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The Cicvarićs as Pioneers of Cultural Entrepreneurship in Serbia

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I focus on the activities of the Cicvarićs, a notable Roma music family from the western Serbian town of Šabac. I begin by overviewing cultural entrepreneurship and its characteristics and then provide the context for a discussion of the Cicvarićs' activities as regards the traditional role of Roma musicians in Serbia and the musical life of Šabac at the time. Following a discussion of their repertoire and the innovative business practices that they introduced, I conclude by highlighting the aspects of their work that can be assessed today as examples of cultural entrepreneurship. I conceptualize the Cicvarićs as pioneers of cultural entrepreneurship in Serbia, paying attention to the notions of supply and demand, economic development, and historical processes of producing, distributing, and consuming urban folk music in Serbia.

Keywords: Cultural entrepreneurship, the Cicvarić family, Šabac

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Introduction

Research into the history of cultural industry and its development in the fields of production, distribution, and consumption of music and dance, especially in the 'peripheral' parts of Europe which are rarely the subject of international academic scrutiny, is still in its early stages. In this article, I wish to highlight aspects of the cultural entrepreneurship in the domain of traditional music and dance in Serbia and Yugoslavia, from the mid-19th century until the second half of the 20th century. I am particularly concerned with the sphere of private entrepreneurship in the area of urban folk music, and I will use the Cicvarić family orchestra as a case study. I discuss the activities of this notable ethnic Roma family whom I regard as the early pioneers of cultural entrepreneurship in Serbia and Yugoslavia in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. By overviewing the Cicvarićs' professional activity, I wish to highlight several problems, such as the connection of cultural industry practices with constantly changing political-economic and cultural realities; the development of certain business models; and the positioning of artists and their products locally, nationally, and internationally. The activities of the Cicvarić family within shifting political and cultural contexts enable a conceptualization of the notions of supply and demand, economic development, as well as historical processes of producing and distributing folk music in Serbia. I will first offer a brief overview of cultural entrepreneurship and its characteristics formulated many decades after they were intuitively adopted and developed by the Cicvarićs. I will also provide a context for their activities by discussing both the traditional role of Roma musicians in Serbia and the musical life of Šabac at the time when the Cicvarićs began their activities. Following a discussion of their repertoire and the innovative business practices that they introduced, I will conclude by highlighting the aspects of their work that could today be assessed as examples of cultural entrepreneurship.

My sources include archival material stored at the Intermunicipal Historical Archive of Šabac, as well as literature on the topics of the cultural and entertainment life of old Šabac (Jevtić, 1985), the famous people from the city of Šabac and the entire Podrinje region (Šašić, 1998), a comprehensive history of old urban folk music in Serbia (Dumnić Vilotijević, 2019), a collection of lyrics of songs performed by the Cicvarićs and other musicians from Šabac compiled by Vladan Kuzmanović (Kuzmanović, 2018), who also prepared an online phonoarchive of available digitized audio recordings made by the Cicvarićs (Kuzmanović, 2023), as well as a first-hand testimony of one of the 'heirs' of the Cicvarićs, Serbian violinist and composer Milutin Popović Zahar (Popović Zahar & Devura, 2013). Additional literature encompasses ethnological, ethnomusicological, and musicological studies on the activities of Roma musicians in various Serbian towns.

Cultural entrepreneurship

The term 'culture' in the broadest (anthropological) sense encompasses all spiritual, social, and material goods in synchronic and diachronic perspectives, while in a narrower (economic, commercial and/or administrative) meaning it can be equated to 'cultural industry', encompassing its institutional frameworks, investment in cultural goods, their distribution and promotion. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines cultural and creative industries as activities "whose principal purpose is production or reproduction, promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature" (EY, 2015). The terms closely related to the cultural industry are 'creative services' or 'creative economy', which are often used interchangeably (Hajkowicz, 2015).

'Cultural industry' applies to all segments of culture that can be adapted to certain markets, distributed and monetized; its expansion is the inevitable result of the development of the market economy. The term was introduced by Adorno and Horkheimer in 1947 in the chapter "Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" from the book *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* which was written for the purpose of critiquing processes of standardization of many areas of culture. Adorno and Horkheimer argued that culture in a capitalist society functions like an industry in producing standardized goods to be consumed, thus transforming their cultural values into economic values (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1989, p.128). Although their understanding of the cultural industry is overly critical (and has itself been extensively critiqued), it was nevertheless very influential.

