




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# SERBIAN TRADITIONAL SONGS

*Learning and  
teaching*

# **Learning and teaching Serbian traditional songs**

Short guide to learning and teaching traditional songs from Serbia and Balkan region



Based on two week workshops in Belgrade  
led by ethnomusicologists  
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and  
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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a part of a project “From traditional music to European integration” realised as an Erasmus Plus mobility project in the field of adult education in 2020. It was founded by the Knowledge Education Development Operational Program (POWER). Booklet is based on the two weeks course “Serbian singing traditions” in which two educators from tanTHEO foundation took part. The course was led by Dr Jelena Jovanović, ethnomusicologist, Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Musicology of the SASA, Belgrade, and Branko Tadić, Profesor of Serbian traditional singing in Music School “Mokranjac” in Belgrade. The goal of the course was to show the general picture of Serbian vocal heritage. Through this booklet we want to share the knowledge we gained during the course. We also want to encourage people to learn about traditional music and traditional cultures in general. We believe that the exchange of knowledge about traditional cultures can be a solid basis for the integration of people from different regions of Europe.

Traditional singing is something special and unique in every geo-cultural region where people live. In the areas where the historical process of urbanisation and mechanisation is slower, traditional music is even more unique. With changes in the way of living, traditional music is also changing and unfortunately disappearing. Our goal in such a project is to learn and teach traditional songs from different parts of Europe to enrich our understanding of these disappearing traditions. By looking at singing traditions from different regions we can better understand traditions from our own native region(s). In traditional music from different places there are a lot of differences but even more similarities.

Group singing is something that bonds people, triggers blocked emotions and heals. It is like a regenerating elixir. It connects you with others completely and directly. Traditional songs are full of metaphors which were used to indirectly communicate with others. Music without a human voice is kind of incomplete. We can think of traditional music as a dimension which exists on its own. It is like a sphere in which we are entering from time to time. We co-creating it but we never own it. In this sphere we can find knowledge about the power of sound, and the knowledge of the ways our ancestors were living.

## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND TOWN SINGING TRADITION

As with every culture, Serbian is influenced by many others and vice versa. The main ones are Celts, Greeks, Romans, Ottoman, Mediterranean, Middle European. In Serbia and the whole Balkan region there is a border of two identities: Oriental and European. And of course there is an autochthonous tradition, cultural elements that survive and have continuity from the Neolithic times. Serbian singing traditions are a mixture of those identities.

There are many songs that tell about the Danube, with the notion of it as a kind of border, or something unknown, something mystical, bordering another world. During the Ottoman invasion, constant migrations of the Balkan inhabitants (Serbs, Greeks, Cincars and others) to the North caused by the danger of the invaders, a so-called "Military Border" was formed and governed by the Government in Vienna of the time. Their aim was to protect the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from the Ottomans. Thus, the Serbian name for the parts of the Border is called "Krajina", with the meaning "peripheral area". In these wide regions were settled down many Serbs and other South Slavs whose duty was to serve as soldiers against the Turks.

In the XIX century Serbs liberated themselves from the Ottoman Empire after being an Ottoman Province almost 400 years. Miloš Obrenović took over power in the Second Serbian Uprising, and wanted to arrange Serbia in a European fashion. So after cultural pressure from the Ottomans, he reacted to that with a focus on European fashion that encompassed the urbanistic and architectural projects, works of arts, public musical events, etc. Thus the dominant Serbian urban cultural milieu in many towns was influenced by these actions, while in the villages life continued keeping the old-time, traditional way of living.

Serbs are also culturally connected with Russia. When Serbs were migrating from the south to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they were not able to protect books for church service. From the time of the early XVIII century, Metropolitan Mojsije Petrović had asked Peter The Great to help keep Serbian cultural and religious identity by sending help in church books and teachers. Thus, the cultural and educational mission of Russia among Serbs in the Habsburg Empire started, and has not been ever forgotten, by the present day.

Serbian music culture was heavily influenced by Central Europe, Mediterranean Cultures, Byzantine Empire and Orient. Central European Culture influenced mainly the towns, especially those in the northern parts of the Serbian cultural area. The main features in music that have been assimilated by the Serbs are the major - minor system, classical harmonic background, instrumental ensembles formed according to Middle European models, and romantic poems.

