

**FOLK MUSIC OF**

**ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY  
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4434**



**YUGOSLAVIA**

**RECORDED BY LAURA BOULTON**

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

# FOLK MUSIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

CROATIA: Love Song

SERBIA: Ritual Song; Dance Tune; Love Song; Kolo Dances

MACEDONIA: Love Song; Satiric Song; Dance

SLOVENIA: Dance

MONTENEGRO: Wedding Song; Erotic Song; Epic

BOSNIA HERCEGOVINA: Dance Songs; Work Song

© 1953 FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.  
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: R53-161

WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION OF THIS  
RECORDING IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW AND SUBJECT TO  
CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

FOLKWAYS FE 4434

FOLKWAYS FE 4434



# FOLK MUSIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

## Foreword

by Milenko S. Filipovic

Yugoslavia is composed of the six Republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia. From time immemorial, roads connecting Europe with the Near and Middle East have followed the valleys of the Vardar, Morava, Danube and Sava, and the so-called transversal routes from the Adriatic have crossed the passes and canyon-like valleys of the Dinaric Mountains and the mountain systems of Sar-Pind and Rodopi in the interior of the Peninsula. These routes were used in pre-historic and historic times by migrating peoples who came from Asia and Europe to the Balkans, bringing their native cultures, which eventually were changed and blended. They have also provided natural avenues for foreign political and cultural influences whose consequences are apparent everywhere in the life and characteristics of all Balkan peoples.

About five-sixths of Yugoslavia's surface is mountainous, with a relatively small plains area in the northeastern part of the country. These isolated mountain regions provided refuge for oppressed peoples and enabled them to preserve their ancient ways of life undisturbed.

The present cultures of Yugoslavia do not represent the culture of the ancient Balkan inhabitants, or of any single people with whom the Yugoslavs were connected in the past, or even of the modern Yugoslavs' immediate ancestors. They are peculiar ethnic cultures which have grown out of elements from all these sources. The cultural picture is further complicated and enriched by the presence of Albanians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Arumanians, Germans, Italians, Turks, Gypsies.

The earliest inhabitants of present-day Yugoslavia to be known by name were, in the west the Illyrians, and in the east the Thracians, together with various related tribes in the north and south. Later groups have inherited many characteristics from Thracian and Illyrian civilization. In the Adriatic area, the Greeks established important commercial centers; the Celtic invasion in the fourth century B. C. was also very significant. The period of Romanization of the Balkan and Danubian provinces under the Empire lasted for several centuries and had permanent effects on important areas of Balkan culture. The introduction of Latin in the Balkans provided the basis for several new Romance languages. The occupied provinces enjoyed a period of economic progress and highly developed commerce. Colonists came from all parts of the Roman Empire, bringing with them new ideas, new ways of life, and even new religions. The most important of the latter, was, of course, Christianity.

In return, the provinces provided the Empire with the products of their mines and with many other economic advantages. Emigrants to colonize remote parts of



Musician with Gusle - Montenegro

Empire, soldiers for the Roman legions, and even emperors of Rome itself, came from the Balkan provinces in this period.

During the Dark Ages, Yugoslavia was the scene of rapid and violent cultural changes when a number of alien peoples settled in the Balkans. The most important of these groups were the Slavs who came en masse in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries A. D. The newcomers were divided in many tribes; in modern Yugoslavia and Bulgaria live the groups who comprise the Southern Slavs.

The later ethnic, cultural and political development of



the Southern or Balkanic Slavs was decidedly influenced by contact with the native population which they overran, as well as with Roman and Greek -- especially Byzantine -- civilizations. Several independent Slavic states arose gradually. The split in the Christian church (formally acknowledged in 1054 A. D.) resulted in the very significant fact that some of the Yugoslavs remained under the control of the Roman Catholic Church (including almost all Slovenians and Croatians, and a few Serbs), while the others, including the majority of the Serbs, stayed firmly attached to Eastern Christianity and formed independent national churches. This religious disunity seriously influenced the later development of Yugoslavia. After a comparatively short period of national independence in the Middle Ages, all of present-day Yugoslavia was subjugated by a series of foreign powers -- Bavaria, Austria, Venice, Hungary, Turkey. The Ottoman Turks, who came to the Balkans in the 14th century succeeded in occupying large parts of modern Yugoslavia. This conquest had a direct and powerful effect on the cultural development of the subject people, even indirectly influencing the life and destiny of those Yugoslavs who were under Hungarian, Venetian, or Austrian rule. At this time some Turks settled within the borders of modern Yugoslavia, and a considerable number of Yugoslavs accepted Islam and Islamic civilization. The Christian population was affected by Islamic influences in all aspects of its culture. Even today, although these influences are rapidly disappearing in the realm of material culture, they are still clearly recognizable in folk art, especially in the folk poetry of Bosnia and Macedonia.

