

# FUNDING FESTIVALS: BRINGING THE WORLD TO SARAJEVO\*

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Received: 15 February 2017

Accepted: 1 June 2017

Original scientific paper

## ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is on the “festivalization” of Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia-Herzegovina, after the signing of the Dayton Agreement (1995), and the donor environment during that time that largely supported foreign rather than local performances. I chronicle a shift – from socialist-era regional festivals before the war to post-war period staged multi-day multi-performance events with foreign programming – and highlight the tendency of donors to de-emphasize local difference as a way of creating politically safe aiding strategies. I unpack why the “festival model” was attractive to local and foreign cultural organizers during this period. Specifically I discuss the reorganization of the Sarajevo Winter Festival as well as other festivals that existed before the war and continued to produce such events after the war.

**KEYWORDS:** Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo, music, post-conflict, festivals, post-socialist, applied ethnomusicology

*“[I]t is possible to organize a concert at a high professional level without entertainers’ charity, which all kinds of humanitarians from around the world dumped on this city over the last four years.”<sup>2</sup>*

\* Portions of this article were included in my dissertation “Aiding Harmony? Culture as a Tool in Post-Conflict Sarajevo” with support from the American Councils Central Europe Research Scholar Program. <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:11298/>

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<sup>2</sup> From an article in *Dani* (August 1996) titled “Mladen Vojičić Tifa,” describing Tifa’s upcoming concert in Sarajevo. Mladen Vojičić is known regionally as Tifa and is a Bosnian rock vocalist who was known throughout the former Yugoslavia for a short stint in the 1980s as the lead singer of Bijelo dugme. Interest-

The first few years after the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995) were inspired by a local excitement at the hope of reconstruction, a new beginning. Many people who had survived the Sarajevo siege responded to the news of peace with celebration. To a certain extent, Sarajevans felt that local resistance had left their city victorious, although the Dayton Agreement softened the exhilaration of ending the war by either side through military might alone. Nonetheless, different factions continue to hold vastly diverse conclusions about who perpetrated the conflict and who was the victor.

While some scholars have located the cause of Yugoslavia's disintegration within economic factors or in international or nationalist agendas, others have emphasized the role of fine arts and popular music in animating cultural, political, and social difference (Wachtel 1998; Gordy 1999). Their arguments suggest that cultural policies have serious political and social ramifications beyond the stage. Scholars of the region have documented the ways in which, like most aspects of culture, music was used during the conflict to divide as much as it was used to unify (Laušević 2000a and 2000b; Pettan 1999; Maners 2000; Gordy 1999), as well as the cultural situation before the war. While these scholars have considered the cultural policies that preceded the unfolding of ethnic conflict and then inspired inter-war music, the effects of cultural policy in the post-war period have not yet been assessed in the Bosnian case.

In the field of anthropology, scholars such as Fisher (1997) and Yúdice (2003) have looked at globalizing ideas about civil society that have been introduced by Western-based programs for political and educational, as well as economic and cultural development. Parallel to this Bosnian case, ethnomusicologist Adriana Helbig notes that in Ukraine,

Following the notion of thinking globally and acting locally, such [foreign funded] programs are usually set up by transnational structures such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and the European Union, or global foundations such as the Open Society Institute, and put into practice by local actors, among them non-governmental organizations (Helbig 2008).

In the 2007 volume titled *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, several scholars, including ethnomusicologist Cynthia Cohen, puzzle through the role of music in conflict both as a fuel for violence and as a tool for reconciliation.

In the post-war era, a significant focus of the international community, in terms of the cultural sphere, has been music and its perceived ability to encourage inter-ethnic co-existence and tolerance. Organizers often define music from outside the region (often Western) as universal in its appeal and application. Following the war in Bosnia, urban cultural centers have been the sites of significant economic investment as well as local and foreign political struggles. Sarajevo, as the new Bosnian

ingly, the Yugonostalgia concert in 1996 was organized by a local newspaper and the majority Bosniak Democratic Action Party (SDA). I was unable to find any evidence that the concert was funded by any humanitarian bodies.

capital, has received the lion's share of this cultural support. Ironically, the international community's goal to encourage a multi-ethnic and democratic Bosnia resembles that of the Yugoslav project of "brotherhood and unity," which was promoted primarily through folkloric music and dance<sup>3</sup> by Yugoslav cultural policy (Majstorović 1980), as both projects sought to transcend religious and ethnic divides. Post-war articulations of inter-ethnic co-existence funded by foreigners, however, differ from their pre-war socialist counterparts in that they incorporate various musical genres including Western-inspired rock (Ramet 1994), newly-composed folk music (Rasmussen 2002),<sup>4</sup> folk music, religious music (including Muslim sacred music referenced in Laušević 2000b), popular music, and alternative music such as reggae, hip-hop, and classical music. Funds have been awarded to a vast array of musical events and projects and the consequences of these funding decisions have not yet been explored.

