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TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENTAL MUSICAL PRACTICES FROM SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA IN A MODERN ENVIRONMENT

Abstract: Instrumental music is one of the most dynamically changing style systems in the field of folk culture. The article examines some variants of traditional instrumental musical practices, typical for the region of Southwestern Bulgaria and new models of their existence. The peculiarities of the musical-folklore dialect are complemented by the complex configuration of coexistence of antiquity as a result of a rich cultural heritage, with the variants of its development and continuation.

Keywords: instrumental tradition, instrumental musical practice, style.

Instrumental music is one of the most dynamically developing traditional practices in the field of folk culture. Ancient models of musical thinking are renewed as a result of various factors affecting musical instruments, repertoire and performers, “as phenomena in folklore that are characterized by a relatively accelerated pace of variation” (Пашкова, 1993, 65). The modern existence of the instrumental tradition in Southwestern Bulgaria is manifested through several models. One of them is a result of the professional development of folk performance, “the functional change of folk instruments and instrumental folk music” (Братанова, 1997) as a result of the creation of a regional “Pirin” version of an orchestra of folk instruments as part of the structure of Pirin Folklore Ensemble. The article examines some variants of traditional instrumental musical practices, typical for the region of Southwestern Bulgaria and new models of their existence. The original look is complemented by forms of coexistence of old and new manifestations in a modern context.

1. The tradition of the *dahare* (tambourine¹) playing and the instrumental style of the tarambuka

A typical local instrumental style for the region of Gotse Delchev is the playing of a tambourine – *dahare*, as part of an instrumental ensemble (usually together with a bagpipe²) to accompany a horo dance or as a rhythmic accompaniment during singing – male or female (Кауфман, 1965, 212; Манолов, 1987, 23; Кацарова, 2008, 38). The main elements that form the style are the result of the peculiarities in the structure of the instrument and its typical playing techniques. The *dahare* is a stretched leather membrane on a wooden hoop – body.

¹ “The tambourine, also called *dahare*, and in the Pirin region – *trempe*, is a percussion musical instrument with one membrane and several metal-sounding bodies” (Джуджев, 1975, 131; Атанасов, 1977, 75, 78).

² Bagpipe – “aerophone instrument”, with a single “reed plate” (Джуджев, 1975, 56–57; Атанасов, 1977, 141).

In certain places on the body there are mounted metal plates – “zils”. The playing of the *dahare* is performed by holding the instrument by the body with one (usually the left) hand, and the sound is reproduced by striking with the palm and fingers of the other (right) hand. Sometimes the fingers of the hand holding the instrument are also involved in the formation of the rhythm. Rhythmic patterns (formulas) are obtained in a way similar and close to the drum³. The difference is that the individual layers of the figures are most often performed by one hand. The beats in the centre of the *dahare* (usually with the palm or with the palm and fingers) are identical to the accent beats⁴ of the *kiak* (the local name for the bigger stick which is used for producing the sound of the drum) on the drum. Blows to the periphery of the *dahare* (usually with the fingers) occur in two ways – a combination between the thumb and the other four fingers or using all the fingers at once. They perform a function similar to the beats with the thin rod of the drum in the formation of metro-rhythmic patterns. The ricochet effect of rubbing the thumb on the membrane of the tambourine is sometimes used. The function of the metro-rhythmic background is performed by the ringing of the zils of the *dahare* as a result of the blows on the membrane. At first glance, the construction of the rhythm seems “simple” and “primitive” compared to the organization of the complex combination between the two hands and the different strokes in the formation of drum models, but good knowledge and mastery of the *dahare* by some performers is a prerequisite for virtuoso technique, as a stylistic feature in their performances. An example of constructing the models in a way similar to the realization of the metro-rhythmic modulation in the drum rhythms is given by Iliya Manolov when performing instrumental music (instrumental ensemble of bagpipe and *dahare* along the Mesta River, including Sersko and Dramsko) to accompany a wedding round dance. Metro-rhythmic modulation is expressed in changing the meter from 2/4 to 7/8 (or 7/16) with the first extended part “so that for the players everything goes smoothly and unnoticed”, as a result of the crucial role of the rhythmic accompaniment, where “the tambourine quite accurately and purposefully rearranges the rhythm so that the two-part equivalent begins to potentially contain the three-part seven-time meter” (Манолов, 1987, 124–125). The basis of the metro-rhythmic modulation is the rhythmic complex, composed of a dotted eighth note with one sixteenth and two eighth notes (or the fragmented variant with two sixteenth notes and one eighth note) in 2/4 meter and its equivalent – one eighth with one sixteenth note and two eighth notes (or the fragmented variety with two sixteenth notes on the second beat) in the 7/16 meter with the first extended part (Ex. 1).