Artistic creativity in the realm of folk poetry, music, and dance, is still alive. Even today, historic events provide the folk singers with subjects for new songs, and brief songs on social subjects as well as those of a purely lyric character, arise everywhere. These branches of folk art in Yugoslavia form a mosaic of archaic and contemporaneous elements.

#### Introduction and Notes on the Recordings by Laura Boulton

Yugoslav folk music, like the folk music of other parts of the world, is continually changing as it is interpreted by new performers in new generations. Yet some of the songs have been sung for centuries, particularly the ancient ritual songs and the heroic epics. Throughout Macedonia, southern Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and South Serbia the guslars still sing as in days of old.

Many of the Serbian and Croatian songs are called "women's songs" to distinguish them from the heroic, narrative songs of the men. They are not the sole property of the women for they may also be sung by men. The men's narrative poems have ten syllable lines, are sung by men and are usually accompanied by the gusle, a one-stringed bowed instrument, or by the tambura, a plucked instrument. The women's songs are lyrics or narrative poems with lines of various lengths, sung (usually without accompaniment) by women or young men for their own pleasure.

There are songs of mourning, wedding songs, lullabies, dance songs, children's game songs, gossip songs, love songs, and work songs for hoeing, reaping, spinning, and weaving.

Songs supplicating for rain have had great importance with these agricultural peoples, where rainfall has meant the difference between feast and famine. Many songs are connected with special days of the year, such as Lazarus Day, St. Nicholas' Day, St. George's Day, St. John's Day, Carnival Sunday, Easter, Milk-ing Festival, Winter solstice, etc.

Non-Yugoslav influences are found in some of the music, due to the influence of invading peoples. In Macedonia, for example, prolonged Turkish domination had a very far-reaching influence on the folk music.

Musical instruments are played to accompany singing and dancing, or in some cases they may be played alone for solo entertainment. Among the most popular instruments, are the zurle (also called zurne and sopele), a wooden horn with double reed, played in pairs, and its usual companion the tapan or goc, the big drum with a skin at both ends. There is also the small darbuk drum, played with the fingers. The gusle, played with a little bow, and the tambura are popular members of the string family. Tambourines -- called def in Serbia and daire in Montenegro and Macedonia -- are played for certain dances. The gajde or bagpipe accompanies both singing and dancing in some villages. Wind instruments include the kaval (Macedonian shepherd's flute), the frula (Arcadian pipe), the supelka (a Macedonian flute), the svirala (Serbian flute), and the duduk (wooden pipe).

The double flute called dojnice is a shepherd's instrument. It has two tubes, one of which has 3 holes, and the other four. The player covers 6 holes, leaving the 7th to give out the tone.

Town instruments include violin, clarinet, lute, tambouritza, accordion, drums, and various brass instruments.

Every area, almost every village has its special dances and costumes. The dances are generally accompanied by music but in certain areas there are "mute" dances accompanied only by the sound of the feet or clapping of the hands. The musical accompaniment more usually would be provided by singing, a single instrument (for example a bagpipe or a drum), or by a group of instruments.

Among the secular dances are countless lively gay dances and humorous dances which may be imitative or may ridicule such traits as laziness, dishonesty, etc., and may even become in a small way a theatrical performance. Sentimental, romantic or erotic dances usually begin or end a social gathering. In some parts of the country there are special dances of mourning.

