

# **The Case of Juraj Križanić (1619-1683?) – His Texts on Music. From Artefacts to Cultural Study (Croatian Writers on Music and The Transfer of Ideas in Their New Environments)**

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This essay describes the achievement, in the fields of music theory and history, of the outstanding Croatian seventeenth-century ecclesiastical writer, polymath and traveller Juraj Križanić (1618-1683?), whose name appeared during his lifetime variously in a Latinized form as Georgius Crisanius and in its Italian version as Giorgio Crisano.

The discovery of Križanić's works, their bibliographical afterlife, the extent and character of what has already been done from a scholarly point of view and, finally, what should and could be done in the future in this regard together make for an exemplary case study fitting perfectly into the scheme suggested by the title of the workshop where the present contribution was presented as a paper. In placing Križanić within the very complex socio-historical context of his time and in mapping his most extraordinary migrations around Europe, it may be stated that his written legacy was created and survived exactly in the way that its author had lived: dynamically on the edge of extravagance, rich in fantasy and often with quite weak connections to reality, precariously balanced between full recognition and total oblivion.

Since Križanić's intellectual output both in the field of music and at large was closely linked to his general ideological vocation and to the

behavior and actions resulting from it, one needs to obtain an insight into both the elementary facts of his life and the characteristics of his posthumous fate.

Križanić was born in 1617/1618 in Obrh, a small village in the vicinity of Zagreb, some 30 kilometers to the west, close to the present-day Croatian border with Slovenia. He was initially educated in the humanities by the Jesuits in Ljubljana (Laibach), later studying philosophy in Graz and theology in Bologna and Rome. Seized very early by the *idée fixe* of a would-be religious unity of the Slavic world, he studied Greek, eastern liturgies and theological controversies in Rome. In addition, he dreamed about a Christian alliance against the Ottomans in order to liberate the Slavic world from the Turkish yoke, deciding to travel to Russia in order to give a decisive impetus to both of his phantasmagorias, which are called “*intentio moscovitica*” in some documents. In 1646-1647 he traveled to Russia (Smolensk, Moscow) for the first time and returned full of enthusiasm for the young Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich Romanov. Between 1647 and 1659 he stayed in Rome, mostly writing and publishing his works on the subjects of Orthodox controversies (*Bibliotheca Schismaticorum Universa*) and music (*Asserta musicalia* and other texts). In the meantime, in 1651, he also visited Istanbul for three months as chaplain to a Viennese court deputation. In Rome Križanić’s activities brought him into contact with such outstanding contemporaries as Athanasius Kircher, Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz, Virgilio Spada, Lucas Holstenius and Fabio Chigi, the future Pope Alexander VII.<sup>1</sup>

In 1659 Križanić went to Russia again, this time staying there for eighteen years – up to 1677. After a year or so of initial attempts to establish himself in the ecclesiastical and scholarly circles surrounding the court he succeeded in accomplishing only one project: work on an all-encompassing Slavic grammar, lexicon and spelling book. Working among many foreigners, especially German and Greek merchants and travelers, in the atmosphere of local controversies between church reformers and conservatives, he obviously acted incautiously in a political sense and was consequently sentenced in early 1661 to sixteen years of exile in Siberia. He served the full term in the town of Tobolsk, and his sojourn there could be characterized simultaneously as a curse and a blessing with regard to the course of his life. Tobolsk being at that time far from a Soviet-style Gulag, Križanić had considerable freedom of action and

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1 GOLUB, 1976, pp. 91-144.

penned several texts there that turned out to be his life's work: *Razgovori ob wladatelystwu* (Conversation on governance), *Gramatično iskazânje* (Grammar), *O Promysle* (De Providentia Dei), *Ob svêtom kreščênju* (On holy baptism), *Tolkovanie istoričeskikh proročestv* (The interpretation of historical prophecies), *O kitajskom torgu* (On Chinese commerce), *O preverstve beseda* (On superstition) and various others. In 1676 the new Tsar, Feodor III Alexeyevich Romanov, pardoned Križanić, who initially returned to Moscow. In March of the following year, 1677, he left for Vilnius in Lithuania, becoming Father Augustin of the Dominican Order there. It was in this city that he wrote the work *Historia de Siberia*, which was dedicated to the Polish King Jan Sobieski, whose army he soon joined (probably in Warsaw). He disappeared on campaign during the siege of Vienna in 1683.<sup>2</sup>

The crucial question about Križanić that occurs to every musicologist is: how and why did such a personality, dealing throughout his life both intellectually and existentially principally with history, linguistics, theology, economics and politics, come to occupy himself at all with music? In this essay we shall try to state briefly *how* he did it (the “artefacts” part); but the answer to *why* he did it (the “cultural studies” part) will have to remain in the sphere of optimistically plausible speculation pending the conclusion of all-encompassing research on Križanić.

