

Franjo Dugan

Croatian Organist, Teacher, and Composer

Chris Krampe

Franjo Dugan: A forgotten composer

Croatian history shares a commonality with western European countries and simultaneously retains very different experiences from those countries further west. Without getting too historically involved, it is fair to say that the past century of Croatia's historical experience has vastly influenced the historical consciousness the modern country at large experiences today. This produces a specific cultural paradigm, which affects all areas of scholarly research, including music.

A musical figure almost completely overlooked in Croatian history is the organist, composer, and teacher Franjo Dugan (1874–1948). Many of Dugan's students went on to play very influential roles in Croatian musical culture; for example, Croatian composer Boris Popandopulo not only received acclaim within his own country, but in his lifetime also received international attention for his compositions. Within information available about these musicians, Franjo Dugan is rarely mentioned.

The reasons for this are not always clear or concise. Dugan was primarily interested in composing for the church, and he played an important role in the growth of Croatian liturgical music, which most definitely placed his work at odds with the former Yugoslav communist government. The suppression of art by governmental structures is no new research topic, and although it is an important subject, nonetheless it will not be emphasized within the scope of this article due to the sheer complexity and range of that issue.

Political motivation aside, another major reason that this man has been largely forgotten outside Croatian organ circles lies in the language barrier; virtually no information about Dugan exists in English, and therefore all information on him must be translated from Croatian. The existing records on Dugan at this time are few, though a renewed interest in his life could produce biographical information that currently has not surfaced. The primary purpose of this article is to introduce Franjo Dugan as a reformist and as one of the most important figures in the creation and elevation of Croatian musical culture, and to discuss Dugan's role in helping to produce a generation of musicians who were then able to disseminate his instruction to an even higher level.

With respect to international scholarly interest, Franjo Dugan's life and work are very important subjects in that his music represents a melding of late nineteenth-century musical ideals with Croatian folk music and melodic principles. Study of his music enables the international community to better understand European cultural trends that are already established; Croatian musicological research is still quite new outside of the Republic of Croatia, and scholarly understanding of Franjo Dugan will eventually help scholars understand how music before and after him also fits into a larger European framework. In order to gain an appreciation of Dugan's style and compositional skill, this article will first give a brief biography of Franjo Dugan, and will then discuss three organ compositions by him: *Fantasy on the Folk Song "Pozdravleno budi telo Jezusa"* (Greeted Is the Body of Christ), *Prelude and Fugue in B major*, and finally *Prelude and Variation on the Advent Song "Ptice lijepo pjevaju"* (The Little Birds Sing Beautifully).

Life, work, and influence

Franjo Dugan was born in Krapinica, Croatia, on September 11, 1874. He attended the Zagreb grammar school, during which time he was first introduced to basic music theory and musical principles.¹ Interest in the organ and organ



Franjo Dugan in the Zagreb Cathedral, 1935

music also manifested during his grammar school years, though he had not yet received formal organ instruction. He acquired enough facility at the instrument to take a small position at a village church, where he accompanied Mass on Sundays and also practiced. In 1889, at the age of 15, he took a larger position at St. Peter Church in Gotolovac. He met Zagreb cathedral organist Vatroslav Kolander during this time, and under his instruction briefly studied organ technique and repertoire.

After grammar school, Dugan was accepted into the Zagreb Archbishop Seminary in 1890. At the seminary he made the acquaintance of Janko Barlé, archivist of the music society "Vijenac". It was Barlé who first introduced the young Dugan to

the various music periodicals of the time, most notably those that were primarily involved with the current trends in the Cecilian movement, a European liturgical movement that sought to reform late nineteenth-century church music, primarily music within the Catholic church, by using Gregorian chant as a model for worship.² The Cecilian movement reverberated strongly with Franjo Dugan's own ideas about Croatian liturgical music and the directions he felt should be taken by the Croatian Catholic Church musically, and thus in later years he would become a major Croatian proponent of the movement's ideals.

In 1893 Dugan decided to abandon his seminary studies and pursue studies in mathematics and physics at the



Dugan portrait

University of Zagreb. He was appointed assistant organist at the Zagreb Cathedral in 1895. In 1897, he completed his studies at the University of Zagreb and was accepted as a teacher at the Zagreb grammar school, where he remained until 1907.

