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The traditional musical activities *singing* and *music playing*, associated with archaic musical-folklore practices, existed in Bulgaria in their “classical” form until the end of the 19th century. Folklore cultural tradition is inherent in pre-modern times. It functions in agrarian societies with a rural, patriarchal culture, and is manifested in local dimensions. Traditional singing and music playing create folklore musical texts characterized by their oral nature, variants and collectivity.

The Revival period (18th-19th century) and the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1878 bring about economic and social changes. The folklore tradition continues to exist, but in new cultural conditions. Modern times in Bulgaria make different cultural systems meet – industrial and agrarian, western and local, non-folklore and folklore. This encounter projects itself also on folklore/traditional music. Folklore singing and music playing continue to exist, but along with the classical forms, transformations and innovations appear in the functioning and in the structure of the musical texts: non-local and town-like character, authorship, written and audio fixation, hybridization.

Traditional musical activities in Bulgaria are regarded as a classical model, but from a historical point of view they represent medieval forms of the tradition, existing in one or other form in the new conditions of modernity as well. The vision put forward is based on materials that registered the tradition in Bulgaria mainly in the 20th century.

The traditional musical activities singing and music playing are an essential component of the culture of the Bulgarian traditional agrarian society. The musical activities, as part of this cultural system, are not only music playing and singing, but also a manifestation of a worldview, of values, of social roles. Folklore singing and music playing contain emotional-

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psychological and aesthetic aspects, characteristic of traditional culture. Together with the ideological aspects, traditional musical activities also have a forming and structuring role in the realization of essential for the folklore culture categories like space and time, manifesting themselves in oppositions like workday – feast, own – alien, sacred – profane, men’s – women’s.

The patriarchal nature of traditional folklore culture in Bulgaria had also an impact on the gender differentiation of the musical activities. The division of the traditional musical activities according to the gender (singing was women’s priority, playing was men’s) was preserved prior to the occurrence of an entire change in the system of the patriarchal music culture.

Traditional singing

The singers, performers of traditional music, have their own social characteristics, determined by sex, profession and ethnic group. Traditional singing in Bulgaria as an activity is mainly associated with women’s performances. Typical for certain regions of the country is also men’s singing (the Rhodopes, Southwestern Bulgaria, and Mid Western Bulgaria). Traditional singing is usually a specialized activity, but in particular cases there is a certain degree of professionalism among the performers (blind men – epic singers, women lamenters).

Traditional *singing* is individual and in groups (collective), with or without instrumental accompaniment. Collective singing is performed by women’s, men’s and mixed groups. It can be sung in a one-part and in a multi-part fashion. In the Bulgarian tradition one-part singing prevails, but there exist regions in which leading is traditional polyphony (Mid Western Bulgaria, Southwestern Bulgaria, the regions of Pazardzhik – Ihtiman, Velingrad and Nedelino). Bulgarian traditional singing is characterized by a number of archaic features among which is the anti-ponic performance – a performer’s practice of sequential singing in which one woman or one group sings the stanza, and the other one repeats it.

Traditional vocal *music* in Bulgaria bears strongly manifested formal music features such as: narrow tone volumes, prevailing gradual movement in the melodic structuring, musical thinking in diatonic, pentatonic and chromatic mode systems, specific ornamental styles, and meter-rhythmic variety. The original rhythmic symmetries in Bulgarian songs are manifested through a variety of asymmetric (irregular) meter-rhythmic forms. These meter-rhythmic phenomena significantly differ from the classical Western European musical metric system, and therefore are characterized as “exotic meter rhythm”, “Bulgarian rhythms”. The traditional multi-part vocal music of the Bulgarians is most frequently a two-part one of the bourdon type (an archaic multi-part form in which one part continuously supports a sounding bourdon tone, and the other one performs a melody).

Traditional singing in Bulgaria is subjected to stable norms for functioning, manifesting themselves in concrete *performers’ contexts*. In the reproduction of the song tradition, a strict set of rules is observed on who, when, where, how, what and why can sing. This normativeness outlines the diversity of traditional singing in various performance contexts, as a result of which different types of developed song cycles are formed.

Traditional singing in Bulgaria is organized in the following types of song cycles functioning in a syncretic unity with the whole socio-cultural system of the agrarian society: ritual, work, and festive. Ritual songs belong to the calendar and the family rite cycles, in work cycles songs on harvest and on working-bees (*sedyanka*) prevail, and the festive ones usually accompany feast tables and folk dances (*horos*).

Ritual songs are sung at significant moments of the calendar cycle. Richest in songs are Christmas and *St. Lazar’s (St. Lazarus’)* Day. These are rites typical of which are developed song cycles. Other calendar moments accompanied by ritual singing are: New Year, St. Jordan’s Day (Epiphany), *Babinden* (Granny-Midwives’ Day), Easter, St. George’s Day, Midsummer Day, etc. Calendar ritual song cycles reflect mainly the society – nature relationship and family ones are connected with the individual – society relationship. Bulgarian family rituals reflect the most significant moments in one’s

life cycle – birth, marriage, death. Wedding ritual singing is performed by maids in groups and by men individually, and funeral song lamentation is women's individual and collective one. Singing which accompanies rituals has different functions – sacred, socializing, aesthetic. Ritual singing and songs intersect the orbits of the individual and the social, the life cycle and the calendar circle, the time of forefathers and the time of the present and the future. In rituals the most archaic layer of traditional singing is preserved. Songs are characterized by narrow ambits, formula structure and mythological texts. Their performance is connected with ritual actions, singing is accompanied by motor gestures (often dancing), pronouncing ritual words (blessings, incantations) and dealing with ritual objects (bread, bunches of flowers, shepherd's crooks, dolls, a flag).

Harvest singing is an essential part of work activities – it marks the time and the space of harvesting and the road between the home and the field. The slow and extended harvest songs harmonize with the rhythm of the hard harvest work. Singing at a working bee (*na sedyanka*) is connected with the work process as well as with the respective communicative situations. Among the songs at a working-bee there are lively ones, catchy, with love themes (in harmony with the signals of premarital communication), as well as with ballad and historical plots.

Singing on a *horo* is a group singing, corresponding to the collective principle in traditional dances. Dance songs are performed at a moderate speed. Singing at the table unites the celebrating people, the respective songs being heavy, slow, with rich ornamentation, with epic, historical and ballad motifs.

