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# Organs as an exemplification of the material heritage of Montenegrin culture

## Part. 2: St. Nicholas' Church and the Church of Our Lady of the Rock in Perast

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### ABSTRACT

This article is a second part of the series of texts on organs in Montenegro, in which the organs from St. Nicholas' Church and the Church of Our Lady of the Rock in Perast will be described. The description of these instruments will include their basic presentation in the context of the organ building trends in this part of Europe. Organs as a special musical instrument are an important example of the material heritage of musical culture. Montenegro, being a predominantly Orthodox country in which instrumental and vocal-instrumental music is not performed, cannot claim a large number of organs. However, their significant proportion includes historically noteworthy instruments.

The congress entitled *The Organ as European Cultural Heritage* was held in Varaždin (Croatia) from 10–16 September 2000. The participants of this event expressed a number of vital opinions regarding European organs. The important issue was to recognise the heritage value of so many thousands of European organs. Their future and survival are only possible on the basis of substantial financial investments, especially in regard to organs in Central and Eastern Europe (www1). As part of the congress lectures, Prof. Christoph Bossert from Germany articulated the notable words: “I would very much like to formulate the following motto: Europe begins in village churches” (Z. Kušćer 2021: 185). This metaphorical expression accurately introduces the theme of the current article which is a continuation of its first part. It is worth mentioning that the contents of the first part result from the research conducted within the framework of the scientific project *Musical Heritage of Montenegro – Musical Practices of Montenegro and their Potential*. “The project’s goal is the intensification of activities with the aim of encouraging scientific and artistic research in the field of the Musical heritage of Montenegro, which will – through cooperation of eth-

nomusicologists, music theorists and creators in the field of musical art – give contribution to the purpose of its further preservation and affirmation in new interpretations” (Arch1).