He married Ana Jagić, daughter of well-known Croatian linguist Vatroslav Jagić, in 1907; in the same year he began formal musical studies for the first time at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. His professors included Max Bruch, at that time the director of the composition department, Robert Kahn, Johannes Wolf, and Karl Krebs. During this time his work was first published in the Croatian liturgical periodical *Saint Cecilia*. In 1908, upon completion of the composition exam in Berlin, he was named professor of the Croatian Music School, a preparatory school for the study of music. During his time at the school he repeatedly came into conflict with the board of directors over differing opinions of what direction the school should take, and he was transferred to the Osijek School for Math and Science.³ He returned to Zagreb in 1910 when he took the position of Professor of Mathematics at the first, and then second, math and science grammar schools.

He became the cathedral organist in Zagreb after the death of his first organ teacher, Kolander, in 1921. He was

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Franjo Dugan (left) and fellow Croatian composer Krsto Odak in front of Kastner and Öhler Department Store, Zagreb, 1943



Final photograph taken of Franjo Dugan, 1944

named a professor at the Conservatory of Music in Zagreb in 1920 after serving in the grammar schools for 23 years. His duties at the conservatory included teaching organ, music theory, and counterpoint. He gave classes on Bach's most important organ works, and introduced the students to late nineteenth-century European organ music to which they had not previously been exposed.⁴

He served as department chair of composition from 1927–1940, and he retired in 1941. He passed away on December 12, 1948. Dugan and his wife had six children, two of whom became prominent musicians in Croatia during the next generation.

Dugan can be credited with pioneering the Cecilian movement in Croatia and advocating it throughout his life, composing new Croatian music intended for liturgical use that adhered to the movement's ideals, educating a generation of Croatian organists and church musicians, and promoting the organ as a concert instrument by regularly giving concerts throughout his lifetime.

Franjo Dugan also conducted several choral ensembles throughout his lifetime. He conducted the Zagreb choral ensemble "Kolo" (1901–02), "Sloga" (1910–1913), "Serbian Singing Society" (1921–1922), and most notably, the Oratorio Choir of St. Mark's Church (1923–1925). Under his direction, the Oratorio Choir performed works by Palestrina, di Lasso, and Bach cantatas, very exclusive repertoire for Zagreb musical circles during that time period.⁵

Dugan's early musical influences represent both Croatian and western European musical traditions. Dugan taught himself the organ by using books written by Christian Louis Heinrich Kohler, Franjo Kuhač, Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck, and Vjenceslav Novac. He also had opportunities to study Bach's organ scores, and was very fond of his music. Dugan's own style was highly influenced by Bach's polyphony⁶; much in the vein of other late nineteenth-century composers for organ such as Joseph Rheinberger and Max Reger, Dugan's music represented a combination of old-

er contrapuntal devices with chromatic harmony. He also studied Croatian folk song, and the combination of these elements in his early life would become the foundation of his compositional style later in life. Broader stylistic elements found in Dugan's compositional output, such as his interest in imitative forms and in polyphonic composition in general, his interest in Croatian folk music and Croatian hymnody, and his melding of Baroque musical forms with late romantic harmony are all identified in his compositions for organ.

Dugan's organ compositions largely represent his early stage of composition before he attended the Hochschule in Berlin. With the exception of three works—*Prelude and Fugue in B* (1908–09), *Prelude and Variation on 'The Birds Sing Beautifully'* (1941), *Christmas Prelude* (1942)—the rest of his 46 organ works were composed before his Hochschule study. The influence of his Berlin education is quite apparent in these works; the pieces are more masterfully crafted than earlier, more passionate works. The later works place a stronger emphasis on thematic development, whereas the earlier works are more improvisatory in nature, and use numerous, sometimes unconnected melodic motives.

Dugan's Fantasy on a Folk Song

Fantasy on the Folk Song 'Greeted Is the Body of Jesus' was composed in 1895. The piece opens with a slow, grave introduction seven measures long. Dugan's early compositions frequently make use of a slower introduction followed by a faster, more virtuosic treatment of the main melodic material from the introduction (Example 1). At the moderato section in m. 8, Dugan places the melody in the tenor voice; the next six measures function as an answer to the opening question phrase. Dugan then dovetails the end of this phrase with the beginning of the actual folk song arrangement, a technique common in his organ works.