Several festivals, like the Future Festival (multi-venue alternative rock festival held in bombed out buildings), were founded after the war by citizens who sought foreign donor funding at the start of the post-war period and hoped that one day their event might become financially independent. Over the years, indeed some of the most successful and long-lasting festivals in Sarajevo have found a way to combine corporate funding (most often in exchange for advertisement opportunities) with development aid.

This article is devoted to the "festivalization" of Sarajevo after the signing of the Dayton Agreement and the donor environment that supported foreign rather than local performances. I highlight the tendency of donors to de-emphasize difference, be it ethnic, cultural, or religious, as a way of creating politically safe aiding strategies. Scholars who write about the impact of festivals on urban settings note that such events have the power to transform spaces, draw tourists, and impact the global and/or local image of the city (see Harvey 1991; Laopodi 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Richards and Wilson 2001). In many cities across Europe, cultural organizers work with city officials to shape concerts and festivals. My emphasis is to uncover why the "festival model" was attractive to local and foreign cultural organizers. Here I write about the reorganization of the Festival Sarajevska zima (Sarajevo Winter Festival) as well as other festivals that existed before the war and continued to produce such events after the war. One of the figures, Ibrahim Spahić, the Director of the Sarajevo Winter Festival, commented to me that international involvement in Sarajevo had made it possible for him "to connect with the modern world especially after the war." Spahić's comments offer a personal narrative that helps to illustrate comparisons between the pre-war and post-war cultural climate and explain the conundrum organizers faced in drumming up support to put on their festivals. Spahić's narrative bears a strong resemblance to that of other cultural organizers who were active before

3 I speak here of the majority of such politically-inspired performances. By the late 1970s, the Yugoslav government also supported Western-inspired Yugoslav rock music. See Ramet 1994.

4 Newly-composed folk music (NCFM) is a popular commercial folk-based genre that rose in popularity after World War II and in the context of rapid industrialization and urbanization in Yugoslavia. For an extensive study of NCFM, see Rasmussen 2002.

the war and worked to establish themselves within the socialist system. His story illustrates the shift in support for cultural events from state funding under the pre-war socialist system in Yugoslavia, to what we could call “hybrid” support from foreign entities (embassies, organizations) and local governments. I argue that the expansion in festivals and more particularly international ones that took place following the conflict, was partly the result of Sarajevo’s new identity as a capital and post-war city, and the increase in international presence and funding that resulted.

The historical overview of the Sarajevo Winter Festival allows for comparisons of content between early festivals that were focused on local expression and post-war festivals that have been more “international.” The description of the festival is informed by my attendance in between 2005 and 2007, extensive conversations with founder and director Ibrahim Spahić and other employees, festival materials, as well as cultural critiques and media reports. I also underscore the lack of a partner relationship between the local organizers and the foreign funders of the Sarajevo Winter Festival, in particular, and other festivals like it. Staff explained to me that they are rarely in a position to choose or even recommend content based upon local interest rather than foreign input.

Because of the sensitivity of discussing ongoing foreign funding, one of the festival directors I spoke with opted out of being named. By the end of our candid discussion, he politely asked me not to use his name or that of his festival when referencing particular statements. His concerns underscore the smallness of the pool of cultural organizers, as well as a fear that individuals he deemed corrupt might withhold support for his events. In small communities such as this one, it is difficult to obscure an individual’s identity; nonetheless, I have attempted to protect his anonymity while including some details of his project. There were also others I spoke with about the topics of corruption and foreign funding who requested that I not attribute their names to their comments.

The Dayton Peace Agreement, as well as a general lack of government funds for culture, tied the hands of local governmental officials and left little incentive for them to support annual cultural events. These circumstances made it especially difficult for such figures to sustain the operating costs of cultural institutes and organizations. The festival model, of several concerts over a short period of time, offered local and foreign organizers the opportunity to make use of a multitude of active donors in the new capital of Sarajevo. The fact that some festival events bordered on being spectacles was, by and large, positive to foreign donors who sought publicity and prominence in their home countries and the city in exchange for their contribution. Several festivals were founded after the war by Bosnians who sought foreign donor funding at the start and hoped that one day their event might become independent. Over the years, indeed some of the most successful and long-lasting festivals have found a way to combine corporate funding (most often by beer companies or banks) with development aid.

