

# *Polyphony, the Memory of Earth's Voice*

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## **Abstract**

*Albanian and international cultural heritage couldn't be understood without Polyphony and vice versa, Polyphony would be an endangered value if it was not included and valued as one of the main limbs of cultural heritage. Studies have shown that in it, Polyphony is not and constitutes only a value of the past but at the same time and manner it represents even the most representative features of contemporaries. It still preserves the identity characteristics which have defined it as one of the most original genres of folklore, which testifies to its non-alienation over the centuries against the assimilative spirits that have described the History of Albania. Many local and foreign critics have shed light on and analyzed the artistic evidence of polyphony in different regions, the forms of interpretation and the features of the lyrics in its entirety as well as the history and graphical context. In addition to different opinions, unanimity but also polemics and in different ways of view on this cultural and artistic phenomenon, all scholars have shed light and treated Polyphony from different perspectives by continuously completing the research angle and at the same time emphasizing on its role and importance in preserving and further strengthening the identity of the Albanian society, despite the conditions and influences from other cultures that have described the Albanian socio-cultural climate. Despite the different points of view in period of time spanning, Polyphony is considered as a space where verse joins the sound in completed harmony between them, preserving intact the form and peculiarities of artistic interpretation, as a sign the directness of the country and the role it has played in tradition, as well as in the contemporary and at the same time the future that does not tend to tear or touch this foundation of our society.*

**Key words:** Cultural Heritage, Polyphony, Art, Interpretation, Culture, Time, Traditions, Study, Value.

## The terrain of the polyphonic tradition

Human society, from its inception to modern times, has been contained to an unstoppable developmental rate, creating, following and defining, all the ages through which its history and evolutionary process has penetrated. Everything has been subjected to a continuous life cycle, to build tools and mechanisms of continuity, and to leave footprints on the terrain where the human community built its activity. Centuries later, when the science of history was reinforcing its role in the overall social consciousness, by means of some data transmitted from one generation to the next and specific features, various scholars have been able to recognize and determine the many characteristics of the organization of life and forms of survival against the many phenomena within and beyond the community.

To reach in modern times, mankind has had to lose, change, or sacrifice many of the indicators that have accompanied it throughout the stages and life cycles that already belong and identify its past. In this way, it can be asserted that ways of communication and reaction have changed over the years, but some rituals have not changed despite passing time, and this remains undoubtedly for the ritual of birth and death, ritual of love and marriage or separation, among others reverence for the dead bodies or for the fallen on the battlefield.

Rituals and habits that are still practiced today are regarded not only as a spiritual ritual but above all as a form of existence, reverence of generations and, moreover as a manner of continuity. Seen from this viewpoint, polyphony remains one of the symbols of the heritage, which also defines the antiquity of any civilization of a nation, language or culture. The general scientific thought, is documented in many studies and directions for the proven fact that in essence the Balkan Peninsula represents the genetics of European civilization.

Over the past few years, the transition process has been accompanied by massive population movements, firstly toward immigration and secondly with a view to shifting focus in large cities. This recurring phenomenon contracted the population in many rural areas where the main sources of ethnographic, folk and especially polyphonic resources are located. Our point of view has focused in region on Vlora and Gjirokastra, as countries affected by the risk of losing or alienating essential identity traits. At the same time, in this unfavorable climate, the prevailing trends or currents of commercial art are influenced, as well as the general spirit of globalization, elements which extend the range of danger especially in the created terrain. The need for intervention through specific projects for the further protection and cultivation of this great creative and interpretive potential, becomes vital also because in this important aspect of the spiritual and artistic emancipation of society, state investment, thanks

to the multifaceted needs for interference in both tangible heritage assets and intangible heritage values always remain insufficient to change the situation.

## A historical overview of polyphony

Most of ethnomusicologist do not have a response for the historic and origin of polyphonique music. Taking into consideration the opinion of French researcher *Mouton*, published in the periodical « *Origine des instruments de musique* » Paris-La Haye, Mouton– Chapter X “Primitive Polyphony” in 1936, in his point of view referring the musical map of the world, it is noticed that a large number of peoples worldwide have had or still maintain the tradition of polyphonic music. Mauton’s research suggests that *the first answers come from German schools at the beginning of the last century which proceed through an evolutionary and diffusions view according to which knowledge, experience, and values have been created by one. or more countries of origin, and then progressively diffusing, as a natural effect of diffusion. It would have been homophonic at first and then polyphonic.* Bernard Lortat-Jacob.

