

The *zurnacies* are quite conscious of the hardships in their profession. To be a servant and “to dance with the people” is one of them. The everyday rehearsals and the tiresome non-stop playing for hours are another misfortune. Accepting the “sting” of this hard profession, the *zurnacies* consciously or subconsciously discover and put the stress upon the “honey” with the “sting”. Maybe the game, the double position of the actor is not that immanent to the player as it is to the maestro. Probably the specific resistance to the negative experience when meeting the audience is the essence of the game with it: to guess the psychological profiles, to make compromises with an indulgent curtsy to those drunk and aggressive – all these are tricks played perfectly by the maestri. On the other hand the sublimation of negative emotions connected with the tiring long performances is accepted as a game and competition. It is not by chance that many maestri when telling of their preparation and hard work with the instrument at home speak not of “rehearsals” but of “training”. Examples: A part of a hot dispute between two young maestri from Kavrakirovo. One of them criticizes his colleague saying that the payers in Petrich “are kiddos”, but “are like wasps with *zurnas*”. The second one defends himself saying: “but he’s every day with the *zurna*, boy!... That’s such a training, boy! Why, to play regularly is a practice!” [C.K., C.O., 03/2001, p.11]. When a player explains how one should put his watch right by the requirements of the audience gives an example with the folk-hits. The people demand them and the musicians must meet this challenge, though it is quite hard to react in time and include the novel into their repertoire: “It works but we must sit somewhere for three or four days and train playing those songs” [C.O., 02/2001, p.4].

The associations with sports, the competition, the physical emulation of strength, can go on. *Zurnaci* performances are a “collective sport” – the skilfulness is measured both individually and in bands. The players from Kavrakirovo, already mentioned, say that some other *zurnacies* must “train a couple of days the difficult songs”, while they as a duet need just a few minutes. The team ability is also included in the “maestro’s factors”. A *zurnaci* from Razlog tells about his son and brother – the musicians from his band: “We have played together and he’s already got accustomed to it... not everybody is able to *glashi* to me”; “We combine best with my brother. We are famous with him” [H.C., p.48, 52]. The maestri like to prove their talent via long marathon non-stop performances. A *zurnaci* from Kavrakirovo says about a watch timing of his performance and announcing his record of non-stop playing for 6 hours. A representative of the Petrich *shkola* (school) claims that few are able to endure blowing longer than an hour – the facial muscles contract. A *zurnaci* from Razlog confessed that the local large *zurnas* allow to play “about an hour or so without stopping – then we take breath”. The usual comment is: “It is a hard work. But we have used to it” [H.C., p.50].

The hard work of the *zurna*-player and the effect upon the physical health of the musicians has been commented many times during the interviews. The musicians mention about having problems with breathing, hearing, sight, getting physically tired, having pains and illnesses. They even have admitted that little by little the maestro turns into an ex-maestro: “They are worn up... I mean the old *zurnacies* are in fact gone. The most important: rarely a *zurnaci* will live a bit longer. It is so, because this a wind instrument, a hard one” [Ю., p.23].