

EDITORIAL

YUGOSLAV DISCO: DIGGING INTO AN “EXCLUDED” MUSICAL CULTURE OF LATE SOCIALISM

MAGDALENA FÜRNKRANZ (VIENNA)/JURI GIANNINI (VIENNA)

One of the editors of this issue of *TheMA* attended a press conference in Vienna back in 2023. During small talk with a journalist from Belgrade, the editor told her that he was working on a project about disco culture in the former Yugoslavia. The Serbian journalist was surprised about the subject and the editor was equally surprised to realize that she didn't know anything about this topic or any of the music acts mentioned, even though her age revealed that she was probably in her teenage years at the peak of disco culture in Yugoslavia. Instead, she was familiar with all the groups and protagonists of the Yugoslav new wave scene. Indeed, that shouldn't have been so surprising! This issue of *TheMA* is the result of a study day that took place in May 2022 at the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.¹ And one of the questions that triggered this study day was precisely the observation of the absence of disco culture from the canons of Yugoslavia's alternative music and popular music at all, despite the huge success and popularity of disco culture in Yugoslav society at the transition of the 1970s–1980s: Many protagonists of the Yugoslav disco scene were stars; discotheques were opening everywhere in the country; as a consequence of the huge impact of the movie *Saturday Night Fever* after its Yugoslav premier in 1978, local cinema distributors were offering other disco movies in their programming portfolio; magazines were dedicated to the disco topic; disco lifestyle and culture were gaining in importance and visibility and spreading all over the country, and a proper disco fever was arising. Nevertheless, disco music didn't make it into the canon of Yugoslav pop music. Scrutinising this absence, we wanted to examine the peculiarities of the genre in its appearance in the culture and society of Yugoslavia from the late 1970s until the early 1980s. Among other things, we were interested in the question of how the hedonistic and consumerist side of the genre could fit in with the country's socialist ideals and way of life. But this was precisely the point, because these apparent contradictions best illustrate the singularity of the genre's development outside the context of its own

1 <https://www.mdw.ac.at/imi/?PageId=4337>; <https://sargfabrik.at/veranstaltungen/stayin-alive-socialist-disco-culture> (both accessed on July 8, 2024).

origins and the characteristics of Yugoslav culture and society in the last decades of its existence. As repeatedly highlighted in the academic literature, Yugoslav popular music and disco (as its part) is a dynamic cultural phenomenon, mirroring and emphasizing the dynamics and contradictions of the society where it took place.² Marko Zubak, the most relevant and active researcher dealing with the subject, has curated exhibitions³ and written several articles on the various facets of disco culture in ex-Yugoslavia,⁴ and, of course, also hypothesised possible causes, that could have led to its exclusion from the canon and historiographical narrative of Yugoslav popular music, dominated instead (in its alternative format), as already mentioned, by punk, rock, and new wave, genres which entered at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s their most creative period.⁵

One of the plausible reasons for disco's exclusion is probably its commercial and hedonistic essence.⁶ One has to keep in mind that disco emerges as a subversive genre (rooted in African American and queer culture)⁷ and was subsequently com-

2 See for example the articles in Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen (eds.): *Made in Yugoslavia. Studies in Popular Music*. New York and London: Routledge, 2020.

3 https://www.academia.edu/14084625/Stayin_Alive_Socialist_Disco_Culture; <https://sargfabrik.at/veranstaltungen/stayin-alive-socialist-disco-culture> (both accessed on July 8, 2024).

4 Marko Zubak: "The Birth of Socialist Disc Jockey: Between Music Guru, DIY Ethos and Market Socialism", in: *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, ed. Ewa Mazierska. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 195–214; Marko Zubak: "Socialist Night Fever: Yugoslav Disco on Film and Television", in: *Popular Music and the Moving Image in Eastern Europe*, ed. Ewa Mazierska and Zsolt Győri. New York: Bloomsbury, 2019, pp. 139–154; Marko Zubak: "'Absolutely Yours': Yugoslav Disco Under Late Socialism", in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 89–98; Marko Zubak: "Yugoslav Disco: The Forgotten Sound of Late Socialism", in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*, ed. Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 195–221.

5 See the following articles in Beard and Rasmussen: *Made in Yugoslavia: Vesna Andree Zaimović: "The Sarajevo Pop-Rock Scene: Music from the Yugoslav Crossroads"*, pp. 36–48; Aleksandar Žikić: "Belgrade Rock Experience: From Sixties Innocence to Eighties Relevance", pp. 61–74; Branko Koselnik: "Jugoton: From State Recording Giant to Alternative Producer of Yugoslav New Wave", pp. 75–88; Ana Petrov: "Bijelo Dugme: The Politics of Remembrance Within the Post-Yugoslav Popular Music Scene", pp. 111–120; Gregor Tomc: "'Comrades, We Don't Believe You!' Or, Do We Just Want to Dance With You?: The Slovenian Punk Subculture in Socialist Yugoslavia", pp. 194–205.