The fantasy proper is fairly strict polyphony, and constantly moves forward in tension until the end of the work. He creates this tension by using mixture chords at important cadential points, and by moving from an eighth-note figuration to a faster triplet figuration for the final, short codetta of the last eight measures. The main melodic material he uses from the actual folk song is primarily the opening phrase; he breaks this theme up and creates short, imitative motives, which he then combines in counterpoint.

Example 1. Fantasy on the Folk Song 'Greeted Is the Body of Jesus'



Example 2. Prelude in B Major



Prelude and Fugue in B Major

Dugan's *Prelude and Fugue in B Major* was composed during the period of compositional study in Berlin. This work, along with his *Toccata in G Minor* and the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* ("chromatic"), is considered his most masterful composition for organ.⁷ From the opening two measures, Dugan takes a very different harmonic approach to composition than in earlier works (Examples 2 and 3). He employs chromaticism more frequently in this work, and develops melodic motives into longer, soaring ideas instead of the short, folk-influenced ideas of his earlier work. He does not abandon the playfulness and Croatian folk element of his earlier work; he merely stretches out musical ideas with compositional devices that create the sense of a formalized folk song. His early works employ forms that closely relate to the folk song idioms on which they are based.

Structurally, the work has much in common with the op. 59 organ pieces of Max Reger. The prelude is a development of one short melodic idea, which then becomes the fugue motive. There is no pause between movements; the end of the prelude dovetails with the beginning of the fugue. The fugue uses rhythmic diminution to build into a finale-type coda, and the piece ends

with a chromatic harmonic progression into a B-major resolution.

Dugan's late compositional style: Prelude and Variation on an Advent Song

Prelude and Variation on the Advent Song 'The Birds Sing Beautifully' is representative of Dugan's late compositional style. A very different type of work than the *Prelude and Fugue in B Major*, the piece is much shorter, and in many ways represents a return to earlier compositional ideas and influences. The phrase structure follows the general model of a folk song, and the use of chromaticism is less prevalent and more subdued than the *Prelude and Fugue*.

The piece opens with a chorale arrangement of the main theme typical of the style (Example 4). The melody is not embellished and remains in the soprano voice. The variation is in the alto voice and the accompaniment makes use of sixteenth-note figuration in the soprano voice. The variation is a very clear, straightforward arrangement of the original folk melody, and could easily be used as a hymn accompaniment for congregational singing, for which it was probably composed (Example 5). Dugan ends the piece with a short, contrapuntal treatment of the folk tune much in the manner of his opening arrangement.

