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Just a Few Years Left for Us: The year 1989 in Yugoslav rock music

In this presentation I will discuss Yugoslav rock music from the late 1980s, in particular the musicians' responses to the events of the year 1989. Although one of the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the massive geopolitical change affecting Europe would be the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia just a few years later, already in 1989-90 popular music artists reacted to the events in Europe, responding positively to the end of the Cold War, yet sensing the rise of nationalism and the imminent catastrophe that would lead to the tragic break-up of their own country. I will discuss several key records by rock bands from different Yugoslav republics, released in 1989 and the early 1990: albums 'A Few Years For Us' by Ekatarina Velika (Serbia), 'We Want the Gusle!' by Rambo Amadeus (Montenegro), 'Small Stories about Big Love' by Zabranjeno pušenje (Bosnia-Herzegovina), 'One Step to Freedom' by Galija (Serbia), 'We Are Travelling' by Leb & Sol (Macedonia), and 'The Nineteenth' by Prljavo kazalište (Croatia), and discuss how these artists reacted to the political turmoil of that era. Moreover, I will highlight the fact that, with the dissolution of the communist Yugoslavia, the local version of rock'n'roll, infused with the ideas of cosmopolitanism, equality and social justice, would be pushed to the margins of popular music industry and cease to be a mainstream genre.