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# The Clarinet and its Players in Eastern Europe and Greece

## Keywords:

Gypsies.

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It is paradox of European ethnomusicology that many of the countries and musical traditions which are geographically closest to the western centres of learning have received comparatively little attention from the scholars of those centres. Information in English (particularly) on the folk music traditions of eastern Europe is surprisingly scant. There is, naturally, more material available on the musical traditions of a particular country in its indigenous language, but such work often remains untranslated. Even Bartók's and Kodály's extensive collections and annotations of folk music material have only slowly become available to a wider readership.

Two significant reasons have contributed to this situation. Firstly, early ethnomusicologists were initially interested in the music of 'exotic cultures' and did not include the traditional music of their own European continent within this definition; and secondly, when later researchers became interested in these areas, the political antagonism that existed between east and west Europe after the second world war created practical difficulties in conducting research behind the Iron Curtain. The situation is slowly changing, however, and the political upheavals of the last decade have not only facilitated a freer exchange of information about these traditions, but have also allowed scholars to study some of the musical side-effects of these upheavals, and the often ambiguous relationships between 'the folk', their music, and the state (see Slobin 1996 for numerous examples of this kind of study). Additionally, the internet, an information resource with little regard for geographical boundaries or political dogma, is also beginning to provide some information about music and musicians in these areas; some relevant websites are listed at the end of this article.

Given this relative paucity of information it may seem perverse to examine the use of a single instrument, the clarinet, throughout this broad geographical area. But by focusing on one specific musical tool in this way we can examine not only particular musical traditions and the musicians within them, but also consider broader issues of musical change. It is also the case that the clarinet is a significant instrument in many of these different traditions, and probably matched only by the violin in its influence and importance throughout this region overall.

Anthropologists refer to the spread of tools and instruments as 'cultural transmission', and a significant point regarding the transmission of the western-style clarinet is that in many areas it is slowly usurping extant traditional instruments. These come in many different forms, according to region and culture, ranging from small, simple pipes to larger instruments with multiple pipes; their reeds may be attached with some kind of ligature, like a western clarinet, or carved from the body of the instrument itself, producing what is known as an 'idioglottal' reed. The western-style clarinet is also replacing many oboe-like instruments, which have double reeds, notably the oriental shawm referred to variously as *zurna*, *zourna*, *surla*, etc. These folk instruments are so varied and numerous it is impossible to discuss them here, but they may be further pursued through references given in the bibliography. With one (Hungarian) exception we shall be solely concerned with the spread and use of the western-style clarinet; so from this point onwards the term 'clarinet' will refer to this particular instrument, notwithstanding that many of the instruments it is replacing might also be described as clarinets by organologists.

We shall firstly consider general matters relating to the clarinet and its players over this region, before examining more specific details from Bulgaria and Greece, reflecting an increasing use and importance of the instrument as one moves from north to south, and west to east.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why the clarinet has become so widespread and popular, but we may hazard a number of guesses. Firstly, much of the rural music-making in these areas has traditionally taken place at times of festivities, weddings, saints' days, etc., and frequently in the open air. The musicians involved therefore needed to generate enough volume, without the benefit of amplification, to cut through not only the ambient noise of the revellers but also the accompaniment provided by their fellow musicians. A number of the slowly disappearing traditional instruments are notable for the ear-splitting renditions their owners coax from them, and whereas Western art musicians are generally encouraged to produce a 'rounded', 'blending' sound, this is not necessarily the case in traditions elsewhere; the clarinet, however, is a sufficiently flexible tool to be amenable to both approaches. Secondly, many of the performance aesthetics in these traditions demand the ability to 'bend' notes between the given pitches of a particular scale or mode, perhaps as a subconscious imitation of the human voice, and it is these micro-tonal inflections which give many types of music their specific character. The quasi-vocal quality implied by a seamless progression between notes is a characteristic that can be cultivated in both the clarinet and the violin. Thirdly, another feature

