ANALYSIS OF SLOVENIAN SONGBOOKS AND REDESIGN OF THE SCOUT SONGBOOK

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Abstract: *Many songbooks today are the work of a single author or contain a collection of songs by different artists, groups or singers from one or more genres. However, a scout songbook is always a collection of songs for singing, usually with additional sheet music or chord symbols. The need arose to create a new scout songbook that would improve on the existing songbook "Strune do lune" ("Strings to the Moon") in terms of content and design. The redesign of the existing songbook required an analysis of songbooks with a similar structure and, above all, a thorough analysis of the existing scout songbook from which we started. Therefore, in the experimental part, we analysed and thoroughly reviewed ten songbooks that are structurally similar to the original songbook. We analysed various criteria (format size and layout, fonts for the main text, titles and subtitles, size and spacing between text lines for the main text, x-height, special features in chorus notation, layout and categorisation of songs according to a theme, illustrations, cover design, binding method of the songbooks and certain special features such as split text verses on the other side of the page) that significantly influence the usability and visual appearance of the songbook. Based on detailed analyses and comparisons, we established sensible starting points for the design. Based on these starting points, we designed a new songbook entitled "Melodije do galaksije" ("Melodies to the Galaxy") and confirmed that analysing existing songbooks is crucial for the design of a new songbook.*

Keywords: songbook, analysis, redesign, layout design

1. INTRODUCTION

A songbook is a collection of songs that are intended to be sung and are usually accompanied by musical notation or chord symbols. Nowadays, there are numerous songbooks created by a single author or containing a compilation of works by various artists, groups, singers, etc., often covering one or more genres – from folk songs, contemporary melodies and popular music to hymnbooks for church singing and more. Songbooks in Slovenian first appeared during the Protestant Reformation in the second half of the 16th century. Primož Trubar and Jurij Dalmatin, two of the leading figures in the dissemination of Slovenian literature, were also responsible for the creation of the first songs in Slovenian. Church music became an essential part of Protestant rituals, which led to all Slovenian Protestant writers composing hymns until the 16th century. These were mainly translations from German or Latin (Možina, 2003; Levec, 1900; Dalmatin, 1584).

Until the 18th century, Slovenian songs served exclusively religious purposes, and since the church poets did not have a particularly well versed Slovenian language, the hymns they wrote generally had no artistic value. Their primary function was spiritual; they were intended to convey religious messages to the people through melodies. This changed during the reign of Maria Theresa and Emperor Joseph II, when Slovenian poetry, modelled on Austrian literary movements, began to flourish. One such follower of Viennese German poetry was the Augustinian monk Father Damascen Dev, who also ventured into secular literature and gave the Slovenes their first non-religious songs. During this period, Valentin Vodnik was the first to give Slovenian poetry lasting value, especially with his collection "*Pesme za pokušino*" ("*Songs to Taste*"), which was printed by Janez Krstnik Retzer in 1806. In the first half of the 19th century, France Prešeren raised Slovenian poetry to a European level and broadened the horizons of Slovenian poets (Možina, 2003; Levec, 1900; Kidrič, n.d.).

A fascinating and significant part of the literary heritage of the Slovene language is the tradition of handwritten songbooks, which, despite the prevalence of printed editions, survived well into the 20th century. The common people used them mainly for singing in church choirs, on pilgrimages and at folk devotions (Pisk, 2017).

The scout songbook "*Strune do lune*" (*Strings to the Moon*") required a redesign in terms of content and graphics, which necessitated the creation of a new visual product. The first interaction between the user and the publication is created by the visual appearance, which emphasises the content and entices the reader to engage with it. Like any printed material, a songbook needs to be attractive and recognisable. We have designed a new songbook entitled "*Melodije do galaksije*" ("*Melodies to the Galaxy*"), which contains songs and their corresponding chords. When designing the songbook, it was important to place the chords correctly above the lyrics to make it easier to accompany them with an instrument (e.g. a guitar). As the content and text must be aesthetically arranged and logically structured – e.g. to ensure that a song is not continued the next page – we looked for the best possible solution. The aim was to create a coherent visual identity for the new Scout songbook and to design its layout to be both a design upgrade and a mirror image of the existing "*Strune do lune* songbook".

