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## **(Post)Yugoslavian Music Press in Transition\***

**Abstract:** The development of the Internet and digital technologies has influenced the ever-greater migrations of printed content to the digital sphere (blogs, online media, Internet portals, social networks), which has also brought with itself changes in readers' habits and in the concept and format of texts as well. Music press is no exception in that respect. In the context of South European states, these processes coincide with the period of political, social, cultural and economic transition, giving rise to the development of numerous regional and local specific forms of popular culture. The existence of the SFRY as a shared state enabled the creation of an authentic cultural space, which continued to develop even after its disintegration. This paper endeavors to shed light on

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one segment of that local authenticity through an analysis of music press. The aim the authors of this paper aspire to achieve is the presentation of the development path of the printed media in the first place in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, then in Serbia, as well as the reconstructions of the modality of the transformation of this media in the transition period from an anthropological perspective. The wish is to identify the perception and significance of music as a local cultural phenomenon through the qualitative analysis of the archival material and the available Internet sources as well, then to trace the cultural changes that have been going on over time as a result of global and local social and cultural turmoil. We do not refer to press only as the medium which has an informative role, but rather as the medium that reflects the local community's attitudes, simultaneously constructing narratives on popular culture that are incorporated in our everyday life.

**Keywords:** music press, popular music, transition, Yugoslavia, Serbia

### (Post)Yugoslavian Transition

According to Katherine Verdery, an anthropologist, “the disintegration of the communist party in East Europe in 1989,” is an event which will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> century to a great extent (Verdery 2005, 39). To understand the period of post-socialism, it is necessary to touch on the transition phenomenon, as a process characteristic for all the states that had had a socialist system until then. In this paper, transition is perceived as “diverse processes included in the abrogation of socialism and the restauration of capitalism in the former communist or socialist world” (Cvek et al. 2015, 13). So, transition is not thought of as a single process undergoing everywhere in the same way; it is rather perceived as several different processes tightly connected with the local environment where the same are taking place, within which they trace different social and political development:

Having in view the fact that practice has shown that the transition process contains much more of complexity, a lack of definition, variations, and contradictions, where every society is quite a special case, it is only the different forms of social transformations that can be spoken about. (Hofman 2008, 209)

In anthropology, transition is probably most discussed through an analysis of everyday life since “it enables a multidimensional analysis and understanding of political practices and contradictory social phenomena” (Hofman 2008, 209). Anthropologists' focus is placed on considering and explaining concrete problem areas in the fields of culture, politics, and the economy, which on their part are closely local, since it is only in that way, through perceiving a narrower context, that they can be analyzed. Writing about post-socialism and transition topics almost twenty years ago, Gordana Gorunović points out that the then:

...anthropological approaches to studying post-socialism in East Europe represent both the amendment to and checking of the analyses focused on macro-levels. Anthropologists began to research the main transitology topics from ethnographically informed perspectives: the civil society building processes and the gender dimension of the concept; the influence of decollectivization and privatization on local policies, identities, and social organization in rural East-European communities; the national identity and so on. (Gorunović 2007, 198)

In order to be able to explain the development of the music press in the period of post-socialism and transition, as well as the implications related to those processes, it is necessary to make a reference to the crucial events that are connected with the former Yugoslavia, which on their part, are not a mere historical fact, but are marked as such in the mental maps of the population of these territories as well. In that sense, the rebuilding of the state in the post-war period, Tito's death in 1980, the disintegration of the state in 1991, and the wars that followed could be singled out. All said events have largely influenced people's lives, as well as their today's perception of the past. Bojan Žikić points out the fact that:

...once such a crucial event is observed from an anthropological perspective, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that it is about the phenomenon which is 'the product of certain social and cultural processes, which some new social and cultural processes (...) war, the relocation of the population, an economic crisis, economic transition, privatization, democratization, accession to EU integration processes arise from as well'. (Žikić 2012, 903)

The disintegration of the state in 1991 is one of the crucial events in the context of the SFRY, so transition is also mainly connected with the period before the very disintegration of the state. There are authors, however, who consider that those processes began considerably earlier. Considering the transition phenomenon in post-socialism on the territory of the former SFRY, Hromadžić points to the fact that some form of transition began a lot before its "official" beginning during the 1990s. Namely, this author thinks that that first transition can be detected as early as in the 1960s and the early 1970s:

...roughly sketched, the transition of the former Yugoslavian territory during the past few decades will remain marked with a series of significant phases", such as the deviation from Stalin's politics in 1948 and winning America's favor and recurring economic aid; near the end of the 1950s, the FPRY's economic growth reached its climax; in the 1960s, there was The Non-Aligned Movement, the denial of further American aid, and a try to implement an economic reform; in 1968, there was student unrest, national and political turmoil (MASPOK), then the Constitution of 1974, the 1980s after Tito – the social and economic crises, the savings measures, the post-socialist Yugoslavian period of the 1990s – the disintegration of the state, the wars, nationalism. (Hromadžić 2020, 89)

In the 1950s, liberalization in the economy became noticeable, and in the following decade, huge unemployment and people's organized departure to foreign countries to work came on the scene due to the unsuccessful reforms (Marković 2007, 25). If the 1970s are perceived as the era of the rise of the prosperity of the state mostly so in the economic sense, then the 1980s triggered off the descending trend that culminated in the 1990s and with the disintegration of the state, as well as the introduction of the multiparty system<sup>1</sup>. Kovačević singles out three significant periods in the Yugoslavian history: 1) the socialist period in the SFRY, which encompasses the period between 1950 and 1985, characterized by "the time of the introduction of social property and its undamaged functioning, as well as the strong limitation of private property and the private economic initiative," then 2) the first transition period (from 1985 to 2000), when "private ownership and entrepreneurship started being liberated from socialist limitations, still retaining the socialist forms of ownership, as well as the devastation of its substance," then 3) the second transition period, which began in 2001 and has been lasting until this very day<sup>2</sup>, "being characterized by the proclamation of the full privatization process and the gradual implementation of the titularization of ownership over business entities," (Kovačević 2007, 21-23). The thesis that "the 1980s, the period of stagnation and the economic downturn, in the SFRY represent a definitive move from finding out the own form of self-management socialism towards the market economy" (Cvek et al. 2015, 15). Yugoslavia had specific socialism reflecting in its independent foreign policy, open borders, and a big share of private property in agriculture (Marković 2012, 38).

That specificity also spilled over transition processes in post-socialism. Namely, the specificity of the social changes that followed after the disintegration of Yugoslavia reflected in the "*ethno-nationalization of society*" processes as the *backbone* of those changes, by means of which those *novel post-Yugoslavian societies* were established in a new manner, speaking in a *social-structural sense* (Bolčić 2019, 325).

### The Press as the Media in Post (Socialism)

The subject matter of the analysis made in this paper is Yugoslavian music press in transition<sup>3</sup>. Music press implies all those highly specialized magazines dealing with music and music-related issues in the first place. The growth of the

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<sup>1</sup> The one-party system was abolished by the Constitution of 1990.

<sup>2</sup> One should bear in mind the fact that this paper was written almost twenty years ago.

<sup>3</sup> For more about (music) press and popular culture see Zubak 2013, Gajić 2023, Stefanović 2015.

music scene is intertwined with the development of the (print) media, as they accompany, record, document and critically evaluate the scene itself (Stojanović 2014, 5).

Given the fact that transition was the process that had begun as early as in socialism, the analysis needed to be split into the press encompassing the socialist period (from the 1950s to the 1990s) and the press released after the 1990s. In the case of the SFRY, the transition processes were being run in parallel with changes in the digital world, for which reason this paper also makes reference to the analysis of the Internet portals which have, to some extent, taken over the role of the print media in the past thirty years. The specificity of the press as a form of the media closely relates to local cultural and social circumstances and the economic and political development as well. In that sense, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia represents a very fertile soil for studying the material(s) of this kind since it was characterized by a more liberal cultural policy in relation to the other socialist countries of that period. That freedom reflects in a possibility of following and adopting all that used to be called Western popular culture. Writing about the history of the print media in the states that were “behind the Iron Curtain”, such as Czechia, Poland, and Hungary, Nossek points out that the production of the print media began to grow after the fall of the “Iron Curtain”:

The history of print media in post-communist East Central Europe demonstrates that growth and changes in newspaper production, distribution, and consumption occurred simultaneously with democratization and the fall of the Iron Curtain in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary. (Nossek et al. 2015, 366)

Such an assertion is not fully implementable when the press in socialist Yugoslavia is concerned since it was surprisingly diverse even prior to the disintegration of the state and transitioning to a democratic system. A big choice of the print media in Yugoslavia could be “read” even as what political theorists refer to as “soft socialism” in practice. The promulgation of the first Law on the Press in 1945, immediately following the end of the war, as well as Tito’s occasional press conferences aimed at instructing journalists on what was considered to be “the right way to work and inform the public”, are also the indicators that the press was quickly recognized as a significant generator of the desired presentations of different segments of Yugoslavian daily life by the authorities:

Josip Broz soon introduced repeated press conferences in his presidential schedule, too, so as to teach them the importance of their contributions to building socialism, then also the content they would be reporting to the ‘masses of people’. (Senjković 2008, 51)

