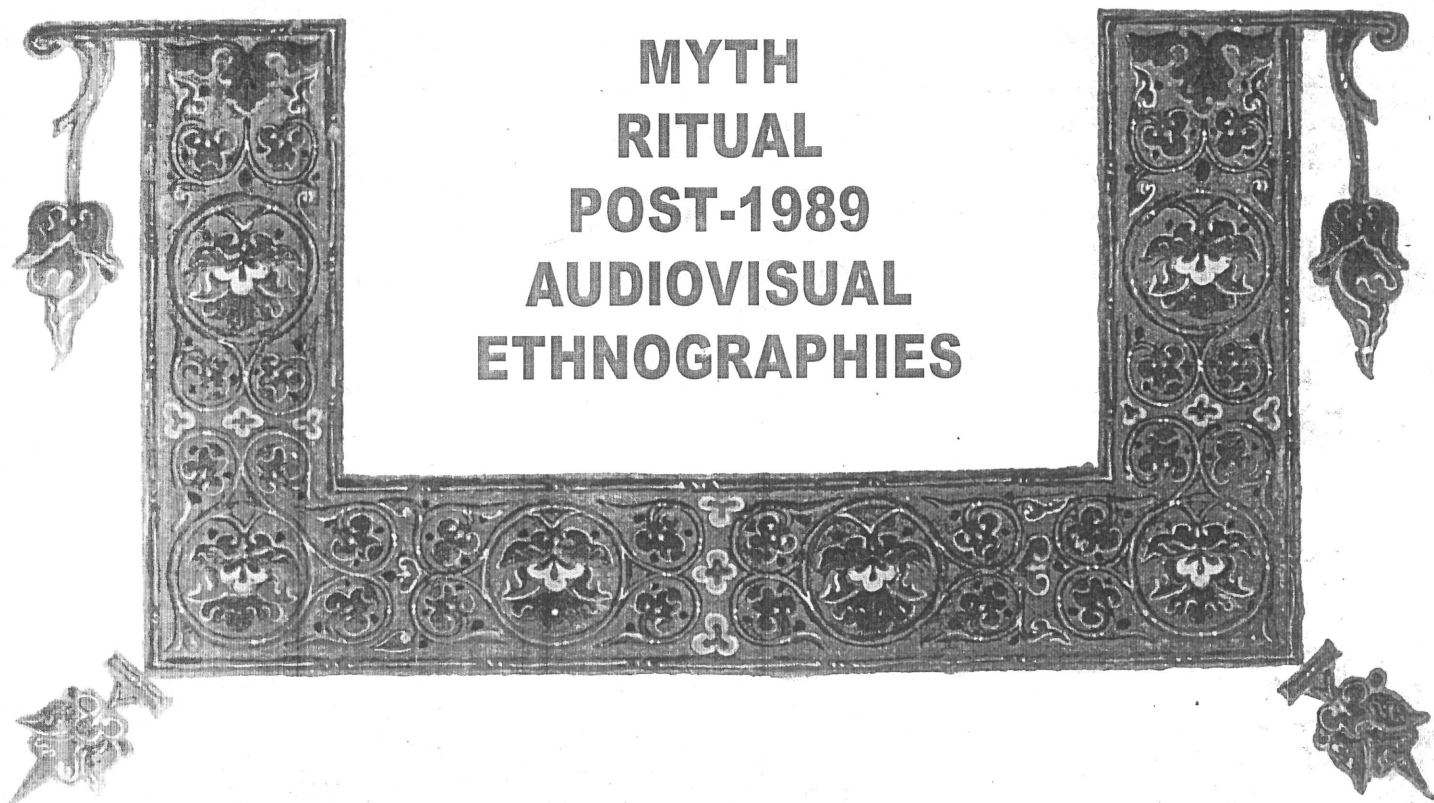


# **MUSIC AND DANCE IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE**

**MYTH  
RITUAL  
POST-1989  
AUDIOVISUAL  
ETHNOGRAPHIES**



This book is based on the Fifth Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe which was held at South-West University "Neofit Rilski" on 2-8 May 2016 in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

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**Goranco Angelov**  
(Shtip, Macedonia)

## TRADITIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS USED IN STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE SINCE 1989

