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4-8 ოქტომბერი 2010 თბილისი, საქართველო

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HYBRID VOCAL FORMS – MIXTURE OF OLDER AND MORE RECENT
VOCAL STYLES AND OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC DIALECTS
IN JASENICA REGION IN CENTRAL SERBIA

The so-called *hybrid* forms, as a segment of the Serbian two-part rural vocal tradition combining the features of older and more recent two-part singing, have already been discussed in a number of papers (Dević, 1979, 1997; Jovanović, 1999; Ranković, 2007)¹. Serbian ethnomusicologists have determined that songs with such features can be found in areas where confrontation may be observed between the features of older and more recent village tradition, as well as between different cultural areas. Such regions are central Serbia, where influences of the vocal traditions of Dinara, Kosovo-Metohija, Ђop, Morava-Vardar² and the indigenous ones (Dević, 1997; Jovanović, 1999: 32) converge, and Lijevča Polje, in northern Bosnia, where influences from the cultural zones of Dinara and Pannonia are present (Ranković, 2007: 39-40). The recognizable physiognomy of *hybrid* forms gives a significant mark to the vocal heritage in these areas. The aim of discussing this interesting and complex subject in this paper is to contribute to this topic and point to new possibilities in establishing criteria for their differentiation.

The *hybrid* forms in the territory of central Serbia, more precisely in its central region of Jasenica, will be discussed based on the field findings and recordings made in the 1980s and in the first years of the 21st century. At the time of the research, the carriers of the tradition of *hybrid* forms were (and rarely still are) village women, the oldest of whom were born in the 1920s. The fact that, these songs were as a rule not performed by the oldest singers (born in the first decades of the 20th century, who stood out as more skilled in singing the songs belonging to an older layer) points to the possibility of viewing the trends of certain changes in the village tradition during the 20th century. The women who these songs were recorded from were also just as familiar with the songs from both the older and more recent vocal layers. This is where the “particular bimusicality” of the singers of this generation is expressed (Dević, 1997: 136).

It is necessary to point out that these songs were/are much favoured among female singers. They find them exquisitely beautiful, even exclusive in musical sense. It is precisely these songs that the village groups considered representative for folklore events: according to the singers’ opinion, ensembles which have them on their repertoire have significant advantage at each performance of competitive character. *Hybrid* forms were also considered difficult to perform; it is thus understandable that the singers who could lead solo parts in them (*lead the melody*) were held in special regard by the community. Considerable agogic freedom in the examples in *rubato* rhythm makes it necessary for the voices in the group to be synchronized to a high degree. Beside that, the role of the leading singer is especially pronounced: the duration of the phrase, the pauses aimed at breathing, the ornaments and colour of accentuated tones depend on her.

In the sense of genre, these songs are not unique. They can be wedding songs, diggers’ songs, or songs for general use, mostly with romantic themes. Their lyrics are of more recent origin, with rhyme.

Field research has confirmed that the tunes / melodic models of the *hybrid* forms in the western part of the explored region (Upper Jasenica) have special local emic names. As a common general term for tune / melodic model, an old word *glas* is used. A term of a more recent origin, *arija*, is used only descriptively, and it can

be heard mostly from singers who cultivate only the songs belonging to the more recent tradition. The local names of certain melodic models testify to: 1. specificity of their performance: we encounter terms such as the *high*, or *great model* (according to interviewees' explanations, when it is sung, it is hollered; a variant of the example 4) and the *heavy model* (ex. 5); 2. the local feature of the area in which the song was sung, hence the term *mountain model* (ex. 4); 3. the function – the *wedding model* (ex. 1-3); 4. the initial chorus which becomes the feature of a specific melodic model, beginning with *oj* or *ej-uj* (ex. 2, 6). Corresponding terms in eastern part of the region (Lower Jasenica), as far as we know, have not been noted down.

In order to understand the genesis of these songs correctly, it is necessary to distinguish the elements of older and more recent two-part Serbian rural vocal traditions. The older way of singing is characterized by the monothematic principle of form building, based on a unique motif material which is repeated and varies during the meloline; also, non-tempered, narrow tone row³ and heterophonic, heterophonic-bourdon or bourdon two-part texture is a significant characteristic, in which an important role is played by the major second chord (within the meloline and, very often, in the cadence). The tendency towards sound amalgamation and undisrupted continuity of the sound, which is why the leading singer and the group take breath alternately, are the aesthetic imperative (Petrović, 1989: 66). In the older way of singing, the appearance of diphthongs is also frequent, for the purpose of „shading” the vocals⁴. Unlike the old singing, the more recent Serbian two-part rural singing (this kind of singing is also named by its emic term *na bas – to the bass*) is mainly characterised by its homophonic texture, more or less consistent tertian parallelism, and the cadence in the interval of the perfect fifth⁵.

