducted fieldworks in Sweden and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has encouraged scientists from different fields to point out the disaster that happened and to encourage the international community to solve the problem, as well as to use their knowledge to help those that were affected. Adrian Hastings, professor of theology at the University of Leeds, wrote a little book *SOS Bosnia* (1993), and later founded the Alliance for the defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ADBH)⁶ from which in 1997

6 The first issue is a short version of the text “Save Bosnia”, which was sent as an appeal to the UN to lift the arms embargo against the Army of Bosnia and Herzego-

the Bosnian Institute was created and based in London. Hastings joined musicologist Bojan Bujić, professor at the University of Oxford, renowned historian Noel Malcolm, Brendan Simms, professor at the University of Cambridge and journalist Melanie McDonagh. In October 1993, the Alliance began publishing monthly news in the *Bosnia Report*, which was published from 1997 to 2007 under that title as an online magazine. The journal contained texts with various kinds of contents, including those about music, aiming to spread awareness of the political and cultural identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to draw attention to the sufferings of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ankica Petrović and Ted Levin released the CD *Bosnia: Echoes from an Endangered World* (1993) on which there are selected examples of Bosnian music that the authors recorded during fieldwork in 1984–85, and several commercial recordings. According to Levin, “The musical sounds presented on these recordings were silenced in many parts of Bosnia (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Some of the performers died, at least one was wounded and one captured, the others escaped in the midst of war bloodshed, their fate is unknown, and inaccessible.” (Levin 1993) All income from CD sales was donated to humanitarian organizations operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁷

Svanibor Pettan, with the project “Azra”, made the most important contribution to research into the musical activities of Bosnian refugees and their practical application. The project involved “three mutually connected groups of activities:

vina as “a means of defending itself and its population from well-armed aggressors”. They also advocated an appropriate military intervention under the auspices of the UN in support of Bosnian sovereignty and integrity. This appeal was signed by numerous professors of British universities and several members of parliament (<http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/oct93/saveb.cfm>, Accessed: August 1, 2018).

- 7 After the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ted Levin and Ankica Petrović donated revenue from the CD to surviving folk musicians. The last donation was presented at the Academy of Music in Sarajevo on June 17, 2017.

- 1) Research on the cultural – and specifically musical – identity of Bosnian refugees in Norway;
- 2) Education for the Norwegians and the Bosnians in Norway through
 - a) Music in Exile and Ethnomusicology classes taught at the University of Oslo, and
 - b) Lectures in refugee centers on Bosnian music and Music and war on the territories of former Yugoslavia; and
- 3) Music making within the Azra ensemble”. (Pettan 1996:249)

The project aims to create such a state of mind among the refugees that should help them living in the present time in Norway, and also to prepare them for co-existence in multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future. After fieldworks which involved refugees located in different parts of Norway (Arendal, Hemsedal, Oslo, Trondheim, Tromsø), regular lectures held at the University of Oslo had followed and finally, public lectures for both Bosnians and Norwegians. As the result of the activities that happened beforehand, ensemble Azra was formed in which both Bosnian refugees and Norwegian students participated. The first public appearance of the ensemble was in March 1994 in the hall of the National Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Oslo, followed by other performances in refugee centers and in front of the Norwegian audience. Using knowledge and social engagement, Pettan offered Bosnian refugees in Norway “valuable alternative to the general notion of being powerless due to war devastation in their home-country and also due to various communication barriers in the host country (Action). Bosnian and Norwegian musicians joined forces in an ensemble performing Bosnian and Norwegian musics for Bosnian and Norwegian audiences, thus bringing closer together people operating ‘with different cultural codes’ (Adjustment). Lectures and university classes pointing to musical and cultural specifics of the Bosnians assisted the external (Norwegian) decision makers in improving the communication with

the Bosnians and consequently in improving the decision-making process (Administrative). The Bosnians, being the primary subjects of this project in applied ethnomusicology, were offered initiative and virtually limitless choices of how to define themselves and how to interact with the Norwegians.” (Pettan 2008:91) “Azra” was quickly recognised as the model through which an ethnomusicologist transmits knowledge “from fairly small and closed circle of academic elite to those to whom that knowledge can help in everyday life, from making political decisions to establishing coexistence in the field.” (Pettan 1995:231) It is important to note that through public presentations at lectures and international, interviews for written and electronic media, and through numerous works, Pettan presented the results of his research, and thus contributed to the strengthening of Bosnian cultural identity and stimulating positive cultural communication.

During 1996, Ursula Hemetek and Sofija Bajraktarević⁸ had started a project “Life signs of one endangered culture – Bosnians in Vienna”. The aim of the project was to get the answers to the questions “Is it endangered?” and if it is, “In which ways is the traditional music present among Bosnian refugees in Austria, in which way is it expressed, does it have a special function? – and if it does, which?”, and finally, “In which way it is connected to the question of the identity and integration in the new environment?” The project involved documenting and processing material collected during field research, and then its public presentation. (Hemetek, Bajraktarević 1999:174) The results of the research were published in several scientific papers, and selected field recordings on the CD *Sevdah in Vienna*.⁹

8 Sofija Bajraktarević escaped from Banja Luka to Vienna. Sofija is a Bosnian Serb, and her husband is a Muslim. Their ethnically mixed marriage was the reason for their departure from Bosnia and Herzegovina. As an ethnomusicologist, she sought the opportunity to use her knowledge in a new environment. (See Hemetek 2015:251)

9 Along with the CD there is also an accompanying booklet in Bosnian, German and English, in which the recorded material is described.

It is important to mention the research of Vesna Andree Zaimović entitled “Musical expressions of Bosnian and Herzegovinian diaspora in Slovenia”. Andree Zaimović herself had participated in numerous musical activities of Bosnians in Slovenia, such as “Cultural weekend of children from Bosnia and Herzegovina – Vodnikova Domačija”, the ensembles of young refugees *Vali* and *Dertum* and numerous concerts of traditional folk and popular music performed by established musicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Andree-Zaimović 1999)

A few years later, Andree Zaimović defended her master's thesis on the *Musical Expressions of the Bosnian Diaspora in Western European Culture* (2003) dealing with issues of Bosnian cultural identity, the structure of the Bosnian diaspora, the function of music in the diaspora, Sevdalinka as a music identity, the perception of domestic music among members of the diaspora and performances of local show business workers in the countries where the Bosnian diaspora lives. The research was mainly focused on examples from Slovenia and only sporadically from other Western European countries. In the last few years, several very interesting works have been created related to the musical expression of Bosnian refugees in Slovenia by the authors Alenka Bartulović and Miha Kozorog. Special attention was dedicated to the musical expression of women (Bartulović, Kozorog 2017) and young people who fled from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kozorog, Bartulović 2015; Kozorog 2017).

Ethnomusicological research has shown that Bosnian refugees experienced sevdalinka as the most important musical form through which they confirmed their cultural and national identity. Why Sevdalinka? Sevdalinka is a Bosnian traditional urban love song which was developed during the Ottoman period as an amalgamation of Slavic and oriental cultural components.

Its longevity and continued popularity demonstrate both the flexibility of its interpretative style and its profound capacity to evoke beauty and deep sensibility. Sevdalinka has operated as a popular form

on different levels throughout its history. In the Ottoman period it was simply the most acceptable urban song among the ruling class in Bosnian towns. In the post-Ottoman period sevdalinka's popularity rose within the most common public setting – the kafana. Its further modernization and popularity was made possible through the developing recording industry and public media (radio, television and concert venues). Hence, sevdalinka successfully maintained its historicity as a genre of classical value even as it gained currency as a form of popular music. (Petrović 2017:713)

Sevdalinke are folk songs that do not have a known author. They were transferred by oral transmission. It is important to mention that there were also numerous songs in the spirit of sevdalinka that have a known author. People also called these songs sevdalinka. Sevdalinka became a Bosnian cultural brand that gained popularity beyond the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Until the 1990s, sevdalinka had a unique identity for all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Hall “Identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.” (1996:2) The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has led to the homogenisation of ethnic communities that have begun to promote exclusively ethnic cultural values. During this period, sevdalinka began to be perceived as a Bosniak national symbol. Unlike the divided opinions in the homeland, the sevdalinka for Bosnian refugees has become a “good medium to promote cultural values of Bosnia and Herzegovina” in a “paradigm of ideal Bosnia”. (Andree Zaimović 2003:214)

Transplanted throughout the world by Bosnian refugees, it became a symbol not only of the Bosniaks in diaspora, but of other Bosnian emigrants. During the ethnic war sevdalinka had also caught the attention of humanitarian workers, journalists and soldiers, whose

interest broadened international awareness of the genre. The export of sevdalinka beyond Bosnia coincided with the rise of general interest in world music. Today, concerts by sevdalinka performers abroad attract diverse audiences, who share the strong emotional responses of Bosnian emigrants. Sevdalinka's endurance seems assured, as sophisticated presentations emerge from the new generations of Bosnian (and some non-Bosnian) performers who bring their own approaches and interpretations to the exploration of its meanings, aesthetics and expressive demands. (Petrović 2017:714)

Ankica Petrović's claims were confirmed by the above-mentioned research. The repertoire of the Azra ensemble consisted of sevdalinka and new songs composed in the spirit of sevdalinka. According to Pettan, well-known songs were chosen "which were beloved cross-ethnically describe scenes and topics to which Bosnians are expected to have an emotional relationship". (1996:251) According to Hemetek, in the case of Bosnian refugees, sevdalinka did not symbolise an ethnic group but "the common musical heritage of people with different ethnic backgrounds who had shared cultural and national identities. It was the war that destroyed these shared identities. So the song genre of sevdalinka served as a symbolic expression of a vanished world and as a means to survive in the situation of being refugees." (2015:270–271)

Bosnian refugees and their "new" life in the countries that accepted them were the subject of ethnological, anthropological and economic research. Bosnian anthropologist Hariz Halilović (2006, 2015) who lives in Australia, wrote about forced migrations, experiences of migrants, trans-local identities, as well as the potentials of the Bosnian diaspora. Val Colic-Peisker (2003) explored collective identity politics, the construction of Bosnian "diasporic" communities, and the integration of Bosnians into the labour market in Australia. Marita Eastmond (1998, 2006), Maja Povrzanović Frykman (2010, 2012) and Catharina Raudvere (2016) wrote valuable ethnological

and anthropological studies about the experiences of Bosnian refugees in Sweden. Researches about Yugoslav associations in Sweden by Henry Bäck (1987) and musical activities of Yugoslav people in Sweden by Owe Ronström (1992) represent important theoretical sources.

Music and migrations, musical performances in diaspora, music and cultural identity of diaspora, as well as music of minorities in the context of migrations were the subject of research of a larger number of ethnomusicologists. (Hall 1993; Skyllstad 1993; Reyes 2001; Lundberg, Malm, Ronström 2003; Rice 2007; Ramnarine 2007) The research and published papers mentioned that are related to musical expressions of Bosnian refugees and cultural contexts in which they happen and overviews of the persons that make this music, perform it and listen to it were extremely important for the methodological approach to this research. Equally important are ethnological and anthropological studies which describe the experiences of Bosnian refugees. Thanks to these studies, it was possible to gain an insight into the life of refugees, as well as their experiences in certain countries. The papers in which research related to members of other nations who were refugees, migrants or diaspora in different parts of the world were presented opened up new possibilities for different approaches to research.

During the three months of research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by six months of research in different parts of Sweden (Malmö, Arlöv, Landskrona, Helsingborg, Gislaved, Gnosjö, Värnamo, Stockholm, Uppsala, Nyköping, Norrköping, Västerås, Göteborg, Gävle, Falun), I have conducted interviews with more than 70 persons of Bosnian origin who were directly or indirectly involved in musical activities. These were members of cultural associations, Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations, APU network and members of musical ensembles. The interviews with persons who were not directly involved in musical activities, but followed them as the members of the audience at concerts and other events, or through

written or electronic media, were important in understanding the function of music in diaspora.

Interviews were structured differently according to pre-defined and elaborated issues. I made four different groups of questions that were adapted to informers – people who are not directly involved in music activities (presidents and secretaries of cultural associations), people who create and perform music, heads of folklore and musical ensembles in cultural associations and editors of written and electronic media. The questions were divided into several groups. The first set of questions was the same for all speakers, referring to their basic biographical data, including questions about the reasons for their arrival in Sweden (political migrants, labour migrants, refugees), their integration experiences, as well as reflections on identity. The following groups of questions were focused on their cultural and, particularly, musical activities. For informants, the questions were mostly related to the history of certain associations, the work of music sections, the organisation of music events, celebrations and informal gatherings, the presentation of the work of the association, as well as the problems they face in their work. For those making and performing music, questions were directed to their musical activity: when, where and how they perform their musical activities, the repertoire they perform, the importance of promoting the Bosnian tradition, and the promotion of their activities in the wider community. The questions for the music section leaders were related to their music education, experience in the leading of sections (in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden), the selection of the repertoire, the presentation of the work of the sections, and the problems they encounter in their work. Additional questions about non-formal education were also given to the leaders of folklore ensembles (seminars with folkloristic themes such as the characteristics of individual dance zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina, folklore and stage, etc.), previous experiences in cultural-artistic associations, selection of the dance repertoire, the interest of young people in participating in folklore sections, and other

relevant issues related to the work of folklore ensembles. Questions for editors of the written and electronic media were focused on the quality and quantity of musical activities of the Bosnian people in Sweden, the promotion of their work in the media, the concerts of Bosnian bands in Sweden, the festivals organised by the Bosnians in Sweden, as well as the concerts by Bosnian stage artists and bands, organisation and media promotion. Besides individual interviews, I also conducted four group interviews involving 5–10 people. These were mostly homogeneous groups of the group from the educational and social aspect, and their musical activities were related to music sections. I did this kind of interview after a rehearsal with choirs or vocal groups. Although there is frequent controversy about the shortcomings of the group interview (a small number of people are considered unrepresentative), in this case it is reasonable to point out the advantages of this kind of interview. Namely, the questions were related exclusively to their work in the section, and more of the speakers gave answers to the same questions. The responses were not always the same because each of the informants expressed their personal opinion. In certain moments, discussion developed that opened up possibilities for better understanding and clarification of specific research problems to researcher. Although the interviews were structured, the speakers could spontaneously and freely respond to the questions asked.

Besides interviews, I have recorded activities such as rehearsals of the choirs and folklore ensembles, folklore festivals and informal gatherings. I recorded choir and folk ensemble rehearsals mostly during the first months of research. At that time, they were held several times a week and lasted longer than usual. In fact, these were the final preparations for the national festival of culture and education, organised by the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden. Informal gatherings organised in homes, associations, open spaces or in some other places occupy a significant place in the lives of the Bosnians in Sweden. For me, this was an ideal opportunity to

record their behaviour and emotions, and ultimately the music that results from such events.

Fieldworks, from the methodological perspective, required that “besides classical methods of interviews and participant observation” a new approach is applied which assumes “long-term involvement into the lives of those who were subject of research through numerous situations and different types of interactions, reciprocal relationship of giving and taking, friendship, common activities and actions, such as musical apprenticeship and exchange”. (Ceribašić 2015:187) Therefore, it was necessary to apply two strategies of qualitative research – observation and participation. The aim of the observation was to gain knowledge of certain life situations, and especially of creating and performing music as a means of communication in informal situations. Unlike observation, participation implied my active involvement in music and dance activities. This type of interactive approach, which involves being part of everyday life, represents a great challenge for the researcher, but also for those who are the subject of the research and the social group to which they belong. In those circumstances, the researcher “becomes/stays part of social environment of the field, which changes with his/her presence” and can hardly keep professional distance and “neutrality”. (Halilović 2008:116) Nettl believes that we do ethnomusicology in the field, but if we try to describe “how members of a folk dance club in Chicago construct their conception of their own ethnicity”, then we are writing musical ethnography. (Nettl 2005:246) From this, it follows that fieldwork is “a process through which observation becomes inseparable from representation and interpretation”. (Barz, Cooley 2008:4)

Therefore, the positivist approach based on facts, rationality and objectivity is simply not applicable in this type of research because “the researcher is not a neutral observer” but a person who “by interacting with the people about whom he writes, and by his own presence in the situations he describes, affects on the so-called ‘material’”. (Pov-

rzanović Frykman 2004:101) The experiences of previous researchers have been confirmed by my research. During my six-month long stay in Sweden, I have spent a certain amount of time in Bosnian families. This was a good opportunity to get acquainted with their way of life, integration into the new environment, thoughts about identity, their connection to their homeland and understanding of social and cultural practices that take place outside of national boundaries. Special focus was on their musical expressions, whether it was traditional folk music of Bosnia and Herzegovina or some other musical genres.

3. Migration Waves: Bosnians in Sweden

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA is a geographically small country located on the Balkan Peninsula. Throughout its history, Bosnia and Herzegovina was in a peripheral position towards the great centres of culture and civilisation – Rome and Byzantium, Vienna and Constantinople, East and West, Mediterranean and Central Europe: receiving their influence, but also creating its own socio-cultural field in which these influences intertwined and reshaped each other. (See Lovrenović 2014) After centuries of independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina was for almost four centuries (1463–1878) under Ottoman rule. At the Berlin Congress¹⁰ in 1878, it was agreed that Bosnia and Herzegovina would fall under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After the First World War, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (since 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). At the time, Bosnia and Herzegovina had stagnated politically and economically compared with other parts of the Kingdom.¹¹ After the Second World War, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (since 1963, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) was formed, consisting of six republics – Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia – and the two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo that were part of Serbia.

The unfavourable political, social and economic conditions con-

10 The Berlin Congress was held from June 13 to July 13, 1878. In Berlin, it was chaired by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The Congress brought together all the representatives of the then great powers: Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

11 In 1929, there were administrative and political changes in Yugoslavia, mainly at the expense of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the first time in its history, Bosnia was divided, and its territory belonged to the Vrbaska, Drinska, Zetska and Primorska banovina.

tributed to a large displacement of the population from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Migration processes took place through different historical periods and were based on essentially different historical experiences and contextual situations. The migration of Bosnians to the countries of Western Europe can be traced in the context of migrations and other parts of Yugoslavia. The first migrations were recorded shortly after the World War II¹², and in the 1960s they experienced their peak.

The historical background to Yugoslav post-war processes of migrancy is a rapid industrialization process in the country after the Second World War. Masses of a peasant nation were set on the move, indulged with visions of a brighter "European" future to be realized in their Balkan homelands. However, by the mid-1960's Yugoslav society became marked by the "saturation-effect" of industrialization, labour transfer from agriculture and a rapid proliferation of bureaucratic structures and national elites. New internal political-economic changes (1962–1967) and an unequal integration of Yugoslavia into the "international division of labour" struck a fundamental blow to visions of prosperity and social mobility for millions of peasants and workers. Twenty years after revolution thousands of Yugoslavs would pour across the borders to seek work in the industrial cities of northern and Western Europe. (Schierup, Ålund 1987:23)

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- 12 According to Pepeonik, in 1945 30 Yugoslavs had a residence permit in Sweden, and in 1950, 111. These data are completely incorrect. Among the Yugoslav migrants there were those who illegally left Yugoslavia because they did not agree with the political ideology, so they declared themselves as citizens without land. (1975:41) Among them was Izet Serdarević, the first ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sweden. The Law on Cooperatives of 1946, which implied that members of a peasant co-operative had to give their land to the cooperative, and could keep only a house with a garden and surrounding buildings (a stable, a hay storage room), has stepped up the departure of Yugoslav peasants to Sweden and other Western European countries overseas countries.

Thus it concerned working migrants who went to the countries of Western Europe looking for work and better living conditions. At that time, in Sweden and other Western European countries there was a need for unskilled labour.¹³ On the other hand, Yugoslav labour migration in Western Europe was considered part of the Yugoslav working class and referred to as “Yugoslav citizens who temporarily work abroad”.

According to a survey conducted by the Swedish Immigration Commission (Invandrarutredningen) and a group of experts in labour market research (EFA – Expertgruppen för utredningsverksamhet i arbetsmarknadsfrågor) from 1969, in the period from January 1, 1964 until December 31, 1968, 12,324 Yugoslavs moved to Sweden. The largest number of workers was from Serbia (5,455), Croatia (3,529), Slovenia (1,458) and Macedonia (997). In the same period, 832 workers from Bosnia and Herzegovina came to work in Sweden. (V. Pepeonik 1975:51) Migrants moved from various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and mostly settled in places with a developed industry. According to Musić, in the 1960s two groups of about fifty people came to work at Volvo in Gothenburg. Most of them were from the Bosnian Krajina, especially from Prijedor and the surrounding area. Groups of women from Bihać, Banja Luka and Tuzla came to work in the textile industry in Borås. (Interview with Šuaib Musić, Gothenburg, October 4, 2018) According to Fikret Ferhatović, “We came from Sarajevo from 1965 to 1967, we were young adventurers, served the army and decided to see the world, to see the pursuit”. The journey took them completely by accident to Sweden. They continued their education, became employed and started families. Most of them stayed in Stockholm. (Interview with Fikret Ferhatović, Stockholm, September 13, 2018)

13 This is supported by the fact that since the mid-1950s, Sweden has abolished visas for Turkey, Greece, Germany, Portugal and Spain. Visas for citizens of Yugoslavia were abolished on July 1, 1964.

According to data from 1970, the largest number of Yugoslavs settled in the south and southwestern part of Sweden, and in Stockholm and its surroundings.¹⁴ In 1971, after the Finns, the Yugoslavs constituted the largest number of working migrants in Sweden. According to statistics, the number of Yugoslav workers, which was 22,491 on January 1st 1968, had by 1971 almost doubled and amounted to 40,726. Working migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina were in total 2165, mostly from the municipalities Bosanska Dubica¹⁵ (471), Sarajevo and surroundings (199) and Bosanska Gradiška (109). (See Pepeonik 1975:52–54)

At the turn of the 1970s, Sweden closed the door to migrant labour. The next decade was characterized by migration through family reunification, so the number of Yugoslavs continued to increase. According to Pepeonik, a large number of Yugoslav labour migrants did not intend to return to Yugoslavia. The reason for this lies with the attitude of the Swedish authorities to migrant workers.

“They do not treat them as ‘guests’ or ‘temporary employees’, but as their migrants who gradually want to include not only in work, but also in Swedish society, either by integration or even assimilation. This leads to the gradual transformation of a part of temporary migrants to permanent emigrants. On the adoption of a number of Yugoslav citizens to settle permanently in Sweden affects a whole range of factors. The most important among them are: safe employment, much higher incomes than in Yugoslavia, the possibility of faster and higher savings, more and more frequent entries in Swedish books of

14 In Malmö and its surroundings there were 8,866 people from Yugoslavia, Stockholm 5,405, Gothenburg 5,353, and Jönköping 2,904.

15 The largest labour migrations from Bosnia and Herzegovina were recorded in the poorer southern parts of the country, particularly Herzegovina. According to the information I obtained during the research, the reason for migration from the villages belonging to Bosanska Dubica (and probably the same case in Bosanska Gradiška) was as already mentioned agrarian reform from the 1946.

real estate owners, attending to the Swedish way of life and living, participation in the Swedish standard of living that is much higher than the standard in the country, the solution to the housing problem that, for many in Yugoslavia, may have been decisive when going abroad, then the possibility of free education for children but also of one's own further education, free Swedish language learning with whom it is even more firmly bound to that country, and gets same social benefits as the domestic population." (Pepeonik 1975:122–123)¹⁶

During the research, I spoke with several person who came from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1970s to Sweden. Everyone confirmed that the reasons for their stay in Sweden were better living conditions, better earnings and the possibility of further education. It is important to note that, since the mid-seventies, Sweden has officially adopted multiculturalism as the leading policy on immigrants and national minorities. In the Swedish Constitution (Regeringsformen) of 1974, it was emphasised that different groups defined by language, ethnicity and religion should be supported in order to maintain their cultural heritage and identities. As early as the following year, the Swedish Parliament adopted a strategy whose policy base was summarized through the notion of "equality, freedom of choice and co-operation".

Equality had been the dominant theme in the Swedish welfare state from its inception, based on a desire to create a strong society which provides security through an extensive and universalist welfare model serving all members of society. The emphasis on egalitarianism was the legacy of a long social democratic hegemony based on a strong belief in state intervention and regulation, which has also shaped the field of immigrant inclusion for over 30 years. Integration was therefore unquestionably a project to be guided by the state and its

¹⁶ Translated by Lejla Čausević Karačić.

welfare institutions, a strategy with broad political and bureaucratic consensus. Freedom of choice was understood as the option of groups to retain their culture and cooperation envisioned the relation between groups in society. However, the implicit assumptions of this strategy were problematic, seeing immigrants as a group requiring special treatment to adapt to Swedish society. (Eastmond 2011:281)

The monopolistic cultural policy, which was dominant until 1976, was replaced by a policy of “diversity” that referred to “differences between people and the specific cultural needs of minorities”. (Lundberg, Malm, Ronström 2003:35) Thus, diversity in terms of expressions, forms and styles was the central concept in cultural life. This policy also significantly influenced the Yugoslav workers who for existential reasons went to Sweden, and eventually felt other benefits that living there brought them. Unlike the migrant workers who were staying in Austria and Germany, whose ultimate goal was to provide material resources for returning home, the Yugoslavs in Sweden were afraid that when returning to their homeland they could face the same or similar problems they had before their departure. That’s why a large number decided to stay in Sweden.

Working migrants have gone through a very complex process of adapting to the new environment and a new way of life. The reasons for this should mainly be found in the fact that they were unskilled persons who performed heavy physical activities, did not know the Swedish language, and had no contact with the local population. We should not ignore the fact that working migrants mainly originated from rural areas and had already built a system of social and cultural values that was based on the local tradition of their homeland. Unlike the process of adapting to working responsibilities and discipline that took place quickly and without problems, the process of adapting to social and cultural habits took place slowly and at the level of communicative abilities. In order to create their own cultural identity in the new environment, it was necessary to develop a new cultural

context within which it would preserve and develop its national, Yugoslavian identity. So they began to form associations and clubs, and then school and religious buildings. Ronström mentions that there were numerous Yugoslav restaurants in Stockholm, some of them bearing names that depict national or geographical affiliations such as Bosnia, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik and others. Restaurants, among other things, also offered national specialties such as *pljeskavica*, *ćevapi* and *ražnjići*. (See Ronström 1992:59) In May 1970, the Yugoslav Union in Sweden was formed, consisting of seven associations. In 1976, the Yugoslav Union in Sweden launched its own newspaper *Jugoslavenski list* (*Yugoslav newspaper*) which was published twice a month until 1993.