By 2003, the variety and number of festivals was staggering. The following is a partial list, along with the approximate dates of operation of several post-war festivals:

Bašćaršijske noći (Nights of Bašćaršija, 1980s–2010),<sup>5</sup> Sarajevo Jazz Festival (1997–2010), Internationalni muzički festival Bosna (Bosnian International Music Festival, BIMF, 2005–2010), Zetra festival (2005–2006), Sarajevo Snow Fest (2004), Internationalni dječji muzički festival (International Children's Music Festival, 2004–2010), World Oriental Music Festival (WOMF, 2005–2009), Dječji i omladinski muzički festival (Children and Youth Music Festival, 2006), MESS Theater Festival (1960–2010), Festival Sarajevska zima (Sarajevo Winter Festival, 1984–2010). The director of one of the festivals, Bašćaršijske noći, counted more than I had:

We have about 30 festivals in Sarajevo, right? So many! [Sarajevo] Art is the cantonal public cultural institution and is the executive director of two festivals. The biggest summer festival in the region is the summer cultural festival Bascarsija's Nights. It is organized for eleventh time since the war, although its content is smaller than it used to be before war and since the eighties, the middle of eighties (Kuburović 2006, interview with author).

In the above quotation, Kuburović explains that Bašćaršijske noći is one of two events he organizes through the concert agency Sarajevo Art and notes that his festival had existed since the 1980s. Of the many festivals I have listed above, only Bašćaršijske noći, along with the MESS Festival and Sarajevo Winter, pre-date the war. Before the war, these three festivals received government support which was contingent upon presenting inclusive content illustrative of socialist multi-ethnic ideologies.

In post-war Sarajevo, as government funds were limited, new foreign embassies were a rich source of cultural sponsorship. During the period of my research, the most active embassies in the cultural scene of Sarajevo were the Japanese, American, French, German, Turkish, and British. It is, however, difficult to pin down budgets on embassy funding and indeed my requests to my own embassy for their cultural budget were not honored. Most governments cycle cultural attachés and other foreign service officials through individual embassies at a fast clip. In my experience, some cultural attachés are fairly knowledgeable about the country in which they work, sometimes even speaking the language, while others are new to the region and its cultures. Many embassy staff, who are not from the region, live rather protected lives and socialize primarily with others from the embassy. For local festival directors who visit the embassies to gather financial support for their events from embassy officials, this makes it difficult to anticipate who will be the recipient of their requests from year to year. Several festival directors I spoke with asked me for insight about the American cultural attaché at the time of my research hoping that more information might help them to make realistic requests. They requested that, as an American, I act as an intermediary in their requests. I willingly engaged in negotiations between a festival director and the American cultural attaché to invite a brass group from New Orleans only later to find that the American official had decided that the cost of bringing

<sup>5</sup> This festival was called Dani Bašćaršije (Days of Bašćaršija) before the conflict.

the band was too high. Even if they had developed close relationships with embassy staff, because of the constant turnover, festival directors found it almost impossible to predict what kind of funding they might garner from year to year.

There were also numerous rumors of festivals that were never actually organized. These include a rather humorous proposal to organize “Woodstock 3” “where everything that has a value in the world’s rock music should be gathered and which should be attended by 300,000 viewers.”<sup>6</sup> In 2006, I met two young female students from Sweden who had been studying concert organization at their university. They arrived with high hopes and claims about the famous stars, including Bjork and Sting, that they would bring to Sarajevo. After meeting them, one of my Bosnian friends joked that she had met a lot of students “playing in Bosnia like it was their sandbox” (Fazlić 2007, interview with author). When I asked what she meant, she explained that Sarajevo was a good place to try out ideas without there being any ramifications. If the women succeeded in finding financial support and their invitations were honored, then everyone in Europe would know, but if not, nothing would be lost. A year later, I met film students from the Netherlands who wanted to found a film archive “to house all of the old Yugoslav films and art-house theater where they could screen them.” They were unaware that for the last fifty years the Kinoteka Bosnia i Hercegovina (Bosnian Film Archive) had been archiving Yugoslav and more recently Bosnian films. Anyone interested in watching films could visit the archive and watch the films in the building’s small theater.<sup>7</sup> Some Sarajevans reacted to this kind of meddling negatively. The idea that some foreigners wanted to engage in developing new institutions or events when they only visited for short periods of time was offensive. The changes they proposed were often inconsistent with the cultural landscape of the time. A friend of mine commented:

They get in the media and everyone talks about them, and then a year later it just kind of ... well what happened? And those people at War Child or those festivals, they go back to their country and they say: “Oh, at the age of 21 I organized a festival,” you know they say, “What a great success!” and they never come back and what they did does not matter (ibid.).

In the previous scenario, foreigners stand to benefit more from their ill-informed efforts than people living in the city. This is one of the many examples in which the

<sup>6</sup> This story actually made its way into *Dani* magazine in October 1997 with a description of the German politician Daniel Con Bendit as “one of the 1968’s leaders of the hippie movement.” The article continues, “According to him there is already an elaborate plan for the festival which is supported by, among others, Coca Cola, Volkswagen and the European Parliament,” at a time when few corporate sponsorships of anything were available. I could find no evidence that the event ever took place.

