

The Influence of the Mediterranean on Funeral Ceremonies and Funeral Music in Slovenian Coastal Areas

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The article describes contemporary funeral music practices in Primorska, a Mediterranean-bordering region in Slovenia. After a brief overview of the history of laments in the Mediterranean, the article focuses on the shape and musical accompaniment of modern funerals. It points out the influence of Mediterranean countries, especially Italy, on funerals in Primorska. It explains how the type of funeral ceremony and the choice of music are coloured by the presence of the sea, giving an account of the most common musical ensembles and repertoires of songs. It compares funerals of members of the Italian minority in Slovenia with funerals in Italian coastal regions. The research is based on ethnographic work and scientific literature, as well as articles on funeral ceremonies taken from daily newspapers, magazines and the internet. The fieldwork is based on research at cemeteries using the participatory observation method and semi-structured interviews. In Primorska, funerals accompanied by the scattering of ashes into the sea are becoming more frequent, as are songs with a maritime theme and songs in Italian. Although the choice of funeral music is very often individualized and there are more and more popular songs, classical music remains the choice of many people in Primorska and also Dalmatian songs are quite common. Traditional laments, which are present throughout Slovenia, are found at funerals less frequently.

Key Words: funeral, music, laments, Slovenian coast, southern Italy

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to present contemporary funeral music practices in Slovenian coastal areas. After a brief overview of tra-

ditional laments in the Mediterranean, it focuses on the nature of funeral music in Slovenian coastal cemeteries today, comparing funeral ceremonies in Primorska with funerals in Italy, a neighbouring Mediterranean country.

[40] The main argument advanced in this article is that music at funerals in various Slovenian regions also reflects their geographical, cultural and dialectological diversity, so that funeral music in the Primorska region would be expected to reflect the presence of the Mediterranean. The article explains how the type of funeral ceremony and the choice of music are coloured by the presence of the sea, giving an account of the most common musical ensembles and songs together with a description of the more unusual musical practices. Mention is made of the funerals of members of the Italian minority in Slovenia as well as of funerals in Italian coastal regions.

The research is based on ethnographic work carried out between 2014 and 2020, scientific literature and articles on funeral ceremonies taken from daily newspapers, magazines and the Internet. The fieldwork is based on research at cemeteries using the participatory observation method and semi-structured interviews with musicians performing at funerals, directors of funeral companies and clients who order funeral ceremonies.

The article also describes the changes that have taken place in funeral music in Slovenian coastal regions over a period of six years. The article is partly based on the author's doctoral thesis on music at funeral ceremonies in today's Slovenia, but it also introduces new aspects of the topic in the light of Mediterranean studies.

MUSIC AT FUNERAL RITUALS IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN IN THE PAST – RITUAL
MOURNING AND LAMENTS

Although mourning is not always associated with funeral customs, as it is also characteristic of other rites of passage, such as marriage, laments are most often associated with death and mourning. Laments are known all over the world. Weeping over the departed together with the spontaneous creation of laments was also typical for Slovenia. As Amy de la Bretèque points out, 'laments are among



those rare forms found all over the world that, regardless of the ethnographic context, have much in common' (2013 in Kölbl 2017, 89).

The history of mourning is long; in Europe, the first mourning was documented in antiquity. Marcello Sorce Keller describes the poetry genre in classical Greece (which, like all ancient Greek poetry, contained music) as *epikedeion*, a funereal mourning and a hymn to the deceased; these songs were sung next to the corpse, while *thrènos* were songs in memory of the deceased (Sorce Keller 2013, 3). A sung ritual mourning is also mentioned by Homer in the Iliad in connection with the farewell to Hector (Homer 2017, 256). Among the Romans, *nenia* (lat. *nenia*) was 'a mourning song, sung by paid women (mourners, weeping over the deceased) in the presence of the corpse and at funerals' (Verbinc 1979, 479).

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Terseglav writes that laments were a tribute to the deceased, performed in public by the deceased's relatives, acquaintances and friends or by hired professional mourners. The improvisation of laments took place according to certain conventions and required the glorification of the deceased (Terseglav 1987, 95). Sorce Keller writes that the representation of grief over death had a cathartic, therapeutic effect on the relatives of the deceased and at the same time aroused empathy in other members of the community. The same author points out that mourning is not regarded as music in traditional Mediterranean cultures, as it is said to be inappropriate to sing in the presence of the dead. A lament is just a lament and nothing else, or it is an emotional speech (Sorce Keller 2013, 7).