In the Albanian reality, this argument raises discussions and questions as follows:

- Which are the countries of origin?
- How are they formed?
- Where are they located?
- Is there a starting point in the history of Albanian territories that may allow us to say: Before an *X moment* there was nothing known and then at an *Y moment* there was already something?
- Is it possible to believe a spontaneous birth, what biology has put in doubt for a long time?

It is possible that polyphony’s “birth” was followed by writing, a theory which is still accepted today from the academics of musicology. *According to many experts, polyphony dates back to the medieval era, and would have been born in Europe, benefiting extensively from the “invention” of musical writing - attributed to Gui d’Arezzo, in the X century.* Bernard Lortat- Jacob.

The fact is that, in one side, music writing is practiced much earlier than the X century, and on the other side, many populations have been practicing polyphony for a long time, or without proving the need for this writing. Today’s musicals, like jazz, take the initiative from musical writing, but then they almost never use it during execution.

In the 1930s, researcher André Schaeffner analyzed that “reason of polyphony music” should be searched elsewhere: in sociology for example, in regarded

evolutionary and diffusions assumptions as questionable and confusing as they implicated a kind of “mechanism in cultural appropriation of knowledge” (a hypothesis which badly resists to historical criticism).

It is also accepted that, music is the most widely spread thing in the world. Moreover, sociology tends to prove the advantage of complex over simplicity.

It is about an epistemological and historical advantage: Hasn't human society been genetically programmed to live in a group, or at least to live as a couple, to “get things done together” and man / woman duality has also to manifest itself musically: the man's vocal cords are longer than the woman's, the man and woman talk (sing) in different registers, a fact that every culture, in its own way, likes to exploit, suggesting an initial polyphony, e.g. in octaves, or by treating these differences of natural material in terms of musical records.

In music, polyphony is a type of musical structure consisting of two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody, as opposed to a musical quality with only one voice, monophony, or a structure with a dominant melodic voice accompanied by chord, which is called the homophone.

Within the context of Western musical tradition, the term polyphony is commonly used to refer for Late Middle Ages and Renaissance music. Baroque forms like fugue, which can be called polyphonic, are usually described as contrapuntal. In all cases what Margaret Bent (1999) called a “dyadic counterpoint”, with each part generally written against another, with all parts modified if necessary, at the end. This point-to-point conception is opposed to “sequential composition”, where the voices were written in a sequence with each new sound fitting throughout the hitherto constructed, which was previously assumed.

The term polyphony is also sometimes used more broadly, to describe any musical texture that is not monophonic. Such a perspective considers homophony as a sub-type of polyphony.

Traditional (non-professional) polyphony has a wide, if uneven, distribution among the peoples of the world. Most polyphonic regions of the world are in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Oceania. It is believed that the origins of polyphony in traditional music vastly predate the emergence of polyphony in European professional music. Currently there are two contradictory approaches to the problem of the origins of vocal polyphony: the Cultural Model, and the Evolutionary Model. According to the Cultural Model, the origins of polyphony are connected to the development of human musical culture; polyphony came as the natural development of the primordial monophonic singing; therefore, polyphonic traditions are bound to gradually replace monophonic traditions. According to the Evolutionary Model, the origins of polyphonic singing are much deeper, and are connected to the earlier stages of human evolution; polyphony

was an important part of a defense system of the hominids, and traditions of polyphony are gradually disappearing all over the world.

Although the exact origins of polyphony in Western church traditions are unknown, the treatises *Musical enchiridia* and *Scalia enchiridia*, both dating from the 900th century, are commonly considered the oldest written examples of polyphony. These treatises provided examples of double-voiced ornamentation against call ornamentation using parallel octaves, fifth and fourth. Instead of being fixed works, they showed ways to improvise polyphony during the performance. The *Winchester Troper*, from the 1000th Century, is the oldest example of swim polyphony for acclaimed performance, though the note does not indicate precise pitch or extension.

Albanian Iso-polyphony is a traditional part of Albanian folk music and, as such, is included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage.