<sup>7</sup> In 2010, one of the local theaters (Meeting Point Cinema) began showing a selection of Kinoteka’s Yugoslav films held and restored in the archive.

“gift” of a volunteer or donor can sometimes be more advantageous to the giver than the recipient.

It should be noted that the music festival model that I discuss here was, by no means, the only one for organizing musical events. After the conflict several large concerts, most notably those of U2 and Laibach,<sup>8</sup> were held in Sarajevo. Speaking of the 1997 U2 concert held at Koševo Stadium in Sarajevo, which was attended by more than 40,000 people, Bosnia’s past ambassador and representative to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey (Šaćirbej), said, “We are perfectly satisfied with the result of the concert which was held to promote a sense of normalcy, peace and reconciliation” (U2 Press Release 1997). In the celebratory and festive aftermath of the war, foreign, diaspora, and refugee musicians visited Sarajevo and other cities in the region to mark the conflict’s end. For many of these concerts, audience members were charged admissions fees that went to pay for the rental of equipment and venues, as well as musicians’ flights and staff.<sup>9</sup>

There were also several festivals which did not emphasize music specifically. The most noticeable of them are the MESS Theater Festival and the Sarajevo Winter Festival.<sup>10</sup> Both carried on in line with smaller inter-war performances and showings by expanding their programs into multi-day festivals. Another category, which I do not address here but should be investigated in the future, is that of concerts organized by political parties. Based on articles in the local press and conversations with friends who were in Sarajevo in the period directly after the war, the Bosniak party called Stranka demokratske akcije (The Party of Democratic Action, SDA) was the most active party in this respect. Many of the concerts organized by the SDA showcased turbofolk musicians, some of whom were also active in wartime parties and concerts.

In the socialist period, most festivals and manifestations had domestic content and were locally and nationally funded. In 2000, when I began living in Sarajevo, I noticed a multitude of festivals, especially in the summer months when good weather made it possible to gather people in outside venues. Many of the posters and concert programs recognized foreign embassies and NGOs for their financial assistance. In the present situation, these festivals have a markedly more international flavor as they present musicians and artists from outside Bosnia with only a few performances by local artists.

Commenting on the number of embassies in the capital after the war, in 2001 journalist Aida Tabaković of *Dani* magazine included the following description:

<sup>8</sup> The Slovenian avant-garde group Laibach is a music group formed in 1980 in Trbovlje, Slovenia. At one of their concerts in Sarajevo directly after the war, the group passed out fake passports to audience members as a political statement upon the inability of Bosnians to cross their country’s borders. For more on Laibach’s political statements though their musical performances, see Schneider 2009.

<sup>9</sup> U2 concert tickets were sold at reduced prices for people living in some particularly poor neighborhoods.

<sup>10</sup> Both of these festivals received extensive support from George Soros’s organization, the Open Society Fund. Along with the Sarajevo Jazz Festival, these festivals have become the most known and successful in Bosnia, drawing audiences from throughout Europe.

In the capital city of our old homeland [Yugoslavia] there was, and probably still exists, an elite street where almost all embassies and consular offices of friendly countries of that time were located. In the capital city of our homeland [Bosnia and Herzegovina] there is no such street. There are even more embassies than an ordinary citizen might guess, twenty-two in total (Tabaković 2001).

In my interviews, I also found it was common for the public to make claims that the cultural sector was rife with corruption and money laundering. A dominant local opinion is that money laundering is one of the primary goals of foreign institutions and governments when they invest in cultural events. Such claims have undermined some positive features of festivals such as gathering people together, reconciliation, and foreign/local exchange and have put into question the use of foreign monies for cultural events. I address these claims as well below. I attribute the generally pessimistic attitude regarding foreign involvement by many Bosnians to the long period of reconstruction following the war and also the cynicism many feel about the future.

#### IBRAHIM SPAHIĆ: WINTER'S SHOWMAN

*"This festival [Sarajevska zima] has an international character due to the many foreign participants performing in it."*<sup>11</sup>

*"Sarajevo is today again a symbol of life, hope and belief in the future."*<sup>12</sup>

Ibrahim Spahić is the director of the Sarajevo Winter Festival which is often referred to as "Zima Festival" by locals. I interviewed Spahić on several occasions, each time finding him to be interested in my research and open to sharing information with me. Our discussions were always held in his private office, which doubles as the Sarajevo Winter Festival and the Građanska demokratska stranka (Citizen's Democratic Party, GDS) headquarters, in central Sarajevo. Spahić's name is also inseparably tied to the Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games of 1984 because of his role in organizing the events. Those who are old enough to have attended the Olympic ceremony often tell their histories in relation to that year in phrases such as "before the Olympics," just as they speak about the last twenty years as before or after the war.