Sorce Keller (2013, 2) maintains that all nations have their special type of lament, each with its own established metrical form. It is characteristic of all of them, however, that they are mostly longer, with epic, rhythmic forms and, on account of the emotions involved, they are lyrical. Laments consisted, at least in the Mediterranean area, of only a few tones – less than five – and were not strophic in character, which would seem to confirm their origin in antiquity.

As Terseglav writes (1987, 95), in the Mediterranean area, especially in southern Italy, Corsica and Romania, laments were performed by hired professional women mourners. In Corsica, where

hired mourners were called *voceratrici*, a distinction was made between two types of lament: *lamenti* were performed at deaths from natural causes, and *voceri* at violent deaths.

[42] In his autobiography, the conductor Riccardo Muti recalls that in his childhood (he was born in 1941) so-called *prefiche* still existed in the south of Italy. These were women who went to the homes of the dead and recited a kind of *laudatio funebris*, for which they were paid (Muti 2017, 17–18).

The most famous and probably the last of them was a woman named Giustina ‘del Camposanto,’ who is still remembered by the conductor; she was dressed all in black. In 1958, E. De Martino wrote in a book on death and ritual mourning that in the province of Lucania it was no longer hired professionals but female relatives of the deceased who took part in the mourning for the deceased. Professional mourners, *prefiche*, were present at funerals until recently. At the time this book was written, however, hiring professional mourners was already considered shameful, and villages accused each other of still practising this tradition (De Martino 1977, 79).

Also in Slovenia, especially in the border areas of Istria, Resia, Prekmurje and Bela Krajina, there was a tradition of mourning a corpse with a special loud mourning ‘with selected pathetic words, which sometimes sounds like a sad song’ – as is written in *Narodopisje Slovencev* (Breznik 1944, 310). This was called ‘narekovanje,’ ‘narek’ or ‘narekanje’ (dictation): ‘Every woman composes these words in her own way, according to momentary impressions, as her sad heart *dictates* ...’ (Ložar 1944, 310). Zmaga Kumer discovered that ‘although we Slovenes are generally reluctant to express our emotions, a loud, improvised, half-singing mourning for the deceased took place at some funerals as an expression of the painful suffering of the family at its loss’ (Kumer 2003, 26).

In her research into ‘naricanje’ in Croatia, Grozdana Marošević concludes that with changing attitudes about death and the expression of emotions, ‘naricanje’ is no longer regarded as normal social behaviour, ‘loud’ weeping in the presence of others having been replaced by ‘quiet’ intimate sobbing, with free improvisation increasingly favoured in place of the now-defunct practice



of 'naricanje.' Also, attitudes towards professional female mourners changed around the middle of the twentieth century, when a mourning was more frequently performed by female members of the family of the deceased (Marošević 2005, 44–45).

According to Helena Ložar Podlogar (1999 in Brun and Remic 1999, 22) how 'narokanje,' 'narekovanje' or 'naricanje' was practiced in front of the house and in the cemetery, and less often a few days after the funeral. This consisted of a mourning with loud weeping and moaning, during which the good deeds performed by the deceased were praised and advice offered for his journey to the after-life. It was a kind of singing recitation that sometimes even turned into a song and was practised especially by women. Even more often, women mourners were hired and paid for their services.

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Zmaga Kumer wrote and thus preserved from oblivion two songs of mourning for the deceased at funerals from the Slovenian villages of Koštabona and Krkavče in Istria (Kumer 2003, 149). She also wrote an example of the so-called *slověsa* (i.e., special songs typically performed in the case of violent deaths) from the Istrian village of Sveti Peter. The lyrics of the poem tell of the murder of a girl by a jealous suitor (Kumer 2003, 212–213).

Today, so-called 'narekanje' no longer exists; instead, funeral rites in Slovenia are associated with certain traditional mourning songs, which have become funeral laments *par excellence*. In the following part of this article, I will also investigate whether these songs are still commonly sung at funerals on the Slovenian coast, or whether funeral music practices are changing to such an extent that their use is steadily decreasing.

MUSIC AT FUNERALS IN SLOVENIAN COASTAL AREAS

A funeral ritual in the Slovenian coastal area is usually divided into three parts, depending on the position of the mourners. The first part takes place in front of the mortuary, where the coffin or the urn is placed and the mourners come to convey their condolences to the relatives of the deceased. Music may be played or not in this introductory part, but not necessarily, involving recorded music on a

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FIGURE 1 The Solinarka Boat During its Journey from the Pier in Ankaran to the Open Sea, Where the Ashes Are to Be Scattered

CD or USB key or a live performance by a musician. The second part of the ritual consists in moving from the mortuary to the graveside. This part usually takes place in silence or starts with recorded music which can be heard as long as it is within the range of the microphones (bearing in mind that the grave may be relatively far away from the mortuary). At the graveside, music is usually performed as soon as the funeral procession arrives, after which speeches may be said or read. If the funeral is of a religious nature, the word is given to a priest, who blesses the grave. The speeches may be followed by more music. Burial usually takes place in silence and often another musical piece is played at the very end of the ritual. In Slovenian coastal areas, there is also a funeral ritual that takes place on a boat, after which the ashes are scattered into the sea.