The print media were developing in parallel with the development and adapting of Western popular culture to the local environment:

Over the years, since the end of the war and especially so since the 1960s, liberalization in the field of culture and the commercialization of journals have led to larger amounts of popular press releases which were dominated by the content of Western popular culture. (Vujović and Prokopović 2018, 156)

Renata Senjković considers that “the replacement of civil, even traditional culture with the real culture of the masses was one of the most important projects of the socialist authorities in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” (Senjković 2008, 15). The significance that the “mass culture” phenomenon had in Yugoslavian socialist daily life reflects through numerous articles published in:

...cultural and nonspecialized periodicals, many thematic gatherings and meetings of social– political organizations, as well as occasional direct interventions of the Yugoslavian political leadership, which served to initiate and direct discussions. (Senjković 2008, 49)

In this analysis, the press is observed as a proactive factor in construing desirable presentations and values in the everyday life of the then Yugoslavia. It is also understood as the medium that influenced to a great extent the perceptions of its readers, formed their habits and interests, their perception of popular culture, as well as the medium that was experiencing continuous changes both in the sense of its content and in the visual sense over time. Those changes were directly connected with the situation in the market and demand and the ever– increasing commercialization of content:

Still in expectation of a reform that would introduce the market economy into the Yugoslavian economic system, Broz called the emergence of ‘commercialism’ in Yugoslavian journalism an objective weakness and justified it as the necessity of the survival of newspaper-publishing houses. Publishers seemed not to find any other way to survive except offering their readers ‘what they demanded’, that is to say suiting ‘their petty-bourgeois aspirations and views,’ their ‘retardation and low taste’. (Senjković 2008, 57)

So far, the press has not been used in the domestic anthropological literature<sup>4</sup> frequently enough as the only source material for analysis in spite of the fact that it has a great potential itself and thus represents the testimony of a certain epoch based on which it is possible to gain an insight into and partly explain different problem areas. Analyzing war narratives during the 1990s, Jelena Vasiljević polemicalizes over the limitations that appear as a problem in anthropological research studies and the active role the press plays in creating those narratives:

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<sup>4</sup> To see how the press and the online media was used in different ways as a data source in Serbian anthropology, see e.g. Vasiljević 2008, 2009, Milosavljević 2008, 2010, Ajduk 2021, Ristivojević 2013, Banić Grubišić 2013, Banić Grubišić and Kulenović 2019.

The limitations of such a choice are clear: on the one hand, there is the media propaganda issue, which marks the information source in a way that constantly thematizes as a special subject matter of research, too, whereas on the other strictly taken such an analysis enables us to claim that we are capable of mapping *narratives in the press*, not necessarily narratives of the public, either. Yet, the fact that the press reported on the war on a daily basis and offered different models to explain and interpret it leads us to conclude that it also reflected (as much as it also built) dominant social perceptions. (Vasiljević 2009, 149)

The research for the needs of this paper was being conducted in the Serbian National Library (at the Periodicals Department) for several months. The print media oriented towards music and those published from the 1960s all the way to the 2000s were analyzed. Such a long spanning spent on tracking this kind of press was necessary to understand its development process both in socialist Yugoslavia and after the disintegration of the state. The research material includes the following music journals that used to be published in the former Yugoslavia: *Estrada*, *Sabor*, *Ritam (Rhythm)*, *Novi Ritam (New Rhythm)*, *Ladin Džuboks*, *Polet*, *YU Rock*, *Rock*, *Pop Rock*. The analysis was organized into the two principles that we believed were the most productive in the methodological sense. The journals were first classified into the “genre” ones, after which they were analyzed in chronological order, which is important so as to understand the process of the reception and making of the local authentic form of popular culture in socialist Yugoslavia. As the available materials were too voluminous, the focus of this analysis had to be reduced to the two very widespread genre profiles such as folk music and rock’n’roll. During the research, the rich volumes that had to do with the music referred to as “popular”, as well as the one belonging to jazz<sup>5</sup>, attracted our attention, which calls for future analyses given the fact that such an analysis would exceed the framework of this paper.

The subject matter of the last part of the analysis includes the Music Internet portals. Namely, it is about the period after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which went in parallel with the development of the Internet and modern technologies that also generated change in the style of expressing oneself “on the network”. At the global level, this period is, among other things, also characterized by a great acceleration in information transmission as well as information multiplication, which has led to saturation of its own kind decades later:

Hunger for knowledge is greater than it has ever been before, so that accurate, timely and independent pieces of information bear in themselves a great potential and have value. On the other hand, never before has society been so flooded with information that we have reached the era of information overload as compared with the prior times of the shortage of news in only a few decades.

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<sup>5</sup> The studies Milosavljević 2018, Milosavljević and Ilić 2019 may serve as the useful starting points for future research in the press oriented towards jazz music.

That overload was enabled by new media and the digital revolution, the revolution of the speed and reach of telecommunication networks, the possibilities of the processing, archiving and transmission of symbols. (Pavlović and Vulić 2014, 134)

The digital transformed the nature of press content at a few significant points:

On-line presentation means (1) the removal of the space limitations formerly imposed by costly printing and distribution; (2) the new display architectures required by new display formats; (3) the added value offered by the availability of hyperlinks to further information, as well as archival materials; and (4) the promise of reader interactivity. (Rupp-Serrano 1994 according to Abrahamson 2015, 537)

The basic aims strived for herein imply the determination of the significance of popular music as a local phenomenon in the mentioned period, then the presentation of the course of the development of the music press and its key transformations that represent a social and cultural reflection.

### From *Performing Musicians* to *Folk Singers*

When newspaper editions dedicated to folk music are concerned, it can be concluded that an important element in its establishment went through specialized associations starting from the 1960s. Before reasons for this are given in full detail, an emphasis should be placed on the fact that folk music dealt with in the press implied (in that time) a sufficiently broad range in which it was also possible to position *starogradska* (old urban music), traditional music, *sevdah* songs, as well as music composed for special purposes<sup>6</sup> and so forth. Such a broad genre front with certain subgenres was referenced using a neutral term *estrada*<sup>7</sup>, which, on the one hand, was sufficiently elastic to include all varieties of the folk music performed on the territories of the then SFRY and its already established performers, as well as those who used to appear and build their own position over time in parallel with the strengthening of the concrete music scene through genre-profiled festivals, radio and, ultimately, television shows. On the other hand, the terminological solution proposed proved effective in dispelling the notion of the domination of a particular *melos* (a melodic basis), but – contrary to that – it rather followed the line of the official cultural policy and the intention of the equality of all the constitutive people and peoples of the then state, simultaneously showing the uniformity of the presence of

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<sup>6</sup> For the determination of the terms traditional and modern folk music and the development path of the given music genres in socialist Yugoslavia, see Janjetović 2010, 63.

<sup>7</sup> Derived from the Latin word meaning: a route, a road, an elevation, a stage – <https://vokabular.net/estrada/>.



the music traditions belonging to them<sup>8</sup>, in the circumstances in which “party ideologists” generally were all but receptive to the traditional opus, treating folk music no better, either (Janjetović 2010, 67-68)<sup>9</sup>. The significance of studying the given phenomenon, however, also reflects in what is found today, which will be possible to demonstrate further in the text:

‘Modern folk music’ can freely be said to be the last living remain of Yugoslavian socialism and its culture. Composed on the old foundations, irrespective of the wishes of the cultural policy creators, it grew like a weed and spread all around, established itself and was also accepted after the disintegration of the country even in the regions where it was only accepted sporadically (frequently not having been approved of at all). (Janjetović 2010, 88)

The mentioned forms of music towards which the press of those times was mainly oriented – which otherwise “domestic scientific circles were all but receptive to” (Đurković 2013, 232) – were not being left petrified<sup>10</sup>. Popular music with the motifs belonging to folk music most broadly speaking started being increasingly present. In parallel with it, the scene that the so-called popular music that was also being dealt with in this press belonged to, was also becoming stronger. Gathering around the term *estrada*, which they all belonged to, and the program orientation of the press, however, had yet another important task, namely to transform *estrada* workers into *artists*, which will be demonstrated herein, simultaneously also succeeding in the intention to establish April 19 as the *Day of Performing Musicians of Yugoslavia*<sup>11</sup>, which confirmed the significance of the profession as a whole.

When speaking about the territory of the then Socialist Republic of Serbia (SRS), the Association of Performing Musicians of the SRS (*UEUS*)<sup>12</sup>, established in Belgrade in 1962, distinguishes itself as a significant driving force in the field of publishing in the promotion of the so-called *performing musicians* and pieces of their music content. Apart from the Association’s basic activity which comprises the advocacy of its members’ labor and social security rights,

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<sup>8</sup> To learn more about the fear of using folklore for nationalistic purposes in the republics starting from the mid-1960s, see Janjetović 2010, 68.

<sup>9</sup> ...the village, which party ideologists treated as the bearer of retardation, primitivism and backwardness, was the source of traditional work. It was supposed to undergo enlightenment in order to enable the whole country to economically develop more quickly and to separate peasants from potentially bad political influences exerted by the representatives of the old regime as well. (Janjetović 2010, 64)

<sup>10</sup> To learn more about the general overview of the mixing of music genres and creations of hybrid forms in a period of fifty years, see Đurković 2013.