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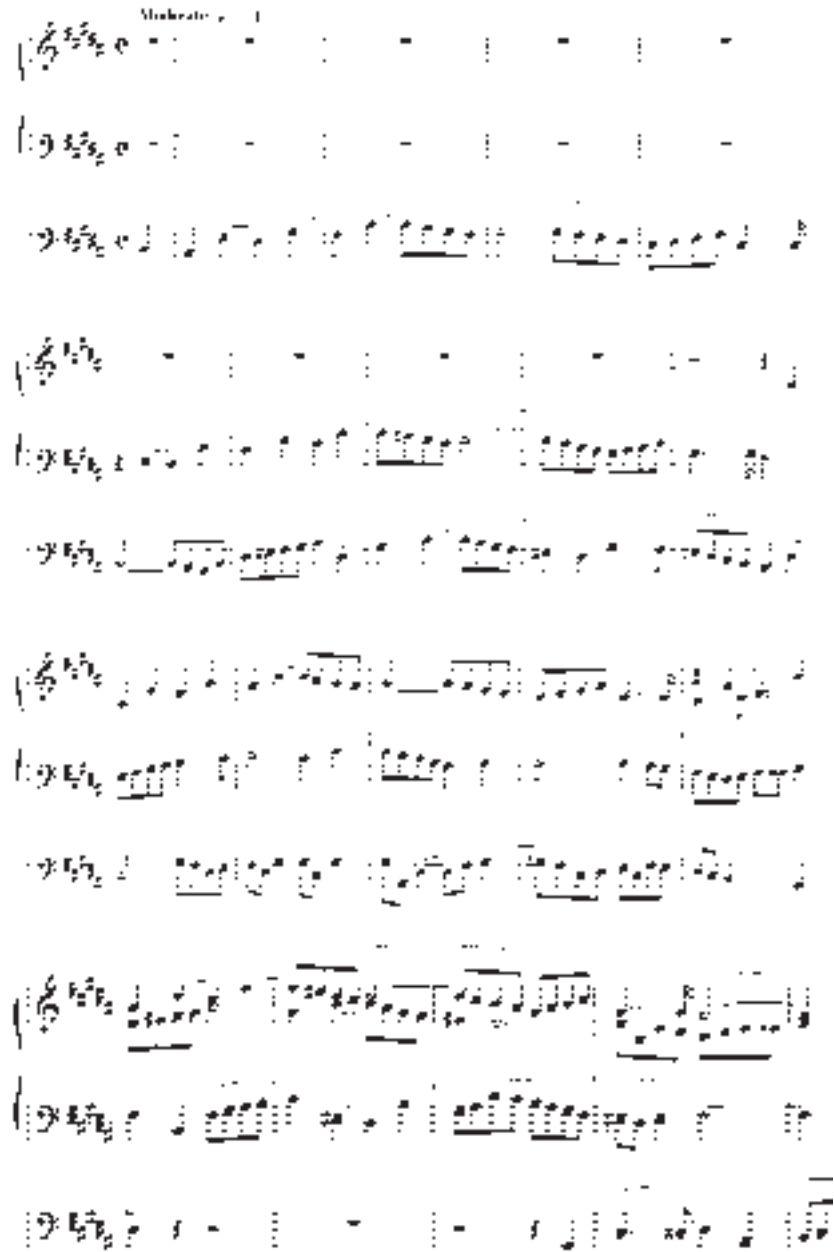
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Example 3. *Fugue in B Major*



As previously mentioned, the piece was written later in life (1941), and is a good example of Dugan’s attempt to create “Croatian” church music for Croatian Catholic services. Dugan wished to remove overtly secular foreign music from church services and replace it with music that he felt represented the conservative Cecilian ideals, and his own native Croatian folk music. It is important to avoid labeling this desire as nationalistic; this was not politically motivated, nor can it be observed from any available correspondence that Dugan was interested in promoting Croatian nationalism. He was absolutely aware of the nationalistic movements in music throughout Slavic lands during his time, but he was primarily motivated by the belief that Croatian music deserved to be elevated to an equal level in the church with the foreign church music then being used in Croatia.

Conclusion

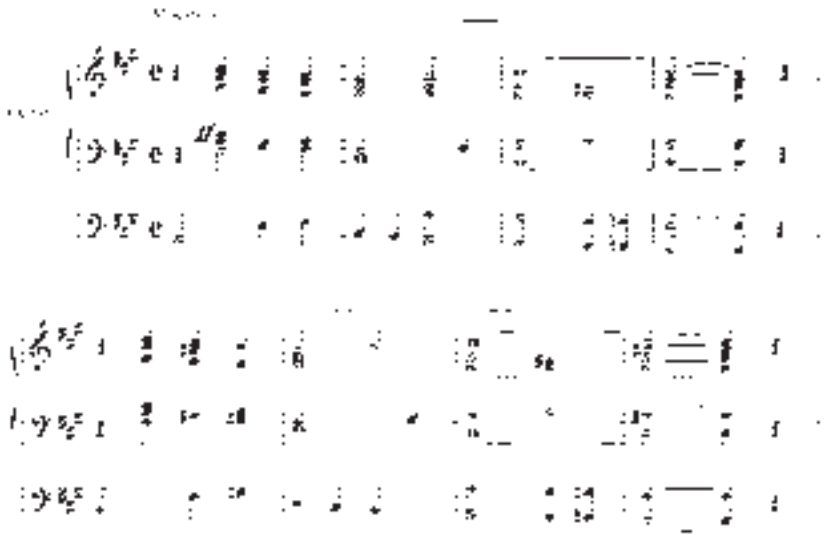
Franjo Dugan’s life work and compositional output represents a major contribution to the Croatian and European musical heritage. Until quite recently, this composer, performer, and scholar has been nearly completely overlooked. Historical developments in Croatia’s recent past combined to prevent the study and dissemination of Franjo Dugan’s compositions, specifically those for the church, which are a large portion of his overall output. As events within the past 15 years have allowed for a more deliberate study of church music and compositions expressly written for Croatian Catholicism, the time for examining this man’s musical development, compositional output, and pedagogical influence has arrived. This research will produce not only a better understanding of Croatian music history and musical development in the early 20th century, but will also strengthen international understanding of European musical development at large. As research begins to develop in countries and societies previously unable