The kolo is the most common dance form in the country. Many of the kolos have come from ancient ritual dances. They are usually danced with various combinations: there are closed kolos, open kolos danced in a line instead of a circle, pair dancing, dances of three, solo dancing, and so on. The dancing traditions are very alive all over Yugoslavia but particularly in Macedonia, Bosnia, and remote villages of Serbia and Slovenia.

Side I, Band 1 -- CROATIA: Love Song. This song was sung by 7 men and 7 women from Garesnica. It is a very old song, slow tempo; uniform rhythm. It reminds one of an ancient chorale.



Zaspo Janko pod jablanom  
moje mile drage,  
lepe moje crne oci, )  
pogledajte na me. ) repeat

Pod jablanom zlatnom granom  
moje mile drage,  
lepe moje crne oci, )  
pogledajte na me. ) repeat

Ja otrgnem zlatnu granu  
moje mile drage,  
lepe moje crne oci, )  
pogledajte na me. ) repeat

Yanko slept beneath a poplar,  
Dearest, oh my dear one,  
Oh, my lovely black eyes,  
Look at me, my dear one.

Beneath a golden-branched poplar,  
Dearest, oh my dear one,  
Oh, my lovely dear one,  
Look at me, my dear one.

I broke off a golden branch  
Dearest, oh my dear one,  
Oh, my lovely dear one,  
Look at me, my dear one.

Side 1, Band 2 -- SERBIA: Ritual Song. There is considerable variety in the music of Serbia, not only between town and rural groups, but between villages as

well. Songs of the mountain people often vary greatly from songs of the low country, and out-door songs are sung in a very different manner from those sung indoors. There are many types of songs: seljacke (sung in the evening when the girls gather for light work), obredne (ritual songs), epics sung to the accompaniment of the gusle, pastoral songs, match-making songs, dance melodies, drinking songs and others. Instrumental melodies also show considerable variety.

The magic-ritual dances (madjisko-obredne) are gradually disappearing, especially those connected with special days and events. This melody is connected with St. George's Day (May 6th, April 13th old calendar).

The kraljicke igre (queen's dances) were performed on St. George's Day or Whitsuntide, with a ritual or magical purpose. The girl-dancers had swords. They went in groups from house to house dancing and singing for prosperity. Eight or ten girls took part in the rite -- singers, dancers, those representing the king and queen, and two standard bearers.

The verses of the kraljicke songs often end with a refrain of "Lado" or "Ljelje", names referring to ancient dieties. Basil, the herb referred to in the text of the song, has special significance. When going into the Serbian Orthodox church, people carry small sprays of basil with them. Basil is used by the priest when sprinkling the congregation. It is also used in the homes to give fragrance. Following is a portion of the song.

Vrlicko kolo - Croatia





Oj ubava malo momo, Lado, Lado!  
Tuzno, jedno mlado momce  
Od tuge se razodjuje  
Tamo dole u gradine,  
Da otkine struk bosiljak,  
Da napravi strucan krevet,  
Pa kad legne da uzdisa,  
Kad se digne da mirise,  
Oj ubava malo momo!

Ah, lovely little girl, Lado, Lado!  
A very, very sad young lad  
Tries to drive his sadness away,  
Down in the gardens  
Picking basil  
To make a bed of the stems,  
So that when he lies down he may  
Breathe the perfume,  
And rising he will carry the fragrance with him.

Side I, Band 3 -- SERBIA: Dance Tunes. These dance themes are played on the frula or Arcadian flute. It is a small wooden instrument popular in the villages. Such old folk-instruments are more and more being replaced in the semi-urban groups by the violin, accordion and brass instruments.

These dances were performed by a group of men and women from the village of Sopot (Mladenovac). There are many dances for men only and also for women only. When they dance together, the men are inspired to show off their most attractive and agile steps. The women are expected to dance sedately.

Side I, Band 4 -- SERBIA: Love Song (Zvoni Zvonce). This love song from Kumane in the district of Zrenjanin is accompanied by the gajde (bagpipes).

Rano projdi preko polja, zvonce,  
Oj, Jovane moj djevdane,  
A moj dragi, dragane.

Zvoni zvonce, tera coban ovce,  
Oj, Jovane moj djevdane,  
A moj dragi, dragane.

