

Wind Instruments of Tradition

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Abstract

Wind instruments of tradition are an evidence of their long existence, indisputable folkloric and artistic values of people who have made them, of societies that have used them, and of nations that have absorbed sounds, melodies, songs, dances and other high musical values that these instruments have produced. In the sphere of folklore, these instruments have got historical, ethnographic, ethical, aesthetic, semiotic, artistic and music values being inexhaustible sources for creators generation after generation, inexhaustible sources in artistic musical compositions of every ethnicity. The research on these instruments will always bring up untreated issues until now, an opportunity to recognise and learn even more about particularities, things in common and differences at times when they were created, why they were created, what did they serve for and what do they serve for today. Musical values and instruments that peoples have inherited from generation to generation, by using and fetching them until present days, are a great treasure of every ethnicity. Studying them helps us to get deeper and deeper into the culture and art that mankind has created throughout centuries. The benefit from this rich tradition to our lives, has always been huge. Even nowadays, folk tradition still occupies a considerable place in the musical and cultural life throughout the globe. Traditional instruments which sound harmonized and fit in with big orchestras, are spices or icing on the cake, as folks say!.

Keywords: musical instruments, wind instruments, traditional music, Albania, Kosovo.

Introduction

*The task of the untreated ethno organology is to treat every single musical instrument used by folks, as something organic, analysing them deeply and thoroughly, without shrinking to partial and uniliteral observations.*¹

The relations between peoples and cultures have always been evident. This can be proved by names of similar and different instruments which continue to exist even today, e.g: “tupan, çifteli, saze, kavall, zumare, gajde”, etc. It can quite fairly be said that some of these instrument names bring us the echo of historical events of the centuries when the musical relationships among these cultures can be proved. But, through observations, we can learn about the origin of etymology. Some of the instruments are named after the material

they were made of, some others after the sounds they make, and some others after similarities of something found in nature. For example: the name “Gajde” (bagpipe), according to “Arbereshet” who live in Calabria of Italy, is connected with the name “Gajdur” (which has to do with the view of the donkey), whereas in Kosovo “Gajde” has got to other names: “Mishnicë” and “Bishnicë”.

Tasks and the goal: additional knowledge, a description of what has not been said, educational aim about traditional music.

The scope of the research: Wind instruments, how they managed to survive from the past, and their effect on modern musical composition.

The main thesis: Wind instruments of tradition, their contribution to musical developing course and modern artistic creation.

Main arguments: 1000 wind instruments, handmade, most of them undealt

¹ Sokoli, Ramadan. *Veglat Muzikore*. “Instituti i kulturës popullore” Tiranë, 1991, p.4.

with before. Argued supporting. Responsibility, inspiration, feeling, zeal, care and accuracy.

Methods: Scientific-research approach, normative, standard, historical, genetic, comparative methods, interviewing method, and the method of individualism.

Wind instruments of tradition

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In the sphere of folklore, these instruments have got historical, ethnographic, ethical, aesthetic, semiotic, artistic and music values being inexhaustible sources for creators generation after generation, inexhaustible sources in artistic musical compositions of every ethnicity.

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*The oldest instrument is the one used even today, so human body. The percussion, "bone flute", and harp are the oldest instruments made by man. Singing, clapping, stamping are musical creations which were used to celebrate, pray and praise God, for grief and joy, to gather troops and intimidate the enemy.*²

One of the first pre-musical aerophone instruments is Ocarina or "Fyell-dheu" as it is called in Kosovo. It is a unique pre-musical instrument regarding its construction and spread. At first, it was called "Fyell-dheu" (Soil-flute), and then it was named Ocarina because of the evident similarities to archaeological discoveries made by other peoples. An Ocarina instrument was found in Kosovo during archaeological diggings in Runik 35 years ago. It is made of clay and its length is 6-7 cm, and the width is 5 cm. Ocarina of Kosovo (Dardana) has got the

shape of a pear, Mayan Ocarina has the shape of a bird, and the Chinese one has the shape of a duck's beak. Dardana of Runik has got 2+1 holes and it is smaller than other similar ocarinas found in China, Brazil, Mexico, Africa and elsewhere. Two holes placed aside its body have a diameter of 8 mm, whereas the one placed on top is about 10 mm. It is believed that it belongs to the Neolithic period. There is an invisible connection between ocarina and other folk pre-musical tools made of mud like: "shtambushka", "bardhashka", or "gërçaku" which were used mainly to produce sound effects. Mayan Ocarina (Ocarina of the Maya tribe), is an artefact that dates back 10000 years BC. On the other hand, the ocarina of Aztec and Inca cultures is thought to be more than 12000 years old.