Cultural industry is one of the key factors in popularizing the cultural, market, and geographic characteristics of a certain state which are thus differentiated, instrumentalized and commercialized, and then offered to both local and global markets as products. Thus, every country or nation, i.e. its recognizable cultural legacy, can become a competitive brand in the regional and global markets. Anything can become a brand – from cultural heritage, national and local histories, legends and myths, cuisine, and geographic or ethnic characteristics.

While closely related to the cultural industry, the term 'cultural entrepreneurship' has a more positive connotation. An entrepreneur creates a product or service that people will buy, as well as an organization to support that effort,

bearing the risk of failure. Cultural entrepreneurs thus transform various types of culture into saleable business ventures. Andrea Hausmann and Anne Heinze provide a comprehensive and useful compilation of definitions of cultural entrepreneurship (Hausmann & Heinze, 2016), several of which are important for the present discussion: first, the identification of cultural entrepreneurs as "resourceful visionaries, generating revenues from culturally embedded knowledge systems and activities" (Kavousy et al., 2010, p. 228); then, their characterization as individuals who create new cultural products, who are oriented towards assessing opportunities and having to find innovative ways of doing business (Scott, 2012, p. 243), and who "organize cultural, financial, social and human capital, to generate revenue from a cultural activity" (Aageson, 2008, p. 92). While researching cultural entrepreneurship in developing countries, Toghraee and Monjezi observed several problems which are of importance here, namely "education issues, poverty, and lack of related institutions" (Toghraee & Monjezi, 2017, p. 1). They also observed that there are "weak steps and stages for promotion, branding, distribution, and ownership support of cultural productions due to not only lack of integration but also a lack of artists' knowledge about these processes" (Ibid.).

All these points are valuable for the study of the Cicvarićs's activities in the newly liberated 19thcentury Serbia, which had to take immediate steps towards self-modernization and try to 'catch up' with the rest of Europe which, by that time, had already embraced the capitalist economic system. The musicians of the Cicvarić family played a decisive role in creating a music market in the emerging civil society in 19thcentury Serbia. Completely unintentionally and without any knowledge of the marketing principles and branding strategies, the Cicvarić family established a lasting 'brand' of Serbian and Balkan Romani *kafana* (tavern) music at the turn of the 20th century, which has continued to be associated with Serbian popular music until the present day[1].

Roma musicians in Serbia

For many centuries in Serbia, but also in other European countries, the Roma people have been socially, economically, educationally, and politically marginalized and segregated. In spite of this, sociologist and Romologist Dragan Todorović highlighted that Romas in Serbia constitute a historically autochthonous minority with clear determinants of ethnic, cultural, and religious identity, including their music:

> In the absence of written language and ethnic territories, the talent and feeling for playing music is a centuries-old cornerstone of Roma status identification and existential survival globally. [. . .] Being excluded from all emancipatory movements, they were left to perfect the skills in which they excelled: playing instruments, singing and dancing. It was only thanks to their lively notes and singing voices that they were accepted among 'Gadže' [non-Romas][2] without prejudice and fear. [. . .] The musical culture was transmitted from one generation to another and became a recognizable sign of the Roma ethnicity. (Todorović, 2020, p. 617–618)

Todorović also highlights that their "nomadic and stateless destiny gave birth to a specific philosophy of life 'to be, not to have'" (Ibid.), paradigmatically sublimated in the voices of famous Roma singers such as Šaban Bajramović (1936–2008), Esma Redžepova (1943–2016), Usnija Redžepova (1946–2015), or Ljiljana Petrović-Buttler (1944–2010).

In the nascent urban society of the newly liberated 19th century Serbia, Roma musicians were present at all social events and festivities, in taverns and other entertainment venues. Although without formal education, their natural talent was cultivated within the community and contributed to their social acceptance: "The magic of their melodies concealed grief, sadness and bitterness of the hurt and marginalised people, the muted pain of the minority eager to be accepted and recognised by the majority" (Ibid.).

