

women have played the bagpipe and the rebeck but they have never played the *zurna*, because: “there is a school where to learn how to play the bagpipe, but for the *zurna* there isn’t such a school”. The musician who used to work in a folklore ensemble involves the theme about male and female playing in the context of this part of his biographic narration connected with the attempts to put in notes the *zurnaci* music. The *zurna* is unique for him since it is not taught in special music schools, it is not made industrially, it is not sold in shops for music instruments, the music is not being put in notes, last but not least – it is one of the last entirely *male* instruments under the conditions of folklorism, which in instrumental music has been showing tendencies of feminization. When the *zurnaci* is seeking an answer to the question “Why a woman cannot play the *zurna*?”, he resorts to explanations with the psychology: “There must be some irritation, something to irritate you and to tell to yourslef – come on, lemme also play!” [M.K., p.28].

Education and Profession

The greater part of the *zurnacies* interviewed have graduated from a secondary school. The players of the older generation (born between the 1910s and 1930s) have no education. Those born between the 1930s and 1960s have a primary or secondary school, while the representatives of the young generations (born between 1960s and 1980s) have a secondary and high school education. There are exceptions in the scheme outlined – S. D. is born in 1937 and has completed the VIIIth grade, while his son D. D., born in 1959 has only the Vth grade.

None of the famous *zurnacies* has graduted from a music school. One or two have the elementary knowledge of notes, learnt during the music lessons at school or while working in the folklore ensembles.

Nowadays many of the *zurnacies* cannot manage to provide for their families by playing music. They have other jobs as well – farmers (growing vegetables) or breeding animals, cattle-dealers (*cambazlik*), employees of state owned enterprises (workers in the local forestry farm). The fact that for them the *zurnacilik* is a second preofession does not make them “semiprofessionalists” since both their talent and mastered technique as well as their being recognized and having a special role in society make these musicians professional maestros. The statement by some of the players that this is their second profession is doublful. The players from Petrich and Gotse Delchev have written for professional affiliation in the archive materials from 1960s: “labourer and *zurnaci*” [АИИ БАН, Папка 265/№4757; 265/№4758]. As our informants have said at that time they used to be forced be employees of the state owned enterprises to have another profession because the *zunacilik* was considered as a job which is not serious and is a part of the private sector¹ [A.M., p.48]. Probably due to that reason the musicians gave formally another job as a main profession.

Several of the *zurnacies* (born in the 1920s and 1930s) have worked full time as instrumentalists in the folklore ensembles Pirin-Blagoevgrad and Yane Sandansky – Gotse Delchev in the 1960s and 1970s.

Playing music is the sole profession for the major part of the *zurnacies*: “I have been with this craft for 38 years. I ain’t got another job, state job I do not have. I am occupied only with music” [M.M., p.48].