Among the songs recorded in Jasenica as *hybrid* forms there is a large number of very different examples⁶. Their characteristics have been specified both in relation to the old and to the new type of singing. Their main features, which bring them to close relation with older singing, are: cadences in the major second chord (ex. 1-4, 6-8, 10), non-tempered tone rows (ex. 1, 2, 6, 9), intersection of parts by descending the leading voice to the *hypofinalis* (as well as to deeper tones of unspecified pitch, by gradual changing, or skip; ex. 1, 4; Golemović, 1984: 135), the appearance of diphthongs (ex. 1) and alternate breathing (ex. 1-5, 8, 9). In more recent papers, the principle of monothematism and fragmentarity in shaping the melopoetic form has been indicated (Jovanović, 2010: 206-208).

What ties in the *hybrid* forms to the songs from the more recent layer is primarily the homophonic texture and parallel motion of vocal parts (all given examples); apart from that, there is more or less consistent occurrence of tone *c1* in the accompanying part (ex. 2-6), often in the function of ornamental tone, but in the cadence as well (ex. 5, 9).

There are two major objective obstacles in identifying and reaching into the norms of formation of *hybrid* forms in Jasenica. The first problem lies in the incompletely profiled physiognomy of the accompanying part, especially in the eastern part of the researched area. The lack of differentiation is exhibited in inconsistent occurrence of tone *c1* in accompaniment and in inconsistency of cadencing (which can be in unison, in the second and in the fifth). Interlocutors themselves say that even in the past the role of the subordinate voice was not quite clear. “People sang as they knew best” is what can frequently be heard during field research; this implies precisely those different variants of the accompanying voice, which in some cases was clearly profiled as in more recent singing, while in others – as bourdon on the tone of the *hypofinalis* and/or *finalis*.

The second problem lies in the fact that the abovementioned features of the older and more recent layers do not occur consistently in all recorded *hybrid* forms. This confirms what Dragoslav Dević stated long ago: “People’s perception of pure performing [of these songs] in terms of style is unpredictable and original”

(Dević, 1979). This was well put: it is indicative, and at the same time intriguing that the collected material provides large heterogeneity of examples which could be classified in one group or the other, which implies unsustainability of strict rules one could otherwise employ when classifying. Here we encounter a relatively large number of, one could say, unique solutions.

It was for that reason that among the recorded examples an analysis was undertaken with the following criteria in consideration: 1) the cadential interval (major second, as a static or dynamic cadence as opposed to the cadence in perfect fifth), 2) treatment of the tone *c1* during *melostanza* (its absence as opposed to its presence), 3) tone row (non-tempered as opposed to a row similar to diatonic), 4) the application of a certain melodic model (models which can not be encountered in newer songs as opposed to their „standard” models), 5) presence of the characteristic cadential formulas as opposed to their absence; 6) apart from the monothematic principle, the logic of its microstructure (fragmentarity as opposed to the wholeness of a longer melodic line), 7) the level of mutual independence of sung parts (which presumes the soloist’s freedom in relation to the static nature of accompaniment, the presence of element of *bourdon* in accompaniment, intersection of the leading and subordinate voice as opposed to the rhythmic, melodic and energetic homogeneity of performance of both parts).

Classification of songs *to the bass* and *hybrid* forms according to cadence has proven to be insufficient for all cases. Apart from the examples in which the second can, without any doubt, be connected to *hybrid* forms, and the fifth with the more recent vocal layer, exceptions can be found: songs *to the bass* with the cadence in the second, but also *hybrid* forms with the cadence in the fifth (ex. 5, 9)⁷.

The occurrence of the lower fifth (of the tone *c1*) in relation to the *finalis* also does not strike as a reliable criterion for determining. The *hypofinalis* and *finalis* are sometimes the only tones in the accompanying part (ex. 1, 7, 8), but a solid rule by which the tone *c1* occurs practically does not exist. It is sometimes present only as a decorative tone, and sometimes within the meloline, although not in the cadence (ex. 2-4, 9).

If a non-tempered tone row is taken as the key parameter for differentiating, exceptions (primarily from the east part of Jasenica) show that not even this is a safe parameter (ex. 3-5, 7, 8, 10).

The monothematic principle of form building is found to be a reliable indicator of belonging to the group of *hybrid* form songs. Their form is relatively complex (speaking in terms of motif structure of the songs of the older tradition): it is usually binary or multi-part and is built from one motive cell and its varying (ex. 4-6, 9, 10).