of much of the music in this region is its reliance on improvisation, requiring considerable ornamentation and virtuosity. The agility and compass of the clarinet is well suited to this kind of playing, more so than some of the instruments it has replaced, and it is interesting to note at this point that most clarinetists in these areas choose to play simple system clarinets, rather than the full Boehm system preferred by most western musicians; again this may be because these instruments have a slightly more penetrating sound, particularly in the top octave, than their more 'refined' cousins. Lastly, at a purely practical level, the clarinet is both portable and relatively sturdy, allowing easy transportation from one place to another; as we shall see, the musicians with whom it is most commonly associated are quite mobile, and need to be available for work over a sizeable area. From a more sociological perspective it is also worth suggesting that the clarinet may have been seen by some as a symbol of technological and perhaps cultural progress. This was certainly the case in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece, for example, when only the more affluent families could afford a clarinet, which subsequently became a demonstration of their wealth, while the peasants continued to dance to the sound of *zournas* (see Mazaraki 1984:48).

Again, we can only speculate on the probable paths by which an instrument developed for urban art music in the early 18th century became so widespread in both urban and rural traditional music by the mid- to late 20th century. But in eastern Europe and the Balkans it is frequently associated with two particular groups of musicians: the Roma or Gypsies, and the *klezmerim* of the east European Jews, and it seems likely that these groups have played a large part in the transmission of the clarinet as a cultural artefact over such a wide area. Throughout this region these groups have for several centuries been acknowledged as significant providers of music for special occasions, and paid for their services as such. In this sense they were (and are) 'professional' musicians, although it would be misleading to suggest that the distinction between professional and amateur is as clear-cut as is frequently the case in western society. These two groups supplied music in both rural and urban areas, with the latter obviously offering more possibility of employment, and it is likely that they would have come into contact with urban art musicians and, conceivably, their clarinets in this way. It seems unlikely these musicians were themselves employed in the churches, courts and theatres of the 18th century as the majority of them could not read music. Sárosi, for example, tells us that in 18th and 19th century Hungary two kinds of musicians existed (in addition to peasant musicians), 'the Gypsy' who played folk music, and 'the German' (which should be understood as including Czechs and other nationals) who were employed in the realm of art music (see Sárosi 1978:111). In the present context both the Gypsies and the *klezmerim*

deserve closer attention.

The description 'Gypsy' is a rather pejorative term derived from 'Egyptian', with whom this race were originally but erroneously connected. They are more properly known as 'Rom' (plural 'Roma'), although here we shall use the two words interchangeably, hoping to avoid confusion, since many previous writers have used the older term rather than the more modern description. In western eyes the Roma are perhaps most frequently associated with the music of Hungary, doubtless because of Liszt's interest in their music, although it is important to note that Hungarian folk music is something rather different than the music of Hungarian Roma. These Roma constitute only one part of a large ethnic group who, having in fact emanated from northern India, travelled across much of the Middle East and Europe, including, by the 16th century, the Iberian peninsula and the British Isles. There does not appear to be a common Roma musical style throughout this ethnic group, as there is a language, although in many areas they do retain different music repertoires which they consider to be their own, and which they distinguish from other music of the region in which they reside. However, given the need to earn money from their musical performances, they have always put their musical skills to the service of whatever music and dance styles are requested by the potential employers of their area; he who pays the piper quite literally calls the tune. Not only have they shown themselves to be adept at assimilating different musical styles but they also perform on the instruments most popular in that region. In northern and western Europe this has meant a predominance of string instruments, whereas in the south and east the quintessential Roma ensemble has been the drum and shawm, although, as already noted, the clarinet is tending to usurp the latter.

