



Čoček

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MA Ethnomusicology

MUM120: Ethnomusicology Major Project

August 2018

Title:

**UNDERSTANDING ČOČEK – AN HISTORICAL, MUSICAL AND
SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MA in Ethnomusicology

Total word count: 20,866 (including headings, excluding footnotes and references)

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING ČOČEK – AN HISTORICAL, MUSICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION

Čoček is a form of Balkan Romani music and dance, mostly performed at weddings, circumcisions and other social events. Its roots go back to an Ottoman music and dance form of the 17th century; since then it has evolved and migrated. Throughout my research I have found that although there is literature on *čoček*, mostly by American ethnomusicologists, it is sketchy, and does not pay sufficient tribute to such an important music and dance style in Macedonia. The motivation for my research is to fill that gap, and the aim of this dissertation is to provide a thorough account of *čoček*, its history, the social meaning and the music.

Following a chronological advance, I investigate the predecessor of *čoček*, *köçek*, in the Ottoman era, from the 17th century onwards, and probe into older hypotheses leading to India and the migration of Romani people. Moving on towards the 19th century, there is a 100-year information gap. I aim to bridge this gap by following the development of *čalgija*, an Ottoman-type ensemble, which will be the first *čoček*-performing ensemble after that 100-year gap. Moreover, I identify the common musical parameters of *köçekce* and *čoček*, and piece together the possible development of *čoček* until its arrival in the middle of the 20th century.

From about 1950, the first *čoček* music and dance is examined, and the development of various styles is followed throughout communist Yugoslavia and during the establishment of FYROM, the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. In the process, I explore the meaning of *čoček* for Romani and for non-Romani Macedonians. A special chapter is dedicated to describing the various styles of *čoček* in musical terms, investigating them for Ottoman elements and following the changes throughout the 20th century. The last chapter deals with the 21st century, and is guided by the negative outlook of Romani people on the future of *čoček*; it also discusses hidden issues of discrimination.

FOREWORD:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Writing this dissertation was a challenging venture, which I would not have been able to complete without the valuable help and support of a number of people. In this sense, I would firstly like to express my very great gratitude to Mihajlo Stojanov, who supported me and my work throughout the whole project by accompanying me to interviews, helping with translations and contributing valuable knowledge as a Macedonian who grew up in a Skopje Romani neighbourhood. I would like to offer my special thanks to each and all of my interviewees. I feel honoured that they gave their time and knowledge in so much abundance, and shared their passion for *čoček* music with me. In many cases I was offered wonderful hospitality in their homes too. Greatly appreciated was the ongoing support and encouragement given by my friends, namely Ruth Kay, Phillipa Nowell and Tom Wagner. Moreover, I would like to thank the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore, Skopje, Macedonia for providing me with literature from their library. Last but not least, I would like to thank City University London and in particular my tutor Dr Laudan Nooshin for their support and patience with me throughout the Master Course.

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DEFINITIONS AND SPELLINGS

As this dissertation deals with Macedonian music, derived from Ottoman culture, there are many terms, words and names stemming from these languages. To preserve their originality and portray

some of the flair of the cultures we are dealing with, I prefer to use the original spellings rather than transcriptions. For Ottoman and Turkish words this involves a number of special characters. For Macedonian terms I use the Latin transcription from their Cyrillic alphabet with the usual special characters. The following is a small spelling and pronunciation guide:

Macedonia	Turkish	English/International	Sample
Š	Ş	Sh	<u>S</u>hoe
Č	Ç	Ch	<u>C</u>hild
Ž		Zh	Plea <u>s</u> ure
Đ		Dzh	<u>J</u>udge
	Ü	UE	<u>L</u>ure
	Ö	OE	<u>H</u>er
	ı	ih/uh	<u>C</u>ircus

WORD AND REGIONAL DEFINITIONS:

In different parts of the world, certain regional terms have different meanings. In general, I will use definitions as used by Macedonian Romani people, as I feel this is appropriate when writing about their music. Moreover, it provides a consistency of the terminology throughout the full dissertation, when dealing with direct quotes from Romani interviewees.

Macedonia = always refers to the FYROM, the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, or the possible new name Republic of North Macedonia. It does not include the Greek or Bulgarian regions of Macedonia.

Macedonians = people living in Macedonia, this includes all white Macedonian inhabitants of FYROM; these are Macedonians of Slavic descent. It does not include people of Romani, Albanian or Turkish descent, even though they might own a Macedonian passport.

Roma/Romani = all Romani people settled in Macedonia, including Romani of Turkish or Albanian origin. Roma is usually used as a plural noun, when talking about the people, and Romani as adjective for describing someone or something of Romani roots.

Gypsy = Roma or Romani. Though today, the politically correct form is ‘Roma’ or ‘Romani’, the word ‘Gypsy’ is used when quoting from sources prior to the 1970s, before it was outlawed.

Western, Westerners, Western people = in Macedonia this generally applies to people and details related to people from Western Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia

Whites, or white people = Westerners as defined above and additionally any white Eastern European and white Balkan inhabitants.

I use the local terms for musical parameters, instruments and similar details. All foreign terms are defined and translated throughout the text. Additionally, there is a Glossary at the end of the document.



INTRODUCTION:

Man is born with music and dies with music. The first song is the cry of the baby, and the last is the crying on its grave. The beginning, the end, and during life: it is *čoček*, that gives you the energy to endure. If ever the dance and the music are put out, I think the universe itself will be put out. There will be no more childbirth. And why am I saying this? Because with every birth itself the *čoček* is also reborn.¹

In Macedonia, *Čoček* seems omnipresent, like the salt in the soup or the sugar on the cake, but when trying to grasp it, its definitions dissolve in word flows like sugar and salt in water. Some consider it to be a music genre, some a form of dance, some any type of Balkan music which makes you feel like dancing, and others a style strictly defined by certain musical parameters. Current literature only touches on the subject briefly, therefore, I felt the desire to examine this genre in greater depth.

The initial question of my research simply is: What is *čoček*? On my journey forth to find a comprehensive answer, I looked further afield into its context, historically, socially and musically. Consequently, this dissertation focusses on the following questions: Where does *čoček* come from? Who performs it and for whom? What does *čoček* mean to people in Macedonia? What are the musical properties and how have they developed over time?

One likely answer could be: ‘*Čoček* is a Macedonian Romani music and dance genre, derived from Ottoman Turkey. It is performed by Romani people during wedding and other important community celebrations, and has a ritualistic meaning to them. The music is mostly improvised over a certain ostinato pattern’. Whilst this is true, it is a partial answer only. To provide a full understanding of *čoček* from ancient times until today, I explored the literature available and I went on several field trips to Macedonia and Turkey from October 2016 until July 2018, where I collected data from

¹ Branislav Petrovski interview 21st April 2018.

interviews, learnt the music, listened and observed the culture. Those trips led on from my earlier Eastern European and Balkan musical journeys. As a violinist and singer, performer and tutor, I have been following the road of Romani music, from Hungary to Turkey for the last 25 years. I have learned, researched, notated and studied Romani and folk styles, and spent time with the people in their native environment to learn first-hand about the culture and their background. Although there are forms of *čoček* present in the surrounding regions, I focus almost exclusively on the territory of FYRO Macedonia, as going any further would be beyond the scope of one thesis.

Literary sources, which provided data throughout this dissertation are by Carol Silverman (1996, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2012) and Jane Sugarman (2003, 2007). Publications by Metin And (1959, 1976), Dorit Klebe (2005) and Şehvar Beşiroğlu (2017) were used for historical reference. The writings of ethnochoreologists Elsie Ivančić Dunin (1970, 1973, 1991, 2007, 2017) and the Janković sisters (1939) enabled me to retrieve knowledge on aspects of *čoček* dance. Other publications referred to include those by Sonja Tamar Seeman (2012) and Tahomir Vulkanović (1962).

The primary sources for the research are direct interviews and sessions with Romani *čoček* musicians, including the three icons for *čoček* in Macedonia. All in their late 60s, they come from Romani musician families which go back a few generations, have studied with older family members as well as with Turkish masters, and some also enjoyed conservatoire training. Ferus Mustafov, clarinettist and saxophonist, is Macedonia's most famous and influential *čoček* performer. Kurtiš Kadriev Jašarov, likewise a clarinettist and saxophonist, and a distant cousin of Ferus, works as performer and music professor. Vevki Amedov, clarinettist, is mostly Turkish-trained and has substantial knowledge of *makam*.² In addition, I conducted interviews and took lessons from Bajsa

² *Makam* is a Turkish melodic system. In Turkey it is still in use today. In Macedonian music it is also present to a certain level and is one parameter to measure the remaining Ottoman elements. See Appendix II.

Arifovska, the only professional female Romani musician in Macedonia. Highly educated by older family members as well as by universities in Macedonian folk, Western Classical, Romani music and jazz, she plays clarinet, violin and piano as main instruments, and a dozen more to performance level. Other data came from accordionist Simeon Atasanov, trumpeter Elam Rasidov, and singer Eleonora Mustafovska.

Knowledgeable in Roma culture and community in general are the brothers Branislav Petrovski, a cultural attaché in the Romani settlement Šuto Orizari, Skopje, and Professor Trajko Petrovski, Macedonia's only Romani ethnologist. To gain a broad view, I conducted spontaneous interviews with random Romani people, including Elvis Asan, a semi-professional musician, his cousin Naser Jašarević. Several Macedonians also provided information: ethnomusicologist Professor Rodna Veličkova, clarinettist Zoran Kraguevski, multi-instrumentalist Vladimir Botev, music teacher Sasho Livrinski and dancer Stojanche Kostov contributed valuable facts on non-Romani forms of *čoček*, as well as Romani *čoček* from a Macedonian point of view. Details of cultural and community aspects were provided by Zorica Coneva, Mihajlo Stojanov and from informal random interviews. For aspects on Ottoman music and culture, I had great help from Turkish specialists, Doç Dr Cenk Güray, Dr Nevin Şahin and music student Mehmet Alişan Budak. For more information on the interviewees please refer to Appendix VI.

Most of the fieldwork I conducted in Macedonia, mainly in Skopje, but also in Bitola, Kratovo, Štip, Kočani and other places. Within Skopje, the most important places are *Šuto Orizari*,³ Europe's largest Romani settlement on the outskirts of Skopje, and *Topaana*, another Romani neighbourhood closer to the centre. There I observed weddings and other celebrations, had social time as well as jam

³ Mostly referred to as *Šutka*. This place is self-governed by a Romani mayor, and has over time developed into a Romani town.

sessions with the *Čerkeži* brass orchestra and others. On one trip I went to Ankara, Turkey, where I spent time with the above-mentioned specialists to learn about *makam* and other Ottoman music-related issues relevant to this thesis.

This dissertation comprises of ten chapters and six appendixes for background explanations. Chapter One covers the history from the beginnings until around 1850. It discusses the predecessors of *čoček* in the Ottoman era, and earlier. Chapter Two covers 1850 until 1950, a time which has barely been researched, piecing together how, after the ban of *köçek*, *čoček* emerged. Chapter Three moves on to Yugoslavia, covering 1960 to 1980. It deals with the development of different *čoček* styles and discusses Romani customs related to that period. Chapter Four also refers to the 1960's to 1980's, but focuses on female aspects of *čoček*: dance, music and social environment, particularly misinterpretations regarding dance and moral aspects. Chapter Five moves a little further down the timeline, covering 1970 to 1990. It investigates newly evolving *čoček* styles and changes, in the aftermath of recently opened borders to Western Europe. Chapter Six moves to the heart of *čoček*, examining its significance to Romani people. The counterpart, the meaning for Macedonians is discussed in Chapter Seven, revealing interesting insights into Macedonian culture.

In Chapter Eight, the musical aspects of the *čoček* styles are examined. I chose to keep musical matters in a dedicated chapter to keep the undivided attention of Chapters One to Seven focussed on the historical and social development. Moreover, this division enables a better presentation of the gradual detachment from Ottoman elements. The last chapter discusses *čoček* after the turn of the millennium, with integrated music samples.

This dissertation is an expedition through time and cultures, and lets the reader explore *čoček* from many possible aspects. Will it conclude in a sound definition of the subject, or will it provide knowledge and inspire the reader to utilise his own definition? Let the journey of discovery begin...

CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINS OF ČOČEK

Once upon a time, a Persian baby camel, *kuchak* in Persian,⁴ or, translated into the Ottoman-Turkish language, a *köçek*, gave its name to dancers of a specific style, and later to the dance itself; a dance which would establish itself, over time, as one of the most important dance forms for Romani people in Macedonia, not only in a cultural, social and ritual context, but also in the context of individuality and identification (Klebe 2005, p. 97).

Köçek, or *köçekler* are boys dressed in female costumes who perform as entertainment for the Sultan (Sugarman 2003, p.93).⁵ Past academic research⁶ places the first appearances of *köçekler* in the 16th century and into the Ottoman era (Klebe 2005, p.97). Beşiroğlu argues that:

One of the main reasons for the emergence of *köçekler* in male settings is the status of women in Islam. Whereas ancient Turkic communities had a very rich entertainment culture and both sexes coexisted in entertainment settings as in other spheres of life, after the adoption of Islam and the new culture that came with it, sexes were spatially segregated, and coexistence was lost. Especially in all-male entertainment settings, this loss was first compensated through the mimicry of female dancers by the *köçekler* (2017, p.47).

Köçek is believed to be the predecessor of *čoček*, not only by the linguistic analogy, but also by common elements in dance and music. The Janković sisters⁷ describe the *čoček* dance of Romani people at weddings in Gostivar, Macedonia (1939, p.136) as very similar to the *köçek* dance description, which Metin And found in 16th to 18th century traveller's chronicles (1976, p.139):

⁴ *Kuchak* in modern Persian/Farsi means simply 'small'. I could not trace when or how it was translated into a 'small camel', neither why the *köçek* dancers would be associated with baby camels. However, in various literary sources, including the referenced Klebe, it was portrayed as such, and I like the story.

⁵ A painting shows *köçekler* performing at the circumcision of the son of Murat III (reigned 1574–1595), Mehmet III (Klebe 2005, p.98).

⁶ Publications such as Klebe's *Effeminate Professional Musicians* and And's *Dances of Anatolian Turkey*.

⁷ Ljubica and Danica Janković are two ethnochoreologists, who conducted and notated folklore dances from Former Yugoslavia in the early 20th century.

movements of the abdomen are the central part of the dance, combined with various shoulder and arm movements. Another shared element of *köçek* and *čoček*⁸ are the *usuls*:⁹ *çiftetelli* and *karşılama*¹⁰ (Özbilgin 2007, p.21) (Silverman 2012, pp.28-29). Both emerged in the Ottoman period and have been performed continuously until the present day.

THE HISTORY OF *KÖÇEK* IN OTTOMAN TIMES

In the 16th century, Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the seat of the Sultan's court, developed into the cultural centre of the Ottoman Empire. The economic growth generated an expansion of culture and affected the city's entertainment practices. *Topkapı* Palace, situated in the centre of Istanbul, became the home of the royal family as well as the meeting point for official and private gatherings (Beşiroğlu 2017, pp.16, 42). Miniatures from that time (And 1976) as well as various 17th and 18th-century travellers' reports (Sugarman 2003, p.93) give evidence of the *köçekler*'s responsibilities as entertainers for the Sultan and his entourage. Evliya Çelebî, an Ottoman explorer,¹¹ reports of performances at 'various festivities, such as birth and circumcision feasts of royal children, weddings, victories and other imperial festivals' (Klebe 2005, p.104).

In its infancy, the *köçekçe*¹² consisted merely of rhythms played on *çalparas*¹³ by the dancers themselves. Later, archival reports and paintings show the addition of vocals and various drums, and eventually *kemençe*¹⁴ and plucked string instruments. The instrumentation was termed *ince saz*¹⁵

⁸ In the manifold definition of *čoček* those rhythm patterns are the only musical criterion on which the entire range of publications as well as all my interviewees agree with each other.

⁹ Turkish term for a rhythm cycle or rhythm pattern.

¹⁰ *Çifteteli* and *karşılama* in Turkish, see Chapter Eight for notation and audio samples.

¹¹ Evliya Çelebi (honorific title - 'Gentleman' Evliya, 1611 – 1682), an Ottoman explorer, originally called Mehmed Zilli, summarises his explorations in the *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evliya_%C3%87elebi – last accessed 8th August 2018.

¹² The musical accompaniment for *köçek* dancers.

¹³ Ottoman type of wooden castanets.

¹⁴ Ottoman fiddle-type bowed string instrument.

¹⁵ Translated 'delicate-sounding instruments'.

(ibid., p.102). By the 18th century, a steady line-up of violin, *ney*¹⁶, *oud*¹⁷, *kanun*¹⁸ and *def*¹⁹ had been established (Seeman 2012, p.300), and beside the term *ince saz*, a new term, *ince çalgi* appeared for that type of ensemble (ibid., p.296). In the late-17th century, *köçekler* attracted attention in Istanbul's *caverns*;²⁰ they showed increased public presence and organised themselves into professional ensembles. As Beşiroğlu writes: 'The figure of the *köçek* was indeed a pillar of the entertainment and festivity culture of the Ottoman Empire, included everywhere from palaces and mansions to quotidian settings' (2017, p.47).

Before the emergence of the *köçekler*, one could find their female counterpart, the *çengi*, or *çengiler*. It is not quite clear if they were primarily dancers, who also functioned as concubines, or if their dance-art was an element of their work as concubines. According to Beşiroğlu 'the history of the concubine *çengiler* in Eastern palaces has ancient roots' (2017, p.47). In her opinion, the *köçekler* carried on elements of the lost dance of the *çengi* (2017, p.48); and with the style of dance, they seemingly have continued in their sexual connotation: Klebe mentions that *köçekler* often, in addition to providing dance and music entertainment, became lovers to their patrons (2005, p.102).

In the early 19th century, *köçekçe* music and dance performances were reported throughout the Ottoman-occupied Balkan regions (Đoržević 1903, p.78). However, a drastic change occurred with the mid-19th-century movement of *Tanzimat*,²¹ which brought in radical reforms of modernisation with the purpose of integrating non-Turks and non-Muslims into Ottoman society to guarantee the empire's stability, specifically in peripheral areas of the empire. Civil liberty, equality and career

¹⁶ End-blown reed flute.

¹⁷ Short-necked, unfretted plucked lute.

¹⁸ Trapezoidal plucked zither.

¹⁹ Small frame drum with jingles, similar to a tambourine

²⁰ Traditional wine bar, often located underground in a cave-like space.

²¹ Translated 'Reorganisation', more information: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzimat> - last accessed 15th August 2018.

opportunities were granted to all Ottoman citizens (Zurcher 2004, pp.50-51). In the process, both the *köçekler* and the *çengiler* were banned (And 1976, p.141). Unfortunately, the Romani people were excluded from the *Tanzimat* transformations of equal opportunities. Instead, they took over performance positions abandoned by other Ottoman entertainers, fulfilling the ongoing demands for entertainment in Istanbul; they established for themselves a monopoly in the entertainment industry (Sugarman 2003, p.98). When exactly, after the ban of *köçek* and *köçekçe*, the term *čoček* appeared, is not clearly traceable; nor is it clear when *čoček* retreated from being a public entertainment into being an intimate Romani social dance with ritual connotations, as documented by the Janković sisters in 1939.

SPECULATION ON OLDER ROOTS OF ČOČEK

Whilst current publications by ethnomusicologists clearly recognise Ottoman *köçek* as the predecessor of *čoček*, there is no real information earlier than the 16th century. However, my research has revealed broader hypotheses, particularly regarding the role of Romani musicians and dancers in establishing *čoček* in the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans. Simeon Atasanov, a Romani accordionist is convinced that *čoček* was brought from India by the Roma. Romani people were a nomadic tribe, who originated in Rajasthan, Northern India. They left India in 500 A.C, and migrated via the Middle East, Iran and Iraq to Turkey and Greece, and beyond.²² They brought *čoček* music and dance with them as part of their cultural heritage.²³ This hypothesis occurred to Simeon whilst he was performing at international music festivals, encountering various groups of Romani musicians from Rajasthan. He remembered that ‘a lot of jamming went on backstage, and playing together came so completely natural’; they discovered so many similarities in their music,²⁴ that in his opinion, the music has to

²² See Appendix V for a map of Romani migrations.

²³ Please note, the music and dance style we are dealing with has only later been called *čoček*.

²⁴ See Appendix IV for a playful exploration of that theory.

be closely related.²⁵ Trajko Petrovski, an ethnomusicologist of Romani descent, is also inclined to believe that *čoček*'s origins begin in India. He calls the Romani 'the carriers of *čoček* music', and alongside they brought the *čoček* dance on their migration from India via Iran to Turkey, and then Macedonia and Bulgaria.²⁶

One might assume, that the latter statements may to some extent be inspired by both Simeon's and Trajko's Romani pride, and by the fact, that in Macedonia, *čoček* is largely considered a synonym for Romani dance. Nevertheless, there are arguments which support this thesis. Klebe points out, that the majority of *köçek* performers in the Ottoman Empire may have been of Romani origin (2005, p.104). Vladimir Botev, a Macedonian musician 'was very surprised to find that modal improvisation is quite old; in India, they already had modal improvisation 2,000 years ago; and *čoček* is definitely a modal improvisation'. He links the Romani's departure 1500 years ago with the spread of *čoček*-related musical styles. On their migration, Romani people would have picked up some of the local musical traditions and idioms and absorbed them into their own improvisation on *čoček* music. 'Because we are a sort of crossroad of conquerors, most of the musical influences have met and mingled here in Macedonia'.²⁷

There is an interesting article which, in the words of the author Vukanović, is 'of quite a different character (...) [and] gives a review of musical culture among Gypsies in Yugoslavia, based on our own investigations into this subject' (1962, p.41). At that time, scientists considered the musicality of Romani people to be a genetic characteristic. Whilst there is no general consensus regarding the reasons for the Romani people's exodus from India, Vukanović's research suggests as one possible motive: 'the Persian King Bahram-Gur (420-440 A.D.) imported, according to tradition, (...) an

²⁵ Simeon, interview 17th April 2018.

²⁶ Professor Trajko Petrovski, interview 16th April 2018.

²⁷ Vladimir Botev, interview 6th April 2018.

extremely musically gifted, old Indian tribe, who were considered to be Romani (...) as his court musicians' (ibid., p.42). Vukanović found that story in collected notes from 16th to 18th century archives, which portray Romani musicians as the most prestigious performers in the whole world, entertaining state leaders and dignitaries (ibid., pp.43-44). He mentions how the influence of Romani musicians leaves its traces on local music and considers their contribution to European music styles a significant one (ibid., p.45). In Branislav Petrovski's opinion, the statement that Roma brought *čoček* from India does not exclude that *köçek* may be the predecessor of *čoček*: 'Historically, the Roma people came over here and brought music and dance with them'.²⁸ I need to stress that I am discussing primarily the musical influences here; the term *čoček* did not appear until the mid-20th century. Samson identifies *čoček's* musical parameters such as the tonal system, the rhythmical structure and the improvisational style as belonging to a wider Middle Eastern Culture, drawn from pre-Ottoman influences, allowing him to 'trace a journey from Persia towards Turkey' (2005, p.50). He also states: 'The ongoing infusions from peripheral cultures gave such a vitality to *čoček* music' (ibid., p.51).

To conclude, the development from the early Ottoman *köçek* to Macedonian *čoček* has been convincingly portrayed by past academic work. What role, if any, the Romani played in the development and establishment of *köçekçe* and *čoček*, cannot be completely clarified, as, to my knowledge, there is no written evidence. Science has only recently been able to prove unequivocally by DNA analysis, that the Romani people originate in Rajasthan, India (2012, The Times of India); all scholarly work prior to that, including the collecting of references in old scripts as well as a lingual analysis, could only ever propose a probability. That music migrates with people is a universal phenomenon and whether the predecessors of *čoček* travelled primarily with Romani people, or

²⁸ Branislav Petrovski, interview 21st April 2018.

equally with any other migrations, may forever stay a mystery. In my opinion, the Roma's musical talents are deeply rooted, and therefore it is likely that they played a big role in influencing local music on their migrations, and therefore a significant role in the evolution of *čoček*.



Figure 1: Köçek dancer²⁹

²⁹ A köçek dancer with çârpâre, accompanied by musicians playing dâire, ney, rebab, and kopuz. From the *The Imperial Book of Festival* (1582/83), located at *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi*, Istanbul. This book depicts the festival for the circumcision of the son of Murat III (reigned 1574–1595) (Klebe 2005, p.98).

CHAPTER 2: ČALGIJA AND ČOČEK

The previous chapter already implied that from the ban of the *köçekler* in the mid-19th century until Janković's first report of *čoček* as a Romani social dance in 1939, there is no real information on *čoček*. In fact, *čoček* music is not mentioned in academic literature until Elsie Dunin's first publications on *čoček* in 1967. This chapter will aim to explore this undocumented period. Assuming that a music and dance art with such a long history would not undergo a 100-year 'Sleeping Beauty' slumber, I took an alternative route to investigate *čoček* during that time: I explored *čalgija*, another musical left-over from the Ottoman culture.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ČALGIJA

The word *čalgija* comes from the Turkish verb *çalmak* which means playing music. In the course of my interviews, Zoran Kraguevski explained that *čalgija* is a type of ensemble.³⁰ Kurtiš Kadriev goes into further detail: 'the original *čoček* was performed with a *čalgija* ensemble. The traditional line-up is *oud*, *djumbuš*³¹, *kanun*, *darbuka*,³² violin and clarinet'.³³ Although I defer the discussion of *čoček* instrumentation for Chapter Eight, tracking the story of *čalgija* ensembles will enable me to draw conclusions on the development of *čoček*.

Seeman defines *čalgija* as an Ottoman urban style of music (2012, p.295), which 'crystallised in nineteenth-century Macedonian towns as a form of urban musical prestige, melding Ottoman urban

³⁰ Interview 3rd April 2018 - Zoran Kraguevski is a Macedonian non-Romani Clarinettist and experienced *čoček* performer from Skopje.