Traditional singing in Bulgaria has ***ethnic and confessional characteristics*** which are an important mark of the musical uniqueness of the different communities. A specific ornamental singing is typical for the Romanies, choir singing for Armenians, multi-part singing for Vallahs, one-part singing for Jews, religious singing for Catholics, and ritual wedding singing for Karakachans.

Traditional singing with accompaniment

Characteristic of the Bulgarian tradition are both singing without any accompaniment and vocal performance accompanied by one traditional musical instrument or a group of instruments. Prevalent is the singular use of traditional instruments in singing, most often a *kaval* (a type of transverse flute), *gayda* (bagpipe), *gădulka* (a type of Gamba), *tamboura*. Rarer in the tradition is singing with accompaniment of a group of instruments – several *tambouri*, a *tamboura* and a *tarambuka* (an instrument of the Derbukka/ Derbouga/Danbec type), a *gayda* and a *tăpan* (drum). Traditional singing with instrumental accompaniment is associated with contexts of performances, such as the table and the working-bee, and in more recent times – the folk dancing (*horo*). In the different regions of Bulgaria could be observed: epic singing with a *gădulka* (Mid Western Bulgaria, Dobrudzha, Thrace), singing at table with a *tamboura* (Pirin region, Velingrad region, the Rhodopes, Teteven region, Razgrad region), singing at table and at working-bee with a *kaval* (Thrace, Dobrudzha, Mid Northern Bulgaria), singing at table and at working-bee with a *gayda* (the Rhodopes, Strandzha).

Traditional singing with the accompaniment of a musical instrument is also typical of other ethnic and confessional groups living in Bulgaria. Among the Turks singing is accompanied by *saz* (a large tambourine), *zil masha*. Among the Gypsies from Southwestern Bulgaria could be observed singing and dancing with the accompaniment of *dayre* (tambourine), *trempe*, and in Thrace – singing at fairs and while conducting a bear, accompanied by *gădulka*, violin, and in more recent times – *bayan* (an accordion with buttons on both sides) or accordion. Singing with the accompaniment of *kaval* is common among the Karakachans and the Vallahs. Bulgarian Muslims sing with the accompaniment of *tamboura*, *baylama*.

Traditional music playing

In the traditional music of the Bulgarian lands aerophonic (wind), cordophonic (string), membranophonic (percussion) and idiophonic (self-sounding) *instruments* are used. Most

common among the aerophonic instruments are: *svirka* (pipe), *kaval* (a type of transverse flute), *duduk* (a type of straight flute with a mouthpiece), *dvoyanka* (a kind of pipe), ocarina, *gayda* (bagpipe), *zurna* (a wind instrument with a double reed plate of the oboe type). Widely used cordophonic instruments in the tradition are *gădulka* (a type of Gamba) and *tamboura*. Among the membranophonic instruments most popular are: *tăpan* (drum), *dayre* (tambourine), *tarambuka* (an instrument of the Derbukka/ Derbouga/Danbec type); and among the idiophonic – *zvantsi* (bells), *hlopki* (cow-bells), *brămbazăk* (jew’s harp), *wooden spoons*. Apart from being used by Bulgarians, most of the traditional musical instruments mentioned here are also used by different ethnic groups. The results of the questionnaire study show that in recent years, along with those instruments, traditional music playing includes some western instruments that penetrated after the 19th century, such as trumpet, cornet, clarinet, accordion, violin, mandolin, and guitar.

In Bulgaria’s traditional culture **players** of traditional musical instruments are men. Music playing requires, apart from the gift, some specific skills which are achieved in the process of training and specialization. The player may be part of the village community and may take part in farming, but he may also be a professional who makes his living by music playing. The village player may be a shepherd, a farmer, and a craftsman whose music playing accompanies rituals, feasts and work activities within the family, the neighborhood or the village. Such musicians perform at family tables, at working bees, while pasturing sheep. Unlike village players, professional players show a high degree of specialization in the musician’s work, which is for sale. Usually these are famous players looked for outside their own village as well. Often the professional players serving the feasts of others are “foreign” – both socially and ethnically. It is no coincidence that a considerable part of the professional musicians in Bulgarian traditional culture are Gypsies. Professional players perform at large kin, town, village or non-local feasts (weddings, treats, folk dances, fairs).

Traditional **music playing** is individual or in groups, on its own or for the accompaniment of songs and dances. Prevail-

ing in traditional music is the singular use of musical instruments (music playing only, or music playing for the accompaniment of singing or dancing). Group instrumental performance in the tradition is connected both with established formations and with the spontaneous gathering of local players and instruments. Among the established formations for group music playing are *zurna* and *tăpan*, *gayda* and *tăpan*. In certain situations such as a wedding, a village square *horo*, and a fair, the practice may be observed of forming a group from the available players with instruments typical for the region. Such instrumental groups include: *kavals* and *gădulka*s (rebecs); several bagpipes; a *kaval* and a *tăpan*; a *gădulka* and a *tăpan*; several *tambouras*; a *tamboura* and a *tarambuka*; a bagpipe, a *kaval* and a *gădulka*; a bagpipe, a *kaval* and a *tăpan*. In group traditional music playing after the 19th century, widely used become new instruments (accordion, wind instruments, clarinet, cymbal, violin, guitar) and formations (brass bands, the Dobrudzha *troyka*, wedding orchestras).

Traditional instrumental *music* is one-part and multi-part. Bearers of multi-part music are instruments like *gayda*, *dvoyanka*, *gădulka*, and formations like two *zurnas* and a *tăpan*, *chift kavals* (a pair of kavals). Traditional instrumental formations can play both in unison and multi-part. Instrumental music is characterized by a large variety of meter-rhythmic forms. Among the many measure forms in instrumental music related to traditional dancing most common in Bulgaria are: 2/4 (*Pravo horo*), 5/8 (*Paydushko horo*), 7/8 (*Rachenitsa*), 9/8 (*Daychovo horo*), 11/8 (*Kopanitsa*), 12/8 (*Petrunino horo*), 13/8 (*Krivo horo*, *Elenino horo*), 15/8 (*Buchemish*).