The western impression of the Roma as being essentially Hungarian is not entirely without foundation, however, since it was in Hungary where they were both most prevalent (Hungary retains a sizeable Roma minority) and, musically speaking, notably influential. Hungary also provides some historical evidence of the transmission of the clarinet as a cultural artefact and the role of the Roma in such transmission. In the late 18th century Hungarian Gypsy bands had begun to incorporate the clarinet after being influenced by the instrumentation of Viennese serenade ensembles, Hungary being then part of the Austro-Hungarian empire; although still largely based on string instruments, they would occasionally add clarinets (Sárosi 1980: 867). However, Kodály suggests that by the mid-19th century Hungarian folk orchestras, known as Magyar bands, were already regarding the clarinet as 'indispensable' (along with the cymbalum, cello, and double bass), even in small villages, and that such bands were following

models already set by the Gypsy bands (Kodály 1971: 127). Thus, the clarinet became an important feature in both the peasant orchestras and the Hungarian Gypsy bands, albeit generally in the larger, urban ensembles rather than the smaller rural ones. There is even some evidence that Hungarians began to associate the clarinet as an exclusively Gypsy instrument, with elderly peasants referring to it as 'the Gypsy pipe' (see Sárosi 1978: 219). Similar patterns of transmission can be observed in Romania. Here the professional or semi-professional musicians, frequently Gypsies, known as *lautari* provided a channel through which certain instruments, including the clarinet, that were previously only used by urban musicians, passed into general folk use (see Alexandru 1980: 136-8).

Some of the characteristics of the Roma are shared by another group of itinerant European musicians, the Jewish *klezmerim*. These musicians were part of the eastern European Jewish peoples known as the Ashkenazi Jews (as opposed to the Sephardic Jews of the Mediterranean territories). The term *klezmer* (plural: *klezmerim*) is a contraction of the biblical term *kle zemer* meaning literally 'tools for the song' i.e. musical instruments, but the term has evolved to describe the musicians themselves. Like the Roma they supplied music on a professional basis throughout this region, although they were probably more prevalent in urban areas, and particularly those nearby large Jewish ghettos such as in Prague. Unlike the Roma, however, they had their own substantial musical tradition, perhaps because their lives were permeated by rituals and celebrations to a much greater degree than the Roma. They too, again no doubt for reasons of financial expediency, would learn and execute the music expected and desired by their paying hosts. The instrument frequently associated with these musicians is really the violin, a stereotype underlined, for example, by the musical 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Indeed, one popular joke that arose during the post-war emigration of Russian Jews to Israel suggested that 'If a man boards a plane for Israel without a violin case he must be a pianist'. But the clarinet also featured heavily in their music-making, and must have been adopted by them at an early stage. Idelsohn, a noted authority on Jewish music, mentions a description of a small band in a provincial German town in 1800: 'The five musicians engaged in other trades in addition to their playing. Two of them were violinists, one played the clarinet, one the violincello and one the *Hackbrett* (Dulcimer)' (Idelsohn 1948: 457). Alfred Sendry concurs, stating that the customary *klezmer* group of the 18th century consisted of 'two violins and a violincello, to which occasionally a clarinet was added' (Sendry 1970: 355).

Today the term 'klezmer' often refers to a particular musical style which has become popular throughout Europe and the USA and which, although having its roots in the Jewish music of

eastern European ghettos, also embraces elements of jazz and other traditional musics of the eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere. In this sense, 'Klezmer Music' is now something of an international commodity, and can be seen as part of the growth of 'world music'. Throughout this explosion of interest however, the clarinet has remained an essential and central instrument, and a number of the genre's most popular and well-known exponents are clarinetists (see discography).

No doubt these two groups, Roma and *klezmerim*, were at times competitors not only with each other but also with other local musicians. Idelsohn suggests that the latter also supplied music to some Christian festivals, and that they were often preferred to Christian musicians 'on account of their sobriety and modesty' (Idelsohn 1948: 456). The point seems well made when contrasted with Sárosi's assertion that, although it is rare to see a drunk Gypsy musician, it is 'at least as rare as the Gypsy musician who plays better when he is perfectly sober than when he is a little tipsy' (Sárosi 1978: 253). Sárosi is possibly being economical with the truth at this point.

