SOUND PORTRAITS FROM BULGARIA
A Journey to a Vanished World
1966–1979

Recorded and photographed by
Martin Koenig

SONG TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS, AND NOTES

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ДИСК 1

4. Сино Гьоргьо льо / Следно хоро
(женi от c. Книжовник, Тракия)

Сино Гьоргьо льо, Гьоргьо,
в село са турци дошлили,/2
българи аскер да збира.
Да збира, сино льо, писава,
и тебе, сино льо, писава/2
и ти на аскер да бъди.
На куда, мале ле, на куда
на турци аскер да правя.

14. Потайно Рада годия*
Линка Гекова Гергова и Менка Илиева Аронова, певици,
с. Бистрица, Среднозападна България

O-o-o
Потайно Рада годия,
Потайно годеж правия
Потайно Рада годия,
Потайно годеж годия
И Рада не е знаела
Куга дойдоя сватове,
И Рада не е знаела
Куга дойдоя сватове,
А та Рада да си заведа.
Е сватове ода по доло,
А та Рада да си заведа.
Е сватове ода по доло,
Рада се връща, повръща,
Па си на макя думаше:
Рада се връща, повръща,
Па си на макя думаше:
—Мамо ле, стара мамо ле,
Като ми даде далеко,
—Мамо ле, стара мамо ле,
Като ми даде далеко,
O, през Дунав дори у Влашко,
Знаеш ли, мамо, людете,
O, през Дунав дори у Влашко,
Знаеш ли, мамо, людете,
Знаеш ли, мамо, момчето,
Знаеш ли, мамо, къщата?

DISC 1

4. O Son Gyorgyo
(women from the village of Knizhovnik, Thrace)

Gyorgyo, son, oh Gyorgyo
The Turks have come to the village
To recruit Bulgarians into their army,
To recruit them, my son, to sign them up,
And they’ll sign you up,
You to be a soldier, too.
To the band, oh mother, to the band
To become a Turkish soldier.

14. Rada Was Secretly Engaged*
Linka Gekova Gergova and Menka Ilieva Aronova, vocals,
village of Bistritsa, Central-West Bulgaria

They betrothed Rada in secret,
They made a secret betrothal,
They betrothed Rada in secret,
They concluded a betrothal in secret.
And Rada didn’t know,
When the wedding party came,
And Rada didn’t know,
When the wedding party came,
And they came to carry Rada off.
The wedding party set off down the mountain.
And they came to carry Rada off.
The wedding party set off down the mountain.
Rada returned, she went back
And said to her mother:
Rada returned, she went back
And said to her mother:
“Mother, oh my old mother,
When you gave me in marriage to a faraway place,
Mother, oh my old mother,
When you gave me in marriage to a faraway place,
Oh, away across the Danube even unto the Vlach lands,
Do you even know those people, mother,
Oh, away across the Danube even unto the Vlach lands,
Do you even know those people, mother,
Do you even know the groom,
Do you even know what his house is like?”
Do you even know the groom,
Do you even know what his house is like?”

*The indented lines are sung by the second singer.
15. Red Wine Flowed
Velitchka Tsenkova, Liliyana Pashaliiska, Mariya G. Malinova, Katya Tsenkova, Lazarinka Gergova, Svetla Kostova, and Irina Todorova, vocals, village of Bistritsa, Central-West Bulgaria

Red wine flowed freely
In the dense green forest.
Next to the wine sat Petar,
A Greek woman on his knee.
The Greek woman said to Petar,
“Marry me, Petar, marry me!”
“I don’t want you, oh Greek girl!”

16. A Bride Walks Through the Green Forest
Nadka Vasileva, vocal, village of Bankya, Central-West Bulgaria

A bride woman walked through the green forest
And spoke quietly and gently to it:
“Why have you withered, oh forest,
Withered and dried up?
Did frost damage you,
Or did blight destroy you,
Or did an axe cut you down?”
“Frost didn’t damage me,
Nor did blight destroy me
Nor did an axe cut me down.
Instead, three chain-gangs passed through:
The first was all young men,
The second was all young girls,
The third was all young brides.
With their feet they trampled the grass,
With their heads they broke the branches,
With their sighs they burned up the leaves.”

17. A Young Seminary Student Plows on Holy Sunday*
Paunka Borisova, Radka Iosifova, and Goryanka Ivanova, vocals, village of Obelya, Central-West Bulgaria

A young seminary student plowed,
He plowed on holy Sunday
On Sunday,
On Sunday, and on Transfiguration Day.