When we talk about Orient influences in Serbian (town) music, we might have in mind that Serbian culture was in touch with the Orient before the Ottoman invasion - that is, through the Byzantine Empire. Some traces of scales found in Old Greek musical theory also, as it is presumed, survived by nowadays, not only in Serbian, but also other Balkan musical cultures. (We should also have in mind that many cultural elements considered as Ottoman originate from Persian and Arab traditions, implanted in Turkish cultural heritage).

In town and semi-town singing there is also the influence of Mediterranean Culture. The town songs were composed by someone and sometimes we know the author by name. For example, in the town Vranje there are songs composed by concrete people for concrete events and they are on the UNESCO lists. And there are other town songs which have their variants in turkish, albanian, hebru, ladino. Traditional songs are influenced by different cultures but there is also an individual characteristic of singers which plays a huge role in their value. But generally town songs are sung in a natural register (voice), similarly to villedge songs.

## CHAPTER 2

### TRADITIONAL SINGING IN THE SERBIAN AND BALKAN VILLAGES

Traditional singing in the villages has its own autochthonous characteristics, because it was much less influenced by other cultures due to less contact with them. The most characteristic traditional type of singing in the villages in the Balkan region is singing “on voice” (in Serbian language, it is mainly called "na glas"). This type consists of two voices, one melodic and the other much simpler is like a bass, background voice, using 2-3 tones in range only which sometimes creates a dissonance-like sound, which is, however, in autochthonous cultures considered as consonance.

In traditional singing culture the theoretical description of music and understanding of some phenomena differs from contemporary European theory of music. For example, a singer from Bosnia, according to the field researches conducted by Branko Tadić, who was explaining the old type of ritual singing, was using words like melody and rhythm but it meant for him something else than what we know from music theory. What we call melody he was explaining as **patterns of short and long syllables** he called “voice” (ancient Greeks were writing about language accents in a similar manner: e.g. two short one long or one long two short, and this understanding of melody may originate from those times). And what we call “melody” he calls “**color of voice**”. And when the melody (color) goes up in “higher” tones he calls them “**smaller**”, like a small dwarf who will speak with a higher voice. And when the melody goes down in lower tones he says it is becoming “**bigger**” like a giant man will speak with a low voice. So when this Singer from Bosnia writes down the melody (color) he is using **bigger and smaller letters** to know how to sing it. He also uses terms like rhythm and tact. **Rhythm**, he says, is something stable, a repeating sound like in the clock. And **tact** is the smallest pattern you can write down and that Bosnian Singer compared it to the sound of heart beating or car engines. **So when learning this kind of traditional song you have to be aware of three aspects which were traditionally practiced to make it easier. First, what is the pattern of shorts and longs. Second, what is the color (small and big tones) and third, is there are repetitions in the text.**

According to the same investigations, Girls and Boys in Bosnia were singing separately. Girls had one version of voice - a pattern of shorts and longs. But guys had plenty of versions. And they were inventing new ones, harder to repeat by other groups.



Guys were competing with each other, and they were trying to create the hardest version, so others could not repeat it. And this fight between these two groups was called "Agonia". And most clever members of the group had their own versions of patterns which were very hard to repeat. One leader was singing and others were copying in perfect timing. And this practice of perfect coordination of singing was the practical ability used also during war in the fights with Ottomans.

Generally, in the ritual style of traditional singing the goal is to blend with the other person in sound and in physical appearance. This is helpful in different kinds of group singing. Then you can achieve this almost perfect timing and coordination. In ritual songs there is often used an interval of a second which may sound unpleasant for Europeans (still, it is similar to the sound of Lithuanian *sutartines*). But this is what drives the performers, this trembling, collisions between sounds, like fighting. The beauty is hidden in the small changes which gives dynamic. And improvising is also a part of this kind of singing. It is like riding a melody, playing with it. And when two people are singing two tones, then they try to make something out of tone, some "mistake", and it also appears unintentionally, but they keep singing this "mistake" and this is how the song is becoming more rich and interesting. And this is an interesting and kind of natural way to teach kids. To make them do "mistakes". But this is something opposite to European traditional formal education which punishes students when they make mistakes. But mistakes are a very important part in the process of learning.

