



Antun Vancaš

Četiri slavenska plesa
(za glasovir / za glasovir četveroručno / za orkestar)

Four Slavic Dances
(for piano / for four-handed piano / for orchestra)



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Zagreb, 2023





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on the basis of the orchestral version written by Felix Spiller)

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It is incontestable that the history of Croatian music in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century would have been written completely differently today and that it would have been incomparably richer in valuable works of art if some of the most talented composers of the nation had not died very young, without managing fully to develop their creative potentials and continue with the creative path they had successfully begun, already marked by striking and superb opuses. In this tragic train, along with Vatroslav Lisinski (1819 – 1854), Franjo Krežma (1862 – 1881), Milutin Polić (1883 – 1908) and Dora Pejačević (1885 – 1923), a special place belongs to **Antun Vancaš** (Zagreb, February 14, 1867 – Zagreb, October 27, 1888). Unluckily, today the cultural public is still only superficially aware of Vancaš's biography and his musical creativeness, for his works have never been printed,¹ and there is no monograph about him in which the facts about his life, education and works of music have been systematically put together. One of the basic sources about Vancaš's life is the Franjo Kuhač article "Memories of Antun pl. Vancaš", published in *Vienac* in 1888, just after his death,² while another valuable contribution for knowledge about the composer's biography is the concise work of Franjo Bilić named *Life of Antun Vancaš*, published in the journal *Arti musices* in 1973.³



Antun Vancaš⁴ was born in a well-reputed middle class family in Zagreb. His father, who was also called Antun Vancaš, was a lawyer, adviser to the crown and director of the Zagreb Post Office. His brother Josip was a well-known architect, famed as the builder of the majestic cathedral in Sarajevo. Since his mother died when he was twelve, and as a lad he was of fragile health and build, his father thought his son might "physically first strengthen if he devoted himself to business studies"⁵ and after elementary school and lower high school he sent him to the Husbandry School in Križevci, where in three years he graduated from the forestry school.⁶ After his return to Zagreb, Vancaš wanted to devote himself to music,⁷ but after all heeded his father's advice and enrolled in agricultural college in Vienna. After a stay in Vienna of six weeks, during which he "went to the opera seventeen times" and concluded that "this profession pleased him immensely"⁸ the young man returned to Zagreb and expressed to his father his great desire to devote himself to the study of music so as to be able to enrol in the Vienna Conservatory. As early as December 1, 1883, he started learning music theory, harmony, counterpoint and the fundamentals of composition under Franjo Kuhač, and the piano with Milan Fabković. The progress in mastering the arts of music made by Vancaš was amazing,⁹ and so in only ten months, in the autumn of 1884 he passed the entrance exam to the Vienna Conservatory with great success; the examination commission decided that the just arrived freshman could "skip the preparatory course, and two courses of harmony, and at once do the school of counterpoint"¹⁰ with Professor Franz Krenn.¹¹ In Vienna Vancaš studied music with Nikola Faller (1862 – 1938), future

1 The only work of Vancaš to have been published during his lifetime was *Križevci Quadrille*, op. 1 for piano, which was printed by Jos. Eberle and Co., Vienna (no year of publication).

2 Franjo KUHAČ: Uspomene na Antuna pl. Vancaša [Memories of Antun pl. Vancaš] *Vienac* 46 and 47 (November 17 and 24, 1888.), Zagreb, pp 730–734 and 746–750.

3 Franjo BILIĆ: Život Antuna Vancaša [Life of Antun Vancaš], *Arti musices* 4 (1973), Zagreb, pp. 119–132. Bilić includes fragments from the Vancaš's letters to Kuhač, so rich in information, as well as letters Vancaš wrote to relatives.

4 In his memoir Kuhač gives the name as Antun pl. Vancaš Požeški [Antun von Vancaš of Požega].

5 BILIĆ, p. 120.

6 Vancaš's certificates and all of his scores are kept in the Croatian Music Institute in Zagreb. For kindly making available to us the composer's manuscripts and for providing scans of the autograph of *Slavonic Dances* we are grateful to the library of the Croatian Music Institute and its manager Dr Nada Bezić.

7 There is some interest in Kuhač's statement that in Križevci Vancaš composed "a waltz, a march and two songs", although he did not write them down for he did not know how to. KUHAČ, p. 731.

8 KUHAČ, *ibid.*

9 "He studied very industriously, grasped everything easily and did his music tasks well and nicely, without any effort at all." KUHAČ, p. 731.

10 KUHAČ, *ibid.*

11 Franz Krenn (Droß, 1816 – St. Andrä Wördern, 1897), Austrian composer and music educator. In 1869 he became professor of harmony, counterpoint and composition at the Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. He trained



Slavenski ples br. 1 za glasovir

Slavonic Dance no. 1 for piano

Antun Vancaš

Andante molto

p

mf marc.

f marc.

p

riten.

Allegro (♩ = ♩ du mouvement de précédent)

mf

mf

mf

p

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Slavenski ples br. 1 za glasovir četveroručno

Slavonic Dance no. 1 for four-handed piano

Antun Vancaš

Andante molto

Primo

p

Andante molto

Secondo

p

7

I.

mf marc.

f

II.

f marc.

13

I.

p

p

riten.

II.

p

p

pp >

riten.

Slavenski ples br. 1 za orkestar
Slavonic Dance no. 1 for orchestra

Sastav orkestra / Orchestra

Piccolo (Picc.)
2 Flauti (2 Fl.)
2 Oboi (2 Ob.)
2 Clarinetti in La (2 Cl. in La)
2 Fagotti (2 Fg.)

4 Corni in Fa (4 Cor. in Fa)
2 Trombe in Fa (2 Tr. in Fa)
3 Tromboni (3 Tbn.)

Timpani (Timp.)
Triangolo (Tri.)
Grancassa (Gc.)
Piatti (Ptti)

Arpa (Arpa)

Violini I (Vn. I)
Violini II (Vn. II)
Viole (Vl.)
Violoncelli (Vc.)
Contrabassi (Cb.)



Slavenski ples br. 1 za orkestar

Slavonic Dance no. 1 for orchestra

Antun Vancaš

Andante molto

Piccolo
 2 Flauti
 2 Oboi
 2 Clarinetti in La
 2 Fagotti
 Corno in Fa 1
 Corno in Fa 2
 Corno in Fa 3
 Corno in Fa 4
 2 Trombe in Fa
 3 Tromboni
 Timpani
 Triangolo
 Grancassa
 Piatti
 Arpa
Andante molto
 Violini I
 Violini II
 Viole
 Violoncelli
 Contrabassi



10 riten.

Picc. 2/4

2 Fl. 1. solo
p pp

2 Ob. *mf* pp

2 Cl. in La *mf* pp

2 Fg. *f* *mf* pp

Cor. in Fa 1 2/4

Cor. in Fa 2 2/4

Cor. in Fa 3 2/4

Cor. in Fa 4 2/4

2 Tr. in Fa 2/4

3 Tbn. 2/4

Timp. *p* 2/4

Tri. 2/4

Gc. Ptti 2/4

Arpa *p* pp

Vn. I *f* riten. *p* pp

Vn. II *f* *mp* *p* pp

Vi. *mf marc.* *f* *pizz.* *p* *arco* pp

Vc. *f marc.* *pizz.* *p* *arco* pp

Cb. *f marc.* *pizz.* *p* pp

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