³ Tapan (Drum), a percussion-membrane (double-headed) instrument with two sound bodies which are vibrated by the intervention of an intermediate auxiliary cannon (“kiak”) (Джуджев, 1975, 125; Атанасов, 1977, 77).

⁴ The article “Drumming styles from Southwestern Bulgaria” defines the terms “accent beats”, “metro-rhythmic background”, “metro-rhythmic modulation”, in the analysis of the drumming instrumental style (Кръстев, 2016).



Example 1: *Dahare* (photo – personal archive).



In this way, the metro-rhythmic modulation, as an inner style mark in the drum music, manifests itself in the form of an inter-style connection, uniting two instrumental styles – drumming and playing the *dahare*. The form-integrating factor in the mentioned cases is the dance, which remains unchanged, regardless of the change of size. From this point of view, musical size is largely a “subjective interpretation” of the music and dance researcher. The means of analysis used are those of Western European music theory. They partially overlap with the stylistic features of traditional music. What determines the type of dance mostly is the construction of the rhythmic model as a set of elements of different durability and distribution of accents between them, rather than its variants at different musical sizes and their exact ratios in duration. On the other hand, the change of size gives a specific nuance and type of variability, with a change in the tempo, fragmentation, saturation or “calming” of the dramatic development of the dance.

The rhythmic accompaniment of *dahare* is built on the basis of several formulas, which are constructed in an identical way and their variants in different sizes and tempos (Ex. 2).

♩=110



Example 2

The rhythmic accompaniment of the *dahare* is sometimes the background of group singing – female or male. Such a case of local style is observed in the village of Koprivlen, Hadzhidimovo municipality during the performances of Georgi and Petar Boychevi⁵. The role of *dahare* during singing is rhythmic accompaniment. The model is a kind of “ostinato”, on the basis of which the song develops. The rhythm also plays the role of interludes between the individual stanzas of the song.

The local style of playing the *dahare* as part of an instrumental ensemble is used in the formation of the orchestra of folk instruments in the Ensemble for folk songs and dances “Yane Sandanski”⁶ – Gotse Delchev and the orchestra of the Ensemble “Pirin” – Blagoevgrad. The soft and voluminous sound of the tambourine is combined with various folk instruments, most often accompanied by solo and vocal-instrumental arrangements of traditional song samples. Subsequently, the tambourine, as part of the local tradition of instrumental music, was replaced by the tarambuka⁷, which “is foreign to traditional musical instruments and has entered practice through some orchestras composed in recent times of new instruments” (Манолов, 1987, 23). The structure and manner of playing the tarambuka offers great opportunities for the development of virtuoso technique and masterful performance style. Perhaps for this reason, it replaces the *dahare* in the instrumental ensemble or folk orchestra. As a result, there is a replacement of the local instrumental style with a similar one, which is typical for a significantly larger region. The Macedonian ethnomusicologist Borivoje Dzimrevski mentioned that, the Macedonian chalgia ensembles which are a part of the old-urban music culture in Macedonia (Republic of North Macedonia), beside other chalgia instruments, also consist a tarabuka. Further he mentioned that besides in Macedonia, chalgia ensembles also exists in Kosovo, Albania, Greece and Cyprus. He also makes a comparison between Macedonia chalgia and the music in the Turkish nightclubs and he noticed some similarities (in the Turkish nightclubs the same instruments were used like instruments in the Macedonian chalgia, but the style wasn’t the same on both places). In the end, Dzimrevski summarizes that chalgia is specific music

⁵ In his book *Instrumental music from Southwestern Bulgaria* Iliya Manolov has published a photo of the Manoilovi sisters from the town of Belitsa, who sing, accompanying each other on the tambourines. They were active participants in the fairs “Koprivshtitsa” and “Pirin sings” (Манолов, 1987, 50).