* Holy Sunday, a commonly used phrase, emphasizes that Sunday is perceived as more holy than other days in the week.
18. Тъмен се облак зададе
Евдокия Димитрова, певица, с. Обеля,
Среднозападна България

Е-е-е...
Тъмен се облак зададе
Над нива, над Иванова.
Иван на снаха говори:
— Снахо ле, Даде хубава,
Я окни,, снахо, та запей,
Низ едно гърло два гласа!
Е-е-е...
Хей га се облак зададе разтуръ,
Та да си нива ненавали,
Снаха на свекър говори:
— Свекре ли мили тате ле
Не мога, тате, да пея,
Близу е нива до гора,
В гора има хайдути,
Един съм хайдутин лъгала,
Той че ме на глас познае,
Че дойде да те убие.
Свекър на снаха говори:
— Повикай, Даде, та запей!
Викнала Дуда, запела,
Хайдутин я на глас позна:
— Ето го моето либе!
Иде си, хайдутин, иде си,
На Дуда свекър си фана,
Назад му ръце изви,
Върза го и Дуда поведе,
Дуда си дума на либе:
— Я ми дай новчето,
Да си свекъро убиям,
Да не казва у село нищо.
Дуда се върна, та свекър не уби,
Ами му ръце отвърза,
Фана хайдутин, убия.

18. A Dark Cloud Appeared
Evdokiya Dimitrova, vocal, village of Obelya,
Central-West Bulgaria

A dark cloud appeared
Above the field, above Ivan’s field.
Ivan said to his daughter-in-law:
“Daughter-in-law, oh beautiful Duda,
Shout out, daughter-in-law, sing out
From your throat two voices
To disperse the dark cloud when it appears
So our field doesn’t get flooded.”
The daughter-in-law spoke to her father-in-law:
“Dear father-in-law,
I dare not sing, father,
The field is near the forest
And there are outlaws in the forest.
I deceived one of the outlaws,
He will know me by my voice,
And will come out and kill you.”
The father-in-law said to the daughter-in-law:
“Shout out, Duda, sing out!”
Duda shouted, she sang out.
The outlaw knew her by her voice.
“Ah, that’s my true love!”
He came, the outlaw, he came up to them,
He grabbed Duda’s father-in-law
And tied his hands behind him.
He tied him up and led Duda away.
Duda said to her love:
“Give me your knife,
Let me kill my father-in-law
So he doesn’t tell anyone about us in the village.”
Duda went back, but she didn’t kill her father-in-law.
Instead, she untied his hands,
Caught the outlaw and killed him instead.
19. The Moonlight Shone

**Group 1:** Tsvetanka Ivanova Turmachka, Zaharinka Peshova Turmachka, Kostadinka Slaveva Turmachka, and Svilena Kirilova Todorova. **Group 2:** Gyuna Hristova Turmachka, Dobrena Naumova Turmachka, Slavka Istiliyanova Turmachka, and Vida Simova Turmachka. Singers from the village of Plana, Central-West Bulgaria.

The moonlight shone.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl
The moonlight shone.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl

May it shine even more brightly
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl
May it shine even more brightly
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl

To let us see whose dance line,
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl
To let us see whose dance line,
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl

Whose dance line is the loveliest.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl
Whose dance line is the loveliest.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl

And why it is the loveliest.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl
And why it is the loveliest.
Pretty Kata,
Golden bracelet, oh Lado girl
Oh Lado, oh good girl

NOTE: This song’s refrain marks it as a Laduvane/ладуване ritual song.
Lada/Лада was an ancient goddess of spring, beauty, and fertility; and her name is invoked during the ritual, performed by unmarried girls dressed in wedding finery, particularly ornamented headdresses.
20. Жална горо
Божурка Тупанкова, певица, и Борислав Василев, кемене (гъдулка), с. Студена, Среднозападна България

Хей-ей!
Жална горо, жал ми е на тебе,
и на тебе, и на стара макя,
защо ми е млада оженила, /2
оженила, на зло изпратила. /2
Хей-ей!
оженила, на зло изпратила,
на зли свекър, на по-зла свекърва,
на зли девер, на по-зла етърва /2
и на либе върли харамия. /2
Хей-ей!
Жали горо, жали мила сестро,
Жали горо, двете да жалиме—
Ти за листе, горо, я за младост.
Твоито листе, па че да покара,
Мойта младост нема да се върне/2

21. Ветар вее, гора се лалее
Кремена Станчева, с. Ковачевци, и Василка Андонова, с. Лева Река, певици, Среднозападна България

Ветар вее
Гора се лалее,
E-e-e, гора се лалее, и-и!

20. Oh, Sad Forest
Bozhurka Tupankova, vocal, and Borislav Vasilev, kemene (gadulka), village of Studena, Central-West Bulgaria

Mournful forest, I mourn for you,
For you and for my old mother.
Why did she marry me off so young
And send me to an evil place?

She married me off, sent me to an evil place,
To live with an evil father-in-law and even more evil mother-in-law,
With an evil brother-in-law and even more evil sister-in-law,
And with a groom who is a cruel outlaw.

Mourn, oh forest, mourn, dear sister,
Mourn, oh forest, let us mourn together—
You for your leaves, I for my youth.
But your leaves will sprout again;
My youth will never return.