Te joj cobane: ukrascu ti jagnje,  
Oj, Jovane, moj djevdane  
A moj dragi, dragane.

Makar isla s Tobom na vencanje.  
Oj, Jovane, moj djevdane,  
A moj dragi, dragane.

"Ring, little bell, across the field.  
Oh, Jovan, my necklace,  
My dearest, my sweetheart.

The little bell is ringing,  
The shepherd herds his sheep.  
Oh, Jovan, my necklace,  
My dearest, my sweetheart."

Said she to the shepherd,  
"I'll steal from you a lamb.  
Oh, Jovan, my necklace,  
My dearest, my sweetheart.

Even if I have to go with you  
To our wedding.  
Oh, Jovan, my necklace,  
My dearest, my sweetheart."

Side I, Band 5 -- SERBIA: Kolo Dance. The gajde or bagpipe accompanies this dance of the village of Dupljaja (Bela Crkva). The men improvise steps constantly while dancing, and in certain dances they compete, dancing around a knife or a stick, or with a glass full of beer or water on the head to show their skill.

The kolo in various forms is popular all over Yugoslavia. Its original role has been forgotten but it is supposed to have been connected with ancient magical ceremonies. From religious rites it has been transferred to social festivals and national celebrations. There are countless variants of the kolo to express gaiety, strength, courage, dignity, etc.

Formerly every guild of craftsmen had its own festival day, and many dances are called by the professions, as Merchants dance, Ploughmans dance etc.

The bagpipe, once one of the favorite instruments to accompany dancing, is gradually being replaced by the tambura and the accordion.

Side I, Band 6 -- SERBIA: Kolo Dance. The duduk (wooden pipe) has been used traditionally to accompany the dancers of the regions around the river Nisava. When the men left their homes to earn money in Rumania or other parts of Serbia they took the duduk along to accompany their own dances wherever they were.

In this region the kolo is danced in many forms, - open-spiral, closed circle, concentric circles, in pairs and solo. The good dancer dances from the knee and weaves a dance pattern on one spot, holding the upper body still. The male dancers use many improvisations.

Side I, Band 7 -- SERBIA: Kolo Dance. The people of Vranje in Southeast Serbia have great zest for dancing. Oriental influences have mingled here with Serbian characteristics. In Vranje under the Turks for centuries Oriental dances were cultivated. The Serbs in the city had to dance at night by moonlight or in their homes. The older people insist on traditional characteristics for each dance but the younger people have not the same interest in preserving all the old dance forms. Furthermore, Gypsies have brought faster rhythms and have introduced string and brass instruments as accompaniment.

The goc, or big drum, with the zurle or the clarinet are very popular as accompaniment for dancing in many districts in Serbia.

Side I, Band 8 -- MACEDONIA: Love Song. Three girls sing this love song in unison, with accompaniment by two kavale (shepherd's flutes). These flutes are often played in pairs. They vary from 12 to 36 inches in length, with six holes. The shepherds amuse themselves while herding their sheep with the soft plaintive melodies of these appealing instruments.

Sevdalino, malo j mome mari (repeat)

Oste li si doma sevd

Oste li si - - - - -

Site pari mi gi zede, sevde (repeat)

Pet stotini para grosa (repeat)

S - - - - - godini.

Daj mi malku od parite sevde (repeat)

Da si kupam doljno rilo



Da ne odam bes u selo  
Kucinjata da ne sve lajat sevde (repeat)  
Pandurite da ne se smejat  
Ti me ne - - - sino da dino.

Sevdalino, my little girl,  
Are you still at home, my sweetheart?  
You have taken all my money from me,  
Five hundred pi<sup>n</sup>stres,  
(Money earned through many) years.

Give me back a little money, my sweetheart,  
That I might buy (some trousers).  
So that I don't have to go through the village  
exposed,  
So that the dogs don't bark at me,  
And the watchmen don't laugh at me.

Side I, Band 9 -- MACEDONIA: Love Song. The bag-  
pipe, which accompanied this song recorded in  
Skoplje, is commonly used to accompany singing and  
dancing. This song is a conversation between a mother  
and her daughter-in-law who did not go to the social  
gathering.

