

11 but knows the instrument from his earliest age. “E’en as a small boy, since he was three he’s been close to me. Dad used to say always: “This kid will make a musician!” – his father reminisces [Д.К., 10/2001, p.32].

The next stage is getting command of the elementary playing skills – *dishane* (breathing), *duhovka* (blowing) and *prastovka* (fingering). Having got knowledge of the instrument, the young *svirach* “*chirakuva*” (is in apprenticeship) to his maestro. He plays with him as a *glashnik* (in the region of Petrich) or *chirak* (Gotse Delchev region) and begins to play with other musicians as a “helper”. During the couple of years that follow he is usually being trained practically in formations with musicians of his age. Having the confidence that he has command of the instrument and enough repertoire and the reputation, and is being demanded, the young *zurnaci* may go to the next stage of becoming a maestro. The tuition of a *zurnaci* takes years because the *zurna* is “a difficult instrument, it is not easy to master it” [АИФ, I, № 100, c. 28]. The biographic story of a *zurnaci* from Kavrakirovo reveals the evolution of the musician: “Listen now, I’s 8 or 9 years old when my uncle Selim took me to teach me. And I learnt about one-two years till I could go alone to the weddings as a *glashnik*. You know it, don’t you, since the time – you’ll go with this one, with that one and thus the music grows on you. With Samir I have also played together for 3 or four years. And I saw I was able further a band to lead. I have good friends as well – come, they call me, to play. I told myself: “Why should I go to accompany? Let me go a bit like a maestro to see how it goes. Started I like a maestro and now I am having my own band” [C.O., 02/2001, p.1].

The technique problems characterizing the *zurna* as an instrument come at the start of the tuition process. The pupil has to learn to breathe, to work with the mouth and the tongue, and to learn the positions of his hands and the so-called fingering.

The correct breathing is the first skill that a pupil should learn. He should breathe regularly so that the tone produced be even, and constantly – so that a *svirach* should play for a long time without getting tired. There are several typical exercises for mastering the breathing technique – whistling through a straw in a glass of water, playing with your belly tightened up, imitating the breathing of a drinking animal. According to a *zurnaci* from Kavrakirovo the future maestro should at first blow into a straw, only after that into the *zurna*: “The beginnin’ is with a straw. They put a little water into a small jar and there you learn to blow. The bubbles come out like spits. When those bubbles do not stop, this means you can already breathe” [АИФ, I, № 100, c. 29].

In order to comprehend the ability to breathe constantly, the pupil gets a sensitive image of it being shown an everyday example – i.e. you know how an animal is breathing while drinking water. A *zurnaci* from Petrich gives the following explanation: “They took the breathin’ from the cattle – when it drinks and sucks water, it lets the air get out of its nose. While we blow through the mouth and breathe through the nose” [АИФ, I, № 100, c. 28]. A *zurnaci* from Dabnitsa remembered that when being taught to breathe, he used to be given the example with the drinking ox parallel together with the lessons to breathe through a straw in a glass of water: “I am breathing through the nose being taught by brother. Said he: the ox, the cow when drinking water take their breath through the nose. It is the same with the *zurna* – does not stop. I have learnt in a glass of water. When you breathe trough a straw into the water the bubble should not disappear. Pr-pr-pr – you take breath through the nose and blow” [Ч., p.9]. The *zurnaci* quoted specifies that this skill is not obligatory for the *svirachi* from his region – “I can do it – but other musicians can-