Melodies by "Finger on Throat", or "By Throat"

These melodies are named like this due to the way they are sung, "by the throat". The structure of these performances contains many throaty interjections similar to the style of "jodel" songs. They are widely used in songs sung by women from Gjirokastra in neighbourhoods called Dunavat and Manalat. We can also encounter this kind of performance in Malësia e Rugovës, in Kosovo.

"Tana's Song", a folk ballad talks about the approach amongst people by using the message, which stems from the sounds of the flute, as a communication tool. In the south of Albania it is known as "Kënga e Tanës" (Tana's song), whereas in Kosovo it's known as "shepherdess' song". It is called so, because it was created by shepherds. In its structure, right in the centre stands the motive of acoustic myths, the universal motive of musical cult as an art, but also as a special communication tool. In this sense, this songs which talks about using music as a language to communicate, draws parallels with the power of Orfeo's harp, the musician from Greek Mythology. "Balada e Tanës" (The Tana's Ballad) is a case which shows how well can the alphabet of melodies made by the flute combine with the literary alphabet, the best example of their fusion.

According to Prof. Sokoli: *even before, old flute players of our mountains thought that the sounds of the flute had a useful effect on cattle.* In our case, Shaqir Hoti, a carver and performer with instruments of folk tradition,

² Blenkinsop, Ian. *Music, The definitive visual history*. London "DK", 2013.

confesses while he was playing a nice melody by flute on the bank of the river Drin, many lizards and snakes were gathered around him and had raised up their heads to listen to his tune. When he noticed them, he stopped playing and at once they were all gone, but when he started over, the same living creatures came back around him again. In the reflections of the study stratifications, simple tools, simple pre-musical instruments are the antecedents of the true musical instruments and as such, no matter how simple they are, they are subject for exhaustive studies, because they help us to have a better insight of their inception, the long route they have passed through, meeting with changes, being developed and being used as true musical instruments.

A characteristic of these instruments is that they are handmade, made with simple tools, with no modern machine. They are made and finalized by the master's skill who carves them, by his feelings, his knowledge about the tradition and his true love for them. My study will also deal with measuring and bringing out the correct dimensions of these instruments intending to provoke generations' curiosity to learn more about them and also make them, as was the case with Ocarina among centuries, which at first had three holes whereas today it has got as many sound sources as is necessary to become part of a big orchestra.

Folk instruments, which belong to aerophone category, make sounds by breath vibrations caused when it blows through their construction. In this category are included folk instruments such as: "*picanga, fuza, fuga, bredhkaçet, vronja, bobla, llullaku, kollomidhja, niellëset, lakori, rabushi, cyli, stërkalca, bardhaçka, cirifilja, fyelldrejti, fyellshremti, bicula, pipëza, zumarja, gajde, karamunxa, glyra, surle, gërneta, gëzhoja*" etc.

Archeomusicology helps us to search deeper and provides clear arguments about ethno-musical tradition since ancient times, offering apparent evidence of biocultural continuity of humanity. So, obviously music completes the mosaic of life's beauty. Aerophone musical instrument can sometimes be found made of fowls' bones, usually from the bones of hawks and eagles. People from the Stone Age, who lived in caves of Fels in Germany, made flutes out of owls' bones and hawks' wings' bones. Among the first

archeological findings are also musical instruments made of shells. Others alike are made of the trees' bark, fruit shells, till they made the flute which required sharper skills, more knowledge and requests by making more sound sources in order to produce more expanded melodies.

One of the most ancient proofs that Illyrians played on flute, can be found in the work of Greek historian Straboni. Then we can see it in the verses of knights' cycle in the north, exactly at "Omeri i Ri" (Young Omer), where a girl is dressed as a boy and is assessed for her skills at playing the flute.