The mother asks:

"Why didn't you go to the party"?

The daughter-in-law replies:

"With whom to go, mother,

When I have nobody?

I have a child-husband.

He goes constantly behind me

Holding on to my skirt

Asking me to prepare him a cake."

This satiric love song reflects reality. It refers to ancient family life when it was the custom to marry very young boys before puberty to older girls, usually much older, perhaps even 25 years of age. In such a case the boy's father was actually the husband of the girl. Since 1912, when Turkish power was overthrown, the law has required that the boy should be 18 years old.

There were three important reasons for these marriage customs in the old patriarchal system. In the 16th and 17th centuries the Turkish rulers took young boys from 12 to 14 years of age into the army. As they did not take married boys, this was a very important reason for marrying. Parents wanted to marry off the boys early in order to get another person to help with the work. Parents of the girls also wished to keep the girls at home to help with the work as long as possible.

Side I, Band 10 -- MACEDONIA: Dance. The dancing of Macedonians is extremely vigorous yet has extraordinary lightness and often shows remarkable muscular control. There is great variety in the types, the steps, the manner of holding hands, etc. The rhythms often use combinations of 4/8 and 3/8, 4/8 and 5/8, 7/8 and 4/8. The kaval or flute is less common for dance accompaniment than the zurle and tapan. When songs accompany the dancing they may be serious or gay; the texts usually deal with national heroes and events, or with love. Certain songs and dances and ceremonies are found only among the Christians, others among the Moslems. In the Christian epic songs the Moslems are defeated in battle, and in the Moslem songs the Moslem heroes defeat the Christians. Women's dances are modest and restrained and are performed with singing or with the daire. Under the Turkish domination the women could not dance with the men except in the family group.

Side II, Band 1 -- SLOVENIA: Dance. Slovenia was under Austrian rule until the First World War and

during this time lost many of its early folk customs. However, in the Bela Krajina (White Region), named for the white costume worn there, remnants of ancient dances may still be found. This piece from Metlika (Crnomelj) on the Croatian border is a typical mountain tunc sung all over Slovenia. Different words are used in different areas depending on the place and the occasion.

Side II, Band 2-- MONTENEGRO: Wedding Song. A very important Moslem custom, Kanja, is the painting of the nails of the bride before her wedding. When a girl appears with her hair and nails dyed red with henna, everyone knows that she is just married or about to be married. The ritual is a long and elaborate one, with singing by a chorus of women and a responding chorus of men. The songs are often ribald. Only a part of the ceremony is included in this recording. Two men sing to the accompaniment of the tambura. This erotic song is commonly sung by boys, but never in polite gatherings.

Side II, Band 3 -- MONTENEGRO: Erotic Dance. This dance is performed by one man and one woman. In these dances for two, the man dances with great vigor, leaping about and spreading his arms as if to embrace the woman. She dances quietly, modestly and with great restraint. At present this dance has the character of a love dance although it is supposed to have come from an earlier "fighting" dance for men which had magic significance. Accompaniment is provided by the tapan (drum) and zurle (wind instrument).

Side II, Band 4 -- MONTENEGRO: Epic Song. Among the most loved songs of the Yugoslavs are the famous epic poems or heroic ballads, telling of the brave deeds of national heroes. Through the centuries, the verse of the heroic ballads, as well as many of the lyric folk songs, has been blank verse, with ten-syllable lines. It was used most effectively by the poet Peter Petrovic Njegos, who wrote a hundred years ago. Since then this form is becoming rare. However, the epic ballad form has continued to flourish.

The guslar is a very important figure in Montenegro as all over southern Yugoslavia, for he has put into song all of the outstanding events of the history of the country. He accompanies his songs on the gusle, which usually has a single string (although it may have as many as three). Its string is of horse-hair, as is also the string of the small bow. The guslar frequently composes some of the songs he sings, but his repertoire includes innumerable epic poems about ancient heroes.

The gusle is used primarily to accompany the epics. The accompaniment is very simple and closely related to the accents of the words and the metre of the verse. The different tones are produced by stopping the string lightly at different places with the fingers. The actual range of tones is more than octave, but only a few of the possible tones are used in playing. This song, sung by a Montenegrin guslar, tells of a feud between two ancient heroes.