6 For general considerations about the exclusion of disco culture from musical critical discourses of popular music see Sarah Thornton: "Strategies for Reconstructing the Popular Past", in: *Popular Music* 9/1 (1990), pp. 87–95.

7 See for example Tim Lawrence: *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970–79*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; Alice Echols: *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010; Tim Lawrence: "Epilogue: Decolonising Disco – Counterculture, Postindustrial Creativity, the 1970s Dance Floor and Disco", in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s*, ed. Pitrolo and Zubak, pp. 303–338.

modified (as is the case for the most examples of subversive cultural phenomena!)⁸. Yugoslavia's disco is clearly influenced by the commercialised, mainstream side of the genre, but we will demonstrate in one of the articles of this TheMA that several transformations of the models taking place in the transfer process show plenty of innovative and subversive potential. As Zubak notes, when "this form of mainstream disco emerged in Yugoslavia in the late 1970s, it mesmerized audiences. Unaware of disco's queer origins, they readily accepted its aura of escapism, apparently at odds with egalitarian and grassroots socialist values."⁹ As a consequence,

the emergence and subsequent popularity of disco in Yugoslavia should have been ideologically problematic: unlike rock 'n' roll or punk, disco lacked any sort of progressive social agenda that could justify its acceptance. The hedonistic and consumerist aspects of disco negated the egalitarian socialist ethos, yet disco was swiftly embraced and domesticated in Yugoslavia. This speaks of the country's developed entertainment and media infrastructure, which provided the necessary conditions for disco's rise as a commercially viable style. In other words, disco was both a reflection and a product of the continued Westernization, ideological transformation, and major economic, social, and political reforms that shaped socialist Yugoslavia.¹⁰

A decadent infrastructure for wealthy, well-off, privileged people or wannabe VIPs may emerge as a framework for the disco culture, but similar to *Saturday Night Fever's* plot, this culture offers spaces of emancipation and affirmation to marginalized social groups, because on the dance floor everyone is equal. Quoting Boban Petrović, one of the most important representatives of the Yugoslav disco funk scene from the late 1970s and operator of one of the first discotheques in Belgrade, „Disco club is the party everyone can attend“¹¹.

8 See for example M. Elizabeth Blair: "Commercialization of the Rap Music Youth Subculture", in: *The Journal of Popular Culture* 27/3 (1993), pp. 21–33; Sarah Thornton: *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995; Sarah Hanks: "Selling Subculture: An Examination of Hot Topic", in: *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*, ed. Shirley R. Steinberg and Joe L. Kincheloe. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, pp. 155–190; Katina R. Stapleton: "From the margins to mainstream: the political power of hip-hop", in: *Media, Culture & Society* 20/2 (1998), pp. 219–234; Dylan Clark: "The Death and Life of Punk, The Last Subculture", in: *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, ed. David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl. Oxford: Berg, 2003, pp. 223–236; Lauren M. Alfrey: *The search for authenticity: How Hipsters transformed from a local subculture to a global consumption collective*. Master thesis, Georgetown University, 2010.

9 Zubak: "“Absolutely Yours”", p. 90.

10 Ibidem.

11 Bege Fank [Predrag Vukčević]: "Cosmopolitan Smile of the Last Belgrade Player", interview with Boban Petrović printed in the booklet of a reissue of his two albums *Žur* and *Zora* made by the label Everland (<https://www.discogs.com/release/31035301-Boban-Petrovi%C4%87-%C5%BDur-Zora>,

Symbolising an idea of community too, and not only an elitist one, disco culture developed to an important field of action for the young urban working-class and for the Roma minorities. One of them, the 18 years old Hamed Đogani represented Yugoslavia at the 1980 World Disco Championship in London after winning the national selections in Zagreb.¹² Đogani became part of Yugoslav cultural memory, being also celebrated by an entry in the *Lexicon of YU Mythology*.¹³

Finally, as a cause of the exclusion, it must also be considered that musically Yugoslav disco is a curious amalgam merging different apparently incompatible stylistic levels and musical sources: funk and big band jazz meet the tradition of estrada¹⁴; local folk influences and pop enter the glittering world of the dance hall. Zubak interprets this stylistic ambiguity as one of the further explanations of the “poor coverage in Yugoslav pop historiography”¹⁵:

Besides only a few true disco albums, there are a number of crossover tunes and individual disco tracks scattered on non-disco albums or B-sides of singles. Yugoslav disco united various and often unrelated musical streams and artists from diverse backgrounds. As such, it cut across established musical categories (*zabavna*-pop, rock, folk, even jazz), evading stylistic definition.¹⁶

In their role as gatekeeper, local music critics showed themselves sceptical and suspicious toward this chameleonic local variant of disco sound, and advocated other styles, namely the afore-mentioned rock, punk, and new wave. We could thus close the circle by returning to the beginning of this editorial, mentioning the surprise of an actual Belgrade journalist, when confronted with the issue of Yugoslav disco, she couldn't do anything with it at all.

accessed on July 17, 2024). The interview is accessible online here: <https://www.psychedellicbaby-mag.com/2024/03/boban-petrovic-interview-zur.html> (accessed on August 22, 2024).