The first important study of the Roma musicians at the turn of the 20th century was published by Tihomir R. Đorđević (1868–1944), whose doctoral dissertation was an ethnographic study of the Roma people in Serbia. This dissertation was first published in German (Gjorgjević, 1903; 1906), and some excerpts were translated into Serbian and published in Đorđević's numerous studies and articles. However, the integral text of the dissertation was published as a Serbian translation only in 2021 (Đorđević, 2021). Đorđević was the first researcher who pointed to the cultural industry aspects of Roma music-making:

> In comparison to Serbian folk music, Romani music occurs as a product. Gypsies appear as professional players, musicians, artisans who do their work for remuneration, and who sell music as a commodity, just like any craft product is sold. The gypsies have their own musical instruments, completely different from the folk instruments: violin, *zurle, šarkija*, drum and tambourine.(Đorđević, 1910, p. 7)

Đorđević also asserted that Roma musicians were ready to sell any type of music, whichever their customers requested – be it Serbian rural folk music, urban folk music, foreign music, or anything else. Thus, he correctly identified their

[1] On this customary (but not always justified) equation of Balkan and Romani folk music in the international context see: (Gligorijević, 2020; Medić, 2020).
[2] See (Todorović, 2014, p. 72).

entrepreneurial and market-oriented incentives, related to the dialectic of supply and demand (although he did not specifically label them as such, because at the time when he wrote his dissertation these terms were largely unknown in Serbia). However, Đorđević remarked that the Roma often 'corrupted' the music they were playing, by changing the lyrics, accentuating them incorrectly, or adding excessive ornaments to the melody, thus revealing his unconscious bias. Nevertheless, Đorđević praised the Roma for being the first authentic music professionals in Serbia and also for transmitting their skills within their community, from parents to children.

Ethnomusicologist Andrijana Gojković, who wrote numerous articles on the customs and practices of the Roma people related to singing, playing and dancing, singled out three categories of Roma music:

- music performed within their closed Roma circles (unavailable to the non-Romas), which could be regarded as their 'authentic' music;
- music of the non-Roma populace from their immediate surroundings, i.e. the Roma version of the folk music of the local non-Roma population; Gojković calls this type 'professional' Roma music;
- the newly-composed *estrada* (popular) Romani music, written, recorded, and performed by the Roma themselves (Gojković, 1989, p. 401).

Danijela Zdravić Mihailović correctly observes a peculiar 'counterpoint' of Romani and Serbian music, which have influenced each other throughout their parallel history: "On the one hand, Roma musicians strive to adapt to the given time and space, but under the guise of their authenticity, which is related to the manner of interpretation; on the other hand, music in Serbia is being modernized and updated, conquering a new sound space through modern technologies and instruments" (Zdravić Mihailović, 2020). Todorović also argues that "a cemented awareness of the Roma as eternal 'borrowers' from other cultures overlooks the Roma as autonomous creators. Their primordial interculturalism made them permanently able to joyfully incorporate the sounds and tones of the territories they were passing by and to offer them back as natural ingredients of their own identity inheritance" (Todorović, 2020, p. 618).

'Little Paris'

When Knez (Prince) Miloš Obrenović (1780–1860) succeeded in liberating the first parts of Serbia from the centuries-long Ottoman rule, its populace was largely illiterate, with a still strong Oriental lifestyle and worldview. This newly liberated, yet uneducated and backward mid-19thcentury Serbia still wanted to catch up with the rest of Europe and adapt to the European concept of life. The beginning of the creation of a new, bourgeois society began in small border towns. The first wealthy merchants were livestock traders, who accumulated wealth by exporting pigs, sheep, and cattle to Austria-Hungary, across the river Sava. The initial accumulation of capital, as well as the exporters' increasingly close contact with the European way of life, changed the lifestyle of the new generation, which gradually accepted many ideas and customs of Western civilization. The newly affluent Serbian merchants began to send their sons and daughters to receive a higher education, primarily in the countries of Central Europe. Located on the right riverbank of Sava and in close proximity to the Austrian border, Šabac was among the first Serbian towns to decisively head towards Europe. The original types of rural folk entertainment such as *posela, prela, kola* and similar small social gatherings with singing and dancing, were soon replaced by balls, dance parties, variety and theatrical shows, concerts by military music chapels, singing societies and other amateur music societies, as well as guest performances by notable foreign solosts and ensembles (Jevtić, 1985).

In Šabac, Prince Miloš Obrenović enthroned his youngest brother, Prince Jevrem Obrenović (1790–1856), a man who was very much inclined to the European way of life. He brought foreign (mainly Czech) music teachers to Šabac, to educate members of the nascent bourgeois class. These musicians transformed the musical taste of the educated population, introducing them to European classical music and opera. Furthermore, by teaching the musically talented Serbian youth, they raised the overall level of musical culture and left a lasting legacy. Two of the most notable Czech musicians who worked in Šabac were Joseph Schlesinger and Robert Tollinger[3].

