

The definition of a music phenomenon as Oriental is a negative attribute in Bulgarian consciousness. It has been one of the strategies marked by nationalism and aestheticism for discrediting hybrid, “impure” music. For example, critics of ethno-pop music (*chalga*) usually load it with the stigma of “Oriental culture”, “sweetish rhythm of the *köçek*”, “Muslim pop music”, “the great pain – the sound of Gypsy and Orient”, “the Oriental problem of the Bulgarian man”, “the troublesome influence of Turkish-Gypsy music”, etc. [ДИМОВ, 2001:94, 103, 170]. The problem of the supporters of pure Bulgarian Folk Music is the Gypsy quality – a negative label hiding many sins. The greatest sin is “de-Bulgarization” – the pollution and vulgarization of Bulgarian music and identity” [Пейчева, 1998]. Gypsy as a musician is “alien” with regard to the folklore-based musical discourse of Bulgarian consciousness, even in its atmosphere of a multiethnic fair [РАШКОВА, 1996:147].

The close-ups of the historic past and those of current pollution of Bulgarian tradition and of the intonation environment also classify the *zurna* and *zurnaci* music as “alien” – Oriental, Turkish, Muslim, Gypsy. They are thought of as evoking associations with horrible images of Turkish rule which lasted for five centuries. A song was recorded in Malko Tarnovo where a large Bulgarian fair was held with the inevitable *zurnaci* music. The recorded song tells of a girl’s conversion to Islam. There the *zurnas* and *tapans* are symbols of this conversion. In the late 1960s the municipal theatre of Pazardzhik staged a play with a historic plot. A recording of local *zurnacies* was used as a marker of the Turkish presence in the performance. Our conversations with ethnic Bulgarians living outside Southwest Bulgaria exposed the stereotype that these instruments are associated with the hordes, the Turkish yoke, Oriental, Gypsy. During field research carried out in the Mesta and Struma river valleys in the last two years, we have not registered such a negative attitude to the *zurna*. This might be due to it being perceived as their “own” instrument belonging to local traditions and their own ethnic music. Negative attitudes to the Roma *zurnacies* are very rare. A sociological survey on the attitude towards other ethnic groups has shown that negative stereotypes towards the Gypsies are the least in number in the Blagoevgrad region. An anti-Gypsy complex is declared by 15% of those interviewed, while in the region of Kardzhali, 43% of respondents admit to it [ДИМОВА&ТИЛКИДЖИЕВ, 1999:37]. This tolerance, relatively high for Bulgarians, in the Blagoevgrad region might be due to a certain extent to the Roma musicians *zurnacies* who represent one of the symbols of local identity.

The publications of Balkan scholars point to the relationship between the *zurna* and Oriental aspects of origin, music, influence on local music cultures. There is a common concept that the *zurna* was adopted in local traditional music practices only on account of its being of Eastern origin, played by Roma, with Oriental features in its music. The *zurna* is alien to local music folklore. It arrived late with the Turks and bears Eastern Music [SIROLA, 1932:53-55]. The melodies of the Macedonian *zurna*, rich in their melifluousness and augmented seconds, have an Oriental character [ЛИНИН, 1978:12]. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the *zurna* is considered an instrument of Muslim – Turkish or Eastern origin [PETROVIC, 1988:129]. A publication on Bulgarian folk music in the Pirin region states that the repertoire of *zurnaci* bands often includes melodies of “foreign origin”. This statement is grounded on the Greek, Turkish and Albanian names of the *horos*; the typical local *horos* and slow melodies. The author notes that the latter “most often have some elements characteristic of performance on this instrument (probably the stress is on the sound