⁶ „Песни и танци от Места 1958“ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_DIKw7Xv5U [Accessed 03.01.2020].

⁷ Tarambuka – “Percussion single head membranophone, with one vibrating stretched membrane” (Джуджев, 1975, 136; Атанасов, 1977, 76).

culture on the Balkan Peninsula, but most present and most developed in Macedonia (Цимревски, 1985).

The technique of playing the tarambuka is similar to the technique of playing the tambourine. The main difference is related to the fact that in tarambuka rhythmic patterns are formed on the basis of a combination of strokes with the fingers of both hands. The specificity in the manner of sound extraction is a prerequisite for the development of bravura and virtuoso technique in terms of fragmentation of very short durations, as a variant development of rhythmic formulas. Some of the performers use a thin stick that they hold with one hand when playing. In this way, the formation of the patterns resembles the drumming manner of playing. The blows with the hand overlap with the blows from the *kia*k at the drum, and the blows with a stick – respectively with the thin stick of the drum. The main difference is the different timbre and dynamic characteristics in the volume of both instruments.

The tarambuka quickly established itself in various instrumental ensembles in Southwestern Bulgaria and in the folk orchestra of the Pirin Folklore Ensemble. The first performer of percussion instruments in the orchestra, Osman Gogov, plays the drum accompanied by dances and tambourine – most often accompanied by songs. Subsequently, he replaced the playing of the tambourine with the performance of the tarambuka. This practice is the basis for building a professional orchestral style with characteristic regional features. The development of musicians with bright individual, virtuoso abilities, who play the tarambuka at the same time as the drum, such as Ivaylo Romanov-Peieto and Radko Assenov, is a prerequisite for the popularization and entry of the instrument into the traditional instrumental style system.

2. The “old” and “new” bagpipe instrumental practices

Iliya Manolov’s study *Traditional Instrumental Music from Southwestern Bulgaria* points the bagpipe as the main musical instrument in the Southwestern folklore region, with the exception of some areas Islamized in the past in the Western Rhodopes. The bagpipers of the older generation, as there are several in each village, are the most reliable performers of traditional ritual and non-ritual music (Манолов, 1987, 12). The place of the bagpipe in the traditional system is related to its determining importance in the formation of instrumental styles. The main components of the stylistic system of the instrumental music of Southwestern Bulgaria are present in the old bagpipe performance style in a concentrated form. The formation of short motifs with motoric movements typically instrumental character is in intonational unity with the formation of melody in vocal music. The untempered character of the intonation is in sync with the song scales. The purely instrumental origin of most bagpipe melodies, their formation is in organic unity with the construction of dance compositional elements – microforms (at the level of dance vocabulary) and macroforms⁸ (at the level of compositional and dramatic construction of the dance form).

⁸ The ethnochoreological terms used are from the research of Ana Ilieva *Theory and analysis of folk dance. Principles of Formation in Bulgarian Dance Folklore* (Илиева, 2007).

The principles of motif-variant construction in the bagpipe dance melodies penetrate in the form of inter-stylistic connections in the system of other instruments. A typical example of this is the music of the dance “Gayda”, “Gayda avasi”, performed by a zurna-drum⁹ band. The very name of the melody creates an association with the bagpipe playing and sound. The musical structure of the dance is composed of alternating short motifs. Some of them stylize the sound of the bagpipe. The main motif with which the dance usually begins is a kind of sound-intonation imitation of a bagpipe. Represents a downward movement from the first degree to the relatively long in duration and stability of the fifth degree of the scale. (Ex. 3).