Joseph Schlesinger [Serbian spelling: Josif Šlezinger] was born in Sombor, then in Austria-Hungary, in 1794, and died in Belgrade in 1870. He was a Czech Jew, who is nowadays widely considered the founder of Serbian musical culture in the early 19th century. He worked in Sombor, Novi Sad, Šabac, Kragujevac (then the capital city of the newly liberated Serbia), and finally in Belgrade. Schlesinger worked in Šabac between 1829 and 1831, when he moved to Kragujevac at the invitation of Prince Miloš himself. There he established a court band [Knjaževsko-srbska banda] and became its first Kapellmeister[4].

[3] Aside from Schlesinger and Tollinger, many other Czech musicians worked in Šabac, e.g. Jaroslav Herle, Emil Pokorný, et al.
[4] More on Schlesinger's life and work in: (Vasiljević, 1989, p. 40).

Robert Tollinger was another important Czech musician who worked in Šabac. Born in 1859 in Hluboka on the river Vltava, he moved to Šabac as a young man, where he studied at the Šabac Grammar School. He studied cello at the Prague Conservatory and graduated in 1879. He worked in Zagreb, Kikinda, Cetinje and Prague, before returning to Šabac in 1902, where he worked as a choral and orchestral conductor, music teacher, composer, and multi-instrumentalist. He often performed with Jewish pianist Ruža Rosenberg-Vinaver (1871–1942). At the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Belgrade Singing Society, the Šabac Singing Society, under the baton of Robert Tollinger, won first place, after which they embarked on an international tour. Tollinger died in Šabac in 1911[5].

Many of these Czech musicians became acquainted with Serbian folklore and began to use its elements in their compositions and arrangements. The opening of the first theatres (and later cinemas) and the establishment of the singing societies and military music chapels followed shortly. The first pianos were brought from Austria to Šabac to the salons of sons and daughters of wealthy merchants. Although this development towards 'Europeanisation' was belated and slow, once started it could not be stopped. As a border town, Šabac took the lead in this trend towards realigning Serbia with European standards, to the extent that it provoked the envy of Prince Miloš Obrenović, who often reprimanded his younger brother Jevrem for so unreservedly accepting the customs and cultural values of the Catholic West.

Another important part of Šabac's social and entertainment life took place in taverns [Serbian: *kafane*, i.e. coffee houses]. At the beginning of the 19th century, Šabac already had numerous taverns, and the new ones were opened regularly, bringing their number close to one hundred. The most well-known ones included 'Casino', '*Devet direka*' [Nine Pillars], 'Paris', '*Gradska pivnica*' [City Brewery], '*Tešmanovića kafana', 'Velika gostionioca'* [The Great Inn], etc. These taverns became the sites where the entire commercial and social life of Šabac took place, as described by historian and tamburitza player Vesna Dobrivojević:

> People from Šabac gathered in taverns to socialise, do business, read the daily press and take part in political discussions; illiterate peasants would often ask literate people to write complaints, petitions and lawsuits for them. In taverns, people ate, drank, had fun, fought, mourned the loss of loved ones or unhappy loves, sang and celebrated various occasions (for example, Omer Cicvarić played at the birthday celebration of Prince Jevrem Obrenović's son Miloš in 1829). The famous family orchestra Cicvarić, with 58 members throughout 7 generations, used *šargija*[6]*, ćemane*[7], tamburitza and drums… Today, the tradition is preserved by a small number of tamburitza bands and the tamburitza orchestra *Bisernica* of the amateur cultural-artistic society *Abrašević*, from which you can hear the authentic sounds of the tamburitza and feel the old spirit of the bohemian Šabac. (Simić, 2016)

Aside from live music, provided both by local bands and touring ensembles, including tamburitza orchestras, jazz orchestras and such, the entertainment in the taverns of Šabac also included comedy acts, magicians, dancers, clowns, and – prostitutes (Jevtić, 1985, p. 19). Šabac also had the first public gambling house called '*Evropa*' [Europe], a luxurious building in the city center, where the richest merchants of Šabac gambled for large sums, and even the king Milan Obrenović (grandson of Miloš Obrenović) himself played cards with the Šabac natives. Gambling was so widespread that in 1845 Toma Vučić Perišić imposed a ban which stated that the police could prohibit card games and other types of gambling if they assessed that it was becoming harmful (Jevtić, 1985, p. 22). The Šabac marketplace was packed full day and night. Due to this vivid day- and nightlife, Šabac was nicknamed 'Little Paris' (and later in the 20th century, 'Serbian Nashville', due to its lively local music scene).