12 Footage of the London competition can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnItx-0mlgdA> (accessed on July 7, 2024). Đogani performs at approx. minute 12:37.

13 Đorđe Matić: “Đogani, Hamed”, in: *Leksikon YU mitologije*, <http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/dogani-hamed/> (accessed on July 7, 2024).

14 The term “Estrada” (Russian [Эстрада] for ‘stage’, adopting the French word *estrade* [‘stage for performing’]) is a crucial one in the history of popular music of the former European socialist countries. It is an umbrella term designating small forms of entertaining variety arts like singing, dancing, circus, clownery, magic arts, etc. At the same time, it is used tout court to label the entire show business of pop entertainment music (music industry). Musically speaking, estrada cannot be clearly defined, as it encompasses different genres, styles, and fashions chronologically changing and evolving. For Yugoslav estrada see Jelena Arnautović: “Networking *Zabavna Muzika*: Singers, Festivals, and *Estrada*”, in: *Made in Yugoslavia*, ed. Beard and Rasmussen, pp. 15–24.

15 Zubak: “‘Absolutely Yours’”, p. 91.

16 Ibidem.

This state of exclusion has slowly been changing in recent years, thanks to the academic debate, which integrates disco music studies in its discourses,¹⁷ and the increasing importance of ‘crate digging’ as a cultural practice, scholarly methodology, and epistemic tool potentially generating knowledge.¹⁸ While academic research is increasingly recognising the complexity and diversity of disco cultures, many collectors, DJs, producers, and music addicts search in flea-markets, record stores, antiquarian bookshops, basements, and archives for forgotten tunes of the past, acting like de facto archaeologists, “preserving and revitalising forgotten music scenes in the digital age.”¹⁹ These ‘archaeological discoveries’ are often brought to the market by music producers and music labels in the form of samplers or reissues: In the case of Yugoslav music, it is worth mentioning the catalogues of the Dutch-Austrian label Everland and the Croatian label Fox & His Friends Records.²⁰

The relevance of ‘digging’ explains the second part of the title of this issue of *TheMa*: Digging into an “excluded” musical culture of late socialism. As a matter of fact, the immersion into this unexplored and fascinating topic offered a lot of discoveries and surprises: Yugoslav disco culture in all its facets embodies the contradictions and ambivalences of the late socialism, whose complexity cannot be captured by Cold War dualistic interpretative patterns (oppression vs. dissent, mainstream vs. subcultural, etc.). It opens up horizons for reflection on many topics – the articles in this issue of *TheMA* deal with some of these: gender and diversity; the star system and associated phenomena like machismo, femininities, sexualisation, and transgression; questions of musical style; collective memory and nostalgia and its connections to commodification. However, a few aspects were not treated, or only treated peripherally and are desiderata for further research: With popular music

17 See the bibliography quoted in footnote 7, further: Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak (eds.): *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022; Tim Lawrence: “‘Work that Body’: Disco, Counterculture and the Promise of the Transformation of Work”, in: *Music as Labour: Inequalities and Activism in the Past and Present*, ed. Dagmar Abfalter and Rosa Reitsamer. New York and London: Routledge, 2022, pp. 66–80.

18 See particularly Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak: “Introduction: Disco Heterotopias – Other Places, Other Spaces, Other Lives”, in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s*, ed. Pitrolo and Zubak, pp. 12–18.

19 Anton Spice: “Watch the World’s First TED Talk on the Culture of Record Digging”, <https://thevinylfactory.com/news/watch-ted-talk-record-digging/> (accessed on July 17, 2024). On the cultural practice of digging see also <https://thevinylfactory.com/features/crate-digging-dont-do-it-stefan-glerum-comic/> (accessed on July 17, 2024); Gábor Vályi: *Digging in the Crates: Practices of Identity and Belonging in a Translocal Record Collecting Scene*. PhD diss., Goldsmiths, University of London, 2010, online under: <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/3421/> (accessed on November 23, 2023).

20 <https://everland-music.com/produkt-schlagwort/yugoslavia/>; <https://foxandhisfriends.org/> (both accessed on July 17, 2024).

being frequently analysed through music genres connected to a specific nationality, defined by specific aesthetics and socio-cultural conventions, being shaped over decades, its historiography seems especially challenging. Based on a national focus connected with social memory and mass culture, the history of a music genre connected to a nation accompanies the process of modernization and cultural massification of the countries in which they originated. Regarding the economical dynamics of disco culture, as part of market socialism, investigating Yugoslav disco sheds light on a commercialised and ‘decadent’ era of late Yugoslav socialism.

