

### ***Professionalism***

The talent and skilfulness, without which the piper could not achieve music with his instrument are skills marking the specialization process. One could say that the traditional instrumental music is a specialized art. In some of its manifestations like *zurnaci* music, this specialized activity requires from the performer professional skills, stamina and hard work.

Having said that all musicians-instrumentalists are specialists, only but few of them are professionals, though the notion of professionalism in traditional music as well as the rating of professionalism in this type of music could be a subject of discussion. It is hard to say where the professionalism begins and ends. But in ethnomusicology the opinion is that the professional musician gets remuneration for their musical mastery. The remuneration can be in the form of presents given to the musician or in money [Merriam, 1964:124-125].

Debates concerning the specialization and professionalism in traditional music have also arisen in Bulgarian musicology. Some of the ideas evoked by the Bulgarian material are applicable to *zurnaci* practice in Southwest Bulgaria as well. The first and elementary professional requirement a contemporary player has to meet is the possession of a high technical masterhood, achieved via special training [Тодоров, Т., 1989:31]. The professional player is being paid and the payment is a stimulus to improve his professionalism [Йорданова, Ж., 1989:110-111]. The professional musician earns his living by playing music, not by working in the fields. Therefore he is both demanded and rejected by the society – the high music proficiency has a non-prestigious character under the conditions of the farmers' culture [Захариева, 1989:33, Тодоров, Т. 1978:72].

It is known that in some traditional cultures does exist a social unity of musicians into professional communities – guilds having subordination, inner segregation according to certain marks, special language and rituals [Merriam, 1964:140-143]. *Zurnaci* practice worldwide has been connected with professionalism both as a quality of the musician and as a marker of the *zurnaci*'s art.

In Middle Asia, for example, the *zurnacies* together with those playing the drums and brass instruments as well as dancers and acrobats used to have their own corporation, a guild. The “trade union” used to coordinate the commissioning of the different groups to perform at the municipal shows, street festivities, family rituals, etc. They used to have a *risola* (a special statute setting the rules of behaviour of the ‘union’ members). There used to be a head of the union – usually the most prominent *zurna* player called *mehtar* [Капматов, 1989:95]. In his famous music tractate dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which is a precious source about the music in Middle Asia in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Dervish Ali mentions that the municipal “trumpeters and drummers” – the *surnay*, *karnay* and *nagor* players – had their guild (a craftsmen union, corporation of those practicing artistic crafts). Members of this union were also the actors from the folk theater and folk circus, but those playing string instruments and the singers were not. The fact is interpreted as a sign of different social status of the musicians groups and by the different social function of the instruments. The *zurnacies* used to be professionals serving the municipal board and via their *axacal* (the guild's leader) – received “orders” to serve at municipal and family feasts. Some of the *zurna* players were employed at the court of the local ruler. The post of the “chief of the *nagora-hona*” was considered the most honorable one. It was held by the best players of these instruments, who carried the title *mehtar*. Similar were the en-