<sup>11</sup> “No craft – no art, either.” – *Sabor*; Issue 9, 1984.

<sup>12</sup> “The Fifth Annual Assembly of the UEUS – The Turning Point in Work” – *Estrada*, Year III, Issue 1, New Series, June 1967.

it also implied publishing a specialized journal called *Estrada: Udruženje estradnih umetnika* (*Estrada: Association of Performing Musicians*). The available materials that were the subject matter of the analysis implies the period from 1965 to 1967/1969. The journal was released monthly and was oriented towards all the mentioned subgenres with a very strong affirmative orientation towards advocating the equalization of the status of the so-called *estrada workers* with the status of the artist<sup>13</sup>. The given construction was aimed at ensuring an equal position with the other, already recognized, statuses of the artist<sup>14</sup> on the example of the so-called “new Yugoslavian man”:

We called them *street musicians* in the past. Later, we called them folk music players and singers. Today, according to their age, we assign a common international name to them – PERFORMING MUSICIANS.

Today, when every working man of socialist Yugoslavia is interested in the implementation of the economic reform, which will bring them greater calmness in their work and progress, when everyone is honestly required to take their right place in the society which they are obliged to contribute to according to their maximum individual potentials, there are the people of one profession, which is mistakenly still not legalized in this country of ours, who live and work in it.

If we want the cadre to represent us in this field, music performance should be recognized as a profession of artistic work. Then the best can be requested. Then, obligations are imposed as well. It is only then that professional associations can control the work done by every individual (*Estrada*, Year I, Issue 1, 1965.).

This “inclining” could have been read in some columns and also in the fact that there were reports on theater, ballet and opera plays, interviews with acknowledged writers, poets, painters and sculptors. Jazz, spiritual music and so forth were also written about. Emphasizing the inappropriate position of performing musicians, as all music workers within the subgenres were terminologically referenced, was through expressing the attitude about the necessity of establishing a federal association inside the SFRY through which they would be able to exercise more rights<sup>15</sup>, then the need to build flats for them<sup>16</sup>, freeing them from paying contributions to the pension fund and the social security

<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously providing information in the given field from the territory of the country as a whole.

<sup>14</sup> “*Estrada* and Society” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 7, 1966; “The music performance profession justifies its existence from the artistic and economic points of view.” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 8, 1966. “Music Performers Within the Framework of the General Reform” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 11-12, 1966.

<sup>15</sup> “The Annual Assembly of the UEUS” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 5, 1966; “A Step Towards the Association of Performing Musicians” *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 5, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> “Where to Build a Small Roof? An Attic is O.K. Too!” – *Estrada*, Year I, Issue 1, 1965.

fund<sup>17</sup>, raising the awareness of how hard their work was, especially so when pub musicians were in question<sup>18</sup>, the issues related to older performers being unemployed<sup>19</sup>, the need to categorize the workers<sup>20</sup>, copyrights<sup>21</sup>, shaping the taste of the audience<sup>22</sup>, the detrimental influence of private managers as opposed to state-owned enterprises performing that activity<sup>23</sup> and so on. Generally, the Journal was characterized by a very conventional, sometimes even academic or otherwise polemical style of addressing the reader audience, also accompanied by a decent visual presentation of performing musicians. The first photograph on the cover page in which the female singer Olivera Vučo's<sup>24</sup> naked legs and décolletage could be seen was published in 1969, when *Estrada* was published in a new series after the break, starting from June 1967, when a change in the orientation that had previously implied relatedness to the *UEUS* was also announced:

Unfortunately, or maybe luckily, our journal is not favored by the patrons who make grants. So, in order for it to survive, it will be forced to make certain commercial concessions as well. For that reason, we may find ourselves in a situation when we have to give somewhat more space to advertisements and, indeed, erotic sometimes. We highlight this without any intention to prejudice the matter, but we don't see any reason at all either to hide that we are planning certain attacks on us which may originate from those puritan journals and newspapers that pretty vociferously teach others ideological purity, economic operations, and rewarding according to performance, whereas they themselves otherwise abundantly use the budget of this community. (*Estrada* – Year III, New Series, Issue 1, 1967).

From this period on, criticism will also be addressing bureaucracy<sup>25</sup>; not long afterwards, in October 1967, the journal was suspended by the founders of the *UEUS*, after which the District Commercial Court in Belgrade releases the jour-

<sup>17</sup> “The Path to Recognition” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 6, 1966.

<sup>18</sup> “What’s the Pub Singers’ Status Like?” – *Estrada*, Year I, Issue 2, 1965; “Music in Pubs” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 5, 1966; “Caterers – Creators of Pub Music” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 11-12, 1966.

<sup>19</sup> “Passengers Without Personal IDs” – *Estrada*, Year I, Issue 3, 1965; “Moonlighting – The Cause of a Lack of Engagement” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 11-12, 1966.

<sup>20</sup> “Forthcoming: Categorization of Performing Musicians” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 4, 1966.

<sup>21</sup> “An Example of Many Negativities” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 6, 1966.

<sup>22</sup> “About Some Issues of Folk Music With Us” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 6, 1966; “A Fight Against Trash – We Owe It to Our Community” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 7, 1966.

<sup>23</sup> “Damages Incurred by Private Managers” – *Estrada*, Year II, Issue 10, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> The female singer who experienced the biggest fame after her appearance in the film called “I Even Met Happy Gypsies” in Kan.

<sup>25</sup> “Bureaucracy and Culture” – *Estrada* – Year III, New Series, Issue 2-3, 1967.

nal from the suspension. *Estrada* became an independent business organization, and the journal continued to be published by the *Estrada* Publishing Enterprise<sup>26</sup>. As early as in 1970, *Jugoslovenska estrada – časopis za estradna pitanja* (*Yugoslavian Estrada – A Magazine Dealing With Performing Musicians' Issues*) started being issued, and was published in the Yugoslavian *Estrada* Enterprise, whose cover page showed the photograph of the mentioned female singer Olivera Vučo, dressed in the same manner<sup>27</sup>, which was an announcement of a more liberal style in orientation, yet holding the course implicative of advocating the ensuring of greater labor-social rights for performing musicians<sup>28</sup> and referring to the National Liberation Movement of Resistance (1941-1944) as the very source of the political orientation of the country that programmatically colored the cultural policy in every context, too<sup>29</sup>, apart from regular interviews with affirmed performers, reportages of festivals and so on. In accordance with that, the magazine also published articles in the Macedonian, Slovenian, and Albanian languages, not only in the so-called Serbian-Croatian language that was dominant. At the same time, this is also the time of the establishment of the school for performing musicians – beginners within the *Jugoslovenska Estrada* collective<sup>30</sup> which, otherwise, also established a concert agency, thus treading a path to the expansion of the music industry.

The journal called *Bosanskohercegovačka estrada – List Saveza udruženja estradnih umetnika Bosne i Hercegovine* (*Performing Musicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Journal of the Federation of the Associations of Performing Musicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina*), whose cover page showed the President of the SFRY Josip Broz Tito in the company of performing musicians in 1980,

<sup>26</sup> The Editorial Board addressing the readers – *Estrada* – Year IV, New Series, November, 1968.

<sup>27</sup> Scarce for that time.

<sup>28</sup> “The Association of Performing Musicians of Yugoslavia Has Been Established” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, the Summer-Autumn of 1970. “There is a favorable climate, it’s now up to us to take advantage of it” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971. “The Performing Musician” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, January-February 1971. “Are Performing Musicians Nothing But a Commodity” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, January-February 1971. “The Splendor and Shadow of the Music Performance Profession: Three Classes” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, January-February 1971.

<sup>29</sup> “With a Song and Dance Through the Revolution of the Yugoslav People” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971. “From the Pages of the Cultural History of the National Liberation Movement of Resistance” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971. “Through the War and Revolution of the Yugoslav People” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971.

<sup>30</sup> “Music Performing School” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971. “How and Where to Educate the Music Performing Cadre” – *Jugoslovenska Estrada*, March-April 1971.

is also good to quote as a press of a similar orientation. The mentioned year is exactly the year when the lifelong president died, the year which is taken as one of the more significant historical dates in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in local contexts, as indicated. The titles still have a strong tone of advocating performing musicians' rights, obligations and responsibilities<sup>31</sup> invoking the Constitution of the SFRY which "had defined the position of art, thus also the position of the music performance activity as an inseparable part of the art and culture of the SFRY."<sup>32</sup>

A completely different orientation, however, can be found in one of the journals published by the Association. It is the magazine called *Estrada – revija estradnih umjetnika* (*Estrada – The Review of Performing Musicians*), which was published in Podgorica, starting in 1994, the year in which there was no common country any longer. Understanding this turn should contribute to becoming familiar with the press published in parallel with the one released by the different music performance associations, which on their part were directly susceptible to current economic, music and political influences. So, independently of the editions published by the different associations, the press that had originated as the need to enrich with specialized editions the television segment that covered (i) folk music and participated in the creation of the then music stars and the whole scene as well also began to develop.<sup>33</sup> In that way, *Sabor*<sup>34</sup> started being published as a special edition of TV Novosti (*TV News*)<sup>35</sup> in 1983. The magazine was characterized by the different so-called colorful pages with *folk singers* on them, more provocative photographs of female singers, more liberal humor, gossip columns, scandals, etc., whereas the polemical tone was dominated by an argument between those belonging to the so-called real folk music and those belonging to the modern folk music whose authenticity and quality were denied by frequently labelling it as trash<sup>36</sup>, simultaneously also addressing

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<sup>31</sup> "For the Full Affirmation of Performing Musicians" – *Estrada*, 1980. "An Agreement Will Resolve the Most Important", *Estrada*, 1980.