Example 3

This motif is one of the main and most often appearing in the construction of the musical-dance form. Due to the characteristic bagpipe intonation it has, perhaps it is the main reason for the name of the dance. The form of “Gayda avasi” is constructed on the basis of alternating short motifs on the principle of construction of bagpipe instrumental forms, which alternate with the typical zurna-style, richly ornamented, virtuously constructed free improvisational parts. This is a typical example of the integrative nature of the system, which combines inter-style connections from different instrumental styles. Another such “bagpipe motif” appears at the moment of the break of the musical-dance form when changing the tempo from slow to fast and performing the metro-rhythmic modulation from the drum. This motif has a kind of signal function, which portends future changes in the music form (Ex. 4).



Structures of song origin often appear in the organization of the form. One of the used song themes “Is that luck to you, grandma, to make a pie”, which is performed by the zurnas, is indicated by Iliya Manolov as a deciphered example of bagpipe performance (Манолов, 1987, 144). During the thematic structure, in the places with semantic caesuras – end of phrases, semi-sentences, etc., the instrumental motoric motives with a function that divides or summarizes the form appear again. (Ex. 5).

♩=100-120

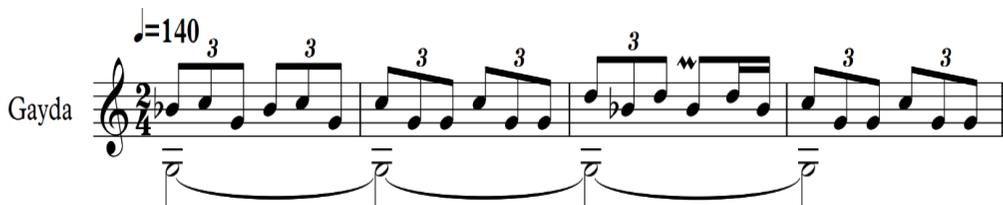


Example 5

Typically, the instrumental motoric motifs, their variant-improvisational character and their role in the formation are an inter-style connection in the different instrumental styles. The change of the movements of eight and sixteenth notes into eight note triplets and vice versa accompanied by “Selsko”, “Chetvorno”, “Za poyas” in rhythm 2/4, is characteristic of both Kemenji¹⁰ and bagpipe style, determined by the variability of the motoric specificity of the thematic material – alternation of short motifs and their variants.



¹⁰ Gadulka (*kemene, kemane*) – “a bowed string instrument with several (usually three) strings, and the sound is produced by direct friction with horse tail hairs stretched on a bow” (Джуджев, 1975, 85; Атанасов, 1977, 162–169).



Example 6

The instrumental ensemble of bagpipes and *dahares* characteristic „of the Mesta, Sersko and Dramsko river valleys“ (Манолов, 1987, 124), accompanied by a dance, is a kind of analogue of the zurna-drum formation, constructed according to similar principles of ensemble music making. In this sense, it could even be argued that the bagpipe and the *dahare* are the older, “rural” version of the formation of the principles of group music in comparison with the urban, professional, multi-ethnic nature of the zurna-drumming formation. The general principles and elements of the stylistic system were considered in the already made analysis of metro-rhythmic modulation in a way that is identical with the zurna-drum ensemble (Манолов, 1987, 124–125).

The modern environment of development of the traditional bagpipe practice in Southwestern Bulgaria is determined by the participation of the instrument in the orchestra of folk instruments of the Pirin Folklore Ensemble. In the initial stage, the old instrumental style has a decisive role in the construction of the orchestral texture. Bagpipe melodies are the basis for the first musical arrangements. An example in this respect is the instrumental play “Bansko melodies”, which later, in the form of a quote, became part of an episode in the musical-dance composition “Spring songs and games from Pirin”¹¹ (music composed by Kiril Stefanov; choreography by Todor Bekirski and Kostadin Ruichev).

The development of the professional orchestral style poses different types of interpretive tasks. One of them is the construction of virtuoso instrumental technique and mastering of performance styles from other regions for the needs of the ensemble's repertoire – “Shop boys-soldiers”¹², music by Rosen Genkov, choreography by Todor Bekirski, “Dobrudzhantsi”¹³, music by Dancho Radulov, choreography by Todor Bekirski, “Vlainki”¹⁴, music by Petyo Krastev, choreography by Todor Bekirski, etc. The orchestral factor defines different functions of the bagpipe or the orchestral group – first and second bagpipes: dropping the bagpipe handle, performing the main melodic line – as a solo

¹¹ “Ансамбъл ‘Пирин’ – Национални празници на професионалното фолклорно изкуство”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ2WIM0TA-M> [Accessed 04.01.2020].