It would be for instance interesting in this regard to map and contextualise the physical and non-physical spaces of popular music in late socialist Yugoslavia, like youth clubs, concert venues, and discotheques, just to mention a few physical examples of them.²¹ Public and private spaces had an important role in shaping lifestyles and the examination of their functions naturally help in understanding and deciphering the dialectic between the capitalist entertainment business and the socialist framework, between escapism and politics. Related to spaces, it is also fruitful to investigate the overlap of public and private spheres in defining the essence of the ‘underground’ lifestyle in the late 1970s. A great example in this regard is the video material shot to accompany Boban Petrović’s 1981 disco-funk LP *Žur* (‘The Party’).²² Directed by Mihajlo Vukobratović for RTV Beograd in 1982, *Ružičasti žur Bobana Petrovića* (‘Boban Petrović’s Pink Party’) was broadcast only once in Yugoslavia in the early hours of New Year’s Day 1983 before the original tapes were lost by the archives of Belgrade’s Radio and Television.²³ Thanks to Swedish television, who bought this film and broadcast it as part of the programme *Fönster mot TV-världen* (‘Window on the world of television’), this valuable document has been preserved.²⁴ The images portray a huge real disco party in a private space, emphasising the quest for hedonistic and lascivious pleasure and placing in the foreground the bodies, the outfits, the dancing moves, the sexual approaches, and the eccentricity of the party’s participants. As Zubak notes, “[s]uch images of decadence and affluence were often used against disco by its new wave and punk detractors.”²⁵

21 For a general introduction see Sara Cohen, Robert Knifton, Marion Leonard, and Les Roberts (eds.): *Sites of Popular Music Heritage. Memories, Histories, Places*. New York: Routledge, 2015 (= Routledge Studies in Popular Music 4).

22 See Zubak: “Socialist Night Fever”, pp. 149–151. For information about the LP and a listening link see: <https://www.discogs.com/master/607204-Boban-Petrovi%C4%87-%C5%BDur> (accessed on July 22, 2024).

23 Zubak: “Socialist Night Fever”, pp. 151.

24 The complete video material is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA3F37B470D9F65D0>; https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLji0q-a4Sd3faPOGK_eYP5I_qtcQLGw4j (both accessed on July 22, 2024).

25 Zubak: “Yugoslav Disco”, p. 212.

Another interesting topic in relation to disco culture is the investigation of transatlantic and intercontinental transfer processes, thus challenging ideas of Yugoslavia as a diverse miniature universe bound together by a collective fate. In fact, cosmopolitanism and the acceptance of imported popular culture was part of the everyday Yugoslav life after WWII. Due to Radio Luxemburg²⁶ as well as many local rock radio shows, music magazines such as *Džuboks* ('Jukebox')²⁷, and tv-shows such as *Koncert za ludi, mladi svet* ('A concert for a crazy, young world')²⁸, the Yugoslav youth was familiar with US popular music. Transatlantic transfer concerns musicians who emigrated to the US to build a career or – at least – to record albums. In the case of Yugoslav disco, *Arian* (PGP RTB – 2120453), one of the most famous disco productions,²⁹ as well as Boban Petrović's *Žur* (ZKP RTVL – LD 0722) were recorded in the United States with local studio musicians. But the agendas of socialist internationalism also led to cultural relationships and exchanges with Africa, South America, and Asia, and it would be equally fascinating – as a counterpart to the examination of transcontinental and Western transfer processes – to trace the role played by black and non-European musicians active in Eastern Europe during the socialist period. Indeed, plenty of (amateur) musicians from Africa, South America, and Asia used to study in the former socialist countries and some of them tried to be in some way musically active.³⁰ Just to mention one example, the disco funk band Zdravo (led by Boban Petrović) used to perform with the daughters of Zaire's ambassador as backing singers, who were even pictured on the cover of the first single of the band.³¹

26 See for example Kristian Kolar: "An Unlikely Cultural Revolution – The Impact of Radio Luxembourg on Yugoslav Culture", in: *In Memoriam Hugo Keiper: Anglistischer Forscher, Lehrer, Freund: eine Würdigung*, ed. Volker Horn, assisted by Bernadette Keiper-Fimbinger. Graz: Keiper, 2023, pp. 175–185.

27 See for example Radina Vučetić: "Džuboks (Jukebox): The First Rock'n'roll Magazine in Socialist Yugoslavia", in: *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik. Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2010, pp. 145–164.