However, the rather bucolic behaviour of the Roma doubtless contributed to the generally low social status ascribed to the musicians throughout this region, although low status is something of a universal trait among musicians (see Merriam 1964:140). Not only are musicians commonly looked down upon, but of course both of these two groups as a whole have an inferior social status. The Roma suffer from having a low status everywhere, and east European Jews, given their frequently marginal position within various societies, often suffer the same problem. Even within the Jewish community, however, the *klezmerim* were regarded somewhat ambivalently: Sendry suggests that their itinerant lifestyle, combined with the uncertainty of their existence, stamped them as 'social pariahs' (Sendry 1970: 365).

Moving away, for a moment, from the clarinet and its players, we should examine one other instrument related to it, which is found only in Hungary and parts of Romania: the *tárogató*. It has suffered a chequered history and is an interesting example of an instrument having a significance over and above its musical role, in this case through its symbolic representation of a Hungarian national identity. The original Hungarian *tárogató* was related to the oriental shawm or *zurna* (mentioned above) and it had a slightly tapered body and a double reed. This instrument, however, became identified with the Hungarian freedom movement (rather bizarrely perhaps, given its oriental origins) of the early 18th century. When this revolt was crushed the instrument was banned, but reappeared during the later war of independence

against the Hapsburg empire. In 1896, in a spirit of patriotic Hungarian nationalism during the celebrations of 1000 years of the Magyar occupation of Hungary, the instrument maker Schunda drastically redesigned it. He changed the bore from the stepped conical bore of the *zurna* to a true conical bore, fitted a clarinet mouthpiece, and designed keywork resembling that of an oboe, giving it a compass from *bb* to *c*<sup>2</sup>. For this reason the latter day instrument, used largely by folk musicians rather than the Roma, is referred to as the Schunda tárogató to distinguish it from its earlier incarnation. Although it is generally associated with the folk music of Hungary and Romania it has occasionally found its way into the world of art music. Mahler instructed that the instrument would be appropriate for the shepherd's tune in Act 3 of *Tristan* at the Budapest Opera House, and it was later introduced at Bayreuth, for the same reason. (For more information on the tárogató, see Weissmann 1980 and Sárosi 1978). A photograph of the instrument is shown in figure 1.

Fig.1 ???????

Bulgaria, like Hungary and Romania, has a rich and varied folk music tradition, although it differs from these other two countries in having been more firmly under the Turkish influence of the Ottoman empire. It also differs in having more prominent roles for certain aerophones (the generic organological term for wind instruments) such as the *kaval*, a rim-blown vertical flute, and the *gayda*, a type of bagpipe. Much that has already been said about the position and status of the Roma elsewhere applies also in Bulgaria, but here there has been a significant musical development in the last two decades in which the clarinet, and one clarinettist in particular, has played a conspicuous role, and this is the rise of *svatbarska muzika* or 'wedding music'. This relatively new genre has significant musical and political dimensions.

The musical style of this 'wedding music' has its roots in Bulgarian *narodna muzika*, which translates roughly as 'folk' or 'people's' music; but it is also infused with elements of Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, Turkish and Rom music, as well as western rock and jazz traditions (see Buchanan 1996). It requires high levels of individual virtuosity with considerable ornamentation and fast tempos, all heavily amplified. There is no standard format for the 'wedding orchestras' who play this music, but the lead instrument is, more often than not, the clarinet, and its most widely recognised star, even credited by some with the invention of the genre, is the clarinettist Ivo Papazov.



Papazov in some ways represents both the old and the new in Bulgarian music. His family background is a mixture of Turkish and Rom, and his paternal relatives were Turkish-speaking *zurna* players from what is now northern Greece; Papazov himself learned both the clarinet and the *zurna* as a child. The rise of 'wedding music' dates from the time he put his band 'Trakiya' together in 1974, and he is now regarded as the most successful and well-known exponent of the genre. Indeed, so well known is he that a certain mythology has grown around him. Papazov's mother maintains that his interest in the clarinet is explained by the fact that his umbilical cord was tied with a piece of string from his father's instrument (Buchanan: 205). From the same source comes the following remarkable anecdote:

In one instance, a Bulgarian couple who had engaged Papazov to play at their wedding approached him three times about moving the nuptials forward, but he was unavailable for the dates they suggested. He recommended other musicians to them, but they declined changing bands categorically. Later he learned that the bride was pregnant, and that she decided to abort her child rather than wed on an earlier date when Papazov could not perform (*ibid.*: 205).

