

MUSIC OF MACEDONIA

**PLAYING 'TIL
YOUR SOUL
COMES OUT**



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

TRACK LIST

ALEKSO “ALO” TONČOV, MUSTAFA EMINOV, TRAJČE NAŠEV, AND ZDRAVE STAFILOV

1. *Pesnata na spaičeto* (The Young Cavalryman’s Song) 5:49
2. *Oro od Alo Tončov* (Alo Tončov’s Dance)/Ramnoto – instrumental 3:51
3. *Pesnata za Lešovskiot Manastir tikveško* (The Song of the Lešovo Monastery) 4:11
4. *Pesnata Ibraim Odža* (The Song of Ibraim Odža) 3:05
5. *Pesnata na seloto Resava tikveško* (The Song of the Village of Resava) 3:29
6. *Oroto Devojče devojče crveno jabolče* (Dance – Girl, Girl, Little Red Apple) – instrumental 2:31
7. *Taksimot Hidžas od Alo Tončov* (Alo Tončov’s Taksim Hidžas) 5:05

MARIJA MICOVA

8. *Zela moma novi stomni* (The Young Girl Has Bought New Pots) 2:16
9. *More kaži kaži Tode bre sino* (Tell Me, Tell Me, Tode My Son) 5:00
10. *Jana bole belo grlo* (Jana Has Pain in Her White Throat) 1:17
—Marija Micova, Mitra Ğurova
11. *Crna se čuma zadade* (There Came the Black Plague [to Macedonia]) 5:05

ĞORĜI ŠARLANDŽIEV, ILIJA GULEV, AND TODOR GOŠEV

12. *Zlata* (Crni Jusuf/Kara Jusuf) – *rusali* dance 5:29
13. *Povnička* (Šekerinka) 3:30
14. *Kapidan avasi* – *rusali* dance 3:45
15. *Ženil se Petre Vojvoda* (Commander Peter is Getting Married) (Skender avasi) 3:25
16. *Guroševica* (Pehlivan avasi/Šarlagan avasi) 4:16

ALEKSO “ALO” TONČOV AND SLOBODANKA TONČOV

17. Sultan Hamid’s March 2:04

Transliterations from the Macedonian alphabet follow Library of Congress standards for Macedonian.

Pronunciation guide: (č – ch) (š – sh) (ž – zh) (c – ts) (j – y) (ĝ – gy) (k – ky)



THE BALKAN PENINSULA & ADJACENT COUNTRIES



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
 Guide to locations referenced in this work

Maps by Annie Brulé

Wedding celebration, Atanas
Kolarovski leading the dance line,
Village of Dračevo, 1966.



THE MID-20TH CENTURY

MACEDONIAN SOUNDSCAPE:

THREE TRADITIONS

SONIA TAMAR SEEMAN

Formerly under Ottoman Turkish rule, Macedonia is nestled between Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, and Kosovo, and holds a rich variety of musical traditions within its 25,713 square kilometers. Macedonia is also home to many linguistic, ethnic, and religious communities: Macedonians, Albanians, Roma, Vlachs, Turks, Greeks, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, who all have contributed to a medley of distinct and intertwined musical traditions. This album, culled from folklorist Martin Koenig's field recordings in 1968 and 1973, presents several musical traditions which, although of long history and popular across the diverse communities, have not previously appeared on recordings. It also offers a sonic perspective on an important period in Macedonian music, before the influx of new popular and modernized forms of rural music (such as the "newly composed folk music" genre). At that time, local traditions such as those captured by Koenig maintained older styles alongside the state radio's centralized broadcasting of folk and regional music. During the 1970s, radio versions of national folk music became increasingly regulated under national guidelines. Most available recordings were disseminated through the state radio, and were recorded by professional staff members of the state radio and folklore ensemble, Tanec. Even so, the repertoire and styles of state ensembles drew from models provided by regional artists like those featured here.

Musical traditions in Macedonia are customarily divided into rural and urban genres, and they span a variety of vocal and instrumental performance styles, repertoires, and ensemble types. Urban centers have given rise to a variety of musical genres that blend local, indigenous musics with Ottoman Turkish, Western European, and dominant styles from neighboring regions. Rural traditions have been more homogenous, reflecting the mono-ethnic composition of villages which could be uniformly Christian or Muslim Macedonian, Turkish, Roma, Albanian, or Vlach. Each of these communities maintained distinct vocal repertoires in their languages, and cultivated solo traditions on instruments such as the bagpipe (*gajda*); plucked lute (*tambura*); small, plucked lute (*čitelija*); end-blown shepherd's flute (*kaval*), often played in pairs; or a small, upright, bowed stringed instrument called *kemene*. Local community members also hired travelling professional ensembles from the cities, such as the *čalgija* or *zurli-tapan* ensembles discussed below, or supported travelling minstrels who accompanied themselves on *tambura* or a single-stringed, bowed *gusla*. Professional musicians lived for the most part in towns, which is where one could hear European-influenced mandolin orchestras, accordion (adopted in the 1930s), and Ottoman-European hybrids such as "old city songs" (*starogradski pesni*) of mixed gendered monophonic chorus with urban *čalgija* accompaniment.



Returning from working in the fields, 1966.

After World War II, Macedonia, with its present borders, was recognized as a constituent state of Yugoslavia. Several national institutions preserved and also shaped the folkloric repertoires of Macedonia: Radio Skopje, the Institute for Folklore-Marko Cepenkov, and the National Music and Dance Ensemble Tanec. These institutions codified and transmitted particular repertoires to represent the unique character of Macedonian culture. Such processes are necessarily selective. While the Institute for Folklore continued to collect and record targeted repertoires, performances at the radio and on stage were also shaped by state management of performance style, instrumentation, and, beginning in the 1960s, more elaborate arrangements. Koenig's 1968 recordings, on the other hand, were made outside of the capital, Skopje, and document an important body of repertoire and performance styles not heard at the state radio or in folkloric productions. The tracks here broadly exemplify key genres found in this region: Macedonian Christian female solo singing from rural areas, Ottoman/Turkish-influenced *zurli-tapan* ensembles, and the urban ensemble called *čalgija*.

Čalgija is an important urban musical tradition in Macedonia. During the period of Ottoman rule (1389–1913), major towns served as administrative and economic centers, bringing together a variety of ethnic and religious community members. Such intermixtures were an integral part of *čalgija*, which emerged in the 19th century and was derived from the Ottoman Turkish *ince çalgi* tradition. The word *čalgi* comes from Turkish (*çalgi*) and means “instrument,” and the genre of *čalgija* is defined by its Ottoman urban instrumentation (violin; *ut* [short-necked, plucked lute]; *kanon* [trapezoidal zither]; clarinet; *dajre* [frame drum] and/or *tarabuka* [goblet-shaped drum]), a hetero-

phonic ensemble texture, and a repertoire that uses Ottoman urban forms and combines local musical elements with Ottoman Turkish melodic and rhythmic modes, called *mekam* in Macedonian (Turkish: *makam*). Until the 1980s, in Macedonian the ensemble was referred to as *čalgi*, the ensemble *čalgijte* (the *čalgija*), musicians as *čalgadžii*, and the repertoire and genre as *čalgija*. Since the 1980s, *čalgija* has been used to refer to repertoire, ensemble, and the musicians. *Čalgija* instrumentalists used *mekam* and Ottoman urban popular genres, as well as folding in a hybrid mixture of local songs and dance melodies. A typical performance in a Macedonian urban tavern (*kafeana*) began with a march to draw in customers (see track 17), then solo improvised instrumental *taksim* (see track 7) to set the mood with the melodic mode *mekam*, followed by Ottoman classical compositions. After this formal set, musicians broke into a series of urban songs and requests from the audience. Professional dance acts ranged from a male dancer dressed as an “Arab,” who performed with a *tarabuka*, to Jewish female dancers who enacted theatrical routines such as a drunken sailor’s dance. During the entertainment female dancers and singers sat with male customers in the audience, plying them with drinks and flirtation.

