## FOLK MUSIC IN PRIZRENSKA GORA, JUGOSLAVIA

A brief orientation and an analysis of the women's two-part singing1)

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Since folk music in Prizrenska Gora has as yet received but scant attention in scholarly literature it is perhaps reasonable to give first a general orientation to the musical tradition of this area and to call attention to the musical features which can be said to be particularly characteristic. The investigations are based on first-hand studies made in Prizrenska Gora – or simply *Gora*, as it can well be called – during the years 1959-66.

Gora and the Gorans. Gora is a mountain district which embraces 30 villages in all. It lies on the north-west side of the Šar Planina range of mountains on the boundary between the Jugoslavian republics of Serbia and Macedonia and right up to the border with Albania, which shares the district so that 21 villages are in Jugoslavia and 9 in Albania. Of the 21 Jugoslavian villages 19 belong to the autonomous district of Kosovo in the republic of Serbia and 2 are in Macedonia.

Gora has been described by several writers, mainly from an historical point of view. The most comprehensive work on Gora and the Gorans to date is Milisav Lutovac's anthropo-geographic study of Gora and Opolje (1955)<sup>2</sup>). The inhabitants can be traced right back to the middle ages and in spite of the many vicissitudes which this part of the Balkan peninsula has undergone and which have not left Gora untouched, it has nevertheless managed to preserve much of its ancient culture. The entire district was once Christian and belonged under the Greek Orthodox monasteries but about the year 1700 Islam began gradually to be adopted, village by village, until the whole area has gone over to the Mohammedan teaching. Islam has set its stamp on the customs, the clothes, the music and the language, but the Christian past nevertheless still shines through. In the literature about Gora the Gorans are usually claimed as Serbs, just as their dialect is declared as being Serbian or Old-Serbian. In a more recent work on the folk-poetry of the Gorans, however, it is asserted that theirs is a northwest Macedonian dialect. If one asks the Gorans themselves one is told hat they are neither Serbs nor Macedonians but Gorans and their language is Goranish. This feeling is no doubt due to the fact that the Gorans have lived for the past 200-300 years as a Slavic-Mohammedan enclave between Slavic-speaking Christians and Albanian-speaking Mohammedans.

The Research. Professor Miodrag A. Vasiljević was the first to give an impression of the song-tradition of Gora with the 46 texts and melodies which he note in Gora in 1946 and published as part of a larger collection (Vasiljević 1950). All are monophonic melodies and, with one exception, all are men's songs. These songs belong to the ordinary repertoire of the Gorans and have been sung to me in many variant versions 15–20 years after Professor Vasiljević's visit to Gora.

My first visit to Gora took place in the summer of 1959 when I was present at a wedding in the village of Vraniste<sup>3</sup>). Subsequently I returned to the district in 1960, 1963, 1965 and 1966 and visited the villages of Dragas, Vraniste, Radesa, Kukuljane and Brod. The material gathered on these occasions comprises ca. 470 tape recordings representing 10 villages and 136 contributors; in addition are 600 black/white photographs and colour slides, together with a 45-minute-long 16 mm colour film. I gave a report on this work with selected examples of the musical tradition at the 14th Jugoslavian Folklore Congress in Prizren in 1967.

Skopje's Folklore Institute thereupon undertook during 1967-70 a number of expeditions to collect in Gora and recorded about 1000 songs on tape. The head of the institute, Blaže Ristovski, has written an article on research into the folk-poetry of the Gorans and accompanies it with 133 selected texts (1969).

Felix Hoerburger has, on the basis of the material which was collected on the research trip in 1959, given a detailed account of Gora's drum and shawm music in his thesis (1963). The work is not printed but parts of it are expected to be published in the near future.