At Koper's central cemetery I spoke to the head of the funeral services, Marko Ugrin, who told me that their cemetery belongs to Marjetica Koper (which is the former Komunala Koper) and includes another forty-five cemeteries in the surrounding villages. The services they offer also include the scattering of ashes into the sea. According to the website Pogrebi.info, a funeral ceremony with a boat that takes up to thirty people on board begins at the pier in Valdoltra. It moves out to a specific point on the sea about two miles from Debeli Rtič, where the scattering takes place. According to the website, the boat makes another round after the scattering ceremony



and bids farewell to the deceased with a siren salute.¹ According to Elvina Babajić Muratagić from the Velenje family company, which specialises in the international transport of the deceased, many requests for the scattering of ashes at sea are received from Austria and Hungary, which have no coastline (Kališnik 2020). Musicians can also take part in this type of funeral at the request of relatives.

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Up until the year 2016, some 450 funerals took place, of which about 70% involved inhumation by cremation, while only a decade ago 50% involved coffins and 50% cremated ashes. In 2020, we were told, an estimated 20–25% of the funerals they handled involved the scattering of ashes into the sea. According to Ugrin, Istrians remain quite traditional in their handling of funeral ceremonies. Even the use of a white dove at funerals (which is a common practice in other Slovenian cemeteries, especially in the Ljubljana region, where the dove flies away in memory of the deceased person) is still not chosen as an option, even when offered gratuitously (M. Ugrin, personal communication, 5 October 2016).

THE TRADITIONAL CHOICE OF MUSIC:
MALE CHOIRS AND TRUMPET

We asked whether Istrians were also traditional in their choice of music. The cemetery has no contracts with musicians; as Ugrin says, ‘many people would like to have music at a funeral, and the musi-

¹ The passage to the land of the dead is often associated with the crossing of water. In Greek mythology, the ferryman Charon transported souls into the underworld along the Acheron River. According to Slavonic legend, the afterlife is also separated from the living world by water. Most authors associate this myth with burial or cremation in boats or ships. As Mirjam Mencej (1995, 3) states, scholars do not agree on whether the Slavs inherited this myth and ritual from the ancient Greeks, from the Scandinavians (who were familiar with burial rites in ships) or whether it was autochthonous. The author herself is inclined to believe that the Slavs did not take this belief from other nations, as it extends throughout almost the entire world, both among Indo-European peoples and in Egyptian and Mesopotamian folklore traditions, Indonesia, Melanesia and shamans (Mencej 1995, 6). Slovenians also imagined that the world of the dead lay beyond water (Šmitek 2004, 34). Some researchers even believe that the etymology of the word *navje* (according to the *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika* (1997) in the mythological sense ‘residence of the dead’ or the ancient word for the cemetery) is related to the Latin *navis* (ship).

[46] cians would like to have contracts with the funeral company, but the Koper funeral company is unable to give contracts to all the musicians available,' so contracts are awarded based on bids on the commercial market. At the cemetery's reception office, relatives² can contact musicians who play at funerals and then arrange things directly with them. According to Ugrin, relatives mostly hire musicians they already know. The list of musicians includes four male singing quartets, one sextet and one mixed quartet with musical instruments. In addition to this, they offer also 'Silence/Silenzio' with trumpet players, a trombone, one soloist singer and a solo clarinetist, Neven Stipanov.

Ugrin told me that in addition to classic funeral laments – of which he stated there were admittedly very few – Dalmatian songs are quite common at funerals. Dalmatian songs are often chosen for the funerals of younger persons, while traditional laments³ are more common for the elderly (A. Pucer, telephone conversation, 30 December 2020). The head of the cemetery also said that church choirs often sing at funerals in rural coastal cemeteries (A. Pucer, personal conversation, 7 October 2016). Funerals in villages are mostly religious and last up to two and a half hours, as the funeral procession may spend up to half an hour walking and the service also includes a mass in the church⁴ (M. Ugrin, personal conversation, 5 October 2016).

Music at funerals in various regions of Slovenia also reflects the local characteristics of individual areas. In Primorska, for instance, songs with a maritime theme are also performed, as well as songs in Italian, the language of the Italian minority in that area.

