

Online database in Research of Correspondence of Franjo Ksaver Kuhač (1834-1911)

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1. Introduction

As archival documentation is an objective source for research, the preserved correspondence of an author is a valuable source for interpretation. Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, who was, due to his tireless work which greatly contributed to Croatian music historiography, recognised as the first Croatian musicologist, left a comprehensive collection of his letters. The correspondence is collected in thirteen books, so-called *Briefcopirbücher*, as Kuhač named them, and contain the total of 3 thousand letters.¹ The letters are written by Kuhač himself and are mainly copies and concepts of his sent letters. He kept those letters as a kind of a memo of what he had written to someone. Unfortunately, the letters addressed to him are not preserved. As the majority of the letters are written in Gothic script, also known as *Kurrentschrift*, in German language, the research of the correspondence includes transliteration and translation of the letters.

The correspondence covers the time span from 1860 to 1911, the period of the growing awareness of national culture and heritage in order to promote new national identity between the neo-absolutist period and the First WW. Those letters are an important source of information about cultural, political and musical events and they provide insights about Kuhač's life, work and numerous activities. They are also evidence on the period marked by important political and cultural changes, as well as Kuhač's strivings to collect financial and moral supports for his researches and endeavours in collecting South Slavic folk-songs.

Furthermore, one can acknowledge not only information about Kuhač's attitudes, ideas and relations between him and his colleagues, but also his views and attitudes about his work and musical, national and cultural affairs in Croatia and Europe. He persistently wrote letters to many eminent politicians and public persons, as well as his colleagues not only in Croatia but in Hungary, Austria, Germany, Czechia, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, France, etc. with aim to present himself, his ideas regarding national music, music theory and music historiography, his work, and to gain new information on musical culture, as well as financial and moral support for publishing his opus and, if possible, to further educate himself.

2. Goal of the paper

Kuhač's relations with composers, musicographers and melographers from the central and south-eastern Europe will be investigated through his correspondence. A comprehensive research on Kuhač's contacts will result with insights which will offer a deeper understanding of the relations between political and cultural circumstances not only in Croatia, but also in the Austrian, i.e. Austro-Hungarian Empire. The research is a part of a nationally financed project Networking through Music: Changes of Paradigms in the "Long 19th Century" – From Luka Sorkočević to Franjo Ks. Kuhač. One of the planned results of the project is the creation of an on-line accessible database, which will provide basic information about the documents, terms and contain all accessible biographical data of the addressees and persons mentioned in

¹ See: Marija Janaček Buljan. 1984. Kuhačeva korespondencija. In: *Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa održanog u povodu rođenja Franje Ksavera Kuhača (1834-1911)* Zagreb, 20.-21. studenoga 1984, pages 463-472. JAZU, Zagreb.

the letters.¹ It is a relational type of database with a MySQL management system. The database is a driven application with PHP. The said technologies are chosen because the data structure is suitable for this type of database – the data is organized in tables. In addition, only the relational data model is used, excluding other metadata or other standards. The database has several searchable topics: Entries, Works, Notions, Persons, Sources. One can search by the certain date or range of dates, terms, compositions or other kind of works of art (librettos or texts), persons, addresses (places), key words (such as employment, biographical data or title) within three thematic areas: 1) the diary of the Dubrovnik nobleman, diplomat and composer Luka Sorkočević (1734-1789) documenting his sojourn in Vienna; 2) performances of foreign itinerant opera companies and soloists in Zagreb in the mid-19th century; 3) Franjo Ksaver Kuhač's correspondence. The list as well as all the biographical data of all addressees mentioned in the second and the third book of the correspondence will be of a great significance in preparing critical editions (transliteration in Latin script, translation into Croatian, and comments supplementing each letter) according to the already published first book² (in 1989 and 1992) of the correspondence.³ The aforementioned will also be of a great value for making a comprehensive Kuhač's biography, bibliography and zeitgeist. The database is still work in progress – the names and surnames of all the addressees from second and third volume have been entered, together with all the places (hometowns of the addressees) and some of the notions and sources. Regarding cities and places, all their name variants are specified. The brief biographies of some of the persons have been entered too, however the complete and accurate biographies still need to be researched.

The aim of this paper is a brief presentation of all the important features of the database, search options and the work which is so far done.

3. References

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¹ The link to the database: <http://hmd-music.org/netmus19/index.php>.

² Ladislav Šaban, Koraljka Kos (ed.). 1989. *Kuhač, Franjo Ksaver: Korespondencija I/1 (1860-1862)*. JAZU, Zagreb, and Ladislav Šaban, Koraljka Kos (ed.). 1992. *Kuhač, Franjo Ksaver: Korespondencija I/2 (1863)*. HAZU, Zagreb.

³ For now, it is not planned to publish the correspondence as a digital critical edition.