³¹ plucked-stringed instrument similar to a banjo.

³² A goblet-shaped hand drum. There are various spellings in different cultures and backgrounds for the same instrument: *darabuka*, *darabouka*, *tarabuka*, sometimes it is called *dumbek* or *doumbek*.

³³ Interview 13th April 2018 - Kurtiš Kadriev is a Romani clarinettist and one of the three most appreciated *čoček* performers based in Štip, Macedonia.

features with elements from local communities' (ibid., p. 296). Sasho Livrinski contributed a more detailed insight on the social aspect of the *čalgija* development:

The Macedonians created a middle class, a bourgeoisie, for the first time in the 19th century. People associated with the bourgeoisie class were eager to differ in every way from the peasants. At that time, the Turkish Empire still occupied those regions. They established a type of musical ensemble called *čalgija* (...) which became associated with the new middle class. The act of accepting *čalgija* was an act of separation from the peasants, but also an act of affiliation with the Turkish occupants in power - rich Macedonians even started wearing a *fez* (Ottoman traditional head dress symbolising status) in order to gain influence amongst the Ottomans.³⁴

The instrumentation of the 19th-century *čalgija* ensembles is almost identical to the Ottoman *ince čalgi* ensembles in the 18th century, which suggests the latter as the predecessor of the *čalgija* ensemble. Over the next 100 years, a clarinet and a *darbuka* were added. The early *čalgija* repertoire is described as drawing on rhythmic and melodic modes derived from Ottoman classical music traditions, combining it with local music from a specific town (Seeman 2012, p. 296). Similar to the late *köçekce* music, *čalgii*³⁵ frequently provided music for dancing; they performed instrumental works and accompanied vocalists, playing in loose unison along to the vocal lines, with improvised middle sections (ibid., p.300). Therefore, we can assume, that *čalgija* ensembles continued and enhanced the *köçekce* tradition, which would be called *čoček* at a later stage.

Over time, more and more local Macedonian elements and local songs were blended into the *čalgija* repertoire. The instrumentation underwent transitions too. Whilst indoors an *indži čalgija* ensemble performed with violin, *kanun*, *oud* and *dajre*,³⁶ for outdoors, in particular for weddings, a

³⁴ Sasho Livrinski, interview 5th April 2018.

³⁵ The term for *čalgija* musicians, notice the word *čalgi* and *čalgii* are almost the same.

³⁶ Medium-sized frame drum with dingles.

*kaba čalgija*³⁷ ensemble evolved, consisting of clarinet, trumpet, *oud* and *dajre*.³⁸ To follow the path leading to *čoček*, we again may look at musical features such as *usul*,³⁹ and also explore *makam*,⁴⁰ and the performance practices of the 19th-century *indzi* and *kaba čalgija*.

ČIFTETELLI AND KARŠILAMA FROM PAST TO PRESENT

In Chapter One I discussed the primary *usuls* of *čoček*, which are *karšilama* and *čiftetelli*. Cenk Güray states that these *usuls* arose amongst the dance music of Istanbul in early Ottoman times and became quickly popular in the Anatolian and Balkan regions.⁴¹ According to Rechberger, both, *karšilama* and *čiftetelli* rhythms drew influences from Arab and North African areas, and quickly became a popular accompaniment for dancing amongst Romani (...) people (2015, p. 89). *Čiftetelli* in particular evolved from the performance practice of the *çifte bağlama*,⁴² it accompanied a specific dance, and was later named *čiftetelli* after the instrument.⁴³ Güray as well as Klebe mention the famous *köçekce* composer Dede Efendi (1778–1846),⁴⁴ who wrote numerous songs in *karšilama* to accompany the dancers. Rechenberger's research portrays the spread of *čiftetelli* and *karšilama* throughout the whole Ottoman region, and the lasting popularity in Asia Minor and Macedonian regions until today (ibid., pp.89, 93). Moreover, the performance practice described by Klebe presents

³⁷ Translated 'rough *čalgia*'.

³⁸ I would even venture a step further: when reading about the added trumpet into the *kaba čalgija ensemble*, it occurred to me they may be another forerunner to Romani brass bands, which perform *čoček* for outdoor weddings in the streets to the present day. Other research only states Ottoman brass ensembles as predecessors of Balkan Brass, see Chapter Five.

³⁹ See Chapter One: The rhythm patterns of *karšilama* (9/8) and *čiftetelli* (4/4) are one identification criterion for *čoček*

⁴⁰ Turkish melodic modes, see Appendix II.

⁴¹ Interview 30th June 2018 – Cenk Güray, Associate Professor in Musicology at Hacettepe University, Ankara.

⁴² A two-stringed, long-necked lute.

⁴³ Güray, interview 30th June 2018.

⁴⁴ More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammamizade_%C4%B0smail_Dede_Efendi – last accessed 16th August 2018.

a considerable resemblance to the one of the female music ensembles who would accompany *čoček* dancing at segregated female celebrations for parts of the 20th century.⁴⁵

Thus, there was certainly no ‘Sleeping Beauty’ slumber from 1850 until 1967, the onset of Dunin’s research. The *čoček*-to-be experienced a lively evolution, even though some aspects happened behind closed doors. Both *karšilama* and *čiftetelli* are still used in the repertoire of Turkish Romani ensembles today, who, after *tanzimat*, continued to perform *köçekçe*-style music,⁴⁶ even though *köçekler* itself were prohibited. How and when the term *čoček* appeared, and the music and dance art established itself as the most important Romani social dance, is not known. This literally happened behind closed doors. Since Romani culture is an oral tradition, and due to the nomadic lifestyle, there are no written records of their history and traditions. Moreover, Romani people had no exposure in any journals or scholar’s writings as the generally low reputation and disregards towards their culture by non-Romani, didn’t make it worthwhile.

THE MANIFESTATION OF ČOČEK

Delivered orally by living heirs, the first evidence of *čoček*, called by that name and established as a music genre is from around 1930. The *čalgii* of that time were the grandfathers, great uncles and tutors of today’s older generation of *čoček* musicians. Whilst songs still coexisted as accompaniment of *čoček* dance, the music associated with the term *čoček* was solely instrumental. Simeon describes: ‘the musicians are playing the best from their soul. If you have vocals in *čoček*, they need to accompany the singer and have no space to show off themselves’.⁴⁷ Already here, a multi-faceted image of *čoček* is becoming apparent. Whilst the multiple *čoček* variations will be discussed in

⁴⁵ Trajko Petrovski, interview 16th April 2018, also see Chapter Four.

⁴⁶ Vevki Amedov, interview 18th April 2018.

⁴⁷ Simeon, interview 17th April 2018.

subsequent chapters, I will proceed here with what I shall label *Čalgija Čoček*: the instrumental *čoček*, performed by Romani *čalgija* ensembles in the mid-20th century. Driven by the lead instrument, in most cases a clarinetist, the early *Čalgija Čoček* was often purely improvised, in *mane*-style,⁴⁸ rich in Ottoman features, in form of *makam* tonality, and *karshilama* and *čiftetelli usul*. Over time, some composed *temas* were included, and a structural form of *tema* and solo sections established but the improvised *mane*-solos were considered by most as the heart of the *čoček*.⁴⁹ In the 1970s, a third *usul*, which is usually referred to as *Makedonski čoček*⁵⁰ established itself in addition to *karshilama* and *čiftetelli*. Incited by a few outstanding musicians, *Čalgija Čoček* would, over time, transform into the classic *čoček*, and advance above all other *čoček* styles. Therefore, I will explore those significant *čoček* performers next.

Since the 1960s, the most popular representative of *čoček* is the clarinetist and saxophonist Ferus Mustafov,⁵¹ later known as ‘King Ferus’. His name is associated with the genre itself, or, in Branislav’s words: ‘Ferus is the symbol of *čoček* in the Republic in Macedonia’.⁵² Ferus was born in 1950, a time when his father, Ilmi Jašarov, likewise a *čoček* clarinetist and his first tutor, had already recorded for *Jugoton*, the biggest Yugoslavian record label (Silverman 2012, p.32).⁵³ Ilmi is known to have introduced the saxophone into *čoček* music.⁵⁴ Kurtiš, quoted earlier, is second cousin to Ferus and another significant clarinetist of that generation. He named the Turkish Roma clarinetists Şükrü Tunar (1907-1962)⁵⁵ and Mustafa Kandiralı⁵⁶ as his tutors. Vevki Amedov,⁵⁷ the third important

⁴⁸ *Mane* improvisation is the equivalent to the Turkish *taxim*: a rhythm and meter-free rubato improvisation over an ostinato accompaniment on one chord or a drone tone.

⁴⁹ Bajsa interview 2nd April, Zoran interview 3rd April, Kurtiš interview 13th April 2018.

⁵⁰ See Chapter Eight for the notation and samples.

⁵¹ Romani clarinetist of the older generation, and the most famous ever *čoček* clarinetist.

⁵² Branislav, interview 21st April 2018

⁵³ Info on Jugoton: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jugoton> - last accessed 8th August 2018.

⁵⁴ Info on Ilmi: <https://www.last.fm/music/Ilmi+Jasarov/+wiki> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferus_Mustafov - last accessed 8th August 2018.

⁵⁵ Şükrü Tunar: https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9E%C3%BCkr%C3%BC_Tunar – last accessed 8th August 2018.

⁵⁶ Mustafa Kandiralı: <http://www.rootsworld.com/reviews/kandiralı07.shtml> - last accessed 8th August 2018.

⁵⁷ Romani Clarinetist based in Bitola, amongst the three most well-known of his generation.

čoček performer of this generation, was also taught by Mustafa Kandıralı. Having studied with Turkish masters, Ferus, Kurtiř and Vevki are all knowledgeable of *makam*,⁵⁸ which characterises their *čoček* performance. In Turkey, Mustafa and řükřü had both been taught by their fathers and grandfathers according to Romani tradition. Their great-great grandfathers two generations earlier, would most likely have been amongst the Romani musicians, who took over the entertainment after *tanzimat*, continuing to play the *köçekçe*⁵⁹ music style.⁶⁰

This tour of significant players and their tutors allows us to trace *čoček* music right back to the start of the 20th century. Zoran regrets that due to desperate economic conditions in Macedonia in the 1930s, there wasn't any recording technology available. So, whilst in Bulgaria or Turkey, the instrumental masters of that era can be listened to on gramophone, Zoran would never be able to hear his father's playing.⁶¹ Sadly, this also means that there are no recordings of Macedonian *čoček* from that time. Thus, we have to rely on what was passed on aurally, and we can only speculate on the changes each generation made. Having portrayed the historical development of *čoček* until about 1960, by which time it had gained its name and was firmly established in Macedonian Romani music, I will move on to discussing the development of various types and interpretations of *čoček*.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Eight for musical details, and Appendix II for details on *makam*.

⁵⁹ According to Kurtiř, in Turkey that style is not called *čoček*. Some may even today use the word *köçek*,⁵⁹ but Cenk told me, that in Turkey they would usually call it *Roman Oyun Havasi*⁵⁹ (Interview 24th April 2018).

⁶⁰ See Chapter One.

⁶¹ Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

CHAPTER 3: BRANCHES OF ČOČEK

To place ourselves within an historical time line: after the Kingdom of Serbia (1882–1918), which followed the Ottoman rule, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–1943), a Democratic Federal Yugoslavia was proclaimed, which was renamed The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1946, and governed by the Communist Party under Tito (Vujačić 2015, pp.136, 227-235). In this chapter I will discuss the multi-faceted character of *čoček*, and explore the development into two key branches, or as Dunin calls it ‘dual identity’ (2007, p.122). The first branch includes versions of *čoček*, which were created for and performed in non-Romani settings such as TV productions, state-related affairs and non-Romani weddings. The second branch encompasses the more secluded Romani *čoček*, which was out of the reach of non-Romani or Party influence.

ROMANI PEOPLE UNDER YUGOSLAVIAN COMMUNISM

I choose the word Party ‘influence’ rather than ‘control’ in reference to Tito’s communist regime as, contrary to the neighbouring countries Bulgaria and Romania, in Yugoslavia ethnic minority groups had much more freedom to keep their customs, religion and music;⁶² Roma, especially, did not face the same level of discrimination (Longinović 2000, p.624). In contrast to Macedonia, both Bulgaria and Romania had communist dictators with harsh racial policies, and any kind of Romani or Turkish music was outlawed and could only take place underground (Radulescu 1997, p.8). In Macedonia however, *čoček* music and dance amongst Romani communities could flourish without restriction.

⁶² Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

The racial policy in Macedonia was in fact one of equality and inclusiveness, placing Roma and other minorities onto equal footing with all Yugoslavian citizens. However, Tito did not promote diversity, therefore the practice of individual cultural customs was not supported. According to Vladimir, ‘Communism tried to erase the differences’,⁶³ though practicing one’s own language, music or religion was not persecuted (Vujačić 2015, pp.232-233); the further you were from the state, the more untouched your life could continue, as in small villages for instance.⁶⁴

In the mid-20th century, an awakening of a Macedonian identity took place,⁶⁵ and subsequently a reaction against Ottoman traditions. As part of this, Macedonian folklore started to detach itself from Ottoman influences (Seeman 2012, p.297). Seemann describes the increasing popularity of ‘traditional Slavic instrument ensembles [which] perform rural Slavic repertoire with *gajda*,⁶⁶ *kaval*,⁶⁷ *tambura*⁶⁸ and *tapan*’⁶⁹ (ibid., p.302). A significant event was in 1949 the foundation of *Tanec*, Macedonia’s first folklore ensemble, formed by the Yugoslav government as an institution to ‘preserve, take care and enrich the Macedonian folklore’.⁷⁰

THE FOLKLORE ČOČEK

Though Tito’s internal policies did not promote diversity, he was keen to highlight Yugoslavia’s multiculturalism to the outside world. Thus, a variation of *čoček* music and dance was included in the *Tanec* repertoire. Named ‘Gypsy Suite’, it became part of the centralized folklore repertoire and was

⁶³ Vladimir, interview 6th April 2018.

⁶⁴ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

⁶⁵ To recall: Macedonians here are only white Macedonians of Slavic decent, not inhabitants of FYROM in general.

⁶⁶ Balkan bagpipe.

⁶⁷ End-blown shepherd’s flute.

⁶⁸ Plucked, long-necked lute.

⁶⁹ Large double-headed bass and treble drum, also known as tupan, davul,

⁷⁰ More info on *Tanec*: <http://www.tanec.com.mk/about-tanec> - Last accessed 18th August 2018.

performed all over Yugoslavia and on state visits to other places on either side of the iron curtain.⁷¹ Though this was meant to represent Romani culture, the creation as well as the performance included very little Roma participation. Dunin calls it ‘a non-realistic representation of Gypsy dancing’ (2007, p.118). Some brutal changes had to be forced onto the original *čoček* to make it suitable for formalised stage settings and a traditional folk ensemble. The dance was adapted into choreographies of grand movements, performed by professionally-trained dancers, whereas Roma people are usually natural dancers, taught by elder relatives. Whereas the choreographies included more pronounced stomach and hip movements than Macedonian folklore dances, they also consisted of a lot of untypical footwork and formation moves (Sugarman 2003, p.92). Moreover, a tambourine was used to underline the ‘Gypsy’ style. This contradicts the Romani solo *čoček*, which is improvised and mostly danced on one spot (Dunin 1973, p.194).⁷²

To fit the choreographies, the music had to undergo drastic changes too: ‘they took the music away from the roots (...) to make arrangements that are suitable for orchestra and dance ensemble’.⁷³ The improvised parts of *čoček*, specially *mane*-style free improvisation, had to be discarded. Stojanche explained: ‘The music has to be consistent, so the choreographies work, and the dancers get their cues for the next step. There can be [improvisation] but it has to be within a strict framework of numbered bars, because of the dancers’.⁷⁴ Considering, that most of my interviewees pointed out the element of improvisation as one of the key features of *čoček*, many Roma people would not define this transformed piece of performance art as *čoček*, despite carrying the name.

⁷¹ Whilst ‘Gypsy Suite’ served as the general name, most of them were in fact *Vranjanski Čoček* (*Čoček* from Vranja); Vranja is a town in Southern Serbia, with a high percentage of Romani population.

⁷² Dunin describes, how in small spaces, women dance *čoček* literally on one spot (1973, p.194).

⁷³ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

⁷⁴ Stojanche, interview 17th April 2018.

The custom of including a *čoček* suite into the performance repertoire of folklore ensembles is still in practice today. I have seen many such performances staged at folklore festivals in Serbia and Macedonia. Though the choreographies would differ from ensemble to ensemble, the music I have observed was in *karšilama* and almost always a variation of the same piece of music: *Vranjanski Čoček*.⁷⁵ Stojanche, who performs one version with his Macedonian folklore ensemble *Orce Nikolov*, reported, that for all folklore styles, they would carefully research and replicate the old tradition, including music, dance and costumes. Whilst there might be slight changes to choreography and music, it always would be in the spirit of the original edition.⁷⁶ As this is common practice for Folklore ensembles, it basically means that no further development of Folklore *Čoček* may be expected.

PUBLIC ČOČEK STYLES PERFORMED BY ROMANI

Beside the Folklore *Čoček*, other types of *čoček* were performed publicly in the early 20th century. Several sources mention music and dance performances in public venues such as *kaffanas*, bars and restaurants. Sugarman mentions female dancers in 1920's Macedonia, who gradually emerge from private performance venues to public ones (2003, p.102). These show a significant similarity to *köçekler* performances in Istanbul's *caverns* in the late-17th century.⁷⁷ Who knows if these *köçekler* performances might never have stopped but continued when the Roma took over in entertainment after the ban of *köçekler*.

Furthermore, Silverman writes about Yugoslavian Romani amateur dance groups in the 1960s, who incorporated *čoček* performances into their repertoire for festivals (2003, p.129). However, whilst Branislav, Eleonora and Stojanche have confirmed staged Roma *čoček* performances at

⁷⁵ Refer to Chapter Eight, Audio Sample 3.4: *Vranjanski Čoček* by Kulturno Umetničko Društvo (Cultural Art Society) *Dimitrije Tucović*: <https://youtu.be/9MQ1PqpusuE> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

⁷⁶ Stojanche, interview 17th April 2018.

⁷⁷ See Chapter One.

Romani festivals and art productions, I have not been able to obtain verification of *čoček* performances by Roma dancers in the *kaffanas* of Skopje or elsewhere in Macedonia, neither for the recent past nor for time periods covered by parent or grandparents of my interviewees. In fact, Eleonora and other Romani ladies vehemently denied such activities, as Romani women would lose their good reputation, and consequently any chances of a decent marriage, if they were known to have performed in a *kaffana*.⁷⁸ Moreover, Romani musicians said that *čoček* generally would not be performed in *kaffanas*, only at weddings and other festivities.⁷⁹

There is another public *čoček* style which needs to be mentioned here. Deriving from the *Čalgija Čoček*, it started appearing in the second part of the 20th century. Ferus and Vevki both report of recording sessions for *Jugoton* and for Yugoslav state radio and television stations and the different way to play *čoček*, when recording or performing in a recording or staged situation and to a wider, often non-Romani crowd. Eventually, this staged *čoček* would develop into a separate style, which I labelled Classic *Čoček*. More details on this will follow in Chapter Seven.

ZURLA AND TAPAN ČOČEK

A third variety of public *čoček* was found in large outdoor spaces and performed by Roma musicians with *zurla*⁸⁰ and *tapan*. The first evidence of these ensembles can be found in 14th century frescos;⁸¹ they sustained their popularity, especially amongst the rural population right up to the turn of the millennium.⁸² Due to the powerful sound, combined with the mobility and compactness, these

⁷⁸ Naser Jašarević, a Romani based in Skopje, interview 17th April 2017.

⁷⁹ Eleonora interview 10th April 2018, Simeon interview 17th April 2018.

⁸⁰ A conical-bore, double-reed wind instrument, also called *zurna*, *zourna* or *zurma*.

⁸¹ Displayed at frescos from the 14th century in Ohrid monasteries (Silverman 1996, p.69)

⁸² Stojanche explained one reason for their disappearance: Romani used to celebrate *Ederlezi* with *zurla* and *tapan* music and dance in a field in Topaana (area on the outskirts of Skopje), until the American embassy was built there. Now, they don't have a space anymore to celebrate in the open, so the celebrations moved into the houses, into closed spaces (interview, 17th April 2018).

ensembles would perform for large outdoor events: ‘Among the Muslim Skopje Rom, *zurla* and *tapan* music is essential for events such as weddings, circumcisions, and calendrical holidays’ (Silverman 1996, p.70). On those occasions, the musicians would perform *čoček* amongst other dance and seasonal music, ‘marking important ritual moments such as the application of henna (...), the arrival of a new guest, and the slaughter of the lamb on *Erdelez*’ (ibid.).⁸³ Dunin reports of *Ederlezi* celebrations between 1960 and 1980, which were held yearly in a big field on the outskirts of Skopje, where multiple *zurla* and *tapan* ensembles circled groups of dancers, each group creating its own intimate ecstasy of music and dance, in the context of a large community outdoor celebration (2007, p.120). Smaller occasions would include a single ensemble for outdoor weddings and street processions. Until the late 20th century, *zurla* and *tapan* were almost exclusively played by Romani musicians (Silverman 1996, p.70). Stojanche reported, that Romani families stopped passing on that tradition and changed to playing saxophone and amplified instruments instead. Nowadays, Macedonian musicians have picked up playing folklore on *zurla* and *tapan*.⁸⁴

From preceding discussions, it became apparent that *čoček* music and dance are far from explicit. Whilst this chapter has introduced the main public *čoček* music styles, which developed in Yugoslavia from the 1960s until around 1980, the next chapter will move on to more intimate settings.

⁸³ *Erdelez*, *Ederlezi* or *Hidrellez* is the spring festival, celebrated for centuries by Roma all over the world. There are numerous forms and spellings of this word, which have developed as local variations and spellings, and due to oral delivery. More information: <http://www.romatimes.news/index.php/en-us/nevipena/muzika/897-history-of-the-song-ederlezi> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

⁸⁴ This presents a paradox as usually it was Romani musicians in Eastern European countries who kept folk traditions alive, whilst the non-Romani followed other trends until folk revival movements in the late 20th century kicked in, and folk became a trend again.

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND ČOČEK

So far, this dissertation has primarily followed the male-driven, virtuosic music genre *čoček*, and we have witnessed its branching into various strands. However, as much as *čoček* music is the most outgoing style in a *čalgija* repertoire, the female Romani *čoček* dance is described as an intimate and private one. In this chapter, we will enter the women's quarters, to explore the female-driven dance art of *čoček* and discover yet another variety of mid-20th century *čoček* music.

WOMEN IN ROMANI SOCIETY

Similar to many Islamic traditions, Romani wedding celebrations in Macedonia took place in segregated environments for certain periods of the 20th century. There are various speculations about the origin of this custom and when it was established. Many researchers of Balkan Roma portray the segregation as a Romani lore-based tradition. However, I would disagree with that theory as I could not find evidence of segregated wedding customs in other Eastern European Romani traditions, neither in literature, nor during my own fieldwork. Although the morality of Romani females, primarily virginity before marriage, are globally described as very strict, these morals apply to the Romani women's conduct in public, but do not include gender segregation. Kertesz describes the strict upbringing and life style of women in Hungarian Roma traditions (2017, p.5), whilst Szeman portrays the patriarchal oppression of Romanian Roma women (2018, p.130). Oppong writes about how Romani women are generally considered as inferior to men (2014, p.67), mirroring the pre-20th-century image of women in Western European society to a large extent (Reich 1993, pp.131-132). Meanwhile, Silverman observed, that even amongst Orthodox non-Romani Macedonians, gender segregation was practised (2012, p.110). Therefore, a strict morality for women in Romani society is evidently customary, whilst the gender segregation seems to focus on Macedonia.

Amongst the Romani I interviewed, Branislav believes that segregation was inspired by religious influences. He describes the global tendency for Romani people to take on religious faiths with strict moral codes and become devout followers. In Western Europe, this may be the Evangelist religion or Jehovah's Witnesses, whilst in Macedonia it is primarily Islam.⁸⁵ In fact, I myself have witnessed the intensity of Romani religious devotion several times. On one occasion I worked with Polish Romani musicians, who cancelled an agreed performance due to a Jehovah's Witnesses' religious meeting, which had been called at short notice. Another time, I was invited to join a local Imam from Šuto Orizari for tea in his prayer room. He told me about his missionary activities in the community, how he promoted the Islamic value system amongst his Romani brethren, in order to improve their life paths.

There is no clear indication as to when the segregated celebrations became custom amongst Macedonian Romani. Trajko mentions that 'before the middle of the last century, *čoček* was danced more openly, but there was some hesitation and fear of [people] shaming themselves'.⁸⁶ In an article, he reports Islamic migrations to Macedonia from around 1925 (2003, p.130), which would explain the implication of increased Islamic rules after that. Some of my interviewees share stories, told by their grandmothers, of their segregated wedding customs, dating back to the early 20th century. Catherine Brown, a British traveller describes the freedom of movement of Romani women, which she observed prior to the 1930s (Silverman 2012, p.111). She had specifically pointed out the joyful dance of women and men together in contrast to the non-Romani Muslim women, who only ever celebrate in their harems. By the late 1930s however, the Janković sisters' writings on Romani *čoček* dance implies separation, although a gender-segregated environment is not specifically discussed (Janković 1939, pp.97-98). Still, we can place the start of gender segregation in the early 1930s. This

⁸⁵ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

⁸⁶ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

custom lasted until the 1980s, when Romani society began to open up,⁸⁷ as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

ČOČEK DANCE AND BELLY DANCE

When looking at *čoček* dance, a debate on Romani *čoček* versus belly dance is unavoidable. According to Sugarman, ‘the various forms of this dance developed into both cabaret “belly dancing” and types of social dancing such as *çiftetelli*’ (2003, p.92). Silverman likewise conceives *čoček* as a dance form with two faces, the *čoček* danced ‘with subtlety and a covered body (as found at Rom community events) on one end and belly dancing and exposed skin on the other end’ (2003, p.127).⁸⁸

Due to the erotic connotation of *köçekler* and *çengiler* in the Ottoman era, and the present-day association of belly dance with adult entertainment aimed at men, Romani people usually distance themselves from linking *čoček* with belly dance. There has been strong criticism, especially by Roma women, regarding the employment of non-Romani belly dancers for music videos by *čoček* stars such as Ferus Mustafov.⁸⁹ Even though those belly dancers multiply the revenue due to increased sales to Westerners, Roma women feel their own customs have been betrayed.⁹⁰ Similarly, after a belly dance show performed by white dancers at a Rom festival, complaints were made by Roma about the bad reputation the performance would bring upon their people (Silverman 2003, p.129). Dunin observed that, amongst Romani, there are no ‘erotic’ connotations, only the ‘English speaking peoples’⁹¹ regard

⁸⁷ Bajsa interview 20th April 2018, Branislav interview 21st April 2018.