The repertoire of music is similar in all parts of Slovenia, espe-

² Usually, there are relatives of the deceased to organize a funeral, but sometimes friends or an institution can indeed help with the organization or, rarely, they can take over the entire organization.

³ These are mostly folk songs that are familiar elsewhere in Slovenia as well, such as 'Lipa' and 'Vsi so venci.'

⁴ In other parts of Slovenia also, funerals in rural areas are usually different from those in urban areas and are frequently religious, one of the most popular songs at church funerals in Slovenia being the hymn 'Nearer, my God, to Thee.'



cially that involving standard laments and the ‘Silence’ on the trumpet, but I noticed some peculiarities in the Primorska region. The choice of music at funerals depends primarily on whether it is a religious or civil funeral, on the deceased’s political beliefs and his musical preferences, and also on whether it is the funeral of a younger person. If the deceased also performed music, for example as a musician in a wind band or as a singer in a choir, the ensemble in which he was active will play for him at his or her funeral.

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THE MODERN TREND TOWARDS
INDIVIDUALISED FUNERALS

As the head of the Koper funeral service told me in my field research, ‘90 per cent of people arrange funerals for others, not for themselves.’ According to him, funerals with cultural supplements, such as music and speeches, are not typical of big European cities, ‘there being only a limited number.’ He also pointed out that funerals abroad were often much shorter.⁵

According to Louis-Vincent Thomas (1985, 107), a French anthropologist, sociologist and ethnologist who has worked extensively on the anthropology of death and death-accompanying rituals, in the modern Western world, funeral rites follow a pattern based on practicality, the governing considerations being speed and price, i.e., to dispose of the dead person’s remains as quickly and cheaply as possible. Thomas (1985) also asked whether in our modern technically orientated society the process of disposing of the dead will ultimately come to be treated completely without symbolism. At the time of

⁵ These practices are also related to the fact that nowadays people strongly discourage and even reject any mention or occurrence of death around them, as evidenced in the writings of the Russian author Dmitry Sokolov-Mitrich (2015, 16). He writes that people are willing to pay anything to keep death out of their world. We would not keep the dead person in our home until the funeral at any cost, we would not wash him and we would not read a prayer over his head. The shorter the path from the deathbed to the grave, the better, says the author, as the ‘last path’ has turned into a mere sanitary procedure. Relatives spend half an hour in a special, dedicated space, then it’s the turn of the next occupant. If the deceased was religious, he at least rests a while in the church, but otherwise he is taken directly to the cemetery.

[48] his reflections, funeral ceremonies differing from established practices were rare. Cremation was not yet widespread: according to the author, in 1983 the proportion of cremations in France, for example, was only 2%. The author therefore at that time called for the development of a new symbolism for the funeral rituals of the future, so that funerals would lose their dull and neutral character and become more personalised.

Exactly thirty-five years later this is now the trend with modern funerals; the criterion applied in their organization being to 'tailor the funeral to the man.' In modern times, with the predominance of cremation, the practice of scattering ashes on a meadow, into the sea or in the mountains became increasingly common and with new forms of burial such as diamond burials (when the deceased's ashes are transformed into a diamond by special laboratory procedures),⁶ the nature of funeral ceremonies and the presence of musical accompaniment may change.

With the emergence of the modern trend towards personalised or 'bespoke funerals,' traditional funerals accompanied by music are becoming unconventional. Music at funerals is not necessarily limited to traditional laments; it can be a different kind of music that best suits the character of the deceased or is somehow related to him, so the range and nature of the music chosen and the kind of musical ensembles have become very wide. During my fieldwork in Slovenian cemeteries, I found out that this practice is already quite common.

MODERN TRENDS OF THE MUSIC AT FUNERALS:
FROM DALMATIAN SONGS TO POP MUSIC

During my research in 2020, the head of the funeral service noted that the choice of music had changed somewhat in recent years, now being 'a more open attitude towards funeral music.' According to him, there is more and more modern music, which means popular songs, mostly in English. There is also a lot of rock music, for example (M. Ugrin, telephone conversation, 22 December 2020).

⁶This custom is also to be found in Slovenia.