The four regions of southern Albania - Lalëria Myzeqe, Tusks, Chameria and Labria - have polyphonic songs as part of their culture. A related form of polyphonic singing is found in northern Albania, in the Peshkopi area; Polog, Tetovo, Kicevo and Gostivar in North Macedonia; and the Highlands in northern Albania and southern Montenegro.

Labëria is particular well known for multipart singing; songs can have two, three, or four parts. Two-part songs are sung only by women. Three-part songs can be sung by men and women. Four-part songs are a Labëria specialty. Research has shown that four-part songs developed after three-part ones, and that they are the most complex form of polyphonic singing.

The *Gjirokastër National Folklore Festival, Albania*, (*Albanian: Festivali Folklorik Kombëtar*), has been held every five years in the month of October since 1968, and it typically includes many polyphonic songs.

Descriptions of playing music in Classical Greece and Rome are full of suggestions about harmonic and counterpoint practices, and music theory, up to “Pythagoras”, is full of detailed accounts of harmonic consonants. Once they mastered the means to write their liturgical music down, moreover, the Franks illustrated various methods to harmoniously strengthen that music. There is evidence of the practice of polyphonic performance of medieval calling since the time we wrote, that is, the evidence of the song itself. Users without subscription are unable to view the full content. Meanwhile, research continues to shed light on the unknown sides of this space described by the creators and performers. “These observations lead us to believe that the Albanian polyphony is more natural and more original than normally accepted. In other words, the origin and reason of the existence of polyphony should be sought in bio-sociology. Cultures, by their own choices, go on to suggest roles and parts, as well as the respective importance of these roles and parts, by persistently cultivating the

aesthetic instruments that the social group has a duty to promote and control. Remember that for some reason, some social groups first develop their taste with soloists' voices and homophonic choruses. In practice, in Mediterranean oral traditions, polyphony singing promotes the acoustic perception that "somehow you want to be together." As far as singers are concerned, sometimes it is about recognizing the distinctions, sometimes melting their voices, marking subtle, sensitive music codes and offering all the intermediate nuances.

In view of the above, the study of polyphony in Albania needs to be seen in a wider context than Albania, in the territories of neighboring countries and beyond, in order to understand so that people of any nationality may spread their values when they are together. So, finally, it can never be said enough, there is no possible culture without emotion divided between people and ethnicity, and that music remains an essential emotional communication between peoples, as the tradition of polyphonic music proves.<sup>1</sup> After each conclusion, the scientific think-tank agrees with the conviction that any attempt to delineate an exhaustive idea about the embryonic phase, the development and extension of immense coordinates over time and different peoples, as well as ways of conveying intact polyphony up to the groove. Beyond the new millennium, it seems to be an unfinished mission, as is the very nature of polyphony characterized by human nature itself.

## **Analysis and features of Albanian folklore**

Albanian folk is very ancient. So, for example: Straboni (Geographical book VII chapter 316) tells of the tribe of Dardanians who inhabited Kosovo, around Vranje, Tetovo, Peja and Mitrovica) that "they do not set aside music, but always use trumpets and cordless instruments". Also, the Adrians, who stood out as music lovers \* see K. Patch; Tirana "Illyrians" 1925) They used these tools. Meanwhile our attention is drawn to an even clearer idea from ancient monuments depicting dancers, instrumentalists and singers who adorn dishes, coins, tombstones, etc. Among other things, many scholars draw the attention of an Illyrian statue of a comic actor unveiled at the Bylis Antique Theater that is featured in the characteristic attitude of folk singers who even today, especially in the northern highlands, sing "top - arm ", holding the hand near the ear while performing the song. It is also known that some feet of the old metric have been named after some Illyrian tribes: such as molos ('-----') as well as peonies (vvv-'), perhaps also pyrrhic feet (v'v), (see Ramadan Sokol's book - Dances and

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<sup>1</sup> Mouton, (1936) « *Origine des instruments de musique* » Paris-La Haye, Mouton- kapitulli X, « *Polifonia primitive* ».