Knjigu pise beze Ljubovicu  
u Lijepu selu Nevesinju,  
te je salje Pivi Kamenitoj,  
a na ruke Pivljaninu Bajo:  
Cujes, more, Pivljanine Bajo,  
ti si mene za srce ujeo,  
ti si moga brata pogubio,



izadji mi na megdan junacki!  
 Evo tebi tri megdana dajem:  
 prvi megdan u krsna korita,  
 drugi megdan na goru Trusinu,  
 Treci megdan gdje se udesimo.  
 Ako li mi ne smijes izaci,  
 poslacu ti derdev i preslicu,  
 uz preslicu misirsko povjesmo  
 vreteno drvo simsirovo,  
 te mi predi gace i kosulju  
 u uckur mi za gace ispredi.  
 Kada Baju sitna knjiga dodje  
 i kad vide sta mu knjiga pise,  
 on uzima divit i hartiju  
 te on begu drugu knjigu pise.

Bey Ljubovic, in the lovely village Nevesinje  
 Writes a (book) letter and sends it to the  
 Rocky Piva, into the  
 hands of Baya Pivljanin:  
 "Listen, you, Bajo Pivljanin,  
 You bit right into my heart,  
 for you killed my brother.  
 Come out, I dare you to fight!  
 I give you three choices:  
 the first at the rocky Korita,  
 The second on the Trusina hill,  
 the third wherever we shall meet by chance.  
 If you should not have the courage to come out,  
 I shall send you an embroidering frame and  
 a distaff,  
 and, moreover, an Egyptian skein with a box-  
 wood spindle  
 so you could weave for me under-drawers and  
 a shirt,  
 and also weave for me a lace belt. ....  
 When this letter reached Baya  
 and he understood the contents,  
 he took his inkstand and paper  
 and wrote the Bey his answer.

In this answer Bayo Pivljanin proposes reconciliation.  
 When Bey Ljubovic refuses with an insulting letter,  
 Bayo agrees to come out and fight. As his second,  
 Bayo selects his closest friend, Mato Njegosevich.  
 The adversaries appear at the agreed-upon place.  
 The seconds check to see whether either fighter is  
 covered with breast-plates. Bey Ljubovich had hidden  
 a shield on his body, but succeeds in persuading  
 Bayo's second to conceal it and keep it secret.

Bajo and Ljubovich draw their swords and start to  
 fight. Wherever Bayo hits Ljubovich's body, sparks  
 fly. When Ljubovich strikes, blood pours from Bayo's  
 body. Bayo defends himself with fury, but when he  
 realizes that he may die because of treachery, he  
 throws away his sword. He grasps with his right  
 hand Ljubovich's sword, and with his left grasps his  
 throat, casts him to the ground to kill him with his  
 teeth.

Side II, Band 5 -- BOSNIA HERCEGOVINA: Dance  
 Songs. These songs are sung by three girls from the  
 village of Cuca Gora in the district of Travnik. The  
 last is a dance song in which men singers join the  
 girls.

Side II, Band 6 -- BOSNIA HERCEGOVINA: Work  
 Song. Throughout Bosnia and Hercegovina the ravne  
 songs are very popular in the villages. The accompani-  
 ment provided by the weird rumbling of the tepsija  
 (pan) is rare. One woman rolls a large copper pan  
 about 18 inches in diameter on the floor while the  
 other sings across it. The whirling pan provides a  
 rhythmic accompaniment and a resonator at the same

time. (The same type of musical instrument has been  
 observed in the Arctic among the Hudsons Bay Eskimo  
 women.)

The song has a love theme, but is used to accompany  
 work.

Kaharli sam,  
 Vecerala nisam.

I am sad,  
 I have not eaten.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Assistance in preparing these notes was received  
 from a number of people. I wish to note with gratitude  
 the assistance of Mr. Chauncy Hamlin, Professor  
 Albert Lord of Harvard University, Dr. Milenko  
 Filipovic, and Dr. Lujo Goranin who assisted with  
 translations and other important information.

Editor - Harold Courlander  
 Production Director - Moses Asch