At the end of the 1980s, some republics clearly indicated that they did not want to stay in Yugoslavia because of the politics that followed Tito's death. The situation in the country made Yugoslav migrants in Sweden and other countries very concerned. At the beginning of the 1990s there was a breakup of Yugoslavia. Due to ideological disagreements with the policy of the then Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, Slovenia and Croatia decided to secede from Yugoslavia. In January 1992, the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a decision to call a referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At a referendum held on February 28 and March 1, 1992, 70% of the population voted, of which 98% voted for the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war that had previously started in Slovenia and then in Croatia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached its peak and caused the greatest wave of refugees in Europe after the Second World War.¹⁷ These forced migrations from Bosnia and Herzegovina were the result of politically motivated violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide, not only due to the war, but also its

17 Due to the war crimes that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and later in Kosovo, on 25th May 1993, the Security Council adopted resolution 827 establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (fr. Tribunal pénal international pour l'ex-Yugoslavie).

direct aim. The result is not just a change in the demographic/ethnic image of entire regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also their mass depopulation. (Halilović 2013:63–64) According to available information, more than 2,000,000 people have been expelled from their homes, of which almost 800,000 have remained in countries of Western Europe. (Colic-Peisker 2003, Eastmond 2011, Povrzanović Frykman 2012) During 1992–1993, Sweden received 42,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. By 1995, another 18,000 Bosnian refugees arrived in Sweden. More than 90% of refugees were under the age of 50, and nearly a third of them were children under the age of 15. In the period of 1992–1995, 55,862 Bosnians applied for asylum in Sweden.

Unlike labour migrants who mostly originated from rural areas and were almost without any education, refugees from the 1990s were of urban and rural origin, mostly well educated, and some of them with pre-built professional careers. According to statistical data for STATIV for 2007, about 25% of Bosnian refugees had a university degree and about 50% had completed secondary school. According to Ekberg, 12.5% of refugees settled in Gothenburg and Malmö, 1.9% in Gnosjö, Gislaved, Vaggeryd and Värnamo, and 85.6% in other parts of Sweden. At the same time, a very small number decided to live in Stockholm. Although the unemployment rate in Gothenburg and Malmö was rather large, it can be concluded that the Bosnians settled in those places to be close to their compatriots (See Ekberg 2016:7–8). The 2003 and 2013 data show that the number of Bosnian refugees increased in these places, and decreased in other parts of Sweden. The reason for this was mainly good employment opportunities. Although the early 1990s were years of recession and increased unemployment, the Bosnians were quite successful in finding work and are often cited as a good example of the integration of migrants into Swedish society. (Povrzanović Frykman 2012, Ekberg 2016)

The Bosnians who fled to Sweden as adults have, over time, changed their conception of home, homeland and affiliation. Marita Eastmond's

research has shown that “many wanted to return as soon as the war was over, but they were also open and pragmatically oriented towards new residents, while others were convinced of the perspective of rebuilding a better life for themselves and their families in Sweden”. (Eastmond 2011:289) Political circumstances in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina were not favourable to refugees and displaced persons. Thus, Bosnian refugees have become emigrants, and their temporary displacement has grown into a lengthy/permanent displacement, both in Sweden and other countries of Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States. (See Halilović 2013) However, since 1995, migrations from Sweden to Bosnia and Herzegovina have been recorded and reached their peak in 1997.¹⁸ (Olovsson 2007:5)

Due to the unfavourable political situation and economic conditions, since 2000 new migrations from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sweden¹⁹ and other Western European countries have begun. The most common migrants are young educated and qualified people,

18 The return of Bosnian working migrants and refugees from Sweden is still occurring sporadically today. Bosnian-Herzegovinian portals and daily newspapers published several stories about returnees from Sweden who started successful small businesses or returned to spend their old age in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will mention several examples of daily newspapers or web portals: the migrant worker Milenko Konjevod who went to Sweden in the 1980s returned to the displaced village of Hutovo (<https://www.bljesak.info/lifestyle/flash/iz-svedske-se-vratio-u-rodno-hutovo-u-zaledu-neuma/151643>, Accessed: May 31, 2018.); The story of Samir Jusufović: Ethno design: In the dust near the road, he got an idea for a product that is now being sold all over the world, (<https://manager.ba/vijesti/u-pra%C5%Aini-kraj-ceste-dobio-ideju-za-proizvod-koji-sada-prodaje-%C5%Airom-svijeta>, Accessed: May 31, 2018.); The Antunović family from Humac near Ljubuški returned from Sweden and started production of bar (<https://www.hercegovina.info/vijesti/hercegovina/povratnici-iz-svedske-pokrenuli-proizvodnju-sipka-u-hercegovini>, Accessed: May 31, 2018.); Refugee Mehmed Ademović from Glodi near Zvornik opened a tourist-catering complex and hired 15 returnees (<http://kalesijske-novine.com/o8/bosanski-ponos-i-tvrđavost-novac-zaraden-u-svedskoj-ulozio-u-svoje-ognjiste-u-glodima-otvorio-turisticki-kompleks-i-zaposlio-povratnike/>, Accessed: May 31, 2018.)

19 According to Sweden's statistics, in 2003 and 2004, some 2,500 Bosnians were registered in the Department of Migration as asylum seekers. (See Westin 2006)

or “brain drain”, who easily find jobs in developed countries. Such migrants are welcome because the recipient countries have a “direct brain gain”, that is, they get ‘ready-made’ experts without having invested anything in their training.” (Halilović 2006:206)

It is very difficult to determine the exact number of Bosnians living in Sweden today. According to the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sweden “there are about 80,000 persons originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the descendants of Bosnian-Herzegovinian emigrants born in Sweden, i.e. the second and third generations of Bosnian migrants, who are in number the third immigrant group in that country. Most of them have acquired Swedish citizenship – around 50,000 – since Sweden is one of the countries with which Bosnia and Herzegovina has signed a bilateral dual citizenship agreement.” (<http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/iseljenistvo/default.aspx?id=6233&langTag=bs-BA#%C5%AoVED-SKA>, Accessed: May 31, 2018.)

Integrating into the new environment, and especially the finding how to succeed, was not easy. Theoretically, the process of integration is analysed using different decision models based on individual rationality. Empirical integration is usually explored in relation to specific sectors of society such as linguistic competence, norms and values, education, work, housing and the use of social services. (See Schierup, Ålund 1987:16)

Unlike voluntary migrations, such as in the 1960s, Bosnian refugees were forced to migrate. Therefore, one should not forget that “behind various demographic statistics are ordinary people and their (un) ordinary life destinies”. (Halilović 2006:195) During the first year of their stay, Bosnian refugees lived in refugee camps, because only in this way could they seek asylum in Sweden. There they met people from various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who in different ways had experienced the horrors of war.

Most people had suffered severe losses, human as well as material,

as they were driven out of their homes, but their exposure to violence differed. There was a smaller number of people who had been in combat, exposed to concentration camps and/or sexual assault. However, such extreme experiences were only tacitly acknowledged and not willingly talked about in the community. 'He was at Omarska' or 'She comes from Srebrenica' were cues to identify such persons but their experiences were never further commented on. (Eastmond 2011:289)

Regardless of the fact that nearly a quarter of a century had passed, the informants had a very vivid memory of the days spent in refugee camps. They were aware of the fact that they were able to escape an immediate life threat, but life in refugee camps brought a number of psychological and social problems. According to Pettan, psychological problems stemmed from “the surplus of free time, which allows refugees to restore painful memories often” and fear of an uncertain future, while social problems have largely arisen “from insufficient communication between refugees and the local population in the country that temporarily settled them.” (1995:224) To this should be added separation from members of a closer or further family about which they mostly did not have any information.

With due gratitude to the country that received them, the majority of the informants also relate very painful memories of the attitude of employees in refugee centres towards them: they sometimes treated them as “uncivilized” persons.²⁰

After their arrival in refugee camps, Bosnian refugees joined the programmes of local communities, consisting of Swedish language courses and work training. This programme aimed to speed up the integration process in terms of inclusion in social and economic

20 Upon their arrival in the camps, they explained how to use a cistern, showers in the bathrooms, an electric stove, a washing machine and other devices that were available to them. This attitude of the employees towards Bosnian refugees was mostly interpreted as degrading, resulting from ignorance of their civilization and cultural values, or their way of life in the homeland.



One of the entrances to the settlement Rosengård (Malmö) where Zlatan Ibrahimović grew up and where Bosnian refugees were placed after receiving asylum. Malmö, August 31, 2018. Photo: Jasmina Talam.

independence. The experiences were different.²¹ The elderly immediately sought work to achieve economic independence as soon as possible, while the younger ones continued their education at higher education institutions or retrained themselves to more easily find a job. Regardless of the many difficulties they encountered, the Bosnians, with respect to migrants from other countries, were the most successful in integrating into the Swedish society. A large number of

21 A comprehensive survey was conducted by Maja Povrzanović Frykman on experiences related to employment in Sweden, as part of a project on the integration of refugees in the labor market in Sweden which was conducted in 2009 at the Institute for Migration Research, University of Malmö. (Povrzanović Frykman 2012) During my stay in Luleå in May 1998, I met several Bosnian refugees who quickly got a job, bought houses and built a new life in Sweden and did not intend to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnians work in economic activities, but not by no means a negligible number of those have emerged as doctors in clinics, professors, and researchers at universities and other scientific institutes. Individuals have started their own businesses and today they have very successful companies. The Bosnians have emerged as eminent artists and athletes, among whom certainly the most significant is Zlatan Ibrahimović. In almost all regions, Bosnians are actively involved in the political life of Sweden and are active as members of parliament or perform other responsible functions, such as the positions of mayors and ministers.

4. Transmigration: Life Between Home and Home

“BETWEEN HOME AND HOME” is part of the title I borrowed from the article by Catharina Raudwere (2009), so I want to explain why I used it. Since the 1960s, migrant workers have sought to maintain continuous and vital connections between countries of origin and the country they migrated to and thus created transnational social spaces. According to Povrzanović Frykman, “people who connect important elements of their social and cultural lives across national boundaries are called transmigrants, and social spaces and networks of relationships in everyday life – transnational social fields or transnational social spaces.” (2001:13–14)

Thus, the term transmigrants refers to persons who create and maintain social relationships that connect their place of origin and place of residence. Transmigrations²² are processes in which transmigrants retain social, economic, and political relationships through their activities, connecting their country of origin with the country in which they migrated.

Since the places of origin of remain an important identity marker, forced migrants endeavour to recreate these social places in the new locations through memories, narration, enactment, and meetings with former neighbours, thus creating a ‘new home away from home’, both similar and different from the one they had left. The attachment to the idea of the old place as home should not be seen as a hindering factor for migrants and refugees in their new places of settlement. Rather, it provides them with a ‘sense of possibility’ to (re)create their

22 Considering the cross-border social practices created by modern migrants, Čapo Žmegač suggests the term “intergovernmental translocality”. (2003:119)

new home constructed around “[the] desire to promote the feeling of being there here”. (Halilović 2012:13)

In the case of migrant workers and later Bosnian refugees, relations with the homeland exist in various forms – from the exchange of resources and information, visits and trips to marriages between persons who migrated with people in their homeland. Transnational social spaces are often confined to regions or local communities, or places of origin. The reason for this lies in the fact that the places of origin for most of the Bosnia and Herzegovina migrants bear a sense of identity. Thus, the term “home” can be used for the place where they reside and perform daily activities and for the place from which they originate or to which they belong, which points to their identity and “demonstrates a conscious connection with a particular group”. (Povrzanović Frykman 2010:41) This is best described by the words of Esmā Huseinović: “When we go on vacation – we go home, when we return from vacation to Sweden – we go home. We all go home and never come home.” (Interview with Esmā Huseinović, Gislaved, August 26, 2018)

In the first years of their stay in Sweden, Bosnian refugees received financial assistance, which they said was sufficient to meet basic living needs. From such a modest budget, they tried to save money and send to their relatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this period, there were also numerous associations whose first task was to collect the money they sent to help in various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, most often places from where people from their local homeland escaped. Beginning a new life outside of refugee camps and gaining economic independence, enabled refugees more opportunities to send money to their relatives back home. It should be added that Bosnian refugees were regularly included in numerous humanitarian actions aimed to help sick individuals, vulnerable groups of people, certain institutions such as hospitals and schools, as well as the recon-

struction of certain facilities.²³ Although the inflow of money into Bosnia and Herzegovina is decreasing from year to year, according to the indicators from 2017, money transfers from the diaspora and other financial transfers from abroad annually reach the amount of 2.5 to 3.5 million KM (1.25 to 1.75 million EUR), which was 13% of the total of GDP of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Transnational connections of the Bosnian diaspora are also seen in frequent visits to the homeland. In the years that followed the war, Bosnians from Sweden regularly spent annual holidays in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These trips are carefully planned – from the transport they will travel with, to the gifts they will take. Traveling mostly took place by bus, rented, or by car, and lasted for thirty hours. According to Povrzanović Frykman, it is important to pay attention to the “huge amount of items” traveling in crowded cars and buses in both directions. (2010:43) On the road to their homeland, gifts for family and friends are mandatory. When choosing a gift, it is necessary to “find a balance between generosity – which aims to alleviate the economic inequality between donors and recipients, and to deal with possible discomforts of recipients who can not worthily repay.” (Povrzanović Frykman 2010:46) In some cases, the donor is fatigued because his “gifts resemble compulsory giving”. (*Ibid.*:46) On their return to Sweden, it was obligatory to take certain food products such as dried meat, cheese, coffee and other domestic products, home utility items – pots for coffee, sheets, skemlije (small wooden stools), Bosnian carpets – which can be treated as material symbols of belonging. Most informants have proudly pointed out that they in the last few years in particular Swedish supermarkets can find numerous Bosnian food products. This fact is very important to them because it enables them to find products that have identical significance for them.

23 During the research, I noted that only the association “BH Gislaved” continuously organises humanitarian actions, and the collected money is sent to poor or sick people whose unfortunate fates were recorded by Hayat television cameras and broadcast in the show “Ispuni mi želju” (“Fulfill my wish”).



Bosnian fast food in Malmö, August 30, 2018. Photo: Jasmina Talam.

In almost all major Swedish cities there are also Bosnian restaurants – from small fast food and mobile, or “restaurant on wheels”, to large restaurants. In small restaurants there are exclusively prepared national specialties from the grill, while on the menus of larger restaurants there are specialties of other countries.²⁴

In recent years, airline lines of low-cost companies that connect Bosnia and Herzegovina with Swedish cities Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg and Växjö have been introduced. Faster and cheaper

²⁴ According to the statements of the informants, Bosnian restaurants, as well as those owned by other people originating from neighboring countries, are visited by persons from the former Yugoslavia, as well as Swedes and tourists from other countries. Various events that promote products from Croatia, which are very popular in Bosnia and Herzegovina, are organized in larger restaurants. So on June 16, 2018 in the restaurant “Bosna” in Göteborg, the Croatian party – Žuja & Karlovačko was organised. Žuja and Karlovačko are the names of popular Croatian beers.

connections somewhat changed the habits of the Bosnians. A number of informants pleaded that they are now more likely to come to their homeland and, with annual leave, spend a few days for holidays or some other occasions. These are mostly people whose parents live in Bosnia and Herzegovina or have themselves renewed their pre-war flats or houses. People who do not have close relatives come home once a year, their stay is shorter and are often reduced to stays of a few days, before or after summer holidays by the Adriatic Sea. The special group consisting of pensioners most often spends the whole summer in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, the diaspora gathers in places where there were many victims to mark the anniversary of the collective funeral for victims of genocide in Srebrenica (July 11) or on the day that Omarska camp near Prijedor was disbanded (August 6).²⁵

The feeling of belonging is often confirmed in other transnational activities carried out individually in family circles, but also collectively in associations and cultural societies.²⁶ Most of the informants mentioned that their children, who were born in Sweden, are familiar with the language, culture and customs of the country from their early age. Some of the basic forms in which the family fosters a sense of belonging are:

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- 25 The anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica is marked in Sweden and other countries where there are numerous Bosnian diasporas. In addition to the Bosnian associations, the Swedish Expo Foundation, whose one of the founders is the celebrated Swedish writer Stieg Larsson (1954–2004), organises public events marking the anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica across Sweden in cooperation with the APU network.
 - 26 In Sweden, a large number of Bosnian associations are active, such as the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden (BHRF), Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Association in Sweden (BHKRF), Union of Bosnian-Swedish Association of Women in Sweden, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Youth Union in Sweden "BHUF", Bosnian-Herzegovinian Association of Teachers, Students and Parents in Sweden, Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations "Integrium", Association of inmates of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden and others. The programme objectives of these associations are focused on various activities – from humanitarian and educational to cultural and sports.

- the family speaks to one another in their mother tongue (Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian)
- Mother's culinary skills, acquired in her homeland, are passed on to her daughter
- ways of celebrating religious holidays
- marking the state holidays of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- directing children to attend native language classes
- mutual family gatherings and
- directing children to membership in Bosnian cultural societies.

It is especially important to mention everyday communication in the mother tongue that is practiced in a large number of Bosnian families, especially in smaller towns. Also, traditional dishes such as pies, Bosnian lonac, ćevapi, and various sweets are very common on the tables of Bosnian families.

A large number of Bosnian cultural associations organise various activities aimed at preserving their local or national social and cultural practices beyond their national and geographic space, reasserting their sense of belonging. Thus workshops for handicrafts (crochet, embroidery, knitting), recitation, drama, music and folklore sections are organised. Folklore sections, being the most recognisable, are in some way a model for the preservation of cultural practices inherited from Yugoslav associations. Fun and social gatherings that are organised for a particular occasion (or without one) in clubs, on club premises or some other places were also characteristic for migrant workers. Such a way of having fun with music and dance is characteristic of the Bosnians today, but also of the diaspora and of other countries that were created by the breakup of Yugoslavia. This should also be added to barbecues that are organised several times a year, especially in smaller areas such as Gislaved and Värnamo, in which Bosnian associations are well organised. In towns located in the central part of Sweden, where a relatively small number of Bosnians live today, parties are organised in a place where there is an association or club,



*Cakes prepared for Eid by
Zikreta Jašarspahić. Malmö,
August 20, 2018. Photo:
Jasmina Talam.*

and are also attended by people living in the surrounding cities.²⁷ Fun and social gatherings that take place under the auspices of the association can be defined as “transnational anchored parties” in the area of transnational affirmation. (Povrzanović Frykman 2010:44) At such parties, the most common feature is sevdalinka. As in other countries, the Bosnians perceive a sevdalinka as a symbol of their national and cultural identity. According to Andree Zaimović, sevdalinka grew into a symbol for several reasons:

- Formal-stylistic characteristics of sevdalinka become fully expressed in the situation of dislocation, especially if dislocation is marked by any kind of frustration ... By listening and performing sevdalinka, as a song of intimate character, it is not

²⁷ According to Emin Halilović’s statements, a small number of Bosnians live in Falun today. Communion and celebrations of state and religious holidays are organized in the Bosnian association “Ljiljan” in Borlänge, where the Bosnians who live in Falun and surrounding places are also present. (Written communication, October 3, 2018) Celebrations of state and religious holidays gathering Bosnians living in Stockholm and the surrounding places are organised at the Bosnian association “Neretva” from Hagsätra. (Interview with Ejub Đuliman, Hagsätra, September 15, 2018)

- possible to relocate only the atmosphere of the native country and homeland, but even more narrow and intimate notion: home.
- Ethos of sevdalinka sublimates Bosnia in the most positive light. Sevdalinka is full of sincerity, humanity, ethics, genuine Bosnian morality and the language of the heart. Its admirers would like to be seen, understood and accepted through the prism of such values.
 - The urban context of this form has been recognized by many Bosnians as the urban spirit of Bosnia that was the aim of destruction ...
 - Multiculturalism of sevdalinka today can be seen through its historical development and numerous transformations that left its trace on it.
 - Confirmation of cultural and ethnical identity through sevdalinka can be directed the way and individual wants it. Some people considered it as a song containing characteristics of Bosnianhood as transnational and multicultural category ...” (2003:214)

Transnational activities also include frequent performances by music artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden. APU networks, Riksteatern, private agency Kaponi, as well as other smaller agencies and associations, organise concerts and theatre performances in Swedish cities with a number of Bosnians of the diaspora. Concerts take place in smaller or larger buildings, depending on the artist's popularity. From conversations with informants – interpreters, concert organisers or audiences – it can be concluded that the concerts are well-visited. It is also important to mention the concerts of regional stage artists, especially those who gained great popularity before the breakup of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian diaspora often visits these concerts because the music that is performed is considered “domestic”, that is, it is music that reminds them of old times and life in the country. It is also important to mention pop and rock groups that were founded



*Gathering with barbecue of the Association "BH Gislaved", Gislaved, August 27, 2018.
Photo: Edisa Avdić.*

by Bosnians and which now occupy a significant place in the music life of Sweden. Their repertoire includes numerous covers of Bosnian sevdalinka, but also very popular songs that comprised a repertoire of Bosnian and regional groups in the pre-war period.

The research has shown that the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden is eager to hear and watch Bosnian and regional electronic media. In this way, they acquire information related to the country, and enjoy all other content offered to them. This should also be added to web portals where you can read all the news from the country, as well as other interesting content specifically related to their local homelands. In Sweden, there are several Bosnian radio stations that have a local character, but they have gained popularity across the country through the web pages.

In the end, the daily translocal connection with the homeland is maintained through various social networks.²⁸ These networks

²⁸ There are numerous families whose closest relatives (children, parents, sisters, brothers) live very far from each other. In fact, they fled in some cases in different

enable everyday contact with family and friends living in Bosnia and Herzegovina or other countries of the world. In addition to private translocal connections, the Bosnian diaspora has joined the World Federation of Diaspora of Bosnia and Herzegovina “with the aim of linking and coordinating the work of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations operating around the world”. The Alliance was created as a result of the need to exchange “information and ideas of interest in emigration, coordination and unique advancement in resolving issues of interest to the diaspora against authorities and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, and fostering that cooperation, then creating conditions for nurturing and developing Bosnian culture and tradition in diaspora and transfer to younger generations as well as the development of humanitarian, educational, economic and other forms of cooperation with the motherland of the country”. (<http://www.ssdbih.com/o-nama/>, Accessed: August 14, 2018) Within this alliance, representatives of the Bosnian diaspora from Sweden are also active.

From the previous lines, it can be concluded that the translocal activities of the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden are reflected in the preservation and confirmation of their identity and the endeavour to “sustain vital clues among different locations in different countries covered by their activities”. (Povrzanović Frykman 2010:40). On the other hand, these connections contribute to the promotion, and often to the reputation²⁹ of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the countries in which they live.

time periods and thus they had no possibility of family reunification. In some cases elderly refugees did not want to go to overseas countries, while their children in those countries saw the opportunity for a better life.

- 29 In an attempt to show the real state of the Bosnian diaspora, I used the expression often. Specifically, individuals were able to misuse the host country or the recipient country or participate in certain dishonest actions. Such cases were indeed rare, but they could negatively reflect on the positive status of the diaspora as well as on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its inhabitants.

I wish, though, to return to one significant sentence from the beginning of this chapter: “We all go home and never come home”. Although they live between home and home – trying to embrace all the values of Swedish society, but also to maintain the Bosnian tradition, they sometimes feel that there is no home in the true sense of the word. In Sweden they feel like strangers, not because Swedish society does not accept them but because they live with the fact that they were forced to leave their home in Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, leaving their homeland was not their desire but the struggle for survival. In spite of all the misfortunes that had come upon them, they tried to help the homeland and their closest ones who remained in it. Sometimes they went to their homeland with happiness and pleasure, but from year to year they feel a growing sorrow during their stay in their homeland.

I can say that every year I feel some disappointment ... The place I was living in was completely destroyed. The government changed, people changed. I do not know the people in the building I live in. They never lived here. Somehow I feel that we are forgetting our names ... When we come we are just a diaspora. It hurts more and more. This year I felt sadness and emptiness when I was down there. There you do not have your family and wherever you come they say the diaspora has arrived. It doesn't matter how much are we with our hearts and souls down there, how much we helped and how much we are collecting help today.³⁰

Bosnians in Sweden mostly retained the image of the homeland as it was before the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It seems difficult to accept the fact that “homeland or home there, in the form it was

30 Conversation with informant is recorded during field research in Gislaved, but because of the content of this statement I will not mention the name of informants.

and what they knew and remembered is no longer there, because homeland is not only a place, but it is also made up of people and relations; homeland is familiarity and intimacy with the physical environment, with a social and cultural environment.” (Halilović 2013:68) Therefore, nostalgia for home and homeland is actually nostalgia for the past, pre-war times in which they lived differently.

Another important issue is how Bosnia and Herzegovina is experienced by young people born in Sweden. Their knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the feeling of belonging is primarily conditioned by home-based education. In families where the mother tongue is spoken, culture and customs of the country of their origin are nurtured and family gatherings are organised, children experience Bosnia and Herzegovina as their homeland. Because of this, children belonging to the second or even the third generation of Bosnians in Sweden can be introduced with sentences like “coming from Kozarac and born in Sweden”. (Interview with Amela Isanović, Gothenburg, October 5, 2018) On the other hand, children who grow up in families where they live entirely the “Swedish” way of life, who have little information about Bosnia and Herzegovina and rare or no contacts with their fellow countrymen, most often do not speak their mother tongue and have almost no feelings for the country of their origin. A large number of informants consider it important that their children and grandchildren speak their mother tongue, preserve the national social and cultural practices of the country of origin, and nurture, develop and confirm their Bosnian identity. At the same time they emphasise the importance of accepting Swedish social and cultural values and integrating into the society in which they live. The answer to the question of how much Bosnia is present in their everyday life was very simple: “We are thinking Bosnian, we live Bosnian, and we work as if we are a Swedish people.” (Interview with Senija Bahtijarević, Gislaved, August 26, 2018) According to Sadeta Murić, “For us, Sweden is no foreign country, it is our second homeland. We were forced from our own country to go to another

foreign country. Nevertheless, it's unusual for you to preserve your identity. Without it, there is no integrity." (Presentation at the 23rd Festival of Culture and Education, Värnamo, October 6, 2018). Folk singer Antun Pejinović expressed his thought through the song.