¹² “Todor Bekirski 45 years of folklore art choreography concert ensemble Pirin part 3”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0nuunuSBTA> [Accessed 14.09.2020].

¹³ “Todor Bekirski 45 years of folklore art choreography concert ensemble Pirin part 2”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gx_7FZaNh-g, (after 11:20) [Accessed 14.09.2020].

¹⁴ “Pirin ensemble first performance ‘Old Treasure’”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXXgfrzwWuY&list=PL08C380D84FCB7CB5>, (after 1:45) [Accessed 14.09.2020].

instrument or part of an orchestral *tutti*; performing harmony, counterpoint constructions, etc.

The modern renewal of the old instrumental practice is expressed in the stylization of traditional forms of making music. The final fragment of the dance music “Game”¹⁵ – music by Kiril Stefanov, choreography by Nikolay Tsvetkov creatively recreates the traditional accompaniment of the round dance “Gayda” from the region of Petrich. The main component of the orchestral texture is the holding of the main thematic structure of two bagpipes – one of which plays the main melody, and the other performs bourdon, similar to the traditional zurna instrumental ensemble. The forming elements are built on the basis of the intonations typical for the dance analyzed above.

The intonation formula, the motoric variant repetition and the improvisational character of the musical accompaniment to the “Gaida” round dance are the basis of the “Gayda”¹⁶ musical-dance work, music by Petyo Krastev, choreography by Georgi Garov. The bagpipe solo part stylizes the typical round dance zurna style, built partly on the basis of the old instrumental bagpipe practice. The untempered character of the solo part in separate fragments of the work is combined with a specific orchestral harmonic progression.

A model of modern bagpipe style, formed on the basis of interrelation with the old traditional one, is the style of Kostadin Atanasov (soloist of the NFA orchestra “Philip Kutev”). Certain elements of his performing style are shaped by the specific ornamentation, intonation structure and thematic material, borrowed from the traditional instrumental and vocal music of Southwestern Bulgaria. Such an example is the author's play “Macedonian Rhythms”¹⁷, with music composed by Georgi Andreev for solo bagpipe (performed by Kostadin Atanasov) accompanied by an orchestra. The basis of the musical form is the creative interpretation of a traditional zurna melody to accompany the dance “Shirto”. In the form of stylization in a modern interpretive model, the solo part integrates the folk melody, the elements of the zurna style and the new professional bagpipe style.

3. A pair of pipes and an orchestral part – first and second pipe¹⁸

The style of *a pair of pipes*¹⁹ in some regions of the Velingrad and Gotse Delchev regions (Качулев, 1962, 201; Манолов, 1987, 21) is in a deep organic connection with the models of the traditional vocal polyphony. In his research Ivan

¹⁵ „Ансамбъл ‘Пирин’ – Игра от Петрич“ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAeVQREYwJM> [Accessed 04.01.2020].

¹⁶ “Petio Krastev Gajda”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DveTSgr9280> [Accessed 14.09.2020].

¹⁷ “Georgi Andreev – ‘Macedonian rhythms’ solist – Kostadin Atanasov”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELZ1v_ICnfs [Accessed 04.01.2020].

¹⁸ Pipe (kaval) – “aerophone instrument”, which is a three-joint cylindrical tube, open at both ends (Джуджев, 1975, 17; Атанасов, 1977, 103).

¹⁹ Regional version of the pair of pipes – two simple instruments “with the same basic tone. The first player always plays a melody, and the second – in unison or bourdon tone” (Атанасов, 1977, 102).