Patrons of *čalgija* reflected the mixture of cosmopolitan urbanites in the region: Christian and Muslim Macedonians, Turks, Albanians and Roma, Sephardic Jews, as well as Vlachs and Christian Roma, all had a stake in this music. As the most prestigious and urbane type of ensemble, *čalgija* musicians

Archival Photo: Malinkovci Family Wedding, Kavadarci, 1932.
From left to right: Ismail Mačev, *dajre*; Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin; Risto Trpčev, *lauta*; Jovan “Jovo” Tončov, clarinet.



were in demand for urban weddings; they learned the repertoire of customers in Ladino, Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani, and Vlah languages. It was usual to hear songs in these languages set to the same urban melody. Through the urban clientele's exposure to commercial recordings, immigration to Europe for work, and imported Western European goods, *čalgija* ensemble members also learned waltzes, mazurkas, polkas, foxtrots, and other popular dance tunes. *Čalgija* ensembles also interwove contemporary hits from Greece, Turkey, and the Arab world, and older musicians recollected listening to—and learning from—newly imported 78 rpm recordings in the taverns before their evening performances.

Each Macedonian town nurtured its own unique style of *čalgija*, and Alo Tončov was considered to be the leading exponent of the Veles *čalgija* tradition. Born in the town of Veles into a Macedonian Christian musician family in 1909, Alo trained in and then joined the ensemble of his father, clarinetist Jovan. Jovan's ensemble entertained a variety of ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities with clarinet, violin, *lauta* (a fretted, plucked instrument), and *dajre* (frame drum) for some 50 years in the town and surrounding villages. The music they played included repertoires from local ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities; contemporary urban songs (*starogradski pesni*) and local dances; and a variety of “*ala franka*” (i.e., Western European) songs and dances such as waltzes and polkas. Due to his extensive history of performing for a variety of local communities for weddings and in coffeehouses, Alo Tončov was a living repository of a range of urban musical repertoires. His family's repertoire was recorded at the state radio and used as the basis for many transcriptions given to the Skopje-based state radio *čalgija* and to the professional Taneč folklore ensemble to record and broadcast.

In contrast to the professional instrumental ensemble traditions of the towns, solo and small-group singing was an important feature of rural life throughout Macedonia. In the lives of rural residents and recent urban immigrants, men and women tended to sing either solo or in tight unison with a close relative or childhood friend. Vocals are usually produced in the throat with a vibrant, loud sound suitable for outdoor performance. Villagers also performed longer, urban-influenced ballad songs that use a more relaxed chest-voice and wider melodic range. Marija Micova recorded two short recitative-like songs (referred to as *vozeni*, *glasoečki*, or *ikoečki*) for outdoor performance that use a three-note range; two other songs whose five-note melodies are from the *soborski* or “festival” repertoire use an augmented second of the melodic mode (*mekam*) Hidžas. The latter two lyrical *soborski* songs deal with more extended narratives from historical events or personal tragedies, while the recitative-like songs describe emotional states, humorous events, or natural phenomena. Villagers often sang to accompany collective work either outdoors in the fields, or indoors during the colder months for women's working bees (*sedenki*). Men and women also sang *na trapeza* (“at table”) songs at social events and during ritual



Woman with distaff,
Nižepole, 1968.



Village dancing, Petrovo, 1968.

celebrations while seated around the table. Today musicians fondly remember many of these activities as part of the rural past. While Alo Tončov reconstructed the heyday of *čalgija*'s aural prestige in 1968, in the field recordings of Marija Micova we hear rural songs from her village experiences as reconstructed in the 1960s, and as sung with her friends in the new urban environment. This sound is largely absent from contemporary Macedonian soundscapes. Since the founding of the state radio and folklore ensembles in the late 1940s, songs collected from rural areas have been arranged with instrumental ensemble accompaniment and regularized in terms of phrasing, text declamation, and language use. Rural vocal traditions such as those recollected by Marija Micova have been largely forgotten due to post–World War II transitions to mechanized labor in the villages, the socialist-led modernization campaign in the mid-1950s, increasing village-to-town migrations, the increasing dominance of state folklore, and the spread of mass media.

The tradition of *zurli-tapan* on this album is another ubiquitous ensemble type. Usually comprised of two *zurlas* (keyless, double-reed, oboe-type instrument; pl. *zurli*) and one or two *tapan*s (large, double-headed drum), this ensemble was originally introduced through urban networks under Ottoman rule, and was gradually adopted by villagers as well as urbanites as an intrinsic part of the music performed for celebratory events. Versions of this ensemble

are found throughout former territories of the Ottoman Empire. As early as the first century *zurla*- and *tapan*-like instruments accompanied by cymbals, one-note trumpets, and kettle drums were used by the Eastern Chinese Han dynasty. Central Asian Mongolian military ensembles adopted these ensembles by the 8th–9th century for ceremonial functions, and the 14th-century Arabic traveller Ibn Battuta noted that such ensembles were used at the Byzantine court for greeting guests, donning the imperial robe of honor, and the imperial act of mounting and dismounting a horse. Called *mehter* in Ottoman Turkish, large versions of these ensembles were of prime importance in the Selcuk and later Ottoman empires to accompany military campaigns, ceremonial processions, sporting events, and outdoor celebrations. The Ottoman sultans also installed *mehter* ensembles in the walls of newly conquered towns to play music at regular intervals, to signal the presence of Ottoman rule. Although there is evidence as early as the 17th century that smaller *mehter* contingents were hired to play for weddings and other celebrations, after the disbanding of the official *mehter* in 1826, professional *mehter* musicians turned increasingly to local patronage to secure their livelihood. As a result, ensembles of folk oboes and large, double-headed drum are found throughout former Ottoman territories in Southeastern Europe. Throughout Macedonia, the *zurli-tapan* tradition has been maintained by Romani musicians who train within their families, and each family tends to specialize in either *tapan* or *zurla*. Often musician families work in pairs, with a given *zurla* family playing consistently with a particular *tapan* family through several generations.

Throughout Southeastern Europe, most *zurli-tapan* ensembles are made up of two *zurli*—one plays the melody, the second either plays in parallel or provides a continuous drone—accompanied by one or two *tapan*s. The *tapan* player executes strong and weak beats by striking both heads simultaneously, using a heavy beater to play the main pulses on the thicker, lower-pitched drum head, and a thin wand on the thinner, high-pitched skin for the weaker beats and syncopated accents. While in most of the Western Ottoman Empire both *zurla* instruments are of the same size, Gevgelija—a small town near the Macedonian-Greek border, whose musical traditions are represented in tracks 8–16—is unique for having developed a tradition based on two different sizes and pitch ranges of *zurli*. In the Gevgelija *zurli-tapan* ensembles, the longer, lower *zurla* provides the lead melody accompanied by a shorter, higher-pitched *zurla* called *džura* (Turkish: *cura*). The *džura zurla* alternates between playing a less ornamented version of the main melody one octave above, melodic fragments in parallel octaves, and holding a high drone when the lower *zurla* improvises. Other unique techniques include staccato tonguing and upward glissandos played by both at the end of each piece. This unusual tradition has not been incorporated into the repertoire of radio or state folklore ensembles, as state institutions worked primarily with *zurli-tapan* musicians from Skopje and [Titov] Veles, who use two large, low-pitched *kaba zurli*.

Ilija Gulev, *džura zurla*,
Gevgelija, 1968.

**PLAYING 'TIL YOUR
SOUL COMES OUT**
MARTIN KOENIG

The music on this recording comes from a particular part of the world where many disparate groups have spent thousands of years vying for control. This region, in Southeastern Europe, is situated between Asia Minor and Western Europe. For centuries, a variety of foreign intruders sought domination and finally, in the 15th century, the Ottoman Turks succeeded. For almost 500 years, the various populations lived under this empire's rule. By the end of the 19th century Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Romania had gained their independence from the Ottomans. The Second Balkan War of 1913 saw all of these nations fighting against each other and ended with the Treaty of Bucharest, which divided up most of Macedonia between Greece and Serbia, leaving Bulgaria with only a small part of Macedonia.