Following the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, traditional musical instruments have had an impact on peoples living in the Republic Macedonia. With the frequent use of traditional musical instruments in the newly created folk music, spontaneously or with a purpose, they became one of the means through which national identity was emphasized and national feeling strengthened among the population. If traditional musical instruments had been heard and seen mostly during festivals of music folklore, folk gatherings, religious celebrations and family celebrations in the rural areas, after the independence, their growing presence in ensembles of folk songs and dances and radio television media was evident. With more aggressive use of the bagpipe, flute, *zourna (zurla)*, *tapan* and other traditional musical instruments, complementation was achieved of something that was in previous years apparently absent or intentionally neglected. Reflecting the growing national consciousness and the impact of state policies on editors in media houses, traditional musical instruments were increasingly prevalent in public media. There is a massive use of traditional musical instruments in the newly created music festivals and songs composed in the spirit of traditional vocal music. More and more these instruments resound with other instruments typical of classical music (violin, guitar, accordion, clarinet,). Unlike 20 years ago, these impacts resulted in increased interest in studying among younger generations, which had not been the case and the number of instrumentalists of traditional instruments has increased. Our opinion is that we cannot ignore a phenomenon which has its own contribution to the national cultural identification and preservation of traditional musical instruments. In our paper, we describe some tunes composed in the spirit of folk music where traditional music instruments are present and which managed to be promulgated, by listening to them to awaken and preserve certain national feelings.

**Keywords:** Identity; Macedonia; traditional music; *zourna/zurla*; *tapan*.

### Introduction

“The anonymous creators of folk poetry have always been following with particular attention, the life of their own people, in different periods of its development, and register it with an extraordinary sense of the word to reconcile it with the melody, almost all historical events [...]” [Konstantinov and Bozinovski 1969:11].

Numerous of chants that were created in the past by anonymous talented artists and transmitted orally through the sung word contributed to preserving many events in the life of the Macedonian people. The everyday events of life were an inspiration for the people to create songs through which they will express their feelings, singing about the finest moments of the life, singing about work from which they were making ends meet, and singing about the tyranny that was made over them by various occupiers. The chants were performed vocally or were accompanied by a traditional musical instrument that was characteristic for the region where they were sung. Traditional musical instruments took over a large part of the rituals that harbored the Macedonian people and had a significant role in building and preserving the national feelings. The musical instruments such as *gajda*, *kaval*, *shupelka*, *kemane*, *tambura*, *zurla* and *tapan*, contributed in building a collective sense of their own, that is different from others, and is a kind of bridge between the past and the present. The use of certain musical instruments allows us to comprehend

how far spread are people with similar musical traditions, habits, customs and history. They would say primitive musical instruments in the past have been based in rural areas and we can say that, recently, these areas were the greatest keepers of these musical instruments.

At the beginning I make an overview which will cover the period from 1945 when the Republic Macedonia defined today's borders as part of the Yugoslav Federation and the Macedonian nation underwent a historical period. This stage lasts until 1991 when the Republic of Macedonia left the Yugoslav Federation, after the long-term attempts through the centuries to achieve the aspiration of the Macedonian people for their own sovereign state. Following Second World War there was a period of massive industrialization of major settlements, a period when much of the population left the rural areas and settled in major cities which had industrial expansion. As people left the rural areas where the traditional musical instruments were harbored, there started a continuous reduction of the use of these instruments.

The traditional instruments continue to be found in rural areas and some of the instrumentalists have transferred them into the urban areas where they have settled. Traditional instruments continue to be used within the ensembles and artistic associations in the country until now. By the early 1990s, the sound of these instruments could be heard mostly at the festivals of folklore, folk religious gatherings and at weddings where rituals are practiced, also on the national radio and television that was filled with exclusively traditional songs. In addition to their traditional use they are inserted in orchestras composed of instruments used in the recent urban instrumental tradition, instruments typical for western music such as accordion, clarinet, violin, guitar, bass, mandolin and other instruments.