<sup>32</sup> The mentioned Constitution of 1974 on the self-government bases was in force then – "An Agreement Will Resolve the Most Important", *Estrada*, 1980.

<sup>33</sup> From the column: "Sabor Drummer" – *Sabor*, Issue 1, 1983.

<sup>34</sup> The magazine was published every two weeks up to 2003. The word means – the gathering of people – <https://znacenje.net/rec/sabor/>, whereas the magazine far more clearly profiled itself towards the so-called folk music of different varieties, due to which fact it was advertised as a journal providing readers with everything about "the folk song and singers."

<sup>35</sup> The press dedicated to music performance in socialist Yugoslavia, the case of TV Novosti – <https://www.beforeafter.rs/drustvo/estradna-stampa-u-socijalistickoj-jugoslaviji-slucaj-tv-novosti/>

<sup>36</sup> "I've Withdrawn Conditionally" – *Sabor*, Issue 2, 1984. "Entrance Forbidden to Musicians" – *Sabor*, Issue 3, 1984. "Business Kills Folk Music" – *Sabor*, Issue 4, 1984.

major criticism to managers' parasitism to the detriment of performers<sup>37</sup>, as well as the improper actions undertaken by record companies<sup>38</sup> too, which could have been concluded from the interviews made with the unsatisfied.

In March 1991<sup>39</sup>, the magazine called *ZaM* (the abbreviation for *fun for millions of people*) that was actually the newspaper edition of the television show of the then Channel 3 of the state-owned television RTS (*Radio and Television of Serbia*) was published for the first time. Raka Marić, the manager of one of the greatest Yugoslavian stars of those times Lepa Brena, initiated both the show and the magazine, with the commercial side of it being dominant. The former debate over the position of performers and the assessment of the quality of music was now suppressed by political turmoil before the disintegration of the country, the criticism being addressed to the ruling elite of the constitutive republics. The space in the magazine given to music and performers was of an entertaining character through interviews with folk music singers in the first place, as well as those belonging to popular and rock music. Vava – the self-proclaimed prophethess who answered readers' questions also had her regular column.<sup>40</sup>

The last magazine to mention – *Grand Revija* (*Grand Review*) was a magazine of its own kind to continue the previously described trends following the principle of private capital as one of the demarcations against the prior socialist period. In the same year when the review was first published, *Sabor* was discontinued due to the privatization of the NIP TV Novosti (*Newspaper Publishing Enterprise TV News*) in 2003. On the other hand, the enterprise Grand with the double Lepa Brena and Saša Popović at the helm<sup>41</sup> as the ideological upholders of the *Zam* production also had their shows on their own television – a reality program of a competitive music character and a production company, whose performers and competitors were abundantly being promoted on the pages of this review ever since 2016, when the magazine was discontinued (to

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“Singers Are to Blame” – *Sabor*, Issue 9, 1984. “Boards of Commissioners Suspended – Trash Remains” – *Sabor*, Issue 6

<sup>37</sup> “Idžan Has Cheated Me” – *Sabor*, Issue 1, 1983. “Too Big Money for Managers” – *Sabor*, Issue 3, 1984.

<sup>38</sup> “*DISKOS* Played a Trick on Me” – *Sabor*, Issue 2, 1984. “Seize All You Can” – *Sabor*, Issue 28, 1986.

<sup>39</sup> Large demonstrations in Belgrade before the common state fell apart.

<sup>40</sup> Which will become a media phenomenon from this time on.

<sup>41</sup> A former accordionist in Lepa Brena's band. Her orchestra called *Slatki greh* (*A Sweet Sin*) left the form of a folk orchestra and slowly adapted themselves towards a smaller form more characteristic of country or even rock bands. Ever since the beginning of their work, they had been playing disco music, then they massively began to ‘borrow’ from oriental, via Hungarian and Latino music all the way to the Scottish bagpipes. (Đurković 2013, 243)

learn more about the genre orientation of *Grand produkcija (Grand Production)*, see Đurković 2013, 235).

Full commercialization is a key characteristic of the metamorphosis of the music press in the studied period. This process was also accompanied by the trend of giving up on the establishment of the music performing profession as artistic, as well as the absence of the polemic that used to refer to the profession itself as well, a concrete music, and the political circumstances that shaped the cultural policy, too. Judging by the articles in the studied press from the 1980s and in the first decade after the country had fallen apart, the turns from *traditional, folk* to *estrada* in the first phase, then again from *estrada* to *folk, traditional*, namely from *performing musicians* to *folk musicians/singers* were characterized by the more significant approaching to the link between music and what belonged to the growing national tension. The last phase, however, was characterized by the absence of any political thinking whatsoever – even when it might include the cultural policy – starting in the 2000s in compliance with the development of the music industry as the lucrative business that, in the modern period, became oriented towards the so-called *region* formed by the former republics of the country in which the original press emerged. So, the expansion of the market made folk singers new neutral workers, while the advocacy of labor and social security rights became irrelevant due to the fact that they related to every newly established state separately.

### Rock'n'roll – from *Popular* to *Alternative* Music

During the 1960s, rock'n'roll was becoming an increasingly significant topic in the Yugoslavian music press<sup>42</sup>. The growing interest in this kind of music among young Yugoslavs intensified the need to start a newspaper, which would bring news from the world of popular culture. So, the magazine *Džuboks (Juke-box)* was initially published in 1966 as a special addition to the magazine *Filmski svet (The Movie World)*:

Feeling a lack of a publication that would satisfy the interests of the numerous audiences in this kind of music, the Editorial Board of the magazine 'Filmski svet' is starting its monthly addition 'The Džuboks Magazine' which is intended to entertain and inform about the events in popular music, simultaneously also closely cooperating with its readers. (Editorial, *Džuboks*, Issue 1, 1966)

Once a month, the magazine made its readers familiar with the latest news and mentions of the popular culture topic both on the domestic scene that was still in the cradle and on the foreign scene. The Editorial Board of the magazine

<sup>42</sup> For more information about rock'n'roll magazines in the sixties see Raković 2012b, 432-439.

was located in Belgrade, and the editor-in-chief was the famous grandmaster Nikola Karaklajić, who was famous in the rock'n'roll world as a man who hosted the first music radio shows called "Sastanak u devet i pet" (*A Date at 9:05*) and "Veče uz radio" (*The Evening With the Radio*) and was the manager of the first television show dedicated to popular music called "Koncert za mladi ludi svet" (*A Concert for Crazy Young People*)<sup>4344</sup>. Conquering the media such as the radio, the television and the press meant the institutionalization of rock'n'roll and the growing acceptance (as well as supervision) by the state (for more, see Vučetić 2012, 203). The supervision of the state reflected in controlling the content which was broadcast and published, yet due to a big response of the young, it was allowed to report on rock'n'roll. The local variant of rock'n'roll was "hiding" under the cover of "popular" music all until the 1970s. Concerts performed by *električari* (electric musical instrument players) had to be "decent", and the lyrics they performed were also controlled. So, even in the case of the magazine *Džuboks* that some authors consider to be "the first rock'n'roll magazine in the communist world" (Vučetić 2006, 74), which was possible to know after reading the content offered in it, there is no explicit mention of the fact that it was a rock'n'roll magazine. The term "popular" music used in Yugoslavia during the 1960s referred to the music that was neither traditional/folk nor jazz, but rather "something in-between", and it covered a broad range of performers – from singers of hit songs to electric bands. The top list published in the first issue of the magazine, which included the songs of Charles Aznavour, Dragan Stojnić, Arsen Dedić and Ray Charles, too, is a picturesque example of how meaningfully broad the term "popular" music was. This list of the performers of different styles ranging from hit songs to jazz musicians testifies to the still undeveloped perception of the rock'n'roll phenomenon. The development of the 1970s' scene led to an even more complex genre division that will clearly single out rock'n'roll as an important genre and the first popular rock'n'roll bands as its representatives (for example Bijelo dugme, YU grupa, Kornj grupa). The magazine *Džuboks* was discontinued in 1969. At that time, it had around one hundred thousand copies published (Stefanović 2014, 16).