Further upheaval of the old political order took place following World War I, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dismantled and replaced by a succession of smaller states, including the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War II the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was consolidated as a federal republic, after some time and for the longest period of its existence called the Socialist Federal Republic (SFR) of Yugoslavia. In the 1990s SFR Yugoslavia fell apart, and each former republic, including Macedonia, set up its own independent nation state. (*See map.*)

The history of this geographic tug-of-war is central to the music of the region. I recorded the music on this album in the Socialist Republic (SR) of Macedonia, the northwestern third (Vardar Macedonia) of the larger geographical and cultural region known as Macedonia, which comprises the adjoining area of northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia) and a smaller area in southwestern Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia). At the time, some 45 years ago, I was struck by the strong feelings of resentment that some of the songs expressed toward the Ottoman Turks. Most of the singers at that time had never lived under Ottoman rule, and I was left with the powerful insight that folk culture has a long memory.

These are songs that were first sung in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the memory of the later, more difficult years of the Ottoman empire was still fresh. It's a great irony that the lyrics often deride the Turks, even while the musical forms spring from the Turkish music tradition. Since recording these pieces, I've found that resentments expressed toward the Turks have diminished dramatically, as all the various groups once ruled by the Ottomans have had time to grow into their own national identities. In recent years, many Balkan nations have even come to recognize and appreciate the rich culture

they share with Turkey, the direct sovereign descendent of the Ottoman empire. The friendship and mutual appreciation between Macedonia and Turkey, in particular, have grown since these recordings were made.

MACEDONIAN FIELDWORK

I first visited Yugoslavia and Macedonia in 1959 as a 21-year-old on his first trip away from home. Over the next half dozen years I passed through the area several more times, but never as more than a traveller. My connection to the Balkans deepened in 1964, however, when I attended a Macedonian folk dance workshop in New York City taught by the now well-known dance teacher Atanas Kolarovski. It was his first trip abroad teaching dance and using music he had compiled in Macedonia together with Dennis Boxell and Ricky Holden. The music varied from lyrical and melodic to raw and keening, and I was deeply moved, by the sound of this music as well as Atanas' virtuosic dancing. I wanted to dance like him and to go to where that music was made and this dancing was happening.

That moment gave rise to my first professional trip to the Balkans. In 1966 and 1967 I took two trips to Southeastern Europe, recording music, filming dances, and photographing the rural lifestyle of the villages I visited. As I worked, I also got a crash course in the folklore of the region. By 1968 I felt I was knowledgeable enough about the music and dance forms to return to Macedonia to record some traditional music for distribution on a commercial recording. I had been swept away by these folk traditions; I now wanted to share them with people outside of the Balkans.

In late summer 1968, recording engineer David Jones joined me in Zagreb, Croatia. The two of us had set aside a little less than a month to undertake recording projects in Croatia, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. After working in Zagreb for a week, we drove south to SR Macedonia, where we spent two weeks locating and recording Macedonian musicians. We were accompanied, assisted, and guided in this work by dancer/choreographer/ethnographer Stanimir Višinski and translator Slobodan Kocev.

In 1967 I had filmed local dancers from the village of Petrovo. In 1968 I returned to record female singers from Petrovo and *zurli-tapan* musicians from Gevgelija. Stanimir recommended that we also record *čalgija* music. He had a great passion for this music and wanted to record some of the old masters of the genre before they passed away. Indeed, we found the *čalgija* no longer existed in Bitola or in Ohrid. However, we did locate and record his boyhood hero, Alekso "Alo" Tončov, who, with his band, is featured on the first seven tracks of this recording. He and the other musicians on this album were then 40–60 years old.

Between 2006 and 2013, I returned three times to Veles, Petrovo village, and Gevgelija trying to track down the musicians I had recorded to gather additional documentation for this album.



Rusali dancers dancing with villagers, Petrovo, 1968.

Throughout my earlier travels in the 1960s and 1970s—both in older, rural Macedonia and across the Balkans—I was consistently impressed by the level of musicianship of local musicians who had never received institutional training. None of the musicians performing on these tracks went to music school or even knew how to read or write music. Younger musicians and singers usually started in their early teens learning from older musicians—fathers and mothers, other family members or neighbors—by watching, listening, and constantly practicing. Every one of the musicians on these recordings, without exception, had a day job as a shepherd, farmer, basket maker, miner, factory worker, or laborer of some kind.

The musicians were able to use their musical gift as a creative outlet and a means to earn some additional income. Informal folk singing functioned as a tool for people working out in the fields, first by establishing a pace that increased efficiency and second by providing entertainment that made the time pass more easily. The musicians and singers were thus supporting their communities in a way that may seem foreign to us today; their songs were not relegated to performance venues but accompanied celebrations large and small, family gatherings, domestic chores, and labor performed inside and outside the home. While each informant interviewed for this recording had a different perspective and understanding, they were similar in that each was born into the culture, lived locally, and was knowledgeable about the cultural traditions of which they spoke.

I visited these places at a time when everything was changing; both the style of life and music were in flux. Now, in 2015, all the performers save one have passed away. Likewise, the very culture that sourced this music, along with its dances, its cultural practices, and its agricultural lifestyle, no longer exists as it once did. As in so many other parts of the world, urbanization, technology, globalization, and emigration have depleted the villages of the people who once turned to these cultural forms to sustain themselves, their families, and their social communities. Young musicians from these areas have been discouraged from picking up the instruments of their forefathers and have instead gravitated to genres like pop, jazz, and rock, perhaps compelled by imported Western pop culture, which is ubiquitous in even these remote parts of the world. Yet, at the same time, here and there, small groups of younger, urban musicians are seeking out this music and attempting to reconstruct it, because they find it authentic and emotionally moving.

I am forever grateful to have been able to travel in this area and do some modest film and sound documentation even as the cultural landscape was changing before my eyes. Looking back, I realize what a transformative experience and opportunity I was afforded during those years. The people I met, the music they created, and the sights and sounds I encountered remain with me to this day.



THE MUSICIANS

Alekso “Alo” Tončov was born June 7, 1909, into a family of *čalgija* musicians in Veles. “I learned from the fathers and grandfathers of other musicians,” he told me during an interview in 1973. “As a 10-year-old I would go to weddings to listen to my father’s band play. I started playing the violin when I was 12; by the age of 13, I became a band member.”

Before World War II, when Alo was in his 20s, he and his father played weddings and other social occasions for the diverse Macedonian communities mostly in the Veles-Kavadarci area. “Wednesday to Friday we’d play for the Turkish community; Friday to Sunday for the Christian; Monday to Wednesday for the Jewish,” he said. In addition to playing for what he called “everyday people,” Alo also played for *beys* (large landowners and aristocrats) in rooms “where a fly could be heard it was so quiet,” and for the *pehlivan* (Turkish wrestlers), where the music would accompany the wrestling match.

Though his father’s only work was as a musician, times were so tough after World War II that Alo was forced to earn a living as a quality assessor for a tobacco cooperative. But even with this day job, he kept his hand in his music. He used to wake up in the middle of the night, he said, pick up his violin, and “work out an idea.” Alo’s family was poor so he never had any music schooling, and his two greatest regrets were that he never learned how to read or write music and was never recorded commercially. When his father died in 1954, Alo said, he began to neglect his instrument.

In 1961 Radio Skopje posted a job announcement for a musician in the radio’s *čalgija* orchestra, and Alo applied. The musical directors knew who he was and, while they were impressed by the first-rate violinist and wide *čalgija* repertoire they heard at the audition, they didn’t hire him because of his in-

From left to right: Ilija Gulev, džura zurla, and Ćorđi Šarlandžiev, zurla, Gevgelija, 1968.

ability to read music. Stanimir Višinski felt strongly that Radio Skopje made a great mistake in not hiring Alo and that the lost opportunity was significant for Alo as well. He thought Alo would have grown as a musician had he been able to play with other experienced and talented *čalgija* musicians. Instead, for the next 25 years Alo played at private celebrations, house parties, weddings, and in *kafeanas* (taverns) and hotels with different combinations of musicians of varied abilities.