Village traditions have a smaller range of tones in melodies but more rich in improvisation of the main musical motif. It is a kind of monothematicism, in which one motive is repeated and richly varied during one particular phrase, including the use of refrains. Musical form is mainly built on only one or two verses. (This feature of Balkan vocal traditions may be noticed in the form of songs' lyrics given in addition to this booklet). Town tradition was influenced by many traditions: eastern European, western European, Byzantine, and Ottoman. Main difference between Balkan autochthonous tradition and the European one is that in melodies under European influence there are strophic forms, mainly consisting of four verses in a strophe.

## CHAPTER 3

### MORE ABOUT TRADITIONAL SONGS FUNCTIONS

Sometimes a particular song may come to you when you are in a certain emotional state, life situations, mood. That song can clear your thoughts because it directs them in a certain way. If we make a parallel with another tradition, we may notice that, for example, in Indian music there are specific ragas for specific moods, certain times of the day. Maybe in this kind of treatment of music in human life we should look for the reasons why musicologists sometimes had problems recording traditional singers when there was no proper time for certain songs.

For example, according to the field findings of Jelena Jovanović in central Serbia, harvest songs are sung for different parts of the harvest process. Some are for saying hello to others, like morning songs "*Jutros rano sunce ogrejalo*" - Early in the morning the sun warmed (the field and the workers). At 10:00 there is time for lunch break and different songs are sung - for women who are bringing lunch, and then in the rest time a song about some girl who sleeps in the grass (*Lepa Pava u kovilju spava - Beautiful girl Pava is sleeping in the grass*), and there is young guy coming, named Rade, who is waking her up (and this is motive of rebirth, or resurrection which is present in many ritual songs worldwide). In Belarusian tradition they were singing a harvest song with the ritual of burying the doll (like a human sacrifice for Gods) and also in the afternoon they sang the lunch songs (*obiadowe*), and then in the dusk they were singing songs to the sun to stay up so they could finish the work.

And it is normal in tradition to sing one kind of melody at a specific time of the year, like a harvest song for harvest time. And they were not singing the song during the rest of the year. But they remembered them and recalled them only in the specific situation. The same principle is present in all the religious traditions today. It is a natural consequence of a common truth that words (and thoughts) have a direct impact on reality.

## CHAPTER 4

### WHY TRADITIONAL MUSIC IS DISAPPEARING

In the older times most people were learning by “osmosis”, through the blending of ways of being and doing between “teacher” and “student” (that is, for example between more and less experienced persons, parents and children). The process was learning by absorption of the teacher's way of doing things by the student. And in this model it is the student who is more active. Today we have a different situation. Now it is the teacher who is more active. We created a system of education where we put our children from a very young age in an unnatural environment. And there we give them unified tasks and orders. They are passive receivers of strictly formed knowledge. So they don't have much chance to be spontaneous, creative, curious. Because of the separation from parents, and grandparents, they don't learn how to tell stories and how to sing naturally.

The first change in relation to the previous times is that kids don't spend much time with their parents and grandparents, and they don't learn by doing so much as in the past. The other thing is that kids nowadays move much less than before the era of TV, Internet and cars in every home. Kids don't know how to breathe with their stomachs, because they don't run anymore. If you move more you will develop a better voice. And if you shout in nature, in the open field or in the forest you will also develop your voice. And also most good singers are also dancers. Moving makes you breathe more and that is developing your voice.

Kids nowadays have too much media around and other distractions. They don't practice face expression. They don't speak much. Because of technology they don't develop face to face communication. They say everything in the same manner. They have a small range of expressions. They speak without melody. The same happened with some adults. Probably because of living in the big City where you have people and noise all around, and where there is a pressure to be quiet.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECIPE FOR GOOD SINGING

The first factor of good singing which is the most important and easy to do is to drink enough water. And to drink it even more when singing. And this is most important for thin people. Fat people who are usually full of water traditionally drink Rakija, because it helps them to lose excess amount of water from their body and make their voice better.

The next “secret” is to move on the fresh air. Work physically, run, dance, do sports, all kinds of movement helps you to breathe using your stomach, helps you to develop your breathing muscles, deepen your breath and consequently develop your voice.

The other important factor is to be physically relaxed for singing. Your legs, heart and brain are the last parts that will fail when you exhausting your body because we need them for survival. For singing you have to be physically relaxed. Moving on the fresh air and enough sleep will help you with that.

Another factor is kind of the last step which makes your singing even better. And this is a process of putting your real emotions into your voice. When you are suffering emotionally, you are broken, lost, then the cry of your soul goes to your voice. And the only time when your voice is strong despite your physical exhaustion is in the state of delirium, when you are for example in a work camp in far northern Siberia and you are completely down, and don't want to live. Then you can realize that singing is not only singing. The fact you were suffering for a long time strengthens your character and makes your singing more powerful.

Many Gypsie musicians died at max 55 years old, similarly with professional singers. If music is your only source of income that is risky. And you are helpless when there is no possibility to sell your music. When you have only one field of expression it is risky. But then you have a much bigger chance to be an exceptional singer. People who are very good at something are often completely helpless in other fields. So there is always a conflict between choosing your one thing and having a balanced life.

There are three “Sacred rules”, recipe ingredients for good singing:

1. Physical: drinking water, a lot of movement, good sleep,
2. Technical: ways of using your voice and body during singing,
3. Emotional: your life struggles or excitements.

Most people are focusing only on the technique. But before the technique you need to sort out your physicality first. Then you can work on technique. And then you add emotions. And emotional suffering puts your singing on a higher level.

## CHAPTER 6

### EXERCISES BEFORE SINGING

There is easy exercise which can help you to use your stomach more while breathing. Before sleep lie on your belly and breathe. You will feel how naturally your diaphragm will work. Inhale in your belly to make it full and exhale naturally.

The technique of using voice described in this section is taken from Bel Canto - Italian folk singing - which has several hundred years old tradition, and was developed in many private schools. It has a goal of making you aware of your speech apparatus and to warm up and relax your muscles.

For the start it is useful to imitate yawning. When we yawn the voice is going from top to the bottom. And this is the natural way of achieving a higher tone without any struggle. And when we add a snorting sound (starting with the letter "b") made with our lips, all the muscles of the tongue and lips become relaxed - which is helpful for good singing. It is a very good starting position. And this vibration moves to our vocal chords and relaxes them.

When making a snorting sound, we can then try to imitate a deeper voice. And Adam's apple is a place where vocal cords are located. And when we swallow the Adams apple goes up. And usually when we sing higher tones we pull these swallowing muscles and that is why it hurts. But we should not use these muscles when we sing. So when we yawn our voice is high and the larynx is very low. And imitating yawning in connection with the snorting sound. This is good exercise which helps you to achieve a good position for signing. And you can also go with your voice from down to top and down again. When you have an itchy nose during those exercises it's a good sign.

There are also many exercises for breathing muscles for example saying "ssss" on one breath until the very end of the air in the body. Try to do it smoothly at first and later with pushes of the air - pulsating move of your stomach.

There is a good exercise for warming up your voice by doing murmurando sound - singing vowels with your mouth closed but relaxed at the same time. And your jaw should be down like you are sleeping in the bus. Diaphragm should be active. Play with positioning of

the mouth, jaw and tongue. When the jaw is lower, singing is more comfortable. Put your jaw down and make the same sound with an open mouth (e.g: Mo, No). And the same on two different heights using one breath. Then continue with this exercise going into higher and lower sounds.

## CHAPTER 7

### TIPS FOR FINDING A TECHNIQUE

Techniques and methods described in this part are valid if you are learning by yourself, or teaching others. The best way is to learn from experienced singers but it is not always possible.

First you need to know the person's experience in singing and adjust the methods to the abilities of the person. For the beginning it is always good to start with simple songs, usually, in Serbian tradition, ritual songs are the least complex in musical structure.

Good exercise for the start is to sing with the jaw down. And without moving your jaw you should be able to change the flow of your voice from front to back. If you are not able to experience this you should practice this first, experiment with this. And at the same time you should be aware of your larynx which is important for singing. Especially for nasal sounds. Using this larynx passage allows you to reach higher notes without struggle.

Next useful exercise is to practice singing on "wi wie wjo" syllables. Try to sing it smoothly in some melody, without brakes and with hard work of your lips. Then you squeeze a little bit, make it bright and push the air from your stomach and "push the sound". Then after adding a bit of nasal sound you should be able to go higher and higher without a problem. And "wi wie wio" exercise is like the opposite to this yawning exercise. In wi wie wio we are practising a bright sound and trying to sing "o" as bright as "e".

In Serbia they have several types of singing. Some are more squeezed, some more windy, and some where air goes more through the nose. And also mixtures of squeezed and windy. So for different types of singing there is a need for different exercises. When we sing higher notes with a bright voice we need to add more air and place the sound behind the tongue with the mouth more opened. And at the same time reaching a little bit of nasal sound - (for example singing a melody on "ma ma ma ma").

In town tradition (influenced by Ottomans, but other practises as well) there is a way of singing like water, to make the sound flow, and don't have the brakes. They don't push too much and have this sliding. Singing in towns is smooth with small glissandos. People there



were singing with wind, starting with the windy noise, opposite to the sound like an explosion, which is present in village ritual songs.

## CHAPTER 8

### LEARNING A TRADITIONAL SONG

To learn a traditional song you have to like the song. Find something that is close to you, familiar. First you need to hear it within yourself, using your inner ear, which helps you absorb the song to make it yours. And for example if you are in a situation when you cannot sing loudly you can draw it in your mind. First step of learning a song is the inner process of memorising. And thinking about the character of the song. It's like going down on a sled. First you look at what is on the way - stone, tree, path. And with singing it's similar. You look at the song and what is happening there before singing.

Our body is an instrument. To sing easily we need to stand on two feet to be stable, we need to be relaxed and to breath. All these elements should help us to produce a sound that we will be happy with. When there are some moments when we don't like what is coming out from our mouth this is also good. Because this means you have a material on which you can work. Some people are afraid to make sounds so this fear is also the material to work on. And when you are happy with the result, the song you sing brings power back to you.

For remembering the lyrics and rhythm it is good to start with reading lyrics of the song in proper rhythm. Then you can start to add melody, part by part. It is an important step because it is harder to learn proper melody when you learned it wrong before than when learning a completely new song.

In Russian and Ukrainian tradition people sung specific songs, composed of many different vocal parts - in a multipart texture. Specific voices of the song were sung by people who had specific characteristics in their voice, they had roles. But generally everyone knew every part - a variant of a melody. And one of the Russian specialists once said that "if you can speak you can sing". So pay attention to how you are speaking. Which register you are using, with what emotion. And tells a lot about us.

Ladies from the village usually use a higher register when they want to explain something. Ladies who were selling something. Very high and very melodic. And in town it is something which we don't do. There is a big influence of our environment on how we speak and sing.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **WHAT IS THE BEST TECHNIQUE?**

We never know what we are capable of because we don't know how to do things and we never try. There is no universal technique. There are specific exercises and methods of using our body for specific types of singing. Technique means - being able to do something that you thought you are unable to do. Learning to sing is a long process. And even the most unable person will improve over time and in unexpected moments can start to sing very well.

When we watched someone and learned a technique, listened and had it explained we can repeat the technique but our brain later will go back to our old ways of performing so we need to give ourselves some time for absorption of something new.

Singing is like cooking, you cannot over do it and you cannot cook too short. You don't want to burn it or eat food which is not cooked long enough. You have to find a balance. And when you over do, dry out or overheat, you need to add water to cool it down and moisturise it. And in singing you add more airflow to cool down your vocal cords. You don't have to be louder when you are going into higher tones. Try to balance the power you are using.

And of course drink enough water.

## CHAPTER 10

### LYRICS OF THE SERBIAN SONGS

FROM VARIOUS GEO-CULTURAL REGIONS, REPRESENTING DIFFERENT VOCAL  
LAYERS, GENRES, AND STYLES

✱

*Work song, sung during spinning parties, in style "na bas".*

*Melody originates from the Užička Požega area, western Serbia, and lyrics from the 10th to 13th verse are reconstructed according to lyric transcription by Vuk Karadžić from the early 19th c.*

**Kićeno nebo zvezdama,**

(Refrain: Oj Jovo Jovo, zvezdama),

K'o ravno polje ovcama.

Danice nema zvezdama,

Ovcama nema čobana,

Sem jedno dete Radoje,

I ono mlado zaspalo.

Budi ga seja Jelena:

"Ustani, brate Radoje,  
Odoše ovce niz polje".  
„Neka ih, sejo ne mogu,  
Veštice su me izela,  
Strina mi srce vadila,  
Majka joj lučem svetlila.”

Translation:

All the sky is decorated with stars,  
(Refrain: Oj Jovo, Jovo, in with the stars),  
Large field is decorated with sheep.  
But there is no Morning Star,  
And the sheep don't have a shepherd,  
There is only one child, Radoje,  
And he, the little one, fell asleep.  
His sister Jelena wakes him up,  
“Get up, brother Radoje.  
The sheep have left the field! ”  
Let them go, I can't get up,  
The witches ate me,  
My aunt took my heart out,  
Her mother shone with light.

✱

*A song of men that work in the foreign lands to gain money for the family (Serb. pečalbarska = songs of sorrow), Gnjilane region, Kosovo. Sung in one part.*

**Kako će se razdelimo**, ej mome  
Ti od mene, ja od tebe?, ej mome  
Ja će idem na daleko, ej mome  
Na daleko, tuđa zemlja, aj mome  
Tuđa zemlja, Karavlaška, aj mome

Translation:

How it will be when we split up, hey girl,  
You from me, me from you, hey girl,  
I'm going far away, hey girl,  
Far away to foreign land, hey girl,  
Foreign land, Karavlaška land, hey girl,

✱

*Lyrical, urban song, with oriental elements, town Prizren, Kosovo and Metohija. Sung in one part.*

**Karanfile, pleme moje,**  
Još da mi je seme tvoje!  
Ja bi' znala gde bi' cvala,  
Mom dilberu pod pendžere.  
Karanfil će mirisati,

Moj će dragi uzdisati,  
Uzdig će se dalek' čuti,  
Dol' od zemlje, gor' do neba,  
Bogu će se dožaliti,  
Nas dvoje će sastaviti.

Translation:

Carnations, my tribe,  
If I only could have your seeds!  
I would have known where I would have bloomed,  
Under my beloved's windows,  
The carnation will smell,  
My beloved will sigh,  
A sigh will be heard far away,  
Across the land to heaven,  
God will have mercy on us,  
He will bring us together.

✱

*Love song, the town of Vranje, Southern Serbia. Sung in one part.*

Sung verses:

**Šetnala se, lele, kuzum Stana,**

lele,

šetnala se, kuzum Stana

Pure verses:

Šetnala se kuzum Stana,  
Gore-dole, po čaršiju,  
Izgubila kovan đerdan.  
Tuj ga srete mlado Turče;  
“More Turče, mlado Turče  
Ti tuj prođe, ti ga nađe!”  
„Nesam, Stano, Bog mi duša!  
Da se krstim, će se smeješ!  
Ako sam ti našja đerdan,  
Oko tvoje belo grlo!”

Translation:

*Lele* is a refrain (from the word *lelek* – onomatopoeic word for crying loudly)

She was walking, “lamb” Stana (lamb – meaning a nickname for young beautiful women),  
Up, down, through the bazaar (the centre of the town),  
And she lost the forged necklace.  
And here she met a young Turk;  
“Hear Turk, young Turk,  
You’ve come this way and you must have found it! “  
“No, Stano, by God and soul,  
If I swore, you would not believe me.  
If I got baptised, you’d laugh.  
If I would find your necklace,  
I would wrap myself around your white neck.



✱

*Easter song, vocal style „na bas”, village Vidrovac, region of Negotin, east Serbia*

Sung verses:

**Tupan mi tupa u selo, male,**

Tupan mi tupa u selo.

Pure verses:

Tupan mi tupa u selo,

Na sami danak Veligdan.

Todora kolo vođaše,

Na sami danak Veligdan.

Dunuše vile vetrovi,

Todore oči zapraše.

Todora Boga moljaše:

“Nemojte vile vetrovi!”

Translation:

(“Male” is a refrain, it means diminutive for “mother”)

The drum is drumming in the village,

On the very Easter day.

Todora leads the Circle dance (*kolo*),

On the very Easter day.

The witches blew with the wind,

And threw the dust in Todora's eyes.

Todora prayed to God:

“Don't blow with the wind, witches!”.

✱

*Lyrical song, singing style "na bas", Šumadija. Sung by two groups in turns, guys and girls.*

Guys: **Čoban Rade pokraj reke spava,**

Budila ga čobanica Rada:

Girls: "Ustaj, Rade, svoje stado spasi,

Odneće ga od reke talasi!"

Guys: "Neka nose i mene i stado,

Kad si drugog prevolela, Rado!"

Girls: "Nisam, Rade, života mi moga,

Tebe imam na srcu jednoga!"

Translation:

Guys: Shepherd Rade sleeps by the river,

The shepherdess Rada woke him up:

Girls: "Wake up, Rade, save your flock,

It will be carried away by the waves!"

Guys: "Let them carry me and the flock,

When you love another one, Rado!"

Girls: "No, Rade, my life,

I have you in my heart!"

✱

*Love song to the dance, Bosanska Krajina region*

Sung verses:

**Oj, djevojko, dušo moja,**

Oj, dje – , oj, djevojko, dušo moja!

Pure verses:

Oj, djevojko, dušo moja,

Đe 'no sinoć s tobom stoja',

Tu mi osta sablja moja,

Sablja moja i marama,

U marami ogledalo.

'Ajde, dušo, da tražimo,

Što nađemo da djelimo:

Meni sablja i marama,

Tebi, dušo, ogledalo,

Ogledaj se do jeseni,

Od jeseni 'ajde meni.

Translation:

Oh, girl, my darling soul,

But last night I was standing with you,

Here my sword stays,

My sword and my scarf,

In the scarf there is a mirror.

Come on, baby, let's have a look,  
What we find, let us share:  
A sword and a scarf for me,  
For you, my darling, a mirror,  
Look at it until the autumn,  
From the autumn come to my home / marry me.

✱

*Reaper's song, older village bourdon vocal style, near Ivanjica, West Serbia*

Sung verses:

**Žanjem žito**, žanjem žito, pa ga lepo slažem,  
Žanjem žito, žanjem žit -, pa ga lepo slažem.

Pure verses:

Žanjem žito, pa ga lepo slažem,  
Dođi, dragi, da ti nešto kažem:  
Da ti kažem, noćas sam te snila  
Da sam s tobom kod ovaca bila.

Translation:

I cut the rye, then fold it carefully  
Come on, dear, I'll tell you something:  
Let me tell you, I dreamed about you last night  
That I was with you where the sheep were.

✱

*Ritual song with a dance on the third day of Easter, used to be a part of the initiation of young girls. From the village Sumrakovac, East Serbia. The 8th and 9th verse are reconstructed from a transcription by Savatije Grbić, early 20th century. Sung in two groups, antiphonally, in one voice.*

**Čubro Maro, jesi l' čula, Maro,**

Čubro Maro, gde ti svekar poš'o,

Čubro Maro, i kolač ti pon'o,

Čubro Maro, na kolaču kita,

Čubro Maro, Turci ga skočili,

Čubro Maro, pa ga pogubili!

Čubro Maro, padni pa ga žali!

Čubro Maro, ne boj mi se, Maro,

Čubro Maro, teva laža biće!

Čubro Maro, ljubi koga oćeš,

Ili mene, il' koga do mene!

Translation:

Čubro Maro, have you heard, Maro,

Čubro Maro, where did your father-in-law go,

Čubro Maro, and took the wedding cake,

Čubro Maro, on the cake there was a braid,

Čubro Maro, the Turks attacked him,

Čubro Maro, they executed him!

Čubro Maro, and the lady pities him!

Čubro Maro, don't be afraid, Maro,

Čubro Maro, this is a lie!

Čubro Maro, choose who you want,

Either me or anyone next to me!

✱

*Wedding song, older bourdon village vocal style, village Mužinac near Sokobanja, eastern Serbia*

**Vino piju dvesta drugara,**

Služila ih Dunavka devojka.

Kako kome čašu dodavala,

Svako trže Dunavku za ruku.

Progovara Dunavka devojka:

“Ako sam ja svima sluga bila,

Ja vam nisam svima ljuba bila!”

Translation:

Twenty friends drink wine,

They were served by a Danube girl.

When she passed the glass to someone,

Everyone was grabbing Dunavka's hand.