Traditional instrumental music sounds in different *performing contexts* – ritual, festive, on work. Music playing outlines the time, the space and the structure of various rites. The musical instrument takes part as an object and as a sound in many family and calendar rituals. A specific emblem of the wedding is playing a *gayda*, or the combination of *zurnas* and a *tăpan*; instrumental music is part of traditional funerals – brass bands in Northwestern and Mid Northern Bulgaria, *kaval* and a *dob svirka* in Dobrudzha. Separate instruments and instrumental groups make the music in calendar rites such as: New Year's masquerade dances, *Rusalii* (men's

ritual dances), Midwives' Day, Strict Shrovetide masquerade dances, *Nestinarstvo* (fire dances), *Kalushari* (men's ritual dances). Instrumental music is an inseparable part of the two basic forms of traditional feasts – at table and at folk dances (*horo*). Playing traditional musical instrument accompanies work activities during the working-bee, during shepherding, less often on harvest.

Traditional instrumental music has specific manifestations in the different *ethnic and confessional groups* inhabiting Bulgaria. Some traditional musical instruments are typical for certain ethno-confessional communities (the *zurna* and *tapan* formation and the cymbal – for the Gypsies; the *shofar* – for the Jews; the *saz* and the *zil masha*, a pair of small cymbals mounted on a forked spring, fork-cymbals – for the Turks). Traditional music playing in these communities is usually related to ritual and festive contexts (circumcision, wedding and Bayram among Muslims; wedding, Rosh Hashana and Simhad-Torah among Jews; Bango Basil, St. George's Day, wedding among Gypsies).

Musical-folklore dialects

The local and the regional specificity of traditional culture determine the dialectal differentiation of musical folklore. Traditional singing and music playing in Bulgaria can broadly be divided into “Eastern” and “Western”, corresponding to the *yat* border (according to the pronunciation of the Old Bulgarian vowel *yat*). Established in Bulgarian folkloristics is the differentiation of several smaller musical-folklore regions that unite the local style characteristics at a regional level. Western musical-folklore dialects comprise the following regions: Northwestern Bulgaria, Mid Western Bulgaria, Southwestern Bulgaria and the transitional regions Ihtiman Sredna gora and Velingrad region. Belonging to Eastern musical-folklore dialects are: Mid Northern and Northeastern Bulgaria, Dobrudzha, Thrace, the Rhodopes, Strandzha and the Srednogorie transitional region.

The list of traditional musical activities that is worked out in this project conforms to the knowledge of musical-folklore dialects well-established in Bulgarian science, as well as to

the information sources that are fundamental to the study – questionnaire cards grouped according to the administrative division of Bulgaria into 28 regions.

The regional lists of traditional musical activities register features that are specific for the corresponding regions. Along with some traditional musical activities common for the region, information is also offered about some unique instrumental and singing performing styles (*na visoko* singing from the villages of Dolen and Satovcha, *na atsane* ‘hiccupping’ singing from the town of Bansko, two part singing from the Nedelino region, Gypsy music playing from Kotel, etc.).



The contemporary state of traditional musical activities portrays a picture which is different from the so-called classical one. Phenomena and processes such as modernization and globalization offer new regulations for the functioning and the development of musical practices, whereby active processes of transformation and disintegration of traditional singing and music playing are taking place. The features of local specificity become more diffusive at the expense of national unification. The mass media and the modern technologies contribute to the opening up towards other cultures, music genres and styles. Different features of the tradition related to the figures of the singer and the player change, as do the functioning of the music, the musical forms, the musical instruments and the instrumental groups. Almost extinct are some relict, unique forms of the musical tradition such as *na visoko* singing and *atsane* singing in Southwestern Bulgaria. This necessitates the investigation and the protection of the archaic and ethnically specific musical activities that have been preserved to the present day. Traditional singing and music playing ought to exist not only in museum exhibits, conserved in decipherment, texts, sound recordings and video images, but also as surviving values, the deed of living men and women of art realizing in a living environment the elements of the inherited tradition.



From the middle of the 19th century, changes appear and continue to occur at a slow pace in the classical landscape of the Bulgarian folklore due to the location of Bulgaria in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula and to its historic development. The considerably faster processes of defolklorization in the rest of the Balkan peoples are expressed in: a rejection of the standards of classical folklore, as a result of which the link between rite, music and dance is lost; expansion of the interrelationships between ethnic cultures, expressed in folklore music as a transfer of some melodic, meter-rhythmic and other stereotypes from ethnos to ethnos; Europeanization of musical-folklore matrices (most clearly these processes take place in the northern territories of Bulgaria), Orientalization of the musical-folklore matrices (more characteristic of the southern territories of Bulgaria). Europeanization and Orientalization involve all the territories of the Balkans but the processes in the Bulgarian lands take place as reflexes of interactions or even as reflexes of reflexes having occurred earlier in the neighbouring Balkan territories. Thus the central Balkan territory, populated by Bulgarians, turns out to be the last and the most internal sector in which the foreign musical ideas gather and intertwine. Balkanized and used in synchrony or in opposition to the musical matrices of the peoples through which they passed before touching the Bulgarian territory, they sequentially involve in the direction from outside to inside the ethnoses populating the peripheral regions of the Balkans – Slovenians, Croats, Romanians, Greeks, Turks, less so Serbs, Montenegrins, specifically Bosnians and Herzegovinians, Albanians. Even the processes of Europeanization of the music in the Turkish towns, situated in the Mediterranean, precedes the identical one in the Bulgarian towns. The interior of the peninsula, populated by Bulgarians, is involved in these processes considerably later, to a considerably lower degree and in a different way in the different dialects, due to the contacts of each one of the dialects with the neighbouring ethnoses, Europeanized and Orientalized earlier. And music and dance need no translation when transferred.

In the middle of the 19th century in the Bulgarian towns penetrate romances, town songs and instrumental melodies

that originated in neighbouring and non-neighbouring peoples – Turks, Greeks, Hungarians, Romanians, Moldavians, Ukrainians, Austrians, Serbs, Italians, Germans, French, Poles, etc. These give birth to a similar kind of creativity in Bulgaria – initially as performances of translated texts with foreign melodies and later as a combination of Bulgarian texts with tunes in the style of a foreign musical culture, and finally also as tunes and texts created by Bulgarians in the style of some of the foreign matrices but also in the style of a new Bulgarian town tradition establishing itself.

The new genre is acquired actively in the large towns and considerably slower in the smaller towns and villages. It markedly penetrates in some of the classical folklore cycles – in the working-bee cycle, in the folk dance cycle, and later in the St. Lazarus' Day's cycle, in the wedding cycle, etc. This process continues uninterruptedly to the present day, but it affects the different dialects in different times and in different ways.