In *hybrid* examples from this region, one can also observe the presence of a unique cadential formula, with the dynamic cadence, which can come before either ending in the fifth or second. The identical formula in certain examples of more recent songs was also noticed by Dimitrije Golemović, who described and named it as the “transitional type of cadence” (Golemović, 1983: 132). The formula consists of the following: the leading voice has a descending movement from the third tone above the *finalis*, stays on the *hyperfinalis* and has a long stay on the *finalis*; the subordinate voice descends from the *finalis* and keeps the *hypofinalis* during the descending movement of the leading voice (ex. 4-7). This phenomenon was already observed also by Dragoslav Dević in his earlier work; he found occurrence of “prolonging the tune on the syllable *oj* in the beginning and in the end” (Dević, 1979), which thus refers to cadential, but also initial formulas of these examples (ex. 2, 6).

Another type of dynamic cadence in the second, which is encountered in *hybrid* forms and in recent songs, presumes skip of the accompanying part from the *hypofinalis* to the lower fifth and return to the *hypofinalis*, sometimes followed by the *oj* exclamation (ex. 10).

The most recent studies of *hybrid* forms, based on melopoetic analysis, have showed that *hybrid* forms are performed within two groups of melodic models: typical ones, occurring primarily in *hybrid* forms (ex. 1-3, 4-6, 10), and the ones typical for the more recent songs (ex. 7-9; Dević, 1986: 51, models 5, 1, 2). Both groups of models occur within different manners of implementation. Here, models in individual examples are treated with an emphasis on elements of melopoetic microstructure. It appears that certain models of *hybrid* forms were developed by modification of models of more recent songs so that it gives them new a physiognomy and character: a phenomenon which has been noticed as relevant for this process is fragmentation of an integral melody.

In terms of style, the characteristics of the *hybrid* forms of central Serbia are closely connected with the older way of singing. Some of these features reflect ties with the tradition of Serbian inhabitants of this area who originate from the Dinaric region, which is confirmed by the latest field research. The emic understanding of the manner of prolonged sustaining of bourdon, the descent of the leading voice on the *hypofinalis* accompanied by forming the chord of the major second, as well as alternate breathing among singers of leading and accompanying parts has been confirmed. Singers explain that it reminds them of singing of people living in western parts of Serbia⁸. Sometimes, in moments of strong expressivity, the static, inert accompanying part in *hybrid* forms assumes the role of bourdon (ex. 4-8); contrary to this, there is relatively great freedom of the solo part in terms of agogic and melodic varying (ex. 4-9; Jovanović, 1999: 32).

The means of articulating the second during the melodic line stands in close connection with the manners already mentioned as the elements of the older Dinara singing tradition (Dević, 1986: 294, Golemović, 1990: 19-21). It is important that, with respect to these singers' manners, the examples from Jasenica are related to the examples from the same genres from the neighbouring areas of western Serbia. Additional characteristics of style typical of *hybrid* forms are occurrence of falsetto-like, ornamental tones, occurrence of tremolando on melodically accentuated tones in the leading part, and "shading" of vocals, which as a manner also occurs in older village singing.

Based on everything that has been said, it can be easily concluded that the examples of *hybrid* forms in central Serbia can be extremely interesting in terms of their melody, chords and formal characteristics. Complementing the above stated emic view, which finds these songs exceptionally attractive, we could add that they objectively have high aesthetic value in musical sense, as specific musical miniatures of unique beauty.

Researchers of Serbian village singing have so far brought forth two different views relating to possible genesis of this kind of songs in the area of central Serbia. According to the originally established classification, they were grouped with the more recent forms of singing, with homophonic texture as the main criterion. The assumption was that they were developed in an attempt to resemble more recent songs. That is why, in the first scientific description of this group of songs in central Serbia, has been used the term *transitional* forms (Dević, 1979). According to this view, these songs represent a "specific link in the normative process of music acculturation", and they represent one of the phases in the evolution of the Serbian village two-part singing (Dević, 1979).

Dević also uses the term *hybrid forms* later, suggesting that these songs do not represent a *transition* after all, but that they are a specific *hybrid* of two different vocal layers and styles (Dević, 1997: 133-136). This term has been used by Serbian ethnomusicologists to this day. Thus, occurrence and popularity of these songs can be explained as autonomous; namely, the old village style found its realization within the frames of a new style, with the need to satisfy the taste imposed by it in the main role. In other words, it has adapted the physiognomy

of the new style by closely approaching its external form, but in its internal logic it remained old-time.

