

Parasquevy (October 14). The music played at the fair is dance, dinner and ritual. There is common feast organized on the eve of the holiday in some villages – sometimes it is held with a *horo* and *zurnaci* music only. In the recent years it has been held with concert programs with the participation of folk-stars and modern orchestras [Д.К., 10/2000, p.13]. On the fair day usually at noon there is wrestling (*gjuresh*). It is a custom typical of this region and *zurnaci* music has an important role in it: “for the fairs we always invite the *zurnas* for the wrestling” [А.Б., p.17].

The fair in Karnalovo (the population of the village is composed of Bulgairans and Chrisitan Roma) begins with a concert program at the stadium about 2 PM. The program is presented by the local amateur dance ensmeble sponsored by the *chitalishte*. The program includes dance performances. The dances are accompanied by a folklore orchestra (a clarinet, a guitar, an accordion, a drum). But the heavy male dances go with the music of *zurnas*. The *zurnaci* group of Samir Kurtov from the nearby village of Kavrakirovo plays for the dancers of Karnalovo. The wrestling starts after the concert program. At this ritual moment, which lasts for two hours, the *zurnaci* act like unique Masters of Ceremonies. At the beginning they play a signal melody to call the people for the wrestling competition, then comes *Alaj* parting the presentation of the wrestlers. The melody *Gjuresh avasi* is played during the wrestlings. The event ends with awarding the winners who usually get lambs, rams or money. In the evening the fair finishes with a common celebration at the village centre. The *zurnaci* play local *horos* at the centre, too.

The fair held on The Day of St. Parasquevy in Kavrakirovo, the village having the greatest number of *zurnaci* in the region, has a part specific for this place, apart from the wrestling and the common village feast. In the evening many *zurnaci* from the village and Petrich go to the restaurant to treat each other with a drink and to compete in playing the instrument. The music played at this party is only *zurnaci* music – the one that the performers play to themselves. The “protocol” ritual and dance melodies are not performed. The musicians play freely with lots of improvisations and demonstrations of technical virtuosity. In 2001 about thirty maestros participated in the performance competition. They played nonstop in the course of three or four hours. There is an unspoken rule – the more famous musicians are left to show their skill at the end of the competition. The award is the appraisal of the other musicians who say, “you’ve let us all down”. Apart from being acknowledged and admired by their colleagues, the best musicians take the largest tip: “such businessmen, guys, came especially to hear me” [С.К., 10/2001, p.24].

Zurnaci music is played at the community’s fair in Belitsa on Holy Mother’s day (August 15). The fair is a holiday for the whole parish. Bulgarians, Roma, *Pomaks*, Christians and Muslims come to celebrate it. It is held on the clearing close to Holy Mother’s chapel located out of the town. The feast starts with a folklore program, prepared by the *chitalishte*. After this everybody is served the *Kurban*. When the people present finish with it, *zurnas* start playing. The *zurnaci* music is beyond the official program. It plays for the people to dance the *horos* [М.П. p.58].

Namedays¹³

Zurnaci formations play at the nameday parties in Razlog. In the 1950s and 1960s *zurnaci* played at family parties on Epiphany, the day of St. John the Baptist, etc. The organizers or the person who gives the party hire in advance musicians from the neighbourhood and give them a prepayment [С.Б., p.36].