28 See for example Marko Perić: *Koncert Za Ludi, Mladi Svet*. Belgrade: RTS, 2017.

29 See also Zubak: "‘Absolutely Yours’", p. 91.

30 A DFG-funded project with the title *Schwarze Musik in der Region (ehemaliges) Jugoslawien* ('Black Music in the Region of (Former) Yugoslavia'), led by Linda Cimardi is currently underway at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (see: <https://gepris-extern.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/495453014>; <https://www.musikwiss.uni-halle.de/drittmittelprojekteundforschung/drittmittelprojekte/yugoslavregion/>, both accessed on August 21, 2024). See also Linda Cimardi: "Black Popular Music in Yugoslavia", in: *The Routledge Handbook of Popular Music and Politics of the Balkan*, ed. Catherine Baker. London: Routledge, 2024, pp. 451–461.

31 Cover and listening link here: <https://www.discogs.com/release/1241801-Grupa-Zdravo-Vikend-Fobija-Roditeljski-Savet/image/SW1hZ2U6MTcyNjU5OQ==> (accessed on August 16, 2024).

The three articles in this Special Issue use an interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon of Yugoslav disco by combining musicology with cultural studies, gender studies, popular music studies, contemporary history, and social studies.

Juri Giannini's and Magdalena Fürnkranz's article challenges the importance of transfer processes between "East" and "West" by dealing with three case studies from the former Yugoslav disco repertoire: Kim Band's "Jugoslavija" intertextually alludes to the Bee Gees song "Stayin' Alive" and Hair's "Aquarius" by adding a certain national twist in its lyrics and therefore characterizing Yugoslavia's individuality in the disco era. "Normalna Stvar" by Sarajevo's vocal trio Mirzino Jato, the most successful disco band in the former Yugoslavia, tried to translate and establish the concept of the German band Boney M. in a new context by adopting a similar habitus to the German model including a raspy lead singer, female background singers, and misogynist album covers. Neda Ukraden's "Ljubav Me Čudno Dira" mashes an estrada-like song with the synth sample from Donna Summer's "I feel love". Furthermore, Ukraden's pose on the cover of the record enters into a dialogue with the Donna Summer "I remember yesterday"-cover. Giannini and Fürnkranz combine theories of intertextuality taken from the field of literary studies by Gérard Genette with its reception in popular music studies by concentrating on the works of Serge Lacasse and Isabelle Marc. Ultimately, the authors show processes of adaptation and transformation of specific models of Western music. Despite the corpus of literature on Eastern European popular music, many of the engaging authors remain stuck in the binary schemata of the Cold War, a schematic thinking has become even stronger after the end of the Cold War. Giannini's and Fürnkranz's article approaches the topic without prejudice via the idea of transfer processes – alluding to Western models is not a matter of dissent, but of something more complex.

Adriana Sabos's article deals with commodification, especially the production of sexy femininities within the Yu-disco culture by examining the band Lokice. The dance troupe was founded in 1977 by the Belgrade dancer and architect Leposava Stefanović, better known as Lokica, and challenged the status quo with ideas of an open sexuality in an interplay between objectification and empowerment. Celebrity culture offers a fertile ground for the discussion of the construction of femininities and gender relations regarded as part of the broader process of social positioning, expectations, and tensions in late socialism. Perceived as public figures, female stars were obligated to embody, on the one hand, the complex dynamics between consumerism and the entertainment industry and, on the other hand, the values and ideas of socialist morality.

Sabo examines the processes of employing the kindred tropes of sexiness, sexuality and eroticism in the production of femininities as well as their function in investigating the music industry in Yugoslavia, furthermore she takes a look in its relationships with the female body. She argues that Yugoslav popular culture adopted the commodification of a Western form of styling and representations of the female body by referring to American disco. Sabo's article offers a rich analysis of Lokice's television appearances, selected interviews and newspaper articles, and songs from the band's album *Ja sam dinamit* ('I am dynamite'). Lokice's femininities were produced in accordance to specific norms of heterosexiness requiring the disciplining of women's bodies to satisfy the demands of a patriarchal society. Overall, Sabo's article contributes to the understanding of how femininities were produced within the Yugoslav disco culture and the music market in general by concentrating on the female body in accordance to the ideas of sexiness or eroticism deeply connected to the structures of the music market, and the profit-making possibilities.

The nostalgia for Yugoslavia and its cultural utterances emerged immediately after the dissolution of the country. After the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the reception of its popular music was politically charged and understood as a statement against the nationalist and chauvinist tendencies of the successor states. The phenomenon of Yugonostalgia was therefore often used as one of the possible reading grids for discussions and debates about the culture, especially the popular culture of former Yugoslavia.