The kind of music that the deceased liked to listen to is often performed at funerals. In December 2020, for example, a funeral was held at Koper cemetery with recorded house music, as in a discotheque. The deceased was relatively young, being aged about forty. According to the head of the Koper funeral service, ‘people abroad are not familiar with all this pomp involving flowers, candles, speeches, music, etc., which is why many people who come from outside, for instance from Trieste, are surprised by funeral ceremonies in our country.’ (M. Ugrin, personal communication, 22 December 2016). [49]

Writing about funeral ceremonies at St Anna cemetery in Trieste, Marta Gregorčič (1999, 168–9), states that there is a great lack of space in this cemetery, which is reflected in the so-called serial graves of strangers connected only by their identical date of death and the lack of time reflected in the burial rites. The funeral ceremony lasts only two minutes, relatives accompanying the coffin from the chapel to the grave without speeches and other cultural embellishments. According to the author’s field research, a church funeral, including the priest’s farewell words, lasts on average only 3.48 minutes (p. 169).

According to the results of my field research, music at funerals throughout Slovenia still consists of (mostly male) singing groups and solo trumpets at the end of the funeral, which traditionally play the ‘Silence.’ Today, this practice is increasingly complemented by a different range of music, such as exclusively female vocal and vocal/instrumental ensembles and solo singers. Instrumental music is often played at funerals by flute, violin, guitar or clarinet; theoretically, all instruments are possible, but in practice they occur less frequently. At religious funerals, the funeral is also accompanied by an organ during the church ceremony.

PERFORMERS AND REPERTOIRE

Singer and clarinetist Neven Stipanov from Piran, who performs at various cemeteries in the coastal region, told me more about the repertoire in Piran and other cemeteries in Primorska. He also sang several times on a boat while ashes were scattered at sea. He says

[50] he feels the different atmosphere of individual cemeteries. His performance at funerals began when he was asked to do it by acquaintances, and then at home he was encouraged to offer his services to the cemeteries. At first, he was quite embarrassed to perform at funerals 'because of the proximity of death,' but after about a year he became used to it. His repertoire includes various musical genres, from classical, folk and film to popular music. He prefers to suggest a classical music repertoire to his clients to derive the greatest benefit from his voice. Sometimes, in addition to singing, he plays the clarinet. He often plays 'Silence' on the clarinet instead of the trumpet, as well as sometimes the black spiritual 'Amazing Grace' or the film song 'Over the Rainbow' (composed by Harold Arlen with lyrics by Yip Harburg).

He found that, in general, people often don't care what is sung but 'just want something to be sung,' though some people have specific wishes about the repertoire. For example, at the funeral of a lady of French descent, at the request of relatives, he sang 'Les feuilles mortes' (written by Jacques Prévert and set to music by Joseph Kosma) and, at the funeral of a 104-year-old fisherman, a composition by the Trieste musician Publius Carniel with the lyrics of Raymond Cornet's 'Trieste dormi.' At the scattering of ashes at sea, he especially remembered one funeral at which he sang 'O sole mio' and 'Rose rosse,' a song performed by the Italian singer Massimo Ranieri (lyrics by Giancarlo Bigazzi to music by Enrico Polito). For this occasion, the relatives asked him to be dressed completely in white, and their choice of music did not include sad songs.

Among the songs he has sung at funerals, he also mentions 'Smile' from Chaplin's film *Modern Times* and the theme from Chaplin's film *Limelight*, which he played on the clarinet. He noticed that the *klapa* song 'Da te mogu pismom zvati,' which people like to request, or, for example, Oliver Dragojević's⁷ songs, are also very popular. He sang, among other things, Dragojević's 'My beautiful angel.'

⁷ At the funeral of Oliver Dragojević on 31 July 2018, when he was transported by catamaran from Split to his native Vela Luka on Korčula, and the next day his songs were sung in the cemetery (Grgič 2018).



He also sang, for example, the song 'Dok palme njišu grane,' originally performed by the Dubrovnik Troubadours. The popular songs he sang included 'You Raise Me Up' by Josh Groban or 'Lahko noč, Piran' by Anika Horvat. He has also performed a lot of classical music, including the famous aria 'Nessun dorma' from Puccini's opera 'Turandot.' He has also received applause, like at a concert, after performing Händel's aria 'Lascia ch'io pianga.'⁸ However, relatives usually thank him and offer their praise by word of mouth or by text message after the funeral (N. Stipanov, personal conversation, 10 October 2016 and 28 December 2020).

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The interviewee mentioned that sometimes clients express a wish for 'a taste of the sea' when choosing music. For example, he often sings the famous 'Con te partirò' (music by Francesco Sartori with lyrics by Lucia Quarantotta, performed by Andrea Bocelli).