⁸⁸ This argument applies to women only; it arises from the demand for modesty in females by Romani societies. Although Romani men dance *čoček* too, possibly not as frequently, and without a ritual context, but they dance passionately and in public. Yet, as with other patriarchal societies, males do not undergo the same restrictions as females.

⁸⁹ Ferus with non-Romani belly dancers: <https://youtu.be/m5B2TA6QIIs> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

⁹⁰ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018; Eleonora, interview 16th February 2017.

⁹¹ Dunin includes anyone non-Macedonian, non-Balkan, non-Romani, basically everyone who is not aware of Balkan Romani culture.

it as an equivalent to belly dancing (1973, p.195). This published paragraph seems a perfect example of that:

The absence of cultural constraints over the lower torso, macabre posturing, and hints of incest in the nuptial song “Usti Usti Baba”, shocked and offended religious communities. During solo renderings of the cocek, Bulgarian-Romani performers welcomed the atmosphere of a forbidden dance, performed with zesty, oversexed abandon (Snodgrass 2016, p.262).

Esma Redžepova, a world-famous Romani singer, and probably the first female who danced *čoček* in public on stage, states: ‘you dance *čoček* with your stomach, you don’t dance with your hips, you don’t dance it with moans’ (cited in Silverman 2003, p.130). From Branislav’s viewpoint ‘the difference between proper Gypsy *čoček* and belly dance is this: In *čoček*, the belly movements are up-down, and discrete, unlike the Oriental belly dance which is full of hip shaking, circling, and erotic movements that are provocative’ (ibid.). He also points out the different style of clothing. Whilst Romani women dance in *čintijani*⁹² and are fully covered, Oriental belly dancers expose their naked midriffs and legs. The misconceptions of *čoček* dance might well be fostered by some non-Romani belly dancers, who use ‘Gypsy dance’ in their publicity texts. They may hope to create better saleability by implying the romantic nostalgia connected to the ‘Gypsy’ image, and a better reputation by using the high moral conduct of Romani women to erase the erotic belly dance image. Lauren ‘Zehara’ Haas reports: ‘As a belly dancer, I came across the word “Gypsy” all the time. It’s often used to mean free-spirited, bohemian, or untethered’.⁹³ She unearths a common misconception, which unfortunately many ignorant creative producers fall into.⁹⁴ Thus, it is no wonder that Romani woman chose to protect their dance behind closed doors.

⁹² Romani word for *šalvari*, long wide pants.

⁹³ Lauren ‘Zehara’ Haas, belly dancer and writer, article about clearing up Gypsy myths <http://bellydanceu.net/issues/520/> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

⁹⁴ Misconception Example: <https://www.facebook.com/GypsyDisco/>, <http://www.gypsydisco.co.uk/> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

THE WOMEN'S ČOČEK MUSIC AND DANCE

Trajko shares some childhood memories: 'At that time, in the 60-70s, when I was a child, I remember, they had separate rooms. The men danced in the male room and the woman in the female one'.⁹⁵ For Romani women, *čoček* dance is an important means of their own creative expression, one small area of their life where they can be truly themselves (Dunin1973, p.196). 'Dancers may show their exuberance by climbing on tables to perform' (Silverman 2003, pp.113-4). Dunin has observed, how 'Women danced in private home settings to the accompaniment of a female *dajre* player and women's singing' (1971, pp.324-5). Silverman tells of an elderly woman sharing her memories from the 1950s, when a female orchestra of two violins, *dajre* and a singer was hired for the celebration at the bride's house (2012, p.111). Bajsa's grandmother also told her about women who 'played music for weddings in traditional spaces. They played *dajre* and they sang, especially for rituals like the *kirna* (henna) ceremony at weddings'. Silverman calls these female ensembles *ženska čalgija*⁹⁶ (1996, p.70).

Even though accompanying *čoček* dance, by itself the Woman's *Čoček*⁹⁷ music was never considered a stand-alone music genre. The male masters of *čoček* would admit that certain musical parameters of *čoček*, such as the rhythms of *čiftetelli* or *karšilama*, are present. However, for them, *čoček* music is exclusively the domain of men, and the female variant merely acts as an accompaniment to *čoček* dance.

⁹⁵ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

⁹⁶ Translated: female *čalgija*.

⁹⁷ Woman's *Čoček* is the label I applied to the *čoček* music performed by female ensembles almost entirely at gender segregated occasions.

To round off the discussion about Women's Čoček, I would like to recall the Ottoman *ince saz* ensembles from the 18th century, and the *indži čalgija* ensembles from the 1850s.⁹⁸ The similarities of both suggest we can draw a straight line from the music in Ottoman harems to the music at segregated female Romani celebrations in Macedonia in the mid-20th century, and re-discover a music which seems to have slept for 200 years behind closed doors. This idea is supported by the consideration that certain women's rituals in Ottoman harems, such as the henna ceremony, appear to be incredibly similar to practices conducted by Romani woman at segregated events.



Figure 2: Wedding in Šuto Orizari

⁹⁸ See Chapter One and Two.

CHAPTER 5: OPEN BORDERS FOR ČOČEK

In the previous two chapters, I have discussed the divergence of *čoček* into two main branches and various sub-divisions, identifying five types of *čoček*: In the public domain we find the Classic *Čoček*,⁹⁹ and the *Zurla-Tapan Čoček*, performed by male Romani musicians, and the Folklore *Čoček*, mostly performed by Macedonians. In the Romani community-based domain, I discussed the segregated Woman's *Čoček*, and the exclusive Romani *Čoček* performed by male Roma musicians was mentioned.¹⁰⁰ After 1980, several changes occurred to Romani life in Skopje; changes which effected the life-style of local Roma as well as Roma living across Macedonia and beyond.¹⁰¹

CHANGES IN MACEDONIA AROUND 1980

One ground-breaking incident was the earthquake in Skopje in 1963, destroying the old Romani neighbourhoods close to the city centre. The municipality dedicated, and financially supported, the re-settlement of Romani people to *Šuto Orizari*, which was a small village surrounded by deserted fields on the outskirts of Skopje at that time. The new place quickly developed into a Romani town, and acquired a certain independence as it was self-governed by a Romani mayor. Branislav observed, that 'when the Roma people had settled in *Šuto Orizari* after the earthquake, most of the weddings were celebrated outside, with tables of food and drink in the streets, and from that point on, the men and women were not segregated. They sit together, feast, listen to the music and start dancing together',¹⁰² in other words, in the 1980s, the gender segregation at weddings and other celebrations became more relaxed and then completely disappeared. Trajko reasons, that 'after the death of Tito,

⁹⁹ For clarity, I have labelled the *čoček* styles. These are not generally known terms, these are my inventions. The 'Classic *Čoček*' refers to the style which was played by Ferus Mustafov and his father Ilmi, also by Kurtiš and Vevki, and it is the *čoček* which lived through the largest developments.

¹⁰⁰ Explored in detail in Chapter Seven.

¹⁰¹ Following marriage and migration, the Romani families spin like spider webs all across the Balkans and beyond. Therefore, any significant changes happening in *Šuto Orizari*, a Romani 'metropolis', will lead to changes in the lives of Roma far beyond Macedonia.

¹⁰² Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the boundaries were opened, for *čoček* as well as for Roma people to move to Western Europe'. In his opinion, it is a more general transformation, caused by a democratic and modern society which has inspired those changes.¹⁰³ Whatever the reasons for this development may have been, for *čoček* the meaningful fact is that 'women now dance solo in the presence of men' (Silverman 2012, p.112), and '*čoček* is now played in the open air, in wide outdoor spaces, halls or concerts. It is danced everywhere',¹⁰⁴ which led to a notable development of the music and performance practices.

Another significant event in 1980 was the death of Tito, the Yugoslav communist dictator, and the subsequent changes from a communist state into a parliamentary democracy, and Macedonian independence, which came to pass peacefully, in contrast to many other neighbouring states. One more element that entailed significant changes was the developing music technology. Amplification found its way into folklore worldwide and inspired new or transformed folk music styles. New types of instruments, such as electric guitars, electric bass, and later keyboards and synthesizers were increasingly used and began replacing traditional instruments.

What influence did those events have on *čoček*? I have already discussed the inclusive racial politics of Tito in Chapter Three. According to Stojanche, 'Gypsies were not overly affected by Communism, because they had the right to express themselves as Roma'.¹⁰⁵ Branislav confirms that the communist regime had little influence.¹⁰⁶ Whilst, according to contemporary witnesses, the political developments had no direct influence on *čoček* music and dance, the reformation into mixed-gender celebrations, which meant the end of segregated women's parties, resulted in the dying-out of

¹⁰³ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Stojanche, interview 17th April 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Branislav interview 21st April 2018.

female music ensembles. According to Bajsa's grandmother, those ensembles have now disappeared, as there is no remaining performance space or opportunity.¹⁰⁷ After all, the music performance in Roma society is a purely male domain, and even more so, it is considered immoral for women to perform music in public. Despite the expansion of *čoček* social dance to mixed-gender territory and to public spaces frequented by non-Roma, Romani women are still under the strict rules of moral conduct, as discussed in Chapter Four. Performing in public for a woman, no matter if as singer, instrumentalist or dancer, would inevitably expose her to the eyes of non-family-related men and non-Romani people, which is considered shameful (Silverman 2012, p.203). Therefore, since the walls of segregation have fallen, there is no socially acceptable performance space for traditional female Romani music ensembles. In all other areas, however, *čoček* music is thriving and expanding. Details on the above-mentioned new technology and the changes it caused will follow in Chapter Eight.

NEW FORMS OF ČOČEK

There are two developments in the 1960s, which by the 1980s show a big impact on *čoček*. The first one is the public appearance of Stevo Teodosievski, a non-Romani accordionist from Kočani, Macedonia, and the music school, which he and his wife, Esmā Redžepova,¹⁰⁸ founded in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The school was formed in 1960 and took on musically talented but economically deprived Romani children,¹⁰⁹ providing them with a good musical education for a fruitful musical career and a positive start in life (Silverman 2012, p.211). As composers, performers and musical educators, both Esmā and Stevo had a big impact on Romani music in general and *čoček* in particular.¹¹⁰ I would speculate, that the inclusion of the accordion into *čoček*, which, according to

¹⁰⁷ Bajsa, interview 20th April 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Famous Macedonian Romani singer, already quoted in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁹ The school was open to Romani kids from Yugoslavia, however, the attendees were mostly from Macedonia.

¹¹⁰ Simeon, interview 17th April 2018.

Ferus, started in the 1970s, transforming the traditional *čalgija* line-up into a much more Western-type of ensemble, may have been inspired, if not initiated, by Stevo. As a pitched instrument, which plays melody and chordal accompaniment simultaneously, it caused dramatic changes to *čoček* by involuntarily disabling certain Ottoman features: suppressing the use of *makam* microtones and transforming the drone-tone accompaniment into a chordal accompaniment.¹¹¹

Stevo not only taught music and instrument technique to the Roma children, but he also composed numerous ‘Romani’ songs and instrumentals.¹¹² These were taught to the students and were included into their generation of Romani music, as Simeon, one of their students, confirmed. Consequently, they significantly influenced the composition style of the school’s Romani students.¹¹³ Esma and Stevo also included vocals into *čoček*, in the form of composed songs as well as vocal improvisation.¹¹⁴ Even though this was not new,¹¹⁵ it is still unusual for contemporary *čoček* styles, and not considered *čoček* by some Romani musicians.¹¹⁶ Bajsa stated that Esma was the only singer who had ever performed vocal *čoček* improvisations.¹¹⁷ Eleonora, Esma’s only female singing student, shared a slightly nerve-racking experience of a concert in Istanbul. During a *čoček* vocal improvisation, Esma spontaneously handed the mic to her, and made her unexpectedly continue the improvisation.¹¹⁸

The second development relates to Romani Brass orchestras, which have become an important part of wedding celebrations in Southern Serbia and Macedonia throughout the last century

¹¹¹ Details in Chapter Eight.

¹¹² Saksi *Čoček*, a *čoček* considered as Romani music, composed by Stevo, Video Sample: <https://youtu.be/iLUh2r3-3Jo> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

¹¹³ Here we find a clear paradox on where Romani music ends, and non-Romani music starts. However, the discussion on what is Romani music and was not is not part of this thesis.

¹¹⁴ Video Sample: Esma *Čoček* https://youtu.be/LNUPSr_zKXU - last accessed 16th August 2018.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter One for *kōčekce* and Chapter Four for Woman’s *Čoček*,

¹¹⁶ See Simeon’s comment Chapter Five.

¹¹⁷ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

¹¹⁸ Eleonora, interview 10th April 2018.

(Silverman 2012, p. 25). Balkan Brass bands developed from a fusion of Ottoman military brass bands with folk and/or Romani music (Cartwright 2005, pp.45-46).¹¹⁹ In Chapter Two I mentioned the trumpet as an added instrument in outdoor *kaba čalgija* ensembles, fulfilling at that time a similar role to Balkan brass orchestras today. The earliest available *čoček* recordings with trumpet were produced by *Jugoton* around 1970.¹²⁰ If we compare those with Seeman's descriptions of *kaba čalgija* one can find considerable parallels to instrumentation and performance practice. Led by trumpet and performed with accordion, clarinet, electric guitar and bass, their sound is heavily stripped of Ottoman musical features, and the implementation of *makam* microtones became impossible due to the inclusion of fretted and keyboard instruments.¹²¹

Whereas one can find brass instruments added to various types of *čoček*-performing groups, a real Balkan brass orchestra uses a classic instrumentation of trumpet or flugelhorn, tenor and baritone horns, tuba or euphoniums. As percussion they include a *tapan* or a snare drum, often with attached cymbals. The best place to explore Balkan Brass bands is the yearly brass festival and competition in *Guča*, Serbia.¹²² Since 1961, it has been a major gathering for all Romani Balkan brass bands. The 'master of *Guča* for all times' is the *Fejat Sejdić Orchestar*.¹²³ Also, a new, Balkan-Latin rhythm pattern increasingly takes the place of *karšilama* and *čiftetelli*, thus replacing Ottoman dance rhythms with South American-derived ones. The appearance of this new Latin *Čoček* was probably influenced by the onset of the global world music trend in the 1980s, which brought the fusion of different styles into fashion.¹²⁴ However, there are regional differences in repertoire. According to Simeon, Serbian

¹¹⁹ To my knowledge, Balkan brass bands are all Romani, at least in 20 years of Balkan exploration I have never come across a brass band which was not Romani.

¹²⁰ Sample: Makedonski *Čoček*, Narodni Orchestar Ferus Mustafov: <https://youtu.be/0rOQTxeC-tU> - last accessed 8th August 2018.

¹²¹ Musical details in Chapter Eight

¹²² About Guca Festival: <http://www.guca-festival.com/guca-festival/guca-festival-info> - last accessed 9th August 2018

¹²³ Info on the ensemble: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejat_Sejdi%C4%87 – last accessed 9th August 2018.

¹²⁴ About World music: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_music - last accessed 9th August 2018.

brass ensembles from the 1990s onwards ‘only play Latin *Čoček*’.¹²⁵ Whilst I agree that they definitely favour that style, I have heard them perform the occasional *karšilama čoček* too. Macedonian brass orchestras however stay more faithful to their Ottoman heritage. They do import some famous Serbian Latin *Čoček* pieces in order to please non-Romani audiences. However, one can still hear a lot of *čiftetelli* and *karšilama* in both older pieces as well as in new compositions.¹²⁶

Let us look closer at the activity and meaning of Balkan brass bands. They are usually led by the lead-trumpet player, who may have founded the group, or inherited this position from his father or uncle. Mostly, the band members are related, often encompassing three generations: young family members learn from the elders, growing into the profession as they grow up. There are some versions, which may also include saxophone, and may even be led by it, if the saxophonist is as high-powered as Ferus. Through the *Guča* festival, brass bands became enormously popular, resulting in a high performance demand for festivals, weddings and other outdoor festivities. According to Mihajlo, the role is a different one for Romani and for Macedonian weddings. In Romani weddings, the *zurla* and *tapan* ensembles were gradually replaced by brass, fulfilling the traditional protocols. Being loud and movable, they play for rituals such as picking up the bride from her parent’s home and bringing her to the groom’s house, and for welcoming the guests to outdoor receptions. Mostly they perform both, *oro*¹²⁷ and *čoček*, with the wedding guests dancing around them or trailing behind them. Their expansive noise also functions as a kind of invitation:

Growing up in *Topaana*,¹²⁸ I remember as a kid first hearing a distant drum playing and afterwards you could hear the first brass instruments, and then we knew there was a wedding. Everyone would come out of their houses into their front yard to see the wedding *povorka* (procession). We applauded and shouted out our well-

¹²⁵ Audio Sample 5.3: *Mundo Čoček*, Boban Markovic, 2009 - <https://youtu.be/D-x--SXJcBA> - last accessed 9th August 2018.

¹²⁶ *Karšilama čoček* by Basalen Romalen: <https://youtu.be/AsGKcIVzUxs> - last accessed 9th August 2018.

¹²⁷ *Oro* is the collective word for Macedonian line-and circle social dances for both non-Romani and Romani traditions.

¹²⁸ Romani neighbourhood in Skopje.

wishes, or just cheered in the rhythm, joining in dancing for the occasional *oro* or *čoček*. Very lovely memories.¹²⁹

After around 1990, the *čoček* found its way into Macedonian non-Romani weddings. When venue and wallet permitted, brass bands were engaged. However, the circumstances were different to Romani weddings. Mostly they would perform a number of *čoček* pieces to stir up the guests as a highlight between dinner and cake-cutting, after the Macedonian *oro* dancing had reached its peak. A Macedonian man shared memories of the last wedding he attended: ‘the vibe was overwhelming. Everyone went into a “crazy mode”, the girls were dancing *čoček*, some of them on tables, and men stuck large bank notes onto the musician’s foreheads’(ibid.).

BRASS BAND ČOČEK GOES INTERNATIONAL

We have arrived at the end of Yugoslavia, and the lifting of the iron curtain in the early 1990s. To Vladimir’s knowledge it was shortly after that, when *čoček* reached its peak.¹³⁰ The open borders as well as the emerging wave of World music fashion created opportunities for Western European music managers and record labels as well as business-minded Yugoslavian non-Romani artists. At the same time, Balkan-themed art movies featuring Balkan brass and other Romani sound tracks conquered the Western European art cinema scene. In this context, we need to meet Goran Bregović, a Yugoslavian¹³¹ guitarist who was highly engaged in the music of the Roma. He composed and arranged the music for various ‘Gypsy’ art movies by film director Emir Kusturica,¹³² such as ‘Time of the Gypsies’ and ‘Underground’, which were internationally shown at arts film festivals and cinemas, and reached global popularity. The catchy music, in particular pieces such as ‘Underground

¹²⁹ Mihajlo, interview 7th May 2018

¹³⁰ Vladimir, interview 6th April 2018.

¹³¹ Born in Bosnia to a Serbian mother and a Croatian father. Info: <https://www.goranbregovic.rs/biography/index.html>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goran_Bregovi%C4%87 – last accessed 9th August 2018.

¹³² Info on Emir Kusturica - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emir_Kusturica - last accessed 9th August 2018.

Čoček and ‘Wedding *Čoček*’¹³³ played a substantial role in the gaining popularity of Balkan Romani ensembles in Western Europe, and the United States. From there, world music record labels, which had mushroomed since the mid-1980s, picked up interest in that music, and started producing albums and organising concerts world-wide. Whilst, for the first tours, the ensembles performed their authentic local music, thereafter one can detect gradual changes towards commerciality, partly demanded by the record labels to achieve higher sales, partly initiated by the musicians themselves, aiming to play what they thought non-Balkan audiences would like to hear. This transformation fed back into the local Romani brass band music, as Romani musicians, whilst having a strong sense of identity, are also very quick to adapt to new trends. Thus, the end of the communistic dictatorship and the subsequent increasing globalisation brought a new level of Westernisation to Balkan Romani music and therefore to *čoček* performed by Balkan brass bands.

To achieve a greater understanding of the world of *čoček*, I would like to dig into some background issues here. It is important to emphasise that none of the contributors, who were driving forces in gaining international fame to *čoček* and other Romani music, were of Romani descent. Though both Teodosievski and Bregović have furthered Romani music in a big way, the opinions amongst Roma and ethnically aware non-Roma are extremely controversial. Whilst Teodosievski’s and Bregović’s qualities as musicians, and their influence in bringing Romani music and *čoček* to world fame, are undisputed, the opinions differ as to whether their influence was actually beneficial for the Roma, or if it was rather a forceful interference of non-Roma into ethnic Romani music. A further criticism concerns their conduct: The motivation of both Teodosievski and Bregović, and of the World music labels, is accused of being driven by power and money rather than true interest in furthering Romani culture. The spectrum of blame reaches from being merely ethically ignorant to

¹³³ Underground, Wedding *Čoček*: <https://youtu.be/2htSHzxVgQY>, Underground *Čoček*: https://youtu.be/8qKB_QURVL0, from the movie Underground, Goran Bregović - last accessed 9th August 2018.

consciously injuring the legal or moral rights of Romani people and therefore actively taking advantage of Romani culture for personal gain. For example, *Šutka*'s Romani inhabitants feel let down by Esma, who was born as a member of their community, pointing out how her Romani heritage was used by Teodosievski to gain international reputation, but she actually never brought any funds or culture back to her own community.¹³⁴ The critique towards Bregović goes deeper; there are numerous accusations of misusing music of Romani people. Some merely relate to an ethnic abuse of using their local music for his commercial purposes, however, there have been court cases about the stealing of compositions of Romani musicians.¹³⁵ Though this dispute is not part of *čoček* in particular, it has impact on the overall development, and is part of an important insight in order to understand certain aspects of the Romani's social exclusion, and of their protective behaviour regarding their own traditions. However, moral or ethnic dilemmas are seldom clear-cut. I would like to share Ferus's reaction when he was confronted with a copyright issue:

Once, when I went to Berlin to the production house, the director asked me: 'do you know someone called Nead?'. I said: 'Yes I know him, we are relatives'. Then he played parts of the CD that he was going to publish. And I told him: 'These are all my compositions!' 'Really?', the director asked. 'Do you have proof of that? Should we stop the production now?' I said: 'No, there is no need for that (...) He is really doing me a marketing favour'.¹³⁶

I have to add that Ferus saw no need to put his name onto the album sleeve either. Of course, the situation is slightly different, as the 'thief' is a relative of the copyright victim. However, I have experienced other situations when Romani musicians quite freely gave away their music, in the full confidence that it was good for them and their music, and they were never aware that, in capitalism, there is often no fair play.

¹³⁴ Branislav, interview 13th March 2017.

¹³⁵ Copyright case info: <https://vladproductions.fr/authors-rights-the-bregovic-case/> - last accessed 9th August 2018

¹³⁶ Ferus, interview 3rd April 2018.



Figure 3: Jam session with the Čerkezi Orchestra in Šuto Orizari

CHAPTER 6: ČOČEK AMONGST ROMANI PEOPLE

In this chapter I will elaborate on the style of *čoček* performed by Romani people during their own celebrations. The division, which befell *Čalgija Čoček*¹³⁷ when performed in non-Romani contexts, such as album recordings and festivals, became more pronounced as *čoček* gained popularity amongst Macedonians and found entry into festivals and non-Romani weddings. From 1970, *čoček* music was a regular part of Yugoslavian music on television, and the first albums, titled ‘*Čoček and Oro*’, were published by *Jugoton*.¹³⁸ From here onwards, the type of *čoček* which I labelled ‘Classic *Čoček*’ rapidly gained popularity, whilst at the same time the difference to *čoček* performed exclusively in a Romani social context became much more pronounced.

THE INTERNAL ROMANI ČOČEK AS A SPECIAL STYLE

Elam explains: ‘the *čoček* played to Macedonian people, cannot be played to a Romani crowd’,¹³⁹ or in Kurtiš’s words: ‘if we play a Macedonian-style *čoček* to our Romani, they will protest’.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, a ‘real’ Romani *čoček*, can only be performed by a native Romani musician, and is really only understood by other Roma. Kurtiš states: ‘the soul and the heart of *čoček* is Romani. They know exactly how it needs to be performed to have the right energy. *Čoček* is always a bit artificial when performed by non-Romani musicians’(ibid.). From my own observations and the musician’s comments, I would summarise: When Romani play amongst themselves, the connection between the performers and the dancing guests is much more intimate and intense. Therefore, an extra level of

¹³⁷ See Chapter Two for *Čalgija Čoček*, and Chapter Three for the early *čoček* branches.

¹³⁸ Sample: Makedonski *Čoček*, Narodni Orchestar Ferus Mustafov: <https://youtu.be/OrOQTxeC-tU> - last accessed 8th August 2018.