Instrumental Music. Summer is the time for weddings in Gora and hence the time when musical activities reach their peak. During these months the men are also home. At other times of the year they are spread over all of Jugoslavia as "foreign" labour in their own country, chiefly as makers of oriental confectionery. In summer the mountains of Gora echo with song and instrumental music most of the week, since a wedding begins on Friday and finishes on the following Monday. For lesser weddings two women are engaged to sing to their own daire accompaniment; daire is a large, round tambourine with dingling metal plates set in a wooden frame. At weddings which aim at a rather grander character an ensemble consisting of a large cylindrical drum tupan and two large oboe-shawms of similar size with the local name svirla (also known as zurla, zurna) is preferred. This ensemble can be enlarged to consist of more musicians. I have attended a wedding for which as many as ten musicians were engaged who were all in action together at the high point of the feast when the bride rides over the threshold of her new home. The group as a whole, comprising both drummers tupandžiji and shawm players svirladžiji, is simply called tupani (= drummers). In the texts of folk songs they are repeatedly named as čift tupani, i.e. a pair of drums (with shawms) and dve rale tupani, i.e. two sets of drums (with shawms). The musicians are gypsies of the district, e.g. from the village Mlike, or from Prizren.

The music accompanies the wedding ceremonies literally without a break - the many and slow processions through the village streets, the men's and the women's dances, the athletic games - running, jumping and wrestling - which are held on Sunday afternoon on a meadow outside the village. The two svirle perform alone in the so-called nebet, a ceremony in the bridegroom's home the evening before the wedding at which is played a sequence of songs lasting up to an hour. Only when the succession of songs is drawing towards its close does the tupan join in and bring nebet to a close together with svirle. The two svirle play in unison or at the octave or with one playing drone to the other.

Apart from tupan and svirla, which are only played by semi-professional gypsy musicians, and daire, which nearly every woman and girl can beat with some degree of skill, the long flutes kaval and šupelka are also to be met with in Gora. These shepherd's flutes are played by men, singly or in pairs. When two play together one has the melody while the other stays on the tonic. In the village of Kukulane I have also heard a man's song with kaval: the singer alternately sang and played the strophes.

The Singing. Vocal music is as much a part of daily life as it is of festal occasions. Women, who remain in the village all year round, especially have need for such diversion as singing can offer them. They sing when they sit together with their handwork or when they weave or churn butter. They sing for their children in the cradle. They sing when they go for walks in the vicinity of the village. They sing at the yearly feasts and above all in connection with weddings, as, e.g. when the bride's hair, hands and feet are coloured with henna; when the guests make themselves ready for the bridal procession; when the bride comes to her new home; when the bride stands on display; when the bride sits with her friends the evening before the wedding night; on the wedding night itself; the morning after the wedding night.

Men usually sing as a common pastime, when they go in small groups round the country-side, when they drink at the village inn, or when they gather in the white-washed living rooms of each other's home at feasts.

The subjects are to a large extent common to both men and women, although the presentation can be quite different. They sing first and foremost about love and weddings, about the problems of family life and of life in general and about the existence of the worker away from home – subjects which are common to large areas but which acquire a local colour as treated by the Gorans. In addition to these general familiar subjects one finds in Gora an unusual number of ballad–style songs which describe events associated with particular villages, families or individuals. The women's versions sometimes give unbelievably detailed descriptions of clothing, its patterns and decoration. The ritual songs, which I have heard in connection with weddings and circumcisions and which are reserved for women to sing, are created on the spot using traditional formulas. Children sing the same repertoire as adults

but have in addition their own verses and jingles. All these songs are valuable documents of life in the villages of Gora and of the Gorans' world of ideas.

As regards their music, the songs of the men and the women differ in their characteristic forms so much from each other that one can justifiably speak of men's songs and women's songs. The women sing a very simple two-part song built on 3-5 tones and with unison and second, in some places thirds, as the only harmony. The interval of the second is used in parallel motion as well as in oblique movement from unison to second and from second to unison. The two voices are as if grafted together and it seems to them unnatural, if not impossible, to sing the songs as solos. The men sing solo or in unison in small groups. The range as well as the melodic line can be more developed than in the women's songs. The melodies are often ornamented in accordance with oriental taste.