As a region in central Serbia, Jasenica is a meeting point of not only older and more recent vocal practices, but also of features of different dialects of the older Serbian rural singing – that is, different aesthetic and stylistic principles in creating and embellishing the leading melody, in the treatment of the accompanying part and in their relationships. Such permeating stems from historical specificities of migrations and from the intersection of different migration currents of the population in this area (Dević, 1997: 134-135). Geographic disposition of certain features of *hybrid* forms in the area of Jasenica matches the data on the origin of its population. The features pointing to the origin in the tradition of old Dinara two-part singing are more concentrated in the western part of the area, in hilly and mountainous areas, and are in continuum with the old singing in the western parts of Serbia. Conversely, the features of the other kind are in territorial continuity with the older singing tradition in the plains of the central, eastern, southeastern and southern Serbia.

The existence of *hybrid* forms in the region of central Serbia, and their vitality at the end of the 20th century, testify in favour of the assumption that they were developed in this area in the environment of a living singing tradition which allowed for the influence of creative impulse in creating new, diverse examples, in the function of communication. In all likelihood, these songs represent a separate offspring of old Serbian singing: it follows the model of the newer style, but does not lead towards it, but treads its own path instead. In that sense, the term *hybrid* gains its full theoretical justification. These songs preserve the beauty and emotion of old village singing, “enriched with sounds” (Golemović, 1991) and are located in the homophonic attitude of newer songs, in an irresistible, fresh and original bond, which allows for a plurality of “unique features” (Dević, 1997: 135) and original solutions. Under circumstances allowing for further existence of the traditional village singing, life and development of these songs would have yet to show in the future.

Notes

¹ This paper has been based on the following sound and written sources: field recordings collected by J. Jovanović, from the collection *Donja Jasenica* by ethnomusicologist Ljubinko Miljković (1986), as well as from unpublished field recordings made by late ethnomusicologist Petar Vukosavljević. I cordially thank to Mrs. Svetlana Stević-Vukosavljević for the kindness she showed providing this material to me

² This old layer of inhabitants which is assumed to have a long continuity – at least from 15th century onwards – in this area

³ This is not the rule for all parts of Serbia; in certain areas, songs of the older village layer contain rows structurally close to diatonic

⁴ More detailed treatment of older Serbian and Balkan two-part singing can be found in: Dević 2001, 2002

⁵ Within this layer of Serbian singing tradition other elements were described, see: Golemović 1983: 132

⁶ The music examples within this paper have been recorded by Petar Vukosavljević – example 1, by Jelena Jovanović – ex. 2, 3-9, and by ethnomusicologists Ljubinko Miljković – ex. 2, 10 (taken from his collection *Donja Jasenica* (1986), ex. 191, 192 and 207

⁷ It was for this reason that in earlier works dealing with this subject *hybrid* forms were treated as *to the bass* songs with the ending in second; see Golemović, 1983: 124-125; Golemović, 1997: 26

⁸ An interviewee from Saranovo village in Eastern part of the region used to be the leader of a group of singers from this village. As he told me, when working with the group, he used to say to the leading singer: “You draw it out like an Era!” whenever the

singer would perform a melodic line in *riabato* rhythm, with a lot of agogic freedom. In a narrow sense, *Era* is a man from Užice region in western Serbia; in a broader sense, it is an inhabitant of western parts of Serbia, as well as western parts of central Serbia, including western Jasenica

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მაგალითი 1. *Ništa bolje ni milije nema* – საქორწილო ხიმღერა, საქორწილო ხიმღერის კილოზე, სოფელი Ovsšte, ზემო Jasenica-ის რეგიონი (ჩაწერულია ფ. ვუკოსავლიევიჩის მიერ 1972 წელს, გაშვებულია ე. იოვანოვიჩის მიერ)

Example 1. *Ništa bolje ni milije nema* – wedding song, na svadbački glas, village Ovsšte, Upper Jasenica reg. (recorded by P. Vukosavljević in 1972, transcribed by J. Jovanović)

♩ = 120

Ni - šta bo - lje ni mi - li - je ne - ma,

a ni - šta bo - lje ni mi - li - je ne - ma.

o.f.

The musical score for Example 1 consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. The melody is in a major key with a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second system continues the melody. A dynamic marking of *o.f.* (overtissimo) is placed below the second system.

მაგალითი 2. (*Qj*) *Domaćine, srećno ti veselje* – საქორწილო ხიმღერა, საქორწილო ხიმღერის კილოზე, სოფელი Svetlić (ჩაწერულია და გაშვებულია ე. იოვანოვიჩის მიერ 2006 წელს)

Example 2. (*Qj*) *Domaćine, srećno ti veselje* – wedding song, na svadbački glas, village Svetlić (recorded and transcribed by J. Jovanović in 2006)

♩ = cca 112

Qj do - ma - ċi - ne, sreć - no ti ve - sel - lje,

do - ma - ċi - ne, sreć - no ti ve - sel - lje.

o.f.