2. METHODS

The first decisive step was a detailed analysis of the songbook "*Strune do Lune*" and the examination of ten collected songbooks with a similar structure, meaning of the lyrics and accompanying chords. We analysed various criteria: Format size and layout, fonts for the main text, titles, size and spacing between text lines for the main text (for which we used a typometer), x-height, special features in the chorus notation, the layout and categorisation of the songs by theme, illustrations, cover design, binding methods of the songbooks and certain unique aspects such as split text verses that continue on the facing page. Some of the parameters have been presented in a table for better visualisation (*Tables 1 and 2*).

All songbooks are bound with soft covers, some stitched, others glued, and some with spiral binding. The songs are divided into a varying number of chapters. The illustrations are mostly in places where there would otherwise be large empty spaces, although "*Jubilate II*", "*Jubilate 3*", "*Med nami je On!*" and "*Odrini na globoko*" only have illustrations at the beginning of the chapters. The covers are very different and usually reflect the content of the songbook. Some songbooks adhere to the principle of not splitting a song over several pages so that you do not have to turn the pages while playing.

Table 1: Analysis of various criteria of existing scout songbooks

Element	Od pomladi do jeseni (*From spring to fall*)	Od jeseni do pomladi (*From fall to spring*)	RBS RST skalar'ca	Rad bi svet naučil pesem (*I want to teach the world a poem*)	Le za Kristusa (*Only for Christ*)
Text block format (mm)	148 × 210	146 × 213	118 × 165	152 × 211	165 × 235
Layout size (mm)	124 × 172	120 × 180	92 × 148	136 × 193	142 × 210
Chapter title Font	Decorative Scripts	Decorative scripts	/	Sans Serif, bold	/
Song title font	Sans serif, bold	Sans serif, bold	Sans serif, bold	Decorative Scripts	Sans serif, bold
Subtitle font	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	/	Sans serif, thin
Stanza font	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	Sans Serif
Stanza font size (pt)	9	9	9	9	9
Chorus font	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic
Chord font	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold

Table 2: Analysis of various criteria of existing scout songbooks

Element	Jubilate II	Jubilate 3	Med nami je On! (*He is among us!*)	Odrini na globoko (*Push it deep*)	Glasbena želja (*A musical wish*)
Text block format (mm)	98 × 157	102 × 159	115 × 169	148 × 210	212 × 209
Layout size (mm)	79 × 135	85 × 142	92 × 145	127 × 182	182 × 175
Chapter title Font	Sans serif	Sans serif	Decorative	Decorative	/
Song title font	Sans serif, bold	Sans serif, bold	Transitional Caslon Old Style, Bold	Sans serif, bold	Sans serif, bold
Subtitle font	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Transitional Caslon Old Style	Sans Serif	Sans serif
Stanza font	Sans Serif	Sans Serif	Transitional Caslon Old Style	Sans Serif	Sans Serif
Stanza font size (pt)	11	11	12	9	9
Chorus font	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Transitional Caslon Old Style, italic	Sans Serif, italic	Sans Serif, bold
Chord font	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif	Sans Serif, bold	Sans Serif, bold

2.1 Analysis of the "*Strune do lune*" songbook

After analysing ten songbooks, a detailed analysis of the songbook "*Strune do lune* was" was carried out according to the same criteria. The songbook "*Strune do lune*" has a portrait format of 148 × 210 mm, with the 224 pages giving the text block a thickness of about 15 mm. The songbook is softbound and stitched. The songs are divided into four chapters – "*Scout Songs*", "*Christian Songs*", "*Popular Songs*" and "*Folk Songs*". The chapters are indicated at the top of each page with a larger, centred title and the chapter names are also indicated by a black rectangle in the outer right-hand margin. The text block is large in relation to the format and measures 123 × 194 mm. The margins are set at 15 mm from the inner edge, 8 mm from the upper edge, 10 mm from the outer edge and 8 mm from the lower edge. On some pages, the songs extend beyond the text block. The text block is divided into two columns with a space of at least 2 mm between them. The pagination is in the bottom right corner (Figure 1).

