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***Military Bands in Service of the Habsburg ‘Civilising Mission’ in Sarajevo, 1878–1918: Platzmusik and Promenade Concert as Examples***

The Austro-Hungarian government justified the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878 tactically through the modernisation of the former Ottoman twin province. Thus, the colonial cultural politics stressed the ‘civilising mission’ which, in practise, meant the introduction of Central European culture and institutions in the occupied area. Musically, the first novelty in Sarajevo was the Western military band performing exclusively Central European works. Such bands introduced two forms of public open-air concerts – the Platzmusik and the promenade concert – which had very different origins.

The Platzmusik was an old Central European tradition meaning usually a brass band performing in a town square. In such contexts, Austro-Hungarian military bands played in a circle while standing, the bandmaster conducting in the centre. In the early years of the occupation, military bands in Sarajevo often played military marches, sometimes those inspired by the conquest of the new province. The obvious purpose was to express the might of the colonial regime aurally.

The promenade concert, on the other hand, was developed in Paris in the 1830s. Such concerts took place in parks or indoors in halls. The first promenade concert in Sarajevo was arranged under that name as late as in March 1912 after the opening of the Music Pavilion in Franz Josef’s Park. The process leading to the final realisation of the pavilion was long and quarrelsome process due to discords in the city council. Unlike some councillors, the German-language press of Sarajevo did not consider the pavilion and regular promenade concerts extravagant but important for tourism, and the education and refreshment of the citizens. The advocates also saw the pavilion and the concerts as important for the image of Sarajevo as a Central European large city. After the rise of South Slavic nationalism in Bosnia, the repertoires of the Platzmusik and the promenade concerts gave raise to polemics; very few of the pieces were of South Slavic origin. With modest results, the bandmasters tried to silence the critical voices by including folk music arrangements and Croatian compositions in the repertoire.

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