*Pitaju me ljudi raznog soja,/People of different kinds ask me,
odakle sam,gdje je zemlja tvoja./where I am from,where my land is.
Kažem Bosna, srcem punim tuge,/I say Bosnia, with a heart full of sorrow,
zemlja moja i ja nemam druge./My land and I have no other.
Svaka druga dođe k'o sudbina,/Every other came like a fate,
u njoj živim, Bosna u grudima./I live in it, Bosnia in my chest.*

*Kad pitaju sve me nešto guši,/When they ask me everything suffocates me,
ime Bosne meni je na duši./Bosnia's name is on my soul.
Kažem Bosna, srcem punim tuge,/I say Bosnia, with a heart full of sorrow,
zemlja moja i ja nemam druge./My land and I have no other.
Svaka druga dođe k'o sudbina,/Every other came like a fate,
u njoj živim, Bosna u grudima./I live in it, Bosnia in my chest.*

*Nek pitaju, ja neću da krijem,/They can ask, I will not hide,
što bi krio gdje sam se rodio,/why would I hide where I was born,
gdje sam svoju mladost potrošio./where I spent my youth.
Kažem Bosna, srcem punim tuge,/I say Bosnia, with a heart full of sorrow,
zemlja moja i ja nemam druge./My land and I have no other.
Svaka druga dođe k'o sudbina,/Every other came like a fate,
u njoj živim, Bosna u grudima./I live in it, Bosnia in my chest.*

It is important to note that, thanks to a dual citizenship agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden signed in 2004, most

Bosnians in Sweden have dual citizenship. Certainly this aspect has contributed to the fact that the Bosnians in Sweden live between home and home, that is, between the homeland of their origin and the homeland that accepted them and provided them with a safe haven. Through their transnational activities, they managed to preserve the Bosnian identity, but at the same time successfully integrate into the Swedish society.

5. Bosnian Identity in a Transcultural Context

TALKING ABOUT BOSNIAN identity in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina is not easy. In order to understand the complexity of Bosnian identity, it is necessary to return to the past and to clarify the historical and social circumstances to which Bosnia and Herzegovina has been exposed throughout its history. Bosnia and Herzegovina was an independent state for more than a millennium. From the Ottoman era to World War II, the historical and social conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were very unfavourable.³¹ Yet they have left her a valuable heritage, that being pluralism of religions and cultures.

Elements of this pluralism by aggressive and obscure nationalisms have always been magnificent and possessed as something that only belongs to them, and not to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The legacy of the Bosnian culture has been proclaimed as constituent part of other organic entities, but peripheral, dislocated, placed in the side, The Bosnian spirit is perceived as a provincial spirit that gets its full value only in merging with the homeland. Therefore, as in many previous historical situations, the national spirit has been magnified, at the expense of the national spirit of Bosnia. (Andree Zaimović 2003:28–29)³²

³¹ After centuries of independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina was for almost four centuries (1463–1878) under Ottoman rule. At the Berlin Congress in 1878, it was agreed that Bosnia and Herzegovina would fall under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. After the First World War, Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Since 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). At the time, Bosnia and Herzegovina had stagnated politically and economically in comparison with other parts of the Kingdom.

³² Translated by Lejla Čaušević Karačić.

At the First Session of the National Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBIH) held on November 25, 1943, Bosnia and Herzegovina was defined as a common and indivisible homeland of Serbs, Croats and Muslims. On this basis, the fraternity and unity of all ethnic groups developed.

The Dayton Peace Agreement, signed on November 21, 1995, confirmed the independence and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but its former regional administrative division into regions was replaced by a division into two entities and a Brčko District with a special status. Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of three constituent peoples – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats and minority groups that almost do not have any rights in relation to the constituent peoples.³³ According to the provisions of the Dayton Agreement, the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian men or Bosnian women without representation of ethnicity are also a national minority.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the process of ethnic differentiation as a result of political events and constitutional provisions, inevitably led to various interpretations of Bosnian identity. In the pre-war years, the issue of identity did not have to be problematised, because identity was simply implied. In all parts of the former Yugoslavia, Bosnian-Herzegovinian identity was recognised as the identity of the community that inherited common spiritual creations such as language, customs and cultural creativity.

Rice believes that “the home of the essentialist position is the identity of the politics of nationalism and the oppression of powerful and subordinate positions defined by ethnicity, race, class, and

33 Discriminatory provisions of the Dayton Agreement towards national minorities were also confirmed by the judgment of the Human Rights Court in Strasbourg in the case of *Sejdić and Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The same court also issued several verdicts in which it was found that the rights of persons who do not want to declare themselves as constitutive people but as citizens are violated. Although the above-mentioned verdicts were pronounced several years ago, none of them has been implemented to date.

gender ... From the aspect of the constructivist position, identities are always constructed from the cultural resources available at any time." (Rice 2007:24) Pettan notes that the disintegration of Yugoslavia as a sense of ethnic identity "became the subject of strong political manipulation. The media were used to persuade people to have more similarities with members of their ethnic/national group no matter how far they live from each other, and most of them would never meet in their life, but with their first neighbors with whom coexistence should not be possible because they are of different ethnic affiliations." (Pettan 1995:248) This is also one of the reasons why Bosnian identity is often equated today with the Bosniak, that is, the identity of Bosnian Muslims who, unlike a large number of Bosnian Croats and Serbs, regard Bosnia as their only homeland.

How is the identity of the homeland reflected on the diaspora? Halilović states that the diaspora, in a wider discourse, became synonymous with recognisable immigrant communities in the countries of immigration.

What makes the diaspora a diaspora, that is, a specific deterritorialized social community is the existence of a sense of collective identity based on a shared vision, memory or myth about homeland, and an active link between members of the emigrant community with the country of origin, homeland and culture. The diaspora is therefore based on the formal and informal connections of people who share the subjective sense of belonging, that is, the mentioned characteristics of collective identity, often concretized in practice by various social activities. The common past, the collective sense of belonging and collective identity are based both on social reality and on the imaginary sense of belonging to one nation or one country. (Halilović 2006:196)

Bosnian refugees from all ethnic groups, among whom Bosniaks were the most numerous, shared a common destiny in refugee camps. Their war experiences from the homeland were at the same time merged

and separated. They were merged by a common unfortunate fate that led them to a place far from home, and separated by the fact that they belonged to the warring parties in the homeland. Particular emphasis should be placed on the fact that in pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, mixed marriages – marriages between members of different ethnic groups – were often encountered. Many people who were in “mixed” marriages left Bosnia and Herzegovina because they could not accept national divisions that were increasingly pronounced from year to year. The question arises as to whether it was possible, in such circumstances, to establish a Bosnian identity? The situation among refugees was, in a certain way, a transplant of the situation in the homeland. Bosniak communities were mostly Bosniaks and those whose spouses or parents were from different ethnic groups, partly Croats and Serbs. A number of Croats and Serbs joined the already established Croatian and Serbian communities. One should not ignore the fact that a certain number of people did not want to join any community because they considered that each of those communities, even those that are marked as Bosnian, had ethnonational tendencies. Some informants emphasised that they proudly emphasise their Bosnian identity, but that identity implies a situation similar to that in pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which close ties were maintained with members of all ethnic groups. Andree Zaimović says that in defining Bosnian cultural identity, it is best to begin with the definition of the term “Bosnian spirit”.

All cultural heritage created on the Bosnian soil, or from people who come from Bosnia and Herzegovina, to a greater or lesser extent have this spirit. This applies both to works of historical significance and to recent achievements in the field of popular culture. The best-selling and most famous Bosnian writers Aleksandar Hemon, Miljenko Jergović and Dževad Karahasan, although they do not live in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the fact that Jergović is considered a Croatian writer, that Aleksandar Hemon writes in English, he rejoices on the

American soil where he receives American literary awards, their works have a common characteristic, and that is the Bosnian spirit. It is similar to pop musicians. Whether it's Goran Bregović who lives in Paris, Saša Lošić in Ljubljana, Edo Maačka in Zagreb or Dino Merlin in Sarajevo – through all their accomplishments you feel this spirit, although most of the people of the country today carry other citizenship.

The Bosnian spirit is essentially an element of Bosnian cultural identity. And as much as the Bosnian spirit is made up of a number of segments that give it an outline, but it does not precisely define it, so is the notion that the Bosnian cultural identity is hybrid, heterogeneous and fragmentary. Bosnian cultural identity is built from a multitude of local identities, so we encounter the identity of Sarajevo, Mostar, Central Bosnia, Krajina, Foča ... We distinguish rural from urban identity, religious from atheistic. As much as political structures have imposed a category of identity as something monolithic, that much, in fact, the contours of identity remain elusive. (Andree Zaimović 2003:30–31)³⁴

Almir Ajanović believes that the Bosnian identity is felt in Sweden, often without ethnic characteristics. It clearly indicates the existence of a multitude of local identities that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are often unaware of.

I met people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden. I did not have the opportunity to travel around the countryside ... Only after the war I visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, motivated by the people I met up there (in Sweden, op. J. Talam) ... Communing with people from Foča, Dobo, Hercegovina with this from Bijeljina, with those from Bihać, you pick up something from everyone ... In Sweden, I understood what Bosnia and Herzegovina is, who these people are, who is my

34 Translated by Lejla Čaušević Karačić.

people, from Srebrenica, Žepa, Bihać, Goražde... (Interview with Almir Ajanović, Sarajevo, July 31, 2018)

Ajanović's view is shared by other informants. Such reflection confirms Halilović's views that the diaspora is based on the formal and informal connections of people who share a subjective sense of belonging that is concretised through various social and cultural activities. Special attention should be paid to the local identity. It is reflected in habits, local customs, the way of preparing some dishes, as well as in musical expression. One of the interesting examples through which the cultural identity of local communities is cultivated are the šargijades. These are cultural events that gather musicians of šargijas and violins originating from Bosanska Posavina and parts of Central Bosnia, living in various parts of Sweden. Regardless of the great distance between the places where they live, the šargija players gather three or four times a year and organize parties where they play the music that connects them, known as the *izvorna* music. "Šargijades were started by one of our friends, Ivica Kožul, from Novi Šeher six years ago, and we accepted that we are from Brod, Kolibe, Koraći, Kakanj, Žepce and other places in which we are playing šargija. Gather us fifty. We all bring šargijas and violins, food and drinks. We eat and drink a little, and then we play almost until morning." (Interview with Antun Pejinović, Gothenburg, October 4, 2018)

Dragica Masatović from Gislaved explained why the šargijas are important for persons from these parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I love those of our songs... They have organised šargijades, maybe they still have them. My husband died and I no longer go there." While he was alive we went. "He (Luka Masatović) played violin for himself.

This is organised by people who like to play, who love izvorne songs³⁵. There was no association, because we are scattered, one is

35 Izvorne songs are traditional name for a special form of traditional rural singing



Ivica Kožul, founder of the šargijades, Helsingborg, October 6, 2018. Photo: Antun Pejinović.

in Jönköping, one in Gothenburg, one in Helsingborg, one in Borås, and so ... Everyone takes his instrument. My husband also played dvojnica and šargija and a little violin. It was very nice. There are people who still meet and who are still friends. (Interview with Dragica Masatović, Gislaved, August 26, 2018)

Dragica is also a member of the choir of the association “BH Gislaved”. The repertoire of the choir section mostly consists of *sevdalinke* because they are perceived as a representative symbol of the Bosnian folk music tradition. Some of the informants, originating from the rural and smaller urban environments, have drawn my attention to

which is accompanied by music. Until the middle of the last century, they were performed only as a traditional music form. Ensembles were made up of two or three men. Singing was polyphonic – in two voices accompanied by *šargija* and violin. They are part of the oral tradition and were transmitted that way. *Izvorne* songs can be found today in rural areas in their original form. In the last 40 years, a huge transformation of *izvorne* songs has been made and is clearly visible in the form of vocal interpretation and instrumental accompaniment. From a traditional rural musical form, these songs became a genre which is today very popular in rural and smaller urban areas in Posavina, central Bosnia on the river Bosna and north-eastern Bosnia.

the fact that they like to sing and listen to songs that are characteristic of their local communities. After the conversation, Dragica sang one original song which is very difficult to sing alone and without instrumental accompaniment. Encouraged by Dragica's example, Saldina Hamza proudly pointed out that she is from Glamoč and sang a well-known traditional song "They ask me where are you from", which is performed regularly at the beginning of the choreography of the Glamoč dance. This song is sung in two voices and it is very difficult to sing only one part without another. Nevertheless, both Dragica and Saldina tried to point out the specific elements of their local traditions with their singing.

Ethnomusicological studies have never highlighted differences in the musical expression of ethnic groups, but whether they belong to a village or city tradition (Rihtman 1983, Petrović 1985, Fulanović Šošić 1997), or to some ethnographic regions – Adriatic, Dinaric or Pannonian. Such a position of science has emerged as a result of many years of research and is now clearly expressed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also among members of the diaspora. People who come from rural areas experience *sevdalinka* as a form that confirms their Bosnian identity, but they love to sing and listen to songs that are related to their local communities and which confirm their local identity.

In this context, it is important to mention *zavičajni*³⁶ (local) clubs formed in the mid-1990s, some of which have grown into associations or alliances, such as the Banja Luka Association in Sweden (Riksförbundet Banjaluka i Sverige). Native associations were created not only by the need for common fellowships, but also by the need to share common memories, confirmations "what they were and who they were in the past. These shared memories of home and homeland there in the past complement the living experiences of the home – of a new home here and now, in the emigration." (Halilović 2013:65)

36 *Zavičaj* originally means "local place".

The research showed that the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden is not a homogeneous category, but different in its ethnicity, according to its interests, life habits and aspirants. Regardless of all the differences, as well as the fact that ethnic divisions tried to make them separate and polarised, the Bosnians in Sweden maintain and confirm the Bosnian cultural identity built up by the many local identities that manifest in various segments of social and cultural life.

6. Cultural Activities of the Bosnians in Sweden

RESEARCH HAS SHOWN that the cultural activities of the Bosnians in Sweden can be divided into two periods: from the arrival of labor migrants to the beginning of the 1990s and from 1992, with the arrival of Bosnian refugees to Sweden. The first cultural activities of the Bosnians took place within the Yugoslav associations. According to Bäck, the first Yugoslav association “Balkan” was formed in Malmö in 1961.³⁷ (1988: 242) In the period from 1964–1970 the number of Yugoslavs in Sweden significantly increased, and associations began to be established in other parts of Sweden.

Realizing that each of them will not be able to achieve much, representatives of 7 associations (Yugoslav Association in Stockholm, V. Rolović, FC Sloga from Eskilstuna, FC Balkan – Malmö, Yugoslav Association Rade Končar from Finspång, Yugoslav Association from Nybro, FF ‘Macedonia’ from Malmö and the Association of Yugoslav Doctors in Sweden) met in Stockholm on May 2, 1970, and made a significant historic decision to establish the Union of Yugoslav Associations and Societies in Sweden. (Popović 1980:5)³⁸

Since 1970, the number of associations gathered in the Union has increased significantly. According to written sources, in 1975 there were

37 According to the text “Ten Years of the Yugoslav Union” published in the *Jugoslavenski list* on December 24, 1980. The “Balkan” association from Malmö was founded in 1962. The *Jugoslavenski list* was the newsletter of the Yugoslav Union in Sweden, and it was published from 1976 to 1993.

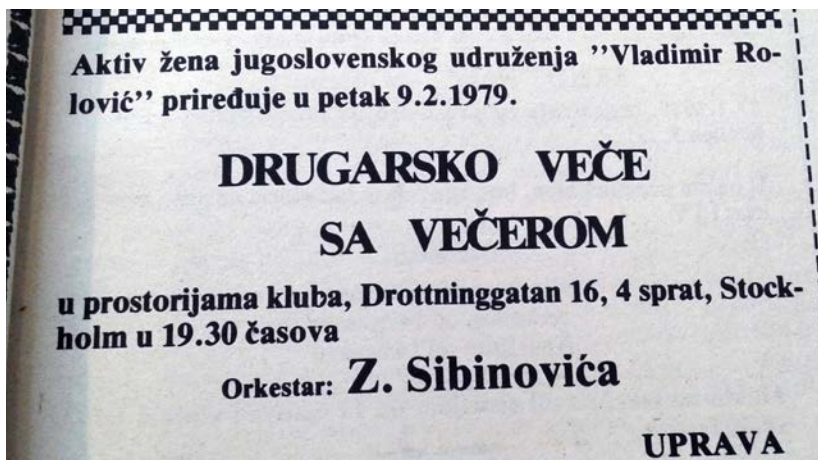
38 Since 1971, the Yugoslav Association from Stockholm has been called the Yugoslav association “Vladimir Rolović”. This was the name of the Yugoslav ambassador who died on April 15, 1971 after the assassination carried out by the activists of the organisation Croatian National Resistance. Translated by Lejla Čaušević Karačić.

40 associations in the Union. According to Bäck, in 1983 in Sweden there were 141 Yugoslav associations, of which 132 were affiliated to the Union of Yugoslav Associations, whilst nine were in the Union of Croatian Associations. Almost all associations have organised cultural activities such as folklore,³⁹ singing and drama. There were also free activities like parties, trips, excursions, lectures and consultations. (1988:236–238) Analysing the ethnicity of members of Yugoslav clubs, Bäck states that most of them were Serbs (40%), followed by Macedonians, Croats, Slovenians, Hungarians, Albanians and Montenegrins. Although the Bosnians, then but a few, were very active members of the association, there is no mention of their activities. It is important to note that in the Alliance, numerous associations with ethnic significance have also been active – Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian, Slovenian and Albanian. Ronström states that the idea of fraternity and unity was present among most of the Yugoslavs in Sweden.

There were indeed those who did not share these dreams of a community across national borders, especially among Slovenes, Croats and Macedonians. Nevertheless, the number of "all Yugoslavs" oriented among those who originated from Serbia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia was dominant in Stockholm, also among them fraternity and unity was not primarily a matter of rhetorical phrase and abstract ideology, but a concrete practice of daily socializing. (Ronström 1992:5)

Clubs were places where they met with their compatriots, organised social gatherings and parties, and sections where they cherished the tradition and culture of their homeland. According to available information, parties or other nightly events were organised at weekends.

39 In this context, folklore implied choreographed performances of folk dances from the former Yugoslavia.



The notification of the comradesly evenings published in the Jugoslavenski list, January 23, 1979.

For parties, professional orchestras or ensembles were hired by the associations which organised the events.

The Yugoslav associations celebrated the holidays celebrated in the homeland, such as the 29th of November (the Statehood Day of Yugoslavia) and May 25th (the Day of Youth, marking the birthday of Josip Broz Tito) but also international holidays such as March 8th Women's day and New Year. It is interesting to note that the celebrations of international holidays were celebrated in the "Yugoslav" way. The first part of the program was ceremonial, during which songs and recitals related to the holiday would be performed, and then this was followed by a party.

Transnational activities of Yugoslavia, especially for those who were members of the association, were present in all spheres of life. It can be said that the Yugoslavs created a "society in society" that had its organisational structure, its own press, music and folklore ensembles, complementary schools, restaurants, religious institutions – in a word, everything serving the function of confirming their national identity.

The cultural activities of Bosnian migrants were very visible within the Yugoslav clubs and associations. Unfortunately, this is evidenced by the modest information from the articles published in the *Jugoslavenski* list and by some of the informants I recorded during the field research. The first Bosnian association was founded in 1978 in Gothenburg under the name Association of Bosnian Families "Bosna". Like many other associations with ethnic or republican significance, the Association of Bosnian Families "Bosna" operated under the auspices of the Union of Yugoslav Associations and Societies in Sweden. The association had 300 active members, and Rejhan Musić was the first president. Looking for information on this association, Izet Muratspahić found Irfan Hodžić, one of the founders of the Association who explained how the association was formed.

We were a few families from the vicinity of Prijedor. Over the weekend, we would always meet at someone's apartment. In Gothenburg there were several clubs from the former homeland, but they were mostly clubs and meeting places for political asylum seekers where we could not find a place for ourselves. I invited my Bosnians and Herzegovinians who were not in a single existing club and we made a decision to built one corner for our souls. So we formed the Association of Bosnian Families. (Interview with Irfan Hodžić was led by Izet Muratspahić, Gothenburg)

The association had several sections – literary, folklore, music, and sports sections. The literary section gathered a large number of members, and among them the most active were Irfan Hadžić, Dušan Marjanović and Dragan Vasiljević. (See Nikočević 1979:5) The members of the section organized various cultural manifestations, among which the most important are certainly Literary Encounters. The folklore section was one of the first sections established within the association. The section's head was Azra Arapović, who was

succeeded by Stojan Tanevski. The repertoire included dances from all over the former Yugoslavia. The association had a very active music section, which consisted of a singing group and an orchestra. The folklore and music sections had performances at all events and parties organised by the association. (Conversation with Hidajet Hodžić, Gothenburg, October 3, 2018) The association marked all Yugoslav national holidays with special programmes. The programmes consisted of occasional speeches, recitals and music programs in which members of the association, and sometimes guests from the homeland, took part. One of the founders of the association Šuaib Musić states that they often hosted eminent singers, and especially Bosnian-Herzegovinian sevdalinka singers. In the formal program on the occasion of Youth Day, May 25, 1979. the famous vocal ensemble Djevojke s Neretve from Konjic, led by Professor Sergej Beljajev, performed. According to Musić, the ensemble Djevojke s Neretve held a very successful concert that attracted the attention of other associations outside of Gothenburg. A year later, at the celebration of Youth Day, the vocal ensemble Breze from Sarajevo performed. (Interview with Šuaib Musić, Gothenburg, October 4, 2018)

The second Bosnian association was founded in 1982 in Malmö under the name Cultural Association “BiH 82”.⁴⁰ The association had several cultural and sports sections, of which the most important was the folklore section. Their work was highly appreciated and praised several times by the Union of Yugoslav Associations and Societies in Sweden.

... the activities are numerous – folklore groups are extremely successful, followed by a canvas section in which the most active are girls and youth, the women's assets are based on the daily activities

⁴⁰ In several articles published in the *Jugoslavenski list* is cited as the cultural association “Bosnia and Herzegovina”. According to the informant, the full name of the association was “BiH 82”. (Interview with Ismet Nuhanović, Malmö, August 23, 2018)

of the association, while about the recitation and football section everything is said to be the most beautiful, and on the best the way to create a strong and populous chess section. For seven years since the founding, the young people from BiH 82 serve as examples for their mass and well-organized participation in the sport and cultural and entertainment program on our national holidays – Youth Day and the Republic Day, and are pleased to see as guests at the youth festivals and on the festivals of Macedonian and Slovenian culture. (Guberinić 1989:8)⁴¹

The association organised evenings of poetry where the verses of eminent Bosnian poets were recited. Considering the educational structure of the members of the association, it is interesting to note that the cultural and entertainment programmes and evenings of poetry were exceptionally well visited. (See Jovanović 1988:6)

In addition to those associations that in their name had the name of the country – Bosnia and Herzegovina – it is also important to mention other associations with the majority of members coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such examples are the Yugoslav associations “Kozara” from Gothenburg, “Džemal Bijedić” from Gislaved, “Sutjeska” from Solna, “25 May” from Huskvarna and “Ivo Andrić” from Billeholm. Based on several articles published in the *Jugoslavenski list*, it can be concluded that Bosnians were very active as heads of folklore sections or as presidents of the associations. In December 1980, an article entitled “No Small Associations” was published, which was entirely dedicated to Hadžira Mehmedović, president of the Association “Ivo Andrić” from Billeholm and the head of the folklore section. The text entitled “Primer – koji treba slediti” (“The Example – To Be Followed”) published on November 16, 1988 speaks about Senija Jorgić, the newly elected President of the Yugoslav Association “Sutjeska” from Solna. Ronström states that the

41 Translated by Lejla Čaušević Karačić.

association in Solna had over 500 members. The association organised dance shows almost every weekend, often with music played by the orchestra of Zoran Sibinović. Ronström (1986:1) Another interesting story, published in the *Jugoslavenski list* on September 10, 1989, is dedicated to Mirjana Holqvist, born in Visoko. The author of the text particularly emphasises that in the home of Björn and Mirjana, everyone speaks the Serbian language. (See Sijarić 1989:8). In addition, Mirjana served as president of the Yugoslav Association in Gävle.

Data on Bosnian musical activities can be found in the works of Swedish researchers. In his work *Ethnomusicology Study on Dance and Music Making in Stockholm* (1992), Owe Ronström described the activity of the Yugoslav associations in Stockholm with a special emphasis on folklore performances and entertainment organisations. As one of the prominent musicians he described Hazim Lolić, originally from Tuzla. Hazim, as a great accordion player, got the nickname Šerbo. In Tuzla, he played in the local radio orchestra and “gained rich experience and a great repertoire of dance melodies and songs, especially Bosnian love songs, *sevdalinke*”. (Ronström 1992:107) He came to Sweden in 1969 and regularly played in clubs in Stockholm, Tumba, Jordbro, Rinkeby, Solna, Gustavsberg, Södertälje and sometimes in Örebro. According to Lundberg (2010), Hazim’s son Ismet Lolić (Tuzla, 1964), is also an accordionist. During his education in Linköping, he founded the YUS band named after Yugoslavia (Yu) and Sweden (S). (Ronström 1992:252) The band consisted of young musicians from various parts of Yugoslavia. Ronström mentions the band Yu-mix, formed by Dusan Gligorijević Giga and two former members of the orchestra of Zoran Sibinović in the early 1980s. The accordionist Ismet Lolić, the son of Hazim Lolić, joined the orchestra. The repertoire of the orchestra consisted mainly of folk dance music, newly-composed folk music, and “commercial music”. Yu-mix was one of the most popular Yugoslav ensembles in Stockholm. Dušan Gligorijević Giga and Ismet Lolić have been accompanied by folklore groups for years. (*Ibid.*:252)

Cultural activities of the Bosnians were also seen in cultural organisations outside the association. The Cultural and Information Center of the SFRJ in Stockholm organised an exhibition on November 25, 1980 on the occasion of the Statehood Day of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Statehood Day of the SFR Yugoslavia. The exhibition presented the rich material cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as information material on Sarajevo as the next host of the Winter Olympic Games.

It is also important to mention the visits by Bosnian musicians who were very popular in the former Yugoslavia. In December 1978, the famous Bosnian pop rock group Indexi held a concert in the restaurant “Aniara” in Stockholm. The author of the article “Pozovi me na kafu draga” (“Invite me to coffee dear”) in the *Jugoslavenski list* says that the attempt by the restaurant “Aniara” to host Indexi is praiseworthy, but it would be even better for such performances to be organised in the “right” place – in the concert hall. (See Stepanov 1979:2)

Thanks to the active work of the Bosnians in electronic media, at the beginning of 1979, the show “Bosnia and Herzegovina from time immemorial to today” was broadcast on the *Invandrardags*⁴² television programme. The authors were Enver Dizdar, Ingeleif Öhman and Ahmet Zinhasović. The aim of the show was to show the cultural history of Bosnia and Herzegovina “from the creation of the first cultural monuments to the present”, and a short film about Bosnian fairs was also broadcast. (See Stepanov 1979:5)

In the early 1990s, the situation in the home country significantly influenced the work of Yugoslav associations. The war in Slovenia, and then in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, led to different opinions about the events of the homeland. Then there came a drop in membership, and the final break up of Yugoslav associations. During my research, I found only the Association of pensioners “Pro Mozaik” from Södertälje, which today gathers persons from all of the former

42 Television broadcasts a program intended for immigrants to Sweden.

Yugoslavia.⁴³ As the name itself says, the association mostly gathers older people who came as working migrants, and some few who escaped in the 1990s. According to Branka Glasenčnik, “every festival begins and ends with the song ‘Yugoslavia’. The music represents all parts of the former Yugoslavia, with the playing and singing of all the music, folk and pop from our area. They dance and play kolo (circle dance)”. (Written communication with Branka Glasenčnik, September 10, 2018)

In the early 1990s, numerous associations with ethnic or national significance began to be established. Bosnian refugees quickly organised and began to establish cultural associations in early 1992. The Swedish-Bosnian Cultural Association in Stockholm and “Sarajevo” from Malmö are certainly some of the first societies established with the help of migrant workers.