At funerals of members of the Italian minority, he often performs songs in Italian, such as 'Signore delle cime.' The Istrian songs requested include 'Va all'ombra Nineta,' the folk song 'Bella Istriana mia,' and he has also sung an old Italian folk song from Piran with a humorous text in the local dialect, 'Se passi per di qua.' At one of the funerals of a member of the Italian community, which he recalled especially because of the huge number of people present, he sang only 'Lacrimosa' from Mozart's Requiem. He noted that members of the Italian minority were very fond of Schubert's 'Ave Maria,' which he performs frequently. 'It stays in their memory, probably because it is in Latin and because it has such a beautiful melody' (N. Stipanov, telephone conversation, 28 December 2020).

He observed that at the funerals of persons who are not from the Italian minority, those attending sometimes request a song in Slovene because they wish to please other relatives who will be coming, but they often say that they do not want standard Slovene folk laments,⁹ because they're 'too depressing' (N. Stipanov, telephone

⁸ 'Lascia ch'io pianga' is a soprano aria from the second act of Händel's opera 'Rinaldo,' in which the captured Almirena laments her fate. As a metaphor for human suffering, this aria can also be performed in a funeral context.

⁹ According to the results of my field research, 'Lipa' and 'Gozdič je že zelen' are the

[52] conversation, 28 December 2020). He noticed that clients often emphasise that they do not want too many sad, 'depressing' songs, as this would make them even sadder in an already difficult situation. Perhaps this characteristic can also be somehow related to the temperament of people from Primorska, in which the influence of the Mediterranean climate could be observed.

The table 1 lists songs from the repertoire of individual ensembles that were active in Primorska in 2016. The songs are classified into Slovenian folk songs, religious laments,¹⁰ partisan mourning songs, Orthodox songs and Dalmatian songs; this is the ranking given in their offer by the singers from the ensemble 7 Plus Quartet. Under the list of songs in their offer, the members of the quartet wrote: 'This is only a part of the repertoire of our quartet which is most often used at funerals. At relatives' request, we can also sing something else suitable for such events, but the wishes should be communicated in time so that we can learn the song.' It should be emphasised that this is only the terminology of the ensembles and not objective scientific terminology. The practice of transferring songs into a popular folk repertoire was also encountered.

The soloist Marjetka Popovski classified the songs she offered in her repertoire into folk songs according to the theme (i.e., the sea, flowers, mountains, rivers, birds, love and wine), patriotic songs, laments, partisan songs, old songs about the Virgin Mary, Dalmatian songs and *sevdalinka*. She offers a varied choice, which can be 'greatly expanded upon agreement.' This singer, who sings to guitar accompaniment, also offers her services as a writer and reader of speeches.

All ensembles can offer Istrian folk songs; part of the repertoire are Dalmatian songs, especially those related to the sea and fishermen. The selection available at funeral ceremonies therefore also re-

most frequently performed laments in Slovenia, together with 'Vsi so venci vejli,' 'Kje so tiste stezice,' 'Po jezeru' and 'Hodil sem.'

¹⁰ 'Ave Maria' is listed under religious laments. Neven Stipanov told me that when he suggests this song, relatives' initial reaction is often to say no because it is supposed to be a hymn. But when he explains that it is a beautiful song that talks about life, they agree (N. Stipanov, personal conversation, 10 October 2016).



The Influence of the Mediterranean on Funeral Ceremonies

TABLE 1 Songs from the Repertoire of the Ensembles That Were Active in Primorska in 2016

Category	Title	(1)	(2)	(3)
Slovenian folk songs	Gozdič je že zelen	•	•	•
	Spavaj mirno	•	•	
	Kam odhajaš, dragi oče	•	•	
	Vigred se povrne	•		
	Polje, kdo bo tebe ljubil	•	•	
	Na poljani	•		
	V tihi noči	•		
	Kje so tiste stezice	•	•	•
	Temna noč	•	•	
	Da te ni	•	•	
	Vsi so venci vejli	•	•	
	Vse najlepše rožice	•		
	Lipa zelenela je	•	•	•
	Gor čez Izaro			•
	Teče mi vodica			•
	Slovensko dekle			•
	Tiha luna			•
	Oblaček mili moj			•
	Zrelo je žito			•
	Zakrivljeno palico v roki			•
	Eno drevce mi je zraslo			•
	Mrzel veter tebe žene			•
	Zabučale gore			•
	Oljki	•		
Solinar	•			

[53]

Continued on the next page

flects the characteristics of the Primorska region: olive growing and fishing, as well as songs in Italian.