Leaving aside the moral dimensions of this story, if true it is a remarkable assertion of Papazov's superstar status, as is Buchanan's account of the Turkish father who moved his son's entire wedding, guests and all, from Istanbul to Bulgaria, because Papazov was unable to travel to Turkey (Buchanan: 206). Whether this was due to logistical difficulties or because of political restrictions imposed on the performer is not made clear, but it is certainly the case that *svatbarska muzika* was deliberately discouraged by the Bulgarian authorities in the 1980s, when it was seen by the general public to be a powerful and evocative alternative to the state-sponsored (and therefore manipulated) 'folk' ensembles that were continuously propagated on Bulgarian radio and television. Because of its Turkish, Islamic associations wedding music, even in the early 1990s, continued to be discouraged by the authorities, who were intent on establishing a unified ethnic Bulgarian state (and therefore culture), and even Papazov himself has been imprisoned for 'speaking Turkish in public and propagandising Turkish music' (Buchanan: 212), a revealing insight into the difficulties some musicians face in pursuing their craft.

Although Papasov has raised the profile of the clarinet in Bulgaria it still has some way to go until it achieves the importance attached to it in Bulgaria's southern neighbour, Greece, where it has become so widespread and popular in folk music that it is now recognised as

the 'national folk instrument'. Together with the violin (*violi*), the lute (*laghouto*) and more latterly with the dulcimer (*sandour*), it forms the Greek popular musical combination par excellence, the *compania* (lit. 'a company'), which has come to replace the traditional *ziyia* (pair), of drum (*daouli*) and shawm (*zournas*) in mainland Greece

The clarinet arrived in mainland Greece from Turkey with the Turkish Gypsies around 1835. It first appeared in northern Greece, in Epirus and western Macedonia, and gradually spread southwards, though with some difficulty. Despina Mazaraki, an authority on the clarinet in Greece, suggests that the instrument took some time to gain acceptance, because 'the villagers did not want it; they were poor people who celebrated their feasts and weddings in the open air, usually the square of the village, and they preferred the shrill sound of the *zournas*, accompanied by the *daouli* than the soft sound of the clarinet, accompanied by the lute' (Mazaraki 1984: 48). Even in urban Athens, where attitudes might have been thought to be rather more progressive, the clarinet was initially scorned: 'Until 1925 the clarinet was not allowed in Athens' and one popular clarinetist named Pericles Papaioannou 'played only in villages, because the police did not allow him in Athens...They considered the clarinet a barbaric instrument' (Mazaraki:46). Gradually, though, the clarinet became established in Athens through being used in restaurants (which also provided folk music), gramophone recordings, and by being heard on the radio. In particular, in the large cities, the vehicle of the clarinet and the *compania* was the music halls, called *café-aman*, which existed until the 1940s (Mazaraki:50). These were cafes with a stage where the instruments of the *compania* played, accompanying floor shows performed by women (usually two) who danced and sang.

As already mentioned, the role of itinerant peoples, especially the Roma, are particularly significant in the transmission of the clarinet and its music. This is especially true in Greece, where they are known for their 'good blowing' and 'caressing manner of playing', which is said 'to strain the leaves of one's heart' (Anoyanakis 1979: 29). Even until quite recently in many parts of Greece the word 'Gypsy' meant instrumental-player. Instead of saying 'the instruments have come!', people would shout 'the Gypsies have arrived!' so closely bound up with the Gypsies was the profession of popular musician (Anoyanakis:29). As elsewhere, however, although the villagers admired the musical genius of the Gypsies, they considered them of a lower status (Baud-Bovy 1984: 64).