Spahić's office was covered with past festival posters and photos of him with politicians and other famous people. CDs and DVDs were piled on his immense carved wooden desk and when, occasionally, he would refer in the interview to something he wanted to share with me, a frenetic search for the document or recording would ensue. He would summon his secretary and any other nearby staff to help in the search and then promptly dismiss them when the item was found. Each time he only allowed

<sup>11</sup> From an article in Dani introducing that year's Zima Festival (December, 23 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Comment by Daniel Tarschy, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, from Geneva, when Sarajevo Zima Festival became a member of the European Festivals Association, <http://sarajevskazima.ba>.



me to ask a few questions before he leapt into a monologue about his life, cultural policy, his festival, and anything else that he thought relevant. Perhaps because he doubles as a festival organizer and a politician, I sometimes got the sense that Spahić was more interested in presenting himself positively than anything else. But then I had anticipated this might be the case as he has held political office and had to present himself to the public from a young age as the director of several organizations as well as the Sarajevo Winter Festival. Although my transcripts of the interviews are riddled with interruptions from phone calls and his secretary's disruptions, in the end Spahić shared a good deal of his life, work, and opinions with me.

Throughout his long career, Spahić has held a large variety of positions, not exclusively in the cultural realm. To illustrate the span of his roles before the war, he was the President of the Council of the Daily Newspaper Sport, and was a member of the Executive Committee of the World Competition in Gymnastics as well as the Council of the Association of the People with Hearing Disabilities. He has held political positions in the two most powerful multi-ethnic parties in Bosnia. In 1990, he was the President of the Socijaldemokratska partija Bosne i Hercegovine (Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDP), in the city of Sarajevo the President of the Građanska demokratska stranka (Citizen's Democratic Party, GDS) in 1993, and maintained that position on and off until the election in November of 2010. GDS is a marginal party that maintains very little power in Bosnia's government. Because Spahić led it in the past, many people have referred to it as the cultural party.<sup>13</sup> In Spahić's life we see how the political world can intertwine with cultural life and through his comments I seek to illuminate one popular figure's understanding of the development of cultural events over time in Sarajevo.

Ibrahim Spahić was born on May 10, 1952 in Sarajevo where he also finished grammar school. He received his first degree from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo. At the age of fifty-two, when I met him, Spahić had a strong presence and a deep voice that made it possible for him to easily dominate the conversation. When I asked him about the first Sarajevo Winter Festival he organized, he responded by explaining to me his first involvement in Sarajevo with cultural events, beginning in the 1960s:

That was the year [1984] of one of the best Winter Olympic Games, some people say the best Olympic Games up until that moment; the Fourteenth Winter Olympic Games were held in Sarajevo in the month of February 1984. And inside the Olympics program there was one special program dealing with cultural festivals, cultural heritage and the presentation of cultural heritage of Bosnia. I organized the event. One generation of 1968, during the time of student riots in America and in the world, we made a new music scene

<sup>13</sup> Filmmaker Danis Tanović, who was the winner of the Academy Award in 2002 for his film for his movie *No Man's Land*, recently founded a multi-ethnic party called Naša stranka (Our Party). Tanović has rallied several other cultural figures to join his party. Unfortunately, this tactic and the party's support for minority rights, a decentralized state and individual rights, only garnered the party four percent of the votes in 2010.

in Bosnia- Herzegovina in which there were, among others, the main figures of the music scene of ex-Yugoslavia and of the Balkans today. Like Goran Bregović,<sup>14</sup> like music editors today on television of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sinan Alimanović,<sup>15</sup> who during the 1970s constructed, with our generation, the first professional jazz space in what is now St. Vinko Church in Titova Street.

We established Centar za kulturu studenata (Cultural Center of Students) in 1973 or 1974 at the time when I was leading the Organizacija studentskog vijeća (University Organization of Student's Council) in Sarajevo. That was the only university [University of Sarajevo] in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1970s.<sup>16</sup>[...] There was music, especially jazz and ethno music and other different projects that at that time corresponded with the modern music of Europe and the world. Also in Sarajevo during the 1960s and 1970s there used to be various local and regional festivals of music, which made Sarajevo the musical center of Yugoslavia. Among other things, there were guitar festivals, then various vocal instrumental ensembles, later rock, pop etc., until hip-hop, which is very interesting today.

During those years Kulturno-sportski centar Skenderija (Cultural-Sport Center Skenderija) was opened, and forming a part of it there was Dom Mladih (Youth House), which is now being reconstructed by some foreign organizations from Norway, together with volunteers from Sarajevo. Among others I joined them, because I started my first job there at 16 years of age exactly that year, 1968 (Spahić 2005, interview with author).