The songs, men's as well as women's, are strophic and in their construction the melodies are closely related to the texts. The stanzas consist of 2-4 lines of the same or different lengths and by means of repetition the forms AA, ABB, AABB and ABAB result, often with variations on the repeats. The repetition of syllables, words or a whole verse plays an important role in the building up of a stanza, as does also the use of refrain and filler-words. Some melodies are rendered in free rhythm but the greater part by far permit a regular metrical division. 2/4 metre is usual, but particularly characteristic is 7/16 (3+2+2) and (2+2+3), especially the former, with the accented quaver at the beginning of the bar. The stanza is often introduced with two quavers thereafter to continue with 7/16 metre to the end of the stanza. More rarely one encounters irregularly grouped metres.

Women's two-part singing. About a quarter of the material I collected from Prizrenska Gora consists of two-part songs sung by women or young girls, for the most part from the villages Vranište and Brod. This material should – when a few melodies in a foreign style are sorted out – be sufficiently representative to provide a basis for a description of the practice of two-part singing in these particular villages, Vranište and Brod, and should at the same time be able to give an indication of the individual character of the music of the district.

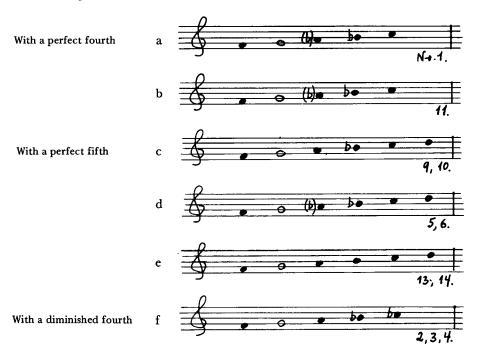
In Gora as a whole singing in pairs, or even three together, is preferred. This applies to both men and women. As the men say, "We also sing alone, but it sounds better when we are two". The men sing in unison and there sometimes occur harmonies in their songs which do not seem to be accidental and which I am almost inclined to call reminiscences of two-part music. With the women's singing, on the other hand, there is no doubt that it is deliberately and intentionally in two parts. Monophonic group singing does not occur at all and solo singing is restricted to the woman alone with the cradle or the loom.

When two women sing they stand side by side with their heads close together and it is impossible to distinguish the individual movement of the two voices. It goes without saying that this creates problems for transcribing from tape-recordings and I have therefore to a large extent worked with special microphoneplacings which make it possible to hear each of the two voices by itself. This procedure has been possible when I have had the singers to myself under peaceful conditions, but during the eventful wedding and circumcision ceremonies I have naturally been obliged to record the singing without special arrangements.

The most significant characteristic of Goranish women's singing is the harmony of the second, mainly in parallel motion. It is worth noting that this practice exists completely unaffected by the instrumental practice, which depends on the drone-bass principle.

Before I go into the polyphonic peculiarities of the women's singing I will discuss their other distinctive features. The song is divided into short stanzas which consist of two or three sections. A single line of text (or two, more rarely three) serves as the basis for a melodic stanza. Filler-words and refrains are used to a considerable extent, just as the lines of text can be extended by repetitions of syllables, words or metrical groups. These text elements, which are not part of the original metre, are underlined in the transcriptions.

The melodies are simple. Apart from the sub-tonic, which can occur at the beginning or end of the melody, the entire tonal material lies above the tonic. The embellishment is deficient and there is only scant variation from stanza to stanza. The following series of tones are used:





Example 1. Scales.

However it is my experience that the singers' relationship to the scales is not hard and fast. The same melody can be sung within the framework of a perfect fifth by one pair or singers and of a diminished fifth by another (nos. 6-7 and 12-13). Furthermore, it also happens that one and the same pair will sing a melody differently from one time to another. I don't think that this is due to a lack of musicianship but rather a traditionally rather loose relationship to feelings of tonality.

The second step is variable. As an example it can be mentioned that in some melodies in which it is usually performed as a major second in relation to the tonic it is lowered immediately before the end of the melody (no. 1). It is more remarkable, however, that in a series of melodies the second step is different in the two voices so that it makes a minor second in the first voice and a major second in the second in relation to the tonic (nos. 6,7,11). It is for this reason that some musical examples are notated with one flat more in the first voice than in the second.

