

GUITAR COMPOSITIONS FROM YUGOSLAVIA

Syukhtun Editions

PREFACE

The term *Yugoslavia* ("land of the southern Slavs"), far from being political in origin, was conceived in the minds of Balkan¹ poets in the early 19th century. Thus, the poetic idea of Yugoslavia differs very much from the political idea. The former has to do with harmony and friendship. As we have seen in the last decade, the political Yugoslavia has to do with discord and collapse. In the present volume, I would therefore still like to refer to its contents as guitar compositions from Yugoslavia, and not the more politically correct "the former Yugoslavia". In the Croatian capital Zagreb, in the 1830s, began what is called the Illyrian Movement. One of the key figures in this movement was the Croatian poet Ivan Mažuranić (1814-1890), most famous for his long poem *The Death of Smail Aga Cengić*. Illyria was the ancient name for the part of the Balkan peninsula that was to become Yugoslavia. Like the 19th-century Serbian linguist and folklorist Vuk Karadžić, the Illyrians had as their primary goal to systematize a national literary language. Eventually they began teaching a vernacular language that extended its range to Bosnia and Dalmatia. The common language of the southern Slavs was the beginning of the poetic Yugoslavia. Thomas Butler, author of *Monumenta Serbocroatica*, writes: "It would be difficult, if not impossible to speak of separate Croatian and Serbian folklore traditions." He then quotes Maja Bošković-Stulli: "Serbo-Croatian folklore is an indivisible entity, forged not only by common themes, subjects, images, forms of expression, ...but also by the same language."²

Folklore includes songs and ballads, illustrating the close ties between the poetic and the musical traditions, which are also apparent in the present collection. After a recent visit to Serbia I learned that the title of a book I carried with me – *Teach Yourself Serbo-Croat* – is no longer politically correct. The people in Serbia today do not like this term, and insist that their language is "Serbian", period. People in Bosnia who earned a diploma in Serbo-Croat now say that they speak "Bosnian". Not being a linguist, I can't comment on what name is more accurate. But I can comment on the tragic and bitter mood which I encountered in Serbia. After horrifying conflagrations for almost ten years, the political Yugoslavia today has been reduced to Serbia and Montenegro, when once upon a time it comprised six republics and two autonomous regions. Despite the political divisions today, "land of the southern Slavs" is still an accurate name for the region. This first volume of guitar music expresses a wish on the part of the editors to keep alive the poetic *Yugoslavia*, as well as the harmony intrinsic to music, and the joy and friendship it brings human beings. It is the result of many years of research into the guitar music of his homeland by the master guitarist, composer, musicologist and writer, Uroš Dojčinović. I am indeed grateful to Mr. Dojčinović for being my gracious host, guide, chauffeur, translator, guitar duo partner and friend during my visit to Serbia.

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Stockholm, Sweden
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1. A Turkish word meaning wooded mountains.

2. *Monumenta Serbocroatica: A Bilingual Anthology of Serbian and Croatian Texts from the 12th to the 19th Century*, Thomas Butler, Michigan Slavic Publications, Ann Arbor, 1980.