14 Born in 1950, Goran Bregović is a musician and composer originally from Bosnia who incorporates Serbian, Bosnian, and Romani musical styles into his compositions. He was one of the original members of Bijelo dugme (White Button), one of the most influential Yu-rock bands of the 1970s. He is particularly well known internationally for his compositions and performances in which he uses Romani brass band music. In addition to his musical releases and concerts around the world, Bregović has composed many film scores, including those for Emir Kusturica's films *Time of the Gypsies*, *Underground*, and *Arizona Dream*. During and after the war, many in Bosnia saw Kusturica's work as a proponent of Serbian nationalism. Bregović's association with Kusturica, several statements he has made in interviews, as well as his choice to live in Belgrade mean that many Bosniaks do not openly approve of him.

15 Sinan Alimanović is a jazz pianist who left Priština in the 1970s and then helped to develop the jazz scene in Sarajevo. In 1980 he founded the group Sinan Alimanović Quintet made up of jazz musicians from across the former Yugoslavia.

16 Since the war, several internationally funded universities have sprung up in Sarajevo including the American University of Bosnia, which also has campuses in Banja Luka and Tuzla, as well as two Turkish universities on the outskirts of Sarajevo in Ilidža. There are also several new universities that cater to specific national communities, including the University of Mostar which is attended by mostly Bosnian Croats and the University of East Bosnia with campuses outside of Sarajevo and in Pale for majority Bosnian Serb students.

One of the major performance and sports halls, Skenderija, was built in 1969, in front of which large socialist political gatherings and other events were held throughout the year. The hall was later remodeled and expanded for the 1984 Winter Olympic Games. Referring to the hall, Spahić noted, “in fact, that was the biggest, the most modern and the most interesting hall in the region of ex-Yugoslavia (ibid.)” Spahić experienced a kind of rebirth of the city as a member of a generation that strove to develop new institutions and modern scenes for art and music. As Sarajevo was to a certain extent in competition with other large cities in the former Yugoslavia, his answer also reveals the regional (Yugoslav) character of festivals, events, and the cultural scene in general. To explain his cultural activities as a student before founding the Sarajevo Winter Festival, Spahić described to me two events he organized outside official performance spaces, in already existing outside spaces in the old part of the city. That his events were not physically held in “official” venues makes both a local and political point about his attempts to work conceptually outside of the governmental structure of the time. For him, these events helped to frame cultural life within the context of the city rather than the state. According to Spahić, modern art exhibitions and performances by Yu-rock and jazz musicians transformed Sarajevo into an urban space:

And we shaped it [this concept] through two big projects before Sarajevo Winter Festival was even an idea. One of them was called *Zajedno* (*Together*) with the students of the art academies, and the other was called *Poetika prostora* (*Poetics of the Place*). These were with professional artists and with young people. That *Poetika prostora* is a project which I was doing for a few years in Baščaršija, in the old part of town, and that was when we discovered these culhans (small garden courtyards), and all of these... Well, all of the places they “were discovering” numerous times, but actually during the 1970s and 1980s we had discovered the places one by one, which means that the most important artists, the whole generation gathered around the group named *Zvono*, and the musicians from that period precisely identified the urban places of the old town. The spots where you could hold a program. And actually that is the first generation after the 1950s, after World War II, which identified the town as a cultural place. Not galleries, not music halls, but the town, the squares, the streets. That was my job, done with those friends of mine, colleagues, of my generation, younger or older (Spahić 2005, interview with author).

Spahić’s description of his involvement in grassroots or alternative cultural scenes is consistent with his later post as president of a minor political party and his involvement with student organizations who sought autonomy from the greater socialist structure while participating within it. It is fair to say that Spahić’s history of working within the socialist system made him an attractive figure in 1984 to organize the cultural section of the Olympic celebration and the festival which later became an annual event. After contextualizing his development, and that of the cultural scene in Sarajevo in the sixties and seventies, Spahić described for me the Sarajevo Winter Festival’s first event:

We started the festival twenty years ago with *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff. And that became a hit for seven to eight years, not just in Sarajevo but in the whole region. And in 1999 we made that ethno concert of all ex-Yugoslav countries on the opening of Biennale in the National Theater. Practically it was the first gathering of artists from the former Yugoslavia. So, our festival has some social dimension, some kind of a direct intervention in the process of reconciliation, in the process of building trust and development. It is the truth, because ... For example, it is a festival that did not project connections with artists either during the war, or before, or after the war. So, it really performs an important function ... and it is noticeable, I mean, with the festivals, not because it has some concerts, performances, no. But because of an atmosphere. I don't know how well you have been following this year's festival. But if you visited five to six places, you could see that good atmosphere (ibid.).