Alo died at age 78 in December 1987 of natural causes. At his funeral many of the musicians from the Veles-Kavadarci area gathered to pay tribute to him. His son still lives in Veles and is active in keeping Alo's music and memory alive.

Four tracks on this album were recorded in Petrovo, a small village situated in the foothills of the Kožuf Mountains near the town of Gevgelija. The air is clean and life is hard. Villagers have fields down in the valley where they grow various fruits and vegetables. That's as true today as it was in 1967, except the village population in 2015 is a quarter of what it was then. When I returned to Petrovo in 1968, we set up our tape recorder and offered to record anyone who wanted to be taped, and that was when I first met **Marija Micova**.

She was a moving and skilled singer, but very shy. Years later, she told me that even though she had been invited to sing for the radio/television station in the capital city of Skopje, she was too shy to go. She was obviously nervous to be singing for us as well. And yet, with all her nervousness, her singing was beautiful.

In 2006, I returned to Macedonia for the first time in almost 40 years and used a photograph that I had taken of Marija in 1968 to track her down in Gevgelija. She told me that she had moved to the town to give her children a better education and found work for herself in a local factory. Everyone I spoke with told me that life is easier in Gevgelija than in Petrovo—or any village, for that matter. Many people in Gevgelija work at one of the four gambling casinos that have been operating there since the 1990s or for one of the small businesses in town, as opposed to doing agricultural work in the village where the labor is physical, harder on the body, and not desirable to most young people.

“I came from a household where song was central to my family's existence,” Marija told me. “Everything we did was accompanied by song. I was the strongest singer in the village, and when I worked in the fields with the other women, my singing would be amplified by the mountains that surrounded the plots where we worked. When I sang, all the mountains shook, and everyone knew that Marija was singing.” When she was still a young woman, two of her five brothers died from tragic accidents, and at that point she stopped singing. This is a common practice in the Balkans; mourning often involves a cessation of dancing, singing, and celebrating of any kind. To this day she does not sing, not even when she is alone.

Marija Micova, Petrovo, 1968.



The municipality of Gevgelija is made up of the town of Gevgelija and 16 surrounding villages. *Zurli-tapan* bands, solely consisting of Romani (“Gypsy”) musicians living in the town’s *mahala* (neighborhood, living quarter), have traditionally played for the different ethnic communities in the municipality and beyond. According to musicologist Živko Firfov, the *zurli* was brought to Macedonia from the east. “It’s unknown when it arrived,” he told me, “but there are frescoes in Macedonian monasteries, dating back to the 14th century, where these instruments are shown.”

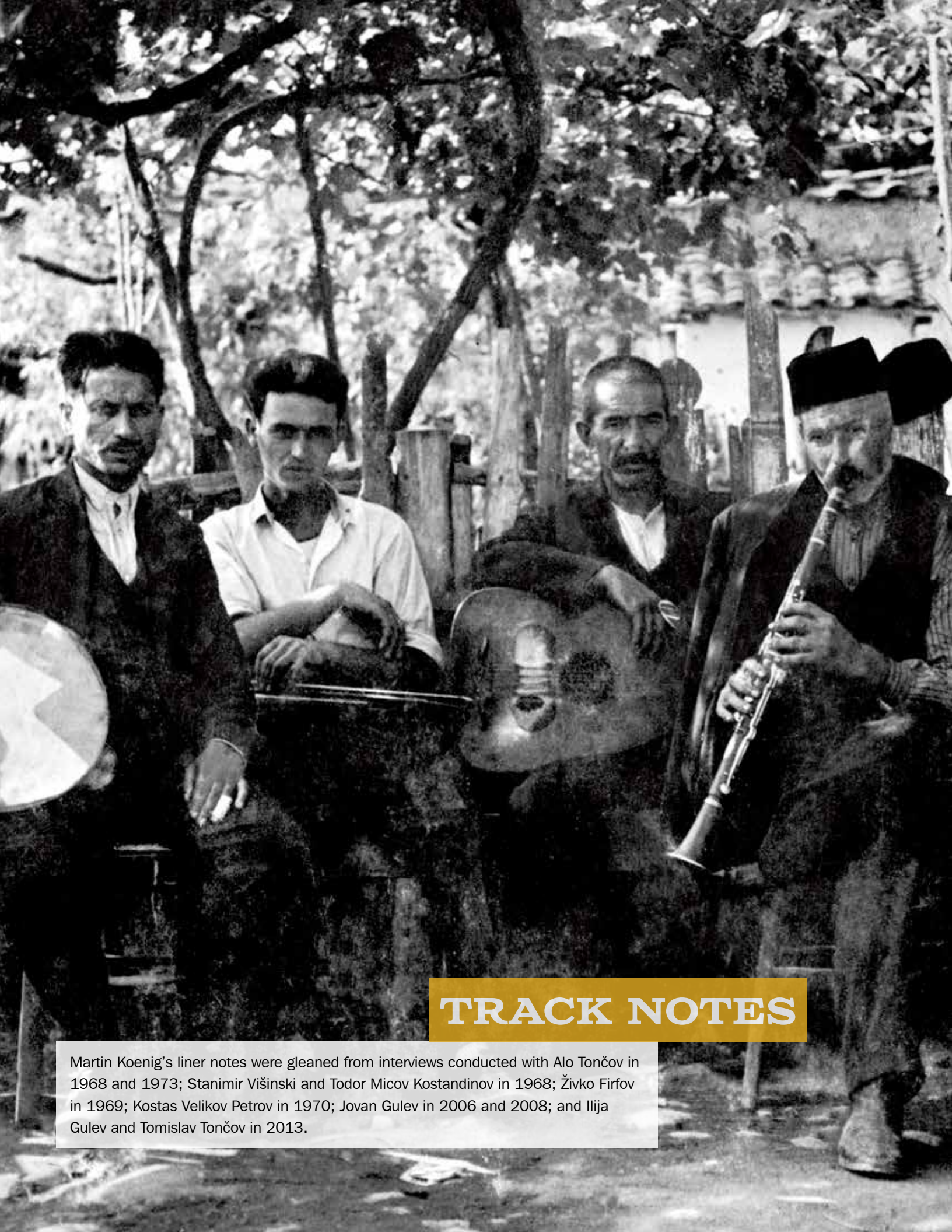
Five tracks are performed by **Ġorġi Šarlandžiev, Ilija Gulev, and Todor Gošev**—the other three musicians featured on this recording. I first heard them in 1967 when they accompanied the dancers from Petrovo performing at Zagreb’s Smotra Folklor Folk Festival. I have always been drawn to *zurli-tapan* music, but I found Ġorġi and Ilija’s playing particularly appealing. They knew each other so well, and they performed as if they had played together forever. In fact, Ġorġi, Ilija, and Todor’s families had been making music together for many years—including Ġorġi’s older brother, Mitre, and Todor’s father, Petre. In the 1930s musicians from these families accompanied dancers from the nearby village of Miravci who performed at London’s first international folk dance festival. In fact, throughout the 20th century these families provided the *zurli-tapan* music for many of the festive occasions in this area.

Below: Ilija Gulev, *džura zurli*, Gevgelija, 1968.

Opposite: Archival Photo: Malinkovci Family Wedding, Kavadarci, 1932.

From left to right: Ismail Mačev, *dajre*; Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin; Risto Trpčev, *lauta*; Jovan “Jovo” Tončov, clarinet.





TRACK NOTES

Martin Koenig's liner notes were gleaned from interviews conducted with Alo Tončov in 1968 and 1973; Stanimir Višinski and Todor Micov Kostandinov in 1968; Živko Firfov in 1969; Kostas Velikov Petrov in 1970; Jovan Gulev in 2006 and 2008; and Ilija Gulev and Tomislav Tončov in 2013.



Archival Photo: Alekso "Alo"
Tončov, violin, circa 1925.

1. *Pesnata na spaičeto* (The Young Cavalryman's Song)

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, violin and vocals; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač* and vocals; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre* and vocals

This song is an old one, originating in the late 19th century. It references the Crimean War, which took place between 1853 and 1856, and was sung at social gatherings in Macedonian towns. It was a popular dance tune, often requested by Macedonian Turks. The song, as recorded here, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

Urban songs such as these topical historical narratives were traditionally associated with *čalgija* ensembles. Also note the use of Ottoman Turkish features such as heterophonic vocal and instrumental textures, and slightly faster treatment of the melody in the instrumental interludes, returning to a more relaxed tempo during verses. The singing style heard here and in tracks 3 and 5 is typical of *čalgija* ensemble performances in which instrumentalists accompany their own singing by using simultaneous variations while also performing divergent interpretations of the instrumental melodies. (*Seeman*)

2. *Oro od Alo Tončov* (Alo Tončov's Dance)/*Ramnoto*—instrumental

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, violin; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač*; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre*

Also known as "Ramno" or "Ramnoto," this dance tune was widely played throughout Macedonia. Prior to the 1930s, men and women danced in separate lines, but after the 1930s both began to dance together in a single line. All nationalities in Macedonia dance "Ramno" with varying steps and styling. It was often danced at weddings, spring holidays, and religious celebrations. At weddings it was usually the first dance at the reception, performed when the bride was brought to the groom's family's house. (*Koenig*)

The tradition of naming a dance for the melody's author is found throughout Macedonia, and may well be part of an emergent star system by which local ensembles attempted to increase their prestige and popularity in farther-flung urban networks. By the 1980s this tune was more commonly known as "Veleško Oro," or "dance tune from Veles." Many such named tunes exist in the types known in Macedonia as *oro* (dance done in a circle formation), *pravo* ("straight"), or *ramno* (for the shoulder hold)—or *duz* ("straight") and *dizi* ("in a line") among local Albanian, Turkish, and Romani communities. They functioned as anonymous folk works, adopted by other bands but often retaining the name of their progenitor. Intended for an open-ended circle dance in 7/8 (subdivided 3+2+2), Alo's opening melody is followed by what local *čalgija* musicians call *mane* or instrumental *taksim*-like improvisation over a rhythmic ostinato at 1:42 that builds rhythmic excitement with faster rhythmic motifs at 2:21. At 2:55 the clarinetist and violinist take turns moving the dancers into a brisk section comprised of improvised rhythmic figures over a rhythmic ostinato. (*Seeman*)

3. Pesnata za Lešovskiot Manastir tikveško (The Song of the Lešovo Monastery)

Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin and vocals; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač* and vocals; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre* and vocals

According to Stanimir Višinski, this song was part of a repertoire about Macedonian nationhood from the time of the Ottoman occupation, sung throughout the Tikveš area in south and central Vardar Macedonia. “It speaks of the evil done to the Macedonian people by Ottoman soldiers and the civilians who supported them. The song has additional verses that don’t appear on this track, and the second and fourth lines should read ‘Albanian Janissaries’ (professional fighters for the Ottomans) instead of ‘Albanian Slavičani’ (an Albanian village located near the monastery mentioned in the song),” he said. Alo disagreed; he insisted he always sung it as “Albanian Slavičani.” The two men were also at odds about whether the music was intended for dancing. Stanimir was convinced that it was; Alo said it was meant only for listening. The song, as recorded, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

4. Pesnata Ibraim Odža (The Song of Ibraim Odža)

Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin and vocals; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač*; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre*

This song became popular at the beginning of the 20th century as the Ottoman empire’s army started to unravel. As a result of the chaos caused by this decline, army deserters and outlaws called *arami* (Turkish: *harami*, “robber”) began to rove the Macedonian countryside. The song is named after Ibraim Odža, a famous leader of a band of outlaws that lived in the Veles area. The song has a corresponding dance and can be found all across Macedonia with variations in steps and styling. It was danced by men and women, separately and in mixed lines, at weddings and on holidays. It is a challenging dance, with an odd-metered, elusive rhythm, and it’s easy for less experienced dancers to quickly lose track of the counts. When performed by good dancers, it’s very elegant. Again, the specific steps and stylistic traits differ between ethnic groups. Here again, Stanimir and Alo disagreed, with Alo saying that he had always sung the last line as it is written here, “The Melnik Mountain, Izvor County.” Stanimir claimed the last line should be “the house of water springs.” This song, as recorded, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

Vocal renditions of this song were recorded by the state radio and on 78 rpm recordings up through the 1960s, while instrumental versions continue to be popular up to the present. Although Alo here sings solo with the *čalgija* accompaniment, you can hear the ways in which his vocal rendition diverges from that of the instrumentalists in a heterophonic texture typical of *čalgija* ensembles. As evidence of Ottoman Turkish influences, the melody is a striking example of the rarely played melodic mode *Gülizâr*, a descending *mekam* that contains features of *mekams* Hüseyini and Muhayyer. While the rhythm is in 12: 3+2+2+3+2, note the greater stress and a bit of stretch on beat 8 during

Wedding celebration, Alekso "Alo"
Tončov Band, Kavadarci, 1968.



sung portions—a feature that gradually disappeared in northern Macedonia by the 1990s. At 2:35 Alo plays a *mane* first by holding the 5th degree, playing figures in free meter and then transitioning into faster rhythmic motifs weaving together short rhythmic motifs over a rhythmic ostinato. During this section he gracefully modulates from *mekam* Gülizâr to *mekam* Hidžas by using the same tonic but lowering the 2nd degree and raising the 3rd degree in the lower pentachord. (*Seeman*)

5. Pesnata na seloto Resava tikveško (The Song of the Village of Resava)

Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin and vocals; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač* and vocals; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre* and vocals

More popularly known as “Što e čudo stanalo” (A Big Miracle Happened), this song, which was part of the musical repertoire in both villages and towns, is an allegorical fighting song from the times of the Ottoman occupation. With a 4/4 time signature, it’s a very danceable tune. Stanimir felt it was typical of the Tikveš region. This song, as recorded, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

6. Orot Devojče devojče crveno jabolče (Dance – Girl, Girl, Little Red Apple) – instrumental

Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin; Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Trajče Našev, *brač*; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre*

According to Alo this song was played at wedding and engagement parties, and was danced by both young men and women, mostly in the Macedonian Christian community. Its rhythm is 9/8, and although it usually has words that accompany it, Alo and his band played it in this recording as an instrumental dance piece. Like many Macedonian dances this one starts out with a moderate tempo that accelerates as the dance progresses. Playing for a wedding was an entire weekend job. “Always we would be playing,” Alo said. “Sunday morning we would play at the groom’s house before walking and simultaneously playing all the way to the godfather’s house, playing nonstop ’til your ‘soul comes out.’ It was very tiring.” (*Koenig*)

Archival Photo: Wedding, Kavadarci, 1968. From left to right: Mustafa Eminov, clarinet; Alekso “Alo” Tončov, violin; *kum*, bride, and groom; Trajče Našev, *brač*; Zdrave Stafilov, *dajre*.



7. *Taksimot Hidžas od Alo Tončov (Alo Tončov's Taksim Hidžas)*

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, violin instrumental

According to Stanimir, a *taksim* is a melodic, improvisatory prelude to a longer piece. In Macedonia, it was performed as a solo, usually by a violinist, though sometimes a musician playing another instrument—a *kanon*, clarinet, or *ut*—can also perform as a soloist. The musician playing a *taksim* may be joined by another instrument as a discrete accompaniment from time to time. The soloist who performs a *taksim* is the most talented, highest master of his instrument and recognized as the most honored musician in the orchestra. A *taksim* can be performed to fill the gap between two dances, especially if the second dance is to be played in a different tonality. "*Taksim* is a pure improvisation," Stanimir said. "The greater the mastery of the player, and the more emotive the musician, the richer the *taksim* is in its musical expression. A masterful player of *taksim* plays spontaneously and from the heart." This *taksim* is Alo's own improvisation. (*Koenig*)

Taksims are an important staple of Ottoman Turkish urban traditions. Skilled instrumentalists improvise according to the rules of the Ottoman Turkish melodic modes known as *mekam* (Turkish: *makam*). Played either as a solo or over an instrumental drone, the soloist sets the mood while also showing his or her improvisatory skill. In *čalgija* performances, the works that followed were often in the same *mekam*, and enabled the ensemble to move seamlessly from one piece to the next in a local version of the Ottoman Turkish *fasıl* or performance suite. Here Alo Tončov plays a *taksim* in one of the versions of *mekam* Hidžas (Turkish: Hicaz). Alo's execution of his *taksim* follows standard traditions found among other Ottoman Turkish performers of the early 20th century. He focuses on a version of Hidžas known in Turkish as basic (*basit*) Hicaz, which includes *mekam* Rast in the upper tetrachord. After establishing the low tonic through neighboring pitches, Alo moves up from Hidžas tetrachord into Rast pentachord at :37, and then incorporates the characteristic lowered 7th degree when descending at :58. At 1:31 Alo expands into the development section (called *meyan*) by extending into the upper octave of Hidžas through 2:34. He then modulates to Mahur at 2:34–2:42, then after a brief pause introduces Segah at 2:44, then Uşşak at 2:55, which enables him to gracefully descend back into Hidžas with a full cadence ending at 3:37. At 3:42, he returns to the upper octave of Hidžas. After holding the high tonic at 4:04, he gradually descends through the upper pentachord of Rast 4:10–4:14, then carries these gestures to Buselik at 4:17, then descends to establish the lower tetrachord of Hidžas by 4:26. He improvises a playful call-and-response series of motivic figures in 4:29–4:40, ending with formal descending cadential figures that lead us to the upper tonic of Hidžas. (*Seeman*)

8. Zela moma novi stomni (The Young Girl Has Bought New Pots)

Marija Micova, vocals

This song and track 10 represent what is believed to be an older, indigenous form of singing using a narrow range of three notes, and executed in recitative-like syllabic declamation. Each verse of this song ends in a characteristic upward-swooping glissando on the vowel *i*—a feature which is found in Macedonia and other rural areas of the former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. (*Seeman*)

9. More kaži kaži Tode bre sino (Tell Me, Tell Me, Tode My Son)

Marija Micova, vocals

In the Gevgelija region it is not unusual to find soloists who sing songs such as this one—a long ballad that tells a very sad story. A soloist is usually a very talented singer, such as Marija Micova. “More kaži kaži Tode bre sino” is a tragic song from this area. This song, as recorded, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

The more relaxed vocal quality and lyrical melody extending to a range of five notes is indicative of urban-influenced *soborski* songs, a term from the noun *sobor*, or festival gathering. Such songs often narrated historical or personal events. This seems to be a free-meter table song (*na trapeza*), which uses a wider melodic range, more intricate ornamentation, and relaxed vocal production (also see track 11). (*Seeman*)

10. Jana bole belo grlo (Jana Has Pain in Her White Throat)

Mitra Ćurova, vocals; Marija Micova, vocals

This song is one that is sung either two-voiced or by a group on social occasions such as holidays or other gatherings in the villages in this region. (*Koenig*)

It is interesting that Marija uses the older three-note recitative-style melody for this song, indicating that text type and melodic type were interchangeable in actual performances. According to genres as established by Macedonian folklorists, one would expect this text to be set to a more lyrical melody of the *soborski* or festival-song type as in tracks 9 and 11. (*Seeman*)

11. Crna se čuma zadade (There Came the Black Plague [to Macedonia])

Marija Micova, vocals

This is another very sad song. In 1968 songs about Goce Delčev were very popular throughout Macedonia. They were ubiquitous both in the small, isolated towns and villages as well in the broader musical repertoire on national radio and TV; more than 100 songs have been written about him. Goce Delčev was a Macedonian revolutionary, one of the leaders of the Ilinden uprising against the Ottomans; he was killed on May 4, 1903, just before the uprising in August 1903. He remains to this day a symbol of cultural and political freedom in Macedonia. This song, as recorded, is incomplete. (*Koenig*)

Two women in traditional dress,
Petrovo, 1968.





Rusali dancers, Petrovo, 1968.

12. *Zlata* (Crni Jusuf/Kara Jusuf) – *rusali* dance

Romani musicians: Ğorĝi Šarlandžiev, *zurla*; Ilija Gulev, *džura zurla*; Todor Gošev, *tapan*

When I recorded this music in 1968, the *rusali* ritual was, for all intents and purposes, no longer connected to a functioning, living tradition. While it was part of the living memory of the dancers, it had already made the transition to the concert stage as a reconstruction, whether in the village of Petrovo, the nearby village of Miravci, or in the city of Skopje. The dances traditionally symbolized collective united power. In 2014 no one I spoke with in the area knew the name of this dance— some called it “Crni Jusuf,” others “Kara Jusuf” (both mean “Dark Jusuf”). No one knew the name “Zlata.” (*Koenig*)

13. *Povrnička* (Šekerinka)

Romani musicians: Ğorĝi Šarlandžiev, *zurla*; Ilija Gulev, *džura zurla*; Todor Gošev, *tapan*

According to Ilija Gulev’s son Jovan, “‘Povrnička’ [Returning Dance] is music played when the bride and groom return to the bride’s parents’ home for lunch after the marriage has been consummated and the bride has been ‘transferred to the groom’s family.’ It is also the name of a dance step and is a dance that is played at weddings.” When I initially recorded the piece, the musicians called the dance “Povrnička.” However, Jovan knew the dance by the name “Šekerinka” (Sweet Little Thing). (*Koenig*)

14. *Kapidan avasi* – *rusali* dance

Romani musicians: Ğorĝi Šarlandžiev, *zurli*; Ilija Gulev, *džura zurli*;
Todor Gošev, *tapan*

Rusali dances consist of two types—the heavy and the light. According to Kostas Petrov, a *rusali* dancer from Petrich, *rusali* sword dances were historically found in a triangular area that included the southern part of Vardar Macedonia around the towns of Strumica and Gevgelija (Republic of Macedonia), the southern part of Pirin Macedonia in the Petrich area (Bulgaria), and the northern part of Aegean Macedonia around Kilkis (Greece). These dances, performed to the accompaniment of *zurli-tapan* musicians, connected to pagan customs that originated in very ancient times, eventually becoming a Christian ritual.

Originally intended to fight evil spirits, the dances, over time, took on a humanitarian focus, intended as a means to aid local people and propagate Christianity. The male *rusali* dancers danced from the second day of Christmas to Epiphany, walking from village to village, dancing in the yards of homeowners, and collecting money or goods from those for whom they danced. They danced to heal the sick and bring fertility and good crops to the household for the coming season. Portions or all of the money and goods collected were given to their village community or church and were always used to benefit the community as a whole for a predetermined project—to construct a school, dig a well, build a road, or undertake another kind of project for the common good.

In this piece, considered a heavy dance, the music begins slowly with the dancers moving in synchrony with each other with uniform movement of their arms and swords, trying to scare off evil spirits. As the music progresses, the tempo quickens, and the dancers continue to dance in unison. *Rusali* music is played either on a bagpipe and *tapan* or, as is the case with this dance, with two *zurli* and a *tapan*. The names of the dances are given according to the locality where they are played and danced, i.e., “Petrovska rusaliskaor tikveška,” “Todore biro kapidan,” or using the old Turkish names such as “Gajda avasi,” “Kapidan avasi,” etc. (Koenig)

The title “Kapidan avasi” likely refers to a dance done from the gateway (Turkish: *kapı*, “gate” or “door”; *dan*, “from”); *avasi* is from the Turkish *havasi* (“melody”), i.e., Gajda melody; Kara Jusuf melody. The Kara Jusuf melody is well known in northern Greece and northwestern Turkey as well. (Seeman)

15. *Ženil se Petre Vojvoda* (Commander Peter is Getting Married) (Skender avasi)

Romani musicians: Ćorgi Šarlandžiev, *zurla*; Ilija Gulev, *džura zurla*;
Todor Gošev, *tapan*

There are no longer any *zurli-tapan* musicians living in the town of Gevgelija. The only musician who still plays from the families of the above musicians is Ilija Gulev, a trumpet player and the grandson of the *džura zurla* player heard on this recording. His band, the Rocky Band, made up of trumpet, guitar, drums, and two synthesizers, plays for celebrations on both sides of the border. He continues to play this particular dance. At the recording session the musicians announced the name of this piece, but both Ilija and his dad Jovan know it as “Skender avasi,” an open-ended circle dance in 7/8 (subdivided 3+2+2).
(Koenig)

As in the previous piece, here again the musicians maintain two parallel traditions by retaining both the Macedonian name and the Turkish name for the same melody. “Skender avasi” means “Skender [Alexander’s] melody.”
(Seeman)



Rusali dancers' procession,
Smotra Folklor Festival, Zagreb,
1966.



16. Guroševica (Pehlivan avasi/Šarlagan avas)

Romani musicians: Ğorđi Šarlandžiev, *zurla*; Ilija Gulev, *džura zurla*;
Todor Gošev, *tapan*

From left to right: Ğorđi
Šarlandžiev, *zurla*, and Todor
Gošev, *tapan*, Gevgelija, 1968.

The former Ottoman territories and Turkey have preserved an older form of Greco-Roman wrestling called *pehlivan* or *güreş*. In this form, men wrestle in pairs from a standing position; one wins when he has flipped the other on his back so that both shoulders touch the ground. *Zurli-tapan* provide the musical accompaniment, matching the density of their melodies and rhythmic tempos to the pace of the competition, with faster rhythmic and melodic patterns played to incite the wrestlers or to mark the climax of the match. In Macedonia, *pehlivan* competitions were part of the wedding entertainment and were also performed during calendrical ritual festivals such as saint's days. In addition, *pehlivan* melodies have been incorporated into music played "at the table" (*na trapeza*) as listening music during the feast portions of life-cycle celebrations. (Seeman)

17. Sultan Hamid's March

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, violin; Slobodanka Tončov, speaking

Recorded in his kitchen in 1973 with an inexpensive, off-the-shelf cassette tape recorder, Alo claimed to have once known 700 wedding marches but had forgotten many of them. He felt that the best marches were from the area of Šar Planina to Gevgelija and regretted that he never recorded any of them. (*Koenig*)

Beginning with the Ottoman military reforms of 1826, Ottoman composers began creating Western European-style marches in honor of the reigning sultan. Sultan Hamid (1842–1912) ruled from 1876 to 1908, and this popular march was composed in his honor. Originally written for Western-style band or piano, Ottoman Turkish *ince saz* ensembles also performed these works, interpreting them in Ottoman classical style with the modes. Two early 20th-century recordings of this piece can be heard on a CD from Kalan Music's archive series, *Ottoman Marches (Osmanlı Marşları)*, released in 1998. One example was performed by the sultan's Western European-style military band, recorded in 1904, and the other by an Ottoman classical *ince saz* ensemble comprised of violin, *ud*, and *kanun*, recorded between 1908 and 1912. Alo's version is very close to these renditions. Note that in addition to sketching out major triads, which show the influence of Western European melodies in 19th-century Ottoman marches, Alo also executes the melody with the slightly lowered 3rd degree typical of *mekam Rast*. Alo also includes the lesser-known trio section. According to older Macedonian *čalgija* musicians, marches were played prior to World War II by *čalgija* ensembles to lure customers into the taverns (*kafeana*), and also in towns such as Veles to accompany wedding guests during the ritual procession through the town. Here Alo's wife was a source of encouragement, overcoming his reluctance to perform this march repertoire by saying, "Okay, okay, but they're lovely!" Thus *čalgija* repertoire opens and closes this album, illustrating the cross-fertilizations among Ottoman Turkish, Macedonian Christian, and Muslim as well as Romani influences that have produced richly variegated local traditions in Macedonia. (*Seeman*)



Alekso "Alo" Tončov, violin, Veles,
1968.

SONG

TRANSCRIPTIONS



Rusali dancers dancing with villagers, Petrovo, 1968.

1. *Pesnata na spaičeto* (The Young Cavalryman's Song)

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, Mustafa Eminov, Trajče Našev, and Zdrave Stafilov

Ferman dojde džanam od Stambola
Telal lice niz čaršija
Da se zberat spaiite
Da si zemat ajlazite
Se započna silna vojna
Silna vojna aman ostoviga de

Spaičeto džanam mlado se posvrši
Vo četvrtok aber mu dojde
Vo sabota svadba ke pravi
Vo nedela vojnik ke odi

Spaičeto džanam konja sprema
Nevestata divan mu stoi
Divan stoi, žeški solzi roni
I negova stara majčica

Go zapraša džanam starata mu majka
Oj spaiče mlado zairče
Konja spremaš za kade ke odiš
Kom ke ostaviš mladata nevesta
I tvojata stara majčica

Additional verses not recorded

Ej di majko, stara mila majko
Dal me prašaš, pravo ke ti kažam
Jas ke odam, silna le vojska,
Tam ke sedam, vreme tri godini
Pominaja le šest meseci
Izim daj i da se maži bre

Štom me prašaš majko, pravo ke ti kažam
Tuve majko [ne e] vreme da te lažam
Ferman dojde od Stambola
Se otvori silna vojska
Jaze majko vojnik ke odam

A decree came from Istanbul
The town crier shouts across the town
For the *spahis* [irregular Turkish cavalryman] to gather/and
collect their salaries
A fierce battle started
A fierce battle started [with the Russians]

The young cavalryman became engaged
On the Thursday he got the message
On the Saturday he will make a wedding
On the Sunday he will go as a soldier

The young *spahi* prepares his horse
The young bride stands beside him
Hot tears she pours
And his old mother also

His old mother asked him
Hey young spahi, young spahi
You are preparing your horse, where will you go?
Who will you leave your young bride to?
And your old mother?

O mother, dear old mother
Since you ask me, I will tell you truly
I am going to a strong army
I will be there for three years
Once six months have passed
Give her permission to marry

Since you ask me, mother
I will tell you straight
Here, mother, is not the time to lie to you
An order came from Istanbul
A powerful army has assembled
I will go and become a soldier (will be called/forced
to join)

3. *Pesnata za Lešovskiot Manastir tikveško (The Song of the Lešovo Monastery)*

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, Mustafa Eminov, Trajče Našev, and Zdrave Stafilov

Bog da bie, bog da bie (2x)

Arnauti Slavičani

Let God strike, let God kill (2x)

Slavičani Albanians

Sardisaja, sardisaja (2x)

Lešovskiot Manastir

They surrounded, they surrounded

Lešovo monastery

Go fanaja go fanaja

Go fanaja egumenot

Kaži pope egumene

Kade ti se komitite

They caught, they caught

They caught the abbot of the monastery

Tell us, abbot priest

Where are your komitadji? (revolutionary fighters)

Abre paša, kuzum paša (2x)

Jas komiti ne znajam

Hey pasha, my dear powerful pasha

I don't know of [any] komitadji

Additional verse not recorded

Se razluti turskiot paša (2x)

Go zapali manastiro

The Turkish pasha got angry

And set fire to the monastery

4. *Pesnata Ibraim Odža (The Song of Ibraim Odža)*

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, Mustafa Eminov, Trajče Našev, and Zdrave Stafilov