The musical score for Example 2 consists of two systems of staves. The tempo marking is quarter note = cca 112. The melody is in a major key with a 2/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second system ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note. A dynamic marking of *o.f.* (overtissimo) is placed below the second system.

მაგალითი 3. *Vita jelo, 'de si 'ladovala?* - საქორწილო ხიმღერა, საქორწილო ხიმღერის კილოზე, სოფელი Donja, Trnava Jasenica-ის რეგიონი (მელიკოვიჩი, 1986; მაგ. 191)

Example 3. *Vita jelo, 'de si 'ladovala?* – wedding song, na svadbački glas, village Donja Trnava Jasenica reg. (Miljković, 1986; ex. 191)

Vi - ta je - lo 'de si 'la - do - va - la?

Vi - ta je - lo 'de si 'la - do - va - la?

The musical score for Example 3 consists of two systems of staves. The time signature is 3/4. The melody is in a major key. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second system ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

მაგალითი 4. *Čuvam ovce u livadi dole* – მუშათა ხიმღერა, მთის ხიმღერების კოლფხე, სოფელი Jarmenovci, ზემო Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (Jovanović, 2007: No.14)

Example 4. *Čuvam ovce u livadi dole* – diggers' song, na planinski glas, village Jarmenovci, Upper Jasenica reg. (Jovanović, 2007: No.14)

მაგალითი 5. *Mile moje preko Jasenice* – სრულდება რთვის დროს, როული ხიმღერების კოლფხე, სოფელი Plaskovac, ზემო Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (იოვანოვიჩი, 2007: 26)

Example 5. *Mile moje preko Jasenice* – spinning song, na teški glas, village Plaskovac, Upper Jasenica reg. (Jovanović, 2007: 26)

მაგალითი 6. *(Q) Ova brda i puste doline* – სრულდება რთვის დროს, ოც-ს კოლფხე (მოდელი, რომელიც იწყება ოც-ს შუახვლით), სოფელი Stragari, ზემო Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (იოვანოვიჩი, 2007: 36)

Example 6. *(Q) Ova brda i puste doline* – spinning song, na *q*, village Stragari, Upper Jasenica reg. (Jovanović, 2007: 36)

მაგალითი 7. *Široko je lišće or'ovo* – სრულდება რთვის დროს, სოფელი Vukasovci, ზემო Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (ჩაწერილი და გაშეგრუვლია ე. იოვანოვიჩის მიერ 1989 წელს)

Example 7. *Široko je lišće or'ovo* – spinning song, village Vukasovci, Upper Jasenica reg. (recorded and transcribed by J. Jovanović in 1989)

♩ = 130

♩ = cca 70

o.f.

მაგალითი 8. *Ovce čuva moja Mara* – სრულდება რთვის დროს, სოფელი Vukasovci (ჩაწერილი და გაშეგრუვლია ე. იოვანოვიჩის მიერ 1989 წელს)

Example 8. *Ovce čuva moja Mara* – spinning song, village Vukasovci (recorded and transcribed by J. Jovanović in 1989)

♩ = cca 75

♩ = 70

o.f.

მაგალითი 9. *Sjajne zvezde po nebu trepere* – ღიბრიკული ხიმქვრა, სოფელი Donja Trnava, Lower Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (ჩაწერილი და გაშეგრუვლია ე. იოვანოვიჩის მიერ 1988 წელს)

Example 9. *Sjajne zvezde po nebu trepere* – lyric song, village Donja Trnava, Lower Jasenica reg. (recorded and transcribed by J. Jovanović in 1988)

o.f.

I. VI.

მაგალითი 10. *Kad zapevam, daleko se čuje* – ლირიკული სიმღერა, სოფელი Kloka, Lower Jasenica-ს რეგიონი (მილიკოვიჩი, 1986; მ.ა.გ., 207)

Example 10. *Kad zapevam, daleko se čuje* – lyric song, village Kloka, Lower Jasenica reg. (Miljković. 1986: ex. 207)

$\text{♩} = 60$

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 60. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures with time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 3/4, and 2/4. The second system has four measures with time signatures 2/4, 3/4, 2/4, and 2/4. The melody is in a minor key (one flat). The lyrics are written below the notes.

Kad za-pe-vam da-le-ko se ču-je, da-le-ko se ču-je,

da - le - ko se ču - je, oj!

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