There are many very productive activities and performance practices related to nostalgia that shape the other side of the coin, namely commodification: Yugo-nostalgia can be used for commercial purposes and be a means for the commodification of feelings and memories through sentimental recollections and kitschy elements. This can lead to capitalistic practices.³² The practice of digging is also partly associated with nostalgia linked to a search for the unknown, coping with nostalgia, even if it is a (manic) turn to the past as well as a rediscovery of Yugoslav disco music connected with fond memories of the old united country, which lived its motto of peace, unity and brotherhood. Against this backdrop, it was crucial for us to include a current examination of the phenomenon of nostalgia in this Special Issue of *TheMA*. Even though Tanja Petrović's article "A Problem with Yugo-nostalgia. Yugoslav Socialist Experience and Post-Yugoslav Left" barely deals with music or culture, especially disco culture, it represents an interesting framework

32 See for example Ana Petrov: "Yugonostalgia as a Kind of Love: Politics of Emotional Reconciliations through Yugoslav Popular Music", in: *Humanities* 7/4 (2018), <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/7/4/119> (accessed on July 22, 2024).

with which to approach the subject matter. Precisely because of this, the subject of Yugonostalgia is essential in partially understanding why a phenomenon like disco in the former Yugoslavia is now gaining in relevance. Tanja Petrović's article challenges ideas of nostalgia in post socialist debates and discusses the ongoing important and often heated discussion on Yugonostalgia and how it relates to the new left in the post-Yugoslav region and its political efficiency. The term 'nostalgia' emerged in the everyday, journalistic, and academic discourses soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the socialism in Eastern and Southeastern European societies. The term designates a range of diverse practices of reviving aspects of the socialist past as well as encompassing products of the popular culture but also everyday objects, visual symbols or recognisable figures. Nostalgia for socialism in post-Yugoslav societies and its diasporas is still relevant today. Labelled as Yugonostalgia, it hasn't lost its importance in social and scholarly debates. Petrović focusses on discourses of the political and intellectual futility and the theoretical incapacity of Yugonostalgia. The author approaches them from a present-day political perspective and within those intellectual genealogies in which Socialism is understood and revisited as a political project and social experience of the twentieth century. She addresses two related sets of issues relevant for understanding "the problem with Yugonostalgia": the epistemic status of the experience of (state) Socialism, and the political potentiality of emotions in the specific post-socialist context that is seen by the post-Yugoslav left as politically unproductive, anti-revolutionary, and damaging for the future-oriented politics of the left.

Lastly, this Special Issue of TheMA includes interviews with Mirza Alijagić (Mirzino Jato) and Lepasava Lokica Stefanović (Lokice) conducted by Marko Zubak. Both interviewees give insight into their stardom, their role models, their everyday lives as musicians, focusing on their dual roles as disco star and opera singer in the case of Alijagić or disco star and architect (Stefanović), their touring, media appearances, the recording environment, the commodification of disco music as well as female bodies, gender roles, and sexism in the music business. The interviews complement the contributions "Disco Ladies'. Production of Sexy Femininities Within the Yu-Disco Culture: The Example of Lokice" by Adriana Sabo, and Giannini's and Fürnkranz's "East-West Transfers in Popular Music (Three Case Studies from the Yugoslav Disco Repertoire)" by providing an insight into the working realities of the protagonists covered in the articles.

One of the intentions of this issue of *TheMA* is to open up space to reconsider Yugoslav disco. The included articles both continue and extend a conversation begun by our popular music studies and musicology forebears, drawing attention to progress made, but also inviting us to develop new ways of theorising Yugoslav disco in the contexts of gender studies, cultural transfer, and questioning the role of nostalgia.

Since dealing with an uncanonised repertoire primarily means discovering new music, it seemed to us to be an immense priority to also create playlists where it is possible to listen to the music mentioned in the articles (accessible via the QR Code at the beginning of two of the articles) and discover further examples from the amazing repertoire of Yugoslav disco music (open the QR Code at the end of this editorial's bibliography).

The editors would like to thank the research support of the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the anonymous peer reviewers, *TheMA*'s series editor Tatjana Marković, the Hollitzer team, Johannes Fiebich, Daniela Supan, Sophie Zehetmayer, Olja Januš, Daniela Codarin, and last but not least all our authors, interviewers, and interview partners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andree Zaimović, Vesna: "The Sarajevo Pop-Rock Scene: Music from the Yugoslav Crossroads", in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 36–48.
- Alfrey, Lauren M.: *The search for authenticity: How Hipsters transformed from a local subculture to a global consumption collective*. Master thesis, Georgetown University, 2010.
- Arnautović, Jelena: "Networking *Zabavna Muzika*: Singers, Festivals, and *Estrada*", in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 15–24.
- Beard, Danijela Š., and Ljerka V. Rasmussen (eds.): *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*. New York and London: Routledge, 2020.
- Blair, M. Elizabeth: "Commercialization of the Rap Music Youth Subculture", in: *The Journal of Popular Culture* 27/3 (1993), pp. 21–33.
- Cimardi, Linda: "Black Popular Music in Yugoslavia", in: *The Routledge Handbook of Popular Music and Politics of the Balkan*, ed. Catherine Baker. London: Routledge 2024, pp. 451–461.
- Clark, Dylan: "The Death and Life of Punk, The Last Subculture", in: *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, ed. David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl. Oxford: Berg, 2003, pp. 223–236.
- Cohen, Sara, Robert Knifiton, Marion Leonard, and Les Roberts (eds.): *Sites of Popular Music Heritage. Memories, Histories, Places*. New York: Routledge, 2015 (= Routledge Studies in Popular Music 4).