While the Cicvarićs were not the only music family that emerged from the Šabac taverns[8], they were the ones whose vivid playing style turned Šabac into a regional center of bohemian life and helped establish the 'Little Paris' brand. These musicians gradually won the hearts of royalty, politicians, the intellectual elite, writers, professors, and artists, as well as ordinary people, artisans, merchants, and workers.

The Cicvarić Family as Pioneers of Cultural Entrepreneurship

The Cicvarićs were a Muslim Roma family from Šabac, who originated from the Šabac Mahala[9]. The family was long-lived. They played and sang in different ensembles from the mid-19th century until the 1960s, with seven generations of musicians going through the family band, including Baka, Salko, Mujo, Omer, Began, Loso, Tulo, Mema, Pinja, Penco, and many others, who transmitted their musical skills from father to son. The Cicvarić bands also included relatives, friends, and neighbors from the Šabac Mahala, but they always played a dominant role in the band

[5] More on Tollinger's life and work in: (Šašić, 1998, p. 304–309; Kokanović Marković, 2019).
[6] A long-necked lute.
[7] A chordophone instrument similar to the violin, belonging to the Persian-Arabic family of string instruments.
[8] Other notable families include the families Milić, Ibrić, Zejić (who were all related to the Cicvarićs and lived in the same mahala), as well as the band led by Vasa Stanković Andolija, who was a Gypsy of Orthodox faith. (Jevtić, 1985, p. 19)
[9] From Arabian *mähallä*, meaning a settlement; in this case, a Roma settlement.

as creators of the repertoire, songwriters and arrangers, as well as the purveyors of their distinctive singing and playing style.

While there are no written records on how these Muslim Gypsies, who probably arrived in Šabac from present-day southern Serbia, North Macedonia or Montenegro via Bosnia (Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 82) became musicians, an orally transmitted legend about the beginnings of this musical family has survived to this day. It goes back to the time when the Turks ruled the Šabac fortress on the river Sava. Among them was a Turkish *dizdar* [commander] who played an old *ćemane*. Because of his unrequited love for a *kaurkinja* [a Christian woman], he slammed the instrument on the floor in anger and broke it. This was observed by a young man from his service, allegedly Omer Cicvarić, who picked up the broken parts and secretly took them home to reassemble them. After repairing the instrument, he taught himself to play it, and then his brothers and relatives followed suit (Anon, 2018; Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 75). After they obtained some more instruments, they started playing and singing together. The Cicvarićs first started appearing in their neighborhood, playing and singing to their relatives and friends, and then in small taverns in Šabac Mahala, which soon became too small to accommodate all those who wanted to see and hear them. Soon they were hired to play at prestigious Šabac hotels and taverns, at city balls, weddings and celebrations, as well as at gatherings of the wealthy townspeople and their guests, thus commercializing and professionalizing their initially amateur activity. In the beginning, the band members wore traditional clothes – handmade pants, shirts and belts, a *fermen* [hand-embroidered vest], embroidered knee-high socks and *opanci*[10] (Figure 1.). Later, as their local and international reputation grew, they adopted European clothes (Figure 2.).

Figure 1. The Cicvarićs in traditional clothes [Photograph], The InterMunicipal Historical Archive of the City of Šabac.

Musical Style And Cultural Entrepreneurship

The Cicvarićs were musically illiterate, but they learned their skill from their elders. The band founder Omer Cicvarić was born either in 1795 or 1796, because an 1863 source found by Vladan Kuzmanović states: "Omer Cicvarić, 67 years, wife Šana, 50, sons Alija, locksmith, 21, Bego, musician, 19, daughters-in-law. . . " (Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 75). Based on the previously cited information that Omer Cicvarić played at the celebration of the birth of Jevrem Obrenović's only son Miloš in 1829 (Simić, 2016), the broken-violin-anecdote must have happened in the late 1810s or early 1820, if by 1829 Omer was already a proficient performer. According to Vladan Kuzmanović, the 'golden era' of Šabac's nightlife was marked by three generations of the family band, each led by one family member: Omer Cicvarić (the band lasted until his death in 1870), Bego Cicvarić (Omer's son; the band lasted until 1901), and Baka Cicvarić (Bego's son; the band lasted until 1913, its activity interrupted by the Balkan Wars). Baka Cicvarić was a notable musician, who was nicknamed Baka Slavuj [Nightingale] for his very pleasant voice and extremely skilled playing on the violin. His band included his three brothers Mujo, Omer Jr. and Began. Omer Cicvarić's other grandson Osman, nicknamed Loso (the son of Alija Cicvarić) began to play in his cousin Baka's band and became a famous musician in his own right. All

[10] Traditional handmade spiked leather shoes.