The font for the lyrics is the linear *Segoe UI*, size 9 pt. Its italic version is used for the choruses, while the bold version is used for the chords above the lyrics. The line spacing is 10 pt. The *Segoe UI* in its bold version is also used for the chapter titles, which are 36 pt in size. The song titles are set in *Penguin* font, size 14 pt, bold, while the author's name is displayed in *Courier New*, size 8 pt.
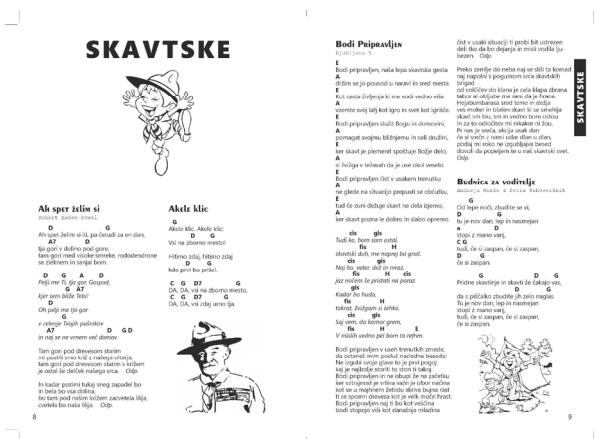

Figure 1: Beginning of a chapter in the songbook "Strune do lune"

The illustrations are stylistically varied and relate primarily to the content of the songs they accompany and are placed in places that would otherwise remain blank. The cover is in four colours: yellow, black, blue and green. The songbook belongs to the scouts who have blue and green on their scarf; therefore, this combination appears on the cover. The front cover is decorated with various elements, such as a dragon and a wolf, which, like the colours, represent the scouts. The guitar and strings on the cover as well as the musical staff and notes, allude to the nature of the songbook, while the depiction of the moon matches with the title. The title is written in *AR Berkley* font, size 72 pt. The chapters begin on the recto pages, immediately after the end of the previous chapter's songs, with no blank pages in between. Some songs continue on the next page, so the pages must be turned (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Image of the open cover of the songbook "Strune do lune"

2.2 Design of new songbook based on analyses

Both "*Strune do lune*" and the majority of the other songbooks analysed are in portrait format, so we decided to keep the same portrait format for the new songbook to ensure similarity and consistency. Next, we selected the main font for the song lyrics. In addition to the existing *Segoe UI*, we considered and compared six potential linear fonts: *Montserrat*, *Lato*, *Open Sans*, *Roboto*, *Source Sans Pro* and *Myriad Pro* (Figure 3).

Segoe UI	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Montserrat	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Lato	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Open Sans	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Roboto	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Source Sans Pro	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance
Myriad Pro	Šerif bo za domačo vajo spet kuhal žgance

Figure 3: Font comparison

We have opted for the Source Sans Pro font, which has a high x-height, which improves readability and which has narrower characters compared to the other fonts. This results in shorter lines or verses that are easier to fit into the narrow text block. The font size has been left at 9 pt, while the line spacing has been

increased from 10 pt to 11 pt. We have kept the italic version for the choruses to ensure adequate differentiation and the bold version for the chords as these need to be easily recognisable.

Once we had determined the font size and line spacing, we set up a baseline grid in Adobe InDesign, created several typical and less typical pages (especially songs with long verses) and used this as a basis for determining the size of the text blocks and their placement in the format. We made sure that no song was split across multiple pages so that you do not have to turn pages when playing or singing.

We have updated the font for the song titles, as the previous font *Penguin* seemed outdated. We opted for *Museo Sans*, an easy-to-read, reasonably geometric, strong font with low contrast. We used *Museo Sans 700* in 12 pt for the songs and *Museo Sans 900* in 38 pt for the chapter titles. The chapter titles were placed on the recto (left) pages, while the songs began on the verso (right) pages. We have retained the chapter indicator at the edge of the page but moved it to the outer edge of the sheet (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Beginning of a chapter in the new songbook

Most of the songbooks analysed use illustrations anywhere on the page to fill blank spaces between songs and enhance the page. We wanted to make sure that the illustrations in the new songbook were stylistically consistent and original, serving primarily to enhance the theme rather than simply fill space. We decided to present the illustrations in the style of an animated book, where the illustrations create an animation by quickly turning the pages (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Creating the illusion of movement with sequential illustrations

We have placed the illustrations on the right pages of the songbook, above the bottom right corner of the page. Because of this placement, we have adjusted the bottom margin of the recto pages and shortened it by two lines to create a little more space for the illustrations. All the songs were placed on page 203, which meant that we needed at least 102 different illustrations, one for each verso page. The concept design included moving illustrations to show the setting up of the camp and the end of the day with singing around the campfire (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Sketch of the set-up campsite

We determined the approximate number of frames needed to depict each activity and sketched the intermediate scenes. We then created vector illustrations using Adobe Illustrator. Due to the small size of the illustrations in the songbook, we simplified all the shapes and tried to depict the elements with as few strokes as possible (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Example of an illustration in the songbook on the right page

Once we had placed the illustrations, we determined the layout of the pagination, as we could not place it in the bottom outer corners as in the previous songbook. We placed the pagination on the right margin of the verso pages, below the rectangle for the chapter title.