Kachulev traces the distribution of *a pair of pipes* in the Western Rhodopes and the peculiarities of the formation of the instrumental ensemble depending on the distribution of vocal folklore polyphony. The bourdon-type duet is an interstitial connection between singing and instrumental pipe practice. In the regions characterized by unison singing, *a pair of pipes* play in unison (Качулев, 1962, 213). Another connection between the vocal music and the instrumental pipe style is manifested in specific cases of instrumental antiphony (Качулев, 1962, 211).

The linear organization of the pipe instrumental ensemble, consisting of playing in unison, variants of heterophony and bourdon duet, is close to the group *zurna* playing, especially in the local Gotse Delchev *zurna* style (Пейчева, Димов, 2002, 117).

The modern environment of the traditional pipe practice from Southwestern Bulgaria is largely the result of the creation and development of the orchestra of folk instruments of the Folklore Ensemble “Pirin”, Blagoevgrad. The musicians form their interpretation through the orchestral playing and the creative requirements set before them by composers and conductors. The main directions of change are related to the peculiarities of modern performance: increasing technical capabilities; expanding the range of interpretive elements, in connection with the function of the flute in the orchestra; virtuoso pipe technique in the performance of passages, various ornaments, specific instrumental techniques, borrowed from classical wind instruments such as flute (double, triple tongue, *frulato*), etc.; formation of an orchestral group of first and second pipe; free use of the various registers²⁰; performance of harmonic filling, counterpoints, etc., as part of the orchestral factor. According to specific creative tasks in some musical works the specifics of the regional performance style are replaced by styles from other musical folklore dialects – Central Western Bulgaria, Thrace, North-western Bulgaria, Dobrudzha, etc.

The connection with the regional style of Southwestern Bulgaria is expressed in the stylization of the traditional performing practice in works interpreting folk music samples from the region. In the musical-dance composition “For Freedom”²¹ with music composed by Kiril Stefanov and choreography by Todor Bekirski and Kiril Dzhenev, one of the fragments is built on the *zurna* round dance melody “Boyna”. The performance of the thematic structure of the first and second flutes stylizes the instrumental practice of playing *a pair of pipes*. Both pipes play in the *kaba* register. The first pipe plays a melody and the second bourdon. In the same way – melody and bourdon are organized and the music texture in the *zurna* ensemble.

The instrumental play “Ethno-Balkan Melodies”²², music by Petyo Krastev, begins with the stylization of the old instrumental practice of *a pair of pipes*. The

²⁰ In the traditional instrumental practice, the playing is mainly in the low register – *kaba* (Манолов, 1987, 21).

²¹ “За Свободата – Ансамбъл ‘Пирин’ – Благоевград”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnYU6vcgX7c> [Accessed 14.09.2020].

²² “Petyo Krastev – Ethnobalkanski melodii”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-rMLsalme0> [Accessed 14.09.2020].

beginning of the work creates associations with the sound environment of the traditional ancient instrumental manner.

The peculiarities of the music texture in the instrumental ensemble of the Pirin Folklore Ensemble build certain stereotypes in the orchestral part of the pipes. In this way a modern “southwestern Bulgarian” manner of playing pipe was formed. The traditional instrumental practice passes into a professional, contemporary orchestral style.

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The considered traditional instrumental practices are part of the stylistic system of the regional folk music. The examples of their contemporary manifestation through professional performance and creativity demonstrate the specific refraction of certain trends in the development of the instrumental tradition. The peculiarities of the musical-folklore dialect are complemented by the complex configuration of the coexistence of antiquity as a result of a rich cultural heritage, with the variants of its development and continuation.

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ТРАДИЦИОНАЛНИ ИНСТРУМЕНТАЛНИ МУЗИЧКИ ПРАКТИКИ ОД ЈУГОЗАПАДНА БУГАРИЈА, ВО МОДЕРНА СРЕДИНА

Резиме

Инструменталната музика е еден од стиловите, кои најдинамично се менуваат од областа на народната култура. Статијата разгледува некои варијанти на традиционални инструментални музички практики, типични за југозападниот регион на Бугарија и нови модели на нивното постоење. Особеностите на музичко-фолклорниот дијалект се надополнети со комплексната конфигурација на соживот, меѓу антиката, како резултат на богато културно наследство, со варијантите на нејзиниот развој и продолжување.