### Musical instruments after 1989

The recent stage of Macedonian history from the early nineties brings major changes in the overall political and cultural arrangements. During this period a number of material and spiritual culture values began to be highlighted, which by this time were somewhat suppressed or neglected. As one of the tools for highlighting what is claimed to be national values inherited from the past, a revival of the emphatic use of traditional musical instruments has taken place. In this period, there were the first attempts by authors of the newly created original music composed in the spirit of the Macedonian musical tradition to give a greater role for these instruments. In order to emphasize their importance to the Macedonian people the use of traditional instruments the use of these was intensified beside the instruments used in urban music culture in original music, as. In their compositions, parallel with the instruments that were used in urban instrumental tradition, the composers added traditional instruments and with that enabled the sound mosaic. During this period the Macedonian composers and the arrangers of the newly created songs, were looking for ways to arouse the national feelings of the Macedonians, and one way to achieve this was the use of traditional instruments. The older songs created by unknown artists have great influence on the authors of the newly created songs in their compositions. In term of the present genres in the newly created songs, the authors, in order to emphasize the national feelings, create songs that enchant centuries of struggle for the freedom of the Macedonian people and songs that are part of wedding rituals, songs with migrant themes, songs that talk about nostalgia for the homeland and so on. The use of traditional musical instruments in the newly created song is more and more prevalent, and through using them a sound reminiscent of vocal music and the history of instruments is made. As instrumental accompaniment in the orchestration of these songs these instruments are used: harmonics, guitar, violin,

clarinet, bass and others, but more common is the use of the traditional Macedonian instruments such as *gajda*, *shupelka*, *tambura*, *zurla*, *tapan* and so on. The use of traditional musical instruments in songs composed in the spirit of the Macedonian tradition somehow raises the status of these instruments, even though they appear in another instrumental environment compared to instruments that are not of this region and their resonance is different from the traditionally established perception.

With the development of the musical consciousness, certain authors of newly created Macedonian songs make efforts in their work to incorporate musical motifs associated with the old Macedonian songs, adapting the melodic movements within the established traditional norms. From the musical aspect, we notice that in some tracks the natural features of the traditional instruments are preserved and in some cases only the color of the sound of the instrument is used. When these instruments sound in their natural register, their timbre reflects the real dimension and when they are used in, for them unnatural tonalities, their authenticity is reduced.

For these reasons we will try to be objective and below we will encompass several newly created songs in which traditional instruments are represented, without going into details, we will denounce their value or we will depreciate the work of the authors. We feel the need to point out that many of these songs became folk songs over time losing the status of composed songs, due to the acceptance by the Macedonian population. We will not divide the songs mentioned, according to their genre and according to their popularity, but according to what the sound of the traditional instruments and if this gives the songs an archaic sound." We consider that with the use of the traditional instruments, the author attempts through the sound of these instruments to arouse the national feelings of the listeners no matter in which genre the composed songs belong. The songs presented are chosen randomly and they represented patriotism and mostly have a wedding theme, also songs associated with on going migration. First we will present several songs in which the national feelings are emphasized through the use of traditional instruments and the patriotic theme is also emphasized in the lyrics.

The first remarkable sound representation beyond the traditionally established norms of the instruments, *kaval* and *tapan*, appeared in the early nineties. One of the first songs that bring together the traditional instruments *kaval* and *tapan* is the song "Biser Balkanski" by the interpreter Goce Nikolovski performed at the festival for newly created songs "Folk Fest Valandovo" in 1990. In this song the *kaval* and the *tapan* bring the listener back into the past, giving the song a sense of nationality and the verse of the song is with expressed patriotic content for the unification of the divided Macedonian territory. The characteristic introduction, the instrumental part chorus and solo improvisation of the *kaval* in this song, have remained from the early nineties until today for many generations, representing an informal anthem of the Macedonian people [Kodzabashia 2009]. After the appearance of this song the use of traditional instruments in the newly created songs began to increase continuously. Following a number of songs that used traditional instruments, , there were songs performed at festivals for newly created songs and beyond by numerous interpreters of popular song. In the song with a patriotic theme, "Vardare Pirin kaj ti e" performed by Goce Kasapovski, the leading role has the *kaval* which occurs in the instrumental part and in the refrain. In this song the *kaval* sounds in its natural range without exceeding its technical possibilities and brings traditional overtones to the songs [peugeot2555 2013].