The literature on clarinet playing in Greece provides insights into both the nature of musical

instruction in an oral music tradition and certain technical details of the clarinettist's craft. Usually the players were self-taught; any 'teaching' took the form simply of listening and imitating. As Anoyanakis points out, no books were provided, and no explanation of style or technique was offered. The teacher did not speak, he played, while the pupil would listen and try to imitate; 'learn how to steal' was the advice often given by the teacher to his student. Indeed, it was only by possessing this ability that the pupil gained whatever benefits he derived from the tuition. Often teachers tried jealously to keep the 'secrets' of their art to themselves. It was only natural that they should view the day's young, untested pupils with some trepidation, as they were tomorrow's rivals (see Anoyanakis 1979: 29-30). Those who were brought up in this oral tradition frequently denigrate the idea that folk music can be easily learned by students who have first studied art music in the conservatoires. The famous clarinettist Tassos Chalkias has said that 'people who went to conservatoires first and then wanted to learn the tradition did not manage it well. If somebody goes to a conservatoire today he will not be able to become Chalkias afterwards. He will spoil the instrument' (Chronopoulos 1985: 91).

In the past some of the clarinets played in Greece were imported while others were made locally. Those locally manufactured were mainly small clarinets in *Eb* (*tzourades*), which, however, are now largely abandoned because of tuning problems. Today's folk clarinets are usually pitched in C, although this is described as *C naturelle* because it lies somewhere between C and B of the tempered western scale (Mazaraki:61-62). Initially these clarinets were very basic and had few keys; even where keys were available they were not always used. Players who had started with traditional instruments such as the *flogera*, a simple end-blown flute, would often just transfer their fingerings from one instrument to the other, ignoring the chromatic possibilities offered by the keys; in any case, the relatively diatonic melodies originating from shawms and flutes did not require them. Even now, in Greece as elsewhere, the simple system clarinet, either with 13 or 15 keys, is preferred to the full Boehm. Mazaraki suggests that another reason for the popularity of this system is that it allows the players more freedom in sliding and half-closing the fingerholes, particularly since many of the early simple system clarinets did not have rings around the fingerholes of either hand, allowing the players to only partially cover the holes. Thus, they could easily manipulate the tuning of the instrument, altering its tempered scale to fit more closely the untempered scales and modes prevailing in Greek folk music, as they were used to doing on the *flogera* and *zournas*.

However, as clarinetists explored the possibilities of the instrument by using more keys, they expanded the melodic range of the instrument, and consequently the melodies of their pieces. Today, a tune played on the clarinet has a range of two or three octaves, unusual for Greek folk melodies. Mazaraki also suggests an intriguing approach to the question of dynamics: 'The self-taught musician does not use dynamics in his playing. When he wants his melody to be louder, he plays it an octave higher, and the opposite when he wants it quieter' (Mazaraki: 64-65).

Improvisation is vitally important in Greek folk clarinet playing, and, just as certain melodic/harmonic structures are favoured by individual Western jazz musicians, so particular ornaments and melismas become identified with individual folk musicians as being part of 'their' style. Such decorations are termed *false notes*, presumably to distinguish them from the 'true notes' of the tune itself.

Mazaraki gives some interesting insights into the technical devices by which musicians construct their improvisations. These comprise ornaments - melodic patterns that emphasise a note by embellishing it - and *melismata*, melodic additions within the tune itself. The first category is further divided into two groups, ornaments of virtuosity and ornaments of expression. The first rely on finger movements and include devices such as appoggiaturas, mordents, trills, grupettos, and tremolos, with the latter using intervals of a third, fifth or seventh. Ornaments of expression are produced by altering the blowing technique and include the *taachta*, a short note added a fourth, fifth or seventh from the principal one but played much quieter and almost staccato. This category also includes glissandi, an important technique used even between microtones, and the extent to which a player can control his glissandi is taken as a sign of his competence; the Gypsy clarinetists of Epirus in western Greece are particularly famous for their use of glissandi.