¹³⁹ Elam, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁴⁰ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

charisma, wildness and passion kicks in. As Elam says, ‘spontaneous improvisation would increase and possibly take over’.¹⁴¹

When playing for outsiders, the intimacy, which inspires and enhances a musician’s performance, is missing. This is combined with the possible desire to reserve certain elements of their art for the people close to them. However, there are some misinformed assumptions regarding the Westerner’s taste in music. I remember one of my first encounters with Asan Rašid and the *Čerkezi Orchestar*, a *Šutka*-based brass ensemble, from whom I learned several *čoček* pieces amongst other Macedonian Romani music. Initially, Asan suggested teaching me covers of Goran Bregović and Šaban Bajramović,¹⁴² the Balkan Romani music known in Western Europe, and, in his opinion, was what I was looking for. We ended up having a great jamming session together, as I already knew the music. Asan told me that, on their rare trips to Germany and France, it was mostly those well-known pieces which were requested and earned them tips. From there I had to work myself layer by layer through their perceptions and musical repertoire,¹⁴³ until we arrived at compositions by his father, uncle and his own work. By then, the *Čerkezi* musicians were quite amazed about what kind of ‘unusual and bizarre person from the West’ I might be, but they still did not teach me the Romani *čoček* performed at their own events as this actually seems not possible. Elam shares: ‘I play spontaneously and with originality, any idea which comes to my head at that moment, it is an instantaneous inspiration, I cannot teach this’.¹⁴⁴ Kurtiš said ‘we don’t learn how to play or dance *čoček*. It is in our blood. Just by listening and growing up with it we have it in our pockets’.¹⁴⁵ As previously discussed, those

¹⁴¹ Elam, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁴² Globally known Bosnian Romani singer: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0aban_Bajramovi%C4%87 – last accessed 16th August 2018.

¹⁴³ From commercial pieces known in Western Europe, such as Esmā Redžepova songs, to Romani music popular amongst Macedonians in the category of Classic *Čoček*.

¹⁴⁴ Elam, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

performances are not recorded for the general public. Thus, no authentic listening samples can be provided.¹⁴⁶

THE MEANING OF ČOČEK FOR ROMA

Čoček is not just music and social dance, it has a deep meaning for Romani people. Dunin describes it as ‘a living, vital form that is an integral part of their traditions’ (1970, p.324) with ‘the principal purpose of its performance being an expression of their cultural identity’ (Dunin 1973, p.196). For Branislav, ‘the Romani *čoček* is a dance with a traditional mark (...). It is associated with Roma, an expression of our energy and joy. We dance it at meaningful occasions like weddings, naming ceremonies or circumcisions’.¹⁴⁷ Trajko points out some healing aspects of *čoček* for Romani: ‘We Roma are poor; our lives are problematic. Poverty and social difficulties are rife but when *čoček* is played, it heals those wounds and makes us balanced and happy again’.¹⁴⁸ In my opinion, those statements do not capture, what *čoček* truly is for Roma, and I struggle myself to find words which reflect what Roma radiate when performing or talking about *čoček*. In a way, it captures and expresses their life energy. As poetic as Branislav’s opening statement in the introduction may sound, it does reflect the true meaning of *čoček* for Roma people.

Moving on to *čoček* within the procedure of actual Romani festivities, Eleonora tells me: ‘the most important moment is when the bride enters the room where the groom is waiting. It is a custom to greet her with *čoček* (...). The bride and groom are lifted onto a table and dance, whilst the guest gather around them in a circle and clap along to the rhythm’.¹⁴⁹ Kurtiš reports, that he often performs

¹⁴⁶ Out of respect I have never taken any recordings myself, even though it would have made stunning field recordings. Audio Sample 4.3 though comes close to a Romani Čoček (see Chapter Eight): *Panadjursko Oro*, Ferus Mustafov: *Ora i Čočeci* - https://youtu.be/rDrmj_UdW1k - last accessed 9h August 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

¹⁴⁹ Eleonora, interview 10th April 2018.

čoček in *karšilama* to welcome guests at festivities. He explains that *karšilama*¹⁵⁰ actually means ‘welcome’ in Turkish. He also regularly plays *čoček* at the peak of parties, for the happiest moments, and each time he is touched by the beautiful atmosphere it creates.¹⁵¹

Even though the *čoček* dance is an improvised solo dance, at Romani celebrations many people, in fact all members of a family, dance together.¹⁵² Although both men and women now dance *čoček* in the same space,¹⁵³ the demands are different. Men dance ‘just for fun’,¹⁵⁴ for example jumping onto the dance floor when their favourite *čoček* or *oro* is being played (Silverman 2008, p.50), often to ‘show off to the girls’,¹⁵⁵ whilst the women do have an obligation to dance. At weddings for instance, each invited lady needs to lead the line of dance at least once. Since the end of segregation, a new execution of *čoček* has appeared, where the bride and her friends, or young female relatives, dance solo *čoček* in the centre, whilst other guests snake around them in *oro*-style (ibid.). Though any erotic connotation when danced in a Romani context is being denied; nevertheless, good dancing skills are desirable in daughters as they have become an asset in achieving a good marriage.

Just as *čoček* music, *čoček* dance is also believed to be anchored with birth into a Romani soul, as an older Romani man expressed: ‘*čoček* is in our blood, it comes to us to dance it, we don’t know why it is like that’.¹⁵⁶ However, Silverman does mention, that, nevertheless, girls are taught at home by experienced *čoček* dancers in the family (2012, p.113), just as musicians learn to play *čoček* from

¹⁵⁰ Turkish spelling of *karšilama*.

¹⁵¹ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁵² Reported by a small Romani boy, street interview in Šutka, 14th April 2018.

¹⁵³ Refer to Chapter Four for gender-segregated celebrations, and Chapter Five for the reunion.

¹⁵⁴ Romani teenager’s comment, Šutka 14th April 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Street interview, Šutka, 14th April 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Street interview, Šutka, 14th April 2018.

their elders. This rounds up the portrait of *čoček* amongst the close Romani community. In the next chapter we shall move to the 1980s, when *čoček* found entry into Macedonian weddings.



Figure 4: Romani wedding preparations, Šuto Orizari, 11th August 2017

CHAPTER 7: THE CLASSIC ČOČEK FOR THE WHITES AND THE WORLD

This chapter will deal with the remaining sub-branch of public *čoček*,¹⁵⁷ the one I labelled Classic *Čoček*, which, of all *čoček* varieties became most notoriously popular in the Balkans. Interestingly enough, even though the music, the musicians and their heritage should be as appealing to the World Music industry as, for instance, Latin *Čoček*, Classic *Čoček* never reached a similar international fame. Nevertheless, across the Balkans and its diasporas, it enjoyed immense commercial success and popularity, to the level of musical addiction.

ČOČEK ADDICTIONS

Bajsa explains that ‘until 35 years ago, *čoček* was THE Romani solo dance, at that time there was no *čoček* played or danced by white people’.¹⁵⁸ After the establishment of *Šutka*, the end of gender-segregated celebrations, and the trend to celebrate Romani weddings outdoors, the joy of *čoček* music and dance could not remain unnoticed. According to both Romani and Macedonians, everyone started integrating sections of *čoček* into their wedding parties. Furthermore, *čoček* albums became popular amongst all Macedonian ethnicities.¹⁵⁹ For Branislav, ‘the urge to jump up and dance instantly, cannot be created by Macedonian music, it has to be something Romani, such as a *čoček* from Ferus’.¹⁶⁰ Elam, who has performed at numerous Macedonian weddings, reports: ‘when I play *oro*, the crowd mostly seems asleep, or drinks, and there is no energy. When I start *čoček*, the real party vibe immediately kicks in, and I collect my tips’.¹⁶¹ Trajko summarises the situation beautifully:

¹⁵⁷ Refer to Chapter Five for *čoček* branches.

¹⁵⁸ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter Two, Three, Five.

¹⁶⁰ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

¹⁶¹ Elam, interview 13th April 2018.

Although we are poor, we have a wealthy culture and music. One of those treasures is *čoček*. And that is why Albanians¹⁶² and Macedonians take the *čoček* into their culture. *Čoček* reached its peak about 30 years ago because it integrates all people here in Macedonia. From being prominently a dance of the Roma, it has spread out to all people around them, to Serbians and Macedonians who are not as poor as we Roma, all got hooked by this music phenomena, all participate in the beautiful *čoček* music and dance.¹⁶³

Hence, from the 1990s onwards, the Classic *Čoček* had become an established part of Macedonian weddings. There is a set of famous pieces, which are the most frequently requested, regularly receiving the largest tips at Macedonian weddings. However, if you play those *čoček*s at a Romani wedding, ‘the guests get angry if you don’t play proper Romani *čoček*’, Simeon explained.¹⁶⁴ Elam had similar experiences: ‘the *čoček*s we play to Macedonian people would be a real downer at a Romani wedding. *Dada Sali Čoček*, for example, the most popular piece at any Macedonian wedding, would be an insult for the guests, if played at a Romani wedding’.¹⁶⁵

The following chapter will discuss musical details, and the most well-known and frequently performed *čoček* pieces will be introduced. However, here, there is a new question, which inevitably comes to mind when dealing with *čoček* for Macedonians: Can non-Romani musicians perform a real *čoček*? The answers differ. Kurtiš’s opinion is that:

Non-Roma imitate, some in a better and some in a worse way. For example, take my playing of Romano Oyun Havasi, and then compare it to a Macedonian musician and you will hear a huge difference. In my soul, I am Rom, we don’t learn *čoček*, it is in our blood, and we perform it with soul.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² *Čoček* exists in slightly differing forms and names at other places such as Albania, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Greece. I briefly discuss some details later in the chapter, but in this thesis, I focus on *čoček* in Macedonia only.

¹⁶³ Trajko, interview 16th April 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Simeon, interview 17th April 2018.

¹⁶⁵ Elam, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁶⁶ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

On the other hand, Bajsa told me: ‘I’m positively surprised, because some white musicians play *čoček* really well. This is what we call *soživot*, living together and learning together’.¹⁶⁷ Zoran, as a white Macedonian wedding clarinetists, thinks like Kurtiš: ‘We will only imitate, and often it will be a poor imitation’.¹⁶⁸ However, he does not censure the actual quality of his playing, but he refers to the charisma, in which no white imitator could ever match a Roma musician. This opinion is shared by most Romani and non-Romani alike. On a technical level, Zoran reasons: ‘few white musicians know about *makam*’ (ibid.). Kurtiš explains in more detail: ‘only we Rom know how to execute the quarter-tonal music.’¹⁶⁹ If you don’t play that right it does not sound like Romani *čoček*’.¹⁷⁰

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of non-Romani wedding bands which included *čoček* in their repertoire rapidly increased, however, amongst the famous *čoček* musicians there are no non-Romani. Whoever can financially afford it, will engage Romani musicians, and ideally Ferus the ‘King of *Čoček*’, for his wedding.

THE MEANING OF ČOČEK FOR MACEDONIANS

Whereas Bajsa mentioned earlier *soživot* – living and learning together - this is, in most cases an idealistic view. In reality, people live together peacefully, often even in friendship in mixed-ethnicity neighbourhoods, though each group follows its own traditions and value systems.¹⁷¹ We have discussed *čoček* music for Macedonian weddings, performed by Roma or non-Roma musicians. I will next examine Macedonian audiences and their affiliation to *čoček*. In Simeon’s opinion ‘they don’t

¹⁶⁷ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Refer to Chapter Six for details on quarter tones and microtones.

¹⁷⁰ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁷¹ Though Macedonians with Albanian roots will also be in touch with *čoček*, I will focus here on Slavic Macedonians. Macedonians of Albanian descent have a very strong sense of identity, and therefore would mostly play their own music at weddings. In the last chapter, we will learn about *tallava*, an Albanian rhythm and music style, which influences all Macedonian wedding music.

feel it and can't dance it properly; they don't understand the meaning and just want to enjoy the atmosphere'.¹⁷² Bajsa thinks that 'Macedonians do feel the *čoček*, but not like Romani people. Macedonians imitate'.¹⁷³ Branislav states in more detail:

To reach euphoria, they demand something lively, so they tell the musicians to play *čoček*. With the music, they start to loosen up, and dance, stir with the stomach, imitating the Roma. And in those moments, they feel for an instance a yearning to transform into a Roma for their dance and music.¹⁷⁴

Macedonians themselves perceive *čoček* differently. In Vladimir's opinion, 'we should be well aware, that it is a borrowed dance and music, but people don't really care, whose cultural heritage it is. It usually is played at the highlight of a party and has its own special meaning for us'.¹⁷⁵ Mihajlo's definition of *čoček* is simply 'any music that will make me want to get up, put my hands in the air and start dancing', whilst for Darko that is 'when girls dance on the table and the men support the dancing girls with certain gestures'.¹⁷⁶ Other Macedonians explained their gender game around *čoček*: 'Many young ladies use *čoček* 'to show off their body. They dance sensually and sexily to attract men, but in a safe space'.¹⁷⁷ Men might approach, join the dance and show off too. The activity of dancing *čoček* makes it a permitted occasion to flirt and behave seductively, whilst the surrounding family and friends provide a protected environment for the girl.¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, there is a much more intricate and powerful social paradigm behind *čoček* dancing in the context of Macedonian weddings. The wedding guests, who consist of the extended family as well as friends, have a lot of power to manipulate their own and the host's status in society via dance

¹⁷² Simeon, interview 17th April 2018.

¹⁷³ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

¹⁷⁴ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

¹⁷⁵ Vladimir, interview 6th April 2018.

¹⁷⁶ Darko, a Macedonian young man from Sopje, interview 7th April 18.

¹⁷⁷ Zorica, interview 13th April 2018.

¹⁷⁸ A linguistic little detail might be of interest here: In Macedonian, people do not 'dance' a *čoček*, the verb which is used translates as 'to shake, to stir up' (*meša*). Likewise, the musicians don't perform or play a *mane* (the solo improvisation, most important part of *čoček*), they 'raise' a *mane* (*kreva*).

and appearance. Outfit and styling of the female members of a family are under the scrutinising eye of other guests, and the evaluation afterwards may well influence one's reputation. In reverse, a guest may express subtle criticism or resentment toward the hosting family by under or overdressing. The success of the wedding itself is mostly measured by dance participation. Weddings with little dancing are sad occasions and considered unsuccessful, therefore wedding guest and their willingness to dance play a big role for better or worse. If the bride or groom, or close family members have caused any offence, then the offended can express that by not dancing, and if they have enough influence, other guests may follow, and a wedding can be boycotted. Similarly, by dancing and sponsoring music which accelerates the dancing at a wedding, one can contribute to the success of a wedding, and gain a high social reputation. *Čoček* as the peak of dancing, is therefore the most powerful tool.

Zorica remembers the wedding of a distant cousin. The girl had had a difficult time¹⁷⁹ and was so glad to finally secure a good match and get married. However, the dancing at her wedding was stagnant. Zorica's father felt sorry for the bride, so he tipped the musicians who broke into *Štipski Čoček* little later. The father went onto his knees,¹⁸⁰ challenging first Zorica and then other guests to join in dancing. This melted the ice and turned the wedding into a success.¹⁸¹ Here another of Zorica's wedding experiences:

It is a custom to request a song or piece of music from the musicians, to greet and transfer well-wishes to the bride and her family. The most popular pieces at the prime times of course require the largest tip. The musicians would announce the family and their wishes over the microphone, before breaking into it. I have this relative, a police constable, who always wants his name to be associated with the best moment of a wedding. So he walks up to the musicians and requests *Štipski Čoček*, by giving an appropriate tip and also showing off his police ID, as a result nobody would dare to steal away his big moment (ibid.).

¹⁷⁹ She has been deserted by her previous fiancée, which in Macedonian society taints a girl's reputation.

¹⁸⁰ The typical initial movement for men in *čoček* dance at a wedding.

¹⁸¹ Zorica, interview 13th April 2018.

Whilst *čoček* for Macedonians does not have the deep-rooted connotation as it has for Roma, it nevertheless has developed into a powerful tool of society. At this point, the regional differences in Classic *Cocek* between the 1980s and 2000 deserve attention.

ČOČEK ACROSS MACEDONIA, AND THE CROWNING OF THE KING

Macedonia is not a large country, yet it has suffered many past occupations, and has a huge array of current political issues both internal and external,¹⁸² which inevitably leave marks on culture and music. *Čoček* as a music and dance considered by some as Romani, by others as Ottoman Turkish, may experience a certain antipathy from Macedonian nationalists. The level of *čoček* popularity amongst Macedonians in different areas is directly related to the ethnic composition of the local inhabitants and the amount of *soživot* amongst them; in Romani neighbourhoods, *čoček* is always big. Bajsa observed: ‘In villages near *Kratovo*, *Mavrovo* and other rural parts of Macedonia, they prefer *gajda*, *kaval* and *tapan*, in other words, Slavic folk music and instruments. On the other hand, in *Kočani* and other Eastern parts of Macedonia with a large Romani and Turkish population, *čoček* is really popular, even amongst Macedonians’.¹⁸³

Both Kurtiš and Elam reflect on the possible musical and regional differences of *čoček*. According to them, skilful *čoček* musicians can mostly be found in Skopje, Bitola, Štip and Ohrid. However, both state that an area itself would only vaguely shape a playing style, mainly because Roma families were accustomed to moving about. If a player was exposed to influences from Turkish, Roma or Macedonian music in his young years, either from exposure whilst growing up or because of his tutors, this may have carved his playing style. However, they believe that ultimately it is the

¹⁸² Ottomans for 500 years, Yugoslavia for 80 years, and nowadays the pulling and pushing of Bulgaria and Greece on the outside, as well as the Albanian population’s pressure on the inside...

¹⁸³ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

player's individual talent, creativity and charisma which defines his playing style.¹⁸⁴ The period from 1980 to 2000, the peak of *čoček*, was of course influenced by political and social developments too,¹⁸⁵ but it was the outstanding talent of a few musicians who greatly advanced *čoček*, including Vevki, Kurtiš and especially Ferus, known as 'King Ferus' or the 'King of Čoček'. Nobody really knows if he was 'crowned' with that nickname by his fans, or if it was self-acquired. Whatever the case, he does carry that title rightfully: his skill combines a highly virtuosic technique with unique charisma; he is the most popular *čoček* musician, has composed the most frequently performed *čoček* favourites, and has been a paragon for other players for the last 35 years.

At this point we have reached the second millennium and have followed *čoček* from its roots to its crown for more than five centuries. We have identified various styles and branches and made our way through a maze of developments. In the next chapter, variations of *čoček* will be visually demonstrated and its musical aspects examined in greater depth.



Figure 5: Photograph of Ferus Mustafov's car in front of his house

¹⁸⁴ Interviews Elam and Kurtiš, 13th April 2018.

¹⁸⁵ To recall: Tito's death, the end of Yugoslavia, and the opening borders to the West, as discussed in Chapter Six

CHAPTER 8: ČOČEK MUSIC TO LOOK AT AND LISTEN TO

With the millennium, we have reached a milestone in the development of *čoček*. This chapter will dive into the music, offering audio and video samples¹⁸⁶ as well as notation and diagrams to visually and aurally demonstrate the styles of *čoček* previously discussed. Moreover, the musical developments will be examined in closer detail, touching on the remains of Turkish and Ottoman elements when appropriate.¹⁸⁷ I shall mostly focus on the styles which lead to the Classic *Čoček*, as this is the central style of *čoček* music, and the only one which really undergoes constant musical changes. For a quick reminder of the various styles, and how they relate to each other, please refer to the ‘*Čoček Tree*’ diagram in Appendix I.¹⁸⁸

This chapter is not a music analysis, it is a guide to comprehending the music, recognising and comparing certain parameters in order to distinguish the styles, and to follow their gradual detachment from Ottoman elements.¹⁸⁹ I have examined the music samples for *makam* usage as a means to show that. However, whilst *usuls* can be notated and followed by any musician, *makam* is a complicated melodic system, which takes decades of study. To help understand what follows, here are some important facts: *Makam* reaches far beyond a scale system. There are basic scales, which typically include *microtones*. From each basic scale a number of *makams* may arise, each following its own characteristic movements. When described by Turkish musicians, *makams* feel alive, like living creatures which follow certain guidelines of aesthetic movement. In Appendix II there is more information and a list of *makams* and their features.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Audio and video samples can be found in the footnotes as web links, and in the enclosed folder/CDrom as files.

¹⁸⁷ Though a thorough analysis of *čoček* from an Ottoman Turkish angle would be worthwhile, it is not part of this dissertation. Comparative samples here only serve the deeper understanding of *čoček* as Ottoman-derived music.

¹⁸⁸ If you are using the electronic document, you may click on the links, which will take you to the appropriate sections in the text.

¹⁸⁹ See Chapter Three and Six.

¹⁹⁰ I have decided to list the *makam* names used in the audio samples, as it will be of value to any *makam*-experienced musician. For readers with little knowledge, Appendix II will provide a more thorough overview, however, it is not

SAMPLE SET 1: ČOČEK USULS

Firstly, I would like to introduce the basic *usuls* of *čoček* (see Chapter Two). Figure 1.1 shows the rhythmical outline of the *čiftetelli usul*, demonstrated in Sample 1.1:¹⁹¹



Figure 6: Čiftetelli Usul

Melodic instruments, such as the *oud*, *kanun*, violin and clarinet, used in a *čalgija* ensemble, and saxophone and electric bass in later wedding ensembles play one of the following lines, demonstrated in Samples 1.2 and 1.3:¹⁹²



Figure 7: Čiftetelli bass line



Figure 8: Čiftetelli bass line variations

The second *čoček usul* is *karšilama*, notated here in two basic variations, demonstrations in Samples 1.4 and 1.5:¹⁹³

possible to notate *makam* correctly in any simplified way within the scope of this thesis. So whilst the many *makam* names may not mean much to some readers, they still portray the complexity of the original *čoček*, and show how a simplification into Western modes gradually occurs.

¹⁹¹ Audio Sample 1.1: *Čiftetelli usul*: <https://youtu.be/r07OrOaSHY4> - last accessed 17th July 2018

¹⁹² Audio Sample 1.2: *Čiftetelli* bass line: <https://youtu.be/JOQP-Zb69Iw>, Audio Sample 1.3: *Čiftetelli* variation; <https://youtu.be/aSptP6EGr6c> - last accessed 17th August 2018.

¹⁹³ Audio Sample 1.4: *Karšilama*: https://youtu.be/Ziq5AOx_ngo, Audio Sample 1.5: *Karšilama* variation (playing more ornamented as in the notation figure): <https://youtu.be/FrmcHbrwhbQ> - last accessed 17th August 2018.

Figure 9: *Karšilama usul*Figure 10: *Karšilama variation*

Played as a bass line by pitched instrument as follows:¹⁹⁴

Figure 11: *Karšilama bass line*Figure 12: *Karšilama bass line variation*

The third typical *čoček* rhythm pattern is the *Makedonski Čoček usul* (see [Chapter Four](#)), which can be found in many variants. Figure 8 shows the basic version, demonstrated in Sample 1.8:¹⁹⁵

Figure 13: *Makedonski Čoček usul* - basic

Here some frequent variations, demonstrated in Sample 1.9:¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Audio Sample 1.6: *Karšilama* with sax: https://youtu.be/FdKYq_sHkLk, Audio Sample 1.7: *Karšilama* variation (audio sample performing a different variation as in Figure 7 shows): <https://youtu.be/qmOxTAVQXIk> - last accessed 17th August 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Audio Sample 1.8: basic *Makedonski Čoček usul*.,: <https://youtu.be/uMFioFEGAQk> - last accessed 17th August 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Audio Sample 1.9: *Makedonski Čoček usul*, variations: <https://youtu.be/0wEdl01kczE> - last accessed 17th August 2018.



Figure 14: Makedonski Čoček usul - variation 1



Figure 15: Makedonski Čoček usul - variation 2

SAMPLE SET 2: ČALGIJA ČOČEK

In this section I will examine the original *Čalgija Čoček* (introduced in [Chapter Three](#)) in more detail. Sample 2.1¹⁹⁷ is from 1960,¹⁹⁸ however, it is still performed in the 1950s-style, with *kanun*, violin, *oud*, *darbuka* and clarinet. This instrumentation defines certain musical elements: There are no accompaniment chords. Any *tema* is performed in unison, accompanied by percussion; *oud* and *kanun* play drone tones in addition to the *tema*. Improvised solos are likewise accompanied by percussion, whilst non-soloing instruments play the *usul* bass-lines. The current sample is led by the violinist, who plays predominantly *mane*-style solos throughout, with no recognizable *tema*. Şahin identified the melodic progression as *Saba makam*, well implemented by Turkish standards.¹⁹⁹ Unfortunately, it fades out rather than allowing us to hear the original ending.

Turksi Čoček (Sample 2.2)²⁰⁰ is in *karşilama*. Starting with a few bars of percussion, a clarinet *mane* is followed by a violin *mane*, both, according to Alişan, in *Hüseyni makam*. After the *mane*

¹⁹⁷ Audio Sample 2.1: *Indim Yarin Bahcesine*, Baki Hilmi, <https://youtu.be/VcT1yg4pRnI> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

¹⁹⁸ It is incredibly difficult to find old recordings. Zoran told me why: 'I work in a big band in Skopje, and I play with traditional *čalgija* ensembles. We used to record so much music, but everything is gone. It is very sad that all was either stolen or destroyed. None of the sheet music, and none of the recordings can be found. Nobody cares for the work and the pieces, it is a disaster. I have seen piles of tapes and sheet music thrown around like garbage, and a lot has been stolen. With each change of government, new people run the TV stations, and they don't care about the previous, they even record over old tapes. I want to start crying, there were so many improvisations, recordings, everything gone'. Interview 3rd April 2018.

¹⁹⁹ Şahin, interview 2nd August 2018.