Figure 2. The Cicvarićs (sitting on the floor in the front row) in European clothes [Photograph], The InterMunicipal Historical Archive of the City of Šabac.

of them were singers, instrumentalists and arrangers, and Baka Cicvarić was the main songwriter (Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 75).

Although Omer Cicvarić lived for almost 75 years, the average lifespan of the Cicvarićs was much shorter, approximately 50 years. A total of seven generations of the Cicvarić family band(s) played throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Since the Cicvarićs played together with their relatives and neighbors from the Šabac Mahala, the families Zejić, Milić and Ibrić, who all lived in the same street (Avde Karabegovića), the band would sometimes bear the name of the family that was the most numerous at that point – for example, from 1918, the musicians who survived the Great War gathered in three bands, led by Zejo Zejić, Ibro Milić and Mujo Milić[11].

According to Milan Jevtić, a chronicler of Šabac's entertainment life, at the turn of the twentieth century, the town's bohemian elite was led by the famous writer Janko Veselinović (1862–1905), an amateur musician himself. He would often party until the early morning with Baka and Salko Cicvarić, who performed his favorite songs. In turn, Veselinović made it possible for the Cicvarićs to perform in Belgrade's famous Skadarlija district and other bohemian haunts. Thanks to this exposure, many protagonists of the Serbian art scene of that time wanted to get to know Šabac and its musical life, and there are well-known testimonies of many writers, poets and painters who appreciated the Cicvarićs, including Stevan Čalić, Mihailo Petrov, Rade Drainac, Trifun Đukić and others (Jevtić, 1985, p. 19). Additionally, the Slovenian composer who lived and worked in Serbia, Davorin Jenko (1835–1914), included many of the Cicvarićs' songs in his theatre plays with dancing and singing, such as the very popular 'play with music' *Đido* [Rascal], based on Veselinović's eponymous theatre play.

The Cicvarić's repertoire included arrangements of popular melodies from all over the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as their original compositions – some of which are now considered folk 'standards' and have long entered repertoires of contemporary folk music ensembles. They can also be regarded as chroniclers of the time in which they lived. Their original repertoire consisted mainly of love songs and dances, including the stories of the love affairs of famous people from Šabac and the sweet life of the city's *nouveau riches*, such as: *Prošetali šabački trgovci* [Šabac merchants went for a walk], *Rujna zora* [Red dawn], *Igrali se konji vrani* [Black horses were playing], *Oj, devojko moja* [Oh, my girl], *Mila moja Kata* [My dear Kata], *Jelena, momo* [Jelena, girl], *Angelina, bela Grkinjo* [Angelina, a beautiful Greek woman], *Moj komšija ćer udaje* [My neighbor's daughter is getting married], *Oj javore* [Hey, linden tree], and the widely known *Cicvarića kolo* [The Cicvarićs' Round dance] (without lyrics) (Jevtić, 1985, p. 19)[12]. Kuzmanović argues that they invented a new genre of lyrical folk songs – *hymns*, with subgenres such as humorous, lascivious, or merchants' hymns. According to this author, the Šabac *hymn* is an extended type of *romance* with lyrics about someone's reputation, the city's glory, urban and national pride, and such (Kuzmanović, 2018)[13].

[11] According to the inscription on one of the photographs taken in Belgrade Skadarlija, in front of the tavern *Zlatno bure* [Golden Barrel], preserved in the private collection by L. Kuzmanović, the band led by Ibro Milić consisted of Alija Ibrić, Baka II Cicvarić, Amid Cicvarić, Memiš Kardić, Mema Jovanović, Musa Jovanović, Milarem Gardić, Osman Loso Cicvarić, Ibro Milić, Nurija Garić and Omer Penco Cicvarić. Available at Wikimedia Commons, https://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Датотека:Cicvarići1.jpg (accessed 15 May 2023).

[12] Many of the songs originated by the Cicvarićs have been recorded by other ensembles such as *Stari Zvuci* [Old Sounds] or *Dilber* [Lover], and released on LP records (Milošević, 2019).

[13] Since Kuzmanović is an amateur researcher, he does not support this claim with a scientific analysis that would prove the specific features of Šabac hymns, as opposed to different types of lyrical folk songs.