Dunavka girl speaks:

"If I am everyone's servant,

I won't be everyone's lover!"

✱

*The song to the dance "drmeš", older two-part village musical layer, from Banija, Croatia*

Sung verses:

Girls: **Malo selo, malo selo, da je selo moje**, da je selo moje,  
Lane moje, da je selo moje.

Guys: Zoro, zoro plava, zoro, zoro plava, nadaj mi se mala,  
nadaj mi se mala.

Ej .haj neka neka. oj haj neka neka.  
nadaj mi se mala, nadaj mi se mala!

Pure verses:

Girls: Malo selo, da je selo moje

Guys: Zoro plava, nadaj mi se mala,

Girls: Znala bi' ga, veseliti bolje!

Guys: Misli svako, da j' bećaru lako.

Girls: Rastaje se zorica od danka!

Guys: Da je lako, bio b' bećar svako!

Translation:

Sung verses:

Girls: Little village, little village, if it has been my village,  
My fawn, if it has been my village.

Guys: (It is) Dawn, blue dawn, (it is) dawn, blue dawn, wait for me to come, little one wait for me to come, little one.

Hey, let it be, oh, let it be,

wait for me to come, wait for me to come, little one!

Pure verses:

Girls: Little village, if it has been my village!

Guys: (It is) blue dawn, wait for me to come, little one!

Girls: I would have known how to make him more cheerful!

Guys: Everyone thinks it is easy to be a beggar.

Girls: The dawn is breaking up with the day!

Guys: If it would have been easy, everyone would be a beggar!

✱

*Narrative song, in style "na bas", from Negotin area, east Serbia*

Sung verses:

**Lepa Mara (j)u Bugare zađe,**

(j)u Bugare zađe

Sve Bugare redom bratimila.

Pure lyrics verses:

Lepa Mara (j)u Bugare zađe,

Sve Bugare redom bratimila.

Ni jedan se za bratstvo ne prima,

Osim jedan Petar Bugárine,

Da ju vodi (j)u tu srpsku zemlju,



Išli, išli, do gore zelene.

Kad dođoše (j)u goru zelenu,  
Stade Mara malo da s' odmori,

Da (j)omije njojno belo lice,  
Sinu lice kano jarko slunce.

Tu ju Petar triput poljubio,  
Beše vedro pa se zaoblači,

Iz oblaka vetar će da bije,  
Stade Petar Bogu da se moli.

„(J)oprosti mi, ti moj mili Bože,  
Nesam Mare škodu načinio,

Sam' sam Maru triput' poljubio,  
Svaki bratac i sestricu ljubi."

Translation:

Pretty Mara entered Bulgaria,  
She fraternised all the Bulgarians.  
No one accepted brotherhood,  
Except one Petar Bugárin,  
To take her to that Serbian land,  
They walked and walked through the green mountain.  
When they came to the green mountain,

Mara stopped to rest a little,  
To wash her white face,  
Her face shone like a bright sun,  
Then Petar kissed her three times.  
The sky was clear, but then the clouds came,  
The wind threatened to blow from the clouds.  
Peter started praying to God:  
"Forgive me, you my dear God,  
I didn't do any harm to Mara,  
I only kissed Mara three times,  
As every brother kisses his sister. "

✱

*Dance song, from Prizren town, Kosovo and Metohija. Sung in one voice.*

**"Oj Coko, Coko, crno oko, crvena jabuko,**  
Idi pitaj na majka ti hoće li te dati!"  
„Pitala sam, prašala sam, majka me ne dava.  
Majka sand'k dava, mene ne udava!"  
„Oj, Coko, Coko, crno oko, crvena jabuko,  
Idi pitaj na tatka ti, hoće li te dati!"  
„Pitala sam, prašala sam, tatko me ne dava.  
Tatko lojze dava, mene ne udava!"

Translation:

"Oj Coka, Coka, black eye, red apple,

Go ask your mother if she will give you to me! "

"I asked, I asked, my mother wouldn't give me away.

Mother gives me the chest, but she doesn't let me go! "

"Oh, Coka, Coka, black eye, red apple,

Go ask your father if he will give you to me! "

"I asked, I asked, my father wouldn't give me away.

Father gives vineyards, but he doesn't let me go! "



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