Križanić produced several texts on musical matters. Here is a list of them according to the present state of knowledge:

### Printed works

1. *Asserta musicalia nova prorsus omnia* (Rome, 1656). This booklet has been found in six (seven) copies up to now: Rome (I-Rsc); Bologna (I-Bc); Vienna (A-Wn); Berlin (D-B); the Vatican (I-Rvat); Vigevano (Archivio Capitolare) – fragment; Paris (F-Pn).
2. *Novum instrumentum Ad cantus mira facilitate componendos* (Rome, 1658). This leaflet has been preserved in only one copy in Vienna (A-Wn), bound together with the Viennese copy of *Asserta musicalia*.

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2 GOLUB, 1981, pp. 1-12.

## Manuscripts

1. *Nova inventa musica or Tabulae novae, exhibentes musicam, Late augmentatam: Clare explicatam: Valde facilitatam* (Rome, 1657-58). This manuscript has been known to exist in two copies since December 2012, following my recent discovery: in Rome (I-Rn, Ms Mus. 167) – Križanić's incomplete autograph; in Paris (F-Pn, Rés. Vm. 11) – Križanić's complete autograph.
2. *De Musica* (Tobolsk, between 1663 and 1666). The manuscript *De Musica* exists in only one autograph copy, preserved in the Central State Archives of Old Writings (Centralni gosudarstveni arhiv drevnih aktov) in Moscow; it makes up part – as a separate chapter – of his more widely preserved work entitled *Razgowori ob wladateľystwu* (Conversation on governance; shelfmark: fund 381, ed. hr. 1799).
3. *O cerkovnom penju* (On church singing) (Tobolsk-Moscow, 1675). This shorter manuscript exists in only one autograph copy, also held by the Central State Archives of Old Writings in Moscow; it makes up part – as a separate chapter – of his more widely preserved work entitled *O preverstve beseda* (On superstition), written in Tobolsk in 1675 (no shelfmark known).

## Opera dubia

1. *Sopra le proportioni musicali* (Rome, 1658?; MS; I-Rvat, Fondo Chigi, F.IV.73; uncertain authorship).
2. *Novi uzorak glazbe* (A new musical pattern) (Moscow, 1676; uncertain existence).

Information on, and appreciation of, Križanić as a music theorist dates back to the nineteenth century. Among outstanding lexicographers we may mention François-Joseph Fétis in 1866<sup>3</sup> and Robert Eitner in 1900;<sup>4</sup> and among Croatian scholars, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski in 1869,<sup>5</sup> Vatro-

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3 FÉTIS, 1866, p. 391.

4 EITNER/SPRINGER, 1900, p. 104.

5 KUKULJEVIĆ SAKCINSKI, 1869.

slav Jagić in 1876,<sup>6</sup> the historians Franjo Rački<sup>7</sup> and Vjekoslav Klaić in 1892,<sup>8</sup> and Mirko Breyer in 1930.<sup>9</sup> Križanić was later included in the historical surveys of Croatian music by Božidar Širola<sup>10</sup> in 1922 and Josip Andreis in 1962, as well as in some more recent publications,<sup>11</sup> while his full recognition was confirmed in 1965 by Albe Vidaković in his dissertation *Asserta musicalia (1656) Jurja Križanića i njegovi ostali radovi s područja glazbe* (Yury Krizanich's *Asserta musicalia* [1656] and his other musical works).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, during the late 1960s and 1970s the ecclesiastical scholar and poet Ivan Golub published around 20 studies, mostly concerning Križanić's treatment of music, and in addition a book entitled *Juraj Križanić – Glazbeni teoretik 17. stoljeća* (Juraj Križanić – A music theorist of the seventeenth century).

Regarding the cultural studies dimension, questions should be put forward at this point on the internal and external aspects of Križanić's treatment of music. It is obvious that his musico-theoretical output was produced in two separate contexts: in the first place, the two printed ones (*Asserta musicalia* and *Novum instrumentum*) plus the manuscript *Tabulae novae* belong to his Roman period in the second half of the 1650s; in the second place, the two remaining manuscripts (*De Musica* and *O cerkovnom penju*) belong to his Russian-Siberian period, having been written some ten to twenty years later. The two existential contexts of Križanić differ substantially in character and are, consequently, reflected accordingly in the contents and profiles of his texts.

In the first, Roman, group of texts, Križanić obviously wished to prove to his intellectual and social environment his level of insight into musical matters. In *Asserta musicalia*, from 1656, he discussed in 20 "assertions" or propositions a series of musico-theoretical and musico-aesthetical problems such as scales, Pythagorean and Guidonian rules, notation, organ manuals, the breaking of rules in the composition of "enthusiastic songs", and intervals and chords. In the main part of *Nova*

6 JAGIĆ, 1876.

7 RAČKI, 1892.

8 KLAJĆ, 1892.

9 BREYER, 1930.

10 ŠIROLA, 1922, pp. 58f.