The Roma have also been responsible for more far-reaching musical changes, since the melodic and rhythmic embellishments within their improvisations have, over time, altered the tunes themselves. Baud-Bovy (1972: 298-99) suggests that Gypsy performers were responsible for the frequent change in a given melody from a diatonic to a chromatic style, the latter based on the interval of an augmented second, while Skiadaresis (1962: 146-148) notes that in regions where there were never any Gypsy musicians, as in western Crete, songs having an augmented second are much rarer than in those areas where Gypsy players lived and performed.

*Melismata* are melodic additions by the clarinetist within song tunes, and again certain melismas become identified with particular players. These usually range within the interval of a fifth, maximum an octave, and are frequently directed towards either the 'tonic' or the 'dominant' of a given scale. Unlike ornaments, which emphasise individual notes, melismas are used to complement the vocal line by embellishing points where the singer sustains a note or perhaps takes a short break. Particular melismas become associated with certain modes, and therefore may recur in different songs which occur in the same mode. The other instruments of the *compania* also provide musical stimuli for the clarinetist; the melismas may contain broken chords or tremolos, imitating the accompaniment of the dulcimer, or chromatic scales in the manner of slow glissandi typifying the violin. In this way some tunes become 'instrumentalised', drifting away from the folk songs on which they were originally based, and leading in turn to the creation of a different musical repertoire.

Naturally, musical traditions evolve, and the performance aesthetic of today's clarinetists is perhaps different to their forefathers. Tassos Chalkias recalls the 'good old days' and complains about recent developments: 'In the old days the two clarinets did not play together; we played one after the other. This bad habit started with the appearance of microphones...In the old days we played quietly. It was not possible to play loudly. But it was the people as well. A different kind of people; connoisseurs. They wanted everything clear...Today it is a jungle' (Chronopoulos 1985: 64).

Jungle or not, the tradition continues today, and as we were putting the finishing touches to this article we had the opportunity to see a folk clarinetist in action, in the central market of Thessalonika in northern Greece. There, surrounded by fruit and vegetable stalls and encouraged by the fishmongers in front of whose stall he played, a Gypsy clarinetist busked with two young children. Playing on a rather weather-beaten simple system instrument the clarinetist, his darker skin betraying his Gypsy origins, improvised endlessly upon a stream of folk and popular melodies, heavily embellished with intricate ornaments and glissandi. His playing drew whoops of approval from the surrounding stallmongers, although they rewarded him with occasional pieces of fruit rather than the coins he would no doubt have preferred. The older of the two children, a girl of perhaps nine, walked among the crowds with a plastic box, soliciting donations. But it was the younger boy who was a revelation. Aged no more than seven, he accompanied his father (presumably) on a small drum (*toumbeleki*) not only with an extraordinary technical facility but also with a sharp musical

ear. The clarinettist hardly uttered a word to him, yet after only one or two notes the young boy would pick up each new tune and assuredly beat out the rhythmic accompaniment, improvising around the basic pulse with the same dexterity as his father manipulated the melodic line. This was a salutary reminder, if one were needed, that despite the increasing urbanisation of countries such as Greece, leading to the inevitable demise of certain rural traditions, and the continuing influence of radio and television which largely disseminate westernised pop music styles, some folk music remains in the hearts and minds of 'the folk', performed by those who have long been associated with it and in ways in which their forefathers would recognise.

Stephen Cottrell  
Evangelia Mantzourani

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## **Webography:**

<http://www4.pgh.net/~jdv/tamb/balkan.htm> - General Balkan info site. Definitely the place to start.

<http://www.well.com/user/ari/klez/> - Huge klezmer site with many links.

<http://www.greekmus.demon.co.uk/folk.htm> - Extensive list of Greek music from N. London record shop.

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/grupd/music/music1.htm> - Turkish Government site.

<http://www.datanet.hu/tanchaz/thmain.htm> - Site on Hungarian folk music and dance.