Rhythmically the songs are characterized by 2/4 or 4/8 and 7/16 time - both with the accented quaver first and last in the bar. The ritual songs in Vranište, which are distinguished by a rhythm which does not fit into any metre, are exceptional. To determine this rhythm I played all the songs of this type in their entirety at half speed and measured with a stop-watch the duration of the individual tones and metrical groups. It appeared that there was a virtually perfect rhythmic precision (no.1):

Example 2.

The internal relationship of the voices. It is not immediately obvious which of the two voices carries the actual melody. The one voice is slightly more mobile than the other and exceeds it in range by a tone or just a semitone. For practical reasons I will call this voice the first voice and notate it on the upper system. But experiments in which I have asked the women to sing alone show an inclination to mix the two parts so that a melody emerges which has the mobility of the first voice and elements of the melodic progression of the second voice.

The second voice has a very simple melodic movement from the third or fourth down to the tonic. Here there is usually only one note to a syllable. The first voice is rather more flexible and has a modest ornamentation in the form of passingnotes and slurred intervals of the third. In the ritual songs from Vranište the first voice is richly supplied with clucking sounds which contribute greatly to giving these songs their individual character.

The introduction to the stanza. The function of leader belongs to the first voice. It is usually - though far from always - also this voice which introduces the stanza. With a very faint voice, barely audible, the first 3-5 syllables, i.e. the first metrical group, are intimated. They are sung on the tonic of the melody, sometimes involving the sub-tonic. The second voice can sing along from the beginning, but if it doesn't it joins in on the second metrical group of the verse and now they sing with full voice. At this place both voices take the same note, viz. tonic, third or fourth.

The close. Just as the tonic provides the starting point of the melody, it is also its point of rest. Both voices close on the tonic, which may well be held for several bars' duration (ex.3a). In many cases the first voice goes down to the sub-tonic, but not until the very last (ex.3b). In other cases the first voice remains on the tonic while the second voice finishes by going down on the sub-tonic (ex.3c) or takes a turn down to the sub-tonic and back to the tonic (ex.3d). This final note often ends in a falsetto tone of definite or indefinite pitch (ex.3e). In ritual songs both voices rise abruptly to the 12th, thereafter to continue in a glissando on the interval of a second to an indefinite note around the third or fourth step (ex.3f).

Harmony. The most frequently occurring harmonies are the perfect unison, the major second and the minor second. The interval of the second is a feature of all the songs and occurs on both unaccented as well as accented beats. Thirds are less common. Other harmonies are not used at all.

The unison occurs primarily on the tonic, which means in practice at the beginning and end of the melody or melodic period (many examples). Thereafter it occurs on the third or fourth step (flat 3rd, 3rd, flat 4th, 4th), which, together with the tonic, and depending on the type of scale, provides the fixed frame of the melody. Unisons on the second step are not nearly so frequent but can be observed in the songs from Vranište. The major second occurs harmonically on



Example 3 a-f.

Closing notes

all steps of the scale (ex.4a-g). The minor second occurs harmonically on the following steps (ex.5a-d). The major third has been observed in melodies from Brod (ex.6a-b). The minor third, like the major third, occurs less frequently but in some cases by contrary motion - which, incidentally, is a rarity in itself (ex.7a-d).

Direction of movement. The two voices move for much the greater part of the time in the same direction. Either they move together in unison (ex.8a), or in parallel seconds (ex.8b). The two voices separate by oblique motion from unison to second, or they come together from second to unison by having one voice remain where it is while the other moves a step. Or both voices move from a second to a unison by similar motion - the one by a leap of a third, the other by a step of a second (ex. 8c:abc). Momentarily drone-like elements occur insofar as the second voice remains still while the first voice moves up by step from unison to a major second then to a major third (ex.8d). Crossing of voices occurs in connection with passing-notes (ex.8e). Contrary motion is not a typical feature but has been observed in the form of unison to third (ex.8f).

Rhythmic movement. The rhythmic movement is chiefly note-against-note with one note per syllable (ex.9a). This uniformity of rhythm of the two voices is frequently broken however when single notes in one part are accompanied by two in the other, one of which serves as passing-note, anticipation or pivotal note. Several notes against one characterize the ritual songs from Vranište in which the first voice embellishes the simple second voice with up to five notes to one (ex.9c). In these songs the so-called clucking sounds are used in connection with the intonation of the individual tones.