The Swedish-Bosnian cultural association in Stockholm was founded in early 1992, and the founders were Bosnians who came to Sweden in the 1960s and refugees who came from Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Fikret Ferhatović, the Bosnians living in Stockholm understood the seriousness of the situation and founded an association whose main task was to help refugees who came from Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, they also helped establish an embassy.⁴⁴ All activities of the association were financed by members. In the same way, other Bosnian associations in Sweden were founded. Everything went silent and it was necessary to work on merging and joint activities of all Bosnian associations in Sweden. (Interview with Fikret Ferhatović, Stockholm, September 13, 2018) In June 1992, the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations in

43 I can not confirm with certainty that this is the only association that still has a “Yugoslav character”, but I have not managed to find any similar association according to the statements of the informants and the search of the web pages.

44 Ferhatović says that Munib Mihaljević, the owner of the restaurant in the centre of Stockholm, provided two rooms for the first embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden.

Sweden was established, its main task to coordinate the activities of the Bosnian associations in Sweden.

The first activities of Bosnian cultural societies in Sweden were the collection of humanitarian aid for Bosnia and Herzegovina. 1992–1995, a large number of humanitarian campaigns were organised targeting individual institutions (hospitals, ambulances, schools, kindergartens), as well as some places that suffered the most damage from warfare. There were also gatherings of members of the association. Gatherings meant primarily meeting people with whom they shared the same fate, and then exchanging information about the situation in the country. Cultural activities began only a year or two later, varying from one association to the other. The reasons for this were multiple. Senija Bahtijarević says “we knew how to sing, but we were not in the mood for singing.” (Interview with Senija Bahtijarević, Gislaved, August 25, 2018) At that time, the attention of Bosnian refugees was focused on the situation in the country as well as on their loved ones about whom they rarely received information. Still, Bosnian associations organised various events that included music and dance. According to the informants, almost all the associations had their own vocal-instrumental ensembles which played at parties. The songs were performed spontaneously and mostly had contents that reflected their psychological state. Besides *sevdalinka*, the songs composed in the spirit of *sevdalinke*⁴⁵ like “Tebi majko misli lete” (“To you mother thoughts fly”), “U lijepom starom gradu Višegradu” (“In the lovely old town of Višegrad”) or “Oj, jeseni tugo moja” (“Oh, the autumn of my sorrow”) were performed. The newly composed folk songs with nostalgic content also formed an integral part of the

45 From conversations with informants, it can be clearly determined that they do not discern the difference between *sevdalinkas* and songs that are composed in the spirit of *sevdalinka*, but they call them all *sevdalinka*. These songs were gladly listened to on radio programmes and often sung in their close surroundings. So, those are the songs they grew up with. Therefore, it is not unusual that they are perceived as folk rather than composed songs.

repertoire at joint gatherings. This repertoire clearly shows that music was the medium that interconnected them and reminded them of past times. The other reason was the lack of professional staff that could lead the folklore and music sections. Namely, the establishment of music and folklore sections was not possible without persons who were professionally trained to lead the ensembles. In the absence of professional staff, music sections were mainly led by people with modest musical education, while folk music sections were taken over by people who used to play in cultural and artistic societies. Cultural societies had a large number of members, in some places and over 1,000. This number has been decreasing from year to year. From the interviews with informants, it was clearly concluded that in the associations only active enthusiasts remained who devoted their modest leisure time to cultural activities related to Bosnia and Herzegovina – most commonly, people who were active in cultural and artistic societies as members of folk or musical ensembles. The younger generation, born in Sweden, have little interest in membership of Bosnian cultural associations. Research has shown that cultural societies today have an average of 100–200 members⁴⁶.

Since 1993, music bands that acted independently or as sections of the association began to organise. Their repertoire was very diverse – from the covers of *sevdalinka* songs, popular Bosnian music to the hits of world famous bands.

In Sweden, the ensembles perform exclusively traditional folk music of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such is the example of *Izvornidār*, founded by Antun Pejinović in 1988 in a village near Žepče. Since 1994, he has continued to work in Gothenburg. The ensemble performs the *izvorne* songs – a special form of traditional folk singing performed with instrumental accompaniment in rural and small town environments in Bosanska Posavina, central Bosnia along the

⁴⁶ According to rough estimates, Bosnian associations in Sweden have about 25,000 members, which means about 25% of Bosnians in Sweden.

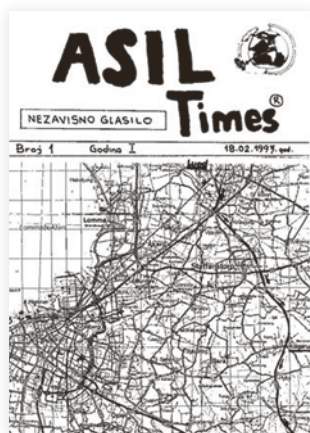


Front Cover of the CD *Bosna u grudima* (Bosnia in the Chests) of the ensemble *Izvorni dar*.

river Bosna and northeastern Bosnia. Singing is polyphonic – in two voices accompanied by šargija and violin. The repertoire of the ensemble *Izvorni dar* is traditional folk songs, but also numerous songs by Antun Pejinović. New songs were created in the spirit of traditional *izvorne* songs. During the long years of work, the ensemble has released several CDs including *Izvorni dar* (Original Gift), *Bosna u grudima* (Bosnia in the Chest), *Ispod starog hrasta* (Under the Old Oak), *Majka svih vremena* (Mother of All Time) and *Bauštelac*.

The ensemble *Izvorni dar* is very popular among the Bosnian diaspora from Bosanska Posavina, but also in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their songs are in the repertoire of numerous *izvorna* music ensembles. Antun Pejinović also recorded several songs, among which some are well known like the song “Pokraj grada Sarajeva” (“Near the City of Sarajevo”), but also the songs he wrote himself like “Čovjek iz Bosne” (“Man from Bosnia”).

In February 1993, the first issue of the independent newspaper *Asil Times* in the Bosnian language was published, edited by Miralem Pervizović. In the same year, the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations launched its printed media *Glas Bosne i Hercegovine* (The voice of Bosne i Hercegovine), edited by Fikret Ferhatović. Since they did not have the means to publish, both magazines were prepared in “home” production. From the typed text and cartoon illustrations a magazine was compiled, and then copied in a relatively small



*First issue of the newspaper
Asil Times, private archive
of Miralem Pervizović.*

number of copies. The content of the first journals mainly dealt with issues related to the war in the homeland, and brought the texts of prominent individuals and intellectuals from around the world who appealed to the international community to stop the war. According to Ferhatović, the *Glas Bosne i Hercegovine* gathered people who were connected with print and electronic media in the country, such as journalist and cartoonist dr. Midhat Ajanović, professor of Bosnian language dr. Izet Muratspahić, publicist and journalist Fikret Tufek, and later journalist Branko Tomić.⁴⁷ (Interview with Fikret Ferhatović, Stockholm, September 13, 2018)

Magazines were to be sold at a very affordable price, but they were generally distributed free of charge. At that time, the Bosnians lived

47 Midhat Ajanović (Sarajevo, 1959) graduated in journalism in Sarajevo and film animation in Zagreb. He received his PhD in 2009 in the field of film studies from the University of Gothenburg where he teaches the History of Animation at the Department of Film Studies at the University of Gothenburg. Izet Muratspahić (Goražde, 1953) graduated and received his PhD from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo. Since 1992 he has been working at the University of Uppsala. Fikret Tufek (Sanski Most, 1946) worked as an editor and director of Radio Banja Luka. In 1993, he escaped from Banja Luka to Sweden. Branko Tomić (Drvar, 1948) was the editor of the Sports Section, Correspondence Office and the European edition of the daily newspaper *Oslobođenje*.

on social assistance and were not able to buy newspapers. The *Asil Times* stopped being published in 1995, and the *Glas Bosne i Hercegovine* marked its 25th anniversary. From 1995 to 2015 a newspaper *Bosanska pošta* (Bosnian post) was published in Norway and read in all Scandinavian countries. Unfortunately, the newspaper stopped publishing for financial reasons. Since 1994, the first Bosnian electronic media began to work. According to Ešef Hodović, the Bosnian People's Association from Gävle founded Radio Haber. The radio programme consisted of service information, news sent by correspondents from certain cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bosnian music. (Interview with Ešef Hodović, Gävle, September 23, 2018) In 1995, the broadcasting of programs on the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Radio Malmö started. The radio was registered first with the association "BiH 82", then the association "Sarajevo".

At the beginning, there were two programmes – on Friday night as a youth, I created it to animate the youth, and it was Sunday for an hour of serious programme ... Then I founded the organisation Swedish-Bosnian Media Association within which the Bosnian Herzegovinian radio ... I rent media space for two hours. On Sunday, the 1444 show was broadcast, so it's done continuously. (Interview with Miralem Pervizović, Malmö, August 29, 2018)

Bosnian radio was gladly listened in Malmö and the surrounding area.⁴⁸ In October 1995, the Association "Bosnia and Herzegovina" from Norrköping founded *Radio Modra rijeka*. From the founding to date, a five-hour program is broadcast on the radio on Friday evenings. The programme consists of news from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as traditional folk and popular Bosnian music. Since 1999, radio "BiH 99" has been operating in Gothenburg, mainly broadcasting sports

48 From conversations with the informants I concluded that in other parts of Sweden the Bosnians did not hear about this radio program.

news. After that, *Gbg radio* was established within the “BiH Media” Association. The Gbg radio program is informative and entertaining, and the information is mostly of a local character – from everyday local service information, sports news from Sweden and the area of the former Yugoslavia to news about cultural events. It is broadcast for six days a week⁴⁹ from 17.00–19.00 on the frequency available in Gothenburg and its surroundings. According to Adnan Erkočević, in the radio program “domestic” music can often be heard, the term “domestic” meaning music from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. There are four channels on the Internet where you can hear various kinds of music that are marked in the menu under the names: pop, folk, light and sevdah. In addition to the music programmes mentioned, shows can be found on the radio dedicated to musicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. Particularly interesting are the contributions of a Sarajevo publicist and music critic Amir Misirlić, dedicated to publications of new music. (Interview with Adnan Erkočević, Gothenburg, October 3, 2018) Thanks to the internet channels, the Gbg radio is gladly heard in all parts of Sweden. Finally, it is also important to mention numerous concerts by Bosnian and regional musicians, regularly held in major cities in Sweden. Concerts are organised by Riksteatern, associations or private agencies.

Cultural, and especially musical, activities of the Bosnian people in Sweden are very diverse and deserve to be described individually. Therefore, the following chapters will be dedicated to each of the above segments, especially with the intent to gain a clear insight into musical activities and other cultural activities carried out by the Bosnians who fled to Sweden, in which cultural contexts the music is created and performed, and which musical expressions influence the formation of Bosnian identity.

49 The program on Gbg Radio is broadcast every day except Friday.

7. Musical Activities of Bosnian Cultural Associations in Sweden

IN THE PERIOD from 1993 to 1997 more than a hundred Bosnian cultural associations were active in Sweden, ranging from 200 to 1,000 members. A large number of associations were established in central and northern Sweden, or in places where refugee camps were located.⁵⁰ At the time, Bosnian refugees did not have permanent employment, and leisure time was mostly spent in associations. Different sections were active within the associations, of which the most important were music, folklore and sports. According to Azra Jelačić “Music was then very important: music is a part of us, as much as we needed to hear the mother tongue, food, so much music was an integral part of our everyday life. Music was also therapy, something that kept us, which brought us together.” (Interview with Azra Jelačić, Malmö, August 22, 2018) Music sections are organised as vocal, vocal-instrumental and instrumental ensembles. By gleaning insight from the content available from associations and unions that have their own webpages, as well as from interviews with informants, I have found that the largest number of music sections is within the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations in Sweden.⁵¹ Numerous cultural

50 In some refugee camps, as in the Surahammar example, there were no conditions for organizing associations, but the Bosnians gathered together and at the same time organized demonstrations to stop the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and public appearances representing Bosnian music folklore.

51 There are large number of Bosnian unions in Sweden, such as the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden (BHRF), Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's association in Sweden (BHKRF), Union of Bosnian-Swedish association of women in Sweden, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Youth Union in Sweden (BHUF), Bosnian-Herzegovinian Association of Teachers, Students and Parents in Sweden, Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations “Integrium” whose program goals include music activities.

activities take place within the Bosnia and Herzegovina Women's Association in Sweden, but they are mostly focused on the literature and drama, and to a lesser extent on music sections.

Vocal Ensembles

Bosnian cultural associations generally had several vocal ensembles that differed by age, gender and number of singers and were divided into children's choirs, youth choirs, female vocal groups or choirs, and mixed choirs. In the first years, there were also choirs which exclusively performed Islamic spiritual music. Children's choirs consisted of 20–50 members who were aged 7–15 years. Their repertoire consisted of popular children's songs, as well as traditional folk, anti-war and patriotic songs. One of the first children's choirs was founded in 1992 in a refugee camp in Surahammar. It was founded and led by Meho Kapo. The first known performance was held in June 1992 in Vasaparken on the occasion of the Days of Culture Festival in Västerås. During 1993, a large number of Bosnians moved from Surahammar to Västerås where they founded the Bosnian-Herzegovinian association "Most", within which the children's choir continued its work, as well as the vocal and vocal-instrumental section.⁵² (Interview with Meho Kapo, Västerås, November 12, 2018) In other associations, children's choirs have been set up with the aim of providing children with additional activity, encouraging them to interact and communicate in their mother tongue, and to develop love for Bosnia and Heregovine and its cultural heritage.

Children's choirs performed on various occasions – from the celebrations by associations of Bosnia and Herzegovina public holidays to events organised by the municipalities in which the associations

52 The association was founded on the day when the Old Bridge in Mostar was demolished, and therefore it was named "Most" ("Bridge"). (Interview with Meho Kapo, Västerås, November 12, 2018)



Performance of the children's choir at the 7th Federal Festival of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Borås, The Archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations.

operated. With the intention of presenting the activities of musical sections to the wider public, the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations started the event called the Federal Festival of Cultural Creativity of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden. The first festival was held on March 2, 1996 in Motala to celebrate the Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides the children's choir of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian association "Most", several other choirs performed at this festival. At the festivals that followed, there were performances of children's choirs.

According to the available information, the choirs who nurtured Islamic spiritual music were very popular in the first years of the association's work.⁵³ They gathered girls and boys aged 15–25. Their repertoire consisted mostly of newly composed spiritual songs that

53 It is important to note that the majority of Bosnians in Sweden are Bosniaks, or members of the Islamic religion who fled to Sweden during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are also the largest number of members of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden.

were created during the war and post-war period in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over time, interest in this kind of music has decreased, so most of these choirs have stopped working, and only a few chorus continued to work within the Islamic Community of Bosniaks in Sweden. Vocal groups and choirs were formed with people of different ages. In particular, youth vocal groups and choirs gathered people aged 16–25 years. Associations with a large number of members often had one vocal group and a larger number of choirs. One such association was the Association of the Bosnian people Gävle (Bosniska folkets förening Gävle). Within the association, the Cultural Section was formed, within which the folklore, children's and youth choirs were active. This section was of great importance because the children were socialised and taught their mother tongue and culture.

The associations wanted to present their work to the general public, and as early as in the first years of their work they performed within various events organised by the Gävle community. The folklore



Performance of vocal group, Association of the Bosnian people Gävle at City fest 94, The Archive of the Association.

section, the children's choir and the vocal group of the Association of the Bosnian people Gävle performed at the City fest 94 "on the stage in front of the municipal building and with their extraordinary performance sparked the attention of media and the citizens of Gävle." (Conversation with Ešef Hodović, Gävle, November 15, 2018)

Thanks to its rich and varied repertoire consisting of Bosnian traditional songs, pop songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina and world hits, the vocal group of the Association of the Bosnian people Gävle also had other notable performances across Sweden. At the 3rd Federal Cultural Festival of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden held on June 6, 1998 in Norrköping, the vocal group with the soloist Almir Ajanović took first place with the song "Let the Sunshine" from the popular film *Hair*, performed in the Bosnian language. In other cities in the northern part of Sweden where Bosnian associations existed, the results of the folklore and musical ensembles were noted.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, their work did not last long.

After a number of very successful years and exceptional results there is a massive hiring of people and moving to other places, especially towards the south. The interest for volunteer work begins to decline, so the number of members has significantly decreased. Unfortunately, many sections and activities that the association highlighted had stopped working, such as the school in Bosnian, radio Haber, chorus and folklore. (Conversation with Ešef Hodović, Gävle, November 15, 2018)

54 During the research, I met several informants who were active members of the association in the following places: Gävle, Ljusne, Sandviken, Bollnäs, Falun, Borlänge, Ludvika, Rättvik and Leksand, and now live in Gothenburg, Malmö and other places in the south of Sweden. They all confirmed that in the first refugee years they organized numerous cultural activities, especially music. Some of them are still active in Bosnian associations in the cities they live in, while others have turned to their family and business commitments.



Performance of the choir of the Association "Bosnia and Herzegovina" from Norrköping at the 5th Federal festival of Amateur Cultural Creativity in Gothenburg, The Archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations.

At the end of the 1990s, massive displacement to the southern parts of Sweden began, and the reasons were better business opportunities and more favourable climatic conditions. The number of members in associations fell sharply, leading to the cessation of certain sections. Due to too few members, some associations have completely stopped working. Bosnian cultural societies formed in the southern parts of Sweden in the early 1990s are mostly active today, but with a significantly smaller number of members. From the documentation of certain associations, as well as from the archival material of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations, it can be concluded that music sections, especially vocal groups and choirs, were still very popular.

Choirs of the associations "Ljiljan" Växjö, "Bosanska krajina" Malmö, "BH Gislaved" Gislaved, "BiH" Värnamo and "Bosnia and Herzegovina" Norrköping can be mentioned as examples.⁵⁵ Unlike

55 There are certainly more choirs that have been active for more than 15–20 years, but I have listed only those who work within the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden and for which I have collected accurate data during field research.

many choirs in which the number of members decreased, the female vocal group of the Association “BiH” Värnamo, which in 2008 had 9 members, grew into a mixed choir with 23 members. Of particular interest is the example of the Association “Bosnia and Herzegovina” from Norrköping, where the two choirs have been active for a long time – the mixed choir and the female choir Safir.

According to data which I collected during fieldwork, there are about 140 Bosnian associations in Sweden, of which only forty have folklore and/or music sections. In recent years, female vocal groups or choirs are the most active, as well as a small number of mixed choirs. They comprise 10–50 members of the middle and older generations. The leaders of vocal ensembles are also amateurs. These are people who stand out with a beautiful voice and expressed desire for group singing. In several associations I noted that the leaders of these sections were people with singing experience in amateur choirs or who worked as teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁶ The vocal ensemble rehearsals take place in the evenings of working days, once or twice a week for an hour or two. Before performances, rehearsals take place during the weekend as well. Vocal ensembles mainly perform at events and celebrations organised by their – or other – Bosnian associations, as well as at certain events organised by municipalities.

Aware of the numerous limitations they face – from the competencies of the section leaders, the lack of singers with sufficient interpretive abilities, to the lack of literature and adequate space, this section turns to the repertoire that is most familiar to the singers and which can be sung in the correct way. Therefore, the repertoire of most

56 From the conversation with the informants, I concluded that in the first years of the association, sections were led by persons who had studied at a secondary music school and sometimes at a music academy. The reason for their departure from the association lies mainly in the fact that the management of the sections has been and still is *voluntary*, that is, leaders have no remuneration for their work. From the point of view of the leaders this is understandable, because the work of the section manager is not simple – requiring dedicated work, expertise and professionalism.

vocal groups and choirs, and vocal-instrumental ensembles consist mainly of sevdalinkas, songs composed in the spirit of sevdalinka and pop songs from the repertoire of popular singers and/or groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. In the repertoire of some vocal groups and choirs are also found Swedish traditional songs.

The lack of professional leaders inevitably affects the quality of performance. Because of this, the songs are often performed with one voice, based on the performances the singers have heard through the electronic media. Rarely, attention is paid to sound quality (vocal technique and homogeneity of sound), and to basic interpretive elements such as tempo, dynamics and articulation. When it comes to examples of traditional songs – sevdalinka – almost no attention is paid to elements of style. Consequently, performances are perceived more as informal singing, than as organised joint singing. Singing is performed without musical accompaniment (a cappella) or with recorded instrumental accompaniment. During the research, I recorded several groups singing duets and the vocal trio from the Cultural-artistic association “Bosna” from Borås, singing in two or three voices.

The trio consists of Larisa Pojo, Zerina Čutura and Berina Ljubinač.⁵⁷ Their repertoire consists of very interesting covers of sevdalinkas and popular songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina. With their unique, well-designed and trained performances, the trio gained great popularity among the Bosnian diaspora in Sweden.

Vocal groups and choirs often performed with instrumental accompaniment by mainly self-taught musicians or musicians with very modest musical education. In the last few years, only a few vocal groups perform with the instrumental accompaniment of one or two musicians, most often accordions and guitars.

57 Members of the trio actively participate in the work of the mixed choir “Izvor” of the Cultural-artistic association “Bosna” Borås.



Vocal trio of Cultural-artistic association "Bosna" Borås, Private archive of Larisa Pojo.

A good example is the vocal group of the Association of Women “Đulistan” from Gothenburg led by Jakub Cucović. They acted as a section of another Bosnian association, and since 2016 they have acted as an independent association. Unlike other vocal ensembles that perform exclusively music from Bosnia and Herzegovina, their repertoire includes songs from Sandžak,⁵⁸ as well as old songs from Podgorica.⁵⁹ The vocal group of the Association of Women “Đulistan” often performs at various manifestations organised by Bosnian associations, but tries to present the Bosnian tradition and its work

58 Sandžak is the name for the geographical and cultural-historical area administratively divided between Serbia and Montenegro, which is mostly inhabited by Muslims.

59 The name of the *stare podgoričke pjesme* (old songs from Podgorica) refers to the traditional folk songs created as a combination of an older Montenegrin tradition and Ottoman influences. It is believed that they were created in the Old Town – the old part of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, and thus they got the name of the old Podgorica song. Thanks to the popular Montenegrin singer Ksenija Cicvarić, these songs were very popular in the area of the former Yugoslavia.



*The vocal group of the Association of Women "Đulistan". Gothenburg, October 5, 2018.
Photo: Haris Tucaković.*

to a wider cultural public. In August 2018 they performed at the Culture Festival (Kulturkalas) organised by the city of Gothenburg. (Interview with Alma Softić, Gothenburg, October 5, 2018) Although it is a matter of amateur singing, the members of the vocal trio of the Cultural and Artistic Association "Bosna" from Borås and the vocal group of the Association of Women "Đulistan" from Göteborg are very professional in their rehearsals and performances.

Vocal ensembles of associations operating within the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations regularly participate in the Federal Festival of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Culture and Education in Sweden which is of a competitive character. Four mixed choirs from "BH Gislaved" Gislaved, "BH" Värnamo, "Ljiljan" Växjö and "Sarajevo" Jönköping, and two female choirs from the association "Bosnia and Herzegovina" Norrköping and "Bosanska krajina" Malmö participated in the 23rd Festival of Culture and Education held on November 3, 2018 in Värnamo.⁶⁰ The most prominent performance

60 The vocal trio of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural-artistic association "Bosna" from Borås also participates in the Federal Festivals. At the last festival they performed in the revue program because there is no category in which they could compete. Nevertheless, the organisers think that the quality of their performances should be a model for other vocal ensembles, and that it is important to present them at festivals as the most massive events.

was the choir of the Association “Sarajevo” Jönköping, which was very serious, almost professional-looking on the stage. All the choirs sang with recorded instrumental accompaniment, except for the choir of the Association “Ljiljan” Växjö, which sang accompanied by its leader Besima Mašić on the keyboard.

As already mentioned, performances by vocal groups and choirs take place mainly in associations and manifestations where the “Bosnian” audience is gathered, and rarely in places where Swedes gather. An interesting example is the vocal group of the Association of Women “Sedef” from Malmö. In addition to independent activities, the vocal group cooperates with the female choir Röster utan gränser from Malmö, led by Bodil Bendixon. Thanks to this collaboration, they also performed several Bosnian songs that Bodil Bendixon translated into Swedish.

The vocal group of the Association of Women “Sedef” and the female choir Röster utan gränser from Malmö had several joint performances. One of the most precious was the performance at the Malmö Railway Station, which was organised to support the fight against violence against women. In this performance, they presented



The performance of the female choir Röster utan gränser and the vocal group of the Association of Women “Sedef” from Malmö, The Archive of the Association of Women “Sedef”.

Swedish songs and the traditional folk song “Mila majko šalji me na vodu”. (Interview with Ramiza Karamehmedović, Malmö, August 23, 2018)

Unfortunately, such examples are very rare. Talking with members of vocal sections, it can be noted that they are aware of the fact that their work is insufficiently visible and recognised in the overall cultural life of the cities they live in, and that they should work on greater promotion of the work of the association, but also of the Bosnian folk music. They therefore gladly respond to all manifestations organised by municipalities or cultural institutions and organizations.

By analysing the performance of vocal groups and choirs in Bosnian associations in Sweden, as well as speaking with informants, it can be concluded that singing in vocal ensembles is significant for several reasons:

- it is relaxing, positively affecting the psychological and physical condition of persons, helping them recover from post-traumatic trauma;
- it allows more frequent meetings and socializing with their compatriots;
- by performing traditional folk songs, new songs composed in the traditional spirit, as well as patriotic and entertaining songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, they confirm their Bosnian identity;
- in some cases, such as the vocal group “Sedef” from Malmö, they sing together with other singing ensembles in Sweden, which enables them to better integrate into the environment in which they live.