The Cicvarićs' repertoire also included songs that commented on the social and military events of that time, starting from the early songs commenting on the centuries of Turkish rule, such as *Na sramotu Begi i Mus-Agi* [The shame of Bega and Mus-Aga] or *Razvilo se ravno polje prilepsko* [The Battle of the Prilep Field], followed by patriotic (mainly tragic, but sometimes humorous or rebellious) songs written in response to the invasion of the Austro-Hungarian army, such as *Kapetan Đoka* [Captain George], *Na Šabac je udario Švaba* [Šabac was attacked by the Germans] or *Dođi, Švabo, da vidiš* [Come and see, you German]. In all, the songs performed by the Cicvarić spanned the Turkish period, the Annexation, the Serbian-Turkish wars, the First and Second Balkan Wars, and the Great War. In all these songs, the Cicvarić revealed themselves as true patriots. Although they preserved their Muslim names and faith, they also celebrated Serbian national and religious holidays, participated in all national victories and defeats of the Serbian people, and died as soldiers together with their Serbian comrades. For example, in 1912, Baka's younger brother Mujo Cicvarić signed up as a volunteer in the Sixth Šabac Regiment of the Serbian Army during the First Balkan War. He brought both his rifle and his violin to the front, and his courage and his songs made him famous in Kumanovo. Unfortunately, he contracted cholera in the trenches and died (Anon, 2018). Another brother Began Cicvarić was killed in the Second Balkan War in 1913 (Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 77). The Cicvarićs were honored when, in 1918, they were invited to Belgrade to take part in the central ceremony to celebrate the breakthrough of the Thessaloniki Front and perform in front of the King, the Liberator Petar I Karađorđević and other nobility; and at the end of 1918, they also joyfully welcomed the Serbian Army in Šabac. Later, the Cicvarićs were the first musicians to sing a moving dirge on the occasion of the death of King Aleksandar Karađorđević who was assassinated in Marseille in 1934. Queen Marija personally thanked them with a letter for this gesture of love and loyalty (Anon, 2018).

The Cicvarićs became synonymous with entertainment because they knew how to build up the atmosphere and keep their listeners in a good mood throughout the evening. According to written testimonies and the available recordings, they would begin their performance with slower songs, ballads and *sevdalinkas*, and then move on to more dynamic songs, until they reached the climax. Based on the available recordings, the Cicvarićs sang their songs in a responsorial style: the main singer would lead the melody, and other band members would join in, usually singing in unison or in parallel octaves or sometimes parallel thirds[14]. Although the Cicvarićs' richly ornamented and exaggerated style of interpretation is nowadays considered archaic, the same type of responsorial singing in unison has been preserved by bands who perform in the Belgrade tourist district Skadarlija until the present day (Dumnić Vilotijević, 2019). When it comes to the Cicvarićs' instrumental compositions, such as round dances, these unfolded as countless repetitions of one or two melodic-rhythmic models, with occasional melodic variations, while maintaining a steady pace, so that people could dance.

The Cicvarićs introduced another practice that has been preserved to this day, namely, the custom that the audience should adorn the musicians with money and gold. Every evening the Cicvarićs were lavished with money, which they continued to spend in the same tavern after the gig was over. Although they initially established their reputation by performing in the numerous taverns in Šabac, they later went on to perform at elite hotels, city balls, weddings, celebrations, private parties of wealthy citizens, and even important state events, in the Serbian capital of Belgrade and in many other cities in Serbia and abroad, including Budapest, Paris and Prague, where they made their first record. They served as their own managers, who booked gigs and tours, at a time when Serbian society at large barely had any concept of concert promoters or cultural management.

The Cicvarićs made about twenty gramophone records with about fifty songs between 1909 and 1922, with a mixture of their original compositions and a selection of what could be dubbed 'Balkan standards', including Turkish, Macedonian and Bosnian popular songs, but also many other types of songs that belong to the repertoire of old urban folk music[15]. They also recorded instrumental potpourris or garlands. Some of their best-known instrumentals include the famous melodies *Svilen konac* [Silk Thread] and *Nizamski rastanak* [Nizams' Farewell]. These melodies are often regarded as works of anonymous folk composers or attributed to Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac (1895–1965), the famous violinist and lawyer from Belgrade, a long-term leader of the Folk Orchestra of the Radio Television of Serbia. However, Milutin Popović Zahar (b. 1938), another violinist and lawyer, and a long-time researcher of the Cicvarićs' legacy,