- Echols, Alice: *Hot Stuff: Disco and the Remaking of American Culture*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Hanks, Sarah: "Selling Subculture: An Examination of Hot Topic", in: *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*, ed. Shirley R. Steinberg and Joe L. Kincheloe. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, pp. 155–190.
- Kolar, Kristian: "An Unlikely Cultural Revolution – The Impact of Radio Luxembourg on Yugoslav Culture", in: *In Memoriam Hugo Keiper: Anglistischer Forscher, Lehrer, Freund: eine Würdigung*, ed. Volker Horn, assisted by Bernadette Keiper-Fimbinger. Graz: Keiper, 2023, pp. 175–185.
- Koselnik, Branko: "Jugoton: From State Recording Giant to Alternative Producer of Yugoslav New Wave", in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 75–88.
- Lawrence, Tim: *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970–79*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Lawrence, Tim: "Epilogue: Decolonising Disco – Counterculture, Postindustrial Creativity, the 1970s Dance Floor and Disco", in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*, ed. Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 303–338.
- Lawrence, Tim: "'Work that Body': Disco, Counterculture and the Promise of the Transformation of Work", in: *Music as Labour: Inequalities and Activism in the Past and Present*, ed. Dagmar Abfalter and Rosa Reitsamer. New York and London: Routledge, 2022, pp. 66–80.
- Perić, Marko: *Koncert Za Ludi, Mladi Svet*. Belgrade: RTS, 2017.
- Petrov, Ana: "Yugonostalgia as a Kind of Love: Politics of Emotional Reconciliations through Yugoslav Popular Music", in: *Humanities* 7/4 (2018), <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/7/4/119>.
- Petrov, Ana: "Bijelo Dugme: The Politics of Remembrance Within the Post-Yugoslav Popular Music Scene", in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 111–120.
- Pitrolo, Flora, and Marko Zubak (eds.): *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022.
- Pitrolo, Flora, and Marko Zubak: "Introduction: Disco Heterotopias-Other Places, Other Spaces, Other Lives", in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*, ed. Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 12–18.
- Stapleton, Katina R.: "From the margins to mainstream: the political power of hip-hop", in: *Media, Culture & Society* 20/2 (1998), pp. 219–234.
- Thornton, Sarah: "Strategies for Reconstructing the Popular Past", in: *Popular Music* 9/1 (1990), pp. 87–95.
- Thornton, Sarah: *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

- Tomc, Gregor: “‘Comrades, We Don’t Believe You!’ Or, Do We Just Want to Dance With You?: The Slovenian Punk Subculture in Socialist Yugoslavia”, in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 194–205.
- Vályi, Gábor: *Digging in the Crates: Practices of Identity and Belonging in a Translocal Record Collecting Scene*. PhD diss., Goldsmiths, University of London, 2010.
- Vučetić, Radina: “Džuboks (Jukebox): The First Rock’n’roll Magazine in Socialist Yugoslavia”, in: *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik. Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2010, pp. 145–164.
- Žikić, Aleksandar: “Belgrade Rock Experience: From Sixties Innocence to Eighties Relevance”, in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 61–74.
- Zubak, Marko: “The Birth of Socialist Disc Jockey: Between Music Guru, DIY Ethos and Market Socialism”, in: *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm*, ed. Ewa Mazierska. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, pp. 195–214.
- Zubak, Marko: “Socialist Night Fever: Yugoslav Disco on Film and Television”, in: *Popular Music and the Moving Image in Eastern Europe*, ed. Ewa Mazierska and Zsolt Győri. New York: Bloomsbury, 2019, pp. 139–154.
- Zubak, Marko: “‘Absolutely Yours’: Yugoslav Disco Under Late Socialism”, in: *Made in Yugoslavia: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Danijela Š. Beard and Ljerka V. Rasmussen. New York and London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 89–98.
- Zubak, Marko: “Yugoslav Disco: The Forgotten Sound of Late Socialism”, in: *Global Dance Cultures in the 1970s and 1980s: Disco Heterotopias*, ed. Flora Pitrolo and Marko Zubak. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 195–221.