11 ANDREIS, 1962; ANDREIS, 1974, pp. 113-117.

12 Initial publication as an article: VIDAKOVIĆ, 1965. Later published separately in English: VIDAKOVIĆ, 1967.

*inventata musica* or *Tabulae novae, exhibentes musicam*, from 1657/1658, Križanić displayed 30 tables with complicated graphical drawings that deal with the problem of the classification of consonances on the one hand and propose a kind of “equal temperament” on the other; these can be understood as an expansion and more detailed elaboration of his short “assertions” published one year earlier. In *Novum instrumentum*, a published pamphlet from 1658, Križanić offered in five points instructions for a device intended for a “miraculously easy way of composing songs”. The mechanical device, which was intended for use by both amateur and professional musicians, has itself not survived.

This Roman group of writings, though theoretical in character, took as their final goal the facilitation of specific aspects of practical music-making: composition and the notation of musical compositions. In a short period of only two years Križanić produced three separate, yet connected, musical writings. In the first, he used as sources older writers such as Boethius, Gioseffo Zarlino and Giovanni Battista Doni; in the second and third, elements from Marin Mersenne, Athanasius Kircher, René Descartes, Giovanni Valentini and Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz that have been identified by researchers from the 1970s onwards. The manuscript of *Tabulae novae* was written in two copies, one of which was presented as a gift to Pope Alexander VII. What does all this bespeak? For some reason, Križanić was eager to put himself forward both as an expert on questions of music theory and also as someone who desired to improve and facilitate the techniques and practices of composing, reading and performing music. Was he himself an unrealized composer? Was he thinking of a future need to teach somebody to compose up-to-date music? Was he thinking about his first Russian experience and the prospect of another Russian trip, a mission in which music-making could play a certain role? Or was the bull *Piae sollicitudinis* concerning music, issued by Alexander VII in 1657,<sup>13</sup> somehow connected with Križanić’s efforts to promote certain “puristic” ideas about music in general?

The Russian group of writings consists of two manuscripts (*De Musica* and *O cerkovnom penju*), both written in exile in the Siberian town of Tobolsk. The first text has additional information – it is captioned “Hæresis Politica 16. De Musica” – within a broader text dealing with eight false political beliefs or misconceptions (errors), and has been written in Latin. It consists of twenty “points” and four “questions”. On the whole,

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13 Cf. *IBID.*, p. 44.

the “points” could be understood as a new series of propositions, following the twenty “points” of the 1656 *Asserta musicalia*. Much space is devoted to various aspects of music-making and to a characterization of music in ancient Greek and Roman practices, as well as among modern nations such as those of the Italians, Spaniards, Turks, Croats, Serbs, Czechs, Poles and Hungarians. Križanić’s most intriguing thesis lies in the assertion that the sole purpose of the existence of music is to offer men pleasure, joy and relief from their troubles, all other concepts and beliefs, past or present, being merely false ones. The second part – four *Quaestiones de musica* – deals with the history of church music, the variety of European national musics, secular music and *tibiae*. In this part of the work the second and third sections seem to be the most interesting, since they put forward various suggestions or directions on what to retain and what to change in the Russian musical life of their day.

Thus – despite the fact that the Russian group of writings has not as yet been studied in detail – it may be asserted that a shift occurs between the Roman portion of Križanić’s texts, which deals mostly with music theory and aesthetics, and the Russian portion, which deals mainly with the ethnographic and sociological aspects of music. Both orientations were very probably dictated by the particular and differing socio-cultural environments of Rome and Russia, respectively, and by the role Križanić imposed on himself in his position within these two very different cultural circles. However, some unifying aspects exist as well in these two poles of his musical thought: ones exemplified by his general attitude towards music as a useful pleasure-giving activity and by his personal ambition to participate actively in the religious and socio-cultural politics of his time.

At the most general level it should be pointed out that this phantasmagorian idealist, a man of exceptional culture and encyclopaedic knowledge, was commonly misunderstood by both his audiences: “in Rome he was considered an exaggerated Slav nationalist, while in Moscow he was considered a suspicious foreigner and, for the state, a dangerous man”.<sup>14</sup> And yet, his œuvre was later studied by Peter the Great and the Russian nineteenth-century Slavophiles, as well as by South-Slavic nationalists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,<sup>15</sup> thus bridging past and present and making him “a man for all times” in terms of the relationship between the European West and East.

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14 Cf. *IBID.*, p. 9.

15 Cf. GOLUB, 2003, pp. 123-140; GOL'DBERG, 1976; PAVIĆ, 1974; SOLOVIEV, 1868.

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