The new aesthetic and formal criteria initially imposed by the town song and the romance and further developed under the influence of the Bulgarian school, weaken, and in some regions such as Northwestern and Mid Northern Bulgaria, even oust the classical folklore criteria. In those cycles in which it is not possible to change the old song repertoire, the new town aesthetics brings about a decline and even a disappearance of the song in the ritual.

Especially quickly the bases of the classical folklore system are undermined after Bulgaria's Liberation from the Ottoman rule.

The cultural enthusiasm in the period after the Liberation is expressed to the utmost degree in a trend towards withdrawal from Bulgarian and Balkan values and unification with the European ones (similar to the process today). Classical folklore, having essentially changed in some dialects (Northwestern Bulgaria, Mid Northern Bulgaria) or being changed in others (Macedonia, Thrace, Northeastern Bulgaria), starts to adopt models belonging to the European popular tradition, which causes a modulation of the classical folklore structures. Under the dictatorship of a primitive

tonic-dominant functionality (mainly in the folk dance cycles of Northern Bulgaria and Macedonia), the melodic buildup of songs and of instrumental music changes. The comparison Dur – parallel moll emerges (Dobrudzha, under the influence of the Moldavian music brought by Bessarabian Bulgarians and the Bulgarians from Northern Dobrudzha). In Western Bulgaria (Macedonia, the Big Shopp region, Northwestern and Mid Northern Bulgaria), the two-beat (two-fold) dance-song form actively penetrates and, gradually, the dynamic amplitude in singing, absolutely foreign to the Bulgarian classical folklore aesthetics, imposes itself (initially in Dobrudzha, Northern Bulgaria, Macedonia, and later in Thrace and in the Rhodopes).

The activization of these processes takes place also under the influence of the newly-established after 1878 military brass orchestras. Their repertoire conforms to the democratic classical European models of art. Initially, directors and performers are Czech, Hungarian and Austrian Kapellmeisters and instrumentalists. Their first attempts to bring Bulgarian folklore melody in line with European harmonic patterns makes use of the newly established town melodic models, as the ritual types of melody and meter-rhythmic organization could not be subjected to the European classical patterns. These processes develop most actively along the valley of the river Danube – on the territory of Northern Bulgaria. As a result of strong interactions with the town music of Romania and Serbia, spread mainly by Gypsies and Jews in Northern Bulgaria, a new genre is born: the music of the brass bands. It is not a continuation of the musical folklore of this region. But only several decades later it already becomes the real musical folklore of Bulgaria. The work of the military Kapellmeister Diko Iliev presents this type of town music, which has its authors but is spread and developed in a folklore way by groups of instrumentalists with no education and no music-sheet literacy. While performing, they use mainly the themes and improvise at every opportunity, without harmonically performing the author's score. One or two decades later, brass bands are common throughout Northwestern Bulgaria, Mid Northern Bulgaria, the Western Border regions, and partly in many other regions of the country, too. The emergence of the new type of or-

chestras leads to the substitution of traditional folk instruments – bagpipe, *gădulka* (a type of Gamba), *kaval* (a type of transverse flute), *duduk* (a type of straight flute with a mouthpiece), *tamboura*, etc. with classical brass instruments – cornet, clarinet, bass cornet, etc. These bring with them a new repertoire and new European themes.

The clarinet and the violin spread on the territory of Bulgaria long before the Liberation from the Ottoman rule in 1878. These instruments conquer much earlier the neighboring Balkan territories – Greece, Romania, Serbia, Turkey... Because of their exceptional dynamic and technical potential, they become the basis of the so-called *chalga* (*chalgadzhivski*) orchestras or groups (*chalga* is instrumental music of an improvisational nature and with oriental nuances). During the 20th century their participation in the tradition of the Bulgarians – both in towns and in villages – considerably deepens. The main violin and clarinet performers are the Gypsies. It is no coincidence that after the emergence of brass bands they are the first to establish bands in Northern Bulgaria (the Lyaskovo band) that turn out to be a contagious model for imitation. These two instruments, along with the *zurna* (a wind instrument with a double reed plate of the oboe type), are used as leading ones by Gypsy instrumentalists, whatever the ethnic ritual or festive system they serve – the Gypsy, the Bulgarian, the Turkish or one belonging to other ethnoses. Their polyfunctionality harmonizes also with the tradition of the neighbouring Balkan peoples. Although they have separate repertoires for every separate community, the *chalga* (or brass) bands often mix up Bulgarian repertoire with a Gypsy or a Turkish one (each of them is already a Europeanized and an Orientalized product).

At the beginning of the 20th century the first sound recordings also appear: gramophone records with folk music. The performers recorded are outstanding singers and instrumentalists usually belonging to the so-called *professionals* – performers who have acquired fame far beyond the territory of their region, although they are typical representatives of their own dialect. Instrumentalists, on the contrary, present super-dialectal musical ideas borrowed from interactions with other ethnic musical cultures. For the first time in the devel-

opment of Bulgarian folklore, the fixing on sound recordings of the performances of great singers and instrumentalists promotes certain song and instrumental melodic models as artistically valuable, worthy of imitation and repetition. A new process develops of imitation and exact copying of models with no improvisation. This changes the criteria of folklore aesthetics and the most essential qualities of the folklore performance – the author’s co-participation in it. The promotion of performers through sound recordings brings also about a certain narrowing of the repertoire of the dialectal performers – only what is presented through the gramophone record is valuable and it is the only one worthy of continuing its existence. The models of sound recording promote only several genres – at working bee, at table, at folk dances, on wedding, and only a limited number of plots from these genres. This causes a narrowing of classical folklore genres and of plots in Bulgarian folklore as a whole. The genre narrowing also leads to changes in the specific musical parameters of the Bulgarian musical folklore – considerably reduced in quantity becomes the mode-melodic and the meter-rhythmic variety, which are the most representative characteristics of Bulgarian musical folklore. The songs on ritual dances in which there is no synchrony between song and dance measure (typical in the past of St. Lazar’s, Easter and St. George’s Day ritualism in Western Bulgaria, Thrace, and the Srednogorie region) decrease or even disappear. Songs in a very narrow tone volume gradually fall off the rituals in which they used to function because of a change in the aesthetic criteria (Northern Bulgaria, Thrace, the Rhodopes). Their place is taken by variants with a larger tone volume (the Rhodopes, Thrace, Dobrudzha) or by songs with a larger volume and more modern melodies (the Rhodopes, the Pirin region, Thrace, Northern Bulgaria). The genre narrowing leads to the establishment of a small but rather pronounced dialectal repertoire that is promoted as a representative hit-song excerpt through the sound-recordings, the state ensembles and the mass media. Gradually this repertoire is acquired and mastered in the particular dialect and in the towns and villages in which it was not previously known. Today these hit-song dialect excerpts are known all over the country (*Zaspalo e chelebiyche; Izlyal e Delyu haydutin; Devoyko,*

