

photographs showing the instruments themselves, various contexts of *zurnaci* music, famous musicians and bands. The authors themselves, on the spot in Southwest Bulgaria, have taken most of the photographs enclosed. Others were taken by our colleagues or from the personal albums of the musicians, while further ones are from the archives of the local *Chitalshta*¹. The oldest photograph dates from the early 1920s but most of them are of the actual *zurnaci* traditions pictured in the last two years.

The book was created in Bulgarian. It is also published in English, since there may be readers interested in *zurnaci* music who have no command of Bulgarian language.

The book in your hands is the first monograph on the *zurnaci* music tradition in Bulgarian lands. Before leaving you in private with it, we would like to confess to something related to our own reflections on our close approach to *zurnaci* practice. We feel that problematising the researcher's point of view is a part of the study itself. The methodological hopes and doubts we have shared in the book are not just the egocentrism typical of any author's position. We believe that the route is a part of the result itself.

The choice of research methods and approaches is dictated by the hope that they will allow the greatest amount of light to be shed on the truth concerning the scope of the study. In this case, the panorama of *zurnaci* tradition, which this book intends to spread, could hardly be painted without using interdisciplinary methods belonging to different schools and movements. Our approach might seem rather holistic, eclectic, maybe post-modern to the fans of concepts and the followers of a single theory. We find it pragmatic because the phenomenon at the core of our studies is versatile, multi-layered and "catchable" only by means of a range of different methodological nets.

While knotting the investigative nets, we have been unknotting the nets of meaning of *zurnaci* music. This music is heavily loaded by so much love and so much disgust. It goes on sounding in new spaces, contexts, performances and reflections. Would you like to hear its glamour and the way it grants wishes like the proverbial golden fish? Snake charmers and intoxicating people, marathon *horos* and crowded processions, the construction of Muslim identity and a touch to the Orphic and Bacchanalian roots of the Balkan ancestors, an attribute of revolutionary Komitas² and a symbol of massacres under Turkish rule, demonized by atavistic nationalists and favoured by contemporary activists for ethnic tolerance – this is just a part of the miracles.

Our intention has been to make you imagine one more miracle – *zurnaci* music sounding in text of this book to meet and recognize the live voices of the *zurnas*.

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¹ There used to be a culture center even in the smallest Bulgarian settlement up to the 1989. These were the local institutions organizing and supporting the local cultural life and amateur arts. The etymology of the word comes from the primary functions of these institutions called "reading rooms" in the 19th century.

² Thus the participants in the revolutionary organization for the liberation of Macedonian lands used to call themselves. These territories by the clauses of the Berlin Contract were returned to the Turkish Empire and liberated only in 1912. Unfortunately, after the liberating Balkan War Macedonia was divided between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria.