

has acquired command of the instrument – when he has the proper breathing, works properly with his mouth and fingers, can play correctly the melodies, has a repertoire. To this ‘inner’ position – the musician about himself, one should add the outer point of view – the musician about the others. The players interviewed combine both of them when explaining the *zurnacies*’ criteria of skilfulness. According to a player from Dabnitsa there is no universal recipe or term for the promotion of a *chirak* into a maestro. The process runs individually and depends on many factors. If “you get used quickly” to play “you become a maestro more quickly”. The process of acquiring the skilfulness and acknowledgement as a maestro is psychological – the young and ambitious players have an advantage: “You feel that the maestri stay behind and you gain the domination”. The main criterion is the audience, the acknowledgement, the demand, and the payments: “It depends on the people on the way one’s being demanded. If you are in demand – yes, you are a maestro!” [Č., p.7].

In order to meet the admiration and the demand of the audience and thus be acknowledged as a maestro, the *zurnaci* must have the abilities to serve his audience in the appropriate manner. Namely, to play the style it demands, to know the repertoire for the performance contexts typical for the region. And to have his own band: a team of musicians whom to play well with – to be a maestro means to be a leader of maestri. A young *zurnaci* from Petrich tells how he made up his mind to become a maestro. He remembers his start in getting an acknowledgement in the status: “I’ve been a maestro for four or five years. I’ve been a *glashnik* for three years. And then I skip on a maestro. (How did you find out that you could do it? How did you decide to become a maestro?) You see now, I sat at home in my house and thought a bit. I told to myself: Let me see those people that play those songs at festive tables, for *horos*, *köceks* – how they go, how they have selected their repertoire. Let me see, and if I can make it, I will turn out a maestro. If I couldn’t, if I didn’t know a certain song, it’s not worth spoiling my reputation. And I sat there alone at home and began. I made a repertoire to play at dinners, then *horos*, and then *köceks*. And I told myself: That means I can! For the first time I went to the *sabor* in Kladentsi. (As a maestro, with your band?) Yes. But for the first time I went as a maestro and all we were freshmen. The *glashnik* – he’s also a freshman, the *tapanci* – a freshman, too. We went there, but the mayor says: “get inside” to have a drink. He tells: “c’mon do something yours!” And I began trembling, I tell myself: “who knows what I must play?! I began to play some *köceks*, turned to a festive dinner, and did a couple of songs. The man says: “Good. You are a nice band!” There at the *horo* we made a blunder because the *tapanci*, he’s from Petrich, didn’t know what to knock... Then I explained to him. ‘Cause he came for the first time... He’s learnin’ from his dad. But he’s not mature enough in the skill to go alone. Having no one else to play with, I went with him. After that he got control over the situation but by the time he got it I was goin’ to explode, I had my hell” [C.O., 02/2001, p.1-2].

Like the guilds wherein only the masters can teach, make and entitle new masters, in the *zurnacies*’ professional circles the acknowledgement by a maestro means that the young player has really become a maestro, too. According to a *zurnaci* from Debren it is not a special ceremony or event. It is a process and a feeling: “It can be felt, when he gives me an advantage, that man (the maestro, who has taught him and whose *chirak* he has been – n.a.) it’s quite clear. In the playing he lets me go, I’m the leader, he becomes *chirak*” [IO., p.18].