mari, hubava; Rufinka bolna legnala; Ripni, Kalinke, da tropnem, etc. – from the Rhodopes; *Lale li si, zyumbyul li si; Zagukala galabka*, etc. – from Dobrudzha; *Izkaray, Gano, goveda; Dzan, dzan, Ganke le; Chiyo be tova momiche; Enicheri hodyat, mamo; Kitka ti padna, Deno*, etc. – from Northern Bulgaria; *Katsnal brambar na tranka; Dimyaninka; Bre, Petrunko*, etc. – from the Shopluk (*Shopp*) region; *Pusni mene, Shar planino; Kapitana bolen lezhi; Kray Vardaro; Yovano, Yovanke; Ako umram, il zaginam; Kazhi Angyo; Mitro le, Mitro; Nikola, pirinski yunak*, and many others – from the Pirin region; *Dona na porti sideshi; Priz gura varvyaha; Danyova mama*, etc. – from Thrace; *Kalimanku, Denku* – from the Strandzha region).

The instrumental recordings promote the “Gypsified” and Balkanized ideas and models of music-making. At the top of this industry in the 1930s to the 1950s is Ramadan Lolov, a musician with a magnetic presence who brings about the eventual destruction of the classical folklore instrumental performance and the specific instrumental improvisation that it supposed. Lolov causes an unusual boom in the search for new Balkan horizons with respect to the mode-melodic standards, the thematic field, sensitiveness, dynamic amplitude, ornamentation... The development of the sound-recording industry brings new forms of pressure on the old folklore standards and creates new ones that gradually go back in the towns and the villages, serving folklore rituals and festivity in a new, thus far unknown fashion.

In the 1930s, the first live broadcasts begin from the newly-founded Bulgarian Radio. Access in it is initially given to musicians from the western Bulgarian territories, and it is through them that old and new models of music making typical for Western Bulgaria are actively imposed. Later, especially after the establishment of the Bulgarian Radio Folk Orchestra (1951), Thracians manage to occupy important positions there, and the neo-Thracian way of music making turns into a paragon of music making. The Bulgarian radio becomes the main translator of the ideas of the Thracian performers’ tradition. The Thracian dictatorship is also supported by the active interference of two Thracians – the editor-in-chief of the Folk Music Department Georgi Boyadzhiev and by Filip Kutev – the artistic director of the

Bulgarian State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances. The “Thracianization” of the Bulgarian mass media continues until Georgi Boyadzhiev’s death, and exercises a rather negative influence on the entire maintenance and preservation of folklore, especially in Northern Bulgaria, and to a large degree in the Pirin region, too. In the period from 9 September, 1944, to the 1980s, the town music culture as a whole is neglected. Even Radio Sofia for a long period of time prohibits the Macedonian town song, which was, and still remains, the basic resource of the Bulgarian town music-making tradition.

After 9 September, 1944, the development, the preservation and the decline of musical folklore are stimulated by several factors. At the beginning of the 1950s, the state ensembles for folk songs and dances start to get established as a form of stylization and stage re-creation of folklore traditions with the authors’ participation of composers and choreographers. In this period, the radio and the ensembles turn into a paragon for imitation – paraphrases of ensemble performances emerge on the village stages, in which the beauty of what was earlier characteristic of the dialect, the micro-dialect and the village is missing. These processes are extremely active and lead to unification – a unification which, in performances that lack artistry and authenticity, turn into parody. These phenomena are also provoked by the mixing up of the criteria at the folklore festivals, at the opening and the closing of which some performances of the most famous Bulgarian professional ensembles are staged as paragons. The most important role in the stimulation, preservation and restoration of the so-called *pure, source folklore* play the regional festivals and the National Festival, organized since the 1960s. They present the living forms of musical folklore (where they are still in existence) and the revived traditions through their restoration in the changed conditions. Various sources are used for this purpose: 1) living bearers of the tradition (the villages of Kosovo and Borilovets in Vidin region); 2) older performers, still taking part in the tradition of the village for training and for the transmission of certain traditional models (the village of Bistritsa in Sofia region, the town of Nedelino in Smolyan region); 3) many older informants who only narrate and transfer the repertoire, without taking part in it (throughout the country); 4) published research studies and collections in

which the musical tradition of a particular village or of neighboring settlements is described (the village of Tarnak in Vratsa region); 5) materials and recordings from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, fixed 40-50 years ago in certain villages or towns in which the tradition has nowadays died away (an especially interesting case is the revitalization of *Aromanian* (Vallah) three-part singing in the Velingrad region through recordings made by N. Kaufman from the 1950s). The revival of some of the traditional genres and forms first for the festivals and stages also bring about a reverse process – their restoration in the tradition as well. These processes are especially active in Thrace, Northeastern Bulgaria, the Shopp region, the Pirin region, and even in Northwestern and Mid Northern Bulgaria.

The establishment of the Bulgarian television deepens the processes of toleration of the musical folklore through the so-called *re-creation*, designed and cemented in the Bulgarian National Radio for the needs of the programs for authentic folklore, which programs are removed long time earlier, because the authentic folklore does not answer the *high* criteria of the new directors of the folklore department. The performances of the singers are obligatorily presented with accompaniment, made by a permanent group of folk musicians trained in collective music making in the state ensembles. The patterns of this accompaniment are then multiplied on songs and instrumental melodies from the whole country. Their standardization also contributes to the standardization of the presented repertoire as well as of its performer. Everyone conforms to the newly established criteria for performance and behavior promoted by the state ensembles. Most clearly this is evident in the establishment of the so-called *otsviri* – instrumental interludes, through which a marked shift in the dialectal thematic system occurs. The repertoire of the performers who wish to be recorded in the radio has to answer certain criteria based on a narrow-minded understanding of musical form: promoted are performers who can pre-ornament (which does not match the specificity of each of the dialects), as well as instrumentalists who do their playing in *kolena* style and in a large number of them (*kolena* pl., *kolyano* sg.; an instrumental theme close in structure to the song form). Thus the old instrumental improvisation style besides not being tolerated is even stigmatized as incorrect

and unaesthetic. The time comes for the eight-measure structures, repeated two, four, eight, etc. times. And such is the music promoted by the mass media and the recordings from the 1950s up till now. Its placement on top of the cultural space in Bulgaria makes its impact also on the folklore culture in the different regions – more and more seldom is maintained the instrumental type of music which is the result of the old improvisation mechanisms of creativity. It is not by accident that in the 1970s and 1980s the movement of the wedding orchestras emerged.