The first Sarajevo Winter Festival acted as an extension of the Olympic events and lasted for almost three and a half months from December 21, 1984 to April 6, 1985. The long length of the festival, sometimes lasting as long as a month during the winter, has been a consistent characteristic of the festival. Spahić reliably holds hundreds of performances throughout the festival. Poets recite, musicians and dancers perform, artists exhibit, and filmmakers screen their films around the city. Despite the cold weather in the winter, the opening of the festival is usually held outside in a public space. All events are free of charge. Upon the twentieth anniversary of the festival, Sarajevo Winter published a large format coffee table book. Bosnian author and professor Tvrтко Kulenović contributed to the publication by writing the following sentences of his introduction that indicate changes in the character of performances from regional to international:

Founded in 1984, as a concurrent event of the XIV Olympic Games, the "Winter" did not stay in the background of the major event, although it was criticized a lot, but so was the Olympiad itself, and the question was raised "what do we need it for?" The further it went, the more justified its existence through the range of manifestations. At the beginning, it was not an international event: it involved participants only from Yugoslavia, a territory with a rich cultural and artistic heritage that had a lot to show (Kulenović 2005: 7).

The volume's first forty-four pages hold the greetings, memories and appreciation from Bosnian cultural figures and politicians. Many recount the horrors of war and tie the festival's life to that of the city's while others marvel at the sheer size and length of the event year to year. For Spahić the size of the festival is absolutely important:

[S]ince the very beginning that was the biggest event of Yugoslavia, because at the opening there were more than 100.000 people present on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. A lot more than at the Olympics, for example. That was a first

class event and today people still talk about it and remember it, and in fact they did not recover from it yet, even after 20 years have passed (Spahić 2005, interview with author).

The festival's size has caused many critics to ask why it must be so large. Cultural critic and festival organizer Aida Kalendar explained to me that "[t]his is the type of festival where the producer of Zima Festival goes all over the cities to every embassy and asks 'what do you have for this position' and the response is 'ok, we have dancers.' And very often [the festival] does not have any concept, nothing to organize it" (Kalendar 2006, interview with author). Kalendar's claim is consistent with other critiques of this festival as well as the Festival Bašćaršijske noći, which mostly works with embassies to import folkloric musicians from abroad.

It is difficult to generalize about the contents of the numerous performances and exhibitions that were part of the Sarajevo Winter Festival in the years between the Olympics and the fall of Yugoslavia. In fact, the huge variety of events deserve a detailed study. For the purpose of this article, however, is it critical to note that in the festivals before 1992 participants were almost exclusively from Yugoslavia. Throughout the festival programs it is clear that Spahić chose to highlight artists and musicians whose work was conceptually modern, although this emphasis was by no means exclusionary, as one can see in the festival programs numerous classical concerts by the Sarajevo Symphony Orchestra and classical chamber groups of Mozart, Brahms, and Chopin. The programs were divided into categories including Ceremonija otvaranja (Opening Ceremony), Pozorište (Theater), Koncerti (Concerts), Film, Kulturna baština (Cultural Heritage), Premijere (Premiers), Amateri (Amateurs), Poetika prostora (Poetics of Place), Kulturno-naučni susreti (Cultural and Scientific Meetings), Turističko-zabavni program (Tourism and Entertainment Program), "Zajedno" – Susret studenata umjetničkih akademija Jugoslavije ("Together" – Meeting of Students of the Art Academies of Yugoslavia), Gostovanje nacionalnih kuhinja (Visiting National Kitchens), and Program takmičenja na olimpijskim borilištima (Program of Competitions at Olympic Venues).

In 1986, there were three performances in the amateur section: Pjesmom i igrom kroz Istru (Songs and Dances from Throughout Istria),<sup>17</sup> Jugoslavija u pjesmi i igri (Yugoslavia in Song and Dance), and Koncert hora RKUD "Vaso Pelagić," Banja Luka (Concert of the Choir RKUD "Vaso Pelagić," Banja Luka).<sup>18</sup> That year, the national cuisine section included food from Hungary, The Netherlands, (West) Germany, as well as cuisines from regional cities and towns including Novi Sad, Subotica, and Vranje (all now in Serbia), although it is unclear how these national cuisines were chosen.

<sup>17</sup> Istria is a peninsula on the Adriatic. It is shared by Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy and located between the Gulf of Trieste and the Bay of Kvarner.

<sup>18</sup> Vasilije "Vaso" (or "Vasa") Pelagić (1838–1899) was an important revolutionary figure who participated in uprisings against both Turkish and Austro-Hungarian authorities. He was an early proponent of socialist ideas.