The *zurla* and the *tapan* are instruments that somehow are mostly exploited in newly created songs from different genres. The song "Edna misla imame" performed by Vojo Stojanovski, stirs patriotic feelings among the listener of an ancient unfulfilled desire of the Macedonian people, and that is the unification of the three divided parts of



the geographical area of Macedonia. In this song a powerful introduction of trumpets and tapans prevails, which continues in the first part of the instrumental part throughout all song [Percakovski 2008]. In this song the *zurla* moves in its natural range which further emphasizes its characteristic deep and powerful sound, a sound that has remained in the memory of many generations who grew up with the sound of the *zurla* and the *tapan*.

The traditional instruments are mostly represented in the songs with a wedding theme, because in the past wedding ceremonies were conducted with these instruments [concerning *zorna*, defined as a "wedding-*sabor* instrument", as a symbol of local and ethno-confessional identity of the traditional weddings in Macedonia and Bulgaria – see Lini 1986:6–17, 106–112; Peycheva and Dimov 2002:20–23, 30–34, 145–151]. Their use in the newly created songs is for just such a purpose, these instruments produce sound association of the past. In the song "Svadbа Golema" by Vojo Stojanovski the *zurla* is a leading instrument. The *zurla* plays the characteristic introduction and the instrumental part that have become synonymous at each wedding in the whole territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The *zurla* plays in parts of the song and in the middle it makes an improvisation through which the song reaches its climax. The *zurla* plays the instrumental part in the song "Ete majko resiv da se zenam" from the same interpreter. In this song the tambura also appears which accompanies the vocals during the song, and the *gajda* which plays an improvisation in the middle of the song [Kristijan Blazevski 2008].

In the next song performed by Vojo Stojanovski "Svadbа rumelska Damjane" the *zurla* occurs in the second part of the instrumental part and the second part of the refrain and before the last repetition of the refrain motives. The *tapan* is present throughout the song [Televizija Boem 2014]. The *kavals* have a leading role in several songs of the young interpreter of folk songs Spasen Siljanovski. In the song "Na svadbа me kanat" and "Slavej pile pee" the *kavals* play the instrumental part and also the free improvisation in the middle part [RadioKosal 2010; taneftication 2011]. In the song from Vlatko Miladinovski "Majko ke odam jабana" the *zurla* plays the instrumental part and improvisation while the verses are accompanied by *kaval* [Goceliovski 2011]. The *zurla* and the *tapans* dominate in the poems "Gjurbetija" from the interpreter Ljupco Antovski and in the song "Pusta da e tuginja" [Imroduction 2013a] These songs begin with an introduction by the *zurla*, that also plays the instrumental part and the improvisation in the middle part. The *zurla* and the *tapan* are also played in a similar order in the song "Lazaropole" by the interpreter Naum Petreski [Naum Petreski ONAIR 2011]. In this song the *zurla* is accompanied by the *tapan* playing the introduction which continues into the instrumental part. During the refrain the *kaval* appears. What is distinctive in this song is in terms of improvisation, when the powerful sound of the *zurla* is replaced by the improvisation of the *kaval*. The *tapan* as a faithful companion of the *zurla* is present in all songs where the *zurla* is used with other traditional musical instruments and emphasizes the rhythmic patterns that are characteristic for Macedonian music. In most of the newly created songs while playing traditional instruments we notice the use of a drone is a major feature of the traditional vocal and instrumental Macedonian music. The *gajda* and the *zurla* are instruments which in their natural situation of melodiousness belong to a type of drone instrument and their authenticity is greater when they are used with drone accompaniment. Considering that these songs are harmonically present progressive solutions based on classical harmony and they do not correspond with the static drone, this omission is entirely justified.

## Conclusion

The tendency to go back into the past and find out more information about the use of the traditional musical instruments drifts away from their use nowadays. This may be