After 9 September, 1944, together with the creation of the state ensembles for folk songs and dances, measures are taken to restrict the musical formations with different origin – the brass bands from Northern Bulgaria have no chance to appear in the radio and the television broadcasts. Especially unwelcome is their presence at the regional and the National festivals for folk art. The paradox occurs that towns and villages with the typical brass band instrumental tradition, dating back 50 to 100 years earlier, hire players on *duduk* (a type of straight flute with a mouthpiece) or on bagpipe from nearby villages in order to answer the criteria for *purity* of the folklore tradition, criteria, set in the requirements for participating in a festival. Today these towns and villages realize their performances at the Koprivshtitsa Festival with the accompaniment of a tape-recorder, because the lack of understanding of their dialectal peculiarities led to a disruption in their wind instrumental tradition as well. The unbelievable success all around the world of Emir Kosturica's films and of the brass bands in them led to a true revival of the brass band tradition in Northwestern Bulgaria and also in other regions of the country in the 1990s. The processes of destruction and revival are very often due to subjective factors, and in the Bulgarian tradition during the last 50 years they have played in some cases a more essential role than did some other objective processes in the development of culture.

As a reminiscence of the old instrumental tradition of the Bulgarian Revival period, continued by musicians like Ramadan Lolov and later Petko Radev, in the 1970s appears, initially as an underground, an avalanche-like dissident movement of the instrumental groups called wedding orchestras.

This movement starts looking for its place in the multi-layer Bulgarian socialist culture, although according to the guardians of the musical order in the country there is no place for such a polychromatic genre. Nevertheless it exists everywhere – in the Bulgarian wedding ceremony, in the festive system, at the table on feasts. The great names in the music created and performed by them impose themselves as paragons for folk music-making of a new type. These are Ivo Papazov, Georgi Yanev, Ivan Milev, Filip Simeonov and many other real virtuosi – of Gypsy, less often of Bulgarian origin. Having initially arisen in Thrace as a reminiscence of the northern brass bands from the beginning of the century, in a very short time the movement of the wedding musicians floods Bulgaria. After a strong repulse from above by the state, under the pressure of the people, competitions and recordings in radio and television programs follow. As if they see and hear them for the first time! The music of these folklore performers with no (very rarely with some) musical education totally destroys the old Thracian folklore instrumental thematic field, and it also exercises an indirect influence on the song repertoire of Thrace, the Rhodopes and Northeastern Bulgaria, but in the non-neighborng regions the changes take place in a specific way, not as a direct expulsion of the moulds of their art creativity and performance style (the Pirin region, the Shopp region, Northwestern Bulgaria).

As a result of the outlined democratic traditions, accompanying the development of traditional musical folklore of the classical type, some interactions occur and many changes in its structure take place, which lead to considerable changes and a decline. More specifically, what we now call folklore is already radically different from what folklore used to be some decades ago.

The nowadays situation in the Bulgarian folklore musical tradition is a result of the complex action of these factors and the dialectal resistance of the musical folklore and of its performers and bearers. No matter how Balkanized, Europeanized and Orientalized the models of Bulgarian folk music are, patented is the different way in the change of the different dialectal musical cultures – from the strictly separated classical models during the Revival period, through the

specific forms of destroying the classical folklore system and the creation of new musical systems interacting with it and changing it fundamentally (in some regions the dialectal parameters are preserved – in Shopp region, Macedonia, Thrace, Strandzha, Dobrudzha, and in others essentially are changed, or even eradicated some basic elements of the older dialectal musical systems). In spite of the smaller or the larger changes dictated by the complex sets of cultural interactions, dialects still exist today. They present territories in which the village and the town populations preserve in a similar way their old musical culture and in a similar way adopt, further develop and mix the new cultural phenomena with the old ones.

In the **Pirin region** is observed a multi-layer coexistence between oldest forms and genres with newer ones, which are strongly influenced by the Balkan town tradition: the Bulgarian town tradition, created exactly on the territory of Macedonia, the new type of melody and the old type of multi-part singing interacting with each other, today's movements of Pirinfolk and Pirinfest represent the indefatigable Macedonian creative spirit. In this multi-layer cultural structure monody and multi-part singing exist, as well as an old type of multi-part singing with a new type of flexible two-part, three-part and four-part singing. Along with the pentatonic and the diatonic scales, also can be observed melodic structures and melodies in the European Dur-moll standards, strongly permeated by Oriental chromatics. The style of performance is also multi-layered – equipollent men's, women's and mixed singing untypical of other regions (the Rhodopes being an exception), vocal training of the oldest types, typical for the neighboring Shopp region (open, saturated guttural sound making to a more tender, cranial or even nasal sound making, especially characteristic for the town repertoire). Preserved is the large set of musical instruments – from bagpipe, *zurna*, *gădulka*, *tamboura*, *dvoyanka*, *duduk*, to the modern mandolins, guitars, violins, clarinets, accordions, etc. Specific is the Macedonian style of the contemporary wedding formations – in group interpretations the bourdon verticals are looked for, as is the *tamboura*-like, *zurna*-like and *tarambuka*-like coloring in the performance which brings about the strictly regional character of the contemporary music-making forms in the Pirin region. Preserved are the most representative

measure forms in the folklore tradition (both old and new) – 7/8 with a first elongated part and 8/8 measure, 5/8 – a variant of 8/8, 3/8, and others. Preserved is the connection between the music and the most typical dances of the region. The musical components have considerably narrowed down their quantitative participation in rituals. Remaining are the sign accents contained in music: archaic forms of music-dance polymetricity, remnants of archaic vocal techniques of a zoomorphic origin (*atsane* in Bansko, singing in the villages of Dolen and Satovcha in Gotse Delchev region). Typical is the accompaniment with *tamboura*.