As a comparison, by 1999, several years after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, the categories in the program had been simplified as follows: Ceremonija otvaranja (Opening Ceremony), Teatar (Theater), Muzika (Music), Izložbe (Exhibitions), Književnost (Literature), Film, Kulturno-naučni susreti (Cultural and Scientific Meetings), and Ceremonija zatvaranja (Closing Ceremony). In the theater category for that year, groups from India, Venezuela, Italy, Greece, Poland, France, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Belarus, the US, and Spain performed in Sarajevo. Of the thirty-three theater performances, only five were local productions, while three were from Slovenia and one was from Croatia.

The decision to create a program that centered around international acts was largely based upon the festival staff's ability to find more foreign than domestic funding. One of the Sarajevo Winter Festival staff members I spoke with explained the process of preparing for the festival each year. As part of their preparation for the festival, Spahić and his staff visited embassies in Sarajevo. Funding requests were almost always dismissed. However, they were almost always met with the suggestion that the embassy invite musicians from their respective countries. To generalize, embassies offered to pay for transporting artists and musicians to Sarajevo. The Sarajevo Winter Festival programs between 1997 and 2010 reflect this reliance on embassy funds. This is not to say that audiences did not enjoy some of the international concerts and exhibitions.

Before the war, locally and nationally funded music festivals took place in urban centers as well as towns and villages throughout the region. Noting the urban emphasis of much of the humanitarian aid, as well as cultural efforts, is important within the scheme of post-war national policy as it highlights the shift from Yugoslav policy to post-war ad hoc policy. These socialist supported national-in-character festivals have been overshadowed and replaced with a more centralized urban festival tradition. Foreign donors who subsidize the global orientation of these festivals aim to decentralize the everyday ethnic tensions they imagine may be present among festival attendees. By featuring international performers and musical traditions that are oriented towards the global, donors attempt to defuse attention placed on linguistic and cultural differences by highlighting cultural expressions that are seemingly neutral with regard to audience members. From the position of foreign sponsors, it is a foregone conclusion that the de-emphasis of difference, be it ethnic, cultural, or religious, is a politically safe strategy.

Year to year embassy support constantly shifts. Unreliable international funding allotments take on the characteristics of gifts, which some organizers feel must be reciprocated with corresponding offerings of VIP seats, invitations, and receptions. I believe that such exchanges are unbalanced and, in the end, detrimental to the goals of both the funders, who aim at cultural diplomacy, and the festivals that seek to organize viable and well-constructed events. Based on my question about the effect of embassy support, one of the Sarajevo Winter Festival's staff explained to me her frustration with the quality of the festival, especially in terms of the overall notion or theory behind the event: "So, in a sense Sarajevo Winter is... well, it is not a good festival anymore. Sometimes you have really good programs but the concept for the whole festival does not exist" (Sarajevo Winter Festival staff member 2006b, interview

with author).<sup>19</sup> A Bosnian musician from Banja Luka who had attended the Sarajevo Winter Festival on several occasions echoes the staff member's thoughts: "Nobody thought of the overall picture of the festival, it is just made up of what the foreigners will give. It is sad" (Djeka 2006, interview with author). This is also confirmed by Ivan Lovrenović:

I have to say that I believe that all those projects that cost over a million of KM [konvertibilna marka, Bosnian local currency] for our situation are mega projects and a huge problem. That does not mean that we do not need festivals. We need them and they will remain, but if you sum up the expenditures of those festivals, you have spent all of our budgets. Given the situation we live in, when there is a lack of funds for pensions or salaries, it is difficult to offer a serious product in the area of culture (cited in: Seksan 2001).

Perhaps the final question is how embassy funds might have been used to establish long-term institutions rather than one-time events that might contribute to Sarajevo's cultural life throughout the year.

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## ФИНАНСИРАЊЕ ФЕСТИВАЛА: ДОВОЂЕЊЕ СВЕТА У САРАЈЕВО

(САЖЕТАК)

У фокусу овог чланка налази се „фестивализација” Сарајева, главног града Босне и Херцеговине, у раздобљу након потписивања Дејтонског споразума (1995). Нарочиту пажњу посвећујем култури донаторства, којом је, међутим, више подржавано инострано него домаће извођаштво. У овом тексту документујем обрт од регионалних фестивала из предратног социјалистичког раздобља, до вишедневних послератних фестивала са великим бројем, преваходно иностраних, извођача, те указујем на тенденцију донатора да умањују значај локално-специфичних разлика, да би на тај начин креирали „политички безбедне” програме помоћи. Разоткривам због чега је „модел фестивала” био атрактиван и локалним и иностраним културним посленицима и продуцентима у овом периоду. Посебно се бавим реорганизацијом фестивала Сарајевска зима, као и других фестивала који су постојали у доба Југославије, али су наставили да постоје и у периоду након завршетка рата.

Кључне речи: Босна и Херцеговина, Сарајево, музика, послератно раздобље, фестивали, пост-социјалистички период, примењена етномузикологија