an obsession of every researcher of folk music to reach as many sources concerning the use of the traditional instruments in the past whilst at the same time present a certain, some would say a conditional threat of ignoring the situation. Through this work we have tried to look at the period of about 25 years and to realize the presence of the traditional musical instruments in the newly created music composed in the spirit of traditional Macedonian music. In terms of traditional musical instruments used in most of the newly created songs, we notice the use of *zurla*, *kaval* and rarely *gajda* and *tambura*. Perhaps, the less frequent use of the *gajda* is due to the lower range that it has. The *tapan* is present in almost every song in which traditional instruments are used, and also its independent use is noticeable where it enriches the rhythmic pulsation with rhythmic patterns typical for the traditional music. What is also most noticeable in these songs is the absence of the *kemane* an old musical instrument, although it is still used in the north-eastern parts of Macedonia. Unlike the absence of this instrument, we conclude that in the newly composed music in the spirit of the traditional music, the most typical instrument is the *zurla*, a musical instrument commonly used by Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia and recently practiced by the instrumentalists of Macedonian nationality. Viewed from a musical aspect very often in a composition instruments are used according to their natural acoustic tone and technical features which do not correspond with each other. The contrast in terms of their natural sound intensity is balanced in musical studios where you can get the desired dynamics in certain parts of the song. In natural conditions, *zurla* and *kaval*, *zurla* and *gajda* or *zurla* and *tambura* could not play together because of their different sound intensity. We believe that in the future more in depth research can be made about the use of traditional instruments in the newly created songs with folk songs rhythmic-tonal analysis. Here are a few decipherings of the newly created songs in the spirit of the Macedonian vocal tradition where traditional instruments are used (see Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4).

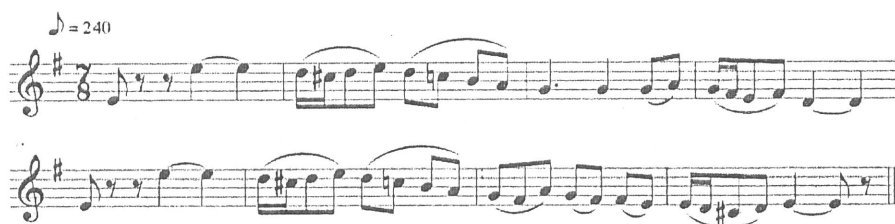


Figure 1. Song name: Biser balkanski. Singer: Goce Nikolovski. Introduction – rubato improvisation on kaval.

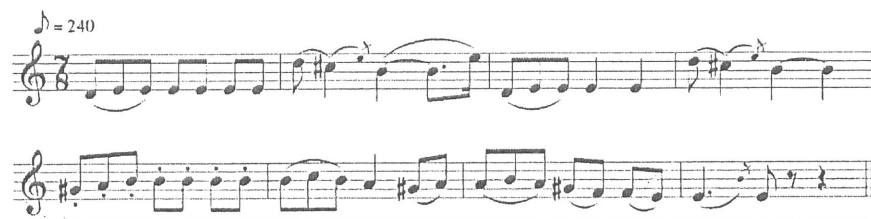


Figure 2. Song name: Edna misla imame. Singer: Vojo Stojanovski. Introduction – rubato improvisation on zurla.

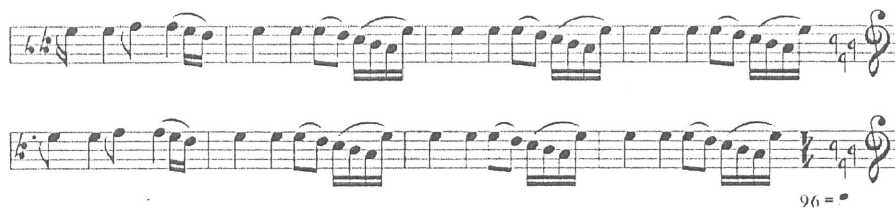


Figure 3. Song name: Svadba golema. Singer: Vojo Stojanovski. Introduction – rubato improvisation on zurla.



Figure 4. Song name: Slavej pile pee. Singer: Spasen Siljanovski.

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2010. Na svadba me kanat [They invite me to a wedding] (YouTube video; Online: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbZrY31MJ00>> (accessed 2016 April 25) (Video showing the newly created song, music – Spasen Siljanoski, text – Jagoda Siljanoska, arrangement – Saso Livrinski, performed by Spasen Siljanoski; 3:46 minute).

**Tanecification.**

2011. Slavej pile pee rano [Nightingale sings early] (YouTube video; Online: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGbcFCGOPMI>> (accessed 2016 April 25) (Video showing the newly created song, performed by Spasen Siljanoski; 4:10 minutes).

**Televizija Boem.**

2014. Svadba rumeliska Damjane [Damian, Wedding Roumelian] (YouTube video; Online: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ8862arzTA>> (accessed 2016 April 25) (Video showing the newly created song, performed by Vojo Stojanovski with dancers of wedding *oro* dance; 5:39 minutes).