As it was the case with the folk music, i.e. performing musicians, described in the previous part, the associations in rock'n'roll also had an important role. Namely, Aleksandar Raković writes that Muzička omladina Jugoslavije (*Music Youth of Yugoslavia*) nourished a great abhorrence of rock'n'roll, so keeping it in the domain of ephemeral "entertainment" was supposed to discredit it in some way and label it as a fleeting phenomenon (Raković 2012a, 162). The

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<sup>43</sup> This is an important note given the fact that the popularization of rock'n'roll at that time was mostly carried out through radio and television shows and through specialized press as well.



development of the music scene is also possible to monitor through the existence of an adequate “local infrastructure” (the places for practicing, concerts, record companies, clubs to go to, and so forth) that enables the recording and performing of music. In that sense, the local community was not initially too inclined to accept the rock’n’roll scene. So, the editor of *Džuboks* notices that there was an ardent zeal for money on the pop music scene on the part of fake managers, whereas the official associations and institutions such as the Youth Federation, the Cultural-Educational Community, and homes of culture did not engage themselves in dealing with that issue in an adequate way:

If the manager of the biggest concert hall in Belgrade does not allow *električari* to appear in his Hall, he does not prevent (as he thinks he does) the atmosphere of primitivism at similar concerts, but quite contrary – he rather makes it easier for irresponsible persons to develop their business instead, facilitating the flourishing of a new ‘gold fever’ because, if concerts for young people are not organized by the one who should, then they will be organized by the one who ‘can’. (Editorial, *Džuboks*, Issue 6, 1966)

The mentioned makes it possible to see the aspiration to establish rock’n’roll as a significant “question of the young” which youth organizations at different levels were responsible for. During the 1970s, the rock’n’roll scene diversified itself and became an increasingly important topic of the print media. One of the reasons for the popularization of rock’n’roll is certainly the support coming from the authorities in the form of the Federation of the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia:

Four years have passed from the closure of Zagreb’s *Pop ekspres* (*Pop Express*) (1970) to the reopening of Belgrade’s *Džuboks* (1974) without any specialized rock’n’roll press in Yugoslavia. The only exception was one issue of Zagreb’s magazine *Pop* (1973). During this break and later, the press of the Federation of the Youth of Yugoslavia. (Raković 2012a, 160)

In that sense, the reopening of the magazine *Džuboks* was welcomed with enthusiasm by the readers. The second edition of *Džuboks* also started “shyly” as a special extraordinary edition of the magazine *Lada* in 1974 under the name of *Ladin Džuboks-jugoslavenski muzički magazin* (*Lada’s Jukebox – A Yugoslavian Music Magazine*), whose intention was to report on the domestic music scene as a whole:

In the first issue, we tried to present as many interesting and objective pieces of information as possible on as big a number of interesting personalities and events in the field of pop, and even contemporary classical and jazz music, too. (*Ladin Džuboks*, Issue 1, 1974)

The broad field of reporting which was not exclusive and explicitly tightly focused on the rock’n’roll world alone gave the magazines greater

possibilities of conquering the market and potential readers. Now, rock'n'roll was a phenomenon which everyone had "heard" of and had a positive or negative attitude about, but it was still included in the syntagm "popular music." This is also testified to by the following segment from the first issue of *Ladin Džuboks* "popular music is written about in almost all our daily and weekly journals, but only from time to time and frequently without a good intention and the right knowledge of the matters" (*Ladin Džuboks*, Issue 1, 1974). In this place, too, top lists are a good example of that lack of any definition. So, the names such as Kornji grupa, Jadranka Stojaković, Bijelo dugme, Kićo Slabinac, Leo Martin, Boris Bizetić, Novi Fosili, YU grupa and Miško Kovač were all on the December 1974 common top list presented in Issue 3 of the magazine<sup>44</sup>. As of 1976, the magazine was renamed again to *Džuboks* and there were evidently fewer and fewer articles about popular music, the focus being increasingly oriented towards rock'n'roll phenomena<sup>45</sup> on the domestic and foreign scenes.

The 1980s are an important period in Yugoslavian rock'n'roll and they can also be interpreted as a kind of *transition* from "classical rock'n'roll" to "new wave rock'n'roll." Certainly, this kind of transition was partly conditioned by both the developments on the foreign scene and the social and political circumstances inside Yugoslavia as well. The crucial year in that sense was the year 1980, when President Tito died, after which the Socialist Party slowly began to weaken due to internal clashes inside it. Together with an increasingly developed "infrastructure", such an atmosphere was suitable for the development of a big number of bands and the "thriving" of the scene. The leading magazines working on the popularization and promotion of new wave were *Džuboks*<sup>46</sup> and *Polet*. The magazine *Polet* was published in the period from 1976 to 1990 as the gazette of the Federation of the Socialist Youth of Croatia with the Editorial Board's seat in Zagreb. This weekly magazine was not a specialized music magazine<sup>47</sup>, but it reported on the happenings on the rock'n'roll scene to a great extent during the 1980s, so it was perceived as an important newspaper in that sense among the readers. As Zubak (2013, 225) wrote: "The launching of *Polet* was a part of the wider attempt of the Croatian youth union to revitalize its stumbled press, in deep crises since the end of the student movement". *Polet* reported on the developments related to music, film, the theater, the comic

<sup>44</sup> *Kornji grupa*, *YU grupa*, and *Bijelo dugme* are rock'n'roll groups, while the other authors belong to a broader determination of popular music. Not all the performers included in the mentioned top list are mentioned, but only those who clearly illustrate the given assertion.

<sup>45</sup> The rock'n'roll phenomena herein imply all that was related to that kind of discourse, such as the film, the theater, literature, music, fashion and so on.

<sup>46</sup> For the representation of new wave through the magazine *Džuboks*, see Sabo 2015, Ajduk 2021, Ristivojević 2011, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> On the political dimension of the magazine *Polet* see Krušelj 2015.

and politics as well. Actually, the key word connected to this magazine is “the young” since they are exactly those who the Editorial Board addressed:

Fighting to achieve the ideal of the socialist humanistic vision, ‘Polet’ will try to express the attitudes and needs of the generation it is addressing and which supports it – it will support all new and fresh ideas, inspire noninstitutionalized, ‘wild’ forms of creative work and direct the energy characteristic of one part of young people towards the common goal – thus fitting in with the endeavors of the Federation of the Socialist Youth of Croatia to change all that needs to be changed for the better. (*Polet*, Issue 2, 1976)

From 1979, there is a record of an increase in the articles dedicated to music, and there was also a column called *Rock*. Music was reported on through interviews with musicians, the creation of top lists, but the magazine still primarily dealt with the themes pertaining to youth, the accommodation and lifestyle at students’ homes, tourism, youth work actions, employment possibilities, a better salary, and so forth. Activism and the important role this magazine had in the new wave context are illustrated by the following lines, whose signatories are the members of Rijeka’s punk-rock group Paraf:

The author of the mentioned article (Darko Faun) has already correctly noticed that our record companies release heaps of hypocritical silly commercial trash, and when real and life-related matters are concerned, they show to be the guardians of false morality and correctly limit the possibility of frank human expressing oneself. We don’t think our songs are the pearls of literature, we didn’t even want them to be that, we aren’t exceptionally literate either, but our matters are exactly the pictures of the ‘city’, people, situations the way we see and experience them (...) Dear Polet readers, it’s already a quite a lot of times that you’ve proven yourselves and it would be horrible to lose faith in the only newspaper which has been honest frequently, at least so far. (*Polet*, Issue 93, 1979)

Namely, the cause for running a story like this was the fact that the record company Jugoton had rejected to release their album reasoning that they were “too provocative.” The magazine, which had the “courage” to disclose something like that, was significant in that popularization:

During the last decade, the magazine has affirmed generations of rock journalists, critics and photographers. The other Yugoslavian youth newspapers owe it a lot for the model and the example. It is possible that ‘Polet’s’ rock column today does not have the significance it used to have in the past, but it’s the fact that everybody in the business likes to see themselves on the pages of this journal. (*Rock*, Issue 83, 1986)

The “courage” to present “provocative content” and the promotion of youth subculture made this magazine an important factor in the spread of the Yugoslavian New Wave scene “in the absence of the official rock discourse *Polet* was

able to pose as the ultimate interpreter of the new scene, the one that shaped its meanings and set the tone of the future narrations” (Zubak 2013, 234).

One of the important magazines writing about the rock’n’roll music scene during the 1980s was the magazine *Rock*. This newspaper was published once in a month in the period from 1982 to 1988. Its publisher was Politika (with the Editorial Board in Belgrade). According to some sources, this magazine was “not only the main domestic rock magazine, but also one of the best sold European music journals. At one moment, its circulation exceeded 100,000 copies” (YU Mythology Lexicon)<sup>48</sup>. The seriousness and dedication to rock’n’roll was also visible from the voluminous and informative texts dedicated to both foreign and to a greater extent Yugoslavian rock (as well as pop) scene. Apart from music developments, it was also possible to read about books, the latest movies, comics, sports, and soul and blues music, which speaks about the thematic diversity and breadth of the concept of the journal itself. The topics dealt with in this journal surpass rock music and are more appropriate for a broader domain of what was then considered as popular culture (e.g. the texts about Marilyn Monroe or Partizan’s footballers). A typical music press column also implied the creation of top lists. The *Hit meseca (Hit of the Month)* column presented the situation on the Yugoslav music scene issue after issue. The readers’ letters that became a more serious column in 1984 were also significant. This journal actively participated in creating the scene not only through reporting on what was going on in rock’n’roll, but also through direct campaigns resulting in the support and development of the scene itself. An appropriate example is the rock music and rock culture platform organized by the Republic Conference of the Federation of the Socialist Youth of Serbia (Board of Commissioners for Culture) and the magazine *Rock* in 1985, held in Belgrade’s Cultural Center and discussing the topics such as “the influence of rock on the program concept of the youth organization,” “the treatment of rock in mass media,” “changes in rock engagement,” “the folklorization of rock,” and similar topics (*Rock*, Issue 75). The text highlights the fact that it was for the first time that something like that had been organized without a cause. Releasing singles of unaffiliated music bands during 1986 and the financial support to youth festivals were also a significant example of the engagement of a magazine in the development and popularization of the domestic rock scene (*Rock*, Issue 88, 1986).