²⁰⁰ Audio Sample 2.2: *Turksi Čoček* (Turkish *Čoček*), Ferus Mustafiov <https://youtu.be/1ZZuQjAas10> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

improvisation, there is a *tema* in *Hicaz makam*, short and repetitive, and again, the recording fades out so we cannot examine the ending of the piece. Though it has a Turkish flair about it, Ališan points out, that to his *makam*-trained ear, the microtones sound inconsistent and not in tune.²⁰¹ This makes perfect sense, as Macedonian musicians do call it quarter-tones, not microtones.²⁰² According to Şahin, the famous Turkish Romani clarinetists, who were teachers to the Macedonian's *čoček* masters (Chapter Three), have an intuitive knowledge of *makam*, as they learned the special features aurally from their fathers.²⁰³ To her ear, the Macedonian Romani players in the samples discussed also use *makams* intuitively, possibly a bit less Turkish than their teachers. Vevki is also aware of that and complains: 'we in Macedonia don't know proper *makam*, we call it Majors and Minors, rather than *Uşşâk*, *Rast*, *Nihavent* and *Hicaz*.'²⁰⁴

The next sample, the *Enverov Čoček*²⁰⁵ is in *čiftetelli*, performed by a traditional *čalgija* ensemble, which, according to Kurtiš, 'is the only line-up in which *čiftetelli* works. I cannot play *čiftetelli* with the saxophone. Well, I can, but that would not sound right. *Čiftetelli* calls for the clarinet, to get the typical character'.²⁰⁶ Though recorded in 1976, the *Enverov Čoček* is still played in the old *čalgija čoček* style, with *mane* improvisations and no *tema*. The clarinet solo moves from *Uşşak* into *Saba*, whilst the violin solo stays in *Uşşak* throughout, performed with Macedonian quarter tones rather than correct Turkish microtones.

²⁰¹ Ališan, interview 21st June 2018.

²⁰² Turkish microtones divide a tone into nine sections, called 'commas', and define strictly which one to use. Macedonians call it quarter tones, but are not precise with the pitch; they simply lower or raise a note, the degree may vary throughout a piece according to the taste of the player. See Appendix II.

²⁰³ Şahin, interview 24th June 2018

²⁰⁴ Vevki, interview 18th April 18.

²⁰⁵ Audio Sample 2.3: *Enverov Čoček*, performed by Ferus Mustafov's Orchestar *Čalgii* in 1976:

<https://youtu.be/pbf7d6uc4M4> - last accessed 16th August 2018

²⁰⁶ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

All in all, for Western ears, *Čalgija Čoček* would in most cases be considered as Turkish, whereas Turkish listeners recognise the Turkish or Ottoman roots in style, tonality and *usul*, but categorise it as its own genre.

SAMPLE SET 3: OTHER EARLY ČOČEK STYLES

The *Zurla-Tapan Čoček* (see [Chapter Four](#)) is a lot noisier, though musically minimalistic; in a way, it embodies the most crucial *čoček* elements: rhythm and improvisation. Led by one or more *tapanists*, the *zurla* plays *tema* and improvisations; if there is more than one *zurla*, some would play a drone. In *Zurla-Tapan Čoček*, percussion is more pronounced than in other *čoček* styles, which may be one reason why it has been popular for many centuries, as, according to Branislav, ‘a passionate *čoček* consumer could be satisfied with percussion only, even drumming with a fork on an ordinary dish or plate can produce a *čoček* to dance’.²⁰⁷ Sample 3.1²⁰⁸ starts with a *mane*, performed in a *makam* combination of *Hicaz*, *Saba* and *Kürdi*, but the microtones do not satisfy Turkish tastes.²⁰⁹ At one point, the *tapan* breaks into a variation of *čiftetelli*, and some *temas* in *Kürdi* and more improvisations follow. In Sample 3.2²¹⁰ the *tapan* player demonstrates the importance of the percussion section. After some initial *zurla tema* sections in *Kürdi makam*, the *tapan* shows off, ending the track with a powerful solo. *Zurla-Tapan Čoček* has generally a basic structural form, starting with *mane* or percussion, followed by *tema* sections in between.

²⁰⁷ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

²⁰⁸ Audio Sample 3.1 *Zurla Tapan Čoček, Zurni goskata v Razlog* (The gossip in wisdom) – *čiftetelli* <https://youtu.be/AuSJx2sFXiU> - last accessed 16th August 2018.

²⁰⁹ Şahin, interview 2nd August 2018.

²¹⁰ Audio Sample 3.2: *Zurla Tapan Cocek Zurnite v Gotse Delchev* <https://youtu.be/WEZDxHHFbyc> - last accessed 21st August 2018.

čiftetelli. Also unusual is an actual improvised section, although in a fixed slot of numbered bars, with a composed phrase leading back to the next *tema*, so the dancers get the cue to continue their choreography. The *čoček* here is embedded into a ‘Gypsy Suite’, surrounded by other stylised Gypsy dances from other regions of former Yugoslavia, which is another typical feature of Folklore *Čoček*.

SAMPLE SET 4: CLASSIC ČOČEK AROUND 1970 TO 2000

So far, instrumentation has just been touched on, in order to differentiate and understand the social contexts and general developments in *čoček*. For the musical development of *Čalgija Čoček* into Classic *Čoček*, the addition of the accordion in the mid-1970s initiated a dramatic transformation from monophonic into heterophonic music. The drone-tone, typical in *čalgija*, was replaced by a chordal accompaniment. However, contrary to Western-classical chord progressions which follow the melody line, the Balkan chordal accompaniment follows the *usul* patterns and their bass lines; the typical chord progression for most *temas* is the following:

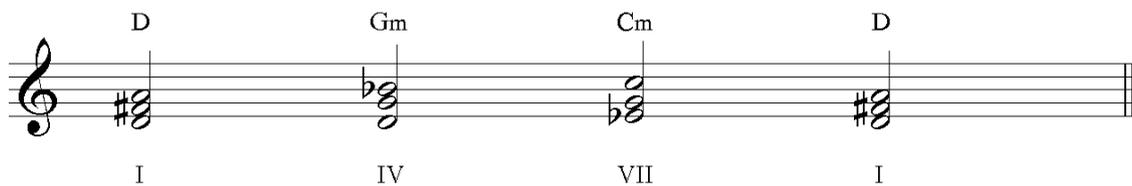


Figure 17: Hicaz Cadence

I have labelled this as ‘*Hicaz Cadence*’. Most *čoček*s in *Hicaz* from 1970 onwards use this or similar chord progressions as accompaniment, moving around the first, the fourth, and the lower seventh degree. By this time, *čalgija* had already moved into the background, replaced by wedding ensembles with accordion, *darbuka*, electric bass and guitar, led by clarinet and/or saxophone. Moreover, with the inclusion of accordion the microtones in *temas* diminished. In addition to *čiftetelli* and *karšilama*, the *Makedonski čoček usul* became increasingly popular.

I have chosen three typical samples from the 1980s, which I will use to describe the musical characteristics of early Classic *Čoček*. Most of the known *čoček* pieces of that time were composed by Ferus, who also performs on the available recordings. The *Olimpijski Čoček* (Sample 4.1),²¹⁶ recorded in 1985, is *karšilama*, performed by saxophone, accordion, electric bass and *darbuka*. The structure is as follows:

Section:	Percussion Introduction:	<i>Tema</i> : AA BB AA BB CC	Saxophone solo	<i>Temas</i> : AA BB CCCC
Content:	4 bars <i>karšilama</i> pattern.	<i>Tema</i> sections of 4 bars each	28 bars length <i>mane</i> style	as previous <i>tema</i>
Tonality:		Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>	<i>Hicaz</i>	as previous <i>tema</i>
Chords:		D D D Cm D	D	as previous <i>tema</i>

Figure 18: Sample 4.1 - *Olimpijski Čoček* structure

In both the *tema* and the improvisations, Ferus uses the Balkan *Hicaz* mode.²¹⁷ Şahin could detect *Hicaz makam* hints, but without microtones.²¹⁸ The main reason for this is the second voice a third above the *tema*, played by accordion, which can only execute diatonic pitches. On one occasion, Elam explained the ground rules of *čoček* harmonisation: ‘If both of us play together, we play in two voices. I play the main *tema* and you play a third above; and we have to synchronise our embellishments. If I am playing by myself I can spontaneously improvise trills and ornaments’.²¹⁹ The accompaniment is typical of Balkan *Hicaz*, consisting of two chords: The tonic chord D Major alternates with C Minor, the chord of the lower 7th degree. A notation for the *Olimpijski Čoček* can be found in Appendix III.

²¹⁶ Audio Sample 4.1: *Olimpijski Čoček*, performed by Ferus Mustafov and the Orkestar Mustafe Ismailovica, 1985: <https://youtu.be/OLMTE-WhKUo> 9/8 1985 - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²¹⁷ Please refer to Appendix II for a briefing on Turkish *makam*, and the differentiation to Balkan modes.

²¹⁸ Şahin, interview 3rd August 2018.

²¹⁹ Elam, interview 13th April 2018

The *Tomin Čoček* (Sample 4.2),²²⁰ also from 1985, is in the *Makedonski čoček usul*. Macedonians nicknamed *čočeks* with this feel ‘*Sa-Sa*’ *čoček*, as it inspires them to shout out ‘sa – sa – sa – sa!’ on each stressed beat. The structure is as follows:

Section:	Intro: rhythm section	<i>Tema</i> : A B C A B	Clarinet solo	<i>Tema</i> A B - fade out..
Content:	6 bars Makedonski <i>čoček usul</i>	Sections A-B: 8 bars each. Section C: 6 bars, with improvised elements	65 bars, most played in <i>mane</i> style.	as before
Tonality:		Natural Minor, or <i>Karçiğar</i> ending in <i>Kürdi</i> without microtones	<i>Hicaz – Nikriz – Karçiğar</i> with microtones.	as before
Chords:	Cm	Section A: C Minor, section B: F Major, section C: Eb Minor	F Major 7 bars, Eb Major for 6 bars, C Minor 52 bars.	as before

Figure 19: Sample 4.2 - *Tomin Čoček* structure

This recording is led by the clarinet, which plays the *tema* without a second voice. Western musicologists might consider the *tema* natural Minor, whereas Şahin detects some *makam* behaviours. However, she points out that in contrast to the *tema*, in the solo Ferus plays *makam* with microtones.²²¹ This usually only occurs, when a second voice is added to a *tema* as in Sample 4.1.

In both previous examples, we can hear a substantial transformation from the *čalgija* recordings (Sample Set Three). The formerly Turkish feel has, due to the different instrumentation, added accompaniment chords and harmonisation, and the reduced usage of *makam*, yielded to a much more Western sound. Though performed with the same instrumentation, the *Panadjursko Oro* (Sample 4.3)²²² is much closer to *Čalgija Čoček*. Played in *čitetelli*, the *tema* is hardly distinguishable from the improvisations, as ornamentation is improvised; the accompaniment chords follow the traditional bass line of *čiftetelli*: This is the structural form:

²²⁰ Audio Sample 4.2: *Tomin Čoček*, performed by Ferus Mustafov and the Orkestar Mustafe Ismailovica <https://youtu.be/RDzuKbBnZOY> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²²¹ Şahin, interview 3rd August 2018.

²²² Audio Sample 4.3: *Panadjursko Oro*, Ferus Mustafov: *Ora i Čočeci* - https://youtu.be/rDrmj_UdW1k - last accessed 18th August 2018.

Section:	Percussion intro	Clarinet solo	<i>Tema</i>	Accordion solo	Clarinet solo
Content:	4 bars <i>čiftelli</i>	mostly <i>mane</i> style	8 bars, played freely with improvised ornamentation	little <i>mane</i> , mostly metered	<i>mane</i> , includes some variations of the <i>tema</i>
Tonality:		<i>Muhayer, Hüseyini, Kürdi</i>	<i>Kürdi</i>	<i>Saba</i>	<i>Muhayer, Hüseyini, Kürdi</i>
Chords:		<i>čiftelli</i> ostinato throughout: Dm-Dm-C-Dm			

Figure 20: Sample 4.3 - *Panadjursko Oro* structure

Though this piece is amongst the *Classic Čoček* repertoire, it is mostly improvised and follows *makam* in a much more traditional way;²²³ it comes close to the style of the internal Romani *Čoček* (Chapter Seven). This leads me to point out one important aspect: Though I have distinguished a number of *čoček* branches and styles, and labelled them to offer clarity, as a living art-form, the edges between the various branches flow and intermingle. The name of this piece contains ‘*Oro*’, though it is musically clearly a *čoček*; this indicates how little importance is given to terminology and rulebooks.

Despite the occasional ‘unruliness’, there is a clear formal structure in *Classic Čoček*. According to Vevki, each genuine *čoček* has to have a *tema*, because ‘how can someone ask at a wedding for a certain *čoček*, if it is not defined by a *tema*, only freely improvised?’²²⁴ This is echoed by other musicians, not just for aesthetic musical aspects, but also inspired by the economic aspects of receiving large tips, when playing certain *čoček* pieces. Zoran explained the *čoček* structure as follows: ‘Mostly the rhythm section starts, then there will be a *tema* of two or more sections, and after that an improvised *mane* solo follows, with the *tema* returning at the end.’²²⁵ According to Vevki, some soloists might start the *čoček* with a solo *mane*. A typical wedding ensemble would consist of ‘a clarinetist, who also plays saxophone; sometimes there is a trumpet, accompanied by accordion, bass guitar, guitar and *darbuka*’.²²⁶ Occasionally one can find a violin. Zoran says with regret, that

²²³ Şahin, interview 3rd August 2018.

²²⁴ Vevki, interview 18th April 18.

²²⁵ Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

²²⁶ Vevki, interview 18th April 18.

towards the 21st century, more and more synthesizers, drum kits or electronic drums have taken over from the accordions and *darbuka*.²²⁷

With the next sample, *Dada Sali* (Sample 4.4),²²⁸ we move to the second generation of Classic Čoček in the 1990s. This is by far the most popular *čoček* piece of all times (see Chapter Eight).²²⁹ According to Ferus, in the 1990s it was performed around four to five times at every Macedonian wedding. Recorded in 1995, one can hear more weight on the keyboard, whilst the accordion has a less prominent role. Also, a drum kit has been added, and even though the piece is in *Makedonksi usul*, the accompaniment has taken on a funk-influenced character. The structure is as follows:

Section:	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC AA BB CC	Keyboard solo	Percussion solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC
Content:	sections of 4 bars each	19 bars	4 bars		21 bars, <i>mane-style</i>	
Tonality:	natural Minor, hints of <i>Buselik</i> and <i>Kürdi</i>	natural Minor, hints of <i>Uşşak</i>		as before	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i> , <i>Hicaz makam</i>	as before
Chords:	Gm - F	Gm		Gm - F	G	Gm - F

Figure 21: Sample 4.4 - *Dada Sali* structure

The tonality is a lot closer to natural Minor and Balkan *Hicaz* modes than to *makam*. The *makam* hints in the keyboard solo could be coincidence. Only Ferus' saxophone solo, for which the accompaniment changes to a G Major, is in *Hicaz* and shows some *makam* characteristics,²³⁰ it appears as if he is playing here with younger musicians who did not study *makam*.

The *Štipski Čoček* (Sample 4.5)²³¹ mostly composed by Ilmi Jašarov,²³² is in *karšilama*, and also enjoys huge popularity. According to Vevki, there was not one Macedonian Wedding without *Štipski*

²²⁷ Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

²²⁸ Audio Sample 4.4: *Dada Sali*, Album: Macedonian Wedding Soul Cooking, 1995: <https://youtu.be/A1yhVwwyARM> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²²⁹ A notation sample can be found in Appendix III.

²³⁰ Şahin, interview 4th August 2018.

²³¹ Audio Sample 4.5: *Štipski Čoček* (*Čoček* from *Štip*), performed by Ferus Mustafov, 1995: <https://youtu.be/JOftkd1ZdpA> until 03:03s - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²³² Refer to the next sample, Audio Sample 4.6 for further details.

since the inclusion of *čoček* in the 1980s. The instrumentation is almost the same as above with saxophone, accordion, keyboards, electric bass and drum kit; a *darbuka* however is not included. The structure as follows:

Section:	Intro <i>karšilama</i>	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC D EE	Saxophone solo	Drum solo	Change to next <i>čoček</i> ...
Content:	2 bars sax, 2 bars tutti	17 bars, <i>mane</i> -style	each section 4 bars	29 bars	4 bars	
Tonality:		<i>Segah</i> - <i>Rast</i>	Bb maj-C Hicaz- Bb Maj, or: <i>Rast – Hicaz - Rast</i>	<i>Meyan</i>		
Chords:	B ^b Major	B ^b Major	A section: B ^b Major B section: <i>Hicaz</i> cadence in C D+E sections: B ^b Major cadence	B ^b Major		B ^b Major

Figure 22: Sample 4.5 - *Štipski Čoček* structure

This *čoček* is an excellent example of various cultural influences mingling within a single piece of music.²³³ The *tema* sections A, D and E are in Major, with a Western sound, whilst sections B and C are Balkan *Hicaz* and have oriental character.²³⁴ The solos however are *mane*-style and contain, according to Şahin, clear elements of *Segah*, *Rast* and *Meyan*.²³⁵

I found a version of *Štipski Čoček* from 1970 (Sample 4.6),²³⁶ performed by Ilmi himself, Ferus' father and earliest teacher, which allows direct comparison:

Section:	Intro <i>karšilama</i>	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC A ⁺ A ⁺ B ⁺ B ⁺ ²³³	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA
Content:	4 bars rhythm section	16 bars, <i>mane</i> -style		17 bars <i>mane</i> -style	as before
Tonality:		<i>Segah</i> , <i>Rast</i> , hints of <i>Müstear</i> and <i>Hicaz</i>	Bb Maj – C Hicaz – Bb Maj	<i>Segah</i>	
Chords:	B ^b Major	B ^b Major	A, D, E sections: B ^b Major cadence. B, C section: <i>Hicaz</i> cadence in C	B ^b Major	

Figure 23: Sample 4.6 - *Štipki Čoček* by Ilmi structure

²³³ Explained by Vladimir in Chapter Two.

²³⁴ Vladimir, interview 6th April 2018.

²³⁵ Şahin, interview 4th August 2018.

²³⁶ Audio Sample 4.6: *Štipski Čoček* by Ilmi Jasharov, 1970: <https://youtu.be/Y389dNVLkXc> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

The first surprise was the much slower speed: Whilst the performance by Ferus starts at approximately 235 bpm and increases to around 340 bpm, Ilmi's introduction is performed at only 200 bpm, and reaches only approximately 260 bpm for the last instrumentals. This is a general tendency as Vevki has previously pointed out, that with time, the speed of *čoček* increased. The next unexpected discovery was that sections D and E of Ferus' *tema* were missing in Ilmi's version. Listening to other available *Štipski Čoček* recordings, which all included those sections, I have confirmed with Ferus that they were added by him. According to Bajsa, it is common practice in folk dances to add 'personal sections' to the traditional *tema*. In *čoček* this is not usually the case, as the individual touch is already given by improvised solos.²³⁷ In the usage of *makam*, one can detect that Ferus is one generation further removed from the Ottoman era. Both father and son base their solos around *Segah* and *Rast*. However, according to Şahin, Ilmi's *mane* is closer to a Turkish *taxim*²³⁸ than his son's.²³⁹

A less known, but typical example is *Janin Čoček* (Sample 4.7),²⁴⁰ in *karšilama*, a collaboration of father and son Mustafov:²⁴¹

Section:	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC DD CC	Saxophone solo by Ilmi	<i>Tema</i> CC DD CC
Content:	Sections of 4 bars each	20 bars, <i>mane</i> -style	
Tonality:	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>	<i>Hicaz makam</i>	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>
Chords:	G – Fm, <i>Hicaz</i> cadence in G	G	as before

Figure 24: Sample 4.7 - *Janin Čoček* structure

The *tema* is in Balkan *Hicaz*, whilst the solo, played by Ilmi, is in *Hicaz makam*. This tendency to perform *temas* in Western modes, and the solos in *makam* came about, as Turkish-trained *čoček*

²³⁷ Only King Ferus as a pioneer of *čoček* does that, and all others are imitating him...

²³⁸ A Turkish *taxim* is the equivalent to a Macedonian *mane*.

²³⁹ Şahin, interview 4th August 2018.

²⁴⁰ Audio Sample 4.7: *Janin Čoček*, Ilmi Mustafov/Jašarov, Album 'Tatko i Sin Mustafovi', 1988:

<https://youtu.be/qDgUe67OscM> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²⁴¹ I tried to clarify the strange situation of different surnames of father and son. Bajsa told me that this is impossible. I may be aware that Romani men often change their wives a few times, and so the question of surnames is a vague one with flexible answers. Bajsa also told me it is an intimate one, too intimate to be asked by a stranger...

masters increasingly performed with modern instruments and younger musicians. It does apply to the next piece, the *Suadin Čoček* (Sample 4.8),²⁴² performed by Kurtiš:²⁴³

Section:	Intro <i>Makedonski čoček usul</i>	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB AA	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB AA BB	C C C C
Content:	4 bars	20 bars, <i>mane</i> -style	Sections of 8 bars length	24 bars, <i>mane</i> -style		2 bar outro
Tonality:		<i>Hicaz makam</i>	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i> , some brief Major motive at the start of B section	<i>Hicaz makam</i>	as before	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>
Chords:		ostinato on F-Ebm-F	A section: F-Ebm, B section: Bb-Bbm, <i>Hicaz</i> cadenz in F		as before	

Figure 25: Sample 4.8 - *Suadin Čoček* structure

Performed in *Makedonski čoček usul*, the structural form is similar to the previous 1990s *čoček* samples. According to Šahin, one can hear the influence of his Turkish Romani teachers in his realisation of the *Hicaz makam* in the solos.²⁴⁴ The contrast to the *tema* sections, which are rhythmically and melodically very clean and structured, is quite significant here. Also, Kurtiš appears to have the urge for some innovative elements, expressed in an unusual mode change to Major in the B section.

SAMPLE SET 5: LATIN ČOČEK

Moving on to *Latin Čoček* will inevitably encompass Romani brass bands, as they could be regarded its ambassadors. To recall from Chapter Six, *Latin Čoček* evolved from a fusion with Latin dance rhythms. Teodosievski's and Bregović's²⁴⁵ impact did not just make the style globally popular,

²⁴² Audio Sample 4.8: *Suadin Čoček*, Kurtiš Jašarov, Album 'Ora i Čočeci', <https://youtu.be/casspDfTIPE> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²⁴³ Ferus and Ilmi certainly held the monopoly for *čoček* recordings in the 1980s and 1990s. I had to look hard and long to find one composed and performed by Kurtiš.

²⁴⁴ Šahin, interview 4th August 2018.

²⁴⁵ Two non-Romani musicians, who were influential in *čoček* and Romani music in general on many levels, see Chapter Six.

it also promoted its Westernisation, clearing away any Ottoman features such as *makam*, though the improvised solos still contain a lot of *mane*. However, the predominant mode is Balkan *Hicaz*.

The first sample, *Ciganski Čoček* (Sample 5.1),²⁴⁶ is a traditional piece, arranged by Stevo Teodosievski:

Section:	<i>Tema</i> AA BB	Trumpet solo	Riff	<i>Tema</i> CC C ⁺ C ⁺	Clarinet solo	<i>Tema</i> DD EE
Content:	7-8 bar-sections	34 bars, mostly <i>mane</i> -style	6 bars percussion	4-bar sections	22 bars <i>mane</i> -style	
Tonality:	G Minor, D <i>Hicaz</i>	D Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>		F Major – F Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i> with <i>Zirgüle</i> touch	F- <i>Hicaz</i> Eb Major
Chords:	A: Latin chord progression B: Dm-Gm	D		Bb-C-F Bbm-C-F	F, Latin rhythm with a <i>çiftetelli</i> touch	F-Eb Eb-Bb

Figure 26: Sample 5.1 - *Ciganski Čoček* structure

This piece is an intricate mixture of Eastern and Western influences, an intermingling and fluid transformation of Major and Minor keys with Balkan *Hicaz*, Western-Latin chord progressions with *Hicaz* cadence elements. The tendency to contain *temas* with more Western, and solos with more Eastern touches is similar to the late Classic *Čoček*. It is unusual to have a clarinet within a brass ensemble, and even more so, as in this piece, the clarinetist uses *makam* in his solo.²⁴⁷ There is one more comment I have to place here: The album cover shows a highly sexual image of the belly and more, of a mostly naked woman, and Esma's name next to it.²⁴⁸ This imagery contradicts earlier discussions regarding the non-erotic connotation of *čoček* for the Romani and in particular Esma's own comments on the subject (Chapter Five).

²⁴⁶ Audio Sample 5.1: *Ciganski Čoček*, Anseml Teodosievski 1975: <https://youtu.be/BgcKTzhOCgc> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

²⁴⁷ To recall: Stevo's music creation generated substantial differences to Classic *Čoček* and other music styles created by Romani musicians; he composed Romani music for Romani, and taught composition to young Romani musicians in the school he and his wife ran. Moreover, his pieces became known as Balkan Romani music outside the Balkans.

²⁴⁸ See Figure 31 on p.80.

Next, there is a Latin *Čoček* performed by the Fejat Sejdić Orchestar (see [Chapter Six](#)), a brass group from Southern Serbia. The *Stefanov Čoček* (Sample 5.2)²⁴⁹ has the following structure:

Section:	<i>Tema</i> AA BB AA	Trumpet solo	<i>Tema</i> AA BB
Content:	Sections of 8-22 bars	Rhythm change to <i>čiftetelli</i> variation	
Tonality:	Gm harmonic, Bb Major	<i>Misheberach</i> Klezmer mode or <i>Nihavend</i> with <i>Neveser</i> and <i>Nikriz</i>	Gm
Chords:	Mixture between Minor cadence and <i>Latin</i> progressions	Gm ostinato, changes to D, back to Gm	as before

Figure 27: Sample 5.2 - *Stefanov Čoček* structure

Though this piece is a Romani creation, produced in 1999, when *Ferus* and the Classic *Čoček* were in full flow, it has quite a different musical character. The *tema* is in G Minor and Bb Major, with melodic motives similar to Latin music. The chord progression also contains Western classical elements fused with Latin progressions. As before, the solo moves to an oriental feel. Here, firstly the accompaniment pattern shifts to something close to *čiftetelli*. The soloist also changes to a more Eastern mode, however, he picks one similar to the Klezmer mode *Misheberach*²⁵⁰ rather than *makam*; still, Şahin could hear *Nihavend makam* with hints of *Neveser* and *Nikriz*, but not performed in any traditional manner.²⁵¹

The last Latin sample is the *Mundo Čoček* (Sample 5.3)²⁵², performed by the Boban Marković Orchestar, another famous Romani brass ensemble from Southern Serbia.