The Goranish women's two-part singing belongs to the oldest layer of the musical tradition of the area and corresponds to the singing, also dominated by the harmony of the second, which is heard in the mountain villages of Bosnia and Herzogovina and in the Croatian and Serbian districts bordering on this republic, as well as on the peninsula of Istria and the island of Krk. This very individual manner of singing is vitally alive in Gora to this day and quite untouched by the popular melodies of the day which are sent out into the either by Jugoslavian radio stations and reach even the mountain dwellers of Šar Planina.

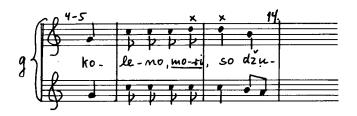
Translated by John Bergsagel.

## Footnotes

- This work is partly based on two articles which the author has published in Serbo-Croat in the Congress Report of the Jugoslavian Folklore Union (Rad kongresa...) no. 14 and 17.
   See literature list.
- 2. See literature list.
- 3. On a research trip in collaboration with the ethnomusicologists Ernst Emsheimer, Stockholm, and Felix Hoerburger, Regensburg.

Example 4. Harmony: major second.





Example 5. Harmony: minor second.



Example 6. Harmony: major third.



Example 8. Direction of movement.



Example 9. Rhythmic movement.



No. 1. Mlajnesto, ta šo si tolko vesela Sali Anifa and Abdiraim Usna, Vranište 1960.



No. 2. Digni me, nane, vutro po rano Skenderi Sala and Hasani Rasima, Vranište 1963.



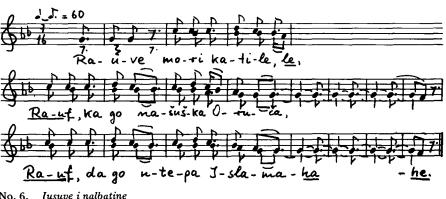
No. 3. Brale se brale bećari Skenderi Sala and a girl, Vranište 1963.



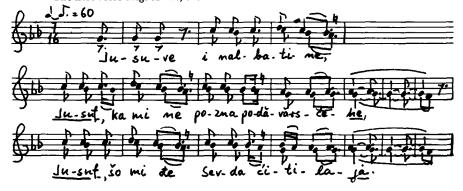
No. 4. Karalijo, kara li te majka Two women, Vranište 1963.



No. 5. Rauve mori katile
Cako Amida and Kademša, Brod 1960.



No. 6. Jusuve i nalbatine
Bećiroski Lutvija, Mejrema and Zećija, Brod 1960.
The first voice sings A flat, the second voice A.



No. 7. Jusuve i nalbatine

Caro Simbila and Ava, Brod 1963.

The first voice sings A flat, the second voice A.



No. 8. Makmut se gotvi vo Tursko
Cako Amida and Amida, Brod 1960.



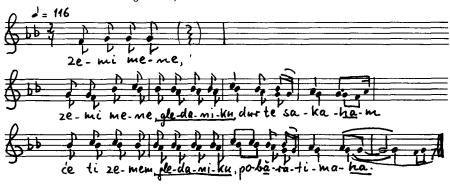
No. 9. Sen divojko na krilo sedeše Cako Amida and Amida, Brod 1960.



No. 10. Se zaženilo Spaiče Cako Amida and Amida, Brod 1960.



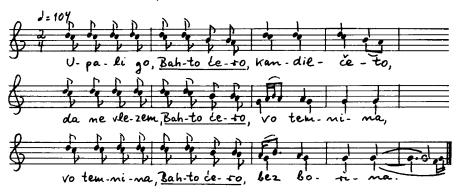
No. 11. Zemi mene, gledaniku, dur te sakam Čučul Safura and Sulba, Brod 1963. The first voice sings A flat, the second voice A.



No. 12. Upali go, Bahto ćero, kandilčeto Cako Amida and Amida, Brod 1960.

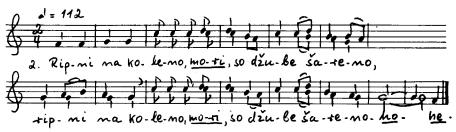


No. 13. Upali go, Bahto ćero, kandilčeto Caro Ava and Simbila, Brod 1963.