RECORDED MUSIC

Until 2016, it was very rare for relatives to bring music on a CD or USB key, and, before October 2016, no funerals were held with

TABLE 1 *Continued from the previous page*

Category	Title	(1)	(2)	(3)
[54] Religious laments	Tiho lučka gori	•		
	Nearer, My God, to Thee	•	•	
	Jaz sem vstajenje	•		
	Nad zvezdami	•	•	
	Signore delle cime	•		
	Usliši nas gospod	•		
	V nebesih sem doma	•		
	Ave Maria	•		
	Molim te ponižno	•		
	Gospod je moja luč	•		
	Pridite na pomoč, svetniki božji	•		
Blagor mu	•			
Partisan laments	Smrt v Brdih	•		
	Počiva jezero v tihoti	•	•	•
	Prečuden cvet	•	•	
	Na oknu glej obrazek bled	•	•	•
	Kaj ti je deklica	•		
	Bella ciao	•		•
	Bilečanka	•		

Continued on the next page

recorded music. The research proved unable to determine precisely what percentage of funerals were held with live music, but on 5 October 2016, for instance, two funerals were performed without music and one with it.

Four years later, in December 2020, this practice changed. The head of the funeral service told me that they hold many funerals where relatives bring recorded music on a USB key. According to his estimation, in about 30% of the funerals where music is played,¹¹ the music is recorded, while 70% is live. In reply to the question whether

¹¹ The absence of music at some funerals may be due to several factors, such as cost or the fact that the funeral is for a Muslim, there being no music at this type of funeral.



The Influence of the Mediterranean on Funeral Ceremonies

TABLE 1 *Continued from the previous page*

Category	Title	(1)	(2)	(3)
Orthodox hymns	Gospod pomiluj	•	•	
	Tebe pojem	•		
	Otče nas	•		
Dalmatian songs	Tiha noč	•	•	•
	Daleko mi je biser Jadrana	•	•	
	Ribari	•		
	Ružo moja crvena	•	•	
	Ribar plite	•	•	•
	Ako si pošla spat	•		
	Maslina je neobrana	•		
	Da te mogu pismom zvati			•
Country music	V dolini tihi			•

[55]

NOTES Column headings are as follows: (1) Quartet '7 Plus,' (2) Quartet 'Riba,' (3) Marjetka Popovski.

the smaller percentage of live music might be because of the Covid epidemic, Ugrin replied that there are no problems with that at the moment, since singers can sing around ten metres away from the relatives. Relatives opt mainly for singers, but also for trumpets, although other instruments and ensembles appear only very rarely.

In addition to the central cemetery, Piran cemetery also includes three village cemeteries (Nova vas, Sv. Peter and Padna). As Aljoša Pucer told me in 2016, in Piran only 'once in ten years' did it happen that relatives brought recorded music on a USB because the cemetery did not have the appropriate equipment for playing it, only a speaker for speeches (personal communication, 7 October 2016), but in an interview in 2020, the same person told me that in order to meet public demand they now have the equipment to play recorded music from a USB key. However, relatives rarely want recorded music (telephone conversation, 30 December 2020).

WIND BANDS

Wind bands are rarely found in cemeteries, although one is available at the cemetery in Nova Gorica. As I learned from the local author-

ities there, when requesting a funeral service, relatives can, if they wish, contact some leaders of choirs and groups of musicians and then come to an agreement with them themselves. The wind band plays at a funeral when the deceased was also a musician (Komunala [56] Nova Gorica, personal communication, 20 October 2016).

A wind band also played in the cemetery in Piran, when, on 31 December 2014, a musician, trumpet professor and conductor of the Piran Youth Wind Orchestra, 80-year-old Umberto Radojković, was buried. He had conducted the Piran Wind Orchestra for twenty years and did not want flowers at his funeral, but preferred financial contributions for the orchestra. His funeral was attended by many of the deceased's musician colleagues, professors and former students as well as the Youth Wind Orchestra, which played Štrucl's mourning march 'Rožmarin.' Another composition performed by the orchestra was an expression of the character of the deceased. He was of a cheerful disposition, and the music played was Štrucl's march 'Pozdravljena, Slovenija.' As his explicit last wish, a quartet of horns played at his graveside 'Glejte, že sonce zahaja' and Beethoven's laments 'Drei Equale WoO 30 in D minor.'

In Slovenia, a wind band, the official state orchestra, known as the Police Orchestra, plays mostly at state funerals and ceremonies of national mourning. The custom of having wind bands at funerals is an age-old tradition typical of southern Italy.

SOUTHERN ITALY AND SICILY: A TRADITION OF WIND BANDS AND FUNERAL PROCESSIONS

The old tradition of wind bands playing funeral marches during the major street processions on Good Friday before Easter is very familiar in Southern Italy. Mauro Sclafani, an academic oboist from Sicily, said that one of the most important processions in Sicily is the so-called procession of the Mysteries (Tartaro n. d.). In Sicily, it is mainly linked with the city of Trapani, but it also extends beyond Sicily (M. Sclafani, personal communication, 19 December 2020). According to Wikipedia (2020), the procession of the Mysteries takes place between Good Friday and Saturday through the main streets of the city and is held to represent the Via crucis. The tradition is said



to be about four centuries old and dates back to the time of Spanish rule in Sicily when it was developed from Andalusian traditions.