²⁴⁹ Audio Sample 5.2: *Stefanov Čoček*, Fejat Sejdić, 1999: <https://youtu.be/-Ara6WwdqdQ> – last accessed 18th August 2018.

²⁵⁰ Natural Minor scale with a raised 4th degree

²⁵¹ Şahin, interview 4th July 18.

²⁵² Audio Sample 5.3: *Mundo Čoček*, Boban Markovic, 2009: <https://youtu.be/D-x--SXJcBA> - last accessed 18th August 2018.

Section:	Intro <i>Latin rhythm</i>	<i>Tema</i> AA BB A ⁺ A ⁺	Interlude:	Trumpet solo	<i>Tema</i> BB AA BB	Mozart theme
Content:	4 bars percussion	varying sections of 8 to 12 bars length	theme from Mozart Symphonie No 40	22 bars, <i>mane</i> -style	as before	as in the <i>interlude</i>
Tonality:		Gm natural and harmonic scale	Gm	Gm, touches of <i>Nihavend</i> with <i>Neveser</i>	as before	
Chords:		around Western Gm cadence		Gm	as before	

Figure 28: Sample 5.3 - *Mundo Čoček* structure

The name already implies that this piece is a ‘*čoček* of the world’. However, in contrast to other Western influenced pieces, this is entirely the creation of highly talented Balkan Roma musicians. Mostly in G Minor, the *Latin* groove stays throughout. The touches of *makam*, which Şahin points out for the solo, are more coincidence, stemming from creative improvisation rather than from any *makam* knowledge.²⁵³

To summarise, Latin *Čoček* is the *čoček* with most Western elements, even though many are created by Romani musicians without other direct input. Some characteristics such as *temas* with more Western elements and solos with a more Eastern touch, implemented by using different modes, *makams* or *usuls*, are similar to Classic *Čoček*, even though Latin *Čoček* is by far more Westernised. However, many of the Latin *čoček*-playing ensembles are southern Serbian and therefore have less Ottoman influence than *čoček* musicians from Macedonia, especially as many of the latter have been trained by Turkish masters, and therefore experienced extra Turkish input.

ČOČEK NAME-GIVING

Before finally moving on to the turn of the millennium, I would like to comment on how Romani musicians name their *čoček* creations. So far, we have examined *Turksi Čoček*, *Vranjanski Čoček* and *Štipski Čoček*, all of which point to places, e.g. a *čoček* from Turkey, Vranja and Štip. Some pieces

²⁵³ Şahin, interview 5th August 2018.

include the name of a person, such as *Enverov Čoček*, *Stefanov Čoček* or *Tomin Čoček* which refers to Enver, Stefan or Tom, who are either the composer, or the person to whom the *čoček* is dedicated. *Čočeks* referring to places of origin or people are one typical naming scheme. Other examples include meaningful events as sources for a certain musical inspiration, such as the *Olimpijski Čoček*,²⁵⁴ which was named after the 1984 Summer Olympics. Sometimes, the musical origin may inspire the name. Amongst further eclectic *čoček* sources, Silverman mentions ‘Pinko’ which is based on Henry Mancini’s ‘Pink Panther’ score (202, p.133).

This inevitably raises questions of where the musical ideas for *čoček temas* come from. Zoran suggests that any Romani song or instrumental can become a *čoček*. Most Turkish pieces of music also work, whilst Macedonian songs or instrumental pieces are almost never suitable.²⁵⁵ Some more exotic location names might reflect a certain influence on the music. For example, Romani people generally love Bollywood movies and music, and often use their favourite movie tunes as a *čoček tema*. Those pieces might be called ‘*Indijski Čoček*’.²⁵⁶ On the other hand, for Sample 8.3, ‘*Indijski Čoček*’ by *Veselo*,²⁵⁷ Şahin points out an ‘Indianized’ interpretation of the *usul* by the percussionist of that recording.²⁵⁸ However, according to Zoran, the rhythm pattern mostly stays steady, and it is the melody line which is characterised by the name; therefore, an ‘*Arabski Čoček*’ may carry a *tema* inspired by Arabic *makam*, or an Arabic folk tune.

Bulgarian sources have also been mentioned as origins for *čoček temas*. Silverman states that ‘among Romani musicians there is a cross-fertilisation of musical styles, with a premium on

²⁵⁴ Audio Sample 4.1

²⁵⁵ Interview Zoran 3rd April 2018.

²⁵⁶ Translated ‘Indian *Čoček*’.

²⁵⁷ Refer to Audio Sample 8.3 in Appendix II *Indijski Čoček* by Veselo, a Macedonian Romani Brass Band: https://youtu.be/N-_Jd98jkf0 - last accessed 19th August 2018.

²⁵⁸ Şahin, interview 4th August 2018.

innovation. Papasov²⁵⁹ confirms, that he and Mustafov would trade tunes over the telephone in the 1980s because travel to Yugoslavia was impossible' (2012, p.133). However, Zoran sees the whole trading business in a slightly different light: 'Ferus and other Macedonian *čoček* musicians steal music; they hear some great Romani music from Bulgaria, they make a little modification, and sell it as their own piece. Only Ferus steals, Papasov does not'. However, as if this would balance out the national accounts of music robbery, he mentions the Bulgarians stealing Macedonian folk music,²⁶⁰ so, all in all, the cross-fertilisation mentioned by Silverman is flourishing.

Whilst this little anecdote gives a taste of Balkan musician's mentality, the majority of this chapter followed Kurtiš's advice, to 'listen, listen, listen' as the only way to capture *čoček*.

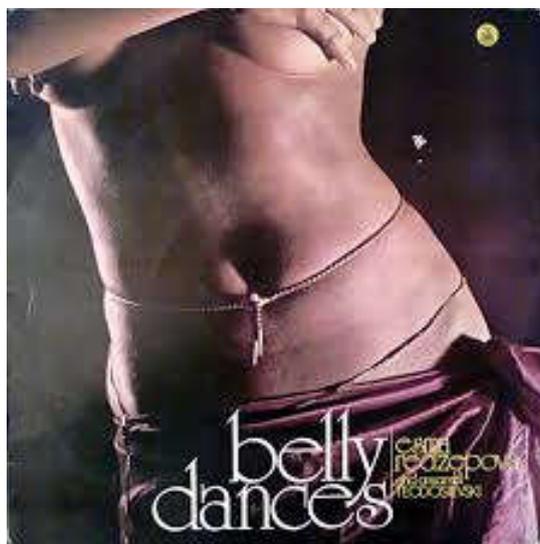


Figure 29: Album Cover to *Ciganski Čoček*, Anseml Teodosievski, see Chapter Nine

²⁵⁹ Ivo Papasov, famous Bulgarian Wedding Musician. *Svadbarska Muzika* (Bulgarian Wedding music) is the equivalent of Macedonian *čoček*, in fact, the style was previously known as *kyuchek*. Ivo Papasov played the same role for developing *svadbarska muzika*, as Ferus did for *čoček*.

²⁶⁰ Zoran, interview 3rd April 2018.

CHAPTER 9: ČOČEK NOW, A DECLINE OR AN ENRICHMENT

This last chapter will discuss the *čoček* of the new millennium. Whilst at present there is still at least one *Štipski Čoček*, and one *Dada Sali* being performed at every Macedonian Wedding, amongst the Romani musicians the outlook on *čoček* is dark. Bajsa complains: ‘In the new century, everything has changed because of electronic instruments such as keyboards and electronic drums. The *čoček temas* may be the same, but the instrumentation and the improvisations are different. For Ferus ‘those computers and electronic devices fuck it all up’.²⁶¹

ČOČEK PORNOGRAPHY

Elam looks back on the golden age of *čoček*: ‘The old generation played more purely, cleanly and simply. There were many great musicians, like Ilmi Jašarov, Ferus’ father. They had their style and we learned from them by ear, note by note. The younger generation plays more technically, with more trills and ornaments’.²⁶² Bajsa and Simeon blame the increasing use of electronic instruments as a source of distortion for *čoček*. Simeon complains: ‘they play with keyboards, using electronic strings and everything is without soul. It feels wrong to use congas or other exotic instruments, trying to play modern *čoček*. I don’t like that’. For Bajsa it is primarily the programmed beats and click tracks, which destroy the *čoček* vibe’. Vevki reflects: ‘Back in my time, in Yugoslavia, we played more slowly. The competition was not about who could play the fastest but about who could tell a better story in their solos. There are no more *temas*, no structure, no beginning, middle or end’. In his opinion, they imitate Bulgarian and Albanian music with fast trills and improvisation but without soul. For him, however, this is no longer *čoček*. ‘Musicians nowadays are focused on commercial

²⁶¹ Ferus interview 3rd April 2018

²⁶² Elam Interview 13th April 2018

goals. They have lost their identity, because they are following music that is not their own, and mostly they are not even aware of it'.²⁶³

All the musicians I interviewed point out the lack of traditional knowledge in the young generation. They reproach the influence of electronic instruments on the one hand, and influences of foreign music on the other. This ignorance towards the traditional art causes a deficiency in musical aesthetics, resulting in a concoction of no character or soul. Bajsa cries: 'for me this is musical pornography', and Ferus laments: 'In the past, there was a substantial difference between the Greek, the Turkish, and our *čoček*. But nowadays the music is mixed with all sorts of influences, there is no more authentic Macedonian Romani music'.²⁶⁴

As a sample of Modern *Čoček*, I chose the *Čoček 2000* (Sample 6.1) recorded in 2014:²⁶⁵

Section:	Intro: percussion	<i>Tema AA</i> to GG	Saxophone solo	<i>Tema HH</i> B ⁺ B ⁺	Keyboard solo	<i>Tema C</i> ⁺
Content:	8 bars rhythm section	7 sections, regular 8 bars	48 bars solo, mostly <i>mane</i> style	more sections of 8 bars	24 bars, no <i>mane</i> ,	section repeats, fades out
Tonality:		Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>	D <i>hicaz</i> , with accidentals, small hints of <i>Segah</i> , <i>Nihavend</i>		Balkan <i>Hicaz</i> , hints of <i>Hicaz</i> , some <i>Uşşak</i>	
Chords:		around <i>Hicaz</i> cadence	D Major	around <i>Hicaz</i> cadence	D Major	as before

Figure 30: Sample 6.1 - *Čoček 2000* structure

If the accompaniment section were exchanged for a 1980s line-up with accordion and *darbuka*, there would not be much difference to *Classic Čoček*. It is the programmed drums, the synthesizer riffs, and the galactic-sounding keyboard solo, which turns it into 'cheap wedding music'.²⁶⁶ However, the clarinet solo still contains enough *mane* to make it recognisable as *čoček*. The slight hints of *makam*

²⁶³ Vevki, interview 18th April 2018.

²⁶⁴ Ferus, interview 3rd April 2018.

²⁶⁵ Audio Sample 6.1: *Čoček 2000*, Ilija Ampevski: https://youtu.be/2a322Y7_8yg - last accessed 19th August 2018.

²⁶⁶ Comment by a Macedonian man

which Şahin could detect are now next to nothing. The flattened notes within the *Hicaz* mode sound more inspired by jazz than *makam*, and with eight *tema* sections, this sample could compete with Folklore Čoček.

Sample 6.2 is a nameless *čoček* from 2010:²⁶⁷

Section:	Intro 18 bars	<i>Tema</i> AA BB CC BB CC BB DD EE FF	Clarinet solo	Ending riff
Content:	accompaniment section	6 sections, 8 bars,	<i>mane</i> hints, mostly metered	repeats, fades out
Tonality:		Balkan <i>Hicaz</i> on C	Hints of <i>Hicaz Uzzal</i> , slight micro tones	Balkan <i>Hicaz</i>
Chords:	C – B ^b Minor	<i>Hicaz</i> cadence	C	C

Figure 31: Sample 6.2 - nameless *čoček* structure

The intro is Western funk, it has no elements of *čoček* or Macedonia, so when the *čoček tema* comes in, it causes a small culture shock. All *tema* sections are in Balkan *Hicaz* and contain musical elements of *čoček*, but they miss the intensity and the soul. The solo consists of too many notes and contains, without *mane*, too little *čoček* substance. Thus, preserved from Classic Čoček are *temas*, the structural form, and the clarinet or saxophone as lead instrument. However, the remaining band resembles any modern rock or funk band; in the previous sample, 6.1, at least the electronic *darbuka* tries to preserve some of the percussion sound. Both examples are as typical of Modern Čoček as one can find in a forest of endless variations and melds. In every other aspect, the 21st century *čoček* has entered the free wilderness of world-music fusion. Even musicians of the older generation can be found having some fun with these new electronic toys.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Audio Sample 6.2: *Tuncay Savlev Čoček*, 2010: https://youtu.be/_ptzT8aSDNk - last accessed 14th August 2018.

²⁶⁸ Ferus having fun on keyboard and sax: <https://youtu.be/NKc7ggj0Q4g> - last accessed 14th August 2018.

EVIL *TALLAVA*

However, whilst electronic elements are seen as destructive to *čoček* music, the foreign influences, in particular the Albanian ones, are considered ‘evil’. The curse word is *tallava*. *Tallava* originates from Kosovarian Romani groups in the 90s. The term is derived from the Romani language: ‘tel o vas’, which means ‘under the hand’; it is a *čoček*-like dance, where the hands are waved delicately.²⁶⁹ Bajsa criticizes the ignorance of people who ‘call everything “*čoček*” and refer to this as *tallava čoček*’. For Kurtiš, this is also a wrong use of the term: ‘*Tallava* is not *čoček*, it is a different style with a different rhythm’.²⁷⁰ Vevki describes it as ‘a free improvisation without *tema*. How could I consider *tallava* as *čoček*? It is chaotic music (...) performed by musicians who have lost themselves’.²⁷¹ Ferus warns: ‘Not only that, the style of *čoček* playing has changed because of the influences of *tallava*’.²⁷² Bajsa has even observed *zurla-tapan* ensembles who favour *tallava* over *čoček*. Eleonora points out another, in her opinion negative, influence of vocal *tallava* on Macedonian Romani music: ‘some Romani singers are taking those Albanian howling ornaments and mix it into Macedonian Romani singing. Nowadays there isn’t a clear Romani singing style anymore, it’s all mixed, and the tradition is distorted’.²⁷³

The first sample is a typical dance party mix (Sample 6.3).²⁷⁴ I have not included a diagram of the form, as it would look rather monotonous with a number of *tema* sections, and some improvisations in between. The backing tracks are programmed, however, in contrast to other modern forms of *čoček*, they imitate Oriental sounding instruments such as *zurla*, *saz* and *oud*. The melodic

²⁶⁹ Info on Tallava: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tallava> - last accessed 14th April 2018

²⁷⁰ Kurtiš, interview 13th April 2018.

²⁷¹ Vevki, interview 18th April 2018.

²⁷² Ferus, interview 3rd April 2018.

²⁷³ Eleonora, interview 10th April 2018.

²⁷⁴ Audio Sample 6.3: *Tallava* Special Mix, Čoček 2016: <https://youtu.be/TIUxJkDaySM> - last accessed 14th August 2018

movement also imitates Arabic influences; I'm writing here 'imitate' as there is neither Turkish nor Arabic *makam*²⁷⁵ resemblance. The *tema* sections as well as the improvisations move about within the first tetrachord of modes similar to the Western Minor scale, with microtone usage mostly on the 2nd degree. When the melody line occasionally expands up to the fifth, or to a tone below the tonic, it already gives the impression of a special moment. This causes a monotony and simplicity which is reminiscent of transcendental music forms.²⁷⁶

Sample 6.4²⁷⁷ is an interesting wedding live performance where the saxophonist starts with *tallava čoček* and moves into a *tallava* version of Dada Sali. For the *tallava*, the same applies as in the previous sample: electronic backing by Eastern instruments, melodic movements between the 1st and 5th degree of Minor. The chordal structure moves between G Minor, the tonic chord and F Major, the chord on the tone below. From those, and many other samples I have listened to, I get the impression that, whilst many pop world music styles developed from fusions of Eastern and Western elements, acting as both magnet and bridge to the masses of many cultures, the *tallava* development is a movement against that stream. It seems to combine Balkan music with elements from cultures to the East and South of it, purposefully avoiding Western European and American tastes in music. However, one issue strikes me as odd, considering that the musicians and producers involved in *tallava* are mostly Muslim: the highly sexual content of some videos, at a time, when Islam tends to increasingly demand exemplary moral behaviour from its followers.

²⁷⁵ *Maqam* in Arabic.

²⁷⁶ Şahin's identification of Turkish songs, which found entry into that mix, was surprising: Mehmet Demirtaş - Fidayda (Hüdayda): <https://youtu.be/YNA03WgVYwY> and Ibrahim Tatlıses - Leylim Ley: <https://youtu.be/T25UthjMGVg>

²⁷⁷ Audio Sample 6.4: Goce Jankulov, *Čoček za Mladence*, 2017: <https://youtu.be/AXSorAs7sJ8> - last accessed 14th August 2018.

MORE MODERN ČOČEK NEGATIVES:

Moving back to *čoček*, Branislav, amongst the Roma who were interviewed, is the only person who portrayed a balanced opinion of positive and negative. On the positive side he sees that *čoček* has spread throughout the world with the help of technology such as the internet, and that sound technology can amplify *čoček* music, so that a much larger number of people may dance to it. He also welcomes the fact that social media has inspired musicians to produce visually appealing videos, catering to a large number of viewers. 'The internet helps to distribute, to spread and to conserve *čoček*, it also increases global consumption'. Whilst he recognises the criticisms others have made, his concerns are more about the dance: '*čoček* is transforming and becoming another form of dance; the very dance itself is discredited by mixed it with completely different elements. It loses beauty and decency'. The same video channels which spread *čoček* globally, also inspire the Roma youngsters to watch dance videos from all over the world, picking up movements which are not decent and cause shame to their parents. 'There are some styles of tropical lands, such as Africa or South America, or disco or Arabic style, which are copied by our girls, and which corrupt our beautiful *čoček* dance'.²⁷⁸ All in all, the fusion of styles without learning the traditional art first, is condemned as corrupting the *čoček* dance as well as the music.

ČOČEK AS OFFENSE

'For us in Macedonia researching *čoček* represents an offence!'. This was the answer to my innocent question to Sasho 'what is your definition of *čoček*?'. Consequently, to fully understand

²⁷⁸ Branislav, interview 21st April 2018.

čoček in Macedonia today, one has to reflect on the negative statements too. This last section of my thesis will discuss some, in my opinion ‘distorted’ views and try to explore their roots.

From Sasho’s point of view, ‘*čoček* is a forceful influence, which conflicts with Macedonian tradition’.²⁷⁹ To investigate further, I asked why then is *čoček* the highlight of any Macedonian wedding, and why is it chosen to celebrate New Year, and mark other important moments in Macedonian people’s lives, privately as well as on State Television? Yet Sasho’s believes:

It is initiated by superficial trendiness and heavy snobbism. We live now in a democratic society, and people are generally influenced by Americans with their idea of freedom. In that sense, one is free to expose their body. A Macedonian girl cannot show off her body in traditional dancing, but with *čoček* she can. That still doesn’t mean that *čoček* is ours.²⁸⁰

In my opinion, his assertion stems from the same fear of losing identity and tradition as expressed by the Roma in regards to the decline of *čoček*. Just as Sasho considers the inclusion of *čoček* as a sign of loss of identity for Macedonians, for Branislav it is the decline of *čoček* in Roma communities, which he interprets as alarm bell for the Romani society, as a sign of losing their identity. He observes how Islamic influences increasingly take over Romani traditions and slowly destroy what *čoček* expresses for Roma: their deep-rooted joy of life.²⁸¹ Nevertheless, the common ground, where both contrasting fears are expressed and embodied, is in, what Rodna calls a new ‘*Shund* genre’²⁸² which is considered by many as a new type of *čoček*. A prime example is the song ‘*Džingrlaka*’ (Sample 6.5),²⁸³ which, according to Rodna ‘is listened to by people from lower social classes, such as builders and truck drivers’.²⁸⁴ Others classify this type of music as a kind of folklore pop, which may fuse any

²⁷⁹ Sasho, interview 5th April 2018.

²⁸⁰ Sasho, interview 5th April 2018.

²⁸¹ Refer to Chapter Seven.

²⁸² ‘*Shund*’ as an international slang word can be translated as ‘rubbish’

²⁸³ Audio Sample 6.5: *Džingrlaka*: https://youtu.be/pNb_HP_aQ7A - last accessed 14th August 2018.

²⁸⁴ Professor Rodna Veličkova, Ethnomusicologist, interview 16th April 2018.

music and dance styles, and be commercially marketed for maximum profit. However, for genuine artists and musicians this genre is considered a disgrace and offence to music on every level.²⁸⁵

Mihajlo gives a sample which portrays the relationship between *čoček* and Macedonian society well:

If you ask a young Macedonian if he likes *čoček*, he will deny it for social reasons. Amongst Macedonians, *čoček* is connected with turbo-folk and, as Rodna mentioned, the '*shund*' genre. So people who admit loving it would be considered of low intelligence and low social status. Thus, despite the fact that *čoček* is actually played at all important moments of their lives, not just weddings, but name days, military parties, school proms as well as simple family holidays, birthdays and picnics, it would be distasteful for anyone to admit liking *čoček*.

Another controversial deed is the tipping culture: at weddings, Macedonians might literally 'shower'²⁸⁶ Roma musicians for playing *čoček* with tips as large as two monthly salaries. The amount of money on the one hand shows their wealth, or pretended wealth,²⁸⁷ and on the other hand it expresses in public, how much they enjoy life. *Čoček* certainly has multiple facets for Macedonians.

HIDDEN ROMANI DISCRIMINATION:

Hidden in this controversial behaviour pattern is also a form of discrimination. Most Romani musicians gave their time freely to my research, because they really appreciated the fact that for some people their music is worth enough to be scientifically captured. Bajsa explained:

Why doesn't anybody here write about *čoček*? Ethnomusicologists write book upon book about Macedonian village music. Nobody writes about Romani music, because they don't consider it important for our country; it is not considered good quality or a high standard of music.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Strangely, Sasho can be seen playing accordion on *Džingrlaka*: https://youtu.be/EGBZ_oWUL-E - last accessed 19th August 2019.

²⁸⁶ This can be taken literally: if you watch the videos <https://youtu.be/AXSorAs7sJ8?t=8m45s> from 8.45s and <https://youtu.be/2azVmREWvHM?t=29m> watch 29:00, 37:00 and 51:00s – last accessed 14th August 2018.

²⁸⁷ Refer to Chapter Eight for the connection to social status and *čoček* tipping.

²⁸⁸ Bajsa, interview 2nd April 2018.

Even though in former Yugoslavia, the Roma had to face a lot less condemnation and politically-driven marginalisation than in the neighbouring countries, the long global history of discrimination towards them, and recent developments of Macedonian identity movements, have changed the situation. Mihajlo explains: ‘In Macedonian society, there is, hidden deep down, a lot of racism and discrimination’. He observes a twisted behaviour, that in the daytime, *čoček* is denounced as a low music genre, and at night, many people indulge into it, using it as an excuse to escape from the same society, which makes them condemn it outwardly. Even though, Romani people have seemingly equal rights and opportunities, and their music is good enough to be consumed at the most important occasions, they are blamed for laziness, thieving and taking advantage of Macedonian society. One wonders, if in some way, Macedonians are actually condemning themselves for a part inside themselves which demands freedom, a freedom they won’t allow themselves? In this sense, *čoček* comes across as a mirror, expressing the problems that Macedonian society has today: *Čoček* on one the one hand as a symbol for inner freedom and joy of life, and on the other hand *čoček* as a symbol of low life and inferior character.



Figure 32: Pazar in Šuto Orizari - Romani arch and wheel

CONCLUSION

After over 80 pages, in which the baby camel '*kyuchak*' slowly transformed into a mirror of Macedonian society '*čoček*', this is the time to return to the initial question: What is *čoček*? Vladimir eluded a direct answer as follows:

The beauty is that you cannot define *čoček*. It followed a natural way of development, without constraint, so it can grow into a rich varied landscape of musical styles, dance forms with precious value to people and cultures.²⁸⁹

The results of my research serve to express the answer in two different dimensions: The musical definition and the people-led interpretation. Firstly though, I will move to my secondary questions, which will naturally lead to a summary of my research. Where does *čoček* come from? *Čoček* emerged from 16th-century Ottoman *köçek* dancers, and *köçekce*, the music accompanying the dance. Possible older roots from India are debatable but by no means evident. Who performs it and for whom? After the ban of *köçek* and *köçekce*, *čoček* emerged in Macedonia, initially, in the early 20th century as a form of music and dance amongst Romani people, performed at weddings and other important social celebrations. From there, *čoček* spread quickly into various directions, and according to its context, a number of different styles developed. After 1980, Macedonians devoured *čoček* as much as Roma, and after 1990, *čoček* travelled the world, on the World music wave in the form of concerts and recordings.