For the newly designed songbook "*Melodije do galaksije"*, we wanted to create a graphic link with the cover of "*Strune do lune"*. The existing songbook has elements that extend beyond the edge of the cover, which we found to be an exciting basis for a visual link. On the front cover there is a musical staff with notes that extend beyond the right edge, and on the back cover a crescent moon continues on the spine and wraps around the front cover. We incorporated these elements into the new cover design and ensured that they continue seamlessly from one cover to the next when the songbooks are placed side by side (Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8: Connection of the musical staff on the front covers of the old (left) and the new (right) cover

Figure 9: Connection of the musical staff on the front covers of the old (left) and the new (right) cover

We also wanted to maintain continuity in terms of colour, so we chose a dark blue background with a starry sky and a yellow moon and used green for the musical staff instead of the border. We matched the shade of green a little better to the colour of the scouts' neckerchiefs. The title of the songbook "*Strune do lune*" was realised in the *AR Berkley* font. We experimented with other fonts, but as none of them turned out to be particularly suitable, and to increase continuity between the songbooks, we decided to keep the *AR Berkley* font for the title. It was reproduced in the yellow of the moon, at 55 pt, in the lower third of the cover.

2.3 Print proof and corrections, printing and finishing

The print proof was intended for grammatical corrections and to analyse the user experience. With the help of guitarists and singers, we checked the suitability of the chords and their placement, the appropriateness of the font size, and corrected errors. In the printing house, we verified the accuracy of the colours, the placement of the illustrations and other elements. Finally, we printed the songbook digitally and bound it with a soft cover and a stitched spine.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In our analysis, we have retained the design advantages of the earlier songbook while avoiding certain shortcomings. The *Source Sans Pro* font proved to be highly readable, clear and more suitable than the *Segoe UI* font, which had wider letterforms and consequently longer lines that were more difficult to fit into the margins. The *Museo Sans* font, which replaced the somewhat outdated Penguin font, also proved to be the better choice. Although the new fonts for the text and song titles disrupted consistency somewhat, we successfully updated the design and realised significant benefits (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison of certain elements of the songbooks "Strune do lune" and "Melodije do galaksije"

Element	Strune do lune	Melodije do galaksije
Text block format (mm)	148 × 210	148 × 210
Size of layout grid (mm)	123 × 194	126 × 189
Line spacing (pt)	10	11
Chapter title Font	Segoe UI	Museo Sans, 900
Song title font	Penguin	Museo Sans, 700
Subtitle font	Courier new	Source Sans Pro, thin
Stanza font	Segoe UI	Source Sans Pro
Stanza font size (pt)	9	9
Chorus font	Segoe UI, Italic	Source Sans Pro, Italic
Chord font	Segoe UI, Bold	Source Sans Pro, Bold

The illustrations are stylistically consistent and show scouts and their setting up a campsite, which makes them thematically appealing. They often fill the space at the bottom right of the page, which is normally left blank. This placement makes them visually interesting and ensures a tidy appearance as they are always in the same place. Although the pagination used is not traditional for such songbooks, it is an appropriate solution given the placement of the illustrations. In addition, the page numbers harmonise well with the black rectangle containing the chapter title at the top. Users may need to get used to this layout the first time they use it.

We have designed a new cover while retaining the link to certain elements, colours and fonts of the previous edition (Figure 10).

The print proof was an important step before the final print, enabling us to recognise and correct errors.

Figure 10: Cover of the songbook "Melodije do galaksije"

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the existing songbook and the comparison with similar songbooks were decisive and served as the basis for the design of the new songbook. It has retained or improved the design advantages and avoided the shortcomings of its predecessor. The new songbook retains the green and blue colours on the cover, albeit in an updated look and includes unifying elements such as the musical staff and the moon. It retains the recognisable title of the songbook, but gets a new font for the lyrics that provides more space in the margins, an updated font for the song titles, stylistically consistent custom illustrations with an additional storyline and avoids splitting the songs across multiple pages, making it easier to use. The goal of making "*Melodije do galaksije*" a design upgrade and at the same time a sequel and a mirror image of its predecessor has been achieved.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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