During 1987 and 1988, it was visible that the magazine itself started commercializing, only to ultimately change its name to *Pop Rock* in 1988. Together with its name, the magazine partly changed its concept as well. The survival on the market requested adaptation implying the introduction of “popular” col-

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<sup>48</sup> Đorđe Matić “Rock” in *YU Mythology Lexicon* available at: <https://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/rock/>.

umns, such as crosswords, the horoscope, more advertisements, psychological tests, caricatures, fashion articles, and so on.

In 1989 and on, the analyses of the domestic rock'n'roll scene were also possible to track through the magazine *Ritam* (*Rhythm*)<sup>49</sup> that was classified as “a monthly guide through popular music, film, video comics and other matters.” The foreign and domestic music scenes accounted for a greater portion of the journal, whereas the information about current movies were also present. Interviews, reviews of records and films, the comic. It was published with discontinuations until 1995, whereas its name changed to *Novi ritam* (*New Rhythm*) during the 1990s, changing again its name to only *Ritam* later. This magazine was being published simultaneously with the war developments in the former Yugoslavia, so the narrative itself of rock'n'roll became “more local”, i.e. the Serbian rock'n'roll scene and the happenings on the world scene were also being written about:

Fast bands of Serbia, a new generation of the Serbian rock'n'roll scene that “has done with the *Paket aranžman* (*Package Arrangement*) concept. All the backlogs of the new wave iconography have definitely been transcended by these new bands, sufficiently autonomous in relation to their predecessors and sufficiently authentic to create a new r'n'r scene. (*Ritam*, Issue 2, 1992)

The war developments influenced the creation of new forms of musical expression, as well as the creation of a new rock'n'roll scene first of all in Belgrade (which was not the theater of war but did feel the difficult social and political moment in other ways through super-inflations, staple food shortages, forced mobilizations, etc.). The alternative scene of rock'n'roll that represented a direct and explicit rebellion against the then authorities was thriving in Belgrade during the 1990s:

He who would assert that the New Belgrade circle of rock groups is something the best that occurred in this city after new wave wouldn't be quite right. This is better than new wave. These bands have created in Belgrade something that didn't exist in the past – a real, passionate rock'n'roll community. It's not an undefined atmosphere calling for something to happen as ten years ago but rather a strong feeling of the power originating from the ability to do something with themselves. (*Ritam*, Issue 2, 1992)

The last magazine analyzed herein which kept Yugoslavian in its name and was initiated after the falling apart of the state was *YU Rock Magazine*, published twice a month from 1994 to 1996 by the publisher Newspaper Publishing Enterprise In Press with the seat in Belgrade. The magazine was primarily oriented towards the “domestic scene”, which mostly related to the Serbian

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<sup>49</sup> This magazine is not the same as *Ritam* – a review of jazz and popular music published from 1962 to 1965, whose editor-in-chief was the poet Miroslav Mika Antić.

scene, although it also wrote about what was going on on the music scenes of the former Yugoslavian republics, and there were also interviews with some Croatian performers. The fact to bear in mind is that there was still ongoing war and that the communication between the music centers was quite weakened. Apart from the texts dedicated to rock'n'roll, the magazine also contained humor, advertisements, readers' letters, top lists, record companies' lists, and so on but there is also evident an insufficient investment in the journal itself (the number of the pages of the magazine, worse print quality, etc.). The analysis of this magazine also provides an insight into the state of the matters of the then music scene, the position of rock'n'roll performers in the sea of *turbo-folk*, which was gaining in popularity in that time. Describing the year 1994 on the music scene in Serbia, one article in *YU Rock Magazine* says:

No less painful either is the fact that there is an increasing stress on rivalry between rock'n'roll musicians and folk musicians, which is quite detrimental to r'n'r itself. In that way, the image of r'n'r itself as progressive music is banalized most quickly because today's young are prone to stereotypically fit in with the trends. (*YU Rock*, Issue 17/18, 1995).

The presentation and creation of the rock'n'roll scene through the music press is a process that was assuming different forms over time. In the very beginning, rock'n'roll was written about as the music coming from the West and time was needed for the local scene to form and for authentic local forms to start being created. The rock'n'roll press kept a close eye on that development, mostly diversifying itself during the 1980s, when there were several different magazines reporting on what was happening on the scene. That increase in the number of magazines was also accompanied by the genre proliferation that was characteristic of one-half of the 1980s. Apart from the characteristic columns of the music magazines, such as top lists, album reviews, interviews with musicians, and so forth, they actively created the scene in different ways, offering support to youth music festivals, unaffirmed bands, an exchange of opinions with the readers through the columns dedicated to them and so forth, and in that sense that kind of the two-way relationship between the press and the rock'n'roll audience is visible. It is also evident that the matters in the music press are directly connected with the social and political developments in the former Yugoslavia since the scene was not active to the extent it had previously been, and it was difficult to survive and be published because of limited funds. The reflection of social developments could be found even in narrowly specialized music magazines like these, not on a regular basis but from time to time, through personal references, opinions, critical references to the scene and simultaneously to the local infrastructure that was connected with the city authorities. So, a text about the students' protests that were lasting for

months and were directed to the ruling authorities was released in Issue 43 in February 1997. The presented analysis makes it possible to learn the extent to which social, political, economic and cultural developments refracted through the press. All the studied magazines kept a close eye on the development of popular culture, simultaneously of the rock'n'roll scene on these territories in different periods as well. First of all, it was about making readers familiar with the terms such as rock'n'roll, pop, and so on, then with foreign musicians. After that, they exerted an influence on that development to a great extent, supporting unaffirmed bands, financially supporting youth festivals, reporting, criticizing, and organizing platforms of public significance. Given birth in the context of specific sociocultural circumstances, rock'n'roll was changing its identity as time passed. Strictly controlled under the "cap" of popular music, it had not been largely "rebellious" in the very beginning. With new wave during the 1980s, rebellion was increasingly being intensified only to reach its climax during the 1990s in response to the gloomy reality of the war.

### Online Music Press in Serbia

For already ten years or so, it is almost impossible to come across serious articles dedicated to this form of art in the printed form. There has been no space in the media for a quality music, film, comic for quite a long time now. The magazines that used to deal with this are almost forgotten. Popular culture that is the most commercial of all branches all over the world has been a part of the underground scene in Serbia for quite a lot of time already. It is needless to say that only trash and schlock art are the mainstream in our country. Yet, it seems that we have to repeat it over and over again, because it happens that not even in the Internet space can different content survive. An alternative to mass culture, which is defined by turbo-folk, popular melodies soothing to the ear and reality shows, ceases to exist.<sup>50</sup>

During the troublesome 1990s, the broadcasting company B92<sup>51</sup>, which represented a symbol of its own kind of resistance, independent informing and an alternative musical and cultural expression of that time, also had a considerable influence on forming music journalism on the Internet at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Apart from being sporadically engaged in-culture promoting monthly editions, the then radio journalists<sup>52</sup> and editors of

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.danas.rs/dijalog/redakcijski-komentar/ispali-iz-voza/>

<sup>51</sup> Radio B92 was established in 1989, as a youth radio station, recognizable for its sharp disagreement with the war policy advocated by Slobodan Milošević.

<sup>52</sup> Today, some of them are reputed as star rock critics of their own kind – watch, for example, a documentary called "Is there really a man whose name's Žikica Simić?"

the prominent alternative music shows of those times<sup>53</sup> on the radio stations not existing today<sup>54</sup>, expanded their activity to online spaces as well – more exactly, they began to publish reviews of music albums and overviews of concerts first on the then B92 website and the related blog (and discussion forum), later on other websites, too. Yet, the first real “specialized” music portals and online magazines on the domestic web started emerging not earlier than in the first half of the 2000s (*Helly Cherry* – 2003; *Srpski Metal Portal* – 2003; *Popboks* – 2004). Since quite a lot of small websites were short-lived with an insignificant number of visitors, only the most popular and most long-term ones will be mentioned in this section.