St. Mary Church in Perast

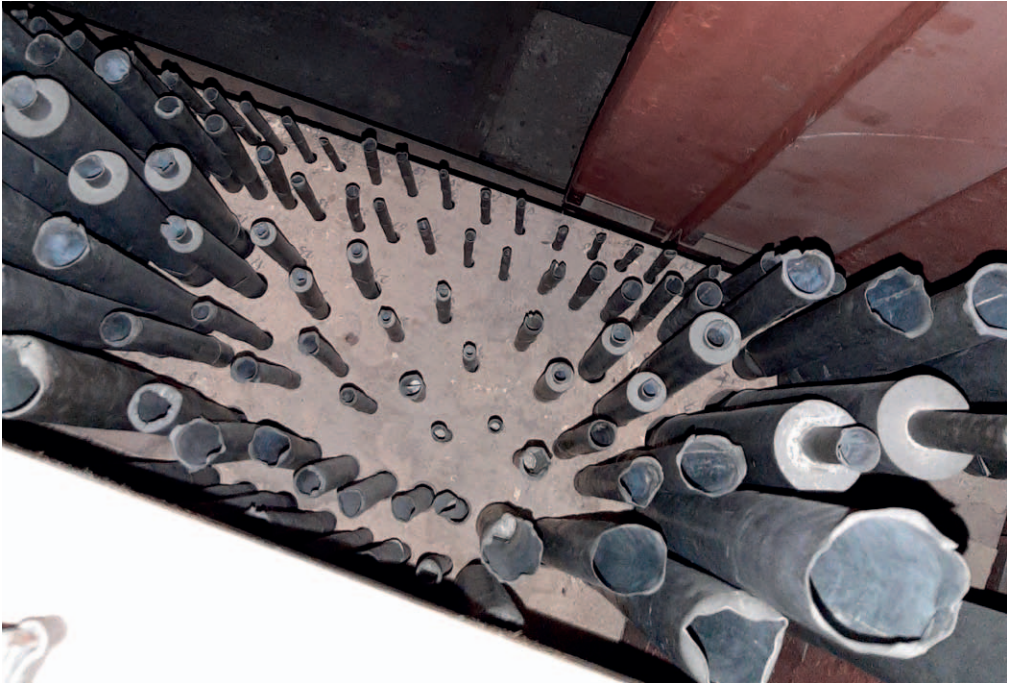


St. Mary Church in Perast

Referring to the statement about Europe having its ‘beginning’ in village churches, there is no doubt that Perast, which is located at the Bay of Kotor, exemplarily fits into this observation. This historic place has around 300 inhabitants, and the historical richness of this charming corner of the earth is remarkable. There are here rich musical, painting and literary traditions. The town had its greatest peak in the 17th and 18th centuries, when along with the rest of the Bay of Kotor it belonged to the Republic of Venice as part of the so-called Venetian Albania (D. Nadaždin, M. Niedźwiecki 2011: 146). This statement will be needed in the description of the organ in Perast. A majority of the currently existing buildings were constructed at that time, including Baroque palaces of wealthy families and 18 Catholic and Orthodox churches – all of them are in Venetian architecture that is typical of the region at that time (www2). The churches include St. Mark’s Church from 1760, St. Anthony’s Church with a Franciscan monastery from 1679, The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary with an octagonal bell tower from 1678 and others. In addition, there are two other churches renowned for their organs: the 17th century St. Nicholas’ Church with the highest belfry on the entire eastern Adriatic coast, and the Church of Our Lady of the Rock called (similar to the artificial island on which it is built) *Gospa od Škrpjela* (Island of Our Lady on the Rock). The founding of this church can be dated to the late 16th and early 17th centuries (A. Ivelja-Dalmatin 2017: 9–12), with the specific time 1630 given.



St. Nicholas Church in Perast



St. Nicholas Church in Perast



St. Mary Church in Perast

Both churches contain two small instruments showing predilections to Italian organ building which put its stamp on the eastern Adriatic coast. Political contacts with Venice and cultural relations closely influenced this part of the Balkans, including specifically organ building (E. Škulj 2010).

#### Organs of St. Nicholas' Church of in Perast

- 6 stops (Principal, Ottava, XV, XIX, Voce umana, Flauto in XII)
- Keyboard compass (short octave): Manual – E–c3; Pedal – E–a
- Slider windchest, Pull-down pedal
- Bellows inside the organ

The first mention of this organ dates back to 1696. It is a bill for the repair of this instrument. It is assumed that the organ can be dated to the first half of the 17th century.

### The organ of the Church of St. Mary of the Rock in Perast

- 6 stops (Principale, Ottava, XV, Voce umana)
- Keyboard compass (short octave): Principal – E–c3; Pedal – E–c
- Pull-down pedal
- Bellows inside the organ

No information regarding the history of the organ is available.

The history of organ building at the Bay of Kotor and, more broadly, in Montenegro remains mostly unrecognised. However, with a high degree of probability it can be stated on the basis of existing knowledge that the region does not have its particular tradition of organ building. Nevertheless, a tradition of organ music performance dating back to the 16th century is evident, which is confirmed by abundant references to organists found in archives of various provenance. Boka Kotorska belonged to the Dalmatian cultural circle. In this region, the organ builder Petar Nakić (1694–1769; the Italian version of his name: Pietro Nacchini or Nachielli) and his school of organ-building put their mark. Nakić left a legacy of between 350 and 370 organs (Armano 1998; Faulend Heferer 1973). They were built in the Neoclassical Italian style with numerous technical improvements. This line of organ-building tradition can be described as Venetian-Dalmatic. Being a Franciscan he undertook an expedition from Šibenik to Venice, in which he studied theology and learned the art of organ building. He is likely to acquire his skills in this area in the workshop of Giovanni Battista Piaggi. Nakić used a slider windchest in his instruments, a tamburo, which was an imitation of timpani playing and was mainly used during Holy Week, and a Tiratutti foot switch (Z. Kušćer 2021: 183–184). Furthermore, Nakić standardised the division of wind-chests into two parts cis<sup>1</sup>–d<sup>1</sup>. A number of these solutions were applied to the organ in Perast. Nakić's pupils included: Francesci Dacci (1712?–1784) and Gaetano Callido (1727–1813?), Gaetano Moscatelli (1765–1822; Šaban 1974; Šaban 2006) and successive generations of their pupils: Antonio Bossi (1805–1871), Carl Hesse (1808–1882) or Franz Goršič (1836–1898). Their names were already mentioned in the first part of the article describing the organ in Montenegro (G. Poźniak 2020).

