

Tanja Halužan**PhD Project working title: Music at weddings in Zagreb**

1. Research overview

Weddings, although in different forms, are a widespread phenomenon: they are almost universal social, cultural and ceremonial family events. At the same time, its specific form is shaped and developed in various ways within individual cultures, regions and ethno-national groups (Elscheková and Fujie 1997:31). In the customs and ceremonial events associated with this important life-cycle occasion, music plays essential role: guiding the wedding sequence from one event to the next, music shapes temporal structure of the celebration (Naroditskaya 2019:2350-2351).

My interest in this area developed from my personal experience of attending weddings of my friends and family members and noticing the inevitability of this role. It very quickly became apparent that the connection between music and the wedding ceremony is realized on several mutually overlapping levels, which intrigued me to make a deeper insight into the music played in this context. This research, therefore, aims to provide an in-depth insight into the current prevailing musical practices connected to weddings, while providing a framework for defining and understanding the role of musicians and the characteristics of music they perform (and create?) in specific local and ritual context.

In Croatia, music scholars have often directed their focus to wedding customs, rituals and musical practices, but mainly in a manner of an overview. On the one hand, there is a large volume of published ethnological studies describing weddings as an indispensable part of life-cycle customs, the most recent being the comprehensive insight into the Croatian wedding customs by ethnologist Zorica Vitez (2003). On the other hand, Croatian ethnomusicologists have in the last century only sporadically addressed this topic, focusing primarily on the vocal forms and music repertoire at weddings in specific regional areas, often omitting a popular music repertoire (Ceribašić 1991, 1993; Marošević 1986).

This study, therefore, aims to contribute to this area of research by generating fresh and important ethnographic insights. The orientation to Zagreb as the capital and largest city in Croatia thereat, as well as its surroundings, was guided by the assumption that it would provide insight into the latest and stylistically diverse musical practices. Given that this research is localised in Zagreb, it adheres to the tradition of research "at home" conditioned by the shift in research paradigm in the 1990s (Cooley and Barz 2008:13; Cohen 1993:125).

2. First insights

Drawing on the collected ethnographic data, in this research directed towards music at weddings in Zagreb area, I focus on three aspects that were already in initial insights revealed as defining and predominant: first of all, the role of music at the wedding as a key ritual of transition and one of the most important life-cycle customs, then the aspect of music labour, and finally the aspect of community dynamics. Besides continuously reading and searching through domestic and foreign literature concerning weddings, rituals of transition, music as labour, etc., lately I have been conducting semi-structured interviews with musicians, venue owners and wedding

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couples, who were reached through known contacts with snowballing method used to include more participants. It is also important to mention that I have been conducting digital media ethnography of online activity connected to the wedding scene, which is further being supported by ongoing participant observation at the wedding events itself.

Because of its increasing questioning in public discourse, my research has so far concentrated greatly on the abovementioned aspect of music labour, addressing some of the initial research questions of motivation and emotion in music-making. I have presented some of the findings this August at the IsaScience 2019 Conference in Reichenau an der Rax in the paper titled "Working the wedding: towards the economic framework of wedding music(ians) in Zagreb area". Furthermore, I have presented a part of my research at the 45th ICTM World Conference 2019 held in July in Chulalongkorn University, Thailand in a presentation "Between traditional models and actual practices: the case of wedding music in Zagreb area and the issue of its sustainability". On the example of current wedding musical practices in Zagreb area, I have discussed the relationship between older local traditions and the newer, heterogeneous ones, as well as the possibilities and challenges of their preservation. The subject and progress of my research I have as well presented at the recent Doctoral Forum within the Doctoral School.

Moreover, I will tackle one of the research questions directed towards the prevailing structures of music ensembles, in particular the questions of hierarchy and gender inequality at the 11th Symposium of ICTM Study Group Music, Gender and Sexuality this June in Zagreb under the title "Not musicians, but singers?": Gender differentiation in the context of music at weddings".

3. Further work

According to the initial plan, most of the time in the upcoming period will be invested in fieldwork. The upcoming research will, above all, look into music and its role in different contexts within culture focusing on individuals, social relationships and music as a social practice and process, but also into the criteria by which the music for the wedding in different contexts is chosen. In the interviews, particular attention will be given to selection of musicians and covering diversity in relation to the supposed cultural, economic and social capital (Bourdieu 1984). Consequently, transcriptions and analysis of interviews will follow, as well as analysis of field notes and audio-visual documentation that I have gathered from my informants.

Although I have in the initial research draft planned to provide insight into the current prevailing musical practices connected to weddings by following the routes of few researched musicians and tracking the weddings in few chosen halls, this proved to be unattainable due to various reasons (above all, disinterest of venue owners). Hence, after my first research year, I redefined my field which will be circumscribed primarily by the activities of various musicians. Furthermore, it is becoming even more apparent that undefined legal status of music labour in this context is quite common. Concerning the fact that it largely operates in a grey, semi-legal zone, it is to be expected that addressing this questions will be challenging.

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Moreover, since weddings are rather private events, I have met some difficulties so far regarding their participating. For this reason, I am currently actively building up my network of contacts and hopefully, when the wedding season starts (from April to October), I will widen my "limited field". In order to bring out more detailed conclusions, it is possible that the narrowing down the scope of research will be needed, which will be shown through the next few months.

4. Selected bibliography

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