Today’s online music journalism in Serbia can most briefly be described by a syntagm “something for everyone” – with respect to the present music genres, the style and form of writing about music, and the web locations where the lyrics like these can be found as well. It is possible to single out several common characteristics of domestic online music journalism which actually account for global trends – such electronic publications are mainly of open access/free of charge and equally contain both textual and audio and visual content, “the wealth of detail available on websites – still images and also videos the viewer can play and pause – have replaced the role that magazine pages once performed” (Warner 2015, 451). Paradoxically, apart from the fact that the development of new media has contributed to the general process of the democratization of music criticism (“readers/fans wanting to post their own comments and reviews has democratized the process of music criticism” Shuker 2016, 170), the institution of the music critic as an arbiter of taste(s) is still present.

The contemporary domestic music press has transformed not only from printed to digital, but it has also made a turn from professional and editorial to amateur and personal, which is testified to by numerous examples of online music criticism, whereas formally speaking, this content has become scattered throughout the digital world. Distinguished domestic music critics who, as has already been mentioned, wrote for culture promoting magazines during the 1980s and the 1990s and/or (who) edited influential music radio shows, post their writings about music (album reviews, concert overviews, annual lists, interviews) on their webpages/blogs or on their personal accounts on different social networking platforms<sup>55</sup>, or otherwise write about different topics discussing popular music within the online releases of weekly and daily journals. Almost

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<sup>53</sup> Dole na uglu (*Down on the Corner*), Tajanstveni voz (*A Mysterious Train*), Moć Veštica (*The Power of Witches*), Pop Depresija (*Pop Depression*) and so on.

<sup>54</sup> Such as Radio b92; Radio Politika; DJ Radio 94.9 program 2, Studio B.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.tajanstvenivoz.net/>; <https://www.popdepresija.com/>



all popular, the so-called lifestyle web portals, also inevitably have a comprehensive section dedicated to music.<sup>56</sup>

Apart from the internet portals dedicated to metal<sup>57</sup> and jazz<sup>58</sup> music, i.e. the portals with clear genre profiles, the majority of the other domestic web magazines are characterized by the equal presence of the other aspects of contemporary popular music, too. In connection with that, it is important to mention at this point that there are no web magazines in Serbia exclusively dealing with alternative popular music<sup>59</sup>; they rather most frequently cover a broader area of popular culture – the television, film, literature, comic art and other forms. To a certain extent, they can be said to use authored texts, which are written from a very subjective criticizing perspective as often as not, tend to preserve for future generations the tradition of cult alternative music and pop-culture magazines in these territories – starting from Džuboks and Ritam, via Ukus nestašnih (*The Taste of the Mischievous*), Vreme zabave (*The Fun Time*), XZ zabava (*XZ Fun*) and OK Magazine, whose ephemeral releases actually marked the end of the printed music journalism in these territories at least when speaking about alternative music. When the broadly understood term “estrada” is in question, there are no Internet portals exclusively dedicated to popular and folk (modern folk) music. The audience is most often informed about these performers and important events through texts published in the online edition of daily journals and weekly magazines of a tabloid characters and “process” details about the private lives of performing (*estrada*) personalities/musicians either on the web portals of an unclear editorial policy where there is a bit of this and a bit of that – news on reality shows, scandals from VIPs’ lives, fashion, astrology, and so forth.<sup>60</sup>

The development of new media has changed the phenomenon of music criticism, i.e. music journalism in general in these territories at several important points. Apart from the obviously different way of content distribution and simultaneously a potentially more diverse reader audience, the new possibilities offered by digital technologies first of all have to do with the degree of the interaction between web magazine creators and consumers, i.e. the audience. This interaction, most often reflecting in the possibility of posting comments to displayed content, contributes to a certain extent to the democratization of these online spaces by allowing the criticism of what has been written and the initiation of live discussions in connection with displayed texts. Apart from this,

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<sup>56</sup> For example <https://www.beforeafter.rs/category/muzika/>; <https://buro247.rs/kultura/muzika/>; <https://www.journal.rs/kultura/muzika/>; <https://plezirmagazin.net/category/muzika/>; <https://www.oblakoder.org.rs/> and many others.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.serbian-metal.org/>; <https://serbianundergroundmetal.com/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.jazzin.rs/>

<sup>59</sup> Not having a better term, the awkward term “alternative” is used as the umbrella term for a larger number of genres and music styles, so the same includes guitar Hindu music, folk, Americana, electronic music, and so on.

<sup>60</sup> The web portal <https://hypetv.rs/> can be quoted as an illustrative example.

these online texts are as often as not written by fans, so many culture promoting webpages can be said to represent one form on the boundary between professional printed music magazines and music fanzines created by the admirers, i.e. followers of different music scenes following the example of the “do it yourself key”. Although said may apply to a larger number of web portals of this type, the extremely hit *Helly Cherry* magazine dealing with alternative and pop cultures<sup>61</sup>, or the web magazine *FatHipster* calling the audience to participate in the website creation on an equal footing of a more recent date can be mentioned as an example:

If you want to take an active part in creating and promoting our web magazine, send us your articles, essays, or proposals; should they fit in with the editorial policy of our website, we will display them. We are also constantly in search for photojournalists. You may also send us your records of your summer/winter holiday, your concert pictures, as well as your intimate confessions should you consider them to deserve to be displayed.<sup>62</sup>

Enthusiasm and fans’ benevolence can be said to be those characteristic features of the majority of these portals. Anyway, music critics are often called/conceptualized as a “privileged type of fan” (Hearsum 2013, 120). What is important to highlight is the tandem of discussion forums and blogs – the formation of the communities of those thinking the same (and belonging to different music scenes) that later opened music web portals. Thus, for example, the editorial board of the website magazine *Jazzin* writes the following in the “About Us” section:

The *Jazzin.rs* Website was established in 2009, as an initiative of a few male and female journalists and enthusiasts, who had previously been meeting on the Internet Forum of the broadcasting company B92 for years, exchanging their impressions of jazz on that forum.<sup>63</sup>

Apart from that, some web portals continue the criticizing tradition (ideologically speaking) of the music press of the earlier period reflecting in the explicit criticism of the existing local and global culture promoting policies. Thus, for example, the portal *FatHipster* tells the reader audience “Take control. Exert an influence.”, whereas the editorial policy of *Jazzin* advocates the publishing of “uncompromising authored texts with clearly expressed attitudes.”

What could be mentioned as a specificity of domestic online journalism is first of all their program focus on the music themes of the ex-Yu territories.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.hellycherry.com/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.fathipster.net/sh/o-nama>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.jazzin.rs/o-nama/>

Besides, the role of associations (of citizens or professional associations) is also important in the establishment of these portals and a further promotion of local music scenes, as was also the case with the then estrada and rock'n'roll press. A few web portals are truly regionally, i.e. ex-Yu focused – both in the sense of engaged journalist associates and in the sense of the geographic, i.e. regional coverage of the themes that are dealt with in these local online magazines. They are, for example, regional music websites Rokomotiva (*Rockomotive*)<sup>64</sup> or the portal Balkanrock, which, for example, clearly highlights its goal to become “the place where all lovers of rock'n'roll, metal, punk and alternative music in the region (Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia) will meet.”<sup>65</sup> At this point, the Montenegrin culture promoting Internet magazine Stereo art magazine (*Stereo Art Magazine*)<sup>66</sup>, the Croatian portals Ravno do dna (*Right to the Bottom*)<sup>67</sup>, as well as the portal Potlista<sup>68</sup> which stopped working in 2018 should certainly also be mentioned.

The online portal Popboks (*Popbox*)<sup>69</sup> which was established in 2004 and closed in 2013 was reputed as one of the most significant domestic websites dedicated to popular culture. Popboks was published by the association called *Društvo ljubitelja popularne kulture iz Beograda (Association of Popular Culture Lovers from Belgrade)*<sup>70</sup>. According to the editorial board's information on the website, 17,600 pieces of news and 4,570 authored texts<sup>71</sup><sup>72</sup> were displayed. The Portal was designed on the example of foreign global popular web portals of a similar type, i.e. it did its best to imitate them.<sup>72</sup><sup>73</sup> Apart from the completely digitalized archive of the magazines Džuboks and Ritam, there were a few columns on the Popboks website, too, the news, events (announcements of and reports on concerts, festivals and other happenings related to popular culture), reviews of albums, books, films and comics, interviews, different authored texts and columns, and the “Scene” column can be said to have been the most important one.