to do so, or unable to draw sufficient international interest from researchers, the complexities of European musical development and culture will be further examined and understood. ■

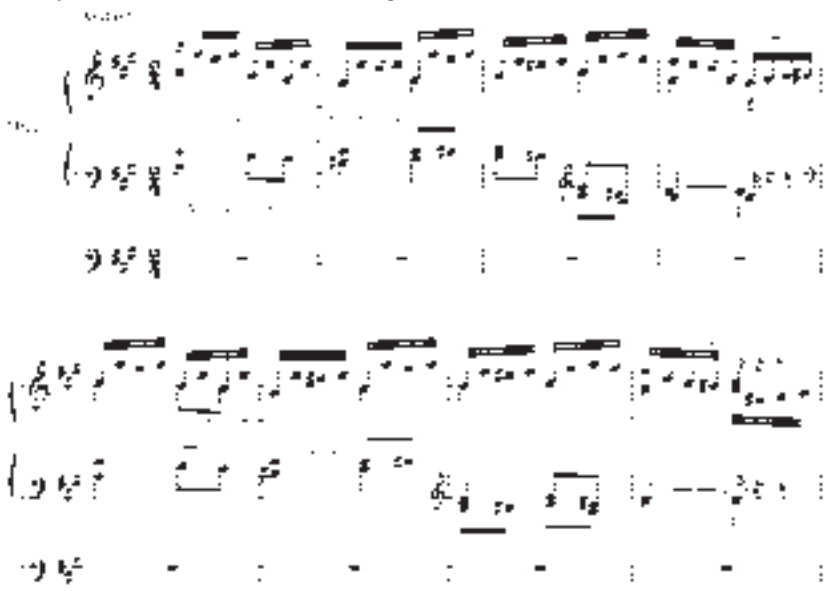
Notes

- 1. Sanja Raca, “Biography of Franjo Dugan,” *Complete Organ Works of Franjo Dugan* (Zagreb: Grafa, d.o.o., Društvo za promicanje orguljske glazbene umjetnosti Franjo Dugan [The Society for the Advancement of the Music of Franjo Dugan], 1998): 167–169.
- 2. Ibid.

Example 4. *Prelude on an Advent Song*




Example 5. *Variation on an Advent Song*



- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Ibid.
- 5. Ibid.
- 6. Raca, 163–165.
- 7. Ibid.

Chris Krampe received his undergraduate degree in church music from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, in 2004, and a master’s degree in church music from the University of Kansas in 2009. He has studied and coached with Marie Claire-Alain, Karel Paukert, James Higdon, and Carl Staplin. In 2003 he took second place for organ at the Music Teachers’ National Association (MTNA) competition in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is currently working on a doctoral degree in choral conducting with Paul Tucker at the University of Kansas,


where he is director of Men’s Glee and Collegium Musicum. Krampe recently directed a choral/dance collaboration of the Medieval mystery play “Ordo Virtutum” by Hildegard of Bingen with members of the KC Ballet and Storling Dance Theater. Krampe’s main research areas are Croatian organ and choral music, for which he has received grants to conduct research along the Croatian Dalmatian coast. During the summer of 2009, he gave a presentation on Croatian music at the College Music Society International Conference in Zagreb, Croatia. He has also presented his research at several conferences throughout the United States. Chris Krampe currently serves as director of music at Prairie Baptist Church in Prairie Village, Kansas.



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