In the **Big Shopp** region, conservatism and the resistance to novelties is most manifest. Preserved are the oldest forms of sound-making – collective, antiphonal two-part singing in its most archaic manifestations: a narrow tone volume, sharp, guttural-thoracic, man-like women's singing. Close is the connection between singing and dancing; preserved are archaic forms of musical-dancing polymetricity. Some remnants exist of archaic vocal techniques of a zoomorphic origin (*Dyakovo* singing, *Samokov* singing, *Svoqe* singing, *Sofia* singing). Still preserved is the original meter-rhythmic picture, although narrowed down by the European metric standards. Preserved are some ecstatic forms of music making and dancing – *tresene* (trembling of the voice) in harvest songs and in other genres, *natrishane* (jolting, vertically springing) while dancing. Strictly separated are women's and men's participation in rituals: women perform all genres and men only the Christmas cycle and the epic songs at table. The gradual entrance of women into the epic genre was also combined with the conquering of the area of the two-part singing by men during the last 10-20 years (the Mitev brothers from the village of Vlodaya, for example). Preserved are the bourdon matrices in collective instrumental music-making of the new type, as well as the instruments and the themes in the new conditions for existence of the tradition. Some new instruments are imported, such as the violin, the accordion, the brass bands, but essential elements of the old tradition are preserved. The result is a slow transformation with a maximum dialectal resistance, which leads to the formation of a contemporary Shopp style, preserving elements representative of the Shopp style – typical exclams, interruptions, repetitions, vocals, ornaments. Typical is the

accompaniment with *gadulka* and with *tambura* (in the Southern Shopp region).

Northwestern Bulgaria represents to the utmost degree the Europeanization of folklore formats and the fast destruction of the most representative characteristics of old musical culture that were the first processes to start as early as the second half of the 19th century. To begin with, the ritual musical system collapses and the singing at folk dances; the instruments are at the earliest changed here – the old folklore instruments *duduk*, *gayda*, *kaval*, *gădulka*, etc. are substituted as early as the first decades of the 20th century with cornets, clarinets, bass cornets, etc. This entirely changes the repertoire of the folk dancing tradition too. New folk music is being created, reminiscent of similar town music in Romania and Serbia. With the new instrumental music, which also had its authors (Diko Iliev), new dances are created and transferred too – tiny-stepped, virtuosic, fast, brisk. The song, which was close to the simplest models of the Shopp song, gradually loses its aesthetic dimensions and entirely disappears from the repertoire of the population in this region, where the unbelievable meter-rhythmic ideas in the ritual song and dance slowly and firmly narrow down to about a dozen specific measures, also common in the whole territory of Bulgaria – 5/16, 7/16, 8/18, especially 9/16, 11/16, etc. The town romances that spread from Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, and Romania surely contribute to the uprooting of the old song tradition. European models are triumphant. Unbelievable violin professionalism develops, characteristic of the Wallachian population in this region. Instrumental perfection is on a par with dancing perfection. Unusually complex musical-dance forms develop. Still, until the 1980s, observed at places are the *dvoyanka*, the *duduk* (especially among Wallachians), the bagpipe, the ocarina, the *kaval*, most of them for one's own use rather than for serving the cultural tradition of the region. In the westernmost regions is typical the accompaniment by a brass band.

Mid Northern Bulgaria and Northeastern Bulgaria to a large degree repeat the processes, typical for Northwestern Bulgaria, with the difference that the relative share of the classical folklore which continues its existence is much larger. The processes of Europeanization occur slower and later.

What is common for these regions is that they do not belong to the same dialects (some of them are western, others are eastern), but the similar tendencies in the development of the town culture in the perspective towards Europeanization draw them considerably closer. The process of integration of Northern Bulgarian town culture is also reinforced by the very active re-grouping of the population of Northern Bulgaria during the Ottoman rule.

The change in the set of instruments in these regions is visible, but not total, as this is in Northwestern Bulgaria. Along with brass bands, peacefully co-existent is the tradition of playing on bagpipe, *gădulka*, *duduk* (in Mid Northern Bulgaria), *kaval*. To the east of the river Vit the village folklore is not so much influenced by the town-like manner, as it is to the West of it. However, some regions with a strongly marked Europeanization exist (the regions of Svishtov, Pleven, Gabrovo, Tryavna), and this result is especially clear among the Wallachian population, and even more in the Bulgarians who returned from emigration in the Banat region.

The rich meter-rhythmic system characteristic of Mid Northern Bulgaria gradually gives way to the two-beat measure and the slow, richly ornamented melody of Northeastern Bulgaria. The modern trend is towards shrinking of the asymmetrical (irregular) measures and their combinations. The specific mode variety gradually gives way to the patterns of the European harmonic standard and the town song melody.

The main type of singing is the monodic antiphonal one (one-part collective and individual). The vocal training is Eastern Bulgarian, mild, the sound produced is in the upper register, often in the style of the town singing. Two-part singing is common only in the eastern parts of the region, *among the immigrants* from Southwestern Bulgaria (the Pirin and the Velinograd region). Antiphony is well preserved. The genre variety, typical for the 19th century, is considerably narrower but, in spite of this, up to the middle of the 20th century are well preserved some more important ritual cycles: the St. Lazarus' Day cycle and the Christmas one, the wedding, the Easter and St. George's Day's (less so) cycles; excellently is

preserved the folk dance tradition and the rich cycles of songs at table, the rituals *Peperuda*, *German*, *Enyovden* (Midsummer), work ritual practices (working-bee and harvest), etc. Typical is the accompaniment with *gădulka* and *kaval*, and among the immigrants from Southwestern Bulgaria – with *tamboura*.

Dobrudzha is a small, but quite clear and distinct dialect. The separate cultural components can be distinguished to the present day – Thracian, Balkan, local (*Grebenski*), but as a whole the music of Dobrudzha sounds monolithic and unified. All its components belong to the so-called eastern dialects. Rich and preserved almost until today is the ritual tradition on Christmas and St. Lazarus' Day, on Midsummer Day and Easter, the rituals *German* and *Peperuda*, as well as the folk dances on Sunday and in the evening. Typical are the Christmas and the St. Lazarus' Day *buenek* (a ritual dance-play, performed while singing). Excellently preserved are the songs at table and the working-bee cycle. The “fair” style of singing strongly influences the song tradition here, ballad plots dominate. The vocal training is similar to the Thracian one, but is milder and closer to the town manner of singing.

The set of instruments is more markedly linked to the old tradition. Typical are *kaval*, bagpipe, small local *gădulka* (*kopanka*), *duduk*. Characteristic is the Dobrudzha *three* (*gayda*, *kopanka* and harmonica, the latter brought here from Moldavia). Specific are the funeral tunes performed by *kaval*-players and *duduk*-players. The accompaniment of local songs is by *kaval* or *gădulka*.