LINKS, AUDIO, AND VIDEO SOURCES:

- Bege Fank [Predrag Vukčević]: “Cosmopolitan Smile of the Last Belgrade Player”, interview with Boban Petrović printed in the booklet of a reissue of his two albums *Žur* and *Zora* made by the label Everland (<https://www.discogs.com/release/31035301-Boban-Petrovi%C4%87-%C5%BDur-Zora>). The interview is accessible online here: <https://www.psychedelicebabymag.com/2024/03/boban-petrovic-interview-zur.html> (both accessed on August 22, 2024).
- Cimardi, Linda: *Schwarze Musik in der Region (ehemaliges) Jugoslawien*, <https://gepris-extern.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/495453014>; <https://www.musikwiss.uni-halle.de/drittmittelprojekteundforschung/drittmittelprojekte/yugoslavregion/> (both accessed on August 21, 2024).
- EMI World Disco Dance Finals – 1980, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnItx0mlgdA> (accessed on July 7, 2024).

- Everland [Label], Music Style – Yugoslavia, <https://everland-music.com/produkt-schlagwort/yugoslavia/> (accessed on July 17, 2024).
- Fox & His Friends Records [Label], <https://foxandhisfriends.org/> (accessed on July 17, 2024).
- Grupa Zdravo: “Vikend Fobija/Roditeljski Savet”, <https://www.discogs.com/release/1241801-Grupa-Zdravo-Vikend-Fobija-Roditeljski-Savet/image/SW1hZ2U6MTcyNjU5OQ==> (accessed on August 16, 2024).
- Matić, Đorđe: “Dogani, Hamed”, in: *Leksikon YU mitologije*, <http://www.leksikon-yu-mitologije.net/dogani-hamed/> (accessed on July 7, 2024).
- Petrović, Boban: Žur, <https://www.discogs.com/master/607204-Boban-Petrovi%C4%87-%C5%BDur> (accessed on July 22, 2024).
- Petrović, Boban: *Ružičasti žur Bobana Petrovića*, <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA3F37B470D9F65D0>; https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLji0q-a4Sd3faPOGK_eYP5I_qtcQlGw4j (both accessed on July 22, 2024).
- Spice, Anton: “Watch the World’s First TED Talk on the Culture of Record Digging”, <https://thevinylfactory.com/news/watch-ted-talk-record-digging/> (accessed on July 17, 2024).
- Spice, Anton: “Crate Digging, Don’t Do It! A comic warning against the perils of vinyl addiction”, <https://thevinylfactory.com/features/crate-digging-dont-do-it-stefan-glerum-comic/> (accessed on July 17, 2024).
- Stayin’ Alive: Socialist Disco Culture* [exhibition], https://www.academia.edu/14084625/Stayin_Alive_Socialist_Disco_Culture; <https://sargfabrik.at/veranstaltungen/stayin-alive-socialist-disco-culture> (both accessed on July 8, 2024).
- Yugoslavian Disco: Digging into an “Excluded” Musical Culture of Late Socialism*, <https://www.mdw.ac.at/imi/?PageId=4337> (accessed on July 8, 2024).

PLAYLIST



- Dado Topic: “Floyd”
Boban Petrovic: “Svetski osmeh”
Miša Blam: “Dobro Jutro”
Tamara: “Hajde”
Igor Savin i Orkestar Stanka Selaka: “Noćni Klub”

Miki Petkovski: "Buđenje"
 Grupa Zdravo: "Vikend Fobija"
 Rok Hotel: "Disko"
 Zdenka Vučković: "Ja ću preživjeti (I Will Survive)"
 Mirzino Jato: "Bez rezultata"
 Arian: "Do posljednjeg daha"
 Lokice: "Disco lady"
 Dubravka Jusić: "Stani, stani"
 Clan: "Motor hocú mama"
 Mirzino Jato: "Normalna stvar"
 Sandra Kulier: "Da Li Biste Bili Ljubazni"
 Krunoslav Slabinac: "Južni vjetar"
 Nenad Vilovic & Grupa ST: "To nije tvoj stil"
 Data: "Opsesija"
 Oliver Mandić: "Moja Draga Voli Kurosavu"
 Arian: "Lutaš Velikim Gradom"
 Mirzino Jato: "Apsolutno Tvoj"
 Cod: "Moja Mala Na Popravni Pala"
 Boban Petrović: "Djuskaj"
 Makadam: "Ko Prijatelj Njene Kuće"
 Zdravko Čolić: "Pusti, pusti modu"
 Cice Mace: "Sta se to događa"
 Suzana Mančić: "Mamin sin"
 Pepel in kri: "Disko zvezda"
 Oliver Mandić: "Nije Za Nju, Nije Za Nju"
 September: "Za Tvoj Rođendan"
 Duo Snoli: "Prava prilika"
 Zorica Milosavljević: "Disko Par"
 Zdravko Čolić: "I'm Not a Robot Man"
 Beti Đorđević: "Nasloni Glavu"
 Neda Ukraden: "Ljubav me čudno dira"
 Boomerang: "Na Zapadu Ništa Novo"
 Oto Pestner: "Novi svijet u 2035"
 Boom Selekcija: "Žuljaš Me"
 Ljubomir Sedlar: "New York, New York"
 Kim Band: "Jugoslavija"