Bog da go bie da go ubie

Toi Ibraim Odža baš aramija

Baš aramija Melnička planina

Let God hit, let God kill

That Ibraim Odža, a real bandit

From the Melnik Mountain

Toj mi posobra verna družina

Verna družina do dvaeset i pet

Mladi momčinja dejgidi de

He gathered his faithful band

A faithful band of twenty-five

Young men hey hey

Pa mi ispadna baš aramija

Baš aramija Melnička planina

Melnička planina, izvorskata kaza

He revealed himself to be a true bandit

A true bandit of the Melnik Mountain

The Melnik Mountain, Izvor County

Additional verses not recorded

Negovata ana aber mu pratila

Kako da znae, sin mu na Sufe

Kako da znae doma da ne ide

His mother sent him word

So he would know, the son of Sufe

Would know not to come home

Tebe te čekaat tvoite dušmani

Tvoite dušmani, site melničani

Site melničani, dolno maalčani

Your enemies are waiting for you

Your enemies, all the people of Melnik

All the people of Melnik

From the lower neighborhood

Tebe te sakaat, sin mu na Sufe

Kade da te naidat glava da ti zemat

Glava da ti zemat na kol da ja stavat

They want you, son of Sufe

Wherever they find you

To take your head

And stick it on a pole

5. Pesnata na seloto Resava tikveško (The Song of the Village of Resava)

Alekso "Alo" Tončov, Mustafa Eminov, Trajče Našev, and Zdrave Stafilov

Što je čudo stanalo (3x)
Tova selo Resava

What a wonder has happened (3x)
At this village of Resava

Tova selo Resava (3x)
Bitolskoto mahalo

This village of Resava (3x)
In Bitola area

Bitolskoto mahalo (3x)
Davčeta Karejata (revolutionary fighter)

In Bitola area (3x)
Davčeta Karejata

Davčeta Karejata (3x)
Dobri na stol sedeše

Davčeta Karejata (3x)
Dobri sat in a chair

Additional verses not recorded

Dobri na stol sedeše (3x)
Bradata si češlaše

Dobri sat in a chair (3x)
He combed his beard

Bradata si bradata si češlaše (3x)
Askerot go čekaše

He combed his beard (3x)
Waiting for the Turkish soldiers

8. Zela moma novi stomni (The Young Girl Has Bought New Pots)

Marija Micova

Zela moma novi stomni
K'ide voda da naliže – iiiiii

The young girl** has bought new pots
She is going to pour some water into them

Voda najde red ne najde
Pa se moma nazad vrna – iiiiii (2x)

Water she found but found there was a line (at the fountain)
So she came back home

Na pat stretna ludo mlado*
Ludo mlado s'brza konja – iiiiii

On the way back she met a wild young man
A wild young man with a fast horse

Konja orle da prevtase
Da prevtase malkaj moma – iiiiii

A horse that could overtake an eagle
Let alone a young girl walking in the street

Raci grne da pregne
Da pregne malkaj moma – iiiiii

He spreads his arms to embrace
To embrace the young girl

**ludo mlado – an endearing term describing a charismatic, wild, appealing young man that young women would find attractive*

*** In this context "young girl" translates as "an unmarried teenager."*

9. *More kaži kaži Tode bre sino* (Tell Me, Tell Me, Tode My Son)

Marija Micova

More kaži kaži Tode bre sino
Od kakva bolka ležiš (2x)

More dil me pitaš, stara le mamó
Pravo ke ti kažam
Tebe ne te lažam

More mojta bolka, stara le mamó
J'od crnata mi čuma (2x)

More da ti fat'me, Tode bre sino
Do trujca mi doktori
Tebe da te lečat

More da mi fateš stara le mamó
Do trujca mi majstori
Grob da mi iskopat

More grob da mi iskopat le mamó
Grob da mi zazidat
Sos tri mi pendžerinja

Tell me, tell me, Tode my son
What kind of disease puts you in bed

Now that you ask me, my old mother
Truly I will tell you
I will not lie to you

My pain, my old mother
Is from the black plague

Let us find you, Tode my son
Three doctors to cure you

Get, my old mother
Three craftsmen
To dig me a grave, o mother

To dig me a grave, o mother
To build me a grave
With three windows

Additional verse not recorded

Da ide moito libe da me vide

So my love can come to see me

10. *Jana bole belo grlo* (Jana Has Pain in her White Throat)

Marija Micova and Mitra Ğurova

Jana bole belo grlo (2x)
Nikoj Jana ne veruve (2x)
Koj veruve ne e tuka (2x)
Ne e tuka na vojната (2x)
Na vojната v'Carigrada (2x)
On ke pušte bela kniga (2x)
Bela kniga crno pismo (2x)

Jana has pain in her white throat*
No one believes Jana
The only one who believes her is not here
He is not here, he is at war
He is at war in Istanbul
He will send a white letter (paper)
A white paper with black letters

* "White throat" indicates Jana is attractive (pretty).

11. Crna se čuma zadade (There Came the Black Plague [to Macedonia])

Marija Micova

Crna se čuma
Zadade
Tam dolu v'Makedonija
Tam gore v'Demir-Kapija

There came the black plague
Down there in Macedonia
Up there in Demir-Kapija.

Koi ke se junak
Odbere
Čumata da ja propadi
J'od žalna Makedonija

Which of the heroes
Will be chosen
To drive out the plague
Out of sorrowful Macedonia

Izbralase junak
Vojvoda
Čumata da ja propadi
J'od žalna Makedonija

A hero has been chosen
A leader
To drive out the plague
From sorrowful Macedonia

Odat vo gora
Niz gora
Dali sa turci poganci
Nito sa turci poganci

They go to the woods
Through the woods
Are they nasty Turks?
They are not nasty Turks

Tuku e odbor
Družina
Ranen mi junak noseja
Mlad Goce Delčev vojvoda

But it is a chosen
Group (band of revolutionary fighters)
They were carrying a wounded hero
Young leader Goce Delčev

Družino verna
Zgovorna
Vija ke utre minate
Mene pri komu ke ostajete

Oh true (faithful) group (band)
And loyal
You are going to leave tomorrow
Whom will you leave me with?

Koj ke mi voda
Podade
Ustata da si raskvasam
Srceto da si razladam

Who will give me water?
To moisten my lips?
To cool my heart?

Additional verse not recorded

Koga ke minite grada
Da ne pejat vikat
Majka mi da ve ne doznai

You pass through the town
Don't sing or shout
So my mother won't know you are there



Woman in traditional dress,
Petrovo, 1968.

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PRODUCER

Martin Koenig is the founder and former director of the Balkan Arts Center (later co-director of the Ethnic Folk Arts Center, which today is called the Center for Traditional Music and Dance) in New York City. Though retired, he remains an active member of CTMD's Board of Directors and a dedicated advocate for community-based traditional artists, especially those in urban immigrant ethnic enclaves throughout the United States. He made more than a dozen field trips to the Balkans between 1966 and 1988, where he sought to research and document traditional Balkan music and dance forms in their original settings. Working in villages throughout the region, he filmed, recorded, and photographed the compelling yet endangered aspects of Balkan traditional culture he encountered.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Dr. Sonia Tamar Seeman is an associate professor of ethnomusicology and Middle Eastern studies at the University of Texas, Austin, as well as founder and director of UT-Austin's Middle Eastern Ensemble, Bereket. Her research focuses on the music of modern Turkey, the Ottoman empire, and Southeastern Europe, specializing in Romani ("Gypsy") communities. She has done extensive field research in Macedonia and Southeastern Europe (1985–87; 1989; 1999; 2013) and in Turkey (1995 to present) on Romani, Turkish, and transnational musical practices. While in Macedonia, she took lessons on clarinet with Muamet Čun and worked with the *čalgija* ensemble of Radio-Television Skopje, while also conducting fieldwork on *čalgija* and Romani wedding traditions. While conducting research on Romani traditions in Turkey, she learned Turkish G clarinet and continues to trace exchanges between Turkish and Macedonian repertoires and styles. She is the author of *Sounding Roman: Performing Social Identity in Western Turkey* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press); an article, "Macedonian Čalgija: A Musical Refashioning of National Identity," in *Ethnomusicology Forum* 21(3); and several sets of liner notes on Macedonian and Turkish Romani artists.

Todor Micov Kostandinov, *Rusali*
dancer, Petrovo, 1968.



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*Front Cover: Wedding celebration,
Atanas Kolarovski leading the
dance line, Village of Dračevo,
1966.*

*Back Cover: Rusali dancers,
Petrovo, 1968.*