With the poor meter-rhythmic organization in Eastern Bulgaria in the background, Dobrudzha presents an oasis of original musical-dance tradition with original asymmetrical measures.

Thrace belongs to the eastern Bulgarian dialects. It has quite preserved musical tradition even up to the 60s and the 70s of the 20th century. Typical are the total monody and a very well preserved antiphony. The meter-rhythm organization is mainly two-beat, the asymmetrical measures are almost absent (with the exception of 7/16, 5/16, less often 9/16). The meter-rhythmic uniformity is compensated by *tempo*

rubatto, complex and richly ornamented melody, large tone volumes. Preserved are the following ritual cycles: Christmas (with *buenek*), on St. Lazarus' Day (with *buenek*), Easter, on St. George's Day, etc.; until recent days the folk dance tradition was thriving; rich are the cycles on working bee and at table, as is the cycle of harvest songs. The old way of sound making and ornamentation (thoracic-guttural) is gradually substituted by a new one (in an upper register and with an ornamentation in the mouth with the tongue), observed in modern wedding singing. Men are equally good performers as women.

The instrumental tradition is represented mainly by *kaval* players, bagpipe players and *gădulka* players. The Thracian style of instrumental modeling is distinguished by mildness and beauty of the tone. Improvisation is typical for the great performers. Most of them are leading musicians, promoted by the radio and the television. High achievements are made by Thracian musicians in the performance of typical shepherd's program musical works. The Thracian instrumental style in the recent 50 years or so has dictated the criteria for Bulgarian folk music-making. Especially outstanding here is the great Bulgarian classical folklore *kaval*-performer Nikola Ganchev, and later, the new great wedding instrumental performers Papazov, Milev, Yanev and others.

Strandzha represents part of the large Thracian region. Many features exist, however, that determine it as an independent musical dialect. Sound making is mild, fine, and subtle. Typical is the slow, shaken vibrato reminiscent of a *tremolo triller*. The melody is pentatonic-diatonic. The volumes are from very narrow to wide open. Ornamentation is in an Oriental manner lavish, rich, reminding of arabesques. Men and women are equally virtuosic singers. The collective antiphonal style of performance in ritual cycles is preserved. In the rituals have survived certain archaisms such as the fire-dance *nestinarstvo*, performed during the fair on the Day of Sts. Constantine and Elena. Rich are the song and instrumental components of this ritual. Also preserved are the maid-bachelor dances during the Long Lent (*Vazhichki*), associated with original tunes and characterized by a specific Strandzha meter-rhythmic organization, as well as by the appearance of partial two-part singing. Well preserved are the rituals St. Marina and *Enyova bulya*. The musical instruments are

bagpipe, *kaval*, *gadulka*. The typical accompaniment is with a bagpipe (with a small one).

The Rhodopes is the most specific eastern region in Bulgaria, which also constitutes part of the great Thracian region. It is distinguished by monodic singing but also by places with extremely original type of two-part singing (the Velingrad region and Nedelino). In spite of the monodic or the two-part singing territories, the uniting indicator for Rhodope music is its pentatonic melodic basis. Preferred in the old cycles are the narrow anchemitonic melodic structures (two-tone, three-tone), but prevalent today are tunes widely developed in an octave (or even larger) volume. Men take an equally active part in the tradition together with women. Typical are the collective performances – men’s, women’s and mixed. In the collective performance a specific measuring occurs, a pulsation in the slow *tempo rubatto* songs, which pulsation cannot be observed in other regions. The collective manner of performance has led to poor improvisation activities in this region. Dominant here are the two-beat measures, with few exceptions (*rachenitsa* and *Svornato*, folk dance in 9/8), and the asymmetrical measures are not typical (with the exception of the Velingrad region, where they are transferred from the Pirin and the Pazardzhik regions).

Today few melodies exist, with many different texts for each of them, and they have turned into hit songs, favorite not only for the Rhodope population but also for the whole of Bulgaria.

The genre variety is not typical for the Rhodopes. Functioning are the cycles on working-bee, at table and on wedding.

Typical instruments here are the bagpipe among Christians and the *tambura (saz)* – among Islamized people. Certain difference exists in the manner of sound making in the singing of Christians (thoracic singing, closest to the classic vocal training) and of Islamized (nasal, falsetto). The observed differences are almost deleted nowadays because of the freedom in the inter-religious communication during the last 40 or 50 years. The style observed 50 years ago, called “high Zlatograd” singing, does not exist any more. As compensation, however, the two-part singing in Velingrad region and in Nedelino today is thriving, stimulated and further developed in various ways.

The new forms of music making, promoted by the wedding orchestras, have an impact on the music of the Rhodope Mountains. The Thracianization of the Rhodope music and song is visible: the tempi become more dynamic, Thracian melody models are introduced, the pentatonics is diatonized, etc. The typical accompaniment is with bagpipe among Christians and with *saz* (*tamboura*) – among Islamized people.

The Srednogorie is a transitional dialect. Its Western regions (the Ihtiman Sredna Gora) present the transition between Srednogorie and Shopp region. There is an original two-part and three-part singing there. *Tresene* (trembling of the voice) in the second part, and free counter-pointing between the two parts can be observed. The ornamentation is rich, wider than the Shopp one, but ecstatic western Bulgarian ornamental formulae are still in action.

The Central Srednogorie has a melody system distinguished by a simple and clear contour, without a rich ornamentation. To the east the Eastern musical-folklore dialects begin, in which monody is the only form of collective expression. Here can be observed models typical for the Middle and Southern, Eastern and Western Bulgaria. The Eastern Srednogorie is the transition between Thrace and Middle Srednogorie. Here the ornamentation has already the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the Thracian one, the melodies expand their volumes.

Typical for the Srednogorie region are the *gădulka*, the bagpipe, the *kaval*. The excellent preservation of the dance tradition has managed to save also the rich melody, connected to asymmetrical variety, especially in the western parts of the region. Rather characteristic are 11/16, 9/16, 10/16 and some combined meter-rhythmic forms.

The contemporary history of Bulgarian musical folklore is the history of the gradual loss of its most representative features – the specific meter-rhythmic organization, the characteristic mode-melodic peculiarities, its link with rituals, etc. Still, this folklore remains Bulgarian; even the dialectal features turn out to be stable, although in any moment the dialectal and the national may be expressed in new ways over and over again.