[14] There are numerous recordings of the Cicvarićs available on Youtube and other platforms, e.g. *Angelina, bela Grkinja* [Angelina, a beautiful Greek woman] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f3yOKl7xrQ&t=11s, *Moj komšija ćer udaje* [My neighbour's daughter is getting married] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFS-cMjodyc, *Rujna zora* [Red dawn] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hk5r-4ArsfY, *Mila moja Kata* [My dear Kata] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3do524hJ1A, *Sarajevka kolo* [A round dance from Sarajevo] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm28kkkcVsk, *Cicvarića kolo* [The Cicvarićs' Round dance] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4mukcdEpr4, and a selection of mp3 songs compiled by Vladan Kuzmanović, including *Jelena momo* [Jelena, girl], *Ja prodadoh konja vrana* [I sold a black horse], *Svu noć mi soko prepeva* [A hawk was singing all night long], *Oj, devojko moja* [Oh, my girl], *Sremsko kolo sa poskočicama* [A round dance from Srem, with exclamations], *Igrali se konji vrani* [Black horses were playing], *Sedi gidi Saro* [Sit down giddy Sara], etc. https://archive.org/details/vladankuzmanovic_y_a_h_o_o_1. In spite of the low quality (by today's standards) of these recordings, it is easy to discern the Cicvarićs' distinctive interpretation style and indisputable vocal and instrumental virtuosity.

[15] For more information on the old urban folk music repertoire, see (Dumnić Vilotijević, 2019).

testified that Carevac himself admitted that he had 'borrowed' these instrumentals from the Cicvarićs. Carevac also instructed Zahar to write lyrics for these melodies in order to preserve them. Zahar indeed wrote lyrics to *Svilen konac* and a new arrangement for *Nizamski rastanak*, which are still performed today (Popović Zahar and Devura, 2013). Although their activities chronologically predated the processes that established the cultural industry in Serbia and its commercially successful genres, as songwriters who wrote and performed their own material to meet popular demand, the Cicvarićs can be considered the early pioneers of composed music in the spirit of the folk music tradition of Serbia and the Balkans, which ultimately led to the birth of the immensely successful commercial genre of *novokomponovana narodna muzika* [the newly-composed folk music] in the second half of the twentieth century[16].

The last band leader was an exceptional musician, Osman Penco Cicvarić, the son of Mujo Cicvarić, who was at their helm from the 1930s to his death in 1965. Under his leadership, the band performed regularly in Belgrade's Skadarlija, in Hotel Lav in Ljubljana, and in many other places. The death of Penco marked the end of 'Little Paris' and all that it entailed.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the Cicvarićs' multigenerational and multifaceted activity embodied many aspects of cultural entrepreneurship highlighted in the introduction, including the connection of cultural industry practices with constantly changing political-economic and cultural realities, the development of certain business models, and the positioning of artists and their products locally, nationally, and internationally. Regarding the first point, the Cicvarićs aptly adapted to the changing political-economic and cultural realities, as documented by the changes in their repertoire and their active participation in all important events of the time, including wars and postwar celebrations or mournings, changes of royal dynasties, changes in the social structure of the nascent Serbian bourgeois society, and so on. Being active participants in these events, the Cicvarićs felt the need to contribute by writing their own songs, not just to meet demand, but also to pay tribute to notable people of their society, from war heroes to famous artists and bohemians. By so doing, they acquired the status of true chroniclers of their times[17]. Additionally, their activities enable us to consider aspects of supply and demand, resulting in the development of certain business models, some of which are still preserved today – such as self-management, the transmission of skill from elders to their offspring, the establishment and development of a successful family 'brand' without any actual theoretical knowledge of marketing principles, establishing a specific type of an all-night tavern performance which is still practiced in Belgrade Skadarlija and other landmarks of Serbian nightlife, organizing domestic and international tours, or making commercial gramophone records and thus preserving their artistry for posterity. The Cicvarić also contributed to cultural diplomacy, not just by performing a repertoire from different parts of what was to become the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia and uniting the peoples of different backgrounds, religious confessions and cultural legacies, or by participating in important political events of the time and contributing to the acceptance of certain individuals and their political roles, but also by performing for the most diverse audiences, bridging the gap between royalty, intellectual elites, and the common people and thus erasing class barriers. Over the course of more than a century of the family band's existence (in all its numerous incarnations and with different band leaders), their impact and legacy were felt both locally, in their native town Šabac, nationally, in the newly liberated Serbia, and internationally, throughout Europe, where they were associated with 'Little Paris' and its vivid nightlife.

[16] On the genre of the newly composed folk music in Yugoslavia see: (Vidić Rasmussen, 1995, p. 241–256; Rasmussen and Beard, 2020).

[17] Vladan Kuzmanović provides plenty of information on the origin of some of the songs that the Cicvarićs wrote and/or performed, and the people immortalized by them (Kuzmanović, 2018, p. 83–122).

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