Outstanding Slovenian Choral Composers

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We present here not only Gallus, but also the most important and most performed twentieth-century Slovenian composers and the youngest generation, which is interesting because it also includes non-professional composers, whose works, however, are highly popular among Slovenian choirs.

Renaissance

Jacobus Handl GALLUS (1550 – 1591): born in present-day Slovenia, died in Prague. His œuvre, consisting of a collection of 374 motets (Opus musicum), two collections of 100 madrigals (Harmoniae morales and Moralia), and 16 masses (Selectiores quedam missae), stands side by side with the most famous composers of that time, Lasso, Monteverdi, Venosa, and others.

P[1]: SRC SASA Ljubljana (ZRS SAZU Ljubljana). Complete madrigals recorded by SingerPur.

First Half of the Twentieth Century

Marij KOGOJ (1892 – 1956), expressionist, pupil of Arnold Schönberg. Developed own original themes on polytonal principles. Important for youth opus and adult choruses (Requiem, Field carnations), his most popular piece being the

opera Black Masks. P1[2]

Second Half of the Twentieth Century

Uroš KREK (1922 – 2008): His opus puts him with the top Slovenian composers of the twentieth century. Attached to the Neo-romantic tendency and use of folklore elements (he worked at the Ethnographic Institute), he followed the example of classical principles without avoiding the constraints of more modern research. Folksong arrangements and the exacting choruses *Vester Camenae, Liberté, Three Autumn Songs, Psalm XLII – Desiderium exsulis* stand out. *P1-7*

Pavle MERKÙ (1927): Member of Slovenian minority in Italy. Besides composing, he was dedicated to ethnomusicology and researches into the music of the Slovenian minority in Resia, Italy, which is also often reflected in his popular vocal folklore arrangements. While staying within expressionist boundaries, he was open to new tendencies with authorial music. Notable works: Messa da requiem 'Pro felicimei transit'*, Madrigali della buona morte* and *Remembering Marta*. *P7-3-1*

Jakob JEŽ (1928): His opus of vocal music is particularly rich in the youth and children's genre. Characteristic features of his compositions reflect the use of traditional means on one hand and scenic effects on the other. Among mixed choruses, *Art and dandelion* and *Farinelli*, and cantatas *Do fraig amors* and *Freising Manuscripts* stand out. *P1-3-4*

Lojze LEBIČ (1934): Ranks as one of Slovenia's leading composers, his works being performed at numerous home and international festivals and competitions. Although mainly an instrumental composer, his choral opus is considerable, also including stage music. Most famous of his equal voices works: *The Seasons*, *The Spells*, *Eulogy to the World*, *In the Silent Rustle of Time (From Time Immemorial, Mosaics, From the Stone*

in the Water, Song of Death), Merry-Go-Round for mixed voices and instruments, and *Hope* for female choir. *P1-3-4*

Lojze LEBIČ

End of the Twentieth Century

Aldo KUMAR (1954): Though having written a number of significant pieces in the instrumental and symphonic fields (now mostly movie and theatre), vocal music remains his first love. Strong traces of Istrian folk music are present in his opus (e.g. *Songs of Love and Coffee*). Also very popular are his songs for children and *Leap over the edge of the world*, a cantata for children's choir and orchestra. *P1-2*

Andrej MISSON (1960): Takes an archaic approach to sacred music; the mood of his secular opus is more expressionistic. Important choruses: *Three motets (Ave Maria, Pater Noster, Ave Maris Stella)*, *Jubilate Deo* – for mixed choir *a cappella*. *P1-2*

Damijan MOČNIK*[3] (1967): His musical language is inspired by a chosen text, its rhythm and tune. A remote tinge of chants and archetypal sonic notions, also from folk music, are perceived in his melodies. His melodic narrative often develops into a many-coloured polyphonic, polytonal and polychord structure. He most often composes for mixed choirs to Latin texts: *Circulus aeternus* cantata, *Adventus Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, Verbum Superum Prodiens, Christus est natus, Veni Creator Spiritus, The Fiddler Plays Before Hell,*

Si Vox et Canta. *P3-5*

Damijan Močnik

Ambrož ČOPI* (1973): Composer of works with secular and sacred topics – in Latin – and successful arrangements of Slovenian folk songs. His distinctive mark is a symbiosis between word and melody, harmonically rich Neo-romantic sound. Best-known original works: *In Domino Speravit Cor Meum* (5 motets for mixed choir), Missa Brevis for high voices with accompaniment, *Totus Tuus* (male voices), *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* (female voices), *Psalmus 108*. *P3-6-2*

Ambrož Čopi

The Young Generation

Tadeja VULC (1978): writes for vocal and instrumental ensembles (percussion, brass). Received several awards for composition (at the competition for creativity in music Maribor, Slovenia; national student prize, Rostrum, Netherlands). Highly popular are her original works for children's (e.g. *Kingdom of Music*) and mixed choirs: *Epilog, Old Ljubljana* cantata and folksong arrangements. *P1, 3, 2*

Katarina PUSTINEK RAKAR (1979): graduated from Academy of Music in composition and music theory. Due to her wide experience with vocal groups and choirs, her opus mostly consists of works for voice – soloists, songs for children, youth, female, male, and mixed choirs. While rarely using contemporary composition elements in her music, her phrasing is usually harmonically rich and fresh. *P1-3*

Nana FORTE (1981): studied composition in Ljubljana, Dresden and Berlin. Using multi-chorus technique and interesting harmonic texture, her compositions are made in cooperation with renowned Slovenian choirs. *Libera me* for double mixed choir has been performed at many international competitions (including the Fifth International Competition for Young Choral Conductors Europa Cantat 2009). CD recordings by APZ Tone Tomšič (Libera me, 2004; Vrtiljak, 2012). *P1-2*

Mojca PRUS (1982): a lawyer by profession, she studies music all the time. Studied at the Conservatory of Music, successful pianist, inspired towards choral composing by Ambrož Čopi. Numerous commissions for original compositions and folksong arrangements followed the success of *Wide is the Tisa*. Three of her works were selected as compulsory pieces for the Twelfth Maribor International Choral Competition 2013. *P3*

Patrick QUAGGIATO (1983): Member of the Slovenian minority in Italy, popular in the choral and orchestral field. His compositions are featured on different CDs and collections, and are also present in repertoires of simple choir performances and international competitions. He mostly

composes to Slovenian texts – Italian for *Coro Giovanile Italiano* – and his most recent success is *Missa Nova Laudate Pueri Dominum* for concert band and upper voices. *P3*

Gašper JEREB (1985): dedicated to instrumental and vocal music, he draws the inspiration for his musical language from the past. Renaissance concords, Baroque polyphony, classicistic order, Romantic dreaminess, as well as elements of jazz and a modern approach, always pleasing to the ear, make up his compositions. Besides interesting original works (Christmas Cantata *Magnum Mysterium, Love is my sin, Vis Amoris*), his choral arrangements of instrumental works (Chopin, Tristesse; Grieg, Solveig's Song) and pop are excellent too. *P3*

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[1] P – Publisher(s)

[2] 1 – JSKD (Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities), 2 – DSS – Society of Slovenian Composers, 3 – *Astrum Music Publications*. 4 – Earthsongs, 5 – Carus Verlag, 6 – Sulasol, 7 – *Pizzicato Verlag Helvetia*

[3] **see article 10 Mini Portraits*

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