It can be concluded that the vocal groups and choirs emerged, and that today they are an important activity of Bosnian cultural associations in Sweden. Singing in vocal ensembles affects the mood of the singers, reduces stress and creates a positive atmosphere that contributes to a better quality of life. A rigorous discipline of singers is not expected

at practices, but a relaxing and relaxing atmosphere that involves occasional breaks for conversation and jokes. This atmosphere is influenced by the repertoire, which usually consists of traditional city love songs – *sevdalinka* and popular songs. Singers of middle age and older age grew up with *sevdalinka* and new songs composed in the spirit of the traditional. Therefore, their performance in the ensemble is perceived as a meeting with the known and already experienced, returning them to the past and living in the homeland. On the other hand, the performance of *sevdalinka* with the people with whom they built a new life outside its national and geographic space has a unique identity for singers. By performing popular music characterised by simple, easy-to-remember and melodic verses, a relaxing and positive atmosphere is created. Song versions are not demanding. Analysing available recordings in which vocal groups and choirs sang a cappella or with the musical accompaniment of one or more musicians, it can be concluded that the performances were far better than performances performed with recorded music accompaniment. Instrumental accompaniments are recorded according to the original arrangements of songs that are well known to the singers. Singing adjusts to the recorded musical accompaniment, which sometimes does not match the voice capabilities of individual singers. Therefore, various problems related to intonation, tempo, dynamics and articulation occur. In ensembles whose leaders do not have musical education, such a problem is often ignored. This should be accompanied by the fact that vocal ensembles do not usually select singers, but welcome all who want to sing. It is interesting to note that singers in mixed choirs are very often married couples who, after everyday work, spend their free time together with music.

The existence of vocal ensembles in Bosnian cultural associations is very important both for singers and for other members of the community who make up the audience at their performances. The numerous problems and constraints they encounter in the work of vocal ensembles are ignored, but they are trying to solve them as

much as possible. This is also indicated by the fact that certain vocal ensembles, such as the vocal trio of the Cultural-artistic association “Bosna” from Borås and the vocal group of the Association of Women “Đulistan” from Gothenburg, have been recognised as very good and serve as an example to others.

Vocal-Instrumental and Instrumental Ensembles

Vocal-instrumental ensembles, and in some associations instrumental ensembles, once formed an integral part of almost all Bosnian cultural associations. Associations that had adequate space, instruments and a large number of members interested in playing in ensembles organised courses where they learned to play instruments, mostly accordion, keyboards and guitars. The courses were mainly attended by children aged 8–16 years. The knowledge and skills acquired at courses were applied in children’s orchestras. It is important to mention that in the orchestras were also children who, before coming to Sweden, attended elementary music school. The association “Bosnian Krajina” from Malmö, as early as in its first years, formed an orchestra in which



*Children's orchestra of the Association “Bosnian Krajina” Malmö,
The Archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations.*

children and youth played. This orchestra worked very successfully thanks to the enthusiasm of both the leaders and members of the orchestra. (Interview with Azra Jelačić, Malmö, August 22, 2018)

The number of players in children's orchestras depended on the number of players and instruments, and ranged from four to ten. The orchestras were different – guitar quartets to orchestras with various instruments such as accordion, keyboards, guitars and various percussion instruments. The leaders of children's orchestras were people with a certain degree of music education, most often from a secondary music school. The orchestras performed independently, but also as instrumental accompaniment for children's vocal groups and choirs. New research has shown that children's orchestras no longer exist as sections of Bosnian associations. The reasons for this are the lack of professional staff, the lack of instructors, and the reduced interest of children for such sections.

Vocal-instrumental ensembles represented the most important sections of Bosnian associations. Mostly they were formed by self-taught musicians. They numbered from four to five members – one singer, guitarist, accordionist, keyboard player and sometimes a drummer. The first vocal-instrumental ensembles were formed in 1992. Hajrudin Šemović says that in Skellefteå, where they were housed upon their arrival in Sweden, there was a group of musicians consisting of his longtime friend Sadin Ćatović with Suad Golić and Mirsad Hasanović from Mostar. They founded the first ensemble that played at parties. After two years, they moved to Nyköping and continued their work in the Bosnian association "Behar". Then they joined Safet Ridžić from Turbe near Travnik. The ensemble participated in events and manifestations organised by the association.

In the first part of the program, children performed folklore, and after them the folklore section that included older people. While they changed and prepared for the performance of another choreography, we performed several sevdalinkas. The audience was usually older people,

so we wanted our performance not to be noisy, but to be acceptable to the audience. After that official part there would be a party. "Then we also played selected newly composed folk songs. (Interview with Hajrudin Šemović, Nyköping, November 4, 2018)

These events took place on the occasion of various holidays: Women's Day, Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Statehood Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina and religious holidays. Similar examples have been recorded in other Bosnian associations. Vocal-instrumental ensembles complemented the program organised by the association and played at parties. The repertoire of the vocal-instrumental ensembles were mostly *sevdalinkas*, songs composed in the spirit of *sevdalinka* and the newly-composed songs that were created up to the 1990s. The instrumental part of the ensemble was often followed by the vocal ensemble, so in the repertoire there were also melodies of folk dances⁶¹ from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similar examples have been recorded in other associations. The players gathered in refugee camps and played together. The founding of Bosnian associations formed vocal-instrumental ensembles that were very active in all cultural activities.

61 In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the *kolo* represents the basic dance form. "It's an unbroken series of dancers who, by the imagined circle, are holding hands together, their shoulders or their belts." (Zebec 2005:124). Some *kolo* dances already have in their name a statement indicating the gender, sex or age of the player (Girls' *kolo*, Boy's *kolo*), the occasion on which they are performed (choosing *kolo*, *kolo* with beautification of the bride, sorrowful *kolo*), according to the accompaniment (deaf *kolo*, mute *kolo*, sung *kolo*, *kolo* with diple accompaniment), according to the direction of the movement (Circle around, On one side, On two sides, Offhandedly, *Cyc-cak*, There here) towards the player's order (Wheel *kolo*, Single *kolo*, Round in the *kolo*, *kolo* in two), to the number of steps (Trojanac, Četverac, Osmerac), according to the type of steps (Kolanje, Potrkuša, Poskakuša, Povračanac), according to the dynamics of steps (Fast *kolo*, Flat *kolo*) according to the name of the place or region (Kozaračko, Zeničko), according to the initial verse of the song that was sung in the circle (Beautiful Mara *kolo* leads) and by the names of some people who are connected with the formation of a *kolo* (Jeftanović's *kolo*, Rahman's *kolo*, Anino *kolo*).



Vocal-instrumental ensemble Karavan Saraj of the Association Multikulturella föreningen i Dalarna from Leksand, Private archive of Enes Žiga.

In rare refugee centers, such as the center in Leksand, the Bosnians formed multiethnic ensembles that performed Bosnian music. Vocal-instrumental ensemble Karavan Saraj was formed with the association Multikulturella föreningen i Dalarna (Multicultural association in Dalarna). The ensembles were formed on the initiative of the Swedes who worked in the centre.

As soon as we arrived, they hired us to play something. We made the first little concert as early as in September of that same year, in 1994. A Swede was singing, a Latin American played and sang, and I taught them "Moj dilbere kud se šećeš" ("My dear, where are you"), and we performed. It was a solemn opening of a hall. As early as in January 1995, there was a big concert... It was Bosnians in Leksand, but the whole orchestra consisted of Swedes, only accordionist Mirsad Bajraktarević from Prijedor and I were Bosnians. So we made a whole movement that included Swedish children from gymnasium and their choir. They sang and played our (Bosnian) music. Each year we had one big concert. In four years we rehearsed a large repertoire. (Interview with Enes Žiga, Hagsätra, January 20, 2019)



*Vocal-instrumental ensemble of the Bosnian cultural association
"Neretva" from Hagsätra, Stockholm, The Archive of association.*

Besides Žiga and Bajraktarević, members of the orchestra were Claes Meyer – flute, Ulf Allgulin – bass guitar and Kerstin Fält – vocals. The work of this ensemble attracted the attention of the Swedish media and was presented as a good multicultural project. Also, after moving to Stockholm in 1998, Žiga went to Leksand and worked with the orchestra. In these years they also held several concerts in Stockholm, and the repertoire included not just Bosnian music, but also music from other Balkan countries.

A particularly interesting example is the vocal-instrumental ensemble of the Bosnian cultural association "Neretva" from Hagsätra. The ensemble participated in all cultural activities of the association, alone or as an accompanying folklore section. Every first Saturday of the month, the ensemble played at parties organised at the premises of the association. In order to present the traditional folk music of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the general public, they decided to make a step forward in relation to other ensembles.

During 2013, the drama section of Riksteatern, with members from the Association "Neretva", launched a project on the Bosnian tradition. From this project came the idea to make a concert featuring the Bosnian music tradition. The project called "Sevdalinka

in Scandinavia” was realised in partnership with Riksteatern, APU network and the Bosnian cultural association “Neretva”. The vocal-instrumental ensemble of the Bosnian Cultural Association “Neretva” did not have enough capacity to independently realise such a big project, so they decided to invite several professional music artists to help them realise the project. This is how a collaboration with Bosnian artists – Enes Omerdić,⁶² music professor and a great accordionist, opera singer Bianca Muratagić⁶³ and Swedish opera singer and violinist Mona Rosell came into being. Enes Omerdić joined as leader of the orchestra.

We gathered together Suad Golić, Enes Žiga, Nedžad Imamović, Ahmet Kozaragić, Bianca Muratagić, Mona Rosell and I. We wanted to present ourselves in the best possible way. The tests were held regularly on weekdays and in one week at the premises of the association in Hagsätra. Before the concert we had a rehearsal on Saturdays and Sundays and we held our first concert at the Södra Theatre in Stockholm on November 24, 2013. This concert was very successful. After that, we immediately received an offer from Malmö and held a concert there. Two or three months later, we held the same concert in Lidköping. (Interview with Enes Omerdić, Nyköping, November 4, 2018)

62 Enes Omerdić graduated at the Academy of Music of the University of Sarajevo. In addition to his work at Kulturskola in Nyköping, Omerdić is also active as a soloist on the accordion. He collaborated with Ale Möller and held concerts and workshops with his band in several Swedish cities. He also participated in the *Världsmusiken flödar i Sörmland* manifestation (World music flows in Sörmland). For some time, he worked as an assistant at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, and often participated in the Accordion Festival organized by the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.

63 Bianca Muratagić attended the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory in Milan. She has performed numerous roles in opera houses in Sweden, Italy and Switzerland. In addition to opera and classical music, Bianca Muratagić is also happy to sing other musical genres like jazz, blues, soul, rock and sevdah. For many years she has also been leading the private school Sångakademi Bianca in Uppsala.



*Cover page of the concert program,
Private archive of Enes Omerdić.*

The concert program consisted of eleven sevdalinkas, four songs composed in the spirit of sevdalinka, three instrumental performances of Bosnian folk dances and the song “Anteckningar om landet” by the famous Bosnian poet Mak Dizdar, which Haris Grabovac recited in Swedish. Bianca Muratagić, Mona Rosell, Enes Žiga and Suad Golić performed as vocal soloists. Concerts at Södra teatern in Stockholm, and then in Malmö and Lidköping were perfectly prepared with an impeccably trained repertoire. Great attention was paid by both Bosnians and Swedes, so for each of the concerts people sought a one more ticket.

The vocal-instrumental ensemble of the association “Neretva” met later, but not with all its members. They played during a dance evening at the Swedish Dance Association in Stockholm, which also has Balkan dances in its repertoire. Unfortunately, this vocal-instrumental ensemble is no longer active.

In recent years, Bosnian associations rarely have vocal-instrumental ensembles. Ensembles performed all their activities in associations voluntarily. Also, they purchased the instruments and additional equipment themselves. That is why they separated from time to

time and began acting as independent music bands performing commercially at parties, weddings or other occasions. The lack of vocal-instrumental and instrumental ensembles is reflected in the quantity and quality of the work of the association, especially when it comes to instrumental accompanying vocal groups, choirs and folklore ensembles. Therefore, the vocal sections and folklore ensembles perform with recorded instrumental accompaniment or Karaoke instrumentals that can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/>. Such a way of performing, which in this case arises out of necessity, does not leave the possibility for quality vocal interpretation, since the singers in each segment (intonation, tempo, dynamics, articulation) must adapt to the recorded sound.

Folklore Ensembles

Following the example of cultural-artistic associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the heritage of Yugoslav clubs and associations, folklore ensembles are among the most representative sections of Bosnian cultural associations.⁶⁴ The basic task of folklore sections was

64 Performing folklore on stage has a tradition of more than a hundred years in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the time of the Austro Hungarian empire (1878–1918), the first ethnic national cultural and singing societies were formed, such as the Croatian cultural association “Napredak”, the Serbian educational and cultural society “Prosvjeta”, the educational and cultural society of the Muslims “Gajret”, the Jewish singing society “Lira”, and so on. In the years that followed the Second World War, the new Communist government banned the activities of national societies. The goal was to develop the idea of fraternity and unity of the people of Yugoslavia. Following the model of the cultural policy of the Soviet Union, the creation of a socialist culture in Yugoslavia was dependent upon folk heritage and folklore societies. Numerous amateur folklore groups were established in rural and cultural-artistic associations (KUD) in urban areas. Cultural-artistic associations were often sponsored by large companies. The plan and program of the work of folklore ensembles was prepared by experts. The repertoire of the folklore ensembles of cultural-artistic associations of the city of Sarajevo was prepared by employees of the Institute for Folklore Studies of Sarajevo. (Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, IF-133/48).

to preserve national and cultural identity through performances of choreographed folklore. Because of this, almost all Bosnian cultural associations in Sweden, in the first years of their work, formed folklore sections consisting of two folklore ensembles – junior (children under 16) and senior (from 16 years of age). The sections were most often led by people who had dance experience in cultural-artistic associations in their homeland. At the beginning, of their work with folklore ensembles they encountered a series of problems. The first problem was the repertoire. Namely, in the pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, the folklore sections of cultural-artistic associations had a repertoire of dances from all Yugoslav republics. These are folk dances in which the concept of choreographed folklore is applied on the stage. Since the 1960s, a large number of notated choreographies of Bosnian dances⁶⁵ have been created. However, folklore ensembles mostly performed choreographies from other former Yugoslav republics, such as Vranjanske igre (Dances from Vranje), Rugovo, Šota. The above choreographies were considered attractive and most representative for presentation on the stage. Choreographies of Bosnian dances were only a small part of the repertoire of folklore ensembles. Generally speaking, the leaders of folklore ensembles with dance experience in cultural-artistic associations in the homeland had more knowledge of dances from other republics of the former Yugoslavia than from

65 In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were no educated ethnochoreologists or choreographers. This work was done by people who were folklore lovers; for years they conducted field research together with ethnomusicologists and ethnologists and educated informally through folklore schools or seminars organized in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. The first Bosnian ethnochoreologist Jelena Dopuđa (1904–1987) devoted almost her whole working life to collecting and studying the folk dances of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Jelena Dopuđa acquired her knowledge through continuous studies and long-term field research into choreographies – stylized settings of folk dances. Of the 43 choreographies that are in her legacy, only twelve were performed. A large number of these choreographies have not been in the repertoire of folklore ensembles for a long time. In addition to Jelena Dopuđa, the famous Bosnian choreographers were Hajrudin Hadžić Hadžija (1927–2008), Vaso Popović (1936–2005), and still-active Miroslav Šilić.

Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, this problem was transmitted from the homeland to the diaspora. Because of this, most folklore ensembles of Bosnian cultural associations had a very modest repertoire, which consisted mostly of Bosniak dances in various variants. The second problem was a costume. Namely, at that time it was not possible to procure a costume from Bosnia and Herzegovina, or materials from which a certain costume would be made. The valuable hands of women who worked in the sections of the association were trying to make costumes that would be as original as possible.

Then the costume was a big problem, we did not have Internet, pictures, or anything. I bought silk curtains in second hand stores. We got one dimije (part of folk costumes) – traditional pants from a choreographer from Denmark, so I sewed on that sample. I managed to put it all together, although I had never sewn that before. And the caps, and the vests, I was sewing it from various curtains. We did not have the money to buy anything else. But it looked fine. (Interview with Elza Žiga, Hagsätra, January 20, 2019)



Members of the folklore ensemble Multikulturella föreningen i Dalarna from Leksand, Private archive of Elza Žiga.



Folklore Section from Borlänge, The Archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations.

And finally, it was necessary to prepare musical accompaniment. In the main, vocal-instrumental ensembles were in charge of this. In associations where there were no vocal-instrumental ensembles, the instrumental accompaniment was performed by one player on accordion or keyboards or the instrumental music was recorded.

Regardless of all the above-mentioned problems, the folklore sections worked hard and performed at all events organised by the association, as well as events organised by the municipality. Also, some folklore sections cooperated with related Swedish associations, organising social gatherings and sometimes joint performances.

Nermina Omerdić, as a seven-year-old girl, was a member of the folklore section of the association “Behar” from Nyköping, which was led by Ekrem Kulenović. The folklore section often performed at various events organised by the municipality. In order to gain new knowledge about Swedish traditions as well as better integration, the association established cooperation with related Swedish associations.

We had a very good cooperation with the Folkdans förening association from Nyköping, whose members were older than us, they always invited us to joint gatherings that took place in various places, we were taught their dance, they ours, practiced and danced both our and Swedish dances. That was really interesting. (Interview with Nermina Omerdić, Nyköping, November 4, 2018)

One example is the Bosnian association in Gävle: "The association has established cooperation with the Gävle community, the Institute for Immigration, the library, the local radio station and the Open Forum in Sättra. The Folklore Ensemble of the Association participated in numerous events organised by Swedish organisations and institutions, especially those organised by the municipality." (Interview with Ešef Hodović, Gävle, November 15, 2018)

Since 1996, folklore ensembles have regularly participated in the Federal Festivals of Amateur Cultural Creativity. These were opportunities for socialising and exchanging new experiences, but also for assessing the quality of work. By inspecting available documents and images of federal contests, it can be concluded that the repertoire of folklore ensembles consisted of Bosniak dances under various names, and that most of the choreographies were based on the same or similar contents. At first glance, the most impressive performances were given by the Cultural-artistic association "Dukat" from Gothenburg. The then choreographer of the society, Murat Hačković, laid the foundations with the folklore section and was the role model for many choreographers who worked in other Bosnian associations in Sweden. (Interview with Amel Mulalić, Gothenburg, October 2, 2018)⁶⁶ The repertoire of

66 Murat Hačković is a professor of forestry, but he was a long-time dancer at the Academic Cultural-artistic association "Seljo" in Sarajevo. Amel Mulalić used to dance in the folk ensemble of the Cultural-artistic association "Dukat", and today he is the president and leader of the folklore section of the Cultural-artistic association "Behar" in Gothenburg.

the Cultural-artistic association “Dukat” was known choreography, but also choreography by Hačković.

In the late 1990s, in the repertoire of cultural-artistic associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina were found well-known choreographies and some of the almost-forgotten choreographies of Bosnian dances, as well as new choreographies that were often made by people whose knowledge of folklore, but also general education, is very modest. Most of the new choreographies were created on the basis of already existing ones. They contain similar or the same choreographic patterns, and also “taking over” of parts of well-known composed choreographies. During their visits to the homeland and cooperation with Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural and artistic associations, Bosnian associations in Sweden had the opportunity to get acquainted with the new choreographies that were in the repertoire of folklore ensembles in their homeland. More and more information about the flow of information was certainly contributed by the Internet and especially the popular YouTube network service, founded in 2005, where videos can be uploaded and viewed. During this period, the repertoire of the folklore ensembles of the Bosnian associations was enriched with new dances, both from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from other countries.

For the last fifteen years, various choreographies have been seen at the festivals – from those that were created by Jelena Dopuđa and Hajrudin Hadžić, new choreographies that were created on existing choreographic patterns and “taken” parts of well-known composed choreographies to choreographies that do not have any elements of Bosnian folklore. Analysing the choreography presented, one can clearly see that several choreographers used the same dance material that inevitably led to the emergence of scenic stereotypes. Regardless of the fact that these are amateur folklore ensembles, it is obligatory to analyse the quality of the presented choreographies and to determine how much this performance contributes to the preservation, presentation and promotion of Bosnian folklore. Analysing the recordings from

the Federal festivals of the amateur cultural creativity in the Bosnian associations in Sweden from previous years, it can be concluded that the quality of the presented choreography was very diverse. Some of the choreographies, such as the Bosniak urban dances,⁶⁷ were quite well-trained and – derived from the aspect of dance. However, musical accompaniment is also an integral part of choreography, whether vocal, instrumental or vocal-instrumental, as well as costume. The instrumental music performed by the ensembles on the stage was usually very well performed and provided dynamically monitored events within the stage performance. Unlike “live” instrumental accompaniment, recorded instrumentals are almost always very bad and sometimes have a tempo that does not match the dance capabilities of the dancers. A special problem is the vocal ensembles used by folklore ensemble leaders along with dance. With this kind of work, attention is directed exclusively to the movement, while singing is given less attention. Because of that, there was singing with countless mistakes of an intonation character or it was barely heard because of the loud instrumental accompaniment. A special problem was the costume. Although it is widely known what the costumes of the Bosniak urban and rural areas are, and what details of costumes are characteristic for which parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, costumes were in some cases very badly designed and made. While one respected the tradition and tried to make costumes that would be an adequate replica of the original, individuals added some dressing details that did not have any background in tradition⁶⁸. Certain of these failures

67 From the ethnochoreological point of view, it is very inappropriate to name the choreography Bosniak city dances without mentioning the locality of these dances. Thus, the “mixing” of the material from the localities belonging to different dance zones (Pannonian, Dinaric and Adriatic), which are very different in their dance folklore, comes in.

68 One of the most obvious examples of unsuitable details that should represent a traditional costume it can be observed in some Muslim women’s costumes. It is known that Muslim – and in most cases Orthodox and Catholic – people require the hair to be covered with a scarf. In some performances of Muslim/Bosniak

can certainly be attributed to the incompetence of the leaders of folk ensembles. However, it is also necessary to take into account the conditions in which the ensembles performed. The lack of funds for the procurement of ethnochoreology literature, costumes and folk instruments, as well as the inability to consult professional people has largely influenced the quality of the work of folklore sections.

In recent years, Bosnian associations are mostly a matter of active children's folklore sections. People who belong to senior folklore section often go to school in other cities, or because of other obligations they can not continue to play in the section. This is why there are active and senior folklore sections in only a small number of associations. Folklore ensembles are mostly run by former participants who continually gain new knowledge through seminars organised by the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden,⁶⁹ as well as by self-study of available literature.



Rehearsal of the folklore ensemble of the Cultural-artistic association "Behar" from Gothenburg, October 2, 2018. Photo: Jasmina Talam.

dances, the girls wore binding ties around their heads instead of scarves. Such an approach represents more the desecration of traditional folk costumes than its presentation and promotion.

⁶⁹ For several years now, the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden has organized seminars for the leaders of folklore ensembles. Lecturers are choreographers and leaders of folklore ensembles from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the field research I saw a number of problems that they encounter in everyday work in ensembles – from financial to just a small number of people interested in folklore sections. Financial problems significantly affect the authenticity and quality of clothing items (costumes) in which choreography is performed, as well as the quality of instrumental accompaniment. The smaller number of members in the ensemble, and especially the disproportionate number of dance pairs,⁷⁰ significantly influences the possibility of performing choreographed dances. The choreographies that are being prepared, with their dance elements, are not intended for children but for adults,⁷¹ which is also a major problem for the leaders. From the conversation with the leaders of the folklore sections, Kenan Jašarspahić and Amel Mulalić, it was clearly concluded that the problems related to the performance of choreographed folklore on stage from the country were also transferred to the diaspora. Although Kenan and Amel have dance experience and acquire new knowledge both theoretically and practically, they concluded that they are not always sure that everything is working properly. They observe the role of choreographers and folklore ensemble leaders in their homeland. However, the attitude of choreographers with whom they have achieved contacts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those who hold seminars, often differ in the pedagogical approach to the work of folklore sections, the selection of folklore material and the manner of performing dance figures and other elements of the folk dance scene. In doing so, no attention is paid to the understanding and function of folk dances, nor to elements of the style

70 In all the folk ensembles of Bosnian associations in Sweden, there are more female than male dancers.

71 Unlike some countries that emerged after the break-up of Yugoslavia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the practice of presenting a children's folklore, which is appropriate to that age, did not come to life. There are no choreographies based on children's folklore creativity, for example, children's singing songs, counters, jokes and the like, or dances that involve the use of children's instruments.



Performance of the senior folklore ensemble of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian association "Sarajevo" Malmö at the 22nd Federal festival of culture and education in Gothenburg. November 25, 2017. The archive of the association.

of certain dances or certain dance zones.⁷² Such diverse approaches create confusion and make the work of the leader more difficult.

They therefore strive to establish their own way of working, which primarily aims to ensure that the performers are well trained and that they appropriately display the selected folklore material with the appropriate folk dances. By analysing the available recordings, it can be concluded that such an approach to the work with folklore

72 As mentioned above, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there is a clear problem with choreographers and the leaders of folklore ensembles. This problem is experiencing its culmination from 1995 to the present. The choreographer must first possess the knowledge acquired through his own field research, and then creative energy and creativity for the artistic design of authentic choreographic solutions. Unfortunately, the level of knowledge of most of today's choreographers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even more in the diaspora, is very modest. Therefore, their choreographies are reduced to the "stringing" of dances rather than the creation of a new artistic value based on originality, authenticity and according to the criteria of folk aesthetics. According to Andrija Ivančanin, the leaders of folklore ensembles should continuously "listen, read and absorb from others, but also acquire their own personal experiences". (Ivančanin 2006) Because of this, various interpretations appear and approach the creation of choreographies as original authorial works, as well as in the work with folklore ensembles.



Performance of the senior folk ensemble of the cultural-artistic association "Zlatni behar" from Arboga at the 23rd Federal festival of culture and education in Värnamo. November 3, 2018. Photo: Jasmina Talam.

ensembles is practiced by the leaders of other folklore ensembles in the Bosnian associations in Sweden.

At the 23rd Federal festival of culture and education, folklore sections competed in three categories: younger juniors, juniors and seniors.⁷³ Most of the presented choreographies were Muslim/Bosniak dances from various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some of them were well trained and performed, while others had numerous shortcomings. The most impressive performance in the category of young juniors was by the folklore section of the cultural-artistic association Behar from Gothenburg led by Amel Mulalić, and in the category of junior by the folklore section of the Bosnian association "Sarajevo" Malmö, led by Kenan Jašarspahić. Particular mention should be made of the extraordinary inspiration of children during

⁷³ The younger junior category includes children aged 6–12 years, juniors 12–18 years and seniors from 18 years onwards. In the first years, it happened in the folklore ensembles that children from 8 years of age played with adults, which was inappropriate. The established categories have enabled the formation of more folklore ensembles in one association, and in each of them people of a certain age. (Interview with Muhamed Mujakić, Norrköping, November 2, 2018)

the performance, reflected through their enjoyment of dance and clearly expressed enjoyment in the stage performance.