<sup>64</sup> <https://rockomotiva.com/>

<sup>65</sup> <https://balkanrock.com/o-nama/>

<sup>66</sup> <http://stereoart.me/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://ravnododna.com/>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.potlista.com/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.popboks.com/>

<sup>70</sup> *Društvo ljubitelja popularne kulture* was established in Belgrade in 2004. Its aim was to popularize different projects in the field of popular culture (music, film, comic). This nonformal organization was started by Predrag Popović, the then journalist of the Džuboks magazine, with a group of his friends. <https://dljpk.com/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.popboks.com/article/30056>

<sup>72</sup> Such as <https://pitchfork.com/>; <https://drownedinsound.com/>; <https://www.paste-magazine.com/>

The “Scene” column contained data on 338 independent and unaffirmed domestic bands. A separate page contained a short biography of the performers, their songs that can be listened to, a link to the webpage of the band (more frequently to the My Space profile) and the email contact. It is the bands themselves who provided the Popboks Editorial Board with these data. Popboks initiated and organized numerous campaigns – it took part in editing compilations of domestic bands<sup>73</sup>, the concert serial *Scena uživo!* (*The Scene Live*), as well as different platforms and other events related to popular culture. In that sense, the role Popboks played in affirming new music performers and strengthening the local alternative culture scene was all but insignificant. An editorial comment of the daily journal *Danas* (*Today*) maybe speaks the best about the significance of the Popboks website and the state of the matters in the cultural policy in Serbia:

Popboks has unfortunately been ‘rolled over’ by advertisers and sponsors while they were running towards reality shows and turbo-folk music singers. The last bastion of pop culture in Serbia was extinguished by ‘the deprofessionalization of the domestic pop culture scene’ and ‘the unattractiveness of endeavors like these for the advertisement market.’ Once again, that persuasively demonstrated both the direction in which the ship of Serbian culture was sailing and how abandoned to the fate of the capricious sea it actually is.<sup>74</sup>

The quoted paragraph plastically shows the possible or expected fate awaiting independent culture promoting portals which are not market/mainstream oriented. As often as not, online media are in a financially unfavorable position; they depend on the successful distribution of advertising, i.e. commercial content and therefore equally suffer the pressure of the market just as the print media do. Magazines fall in what may be considered a “privileged position” – more detailed and interpretive than newspapers and somewhat less reflective yet more accessible than books. As an art form, magazines have a certain binary quality that serves to secure them a special place in their readers’ lives (Abrahamson 2015, 535). Simon Warner considers that music journalism and criticism simultaneously represent “a literary sub-genre in its own right, a cultural force of influence, a sociological barometer of the broader times or as an adjunct to the bigger industry it reports on and feeds on”, sometimes underpins and also subjects to its forthright critical barrages. (Warner 2015, 441)

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<sup>73</sup> For example, *Jutro će promeniti sve* (*The Morning Will Change Everything*) – a compilation of songs of 16 performers from different regions of Serbia, edited by the Pop depresija, Popboks and DJ Radio 949 radio shows.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.danas.rs/dijalog/redakcijski-komentar/ispali-iz-voza/>

## Conclusion

The basic aims pursued in this paper imply the determination of the significance of popular music as a local phenomenon in the mentioned period, then the presentation of the course of the developments of the music press and its key transformations that represent a social and cultural reflection. The development of the popular culture that was available to the “broad masses of people” through the press is evident when gaining an insight into the archival material at our disposal today. In this paper, the music press is observed through its interaction with the sociocultural circumstances of the local environment inside which it developed and changed its shapes. The economic crisis, the war developments, the political and economic transition exerted quite a big influence on the content and appearance of the press although it may not seem so at first sight. The introduction and branching of the music press to the Yugoslavian market also enabled the creation of (at that time) a new music world, the shaping of the audience that was hungry for new content in the pre-Internet era and with the modest radio and television offers. The two-way relationship between the music press and the audience is most clearly visible through the columns called “Top lista” (*Top List*) and “Pisma čitalaca” (*Readers’ Letters*), which were an inseparable part of this type of press and were created in cooperation with readers.

The analysis has shown that the music press was experiencing incessant changes in both its content and in the visual sense, those changes being a product of the market offer and demand, as well as the social and political circumstances of that time. One of the main consequences of “market competition” was the evident commercialization of content. Apart from the commercialization that is the basic characteristic of what is called popular music, there is also noticeable connectedness with the events in the then state. On the example of folk music, the first thing to notice was “*estradiation*”, and starting in the 1980s, the ever greater “connectedness” with the growing national tension that reached its climax during the 1990s. After 2000, commercialization and the market “policy” replaced the national one, so folk singers became “neutral” in that sense. Contrary to the folk singers who were flirting with nationalism, rockers expressed their rebellion against the war through different campaigns. The rock’n’roll press reported on those campaigns, but in spite of the efforts to “win” the years of war with music, there is an evident change in the narrative in the press itself during that decade. Beside a scarcer press, and the quality of the newspaper itself, there is also an evident more irregular release of magazines and journals, as well as the editor’s increasingly big focus on the Serbian scene, given the fact that it was difficult to establish a connection with the former republics in that time.

The existence of specialized online portals was preceded by the creation of the websites on which one could find music album reviews and overviews of concerts. It was only after the 2000s that music online portals began to emerge. The contemporary domestic music press transformed not only from printed to digital – but, as numerous examples of online music criticism show, it made a turn from professional, editorial towards amateur and personal; formally speaking, this content became scattered throughout the digital world. The analysis has also revealed the existence of a similar matrix between the print media and the online portal. Namely, the majority of these portals are actually oriented towards popular culture (except for jazz and metal portals), so they cover the television, literature, comic, film, and so on. It is worthwhile to direct future research studies in music journalism towards the examination of the communication function of printed and online magazines, as says Paula Hearsom (2013):

For music journalism to continue to be meaningful the requirement to be fulfilled is to create a shared musical discourse with a purpose. In order to re-evaluate the original principles of music journalism we need to understand the three aspects of its communicative functions listed below.

- 1) How we experience music journalism through its various platforms and discourses.
- 2) How we engage with the content through the connection between the words and the music itself, both individually and collectively.
- 3) And finally, how together this creates particular meaning(s). (Hearsom 2013,109)

This “journey through time” has given us the opportunity to keep track of the transition that was present in the field of music, which on its part cannot be perceived separately from any other segment of everyday life, particularly not so when the turbulent periods such as the disintegration of the state, the wars, and change in the political and economic systems as well are in question.

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*(Post) jugoslovenska muzička štampa u tranziciji*

Razvoj Interneta i digitalnih tehnologija uticao je na sve veću migraciju štampanog sadržaja u digitalnu sferu (blogovi, online mediji, internet portali, društvene mreže), što je takođe dovelo do promena u navikama čitalaca, kao i u konceptu i formatu textova. Muzička štampa u tom pogledu nije izuzetak. U zemljama Južne Evrope, ovi procesi se poklapaju sa periodom političkih, socijalnih, kulturnih i ekonomskih transformacija koje su dovele do razvoja brojnih regionalnih i lokalnih specifičnih oblika popularne kulture. Postojanje SFRJ kao jedinstvene države omogućilo je stvaranje autentičnog kulturnog prostora koji je nastavio da se razvija čak i nakon njenog raspada. Ovaj članak pokušava da osvetli jedan segment ove lokalne autentičnosti analizom muzičke štampe. Cilj koji autori ovog članka žele da postignu je predstavljanje razvoja štampanih muzičkih medija, pre svega u Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji, zatim u Srbiji, kao i rekonstrukcija modaliteta transformacije ovih medija u prelaznom periodu. gledišta. Cilj je definisati percepciju i značaj muzike kao lokalnog kulturnog fenomena kroz kvalitativnu analizu arhivskog materijala, kao i dostupnog materijala na mreži, a zatim pratiti kulturne promene koje su se dešavale tokom vremena kao rezultat globalnih i lokalnih društvenih i kulturnih previranja. Štampu tretiramo ne samo kao sredstvo koje igra informativnu ulogu, već više kao sredstvo koje odražava stavove lokalne zajednice, istovremeno stvarajući narative o popularnoj kulturi koji su uključeni u naš svakodnevni život.

*Ključne reči:* muzička štampa, popularna muzika, tranzicija, Jugoslavija, Srbija

*La presse musicale (post) yougoslave en transition*

Le développement de l'Internet et des technologies numériques a influencé une migration de plus en plus grande du contenu imprimé dans la sphère numérique (blogs, médias en ligne, portails web, réseaux sociaux), ce qui a aussi provoqué des changements dans les habitudes des lecteurs, ainsi que dans la conception et le format des textes. La presse musicale ne fait pas exception à cet égard. Dans les pays de l'Europe du Sud, ces processus concordent avec la période des transformations politiques, sociales, culturelles et économiques qui ont mené au développement des nombreuses formes particulières régionales et locales de la culture populaire. L'existence de la Yougoslavie en tant qu'un état unique a permis la création d'un espace culturel authentique qui a continué à se développer même après son démantèlement. Cet article tente d'éclaircir un segment de cette authenticité locale par l'analyse de la presse musicale. L'objectif que les auteurs de cet article désirent atteindre est celui de présenter le développement des médias musicaux imprimés, tout d'abord dans la République fédérative socialiste de Yougoslavie, ensuite en Serbie, ainsi que de reconstruire les modalités de transformation de ces médias dans la période de transition. L'objectif est de définir la perception et l'importance de la musique comme d'un phénomène culturel local à travers une analyse qualitative du matériel d'archives, tout comme du matériel accessible sur les réseaux, et de suivre ensuite les changements culturels survenus au fil du temps et causés par les agitations sociales et culturelles globales et locales. Nous traitons la presse non seulement comme un moyen qui joue un rôle informatif, mais plutôt comme un moyen qui indique les positions de la communauté locale, créant en même temps des récits sur la culture populaire qui sont incorporés dans notre vie quotidienne.

*Mots clés:* presse musicale musique populaire, transition, Yougoslavie, Serbie

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