Chapter Nine explored the next question in some depth: What are the musical properties and how have they developed over time? By following back two generations of the living heirs, I could delimitate the start of *čoček*, as a music and dance genre of Romani people, called by that name, to

²⁸⁹ Vladimir, interview 6th April 2018.

the start of the 20th century. The next new discovery on that topic was, that *čoček* is not one genre, but an ever-evolving multi-faceted genre of many styles. After collecting, organising and cross-referencing all the data from my research, I could define six prominent styles, or in a wider context, nine variants of *čoček*, which I labelled to promote a clear mode of presentation: The earliest style, *Čalgija Čoček*, is performed by a *Čalgija* ensemble. It is mainly improvised, in *mane*-style, using *makam* tonality with quarter tones (rather than Turkish *makam* microtones). The for this style typical *usuls* are *čiftetelli* and *karšilama*. A contemporaneous one, the Woman's *Čoček*, the most intimate, and the only by female musicians performed *čoček* style, shares the same *usul*. A minimalistic and noisy outdoor version is the *Zurla-Tapan Čoček*. *Mane*-style solos and *temas* in *makam* by *zurla*, and powerful *čiftetelli* or *karšilama usuls* from *tapan* define this style. Created by Yugoslav's communist party around 1950, with little or no Roma participation, is the Folklore *Čoček*. Choreographed dances and composed music for the state folk ensembles, there is neither *makam* nor improvisation. *Karšilama usul* and *tema* sections imitating *čoček temas* are the only *čoček* parameters.

From around 1970, the *Čalgija Čoček* transformed, adding Western instruments such as the accordion and electric bass, and branched into the Romani *Čoček* and the Classic *Čoček*. Using *čiftetelli*, *karšilama*, or the new *Makedonski čoček usul*, the Romani *Čoček* stays closer to Ottoman features whilst the Classic *Čoček* undergoes further Westernisation. Both keep *mane* improvisations as their heart. However, the Classic *Čoček*, enjoyed by Westerners, puts more emphasis on *temas*, and less on *makam*, increasingly favouring Balkan *Hicaz mode*. This is the *čoček* style, which claimed the greatest fame, and brought the king's crown to Ferus Mustafov. From the 1990s, the instrumentation leans more and more towards funk rock bands, incorporating drum kits and keyboards, and then synthesisers and electronic drums.

Latin *Čoček*, which developed in the late 1970s by fusing *čoček* with South American dance rhythms, is the most Westernised, and globally best-known type of *čoček*. Prominently performed by Balkan Brass ensembles, it uses mostly Balkan *Hicaz* mode, never *makam*. After the turn of the millennium, one could define many more *čoček* styles, some as cross-over with turbo folk and foreign fusions. I decided to summarise those as Modern *Čoček*, which includes *čoček*-based music mixed with anything the young musicians, who are usually not knowledgeable in *makam*, feel inspired to do. The only specific style of that category, which needs to be mentioned is *tallava*, as it is, in contrast to most modern *čoček* fusions, orientated eastwards.

This brings us to the first milestone of the conclusion: A musical definition of *čoček*:

Čoček is a Macedonian music and dance genre, which is built on *čiftetelli*, *karšilama* and *Makedonski čoček usul*. Using a looser version of the Turkish *makam* system as tonality, a *čoček* consists of *tema* sections and solo improvisation, the latter in *mane*-style being the heart and the soul of *čoček*. The dance is an improvised form of solo dance, centering on stomach movements, but different from belly-dance.

This definition stands true for the prime-time of *čoček* from 1970 until 2000, It also fits *Čalgija Čoček* and *Tapan-Zurla Čoček*, and alignes with the views of the Macedonian *čoček* masters of that era. Most of them consider Latin *Čoček* as a side-line, whilst Woman's *Čoček*, Folklore *Čoček* and modern *čoček*s to varying degrees are not included in their definitions. Contemporary musicians though would define the 21st-century *čoček* variants as *čoček*. However, dissecting those would be a great subject for further research.

This suggestion is partly inspired by one of the most surprising discoveries of my research: the negative remarks given by Romani musicians upon the change of the millennium. The blending of foreign musical influences and electronic instruments into *čoček*, and the loss of the old *makam*

knowledge makes both, the Modern *Čoček* and the Tallava *Čoček* into frowned-upon genres. With increasing globalisation and various internal social developments, the Ottoman stamp on *čoček* wanes, giving in to the Western trend of universal fusions. In contrast however, the *Tallava Čoček* follows a counter flow and orients itself toward the East.

The remaining question to answer is: What does *čoček* mean to people in Macedonia? Whilst history and musical parameters can be measured and envisioned, there has not been much detailed research into this topic, and the outcome was precarious. By my questions, many Macedonians and Roma were for the first time encouraged to take a critical look at *čoček* and the surrounding issues. Whilst Romani people are convinced, the music and the dance are chiselled into their heart and soul, and state a deep ritual meaning, for Macedonians, it is, according to their own and to Romani comments, only fun – on the surface. My research did intensify the soul connection of Romani people to *čoček*. In its 100 years of existence in Macedonia it is not just a ritual form of music and dance, which they are passionate about, it has become a symbol of their culture and is expressed in dance and music.

However, the statement of just being easy fun for Macedonians has not proven to be true. My research shows that, whilst it is considered by a few people just that, *čoček* has actually developed a strong social meaning for Macedonian festivities since its entry into their society nearly 40 years ago. Though there are *čoček* opponents, it is established as a tool and a means to make weddings and celebrations a success, and as the ritual music to accompany important moments and mile-stones in the life of Macedonians.

Research on that subject feels by no means complete. Whilst there is no more capacity here, there are two areas in a real need for further investigation: On musical matters, a thorough and detailed

music analysis, especially in regards to *makam* would be incredibly interesting. Moreover, any still early existing *Čalgija Čoček* pieces would need to be recorded, collected and archived, before the generation, who still has the knowledge from their fathers and grandfathers, take it to their graves. On musical and social matters, as mentioned above, in-depth research on Modern *Čoček* and its splitter forms would be rewarding and, in my opinion, generate interesting findings.

To finish off, and answer the main question ‘What is *čoček*?’ in three words, I would like to return to Istanbul, where our story began, to the term used by Romani musicians there: ‘*Roman Oyun Havasi*’, ‘a joyful Romani dance’. And I would like to share the emergence of a type of new *köçekler*: Romani boys dressed up as girls dancing *čoček* on Skopje’s main square on the 1st April: <https://youtu.be/jqPL-NsQQCs>.²⁹⁰

... and may they dance happily ever after ...



²⁹⁰ Last accessed 27th August 2018.

APPENDIX I: DEFINING ČOČEK AS GRAPHICS

ČOČEK TREE

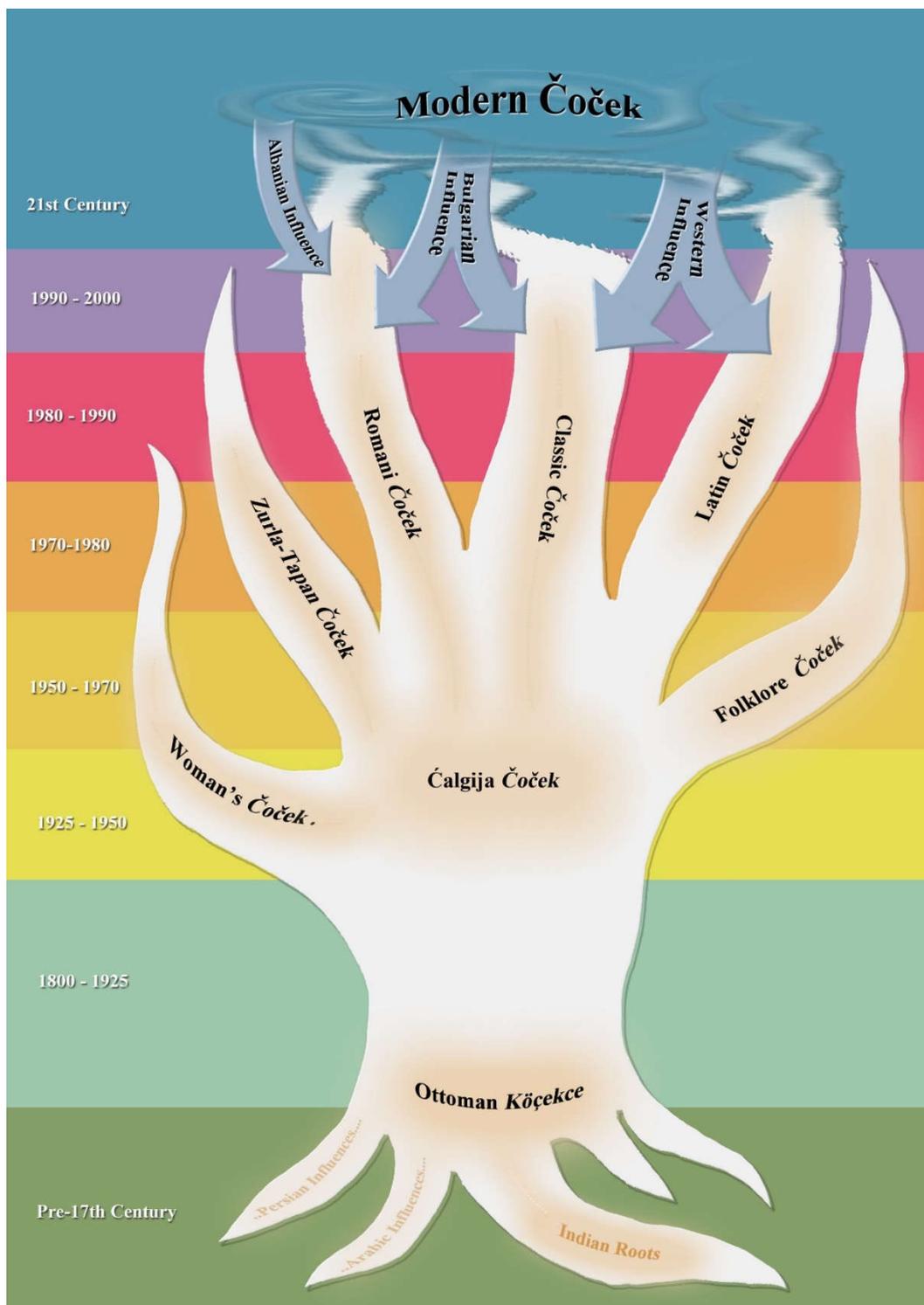


Figure 33: Čoček Tree

The *Čoček* Tree graphic visually defines the development and connections of the various *čoček* styles and their influences on a time line.

ČOČEK DEFINITION LEVELS:

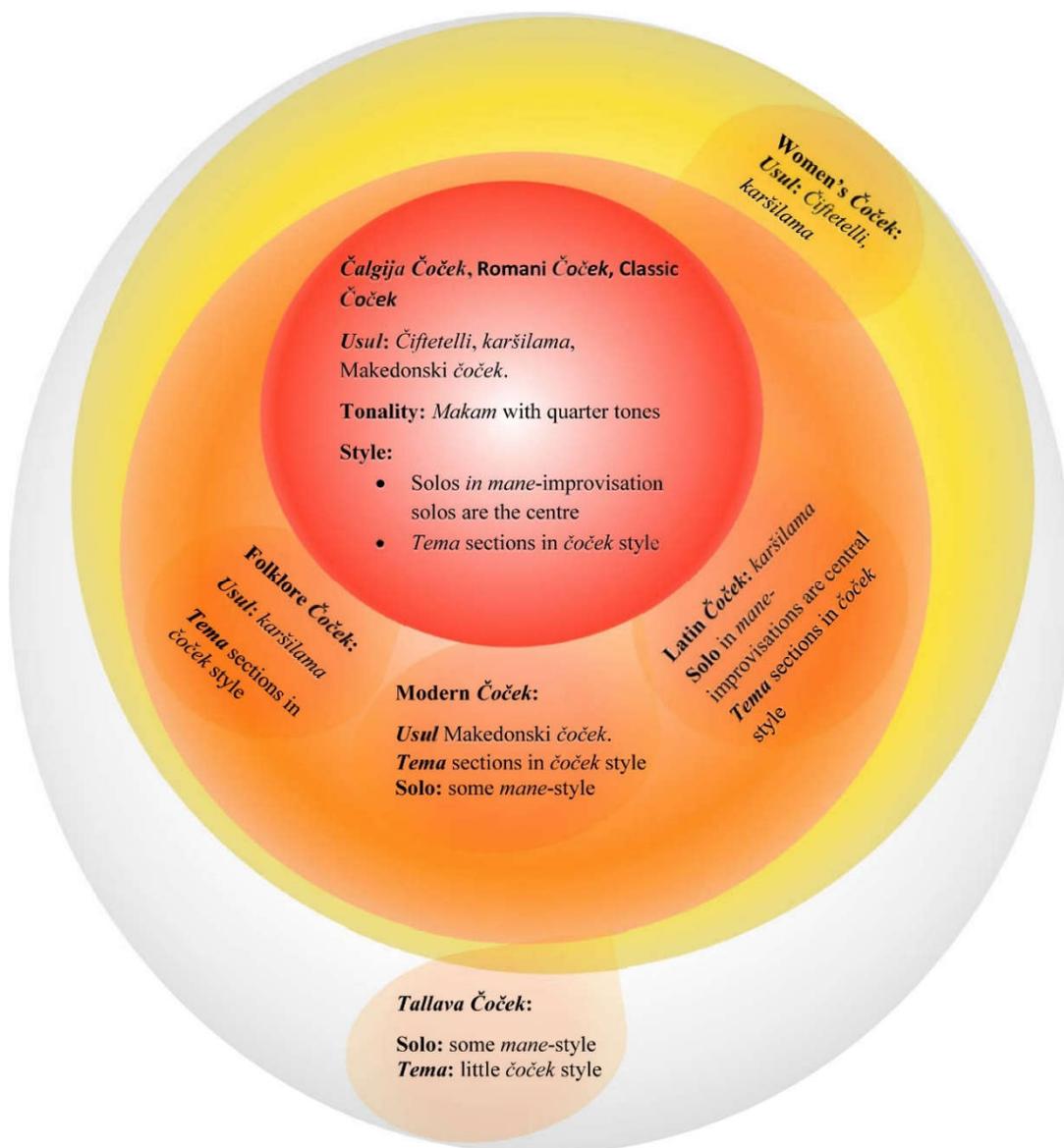


Figure 34: Čoček Definition Levels

This diagram portrays the main styles of *čoček*, summarising their typical *čoček* elements, and categorising them into definition levels according to the consequential closeness to the central *čoček* styles.

APPENDIX II: SUMMARY OF TURKISH *MAKAM*

To understand *makam* thoroughly, one would have to study with a Turkish master. Here, I can only offer a brief guide, staying, as much as possible, precise within the complex and over the centuries ever changing theory. Initially, *makam* consists of an overwhelming amount of theory. However, upon a closer study, it unfolds into a method of teaching the beautiful aesthetics of Turkish music practice in a step-by-step method to students. My knowledge has been accumulated by interviews and lessons with Cenk Güray, Nevin Şahin, Mehmet Alişan Budak, and from two book sources by Murat Aydemir and Karl Signell.

First of all, a *makam* is not a mode or scale, however, it is built of basic scales. Signell defines 13 basic scale, each of which is the basis for a number of *makams*, by assigning certain behaviours and movement patterns to it. The basic scales use microtones (2008, p.33). I will introduce the most important *makam* ingredients in glossary-style here:

Microtones: In Turkish music, a whole tone is divided into nine equal steps, called *kommas*. Only three or four of these *kommas* are used: the 1st, 4th, 5th and the 8th *komma*. This adds up to a 24-note system of irregular intervals:²⁹¹

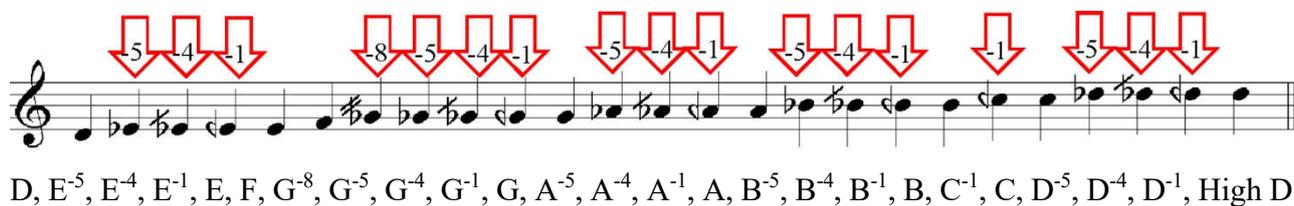


Figure 35: the 24-note system of *makam*²⁹²

Tetrachords and Pentachords: There are many individual ones, which work like building blocks for the basic scales and can be imported into various *makams* as *çeşni* (see below).

²⁹¹ In contrast to our diatonic system, which uses 12 equal semitones in one octave.

²⁹² The capital letters are the defined pitches (equal to European classical notation), the ascended number after the ‘-‘ (minus) sign represents the amount of *kommas* by which a pitch needs to be lowered

Basic Scales: They are constructed of one tetrachord and one pentachord, either can be on the top or the bottom.²⁹³

Dominant Note: Similar to the Western classic dominant on the 5th degree, it defines the dominant note of a scale, however, in *makam* this is not necessarily the 5th degree, it can be the 4th or 3rd, or any other degree of the basic scale.

Cadences: Melodic patterns which emphasis a certain pitch and/or define an ending. There is a full or final cadence, emphasising the ending on the tonic. Half cadences are played on the dominant note of a scale, providing a slight sense of conclusion. Suspended cadences have a weak sense of conclusion, they enrich a *makam* with *çeşni*.

Çeşni: Translated ‘flavour’. These are various types of elements cadences, imported notes, tetrachords or small melody patterns from other *makams*) which give a *makam* its special character.

Behaviours: There are three types of behaviours for a melodic progression in a *makam*:

1. Ascending: the *makam* begins with the tonic or a note around the tonic.
2. Ascending and descending: the *makam* begins with or around the dominant note.
3. Descending: the *makam* begins with or around the high tonic.

From these elements, *makam* are built, each one having its own individual character, behaviour and flavour. In total, there are 60-70 *makam* recognised today (Signell 2008, p.16). Whilst this seems on a first impression an incredibly complicated system, and possibly restrictive for creative playing, it takes more study to understand the opportunities it opens for aesthetic and artful improvisation in Turkish Ottoman style.²⁹⁴ Once you have learned a number of *makams* and the typical cadences, behaviours and *çeşni*, only then you can discover the huge amount of creativity they offer, as in performance practice, they are used as a playful toolbox rather than as restrictive rules. Following is a diagram with the *makam* used in the here analysed *čoček* samples:²⁹⁵

²⁹³ The explanation of both Signell and Aydemir concerning basic *makams*, built from tetrachords and pentachords, belong to the 20th century theory established by H. Sadettin Arel. The old theories in the 15th or 17th century do not use them, and even today their use is disputed amongst Turkish music specialists (Şahin, interview 28th August 2018).

²⁹⁴ Comparable with the complication of unusual jazz scales: In order to improvise on a semi tone-tone scale for instance, understanding and practicing the scale takes effort, later it adds enormously to creative improvisation.

²⁹⁵ Please note, this diagram is far from precise. Firstly, there were discrepancies between the sources, secondly there are endless variations and exceptions. It is best used as an idea how different *makams* may behave in contrast to each other, and see them as organic, alive beings.

Name	Tonic	Strong note	nearest Western scale microtone <i>komma</i>	Behaviour
<i>Buselik</i>	A	5 th : E	like Natural Minor, no <i>kommas</i> , sometimes raised 7 th and 6 th by 5 <i>kommas</i>	ascending or ascending-descending: moves up to 3 rd (C), susp. cad. on 3 rd (C), half cad. on 5 th (E), various other flavours, final cad. on tonic.
<i>Hicaz</i>	A	4 th : D	like <i>Balkan Hicaz</i> but 2 nd degree Bb is one <i>komma</i> high, raised 6 th to F#	descending-ascending all <i>Hicaz</i> scales use the same susp. cadences, all can be used within one composition. The distinct difference is the dominant notes. Often the 6 th is lowered to F when descending.
<i>Hicaz Zirgüle</i>	A	5 th : E	like <i>Balkan Hicaz</i> but 2 nd degree Bb is one <i>komma</i> high, 7 th degree is raised to G#	
<i>Hicaz Hümayun</i>	A	4 th : D	like <i>Balkan Hicaz</i> but 2 nd degree Bb is one <i>komma</i> high	
<i>Hicaz Uzzal</i>	A	5 th : E	like <i>Balkan Hicaz</i> but 2 nd degree Bb is one <i>komma</i> high, raised 6 th to F#	
<i>Hüseyni</i>	A	5 th : E	like Dorian, but 2 nd degree 1 <i>komma</i> flat	ascending-descending. half cad. on 5 th (E), often susp. cad. on 3 rd (C), final cad. on tonic.
<i>Karcıgar</i> *)	A	4 th : D	like Phrygian with lowered 5 th (4 <i>kommas</i>) and raised 6 th (semitone)	ascending-descending; from 4 th upwards to high tonic, half cad. on 10 th (high C).
<i>Kürdi</i>	A	4 th : D	like Phrygian	ascending-descending start on tonic (A) or 4 th (D), half cad. on 4 th (D), sus cad on 3 rd (C) and low G, final cad. on tonic (A)
<i>Muhayer</i>	A	8 th : high A, 5 th : E	like Dorian, 2 nd degree 1 <i>komma</i> flat (using the <i>Hüseyni</i> basic scale)	descending half cad. on 8 th (high A), half cad. on 5 th (E), descends with some sus cad, final ca on tonic.
<i>Müstear</i>	B ⁻¹ **)	3 rd D	like Harmonic Minor, tonic (B) and 4 th (E) one <i>komma</i> flat,	ascending similar to Segah
<i>Nihavend</i>	G	5 th : D	like Natural Minor, no <i>komma</i> in main scale, but in lower extension	ascending-descending half cad. on 5 th (D), many <i>makam</i> flavours, final cadence on tonic (G).
<i>Nikriz</i>	G	5 th : D	like Major, with 7 th lowered by 4 <i>kommas</i> , so nearly flat 6 th ,	ascending or ascending-descending: start on 5 th , either cadence or play scale up to top tonic, 3 rd (B) is sharp on way up and flat on the way down,
<i>Rast</i>	G	5 th : D	like Major with 6 th (E) 1 <i>komma</i> flat	ascending half cad. on 5 th , susp. cad. on 6 th (E), final cad. on tonic (G)
<i>Saba</i>	A	3 rd C	like Phrygian with 2 nd and 6 th lowered by 4 <i>kommas</i> and 3 rd and 7 th lowered by 1 <i>komma</i> .	ascending half cad. on 3 rd (C), then many flavours and up-down movements, final cad. on tonic (A).
<i>Segah</i>	B ⁻¹ **)	3 rd : D	like Major with possible raised 5 th and 7 th , tonic and 4 th are 1 <i>komma</i> high	ascending no required cad. but possible suspended cad., several flavours
<i>Uşşak</i>	A	4 th : D	like Phrygian with 2 nd raised by one <i>komma</i>	ascending from tonic ascending tetrachord, half cad. on 4 th (D), various flavours, final cad. on tonic (A)

Figure 36: Table of various *Makam* behaviour.*) preferred *makam* of *köçekce*.**) ⁻¹: indicates a microtone 1 *komma* flat.

This brief definition is only a crude guide to understand the basics of Ottoman-Turkish *makam*. Traditional *čoček*, as an Ottoman-derived genre uses *makam*, even though in a looser approach. We learned in Chapter Three and Eight of the more intuitive execution of *makam* by Romani musicians, also that in Macedonia, instead of the microtones fixed to specific frequencies, a variable pitch between two semi-tones is used, called quartertones.

I would like to make a few comments on *Hicaz*. The main characteristic element of all *Hicaz makam*s is that the bottom element is a *Hicaz tetrachord or pentachord*, carrying the same name as the basic scale and the *makam*, as it contains the characteristic element for *Hicaz*: the augmented interval between 2nd and 3rd degree. In *makam* it is slightly smaller due to the by one *komma* raised 2nd degree than in the Balkan *Hicaz* mode, where the 2nd degree is adjusted to the next diatonic note:

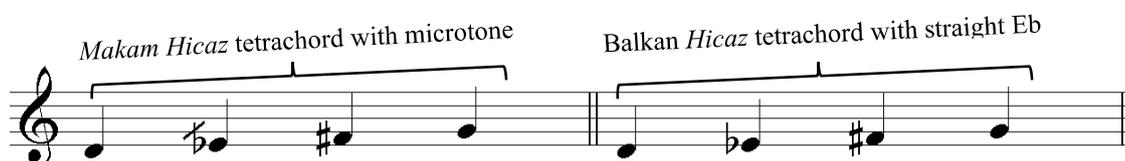


Figure 37: *Hicaz* tetrachord in *makam* and Balkan mode.

This explains the tonal difference between *Hicaz makam* and Balkan *Hicaz* mode. Additionally, whereas the *makam* follows the behaviours above, the *Balkan Hicaz* mode is outwardly set free to improvise anything. However, a style of music is recognizable by certain implemented patterns, even if they are not officially analysed and labelled. Şahin could still detect elements of *makam* behaviour in Latin *Čoček* or imitated *čoček*s, which most probably have not intentionally been implemented, but came by imitating Ferus, or by having listened to a lot of *makam* improvisation.

For a more intense study, I can recommend the literature mentioned above by Murat Aydemir and Karl Signell (both in English language, details to be found in the reference section), or even better, planning an extended trip to Turkey and study with a *makam* master.

APPENDIX III: NOTATION OF SOME SIGNIFICANT ČOČEK PIECES

I have included notation samples of three *čoček* pieces. Only the *tema* sections with chords have been transcribed, I have not attempted to include ornamentation, as Western classical embellishment signs do not lead to the correct implementation and would easily cause mis-interpretation. Therefore, listening to the audio samples will create a better understanding, for the correct interpretation of both the *tema* as well as the solos, for capturing *čoček mane*-style improvisation directly from the source.

OLIMPIJSKI ČOČEK:

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the piece 'OLIMPIJSKI ČOČEK'. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat and one sharp (B-flat and F-sharp), and a 9/8 time signature. The notation is enclosed in a repeat sign with first and second endings. The first ending consists of six measures, and the second ending consists of three measures. Chords are indicated above the notes: 'D' above the first measure, 'Cm' above the seventh measure, and 'D' above the eighth measure. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, with some slurs and ties.