In the category of seniors, the best result was achieved by the folklore section of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian association "Bosanska Krajina" Malmö, prepared by Eldar Pašić. An interesting and well-trained choreography named "Dances from Bosnia" was performed by the folklore ensemble of the Cultural-artistic association "Zlatni behar" from Arboga, led by Almir Karahodža.

It can be concluded that folklore ensembles did, and still, play a very important role in Bosnian cultural associations. Credits for sustainability and the positive attitude of the environment are mainly attributable to the great dedication and dedicated work of the leaders whose task, in relation to leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is far more complex. Their task includes several different segments:

- motivation of children and youth for active participation in folklore ensembles
- selecting appropriate choreographies that are adapted to the age of the participant
- continuous and well-planned work on the preparation of selected choreographies and
- developing love for Bosnian musical and dance tradition.

At the last Federal Festival, it was noticed that the children's folklore ensembles were quite numerous. This is one of the indicators of the success of the managers and their correct attitude towards work, as well as for the players. Choosing suitable choreography is one of the most difficult tasks of the leader. Namely, the majority of the leaders do not have enough ethnochoreology education,⁷⁴ so

74 The term ethnochoreological education refers to the reading of descriptive or labanotation which was used for writing dances from Bosnia and Herzegovina and published composed choreographies.

they usually choose choreographies already known or the famous folklore material from which they create a new choreography. The quality of other elements of the scenic setting of choreographed folklore, such as instrumental accompaniment and costumes, are largely dependent on the financial means of the association. The folklore ensemble leaders are also expected to practice songs that form an integral part of choreography. Although they do not have any competence for this work, the leaders of the folk ensembles try to do the job correctly. Since the leaders of the folklore sections are amateurs, it is quite clear that they often need professional help and additional training that involves acquiring knowledge about Bosnian music and dance folk tradition, the methodology of working with folklore ensembles and the scenic application of folklore. This is the only way for folklore ensembles to work better, as well as for the presentation and promotion of Bosnian folklore.

Rhythmic Dance Sections

Rhythmic dance sections began to form during the last ten years, most likely to encourage girls who wanted this kind of activity. Members of these sections are mostly girls aged 8–15 years. Rhythmic dance sections involve performing various types of social dances – from classic, Latin American, traditional, and modern dances known under the common name of Street Dance.⁷⁵ Dances are chosen according to their personal affinities. Rhythmic dance sections have a formal leader, but dancers usually organise rehearsals, learn dance steps, create and train choreographies with selected music and choose costumes. The research has shown that the most commonly designed choreographies are those in which Street Dance dances are performed and combine different dance styles and techniques such

75 Street Dance implies various dance versions that have largely developed on the streets, in school playgrounds and other places where young people gather.

as breakdance, popping, locking, hip hop and others. In addition to the aforementioned dance styles, some of the choreographies are sometimes made up of gymnastic figures (for example stars), which dancers use to present their skills.

Rhythmic dance sections mainly perform at various events organised by the associations in which they operate. As programmes of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations imply the nurturing of Bosnian culture and tradition, these sections are not considered as “important” as for example the folklore section as they do not contribute to the attainment of the programme goals of the association. Regardless of differing opinions, in the last few years these sections have presented their work at Federal Festivals of culture and education. Rhythmic dance sections from the associations “Rubin” from Eslöv, “Ljiljan” from Landskrona and “Bosnia and Herzegovina” from Norrköping took part in the revue program of the 23rd Federal Festival.

Their performances displayed the relaxation and freedom of dance expression, which in some instances led to uneven performance of dance movements. Clearly expressed children’s enthusiasm, love for this type of dance expression and enjoyment of the performance were also passed on to the audience. It can be concluded that these sections are very important because they develop creativity and a sense of group work, positively affect the psychological state of individuals, contribute to proper physical development reflected through proper body holding, coordination of movement, orientation in space and feeling for rhythm and allow more frequent meetings and socialising with their compatriots. The choice of music and dance that does not belong to the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina expands the children’s minds and opens new spaces for integration and better connection with their peers, members of other ethnic groups. It is therefore very important to support children in their desire and to cultivate different types of dances, and ultimately enable them to enjoy activities in which they find satisfaction.

Celebrating Holidays and Parties

In addition to regular activities in the sections, Bosnian associations organise various events that include music and dance. Already in the first years of work, the associations organised celebrations of Independence Day⁷⁶ and the Statehood Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina,⁷⁷ Women's Day and certain religious holidays. Celebrations of national holidays are extremely important because patriotism is confirmed through their celebration. In addition to celebrations in associations, central ceremonies are organized jointly by the Unions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations operating in Sweden.

Celebrations of national holidays in associations consist an official part of the programme during which they sometimes talk about the significance of celebrating holidays, and the selected recitation and music programme in which members of the association participate. The official part of the programme is followed by "unofficial" socializing and entertainment with music and dance. Central celebrations of national holidays consist of a long programme featuring vocal groups,

76 The Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina is marked on March 1 – the day when citizens voted on Bosnia and Herzegovina's secession, ie their exit from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in a referendum. The referendum on independence was supported by 64% of the citizens – mainly Bosniaks and Croats, and a smaller number of Serbs. The EU member states recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 6, 1992, and the United States a day later. On May 22, 1992, it was admitted to full membership of the United Nations. Independence Day is officially February 28th 1995, but only on the territory of the Entity Federation of BiH. Unfortunately, the results of the referendum were not accepted by the majority of the Serbian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nor in Yugoslavia, which had already been separated from Slovenia and Croatia. The non-acceptance of the results of the referendum led to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

77 The Statehood Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina is celebrated on November 25th as the heritage of the former Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On that day in 1943, the First Session of the National Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBIH) was held, at which the decision was made that Bosnia and Herzegovina would become a Yugoslav republic with borders established from medieval Bosnia and would ensure the equality of Muslims and Croats. Since 1995, the Statehood Day is celebrated only in the entity Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Central celebration of the Statehood Day, members of the folklore ensemble of the Bosnian association "Liljan" from Oskarshamn, saz players Asim Hodžić and Darko Zelenika, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sweden, Skövde, 2011. The archive of the Bosnian women's association in Sweden.

choirs, folk ensembles, and soloist singers or musicians from various associations. At these celebrations, a large number of people from various parts of Sweden also gather. Sometimes, the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sweden also attends ceremonies. After the official part of the program, a party is usually held with music played by some of the more popular minor Bosnian bands.

In the last few years, the APU network in Stockholm has been organising ceremonies on public holidays. The ceremonial celebrations are mostly started with occasional speeches and congratulations, followed by an art program. Guests from Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly attend these celebrations.

In many countries of the world, Women's Day⁷⁸ was marked by various activities aimed at highlighting discrimination against

⁷⁸ International Women's Day, which began on March 8, 1909. It is celebrated in the United States, Sweden, Finland, former Yugoslavia, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is called the Women's Day.



Public announcement on the celebration of Women's Day in the Association "Bosnia and Herzegovina" Norrköping, 2010. Private archive of Enes Omerdić.

women in society and promoting gender equality. On the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the Women's Day celebration was reduced to parties that were equally enjoyed by women and men. Such a practice was passed on to the then Yugoslav Diaspora, and later to the new states formed by the breakup of Yugoslavia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is a well-established practice that women are should be given flowers and, if possible, some gifts. Celebrations are organised in institutions, restaurants or some other catering facilities. Bosnian associations in Sweden regularly celebrate Women's Day. Unlike the above-mentioned holidays, the celebration of Women's Day involves exclusively entertainment with music and dance.

Parties (zabave) or socialising (druženje) are the most common forms of gathering members of the association and other people to socialise, sing and dance. This form of gathering was very popular in Yugoslav clubs. According to Ronström, the parties of Yugoslav associations in Stockholm implied important events where people were socialising, singing and dancing.

Parties are organized by associations in their own or rented spaces, they are open to everyone, some associations organize parties only a few times a year, while others organize dance parties every week. At least one or two parties are organized every weekend in Stockholm. The suburbs mostly attract people from the neighborhood and often have a distinct family character. The associations in the city are attractive to younger audiences from different parts of the city ... There are few places for musicians in front of the open dance place, while the rest of the hall are arranged in rows. modestly decorated, there are no tablecloths on the tables, food is served in paper plates, and beer and Coca Cola are served in cans. (Ronström 1986:9)

Following the example of the Yugoslavian associations, Bosnian associations organise parties with or without a particular cause. Parties are usually held at the premises of the association. Therefore, the number of visitors is limited because it depends on the space available. A few associations, such as Association "BH Gislaved", have large rooms where it is possible to organise parties for more than 100 people. Parties organised as an "informal" part of celebrating public holidays have a festive character. They gather a large number of people, and sometimes they are held in larger rented rooms, restaurants, and sometimes in hotels. The rooms are decorated with flags of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden, and other occasional features related to a particular holiday. After the official solemn program, socialising continues with eating and drinking, and then with music. Most informants mentioned that musicians start playing only half an hour or an hour after the "official" start of the party. Due to numerous obligations, Bosnians do not have many opportunities to talk and socialise. Therefore, they want to use part of the time for a conversation in which they will not be disturbed by the noisy music. A similar atmosphere prevails at parties organised on the occasions of Women's Day and Religious Holidays. Celebrations of national holidays and Women's Day are mostly organised on the day of the

celebration. In the Bosnian tradition, religious holidays are always celebrated in the home, where families and friends gather. The parties are organized mostly on the first Saturday afternoon.⁷⁹ Unlike other entertainment programmes where food is most often prepared in the association, food prepared at home is mandatory for religious holidays. This especially refers to cakes such as baklava and hurmašica, as well as other sweets traditionally prepared in some parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cakes are served together in large ovals and placed on tables so that everyone present can try one or more types of desserts. In some smaller towns, especially in the northern part of Sweden, where there are no Bosnian associations, the Bosnians gather in an association located in the nearest town.

It is important to mention that most of the Bosnian associations organise a New Year celebration, which is very similar to the parties that are organised for the celebration of the holidays.

In addition to the aforementioned parties, the associations organise parties without any special occasion. Such parties have the goal of facilitating socialising with compatriots, and the joy of singing and dancing. These types of entertainment are most often organised at the premises of the association, where members of the association gather, and others interested in this form of entertainment. The party is advertised through the association's web site, social networks, and through posters placed on the premises of the association. Tickets cost between 50 and 100 Swedish crowns. The ticket price does not include food and drink, but only entrance to the party.⁸⁰ Revenue from a party is intended to cover expenses, and in some cases is used for humanitarian purposes.

79 As already mentioned, the largest number of members of Bosnian associations are Bosniaks or muslims. Therefore, most associations organise only the celebrations of the Ramadan and Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). The Easter/Christmas Eve and Christmas celebrations are held in suitable ways only in those associations where there are Catholic and/or Orthodox believers.

80 Food can be brought or, if possible, bought from the association. Beverages, exclusively non-alcoholic, can be bought at a very reasonable price.



Celebration announcement after the 23rd Federal festival of culture and education in Värnamo. November 3, 2018. Photo: Jasmina Talam.

Almost every association had its own vocal-instrumental ensembles which played at parties. In recent years, smaller bands whose services are not expensive have been hired to provide their repertoires and meet the expectations of those present. Bands usually have two or three members, one or two musicians and one singer. Musicians usually do not have formal music education, but are self-taught or have acquired musical skills within cultural and artistic societies. These bands are “specialised” for performances at different types of parties, including weddings. Their repertoire is very diverse and consists of traditional folk songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, old town songs, newcomers and all the way to local pop music. The bands are mostly located on a small elevated area that looks like a stage. The performances of the bands at parties do not differ from performances on other occasions. The singer, with a very strong voice, performs continuously for 45 minutes to an hour, followed by a 10–15 minute

break. That type of schedule was followed during the whole of the party. Musicians play their trained repertoire with a pre-determined schedule. Since musicians do not interact with potential dancers, the dance starts at the moment when they feel the need for dance. So, it does not matter whether a particular dance or a song that follows a dance is played, but whether a dance can be performed with the existing music. It is interesting to mention that traditional dances (kolo), mainly from Serbia (for example Moravac, Užičko kolo), make up only a small portion of the repertoire and are mostly performed at the end of each music cycle. The performances of the kolo precede the vocal-instrumental songs of different content with which it is possible to play kolo or other forms of dance.

Parties were once organised very often. Some associations organised parties every Saturday and a large number of people gathered there. In recent years, parties have been organized regularly for the celebration of national holidays, and in certain associations for Women's day and religious holidays. A smaller number of associations organise parties on New Year's Eve. A party which is not for any special occasion is organised once a month or once in two months. Today, they also gather a large number of people of different ages. The research has shown that parties play a significant part in the lives of Bosnians in Sweden.

By analysing the musical activities that take place within the Bosnian associations, it can be concluded that they are aimed at the preservation and promotion of the folk music and dance tradition. A large number of Bosnians who fled to Sweden in the early 1990s saw Bosnian associations as places of self-identification, gathering and socialising with their compatriots. These places were a shelter in the period when the process of socialisation and adaptation to the new environment was under way. Active work in music sections, celebrations of holidays related to the country, as well as entertainment represents the implementation of their national social and cultural practices outside their national and geographic space. The number of members who actively participate in the music section is differ-

ent from association to association.⁸¹ Due to the smaller number of interested people, some music and folklore sections stopped working completely. By analysing the age structure, it can be concluded that the membership consists mainly of middle-aged and elderly people and children aged 6–17 years, and partly from those who are 18–25 years old. The most obvious example is choirs, in which the majority of singers are middle-aged and older. Also, it is noticeable that there is a small number of senior folklore sections. Young people most often go away to study or move to other places for better business opportunities. It should be added that these generations have grown up in a different environment, have more intensive interaction with the local population, and better communication in the Swedish language. Therefore, their interest is not always and exclusively focused on work in Bosnian associations.

In general, it can be concluded that Bosnian associations have very rich musical activities that are conducted all year round within music and folklore sections, as well as local events, celebrations and parties. Music and folklore sections mainly perform traditional folk music and dance from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Various music genres can be heard at parties – from newly-composed folk music to popular music from all countries of the former Yugoslavia. The quality and quantity of musical activities most often depend on the persons managing associations and individual sections, but also on the number of members – which is constantly changing. The research has shown that associations are faced with numerous problems in their work, the most notable being a lack of professional leaders who can lead quality ensembles. This problem is directly related to the financial situation, because with the modest budgets of the association I can

81 It is important to note that in some larger cities the number of associations has decreased. In the mid-1990s, there were about a dozen Bosnian associations in Stockholm, and today there is only the Bosnian cultural association “Neretva” Hagsätra, in which the Bosnians who live in Stockholm and surrounding areas gather.

not deduce the fees of the heads of the sections. Regardless of these shortcomings, enthusiasts in associations are making great efforts to keep all activities active and to retain the epithet of the most representative promoters of Bosnian tradition and culture in Sweden.

8. Music Bands

AS MENTIONED IN the previous chapters, the Bosnians formed the first bands in the first years of their stay in Sweden. Most bands were formed within Bosnian cultural societies. Members of the bands were young people from various cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who shared the same destiny in refugee camps. Some of them had completed elementary music school, some were self-taught musicians, and some had similar musical experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As in other European countries, “the musical creations of Bosnian people in refugee mainly focused on sevdalinka, traditional music, musical heritage and cultural identity, while the popular, alternative and underground musical expressions of refugees were neglected at the time.” (Kozorog 2017:78) In refugee centers, especially those located in Gävle and its surroundings, musical ensembles were formed in which only Bosnians or Bosnians and Swedes played. Emin Halilović was the initiator and founder of the vocal-instrument group Zelena rijeka in Falun.

The Zelena rijeka (Den gröna floden) was created spontaneously. I accidentally met our youth on the lake in the summer of 1994. They had a guitar and sang our songs. I offered them help to start the group, and I thought that I would later retreat because of my obligations, but I remained until the end. The members of the Zelena rijeka and their parents were the embryo of the BH association in Falun that was later registered. We had the help of the Swedish association ‘Vuxenskolan’ from which we received a loan for the purchase of instruments. We repaid the loans from the sold tickets and cakes that we sold at performances as well as my wages which I gave up as the leader of the group. (Written communication with Emin Halilović, October 3, 2018)



Band Zelena rijeka, a photo originally created in 1995, Private archive of Emin Halilović.

The vocal part of the group Green River consisted of Sabina Sakić, Ajla Čatović, Vildana Ramić, Lejla Vražalica, Emina Ćirgić and Merima Čatović,⁸² and the instrumental part Mario Ravlić (keyboards) Pero Ravlić (bass guitar), Denis Ribić (percussion, later bass guitar), Damir Sejdinović (electric guitar), Emir Sakić (guitar) and Emin Halilović (guitar, keyboards and vocals). The guests of the group were Nedim Ćoralić and Ramiz Jakupović.⁸³

The repertoire of the band was composed of traditional and pop rock songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as several foreign (from USA and UK, op. J.T.) songs. For three years, the group had about 60 appearances in Bosnian associations in the Dalarna region (Falun, Borlänge, Ludwig, Rättvik, Gävle, Leksand), and in schools and retirement homes. The last group appearance was at the City

82 Most of these members of the group live in Gothenburg today.

83 Ramiz Jakupović lives in Jönköping. He is actively engaged in music as a singer in the band Ritam srca.

Fest in Gävle in August 1997. (Written communication with Emin Halilović, October 3, 2018)

A few bands, like the United souls band, also performed other types of music. In the United soul band, Bosnians and Swedes played together. According to the founder Almir Ajanović, the band was founded in the time when they were in refugee camps.

Before the war, I established the Glass bells bands, and after that, three of us from the same band – bassist Dario Muratagić, Bjanka Muratagić, his sister who sang the accompanying vocals and me ... Then we made a band that played covers with the Swedes. That band we called United souls. The half of band were Swedes, half Bosnians ... We lived in Tierp, and we worked in Gävle. The repertoire of the band was from BB King, JJ Cale, from blues to Mariah Carey, Madonna. We played everything that people like to listen to – from the blues to the pop rock of the sixties and seventies, and the eighties to that little more modern music. (Interview with Almir Ajanović, Sarajevo, July 31, 2018)

The band United souls was active for one year. Ajanović re-established the band Staklena zvona in 1994. They performed in Bosnian clubs throughout Sweden, as well as in other Scandinavian countries.

Music meant a lot at that time. In 1994 and 1995, when there was still war, we filled the halls with capacities of 200–700 and some 1,000 people. Sometimes it happened to stay a few hundred people outside, for example in Norrköping, Göteborg, Malmö ... The music was everything for the whole band, especially for me. It's the only thing that attracted my attention not to think about family or war. (Interview with Almir Ajanović, Sarajevo, July 31, 2018)

The repertoire of the band was diverse – from traditional folk music, newly composed folk music to pop music from the territory of the

former Yugoslavia. They performed a well-known repertoire with a pre-determined schedule. During the performance, the singers alternated – Almir Ajanović performed pop and Nedim Ćoralic⁸⁴ performed folk songs. The band Staklena zvona was active until 2000. After that, Ajanović started his independent career.

Musical activities of other ensembles that were created in the period of 1993–1995 generally lasted several years due to the continuation of education of individual members or because of changing the place of residence. Some members of these bands continued their musical career in other, newly formed bands, while some of them stopped playing music.

Late in the 1990s and early 2000s new bands emerged, some of them still very active today. The research has shown that musical bands, according to number of players, repertoire, interpretation and occasions on which they perform, can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of smaller professional bands. These bands are specialised for performances at different types of parties, including weddings. Their repertoire is very diverse and consists of *sevdalinka*⁸⁵ and traditional songs from other ex-Yugoslav countries, newly-composed folk songs, as well as domestic pop music. A per-

84 Nedim Ćoralic lives in Helsingborg today. For years he sang at associations in Sweden, and he gained the greatest popularity after performing in the final of the popular TV music competition “Nikad nije kasno” (“It’s Never Late”, 2017).

85 *Sevdalinka* is traditionally performed with *saz*, and from the end of the 19th century and with the accordion. With the beginning of the singing, the player gave the domination to the singer. At that time, the instrument performed a melody or a corresponding accompaniment with a simple musical structure. In the traditional versions of the *sevdalinka*, the duration of individual tones can not be determined precisely but only approximately. The reason is that the melody is directly subordinated to the text, which is not the case with the melodies accompanying the movement. A free rhythm expressed in a tempo *parlando rubato* allows both the singer and the musician an emotionally accentuated performance. *Sevdalinka* itself means a sophisticated, noble and exciting performance without excessive effects both by the singer and by the musicians. So singing and playing created the complete atmosphere that on the listener left quite an impression. (See Talam 2013:152)

formance lasted for about an hour followed by a 10–15 minute break. That type of schedule – with the performances followed by shorter breaks – was followed during the whole party. Musicians performed a well-known repertoire with a pre-determined schedule. Since they have rehearsed a repertoire that constantly repeats, they do not need to have a regular rehearsals. These bands can be treated as “commercial” because their aim is to make a profit. Some of these bands had previously played in Bosnian cultural associations, and then became independent in order to have private performances. There are such bands in almost all Swedish cities where the Bosnian diaspora lives, as well as the diaspora from other Balkan countries.

The second group consists of bands that are mainly focused on pop and rock music or their fusion with other music genres. Members of the bands are good and experienced players who continuously upgraded their skills of playing and pay great attention to interpretation and sound quality. Their repertoire is quite diverse and consists of the covers of *sevdalinka*’s, pop and rock songs that were once popular in the area of the former Yugoslavia, the hits of the famous rock groups as well as the author’s songs. In comparison to “commercial” bands, these bands mostly held regular rehearsals, in which besides the existing one, a new repertoire is rehearsed. Most often they play at festivals, events organised by communes or Swedish cultural organisations, in clubs that promote different music genres, organise individual concerts and perform at concerts with popular bands from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. It is not a large number of bands that belong to this group. During the research, I met with members of the bands *Bosnia Express*, *Etna* and *Sevdalini*.⁸⁶ Each of these bands has its own specific musical expression that attracts a certain kind of the audience.

86 Beside of mentioned, there are several other Bosnian bands that are popular in their communes or regions, such as the *Ritam srca* from Jönköping.



The band Bosnia Express, Private archive of Alismir Jugo.

The Bosnia Express band was founded in 2001 in Gothenburg. It was founded by Alismir Jugo (Mostar, 1968) and his brother Zenaïd (Mostar, 1974). Inspired by street musicians from African and Latin American countries who performed their traditional music, Alismir Jugo wanted to similarly present the Bosnian music tradition for the Swedes. His intention was to form a band modelled on the popular band Mostar Sevdah Reunion, which performs sevdalinka in modern arrangements. Thus, the band's first repertoire consisted almost entirely of the covers of sevdalinka. In the first years of their work, they already attracted the attention of the general public with their performances in jazz clubs, at numerous festivals, rock concerts, and manifestations at which ethno music was performed.

The composition of band has changed many times. Throughout the years, around thirty musicians from different parts of the world have played in the band. Besides brothers Jugo, the current band consists of Riad Tutić from Serbia (guitar), Jim Adler from Sweden (slide guitar, mouth organ), Samir Mehmed from Macedonia (bouzouki, guitar, violin), Minur Hamid from Macedonia (keyboard, voice) Andrew Mercado from Mexico (bass) and Nazif Hasanović from Bosnia and Herzegovina (voice).



The cover of the CD
Himzo & Hendrix.

During 17 years of successful work, the band held around 400 concerts in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, France and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As early as in 2003, they recorded the first CD *Göteborg sevdah blues* with ten covers of sevdalinka. (Interview with Alismir Jugo, Gothenburg, October 12, 2018) After six years, they recorded a second CD called *Too much Balkan business*, followed by the third *Himzo & Hendrix* (2014)⁸⁷ featuring songs written by Alismir Jugo. Their music is generally based on sevdah, but also contains elements of other musical traditions of the Balkans, Roma music, blues and rock. Such a fusion of music genres makes them unique and particularly interesting. An unusual repertoire and the interactive stage performance of the Bosnia Express band contributed to their great popularity. Their songs are in the Bosnian language, are often parodies of already existing songs and transmit humorous messages that are incomprehensible to the wider cultural public of Sweden. Their concerts always attract large and varied audiences.

87 CD *Himzo & Hendrix* was named after Himza Polovina and Jimmy Hendrix. Himzo Polovina (Mostar, 1927 – Plav, 1986) was one of the best interpreters of sevdalinka. As a neuropsychiatrist, he first started using musical therapy in treating patients at the neuropsychiatric clinic Jagomir in Sarajevo. Jimmy Hendrix (Seattle, 1942 – London, 1970) is one of the most famous rock musicians in the 20th century. He is one of the best electric guitar players in the history of rock music.

The year 2017 was particularly important for the Bosnia Express band. In addition to numerous appearances, they also had their first film role. In the movie *Vilken jävla circus* by the famous Swedish director Helena Bergström they played the circus orchestra from the Balkans and presented a few of their own songs.

On the web site Musikcentrum Väst (MCV), a non-profit association and music agency for musicians in Sweden, of which the Bosnia Express band is a member, they were presented as the best Balkan rock-oriental band in Scandinavia. (http://www.mcv.se/bosnia_express/, accessed: October 30, 2018) Thanks to their long and valuable work, the Bosnia Express band has achieved enviable results on the Swedish music scene.

One of the popular Bosnian bands is Etna from Helsingborg. The Band was founded in 2000 as a section of the Bosnian-Swedish Association in Helsingborg. Unlike the Bosnia Express band in which members have changed over the years, the Etna band has had the same members since its inception: Damir Prčić (Bosanski Šamac, 1980) – voice and acoustic guitar, Said Hadžić – drums and Željko Buconjić (Derventa) – keyboards. A few years ago, Buconjić left the band on account of a serious illness and was replaced by Sead Smailagić (Banja Luka). All members of the group fled to Sweden. Since they come from various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, their acquaintance and socialising began in Helsingborg. Their previous musical experience, love for rock and roll and the desire to play in a group music inspired the idea of establishing a band. The group's repertoire consisted mainly of songs by "famous pop and rock bands from the former Yugoslavia ... there are songs (Bijelo) dugme, Bajaga, Azra and others." (Interview with Damir Kačapor, Sarajevo, July 25, 2018) The first solo performances of the band were in smaller halls and clubs where people from the Balkans mostly gathered. Thanks to these performances, they were recognised as a good band. Requests for performances at private parties and weddings followed. Although performances at weddings are quite

lucrative the members of the Etna band decided, after performing, to no longer play at such parties.

