

THE MUSICIANS

*Almost all my life has passed in music...
I have brought to tears the people in Sofia. Kokareshkov used to say:
"I don't want wild zurnas. I do want your zurna to play to me"*
Shein Kurtov

The anthropological approach to music was established decades ago. The research interests have become more and more turned to the music as an event from human life (Lomax). The increasing interest in the problem with regard to its being a biology of music making is not interpreted as biological determinism but as a closer approach to the understanding of the interrelation between human biology and the music cultures, as a deeper comprehension of the dependences of making upon the performance of music and the human cultures [Blacking, 1992:307]. It has been stated that man is the "primary subject" when music is being investigated, and that beyond man neither the instrument nor the music have any sense. Man's being conscious of his activity and able to govern it perceives and keeps in his mind music as a transformation of the gestures of his body. The musical instrument transforms the human gestures-movements into music gestures [Белявский, 1987:106].

It is only natural to put one of the emphases (if not the main one) in the study on *zurnaci* music in Southwest Bulgaria upon the musicians – the *zurna* players (*zurnacies*). The *zurnacies* are the main characters of this book and the interpretations of the researchers follow the thought and speech of the *zurna* players and concentrate upon his point of view. A new kind of knowledge about the rituals and feast of any community is being achieved via the stories told by the *zurnacies*. For example: a member of a certain ethnic or ethnoconfessional group could hardly provide information on the rites, festivities, music and dances of the other groups. The *zurnacies* do provide such information being professionals, mediators between the traditions of the communities, settlements and regions. The musician about the others, about the consumers of the music; the musician about himself and his musicians' guild – that is what the following pages reveal. The musician is being transformed from a main character of a study into an approach to the *zurnaci* as a social status, roles and professionalism, into a coordinating system of spatial social realization and temporal situating of the life cycle.

SOCIAL STATUS OF THE *ZURNACIES*. PROFESSIONALISM

Who plays the *zurna*? The *zurnacies* are a special group among the musicians playing traditional instruments in Bulgaria. They have a specific status and specific social roles, establishing a distinct group with its own professional, ethnic, gender and age characteristics. The analysis of these characteristics outlines the social status of the *zurnacies* – internally, within the frames of the professional community and externally within the frames of the society.