No. 14. Altano divojko

Cako Amida and Amida, Brod 1960.



No. 15. Kua ona so na ramo kožufče Skenderoski Ajša and Sulba, Brod 1960.





Huseini Ćazim plays on the long flute *kaval*. Kukulane 1960.

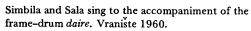


Osmani Ramadan, drummer from Mlike. Vranište 1959.



Bećir Hysen and Rasim Sula, shawn-players from Prizren. Vranište 1960.







Ćefsera and Suzana, two young girls in full-dress. Brod 1965.

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## RESUMÉ

Artiklen søger at give et indblik i den musikalske tradition i Prizrenska Gora – et bjergområde på nordvestsiden af Šar Planina. Befolkningen er slavisk-sproget, tidligere kristen, men siden 1700-tallet muhammedansk. Hovedparten af mændene er beskæftiget som orientalske konditorer over hele Jugoslavien. Gora udmærker sig ved en meget levende folketradition.

Af musikinstrumenter anvendes hyrdefløjterne kaval og šupeljka som spilles af mænd, enkelt eller parvis i borduntostemmighed. Kvinderne bruger rammetrommen daire til akkompagnement af sang og dans. Til bryllupsfesterne, som finder sted i sommermånederne, engageres halvprofessionelle sigøjnermusikere, som spiller på store cylindertrommer og oboskalmejer; trommen kaldes tupan og oboskalmejen svirla.

Sangen er for kvindernes vedkommende knyttet til dagligdagen og især til årets fester og bryllupsceremonierne. Mændene synger oftest for fælles tidsfordriv. Tekstmaterialet er for en stor del fælles for mænd og kvinder, men udformes forskelligt. Der synges om kærlighed og bryllup, om familielivets og fremmedarbejdernes problemer – emner der er fælles for større områder, men som får deres lokalkolorit i goranernes udformning. Desuden findes mange balladeprægede sange, der skildrer lokale begivenheder.

Sangene er strofiske, og i deres konstruktion samarbejder melodierne intimt med teksterne. Stroferne består af to til fire linier af ens eller forskellig længde, og ved gentagelsesprincippet opstår formerne AA, ABB, AABB og ABAB, ofte med variation i gentagelsen. En væsentlig rolle i strofedannelsen spiller gentagelse af stavelser, ord og hele vers, samt anvendelsen af omkvæd og fyldeord.

Nogle melodier foredrages i fri rytme, men langt de fleste lader sig underkaste regelmæssig taktinddeling. Almindelig er 2/4-takt, men særlig karakteristisk er 7/16: 3+2+2 og 2+2+3, særlig den med den punkterede ottendedel i begyndelsen af takten. Sjældnere træffes uregelmæssigt sammensatte takter.

Melodiernes omfang strækker sig fra tre til syv toner, sjældnere mere. Mest anvendt er visse diatoniske skalaer, af kromatiske skalaer er almindelig udbredt den med det forstørrede sekundskridt mellem andet og tredie trin inden for det tilgrundliggende tetrakord, og desuden forekommer flere tonerækker med snævrere kromatik (se nodeeks.).

I hele Gora foretrækker man at synge parvis eller eventuelt tre sammen; det gælder både mænd og kvinder. Mændene synger unisono, og der kan i deres sang forekomme samklange, der synes at være reminiscenser af tostemmighed. Kvinderne synger en meget enkel tostemmig sang bygget over tre til fem toner og med prim og sekund, undertiden terts som eneste samklange. Sekundsamklangene forekommer i parallelbevægelse samt i sidebevægelse fra enklang til sekund og fra sekund til enklang. Alene synger en kvinde kun, når hun vugger sit barn eller går alene og arbejder. Solosang finder hyppigere sted hos mændene; disse melodier er præget af et større omfang og en mere udviklet melodik, og de er ofte ornamenteret efter orientalsk smag.

Undersøgelsen er foretaget på grundlag af egne studier i Prizrenska Gora i årene 1959-66.