The gathering brings together different individuals, with various musical tastes that we can not really satisfy in the best way. We had our own repertoire, which was complemented by several songs that the bride and the groom wanted to hear. During the wedding, people were asking for some songs that we did not know to play, which caused astonishment from the the audience. They almost asked us why we played at the wedding if we can not play this. We don't want to play newly composed folk songs which are very popular at the weddings. Because of that, we do not accept such requests. (Conversation with members of the band Etna, Helsingborg, August 30, 2018)

Over time they complemented their repertoire of hits of world-famous bands, and sevdalinkas and traditional songs from other ex-Yugoslavia areas that are performed in new arrangements. During almost two decades of work, Etna had concerts in Helsingborg, Malmö, Göteborg, Borås, Växjö, Kristianstad and Oslo. They traditionally also play on New Year's Eve in Helsingborg. Because of its rich repertoire and the specific sound and atmosphere that they make during a performance, Etna's concerts no longer appeal only to an audience from Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries of the former Yugoslavia, but to people from all over the world.

Etna is recognised as one of the popular bands in the southern part of Sweden. In recent years, they have been performing in larger halls with better acoustic conditions in which it is possible to achieve better sound quality. At the end of 2014, they performed as an opening group for the popular band Zabranjeno pušenje and Elvir Laković Laka at the concerts in Malmö and Gothenburg.

The following year, they played with the band Regina on their tour of Sweden. Samir Gadžo states that the co-operation between Etna and the bands from Bosnia and Herzegovina was spontaneous.



*Performance of the Etna band at the Zabranjeno pušenje concert.
Photo: Goran Đulabić, Malmö, 2014. Archive of the Etna band.*

“We are known in southern Sweden as a band that will always attract 200–300 people. We have our audience, and the bands that come have their audience.” (Interview with Samir Gadžo, Helsingborg, August 30, 2018) At these concerts, the band usually performs hits of music bands from the territory of the former Yugoslavia, which provides a good introduction to the performance of Bosnian bands and singers.

It is also important to mention the numerous performances they had at cultural evenings in Helsingborg, Malmö and Höganäs. They also performed at numerous festivals, among which Balkan Fest and Maestro Music World Festival can be mentioned. In September 2016, they actively participated in the Worldwide Playing for Change campaign as representatives of Sweden.

Music is not the foremost interest of the members of Etna. Daily work and family obligations sometimes leave no chance for regular rehearsals. Therefore, in certain periods, their activities take place sporadically. However, their love for the music they create as well as the friendship that has connected them for years has held this band on the music scene for 18 years.

After a short concert break, Etna performed to open concerts with the Croatian band Hladno pivo held in November 2018 in Malmö and Gothenburg.



Concert poster of the Hladno pivo band.

The Etna band thrills with its music, especially when it comes to unique covers of sevdalinka and popular traditional songs from other Balkan countries. These covers, in a melodic view, are very close to traditional, and their unusual arrangements give them a new dimension of sound that is distinguished by its specialty and originality. The songs from other Balkan countries are equally good. The hits of the former Yugoslavia bands from before the war are gladly heard today – even by younger people who were not even born at the time when these songs were produced. Due to its diverse repertoire, spontaneity on stage and communication with the audience, Etna became known as one of the most popular bands in the southern part of Sweden.

Trio Sevdalini is the youngest band to cherish Bosnian music. It was founded by Mehmed Jakić (Sarajevo, 1984) in 2017 in Malmö. The trio consists of well-educated musicians: Samuel Lundström (violin), Clara Ljungkvist (violoncello) and Mehmed Jakić (voice and guitar/mandolin). Their repertoire consists mainly of sevdalinkas

and starogradske songs.⁸⁸ Following the model of the most famous interpreters of the sevdalinka, Jakić uses the *sotto voce* style of singing.⁸⁹ With unique vocal interpretation with respect to folk aesthetic criteria, Mehmed Jakić creates the atmosphere of Bosnian urban environments in which sevdalinka was created. He successfully transmitted his artistic energy and deep emotionality to his Swedish colleagues. Their instrumental accompaniment adds such wealth and variety of sound.

Sevdalini have held two big concerts at the Victoriateatern in Malmö. The first solo concert of the Trio Sevdalini was held at that venue on September 2, 2017. As a guest, one of the best Bosnian guitarists – Boško Jović – performed. After that came performances in smaller towns and in local restaurants in Malmö. At the second big concert – held on September 13, 2018 – at the Victoriateatern in Malmö, along with Trio Sevdalini, the “Balkan” quartet Madame Baheux from Austria also performed.⁹⁰ The aim of the concert was to offer something new on the Swedish music scene, and to make known the music of Bosnia and other Balkan countries. According to comments that can be seen on their Facebook page, the Trio Sevdalini concert managed to attract more Swedes than Bosnians, which is not the case with other Bosnian bands in Sweden. (<https://www.facebook.com/triosevdalini/>, accessed: November 15, 2018)

88 Starogradske songs (old town songs) are a musical genre that developed on the foundations of traditional folk and popular music from the end of the 19th century. They were created in the territory of Serbia and soon became popular in other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

89 *Sotto voce* in translation from the Italian means under the voice, ie damping or ultimate restraint in dynamic shade.

90 The Madame Baheux Quartet is popularly known “Balkan” because three members are from the Balkans – Jelena Popržan from Serbia, Ljubinka Jokić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Maria Petrova from Bulgaria. The fourth member is Lina Neuner from Austria. Thanks to the rich repertoire consisting of songs from the Balkans in fusion with other music genres and their authorial songs, Madame Baheux quartet won the Austrian World Music Awards 2014.



Poster of the Sevdalini concert held in Malmö, September 2, 2017.

In less than two years of work, Trio Sevdalini managed to present sevdalinka in a new and unusual interpretation. On a foundation of their unique and already recognisable musical style, sevdalinka songs were given a new sound dimension – an exceptionally good mix of tradition and new music trends.

Traditional Bosnian music found its place in the repertoire of the Swedish band Orientexpressen. This band was founded in 1975, and has been professionally performing since 1982. The band has six members – Owe Ronström (violin), Dan Lundberg (clarinet), Hasse Hurtig (accordion), Anders Sjöberg (guitar, buzuki), Bosse Nordenfelt (double bass, guitar) and Ismet Lolić (accordion). As they wrote on the cover of the CD *An Unfinished Story*, the band was created “out of pure curiosity at a time when music from Eastern Europe was unusual, mysterious and exotic”. (1996) Thus traditional folk and new songs from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Turkey are represented in their repertoire. They have held numerous concerts in Sweden and other European countries, as well as lectures and workshops. They published several albums, including the CD *An Unfinished Story*.

The CD *An Unfinished Story* presents a concert recording of an evening of music held on May 16, 1996, at the Mix Music Café at the



Cover of *An Unfinished Story*, a CD
by the *Orientexpressen* band, 2005.

Music Museum in Stockholm. The CD contains eight *sevdalinkas*, and instrumental performances of the Bosnian *kolo* (circle dance) *Oj, curice dina ti* and *Šota* – the popular Albanian dance from Kosovo. With the musical accompaniment of the band *Orientexpressen*, the vocal interpreter performing was Hazim Bosnić. In the musical performances of *sevdalinkas*, originality is expressed through innovative arrangements. It is especially important to mention instrumental solo parts that display the personal experience of the musicians. It can be clearly seen that the members of the band have fully experienced the spirit of the Bosnian city music tradition, and offered listeners varied and intense emotional and spiritual experiences.

Analysing the work of Bosnian music bands in Sweden, it can be concluded that they have chosen to cherish the Bosnian city musical tradition and also other music genres from the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Their performances, each in their own way, bring a new approach to the *sevdalinka* without compromising its melodic features. Such an approach is also noticeable in the Swedish group *Orientexpressen*. Unfortunately, all the activities of Bosnian bands are mostly related only to the southern part of Sweden. From interviews with informants in towns located in the central and northern parts of Sweden, I concluded that only a few of them were familiar with the work of the Bosnia Express band, while most of them were not aware that there are such types of Bosnian bands. The reason for this is certainly to be found in the fact that playing in a band is for them an additional activity or socialising during which music is created, and not a job that generates income.

9. Music Events

THE MUSICAL ACTIVITIES of the Bosnians in Sweden are also reflected in the organization of music events and festivals. The research has shown that Bosnian associations and individuals organise various manifestations that can be divided into:

- manifestations at the local or regional level that bring together a smaller number of persons and
- large events attended by several associations from various parts of Sweden. Cultural manifestations in which music plays an important role are most often organised at the local level by associations, unions, municipalities or other organisations. These are one-day or evening manifestations at which associations celebrate their anniversaries, organise cultural evenings, and produce other manifestations in which different musical contents are represented. Unlike events organised for the celebration of national and religious holidays dedicated to Bosnians, music events are attended by guests from other associations and organisations that do not have a Bosnian identity, as well as representatives of the municipality. Organising these manifestations often requires a lot of involvement from all members of the association, because they represent different segments of the Bosnian intangible cultural heritage – from traditional dishes to music and dance. Thanks to numerous successfully organised events, Bosnian associations have gained a great reputation in their local communities.

In recent years, Bosnian associations have organised numerous events in cooperation with the Swedish Association NBV (Nykterhetsrörelsens Bildningsverksamhet), including cultural evenings. Cultural evenings include manifestations that represent the work of the recitation, music and folklore sections of the association. Some



*Presentation of the
Bosnian tradition
in the Association
of women "Sedef"
Malmö, Archive of the
association.*

associations organise sevdah dinners where vocal soloists and vocal ensembles of the associations perform. There are rare examples of cultural events organised jointly by several associations. In April 2018, the association "BiH" Värnamo in cooperation with the associations "BiH Gislaved" Gislaved and "Sarajevo" Malmö and NBV organised a cultural evening in which the recitation and folklore sections took part. A joint rehearsal of folklore sections was organised, followed by socialising with dance. These manifestations are very important for Bosnian associations because they allow them to present their work to a wider cultural public. As a result, an increasing number of associations decided to organise various events aimed at promoting Bosnian culture, but also to attract a larger number of young people to become active in associations and to nurture the traditional values their parents brought from their homeland.

The most important musical manifestation is the federal festival of cultural creativity organised by the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden. This is a pre-planned and organised event that brings together a large number of participants and attracts the attention of many audiences. The first Federal festival of culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina was held on March 2, 1996 in Motala to mark the Independence Day of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federal Festival was preceded by regional festivals held from October to December 1995. The festivals are organised in six regions:

- 4) South region – seven associations participated in the event held in Malmö: “BiH 94” Helsingborg, “Ljiljan” Landskrona, “Sarajevo” and “Bosanska krajina” Malmö, “Bosna” Osby, “Rubin” Eslöv and “Bosna” Karlskrona;
- 5) West region – seven associations participated in the Gothenburg event: “Dukat” Göteborg, “Bosna” Borås, “Ljiljan” Uddevalla, “Zambak” Halmstad, “Ljiljan” Varberg, “Sve BiH” Lysekil and “Bosna” Herrljunga;
- 6) Stockholm region – twelve associations participated in the event in Sala: “Miris zavičaja” Sala, “Sve BiH” Skultuna, “Most” Västerås, “Behar” Stockholm Haninge, “Ljiljan” Uppsala, “Amber” and “Biser” Enköping, Stockholm Kungsängen, “Saraj” Köping, Strängnäs, “Ljiljan” Hallstahammar and “Behar” Nyköping;
- 7) Central region – six associations participated in the event held in Örebro: “Sebilj” Karlstad, “Behar” Skövde, “Miris” Örebro, “Karlskoga” Karlskoga, “6. april” Falköping and “Bosna 92” Hallsberg;
- 8) East region – at the event held in Gislaved, there were sixteen associations: “Šest ljiljana” Kisa, “Bosna i Hercegovina” Norrköping, “Bosna i Hercegovina” Gislaved, “Sevdah” Linköping, “Bosančica” Älmhult, “BiH” Värnamo, “Vrelo Bosne” Västervik, “Ljiljan” Motala, “Bosna” Kalmar, “Ljiljan” Vetlanda, “Zlatni ljiljan” Finspång, “Bosna i Hercegovina” Mjölby, “Ljiljan” Växjö, “Una” Ljungby, “6 zlatnih ljiljana” Tranås and “Mir” Hultsfred;
- 9) North region – seven associations participated in the event held in Ljusne: “Ljiljan” Borlänge, “Falun” Falun, “Sve BiH” Ljusne, “Gävle” Gävle, “Ljiljan” Härnösand, “Behar” Hudiksvall and “BH klubben och vänner” Skellefteå.⁹¹

91 I made a list of regional festivals and participants based on the available documentation and data from the monograph of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden 1992–2002 (2002). The list lacks the names of the associations that arranged Stockholm Kungsängen and Strängnäs because I could not find more information about these associations. Since the Association does not have



Announcement of the 21st regional festival of culture and education, Malmö, April 23, The archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations.

Regional festivals are of a competitive nature and choose the three most successful choirs, folklore sections, recitals and dramatic sections. The best placed from each region are entitled to participate in the federal festival. At the 2nd Federal festival of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina held on March 1, 1997. in Nödinge near Gothenburg, about 700 participants from 32 associations took part. From year to year, an increasing number of participants gathered. As a result, it became necessary to provide rooms that could take more than 1000 visitors. The original name of the Federal Festival of Bosnia and Herzegovina was replaced by the Federal Festival of Amateur Cultural Creativity, and later the Federal Festival of Culture and Education.

Due to the relocation of Bosnians from northern towns to other parts of Sweden, a large number of Bosnian associations stopped working. Also, a large number of associations in Stockholm and surrounding areas, due to a smaller number of members, significantly reduced the number of activities or completely stopped working. As a result, the number of regions decreased to four. The few associations that have remained active in certain regions continued to participate in regional festivals in the region that is closest to them. Regardless

more detailed documentation about these associations and censors, as they could not remember the names, it can be assumed that these associations have long been inactive.

of the smaller number of participants, the programme content of the federal festival lasted for 10–12 hours, which was very hard for participants and for visitors. So it happened that parents and other relatives left the hall immediately after the appearance of their child or cousin. The organisers realised that it was necessary to change the concept of the festival. In the last few years, it has been divided into two parts. The first part is the oral part – recitals, plays, monodrama and sevdalinka, and other part is choirs and folklore ensembles. Such a division only partially solved the problem. Each part of the whole lasts for five to six hours, which is still too long for both the performers and the audience. In a ceremonial atmosphere, the 23rd federal festival of culture and education was held on 6 October and 3 November 2018 in Värnamo. The organisation and execution of both parts were very good in all segments. The programme of the federal festival was announced in a timely manner through the network⁹² and Facebook pages of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations and other partner organisations, and through publicly displayed posters. However, the audience was exclusively made up of Bosnians living in various parts of Sweden. The hall in the Gummifabriken Cultural Center in Värnamo, with its exceptional stage, equipment and capacity, was well-suited to this great event. The introductory words of the organisers and presenters were very encouraging both for the performers and for the audience. The programme contents followed one another according to the predetermined schedule and timetables, so there was no unnecessary waste of time. It can be concluded that all organisational segments, with the exception of their duration, contributed to greater interest in amateur work in cultural societies, as well as the popularity of Bosnian tradition among young people. As already mentioned, the festivals are competitive. The competition is conducted according to the rules defining the

92 Information about the festivals, as well as other activities of the federation, are available in Bosnian only.

competition categories, the contents that are being performed, and the way of evaluating certain categories. Analysing the rules of regional and federal festivals, it can be noticed that the speech part of the festival is quite precisely defined, while the *sevdalinka* category is completely unclear. In trying to come up with an explanation of what the category of *sevdalinka* means, most responders gave the answer that “*sevdalinka* represents the most representative segment of Bosnian music tradition” and therefore should be highlighted as a separate category. *Sevdalinka* is indeed the most significant melo-poetic form and is recognised as representative of the Bosnian city music tradition, but in rural tradition there are numerous melodic forms that are equally important in presenting the folk music tradition. Unfortunately, they could not find their place in the federal festivals. Analysing the recordings from the previous years, it can be concluded that under the category “*sevdalinke*” were performed new songs that were created in the *sevdalinke* fashion as well as newly composed folk songs that have no roots in the national tradition. It can be concluded that all the songs performed by the persons who performed them were performed under that category, and members of the jury thought them *sevdalinka* songs.⁹³

A similar approach also applied to the criteria for the category of choirs. A choir was defined as a group of singers regardless of the number of members. In addition, a choir with a larger number of members received a higher score. This evaluation criterion was to the disadvantage of smaller vocal ensembles which performed a better program than some choirs with more singers.

In contrast to the above, the rules for the folklore ensembles are very precise, and the criteria for assessment are quite demanding and imply the authenticity of folklore dances, the authenticity of the costumes,

93 This information clearly indicates that this category was not defined or rated by professional persons, but by those who were considered good connoisseurs of tradition. Also, the way the song and interpretation was evaluated was very awkwardly done.



Performance of the folklore ensemble of the cultural-artistic association "Behar" from Gothenburg at the 22nd Federal festival of culture and education, Gothenburg, November 25, 2017, Archive of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden.

the authenticity of music,⁹⁴ the training of the folklore group, the stage expression and the total artistic value of the presented content.

At the 23rd Federal festival folklore ensembles were very diverse. Some ensembles were very well trained, but the content was mostly Bosniac and consisted of the same dance material and very similar choreographic solutions. This inevitably led to the emergence of scenic stereotypes. Folklore ensembles performed with costumes which were not in the main replicas of authentic costumes. The main parts of the garments corresponded to traditional ones, but the type and colour of the materials from which they were made were not in accordance

94 Authenticity and representativeness of stage performances is assessed by an expert jury. For federal events, each individual member of the jury is in charge only for a particular category, which means that only one person evaluates the performances of folklore groups. According to Zebec, "it can not be said that there is agreement on a unique definition of authenticity". (2002:96) The interests and power hidden in the concept of authenticity are experienced by everyone who participates in the festival in any way, and instead of better understanding there are feelings of suspicion, confusion and envy. (See Buckland 2002:71–74)

with the tradition. The musical accompaniment of folklore ensembles can also not be regarded as authentic. Instrumental accompaniment is not performed on folk music instruments, but on accordions or keyboards, and sometimes accompanied by other instruments.⁹⁵ It should be mentioned in particular that the musicians were not present on the stage, but the instrumental accompaniment was recorded. The role of musicians in the performance of dancing tunes is very important. Actually, dance and the music that accompanied it created a unique dancing-musical unit. The performance of a dancing tune is always related to the performance of a dance because it depends on the musician and his performance whether the dancers will dance well or better. In this case, the role of the musician in the performance of dance tunes is completely ignored. It raises the question whether folklore ensembles, in the conditions in which they operate, can fully meet the criteria that some want to impose on them. Field research, analysis of previous images, as well as the analysis of regional and federal prospects showed that a direct scientific intervention⁹⁶ is necessary, which implies that the ethnomusicologist “on the basis of the results of scientific study, that is knowledge, understanding and conviction”, actively helps in solving specific problems, as well as indirectly by which the results of the research will be presented to “others who will make a decision on the action based on these results”. (Pettan 1995:222) My first step was to help with a more precise definition of the rules, as well as the criteria for evaluating

95 Folklore ensembles of cultural-artistic associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina have different approaches in selecting instrumental accompaniment. Associations that have a serious to folklore mainly use folk music instruments for choreographies of dances from the rural tradition. Whilst a small number of instruments were used in urban areas (def, saz and items that had the function of idiophone instruments – spoons, fildžani and tepsija), city folk dances are performed with tamburitza or non-standard folk orchestras.

96 Indirect intervention in this case involves presenting the overall results of Bosnian music research in Sweden through presentations, written scientific papers, and this book.

music and folk performances. I pointed out the shortcomings in the rules and suggested changes in the festival categories and the criteria for choosing the choirs. I also suggested ways to improve the work of folklore groups, but also to enable them to meet the criteria prescribed by the rules of the festival. Improving the work would certainly be helped by a different concept of evaluating the performance of folklore ensembles. Specifically, it is common practice for an expert jury to have three members – ethnomusicologists for music, ethnologists for costume and a dance ethnochoreologist who will evaluate each of the stage performance scenarios. Members of the expert jury should immediately comment on each performance and submit proposals for further work, and forward them to the organiser of the inquiry in writing. Reports of the expert jury are then sent to all folk ensembles that performed at the venue. (See Zebec 2002:97) Such an approach would surely lead to a better understanding of the decisions of the expert jury in terms of proclamation of the best performances, but also to further quality work.

The second step was a lecture for the vocal ensembles which included: introductory remarks on working with vocal groups and choirs, presentation of selected examples of covers of folk songs for choirs and examples of vocal forms of the folk music tradition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thereafter, a workshop was held where examples of some of the contents of the lecture were presented. Participants in the lectures and workshops got useful tips for future work, suitable literature and noteworthy examples of traditional folk songs. Thanks to good co-operation with the section leaders and the Culture Committee of the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations, positive developments have been visible at the 23rd Session of the Federal festival.⁹⁷

97 From the above text it can be concluded that it is necessary to continuously work on improving the work of music and folklore sections. I offered my services, for which I did not expect financial compensation. However, improving involves the procurement of equipment and costumes – and engaging experts to work with

The Federal festivals of culture and education represent the largest and most important Bosnian cultural manifestations in Sweden and significantly contribute to the presentation of the Bosnian tradition. Accepting the help of experts, as well as the desire to acquire knowledge, will surely bring about better results in the future.

vocal groups, choirs, and folk ensembles. Therefore, how the work will be improved – and by how much – does not depend only on persons who work without any compensation in associations and the Union, but also on their financial resources.

10. Concerts of “Domestic” Music

AMONG THE MORE significant transnational activities of the Bosnians in Sweden are the performances of “domestic stage” artists.⁹⁸ Until the 1990s, the concerts of Yugoslav folk artists in Sweden were mainly organised in smaller spaces such as clubs and restaurants, and concert organisers were Yugoslav associations or restaurant owners. From interviews with informants and from texts from the *Jugoslavenski list*, it can be concluded that the singers of newly-composed folk music from Serbia were the most frequent performers. For Yugoslav migrant workers, the hosting of stage artists was their bond with the homeland and it meant the preservation of social and cultural practice beyond their national and geographic space. At the end of the 1970s, concert tours began with the participation of well-known singers from all former Yugoslav republics. Concert tours were, in a certain

98 In the mid-1980s, Yugoslav laws formalized the categories of “independent artists” and “stage workers” in Yugoslavia. “Work in ‘the service industry’ (uslužne delatnosti) – such as work in kafanas, restaurants and hotels, performing at community celebrations such as village fairs (vašari), dances, private family celebrations (weddings, engagements, baptisms, sending off a young man to military service) – and work in the so-called estrada (concert halls, radio and television and the recording industry) were understood as the two main forms of work in professional musicianship. Although this division was difficult to maintain in practice, it implied a certain distinction between more ‘artistic’ music-making and ‘low-profile’ entertainment offered by rather poorly-skilled musicians ... These two forms of labour overlapped, since many of the performers, although they recorded LPs, still continued performing at informal and private occasions (particularly weddings) as the most important source of income or in kafanas, especially for Yugoslav guest workers in Western European countries. Often musicians emphasised that, no matter how popular and big a star you are, work is work – ‘a gig is a gig’ (tezga je tezga).” (Hofman 2015:34) The Act on the stager activity of the Sarajevo Canton determined the categories: stage performer – person involved in stage activity as a supplementary occupation and who during the course of such activity did not gain significant recognition, and stage artist – person who received awards for his work on stage. (http://mks.ks.gov.ba/sites/mks.ks.gov.ba/files/zakon_o_estradoj_djelatnosti_17-01.pdf, Accessed: January 6, 2019)

way, a Yugoslav “state project” aimed at presenting and promoting music of the then Yugoslav republics in the best way. The leading Yugoslav record companies, the Republic Broadcasting Stations, and the Yugoslav Concert Agency Jugokonzert, which operated at the Association of Music Artists of Yugoslavia, were responsible for the organisation of concert tours. These concerts were held in larger areas and were exceptionally well visited. Often, individuals or groups traveled several hundred kilometres so that they can see and listen to the greatest Yugoslav folk stars.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a large number of popular musicians and those who sought to become popular found their temporary refuge in Western Europe. In addition to the continuous concert activities performed exclusively in Bosnian clubs and associations in the country where they lived, musicians focused great attention on recording new songs, which significantly contributed to their popularity among their compatriots.⁹⁹ At the same time, popular musicians from other countries formed by the breakup of Yugoslavia held concerts in the countries of Western Europe. This should also include the concerts of popular musicians who started building their career in the early 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. In those years, a large number of singers of newly-composed folk music, turbo folk, and “light pop” (Andree Zaimović 2003) appeared, and that music was based on the same, almost purely commercial principles.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, their

99 According to Andree Zaimović, “all the Bosnian music production was dislocated to the countries of Western Europe, especially in Germany.” (2003:7) As a music editor at Radio-Television Zenica (1995–1997), I received countless audio cassettes that were recorded in studios outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as video tapes featuring concerts of Bosnian musicians in Western European countries. Musicians and music producers who lived outside Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout the war wanted their music to be heard on domestic electronic media in order to gain popularity in the homeland as well.

100 Performers of such music became the local “jet set”, which, through numerous electronic media, imposed its system of values of expression, behavioral rules and

activities are mainly focused on the diaspora from the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

For Bosnian refugees, the term “domestic” stage artists involved regional singers and bands, especially those who gained great popularity before the breakup of Yugoslavia, and “domestic” music of all musical genres – from newly popular folk to popular pop music created in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁰¹ “Domestic is everything that is understandable, which is in “our language”, which means that the notion of music in this case is reduced to its linguistic content.”

dress. Andree Zaimović believes that “even the print media, fighting for their own profit, fill their space with stories about new national icons, who originate from the people, do not shy away from their origin and more than modest education. Their words and life philosophy are easy for ordinary people to understand, so there is a great interest in such stories, they are given a lot of attention, and in the end – they are blindly believed.” (2003:139)

- 101 The newly-composed folk music and popular pop music used to represent genres that differed in the quality of music and poetic content, interpretation and performance. Newcomer folk music began to develop in the early sixties of the last century. According to Vidić-Rasmussen, this musical genre was created with the intention of modernizing traditional folk music. In the late 1950s, the arrangers and leaders of the national orchestras started writing arrangements for traditional folk songs. “Arrangers followed a set of compositional standards aimed at artistic improvements of traditional songs and instrumental melodies, including limited improvisation, structure in songs and functional harmony, and a constant rhythm of orchestral accompaniment.” (2017:538) The sixties of the last century marked the migration from village to city and the spread of a mass media network. In that period, newly-created folk music was moving away from traditional folk music. The advantage of newly-written music over other genres is found in the text or more precisely in the content and the message. “The melodious content is adequate to the text. The songwriter and composer, or rather the composer of the text and melodies, adjusts the song to the daily needs and succumbs to the taste of the” newly-made “man who does not want to find his place in a rural, nor can he even in the urban environment. The creatively poor authors thus create themselves an adequate type of song. The words of everyday life, simple and often illogical melodic lines are a sure way to the success of the newly-singing folk song. The instrumental accompaniment is mostly noisy and inept, but it is good to cover the vocal shortcomings of the singers.” (Berberović-Talam 2001:256) Over the past twenty years, newly-formed folk music and light pop music have come closer to one another in all their segments and in literature they are called “commercial” music.