At this moment, it is appropriate to express a more general reflection. It could be stated without a shadow of a doubt that though the musicological potential of Montenegro is very high, the research areas are still largely undeveloped. Organs are an accurate example of this reality: it is a matter that absolutely needs to be examined in detail, if only in the in-depth research of archives. Yet, there are needed local researchers who – in full identification with the heritage of centuries of local, regional and national culture and tradition – will devote their creative forces to systematising and describing this heritage. Organising some form of theoretical (musicological?) course in the music education system would be a good starting point to undertake this challenge and finalise it. Yet, another effective and dynamic *modus operandi* can be also conceivable. Both instruments from the Perast churches were damaged by the passing of time and the lack of professional repairs preceded by their instrumentalist analysis. However, despite this fact these organs have largely retained their originality and

restoring them to full capacity poses a challenge for the modern age. Nonetheless, there can be no *ad hoc* rectification of defects in this case. A comprehensive organ-building intervention at the highest level of expertise should be taken into account. Therefore, on the basis of some international funds (after all, Europe begins in village churches) it could be advisable to entrust the organ renovation and all the preceding and successive scientific activities to people and institutions from outside Montenegro, but only and exclusively with the aim of forming the nucleus of Montenegrin instrumentology (including organology) and organ-building.

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## SUMMARY

Montenegro became a union republic of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992) after the Second World War and the political changes and wars in the Balkans at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. Montenegro proclaimed its independence on 3rd June 2006. As an independent state, this former republic of socialist Yugoslavia takes action to gather and scientifically describe its remarkable cultural heritage. In 2019 Cetinje Academy of Music, which is part of the University of Montenegro, decided to carry out a scientific project aimed at depicting this entire cultural heritage. Folk culture and Orthodoxy are the dominant features of this whole *opus*, thus it is not surpris-

ing that cultural products are mostly associated with these two cultural factors. Catholics constitute a group of about 3.5%, which amounts to a relatively small number of believers. Though they are a small community, they also left their mark on culture. One of the important factors in the Catholic worship is the pipe organ. This article is a second part of the texts on organs in Montenegro, in which organs from two churches in Perast were described: St. Nicholas' Church and the Church of Our Lady of the Rock. Both churches contain two small instruments displaying predilections to Italian organ building, which left its mark on the eastern Adriatic coast. Political contacts with Venice and cultural relations strongly influenced this part of the Balkans, including organ building.

However, the history of organ building at the Bay of Kotor and, more generally, in Montenegro remains highly unrecognised. With a high degree of likelihood, due to the existing knowledge it can be concluded that the region does not have its own distinct tradition of organ building. Nevertheless, there is an evident tradition of organ music performance dating back to the 16th century, which is supported by numerous references to organists in various archives. Boka Kotorska belonged to the Dalmatian cultural circle. In this region, the organist Petar Nakić (1694–1769; Italian version of his name: Pietro Nacchini or Nachielli) and his school of organ-building left their mark.

Both instruments from the churches of Perast were damaged by the passage of time as well as the lack of professional repairs preceded by an instrumentological analysis of the existing material. Yet, it appears despite the circumstances that these organs have largely retained their originality and restoring them to full working order is a challenge of the present day. There can be no *ad hoc* rectification of defects in this case. A comprehensive organ-building intervention at the highest level of expertise is highly required. Therefore, on the basis of some international funds (after all, Europe begins in village churches) it could be sensible to entrust the organ renovation and all the preceding and following scientific activities to people and institutions from outside Montenegro, but only and exclusively with the aim of forming the nucleus of Montenegrin instrumentology (including organology) and organ building.

## Keywords:

organs • Montenegro • Italian tradition • Balkan tradition  
• organ building

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