The flute is the most widely spread instruments in the whole ethno cultural space of the Balkans. This is the reason why it is made in dozens of different forms. The fife (a big flute), is also found in different forms and sizes. The flute, as a solo instrument, for now takes part in small musical formations, combined with other instruments like those of chordophone category and those of membranophone category and rarely with idiophone instruments. A special example is the ensemble of flutes in Gramsh.

In the formation of "sazeve" (harmonica players), the flute has got a "cutting role" in the mainline melody, whereas in the north we find it mainly part of formations with chordophone and membranophone instruments. The flute as an instrument is often found in oral folklore and in folk oral poetry, but also it is described with magic attributes – outside music.

*When we played the flute firstly,
we let our sheep loose to browse in
meadows;
when we played the flute secondly,
they ate the grass so tastily,
when we played the flute thirdly,
they had their heads raised sharply.³*

Whereas, for the empty space inside the flute, people have created riddles as well:

*What's a thing: Its body as a forest
and its mind as a flute?!*

To this musical instrument (flute), known by everyone, loved by everyone, many

³ Topalli, Ramadan. *Ligjërime poetike gojore*. Vitak, Drenicë, 1979.

poems and stories have been dedicated by different writers and poets like: Asdreni, Andon Zako Çajupi, Naim Frashëri, Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi, Martin Camaj, Fatos Arapi, Ismail Kadare, etc. Here are some lines from Andon Zako Çajupi's poem titled "Shepherd's flute"

*The shepherd, fellows, the shepherd,
when the wind blows and howls,
poor him is far away out,
in hail storms and heavy rain showers!
The shepherd, fellows, the shepherd,
Do not forget him,
cause' he left his wife and home,
to take the cattle to graze in lawns,
graze you my cattle,
you, you, you...
Graze you my cattle,
When I pass away recall me,
May he rest in peace!- utter in memory
of me.*

In this case, the writer takes up the role of the language that the shepherd's flute might speak, words that an instrument may say for its best friend, melancholy that it expresses for its closest mate. Through the sounds of the flute, the poet brings out the shepherd's story, difficulties he faces with in different seasons, love and inseparable connection between him and the flute.

Since mythology, people have read stories of magical performances by flute players, which performances had great impact on peoples' lives and decisions. There are many stories, legends and ballads widely spread all around the globe which sublime performances by flute performers. Among the others we will mention "Virgo's Stone", "Tana's Ballad", "The Flute's Lecture" etc.

As first flute player is considered to be Pani, who according to Ramadan Sokoli, was the patron of all shepherds, grasslands and herds. "Magic Flute" by Mozart is magic itself.

From 2000 onward, the festival of folk musical instruments "Magic Flute" is held annually in the amphitheater of the ancient town of Butrint. Every year we can find there the most various flutes with different characteristics and features both in construction and performance, giving us magic melodies of the ancient echo. There we would find old and new names for these instruments like: "fëjll" which is used in the village of Reçan in Macedonia; "dariva" which is used

by Arvanites in Greece; "rrishnjau" which is used by arbereshet in Italy, etc.

There you would find the folk flute with alto register, the big flute as it is called in Kosovo, flutes with wooden muzzles. According to Sokol, throughout the Northwest Peninsula, this flute seems to be the same, named the same (Kavall) but with different proportions when it comes to sound making. The word "kavall" describes a great flute with a thick sound. The fife has been widely used in Balkan folk orchestras. It still has a major role in these orchestras when orchestral melodies based in tradition are performed. In the oral folklore it is reflected like this:

*... Your face shines
So young and you play the fife.*

Conclusion

Wind instruments of tradition, their sounds as coming from the depth of the centuries, appear as a beautiful historical memory, as strong artistic basements, trying hard to keep the connection of communication and coexistence between folklore and modern music. New artists will be even more open-minded and more creative if they possess knowledge not only for the tradition of the nation they belong to, but also for traditions of other ethnicities all around the world. Sounds and melodies coming from musical instruments of all global traditions approach people with each other and unite them. It is music more than anything else which unites people together.

*The man that has no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet
sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night*

William Shakespeare

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