(Andree Zaimović 2003:133) Thus, in understanding the wider audience, music was identified with a text that was understandable and acceptable to them.

Immediately after the end of the war, stage artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and surrounding countries often held concerts in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and then in other Western European countries, the United States and Australia. Concerts by Bosnian stage performers in Sweden were most often organised in cities with a number of people in the Bosnian diaspora: Malmö, Gothenburg, Norrköping, Växjö, Västerås, Stockholm, Jönköping and Örebro.

Concert Tours

In the late 1990s, stage artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries began to organise independent “American”, “Scandinavian” or “Australian” concert tours. The tours were advertised in electronic and print media, via web pages and social networks, for several months in advance. Tours lasted from three to twenty days. The tour of lesser-known singers of folk music generally lasts only one weekend and consists of “three concerts at the same place in all three evenings of the weekend. This creates the possibility of a greater visit, but also diminishes the unique significance of the event itself ... in order to simplify the organization and reduce the cost, they reducing the number of musicians involved. It is not uncommon for a vocal interpreter to sing in front of audiences in smaller discos or in taverns accompanied by a recorded music – instrumental accompaniment.” (Andre Zaimović 2003:150) In recent years, the “weekend tour” in one or more Swedish cities mostly featured singers who participated in television music competitions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

Concert tours of popular folk music singers, such as Hanka Paldum,¹⁰² last from fifteen to twenty days. During the first major tour (February 12–27, 2010) in Sweden, Hanka Paldum held eight concerts in the cities of Skövde, Gothenburg, Växjö, Västerås, Södertälje, Stockholm, Oskarshamn and Umeå. The very serious and thorough preparations of this tour began in May 2009, during the promotion of the album “Sevdah is Love” in the cafe of MultiKulti in Stockholm. Hanka Paldum then sang for the first time with the Swedish band Orientexpressen who, along with several musicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, took part in her Swedish tour.¹⁰³ Hanka Paldum, accompanied by a Bosnian musician’s band, had the last concert tour in Sweden in December 2017. It was a short tour during which she held three concerts in Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm.

Hanka Paldum’s concerts were mostly held in theatres. Her concerts were attended by people from all over the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Thanks to the writings published in Swedish newspapers and web portals, as well as the fact that the Swedish band was performing with Hanka Paldum, many Swedes were present at Hanka’s concerts. And on the last concert tour, the theatres were completely full, and the majority of the audience were Swedes.

Over the past twenty years, the most popular Bosnian pop singer Dino Dervišhalidović, known under the artistic name Dino Merlin, has organised several Scandinavian tours. Dino Merlin’s concert tour was carefully prepared and meant a thoroughly planned organisation of all important segments – concert halls, scenery, lighting, sound, promotion.

¹⁰² Hanka Paldum is one of the most popular *sevdalinka* interpreters, but also performs newcomer songs. In the early 1980s she became very popular in the former Yugoslavia.

¹⁰³ Within the last mini tour, which lasted from 21–23.12.2017. Hanka Paldum held only three concerts in Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm.



*From the concert of Dino Merlin
in Norrköping, March 25, 2017,
Photo: Alma Mamela.*

I wanted to offer our people in the west, as much as possible, all the infrastructure I offer here, in my homeland. For example, I often make concerts in the halls in the West, which was previously unthinkable. So, the same thing I would do in a concert in Skenderija (in Sarajevo), I would do so in the Sports Center in Zagreb. Advertisements for such concerts in the West go through official means of informing, and we even had jumbo posters. (Interview with Dino Merlin was led by Vesna Andree Zaimović 2001)

Within the last tour, which lasted 14 days (March 11–25, 2017). Dino Merlin held three concerts in Malmö, Gothenburg and Norrköping.¹⁰⁴ According to the informants, this was indeed a special musical event. More than 3,000 people from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries attended the concert at the Stadium Arena in Norrköping. Since Dino Merlin represented Bosnia and Herzegovina twice in the Eurovision Song Contest, and participated in other

¹⁰⁴ In December 2018, Dino Merlin held a major concert at the Fryshuset Arena in Stockholm.

international festivals, he is well known to the Swedish audience. It is therefore not surprising that numerous concerts were attended by numerous Swedes.

In addition to the aforementioned, concert tours in Sweden were also organised by other popular Bosnian singers and bands such as Bijelo dugme, Zabranjeno pušenje, Regina, Dubioza kolektiv, Divanhana and others. Bijelo dugme was one of the most popular rock bands in the former Yugoslavia. They were active until 1989.¹⁰⁵ After sixteen years they reunited and held concerts in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Belgrade. Since 2008, they have had two “Swedish” tours. During the first tour, they held concerts in Malmö and Gothenburg where Željko Bebek, Mladen Vojičić Tifa and Alen Islamović sang. The concerts attracted people of various ages from the territory of the former Yugoslavia living in Sweden, Norway and Denmark today. They were however mostly those who grew up with the Bijelo Dugme songs. According to Naser Pobrić, people from all parts of Sweden attended the Gothenburg concert. Thus a group of Bosnians from Tumba, including Pobrić, travelled to Gothenburg to attend a concert with Bijelo dugme. “It was an unforgettable experience. We enjoyed the old songs from our youth.” (Interview with Naser Pobrić, Tumba, January 19, 2019) Analysing the recordings of the concerts,¹⁰⁶ it can be concluded that these concerts were in both

¹⁰⁵ The band Bijelo dugme was founded in 1974 in Sarajevo. Their greatest popularity was achieved during the first ten years of playing when Željko Bebek sang in the band. After Bebek left the band, the band's singers were Mladen Vojičić Tifa (1984–1985) and Alen Islamović (1985–1989). Since 1998, the founder of the Bijelo Dugme group, Goran Bregovic, has founded the Weddings and Funerals Orchestra with which he gained worldwide popularity.

¹⁰⁶ At a concert held in Sarajevo in 2005, about 60,000 people gathered. Part of the audience, including myself, was pretty disappointed. The concert had numerous organisational faults, among which the most primitive was the problem with the sound system. Since I grew up with the Bijelo dugme group and attended their concerts, I could clearly see the difference in the quality of the interpretation. Unlike the former, this concert was “without too much emotion, without contact with the audience, quite uninvited and with boring rain.” (<https://www.lupiga>).



*Concert poster of the band
Dubioza kolektiu.*

interpretation and organisation far from those concerts that the audience remembered.

Among the numerous Bosnian bands that have organised a concert tour in Sweden, Dubioza Kolektiv has a remarkable place. This band was founded in 2003. Thanks to its unique music which is a mix of several genres – rock, punk, reggae and ska, as well as lyrics that call for social responsibility and send strong political messages, the Dubioza Kolektiv has become very popular in all Balkan countries. Since their repertoire contains songs in English, the Dubioza Kolektiv has gained popularity in many western European countries.

The topical lyrics of the songs, that speak in a satirical way about cruel doings around the world, in addition to the unusual musical expression attracted the attention of numerous audiences in Sweden. According to the statements of informants, at the concerts of Dubioza Kolektiv audiences were persons originating from all Balkan countries, and almost half of those present were Swedes.

com/vijesti/bijelo-dugme-sarajevo-pokusni-kunic, Accessed: January 22, 2019.)
The same impression could be gained at concerts in Sweden.

Finally, I especially want to mention concerts with the band Divanhana. Divanhana was founded by a group of former students of the Academy of Music of the University of Sarajevo at the beginning of 2009. In the first years they performed exclusively *sevdalinkas*, and then their repertoire expanded with traditional songs from other Balkan countries. Their performances of traditional music are adorned with new arrangements created under the influence of jazz, pop and classical music. Divanhana had their first major concert tour in Sweden in 2013, and the last in December 2018. Concerts are held in smaller halls and gather mostly younger people originating from Bosnia and Herzegovina and neighbouring countries. Therefore these persons, mostly born in Sweden, have through their various transnational activities have developed a love of Bosnian traditional folk music. In recent years, concerts or concert tours are organised by two performers from Bosnia and Herzegovina or one from Bosnia and Herzegovina and one from Croatia or Serbia. At the beginning of October 2017, together with the popular Serbian Željko Joksimović, the former singer of the band Bijelo dugme Željko Bebek held a concert in Gothenburg, and a few days later, Bebek held two concerts with popular music folk singer Halid Bešlić in Malmö and Stockholm. In October 2018, the “Scandinavian” tour presented Željko Joksimović and Bosnian singer Amel Ćurić.¹⁰⁷ In March 2019, a concert tour with Halid Bešlić and popular Bosnian pop singer Hari Varešanović, known under the name Hari Mata Hari, was announced. This should be added to the fact that Bosnians are happy to visit concerts of popular singers or bands from the region, such as Josipa Lisac, Toni Cetinski, Gibonni and the bands Parni valjak and Hladno pivo.

The concerts of popular stage artists who require very serious organisation in large theatres, concert or other halls are most often

¹⁰⁷ Unlike the previously-mentioned very popular singers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, Amel Ćurić has had a very modest musical career. He is the winner of the first Bosnian reality show OBN Music Talents (2003) and regional talent show X Factor Adria (2015) and released one CD *Urnebes* (2006).

organised by the private music agency Kaponi, Riksteatern, and in the past few years and APU networks. The hosting of less popular stage artists is mainly organised by smaller agencies and Bosnian associations.

Festivals

Research has shown that Bosnian associations, individuals and companies owned by Bosnian people organise music festivals. The contents of the festivals are very diverse and can be divided into festivals of:

- traditional folk music
- folklore
- pop and rock music
- other musical genres.¹⁰⁸

One of the most famous festivals is the Gothenburg Balkan Festival, organized by Balkan Blues Company since 2013. The founder and organiser of the festival is Alismir Jugo. The first festival was held from 28–30.03.2013. During the three festival days, there were several concerts and workshops for young musicians. At the concerts you were able to hear various music genres in the performance of musicians from various countries. Swedish, Ukrainian, Spanish, Romanian and Hungarian musicians and ensembles performed at the first Gothenburg Balkan Festival. One of the most famous Serbian bands, Disciplin A Kitschme, attracted the greatest attention of the audience. In the

¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, due to the limited time and budget, I have not been able to attend festivals. For some festivals, I received detailed information from the informants, as well as accompanying documentation. With additional information I found through web pages, it was possible to analyse and describe individual festivals. For a number of festivals, I collected superficial information that was not enough to do a more detailed analysis. Therefore, in this chapter only festivals for which I have found enough information will be presented.



*Announcement of the Göteborg Balkan Festival
2014, Private archive of Alismir Jugo.*

following years, famous musicians and bands from the Balkans took part in the festivals: Leiner and Hrnjak-Ex Azra (Croatia), Vlatko Stefanovski (Macedonia), Goran Bare and Majke (Croatia), Darko Rundek (Croatia), SASSJA (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Gipsy Groove (Kosovo). Local bands, as well as Bosnian musicians and bands living in Sweden, were also present at the festival.

The Göteborg Balkan Festival is an important segment of cultural life in Gothenburg. Concerts by popular artists are extremely well attended and gather audiences of different age and educational structures, as well as ethnicity. (Interview with Adnan Erkočević, Göteborg, October 3, 2018) The organiser's intention is to give a chance to less known performers whose concerts are not always well attended. According to informants, the Göteborg Balkan Festival justified its function, its content really provides an opportunity to enjoy various music events.

One of the youngest festivals is the Sevdalinka Festival organized by the Bosniak cultural and sport center Gothenburg. The first festival took place on May 20, 2017. This is a concert in which several sevdalinka singers from Bosnia and Herzegovina have performed, as well as Bosnians living in Sweden. The second festival, which took



Performance of saz player Asim Hodžić at the 2nd Sevdalinka Festival in Gothenburg, December 1, 2018, Photo: Damir Galijašević.

place on December 1, 2018, conceptually did not differ from the first. At the festival 16 singers from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sweden and the choir of the Association of Women “Đulistan” from Gothenburg performed.¹⁰⁹ It is interesting to note that the lesser number of performed songs were sevdalinkas and the greater recently-composed songs. Some of these songs are composed in the spirit of Sevdalinka, so people often regard them as sevdalinke, while others belong to the genre of newly composed folk songs.¹¹⁰

Considering the manner of organisation and programme content, it can be said that the Festival of Sevdalinka is intended almost exclusively for a Bosnian audience and partially for people from other Balkan countries. The festival obviously arose from the need for cultural events aimed at presenting Bosnian traditional folk music. However, the programme content of the festival clearly indicates that this goal has not been fully realised, since most of the programme

¹⁰⁹ Damir Galijašević gave me information about the 2nd Sevdah Festival.

¹¹⁰ Among the songs performed that are composed in the spirit of sevdalinka are “Ne klepeći nanulama”, “Na teferić pošla nana”, “U lijepom starom gradu Višegradu”; the newly-composed folk songs are “Plava žena, topla zima”, “Nad izvorom vrba se nadnela”, and the song composed in the spirit of the “old town” songs is “Ko te ima, taj te nema”.

does not offer traditional folk music. Besides good will and desire, it is also necessary to have the knowledge of traditional folk music that will enable its quality and authentic presentation. Unfortunately, the organisers are very often limited by financial means, so their thinking is more focused on the realisation of a particular project, not on the quality of content. Sevdah Festival is an important event for the Bosnians in Gothenburg. Hopes remain that more attention will be paid in the future to the programme concept of the festival, and to the selection of songs and performers. This would significantly contribute to the quality and better promotion of Bosnian traditional folk music.

11. Final Considerations

THE RESEARCH PRESENTED in this book aimed to point out the richness and diversity of musical activities of the Bosnian people in Sweden. During the six months of research in different part of Sweden, I have conducted interviews with 70 persons of Bosnian origin who were directly or indirectly involved in musical activities. At the same time I studied the literature, found, cataloged and classified manuscript, archival material, audio and video recordings, and other documentary material related to the subject of research. The scope and content of the collected material and the information I received during the field research influenced my original research topic, focused on the musical activities of Bosnian refugees, expanding it to include the musical activities of the Bosnians who came to Sweden as migrant workers in the second half of the 20th century.

The musical activities of Bosnian migrant workers in Sweden took place mainly within Yugoslav associations and clubs. At the end of the 1970s, the first Bosnian associations were formed, which primarily cultivated the Bosnian tradition and culture, and secondarily the tradition of other former Yugoslav republics. As a result of politically motivated violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide, more than a million inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina were forced to leave their homes, of which more than 60,000 people found their new home in Sweden. As early as in the first years of their stay in Sweden, the Bosnians began to perform various musical activities that were mostly related to the folk music tradition. Since 1992, Bosnian cultural associations have been formed in which the most important place is occupied by music and folklore sections that cultivate the folk musical tradition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Analysing the work of the associations, it can be concluded that their musical activities resembled the activities of Yugoslav associations, but focused on Bosnian traditional music and dance.

Generally speaking, the musical activities of the Bosnian people in Sweden are very wide and encompass different musical expressions and genres. And after more than two decades, musical activities are mostly performed within the sections of cultural associations, the Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian associations in Sweden, and other unions of Bosnian associations in Sweden. The Bosnians in Sweden carry out other musical activities through which they confirm their individual, cultural and national identity. This primarily refers to the organisation of parties, the celebration of holidays, the organisation of various musical manifestations and concerts of stage artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important to note that several bands whose founders and/or members originate from Bosnia and Herzegovina are also active in Sweden. In the repertoire of the bands, Bosnian urban love songs – *sevdalinkas* – take a significant place, but they cherish traditional songs from the territory of the former Yugoslavia, as well as other music genres. An analysis of the musical activities of the Bosnians in Sweden has shown that they take place continuously, and that a greater number of them are organised for the purpose of cultivating Bosnian tradition and culture, as well as for frequent meetings and socialising with their compatriots. The continuity and quality of individual activities generally depends on individuals who are making great efforts to improve their work, offer better quality content, and also animate others to actively engage with associations. It is important to note that there are numerous problems and limitations that musical and folklore sections encounter in their work. This relates primarily to the lack of professional staff in certain places, and that some people are not prepared to work voluntarily – that is, without compensation for their work. On the professional side, this is understandable, because for each educated musician, maintaining the music section involves professional work. In the absence of professional guidance, music ensembles take music lovers or former singers in cultural and artistic societies that have no relevant experience and often no musical education. The problem

of leadership of folklore ensembles was “conveyed” from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the diaspora. Leaders of folklore ensembles are most often people who played in the country in folklore sections of cultural and artistic societies. Such persons do not possess sufficient ethnochoreological, choreographic and pedagogical knowledge that would enable them to put a good choreography on the scene. In recent years, positive developments have been made in the work of folklore ensembles. Seminars are organised where folklore ensemble leaders are introduced to the steps and stylistic characteristics of individual dance zones, as well as with various choreographies.

Organisations of parties, celebrations and music events vary significantly and can be classified from those that do not offer quality music content to those that feature an extremely high quality and well-trained programmes. The musical content of entertainment is mainly reduced to the engagement of one or two musicians, with the crucial role being played by the price, not the quality of performance. Great attention is paid to the celebrations of holidays. This is supported by the fact that in the past few years more than one federation organised central celebrations of national holidays.

On these occasions, the best-quality content offered by individuals or associations is presented. And the organisations of other music events is very diverse – from modest to high-quality. I especially want to mention the Federal Festivals of culture and education, which for their complex organisation and rich programme really deserve all kinds of praise. It is also important to mention other manifestations such as the series of concerts “Sevdalinka in Scandinavia”. The orchestra of the association “Neretva” from Hagsätra, led by professor Enes Omerdić, organised a unique musical event and staged an extraordinary promotion of Bosnian culture. Unfortunately, only a handful of people were able to attend these concerts because there was no manager to arrange and organise a number of concerts across Sweden.

The bands founded by or consisting of Bosnian musicians play a significant role in the promotion of Bosnian music in Sweden. Each

of the bands has its own unique musical expression and presents the folk music tradition in its own unique way. Some of these bands are less, some are more popular. This is not influenced by the quality of their interpretation, but by the fact that they do it as amateurs and in their free time, and are not able to often present themselves to a wider cultural audience.

Concerts of “domestic” music include concerts with musicians from the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Concerts by popular performers, regardless of whether they are Bosnian or from neighbouring countries, are mostly spectacular and gather all the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and in recent years also Swedes. It is interesting that even after so many years of political decay, “Yugoslavia” continues to exist as a part of transnational cultural collectivity.

Ceribašić says that “music is a social field, which, therefore, creates and reflects social reality, it is possible – relying on the knowledge gained through its research – to use it to influence the social change.” (2015:192) By using these principles, I pointed to certain problems that could significantly contribute to the quality of musical activities, but also to their visibility in Swedish society. This primarily refers to connecting people who want to nurture the Bosnian musical tradition, as well as to work on its promotion in Sweden. It is equally important to engage experts who can successfully manage the music sections of the association, as well as conduct continuous education of the leaders of folklore sections. One of the big problems is visible in the promotion of musical activities of the Bosnians in Sweden. Namely, notifications of concerts, and other events are mostly published on the Facebook pages of individuals or associations, and in the Bosnian language on the association’s web pages. The information thus presented is not available or not understandable to the Swedes and therefore they do not attend or rarely attend events organised by Bosnian associations or individuals. The exception is the organisation of concerts or concert tours with popular stage artists organised by private agencies. Also, it is

necessary to connect with Swedish associations that aim to promote intercultural communication.

This book is the first study dedicated to music and music-making among Bosnians in Sweden. Like any other, the research does not represent the entire story but opens up opportunities for new or comparative research of Bosnian music in Sweden, as well as a potential model or exploring the music of other ethnic groups.

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List of Informants

All interviews are archived at Svenskt visarkiv
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Ajanović Almir, born 1975 in Sarajevo, lived in Gävle
Alilović Adisa, born 1980 in Tuzla, lives in Norrköping
Avdić Edisa, born 1974 in Kozarac, lives in Gislaved
Bahtijarević Senija, born 1958 in Bosanski Petrovac, lives in Gislaved
Bandić Šefika, born 1957 in Sarajevo, lives in Norrköping
Bukić Zlatan, born 1961 in Banja Luka, lives in Malmö
Bunar Nihada, born 1978 in Sarajevo, lives in Stockholm
Cucović Jakub, born 1962 in Peć (Kosovo), lives in Gothenburg
Dervišić Amir, born 1972 in Jajce, lives in Anderstorp
Drašković Danijel, born 1978 in Mostar, lives in Uppsala
Duliman Ejub, born 1958 in Mostar, lives in Skarpnäck
Đurić Jelisije, born 1957 in Ljeskovica near Žepče, lives in Tullinge
Erkočević Adnan, born 1977 in Trebinje, lives in Gothenburg
Ferhatović Fikret, born 1945 in Sarajevo, lives in Stockholm
Ferhatović Hadžera, born 1934 in Banja Luka, lives in Norrköping
Gadžo Samir, born 1967 in Sarajevo, lives in Helsingborg
Glasenčnik Branka, born 1953 in Sarajevo, lives in Södertälje
Golić Suad, born 1957 in Mostar, lives in Hagsätra, Stockholm
Hadžisalihović Saliha, born 1955 in Bijeljina, lives in Gislaved
Halilović Emin, born 1953 in Sarajevo, lives in Falun
Hamza Saldina, born 1969 in Glamoč, lives in Tranemo
Hodović Ešef, born 1955 in Čajniče, lives in Gävle
Hodžić Hidajet, born in Kozarac, lives in Gothenburg
Horić Emira, born in Prijedor, lives in Norrköping
Huseinović Esmā, born 1954 in Derventa, lives in Gislaved
Huseinović Jusuf, born in Derventa, lives in Gislaved
Husković Vahida, born 1960 in Čajniče, lives in Norrköping
Jakić Mehmed, born 1984 in Sarajevo, lives in Malmö
Jalović Senir, born 1963 in Trebinje, lives in Gothenburg
Jašarević Ismet, born 1960 in Višegrad, lives in Bandhagen
Jašarspahić Kenan born 1983 in Kakanj, lives in Arlöv
Jašarspahić Zikreta, born 1955 in Zenica, lives in Malmö

Jelačić Azra, born in Banja Luka, lives in Malmö
 Jugo Alismir, born 1968 in Mostar, lives in Gothenburg
 Jusufović Samir, born 1968 lives in Banja Luka, lived in Helsingborg, lives in Sarajevo
 Kačapor Damir, born 1972 in Višegrad, lives in Helsingborg
 Kapo Meho, born 1957 in Sarajevo, lives in Västerås
 Karamehmedović Ramiza, born 1953 in Lastva near Trebinje, lives in Malmö
 Kazlagić Admira, born in Mrkonjić Grad, lives in Norrköping
 Konjević Bahra, born 1967 in Prijedor, lives in Gislaved
 Konjević Nazmija, born 1963 in Rakovčani near Prijedor, lives in Gislaved
 Livančić Jordana, born 1964 in Jajce, lives in Gislaved
 Masatović Dragica, born 1956 in Teslić, lives in Gislaved
 Mehinović Raza, born 1956 in Podborje near Kakanj, lives in Stockholm
 Merudić Muharema, born 1968 in Bosanski Novi, lives in Gislaved
 Mujagić Fikreta, born 1948 in Prijedor, lives in Norrköping
 Mujakić Muhamed, born 1947 in Prijedor, lives in Norrköping
 Mulalić Amel, born 1987 in Bosanska Gradiška, lives in Gothenburg
 Mulazimović Nedžad, born 1955 in Sarajevo, lives in Norrköping
 Muratspahić Izet, born 1953 in Đakovići near Goražde, lives in Uppsala
 Murić Sadeta, born 1947 in Prijedor, lives in Gislaved
 Musić Šuaib, born 1939 in Čarakovo near Prijedor, lives in Gothenburg
 Nezirević Aida, born 1974 in Banja Luka, lives in Norrköping
 Novljaković Husein, born 1968 in Bosanska Kostajnica, lives in Landskrona
 Nuhanović Ismet, born 1955 in Han Pijesak, lives in Malmö
 Omerdić Enes, born 1974 in Zenica, lives in Nyköping
 Omerdić Nermina, born 1987 in Bijelo Polje (Montenegro), lives in Nyköping
 Pejnović Antun, born 1965 in Bistrica near Zavidovići, lives in Gothenburg
 Pejnović Slavica, born 1971 in Ljubatovići near Žepče, lives in Gothenburg
 Pervizović Miralem, born 1954 in Trebinje, lives in Malmö
 Pobrić Jasminka, born 1960 in Mostar, lives in Tumba, Stockholm
 Pobrić Naser, born 1961 in Zavidovići, lives in Tumba, Stockholm
 Prčić Damir, born 1980 in Bosanski Šamac, lives in Helsingborg
 Radaslić Milena, born 1958 in Glamoč, lives in Gislaved
 Softić Alma, born 1972 in Banja Luka, lives in Gothenburg
 Šemović Emina, born 1967 in Nikšić (Montenegro), lives in Nyköping
 Šemović Hajrudin, born 1961 in Bijelo Polje (Montenegro), lives in Nyköping
 Šura Ena, born 2000 in Värnamo, lives in Gislaved
 Tucaković Haris, born 1957 in Mostar, lives in Skövde
 Vajzović Tufik, born 1947 in Pljevlja (Montenegro), lived in Zvorniku, lives in Gothenburg
 Veladžić Fatima, born 1968 in Velika Kladuša, lives in Värnamo
 Zahirović Mirsada, born 1964 in Bosanska Dubica, lives in Lindköping
 Zekiri Mirsada, born 1957 in Bijeljina, lives in Gislaved
 Zemanić Suada, born 1964 in Banja Luka, lives in Norrköping
 Žiga Enes, born 1955 in Goražde, lives in Vällingby, Stockholm
 Žiga Elza, born 1959 in Pljevlja (Montenegro), lives in Vällingby, Stockholm

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Bosnians in Sweden – Music and Identity gives an extensive overview of the musical activities connected to Bosnian associations in Sweden. The study is primarily related to the musical activities of the musical ensembles whose founders and members migrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The book is based on fieldwork and documentation of various celebrations, organised musical manifestations in which Bosnian musicians take part, concerts with musicians invited from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighbouring countries and broadcasts from the Bosnian radio stations in Sweden.

This study provides new insights about the important role of music and dance in migrant contexts and its findings can easily be applied on a more general level for other migrant groups.

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