In his autobiography the famous conductor Riccardo Muti describes the 'music world' he knew from his childhood in the Apulian town of Molfetta: 'I grew up in the fantasy world of Good Friday, "Povera Rosa" and funeral marches from Molfetta' (Muti 2017, 25). 'Povera Rosa' is probably the most famous funeral march and is performed by a wind band in the streets during the Good Friday procession. The repertoire of funeral marches played by bands is extremely rich. According to the website enumerating the most common funeral marches in Trapani, the composers of the marches are frequently local musicians, but popular arrangements of other works by European composers are also played, such as an adaptation of Chopin's sonata; often, however, the composer of the march is unknown. In addition to performing funeral marches, music of various other kinds is performed at funerals in Sicily and southern Italy. At church services, the songs that find most favour in Sicily include Marco Frisina's 'Eccomi,' 'Il Signore è mio pastore' and 'Chi ci separerà,' written for choir and orchestra or choir and organ. A popular composer of sacred music performed during a funeral service is also Giuseppe Liberto (M. Sclafani, personal communication, 19 December 2020).

[57]

As can be seen from the traditions described above, traditional funeral music in southern Italy and Sicily is very different from that encountered in the southwestern coastal part of Slovenia. In southern Italy, funeral music is associated with old religious traditions and the playing of funeral marches, this being unknown in the coastal area of Slovenia and beyond. During my field research, I learnt that the presence of bands was more frequent in decades past (for example, the performance of the Railway Band at the Žale cemetery in Ljubljana) and nowadays it is reserved for use at official and state funerals. The band may sometimes play at a funeral by way of an exception, usually if the deceased person had also been a member of a band. Here again, we encounter the trend towards individualized funerals or 'funerals tailored to the man' in order to reflect the deceased's profession or interests.

CONCLUSIONS

[58] Modern funeral rituals have undergone numerous changes, some of which are reflected through music or in some cases have their origins in music. According to field research, there is also a new kind of modern burial in Primorska, involving the scattering of ashes into the sea. The lyrics of the songs performed at funerals are sometimes related to the sea; there are more songs in Italian and also Istrian folk songs in the dialect spoken by the Italian minority in coastal places – songs that are not to be found elsewhere in Slovenia. Traditional Slovenian laments about the sea and fishing are encountered but are less common. As elsewhere in Slovenia, the choice of funeral music is very often individualised and reflects the wishes of relatives, as well as the deceased's religious and political beliefs, age, character, profession, hobbies and interests. Thus, popular music, especially in English, is increasingly present at funerals in the Primorska region. We even found disco music at the funeral of a younger deceased person. Traditional laments, which are present throughout Slovenia (such as 'Lipa' and 'Vsi so venci vejli'), are still found in the repertoire of funeral music, but less frequently. It is interesting to note that sometimes people in Primorska describe these laments as being 'too depressing' and say that they would merely add to their grief; I did not find this curiosity elsewhere in Slovenia. Perhaps this is related to the character of the people living along the Mediterranean, which also influences the choice of funeral music.

Classical music remains the choice of many people in Primorska; popular compositions include Schubert's 'Ave Maria' and arias from operas, which are mostly in Italian and are often (but not exclusively) chosen by members of the Italian minority. Standard ensembles at funerals in Primorska are still singers and a trumpet at the end, but sometimes solo singers appear, occasionally also other instruments such as the clarinet, guitar or flute. There is more and more recorded music, which is used mainly in the Koper cemetery.

If we compare funeral music in the Slovenian coastal areas with funeral music in the neighbouring Mediterranean country of Italy, great differences can be seen. In nearby Trieste, funerals are extremely short, without any cultural additions, which is in stark con-



trast to the average funeral in our country. The presence of wind bands is also completely different from practices at Slovenian funerals. Wind bands playing in processions are familiar from southern Italy; they are a unique tradition with a long history but have had no influence on Slovenian funeral music and are not related to it. [59]

It would be interesting in further studies to give special attention to investigating how the Mediterranean influences the character of the people and thus their choice of funeral music; how do these choices differ from the funeral music popular in the northern countries? In addition, it would be interesting to observe further the dynamics of the changes. As was evident from the case of funeral music in Koper, changes became apparent in a relatively short period of four years.

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