21. The Wind Blows, the Forest Sways
Kremena Stancheva, village of Kovachevtsi, and Vasilka Andonova, village of Leva Reka, Central-West Bulgaria, vocals

The wind blows,
The forest sways.
Oh, the forest sways!
22. Пушка пукна / Оздолу иду връцка колца

Атанас Вълчев, гъдулка; Никола Атанасов, гайда; Господин Станев, кавал; Румен Сираков, тамбура; Симеон Георгиев, тъпан. Кремена Станчева, с. Ковачевци, и Василка Андонова, с. Лева Река, Среднозападна България, певици

I. Пушка пукна, Гюле мой,
Pушка пукна, Гюле,
О-о, Гюле мой,
Pушка пукна, Гюле. /2
Та удари, Гюле мой,
Та удари Гюле,
О-о, Гюле мой,
Та удари, Гюле /2

II. Оздол иду връцка колца,
Оврътелки, трепетелки,
Оврът, Марко, колангити,
Тангги, ланги, виторанги,
Вирилити, наступити,
Многу ли сте скържалити,
О-ой, варай, варай, и-и!

Та кой ми се у ни вози
Оврътелки, трепетелки,
Оврът, Марко, колангити,
Тангги, ланги, виторанги,
Вирилити, наступити,
Многу ли сте скържалити,
О-ой, варай, варай, и-и!

22. A Rifle Fired

Atanas Valchev, gadulka; Nikola Atanasov, gaida; Gospodin Stanev, kaval; Rumen Sirakov, tambura; Simeon Georgiev, tapan. Kremena Stancheva, village of Kovachevtsi, and Vasilka Andonova, village of Leva Reka, Central-West Bulgaria, Vocals

I. A rifle, oh my Rose
A rifle fired, oh Rose
Oh my little Rose!
A rifle fired, oh Rose
And it hit its target—oh my Rose

II. Up Comes a Rolling Cart
A cart comes rolling/clattering up the hill
And who is it riding in this cart?
Etc.

NOTE: The song is full of nonsense words and onomatopoeia referring to a squeaky, creaking cart rolling along; its refrain presents as a kind of tongue-twister in Bulgarian that is difficult to translate literally.
2. Мă Copile
Йон Чобортович, цигулка и вокал; Георге Христович, фрула, с. Халово, Източна Сърбия, бивша Югославия

Мă copile,  
Мă copile, пuiу mami,  
Care-ț mâncă muică băni?  
Nima nu îa mâncat(ă),  
Sângur cu mâna ia-m dat(ă), /2  
La li frumuasă pi-n sat(ă), /2  
La-l cu păru pepćanat(ă),  
La cu păru pepćanat(ă).  
Săn-çi pi la nuoi pi-n sat(ă). /3

5. Тръгнала е Неда
Минка Колева Бачкова и Минка Колева Бачкова, певици; Недко Петров Петров, гъдулка; Иван Кодинов Русанов, акордеон; с. Гарван, Добруджа

Тръгнала е Неда  
за вода студена  
С крива кобилица,  
с подковани медни /2  
Като из път върви,  
снагата си крепи,  
Като вино в чаша,  
вино и ракия /2  
Подире ѝ върви  
Кольо у механата,  
Той на Неда дума:  
—Недо, бяла Недо, /2  
две жени да имам,  
Тебе пак ще взема,  
на балкона ще туря /2  
Кога дъждът вали,  
дама ня да роси,  
Кога вятър вее,  
дама ня да люлее /2  
Калдъръм ще направя  
да не ти изцапа  
жълтите чехлички  
златните пантофи

5. Neda Went Out
Minka Koleva Bachkova, vocal; Nedko Petrov Petrov, gadulka; Ivan Kodinov Rusanov, accordion; village of Garvan, Dobrudzha

Neda went out  
To fetch cold water  
Carrying a curved yoke,  
With hammered copper vessels.  
As she walked along the path  
She held herself straight and strong  
Like wine in a glass  
Wine and brandy.  
After her came  
Koljo, the tavern habitué.  
He said to Neda:  
“Neda, fair Neda,  
Even if I already had two wives  
I'd still marry you  
And install you on the balcony  
So that when it rained,  
It would moisten us both.  
And when the wind blew  
It would rock us both as in a cradle.  
I'll put down cobblestones  
So the rain won't stain  
Your yellow sandals  
Your golden slippers.”
14. **Delyu the Rebel Went Out**

Valya Balkanska, vocal, village of Arda; Lazar Kanevski, kaba gaida, village of Momchilovtsi; Stefan Zahmanov, kaba gaida, village of Sokolovtsi; Rhodopes

Delyo* the outlaw emerged,
The outlaw, the brigand,
With men of Dumovo and Karadzhovo.
Delyo ordered, he commanded
The Ottoman officials of Deridar,
The Ottomans and their Bulgarian minions:
“I have two aunts in yonder village,
Do not force them to convert to Islam,
Do not sully them...”

**NOTES:**
* The singer’s use of the form Дельо/Delyo should be considered a phonetic variation of Делю/Delyu.

Делю хайдутин / Делю войвода (Delyu the outlaw/commander) is a figure from the late 18th or early 19th century, who operated as a rebel outlaw during the time of the mass conversion to Islam of Bulgarian Slavs by the Ottomans in the Rhodope Mountain region. Songs about Delyu often portray him as protecting the local population from being converted.
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