Figure 38: Notation of *Olimijski Čoček*, Audio Sample 4.1, Chapter Nine

DADA SALI ČOČEK:

Musical notation for the piece "DADA SALI ČOČEK". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of six lines of music. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Gm, F, Gm, F, Gm, F, Gm, F, Gm, Gm, Gm, F, E, E♭, Cm, Gm, Gm, F, E, E♭, Cm, Gm.

Figure 39: Notation of Dada Sali, Audio Sample 4.4, Chapter Nine

ŠTIPSKI ČOČEK

Musical notation for the piece "ŠTIPSKI ČOČEK". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of three lines of music. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: B♭, B♭.

The image displays ten staves of musical notation for the piece "Štípski Čoček". The notation is written in a single system with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor) and a common time signature (C). The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a C chord. The second staff includes Fm and Bbm chords. The third staff starts with a C chord and ends with a Bbm chord. The fourth staff features a Bbm chord and ends with a C chord. The fifth and sixth staves show melodic lines with Bb and F chords. The seventh staff includes Eb, Bb, and F7 chords. The eighth staff has Bb and Eb chords. The ninth and tenth staves feature Bb and F7 chords, with the tenth staff ending with a repeat sign.

Figure 40: Notation of *Štípski Čoček*, Audio Sample 4.5, Chapter Nine

APPENDIX IV: HYPOTHESIS ON ČOČEK WITH INDIAN ROOTS

Chapter Two touched on Simeon's hypothesis, namely that the Roma brought *čoček* from India. To follow this lead is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, I would like to include a small and playful collation to show that there is a probability in this hypothesis, and possibly inspire further research into this subject. I have chosen two traditional Indian pieces by an Indian Romani Brass ensemble (Samples 7.1 and 7.2)²⁹⁶ and two Balkan Romani *čoček*s (Samples 7.3 and 7.4).²⁹⁷ When listening, one can hear and feel a lot of similarities. On closer inspection, all four samples use the *Makedonski Čoček usul*, although there are certain differences in the execution, partly caused by a slightly different accentuation, and partly by the different instrumentation of the percussion sections.

Vladimir's comment (Chapter One) on modal improvisation in India prompted me to examine the Indian pieces for traces of *makam*, even though India is no *makam* territory. According to Şahin, Sample 7.1 clearly uses *Segah* throughout, although the microtones are missing. Just like several *čoček* pieces, Sample 7.2 starts with a *mane* introduction in the equivalent of *Kürdî*, *Buselik* and *Nihavend*. Sample 7.3, *Indiski Čoček* is played in *Rast* with elements of *Segah* and others; the name was probably given as it imitates Indian music and sounds in some ways more Indian than the Indian examples. Sample 7.4, *Indjiski Čoček* starts in *Buselik*, and roams via *Segah*, to a *Hüzzam* which, according to Şahin, sounds like Balkan *Hicaz* due to the lack of microtones. Although we are using here *makam* only as a method of comparison, it is interesting to note how many *makam* elements there are present in the Indian Romani pieces, and how many melodic similarities we detected between the Romani and the Indian pieces. Sample 7.4 could actually be 'part-exchanged' with

²⁹⁶ Audio Sample 7.1: The Jaipur Kawa Brass Band: <https://youtu.be/we16Qf4VkNc>, Audio Sample 7.2: Dulhe Ka Sehra, Jaipur Kawa Indian Brass Band: <https://youtu.be/VCstXI6t0to> - last accessed 12th August 2018.

²⁹⁷ Audio Sample 7.3: Indiski Čoček by Veseli Romi, a Macedonian Romani Brass Band: https://youtu.be/N-_Jd98jkgf0; Audio Sample 7.4: Indijski Čoček, Duvački Orchestar: <https://youtu.be/ywbggZ05leg> - last accessed 19th August 2018.

sample 7.1, i.e. one could exchange the sections of the pieces and it would work. Both have several *tema* section, some percussion breaks and riffs.

To summarise, we have a similar melodic structure, similar rhythmical patterns, similar structural forms and a similar energy. So whilst this playful little journey from Macedonia to India is by no means evidence, it unravels enough common elements to consider the possibility of an Indian influence on *čoček*, and does certainly not disprove the thought of some *pre-köçekce* and *čoček* type of music and dance migrating with the Roma from India to the Ottoman empire. However, due to the world-wide popularity of Balkan Brass Bands, we cannot exclude the possibility that Indian band may have been influenced by Balkan brass.



Figure 41: Jaipur Kawa Brass Band, India²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Source: <http://concerteurope.hu/en/artist/jaipur-kawa-brass-band-2/> - last accessed 20th August 2018.

APPENDIX V: MAP OF ROMANI MIGRATION

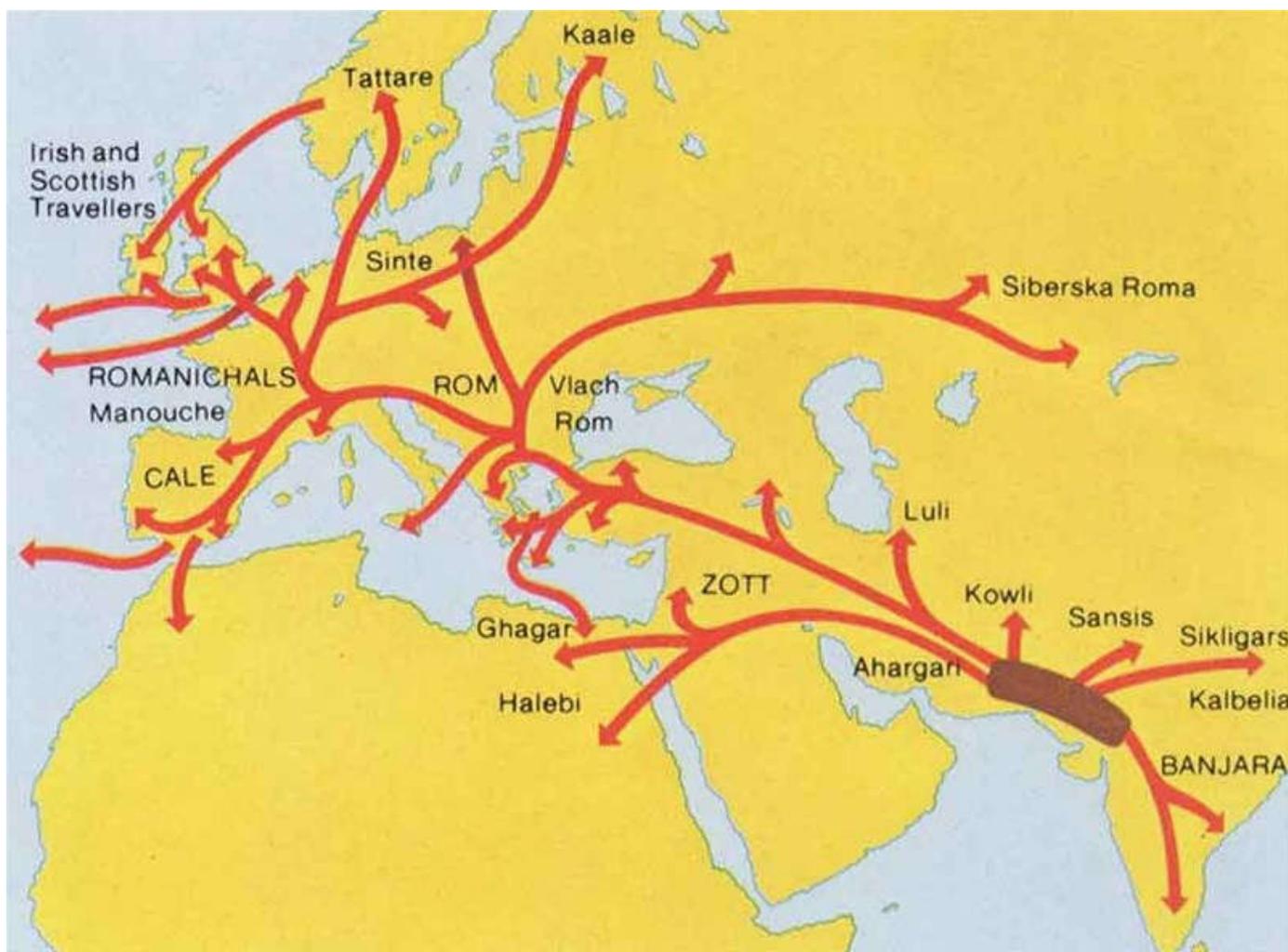


Figure 42: Map of Romani Migrations

Romani share the strongest genetic similarity with the aboriginal *Domba* people of North-Western India, traditionally ostracized by the Indian caste system and regarded as untouchable. This connects with an old linguistic theory that the name 'Roma' derives from the Classical Sanskrit word 'Domba', meaning 'man of low caste living by singing and music'.

Study of the Romani language indicates that the Roma migrated to Europe by heading north from the Hindu Kush, across the Iranian plateau and the southern shores of the Caspian and Black Seas, across the Bosphorus, and subsequently spread across Europe from the 13th century, reaching as far afield as the British Isles, the Iberian Peninsula, Sweden and Russia by the 16th century.²⁹⁹



Figure 43: A normal day for Roma in Šuto Orizari

²⁹⁹ Source of text and map: <http://www.abroadintheyard.com/dna-study-finds-european-gypsies-left-their-ancestral-home-in-northwest-india-1400-years-ago/> - last accessed 27th August 2018

APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEWEE'S BIOGRAPHIES

MAIN INTERVIEWEES:

Bajsa Arifovska (interview and sessions in Skopje, August 2017, and on the 2nd, 6th, 9th and 16th April, and on 30th July 2018) is one of the most well-known representatives of Macedonian and Romani folklore. Born in 1978 in Kočani, with *zurla* and *tapan* players on one side of her family, and traditional Macedonian folklore musicians on the other, she studied violin, piano and theory at the music high school in Štip. Additionally, she learned flute, clarinet and saxophone. In 1996, Bajsa studied traditional Macedonian instruments (*kaval*, *gajda*, *tambura*, and *tapan*) with Professor Dragan Dautovski at the Skopje Music Academy, and began her career in his quartet, touring internationally. In 2000, Bajsa worked as tutor for traditional instruments at the music high school Ilija Nikolovski, Luj. More recently, she became a member of the National folk ensemble *Tanec*.³⁰⁰ Bajsa contributed a lot of general knowledge, from her studies and her experiences in many folklore branches of Macedonia. Moreover, she brought me in touch with other musicians such as Ferus and Zoran, and she taught me my first baby steps in playing *čoček* on the violin.



Figure 44: Bajsa Arifovska³⁰¹

Ferus Mustafov, (interview in Skopje, 3rd April 2018) also known as King Ferus, is a Macedonian saxophonist of Romani descent. Not just is he highly popular in his home country for performing folk and Romani wedding music, he is also credited for bringing *čoček* music to international popularity. He was born in Štip, Yugoslavia, into a Rom family of musicians and is the son of Ilmi Jašarov, likewise a well-known clarinetists and saxophonist. His professional career began at the age of 17 whilst studying violin and clarinet at his local junior music academy. He went on a successful tour with Toma Črčev's ensemble, and afterwards left the music academy to become a working musician. In Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, he took a leading role promoting folk music and gained international fame through his album releases. Ferus is the most sought-after wedding musician in Macedonia for the last 30 years.³⁰² For my research he contributed some of his

³⁰⁰ More about Bajsa: <http://www.izvormusic.com/bios/bajsa.html> - last accessed 27th August 2018.

³⁰¹ Source: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/26760850.html> - last accessed 27th August 2018.

³⁰² More on Ferus: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferus_Mustafov - last accessed 16th August 2018

knowledge about *čoček* music, recent history, and social aspects from his ample experiences performing internationally for Romani, Macedonian and any other audiences.



Figure 45: Ferus Mustafov³⁰³

Kurtiš (Jašarov) Kadriev: (interview in Štip, 13th April 2018) is one of the leading saxophonists and clarinetists in Macedonia. Born in Štip in 1958, he comes from a family with a long music tradition, performing traditional Romani music all across Macedonia and the Balkans. As a soloist, and with his group ‘Brass Band Kurtis Kadrievi’ he participated in a number of festivals in France, Belgium and the Netherlands and has recorded many albums of traditional Romani music, including *čoček*. He composed and performed music for Emir Kusturica’s film ‘Dom Za Besenje (House for Hanging)’. Kurtiš has completed a degree at the Music Academy of the *Unversitet Sveti Kiril I Metodij*, Skopje. He picked up his *čoček* and *makam* playing partly from his family, and partly from the Turkish clarinetists Şükrü Tunar and Mustafa Kandirali.



Figure 46: Kurtiš und Gundula after the interview

For my research, Kurtiš taught me a lot about the more intricate details of *čoček* music as well as about the social background from his own experience as a Romani musician.

³⁰³ Image Source: <http://www.noonoorecords.com/balkan-gypsy-music-goes-global/> - last accessed 27th August 2018

Vevki Amedov (Interview in Bitola, 18th April 2018), born around 1950 is based in Bitola. He completed a music degree as well as studying with Turkish masters such as Mustafa Kandirali. When he was 22 years old, he started performing at Turkish and Roma weddings, performing various folklore styles including *čalgija*, folk and *čoček*. Even though he is a highly known and appreciated player, he never built up a public image or recorded many commercial albums and TV programmes. Vevki is, in his approach to *čoček*, the strictest of my interviewees; in his definition, real *čoček* is only *Čalgija Čoček*, Romani *Čoček* and on the periphery Classic *Čoček*. Studying with Turkish masters, he has a thorough knowledge of *makam*, and prefers a Turkish approach to *čoček*. In his younger years, he performed mostly *čalgija* style, always in *makam*, mostly at Romani weddings and social events. He is not very well known amongst Macedonians, as he plays in old-fashioned style, with the finesse he learned from his Turkish teachers and colleagues. In the last ten years, he has dedicated his life more to religion and drawn back from the music scene. For my thesis, Vevki contributed knowledge specifically on the older styles of *čoček* and on *čalgija*.



Figure 47: Vevki Amedov demo cover

Branislav Petrovski (Interviews in *Šuto Orizari* and *Topaana*, 16th February 2017 and 21st April 2018) is known as a ‘cultural attaché’ in *Šuto Orizari*, where he is based with his family. In 1998 he formed the association ‘*Romano Ilo*’ in order to follow his passion and support Romani history and art, to conserve Romani traditions and to educate his people to improve their living conditions and outlook in life. The organisation organises cultur and community projects in the field of Romani folklore, theatre, art and research. Amongst his projects is the Amateur Romani Theatre Festival ‘*Garavde Muja*’, the International Scientific Symposium ‘*The Spiritual and Material Culture of the Rom*’, and a photography exhibition portraying ‘*Gjurgjovden–Herdelez 1967–97*’. Educational projects include the ‘Education of children to prevent smoking, alcohol, drugs and AIDS’. His most recent achievement was the exhibition ‘50 Years of *Čoček* from 1967 until 2017’ in collaboration with choreoethnographer Elsie Ivančić-Dunin at the City Museum in Skopje.



Figure 48: Branislav Petrovski

Prof. (Dr.) Trajko Petkovski (Interview in Skopje, 16th and 18th April 2018) is a Romologist and senior researcher of the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore in Skopje, Macedonia. He completed a master at Belgrade University about the calendar rituals of the Roma in Skopje, and a doctorate at Zagreb University, about the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Roma in Macedonia. In 1997 he was president of the first scientific international symposium of the Roma. Trajko published and presented a large number of scientific works on Romani language, ethnology, culture and folklore, including two songbooks on Macedonian Romani folk songs and various dictionaries of Romani language at conferences in Macedonia, Europe, USA and India. For this thesis he has contributed knowledge on Romani sociology and culture as well as provided me with reading material from the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore.³⁰⁴



Figure 49: Prof. (Dr.) Trajko Petrovski³⁰⁵

Zoran Kraguevski (Interview in Skopje, 3rd April 2018) is a Macedonian clarinetist and saxophonist, originally from Bitola. Born in 1962, he belongs to the older generation of non-Romani *čoček* musicians. He originally studied classical clarinet in Helsinki, and at the Faculty of Music in Skopje. He also learned saxophone and studied jazz. *Čoček* he learned in person and by copying from Romani masters such as Ferus and Kurtiš. Nowadays he works daytime as clarinet tutor at the high

³⁰⁴ Sources: *Ethnic Identities in Dynamic Perspective* (2002) Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society, and <http://www.kaflaintercontinental.com/writings/articles/Trajko.Petrovski.htm> - last accessed 27th August 2018.

³⁰⁵ Source: <http://ednomagazine.com/en/briefly/promotion-of-a-scientific-work-about-the-roma> - last accessed 27th August 2018.

school for music and ballet ‘Ilija Nikolovski – Luj’, Skopje and at night-time he plays for Macedonian weddings and events, either with his big band MTRV, or with his wedding band, performing *oros* and *čoček*. Zoran gave valuable input as a non-Romani musician performing *čoček*, answering musical questions as well as giving me cultural insight. Moreover, he connected me to Vevki and to Kurtiš and helped set up meetings.



Figure 50: Zoran Kraguevski³⁰⁶

Dr. Nevin Şahin (Interview in Ankara, Turkey, 24th June, and via email on 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 28th August) received her PhD degree in Sociology at Middle East Technical University, Turkey. Her fields of interest include sociology of music, historical musicology, migration and transnationality, and qualitative methodology, with a focus on *makam* music. She worked on research projects and conducted ethnographic fieldwork on music and migration among German-Turkish young women in amateur Turkish music choirs, music and power among performers of Mevlevi music, and self-reflexivity among qualitative researchers. Besides her academic work of international publications and conference presentations, she is a performer of traditional Turkish percussion, recording albums and performing in ensembles of Balkan, Anatolian folk, classical Turkish and ethno-jazz music in Turkey and abroad. For my research she contributed a lot due to her enormous *makam* knowledge.



Figure 51: Nevin Şahin

³⁰⁶ Source: <https://goo.gl/images/HbyHVh> - last accessed 27th August 2018.

Doç. Dr. Cenk Güray (Interview in Ankara, Turkey, 23rd June 2018) was born in Ankara in 1973. He initially completed University with a bachelor's degree in 1995, a master in 1998 and a PhD in 2003 in Mining Engineering at the Middle East Technical University. He continued studying and received a master's degree in Musicology from Başkent University in 2006, and a PhD in Turkish religious music from Ankara University, Faculty of Divinity in 2012. Currently, he is working as associate professor of musicology at the Hacettepe University State Conservatorium in Ankara, focussing on Turkish music theory and Turkish religious music. Güray is also a skilled *bağlama*³⁰⁷ player, performing with traditional and jazz fusion ensembles. As both a researcher and a musician he has been participating in many academic activities, concerts and recordings worldwide.



Figure 52: Çenk Güray³⁰⁸

OTHER INTERVIEWEES:

Eleonora Mustafovska (Interview in Kratovo, 16th February 2017, 10th April 2018), is a young Romani singer and the only female student of Esma Redžepova. She regularly performs with Esma's Band Next Generation, performing at festivals such as the Khamoro Festival in Prague and Balkan Trafik in Brussels. Eleonora contributed insight from a Romani female point of view.

Simeon Atasanov (Interview in Skopje, 17th April 2018) is a Romani accordionist, also a composer and arranger. Being from a Macedonian Romani musician's family, he spent part of his childhood in Belgrade, studying with Esma and Stevo in their school. Later, he wrote and arranged music for Esma and performed in her ensemble. Nowadays, he is the mentor of Eleonora, and one of the leaders of Esma's Band Next Generation. Simeon contributed insight on *čoček* as an accordionist and composer of *čoček* and other Romani music.

³⁰⁷ Long-necked lute

³⁰⁸ Source: <http://www.cenkguray.com/> - last accessed 27th August 2018.



Figure 53: Accordionist Simeon

Elam Rasidov (Interview in Kočani, 13th April 2018) is a Romani trumpet player. Like Simeon, he comes from a musician's family, and studied for a while in Esma's and Stevo's school. He performed with Esma on her concerts and recordings, and plays with his orchestra in restaurants and weddings in Kočani. He contributed his knowledge and thoughts on *čoček*, and also taught me a *čoček*, which he had adapted for the violin.



Figure 54: Gundula - Elam - Mihajlo

Other Romani interviewees who contributed information are accordionist **Enver Rašid** (interview in Topaana, 9th April), a regular performer for Romani and Macedonian festivities, Elvis Asan, a semi-professional musician, and his cousin Naser Jašarević (Interviews in Šuto Orizari, 17th February 2017). More data was collected by asking random Romani in the streets of various neighbourhoods in Skopje, Kumanovo and Štip.

Stojanche Kostov (Interview in Skopje, 17th April 2018) is a Macedonian researcher in the field of dance anthropology at the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore in Skopje, as well as a member of the Folklore dance ensemble *Orce Nikolov*. He contributed information on Folklore *Čoček* as well as *čoček* from a non-Romani dancer's point of view.

Vladimir Botev: (Interview in Skopje, 6th April 2018) is a freelance musician, educated at the Music Academy, Skopje, as guitarist, pianist and music theory tutor for a variety of styles, such as classical, flamenco and jazz. Currently he is teaching, arranging music, composing, producing and performing. He contributed valuable knowledge and reflections as a musician who only later came across *čoček*.

Mehmet Ališan Budak (interview 28th and 29th June 2018) is a student of the Ankara University Music Academy, a former student of Güray, studying Turkish classical music. He gave me first instructions on *makam* and evaluated some of the *čoček* music for *makam* usage.

Other Macedonians who contribute valuable, and sometimes challenging, data are **Professor Rodna Veličkova** (interview in Skopje, 16th April 2018) musicologist and researcher at the *Marko Cepenkov* Institute of Folklore in Skopje and **Sasho Livrinski** (interview in Skopje, 5th April 2018) an accordionist, composer, and music teacher at a high school. More general insight on Macedonian sociology, and on Romani issues from an outsider point of view was provided by **Zorica Coneva** (Interview in Skopje, 19th April 2018), a young Macedonian women with a lot of wedding experience, **Mihajlo Stojanov** (interviews in Skopje and by email from February 2018 until June 2018), a young Macedonian guitarist who grew up in a Romani neighbourhood and **Darko Vidinić**, another young Macedonian men.



Figure 55: Bajsa - Ferus - Gundula

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GLOSSARY

Čalgija = an Ottoman-type ensemble and the music they perform. The line-up consists of clarinet, *oud*, *kanun*, *darbuka*, possibly *djumbush* and violin.

Čalgii = the musicians who perform in a *čalgija* ensemble.

Çalparas = Ottoman type of wooden castanets, played by *köçekler* whilst dancing

Caverns = Traditional wine bar, often located underground in a cave-like space.

Çengi = female dancer of the Ottoman era. A type of belly dancer, often also a concubine. Plural: *çengiler*.

Çifte bağlama = long-necked plucked-string instrument with two strings. It belongs to the family of lutes, with a deep round back, but a much longer neck than *oud* or lute.

Çiftetelli = *çiftetelli* = 4/4 rhythm pattern, which emerged in Ottoman Istanbul, today found in Turkey, Greece and the Balkans.

Dajre = in Ottoman context a medium-sized frame drum with dingles, in modern context a type of tambourine.

Darbuka = goblet-shaped hand drum, traditionally made from clay and goat skin, modern instruments can be made from metal and a synthetic skin.

Dumbuš = long-necked plucked-stringed instrument, from the family of lutes, with a metal body and a membrane front, similar to a banjo.

Def = Small frame drum with jingles, similar to a tambourine

Gajda = Balkan bagpipe, made with goat or sheep's hide, with a melody and a drone pipe from wood or bone.

Ince çalgi = alternative name for the *ince saz* ensemble

Ince saz = literally 'soft-sounding' instruments, a type of ensemble developed in 18th century Ottoman empire, consisting of violin or *kemençe*, *ney*, *oud*, *kanun* and *def*.

Indži čalgija = indoor *čalgija* ensemble, the heir to *Ince çalgi* with violin, *kanun*, *oud* and *dajre*.

Kaba čalgija = outdoor *čalgija* ensemble with a line-up of clarinet, trumpet, *oud* and *dajre*.

Kanun = type of large, plucked zither with a thin trapezoidal soundboard.

Karšilama = 9/8 rhythm pattern, frequently used in music of the Ottoman empire, today found in Turkey, Greece and the Balkans

Kaval = chromatic wooden end-blown, rim-blown flute, associated with mountain shepherds.

Kemençe = Ottoman fiddle-type, bowed string instrument

Köçek = young male dancers dressed in female costumes, providing entertainment in the Ottoman empire. Plural: *köçekler*.

Köçekçe = musical accompaniment to the *köçekler*'s dance.

Makam = Ottoman Turkish melodic modal system.

Ney = wooden end-blown reed flute, a middle eastern variant of the *kaval*, and one of the oldest instruments, continuously played for more than 4500 years.

Oro = collective term for Macedonian line and circle social dances, for both, non-Romani and Romani traditions.

Oud = Short-necked, lute-type, pear-shaped unfretted plucked-string instrument.

Soživot = literally coexistence, cohabitation; expressing the state of people from different ethnic backgrounds living together and interacting in the same neighbourhood.

Tambura = long-necked, plugged lute-type instrument, fretted, with 4 strings. Its ancestor is the Indian *Tanpura*.

Tanzimat = mid-19th century movement of social reforms and modernisation in the Ottoman Empire.

Tapan = Large double-headed drum, with a deep bass and a treble sound, played a mallet and a stick.

Tema = the composed sections of a *čoček*.

Usul = Turkish term for a rhythm cycle or rhythm pattern.

Zurla = a conical-bore, oboe-like double-reed wind instrument.

Ženska čalgija = a female-only *čalgija* ensemble.