Music of Our Ancestors, Tirana 1971). Sokoli, speaking of the dances and songs of the ancients, states that;

We can imagine the inhabitants of these ancient centers singing and dancing not only on stage but also in houses, in temples, near springs, in squares and lawns. The cult of museums, along with the traditions or myths, as well as the many facts presented, tell us what place music and dance had in the ancestral social and private life. They sang and danced in different circumstances; for feasts and weddings, for sacrifices and celebrations, from the cradle to the grave. Between these two goals; almost every important circumstance had its own repertoire where many of those artistic and interpretive traits and nuances from that repertoire felt to have arrived to this day through the passage from generation to generation in folk tradition.

“Historian Frederick Gibert, who writes in his book,” *The History of the Countries of Albania*” at the beginning of the 20th century: *Studying the character of the Albanian is very difficult because it is full of contradictions and unexpected views! This people do not know the concept of love, but they sing to love more than anyone else and with the most beautiful songs. Thoughts on love in Albanian society have not been the same. They have evolved over time, with the social position that women have occupied in families, societies, etc.*” Folk creativity, regardless of genre, is characterized by several traits that are common to all kinds, to all its artistic expressions. It has now become commonplace for the sake of representing study norms and characteristics to divide all folkloric creativity into different genres and types just like cultivated literature<sup>2</sup>. This division, if made for study purposes, may be accepted, but it does not fully correspond to the truth where we look closely at the general features of the oral creativity of the people. In his journey to this secluded corner of Europe, Lord Byron had not foreseen that one of the letters he addressed to his mother, while he was in Albania, would be the most representative of the Albanian folk. Regarding the above, one of his works would be mentioned by the distinguished Albanian scholar Faik Konica who brings the contents of this letter, written 200 years ago in its most original spirit: “Dear mother, let me tell you that the Albanians in their dresses, consisting of a long *white kilt*, gold worked cloak, crimson velvet gold laced jacket & waistcoat, silver mounted pistols and daggers, velvet vest embroidered with gold, with silver ornaments to give an unimaginable appearance, adorned with elegance to a stranger’s eye. “ In this way Byron had written to his mother from the Kingdom of the northern Europe.

Folk genre cannot be subdivided only into lyric, epic and dramatic genre as it is divided in cultivated literature. Folk sometimes is called as oral literature, but should not be accepted as such for several reasons.

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<sup>2</sup> Arsen Jani Mustaqi: *Lirika popullore Shtëpia Botuese Argeta LMG, Tiranë 2011, f. 8 - 9.*

Firstly, in folklore, lyric, epic and dramatic almost coexist. In love songs, for example, it is often a dialogue between the two lovers, thus constituting a point of dramatic dialogue. On the other side, many lyrical love songs, e.g. contain a narrative, are based on an event and that is exactly what connects it to the epic. The same is true of the epic, which is almost never seen in its original appearance but is always mixed with lyrical moment.

Secondly, folk songs are born simultaneously as a text, a melodic line or as a melody, thus constituting a unity that is aesthetically valued only if all the constituent elements are interpreted together, to give the song its true artistic and emotional weight and value. On the other hand it must be admitted that in folklore, there are no songs to be recited, but verses which are sung.

Thirdly, folklore can preserve the old verse and so, for example, in folk, in heroic song we can apply the system of tonal verse, and in a love song, the other system. While today, an Albanian poet writes usually by applying the syllabic system.

However, we must admit that in some folklore creations the lyrical spirit prevails, in others the epic spirit etc, without being obliged to mention here the lyrical or epic and dramatic gender as we do with cultivated literature. For this reason, the approach of folk with the cultivated literature is quite conventional.

Folklore creation remains to this day a living and inalienable space, which over the time tends to evolve and be enriched by the inclinations and imaginations of contemporary art. This is because it is passed down from generation to generation only verbally, not written and so any new carrier can forget parts, add others, can merge into one of two songs (contamination phenomenon), from three tales, e.g. can create a single tale etc. This necessarily happens in a spontaneous, almost spontaneous way: during the story, the popular poet or storyteller creates one by one according to his talent and inclinations. We come to an important characteristic of folklore, its improvisational character. This means, as mentioned above, that popular songwriters and storytellers do not strictly adhere to the previously born creation, they can touch it, either through interpretation or editing. Sometimes they do this together, as a singing or performing group. Improvisation is a characteristic of all folk art, but it was later used in cultivated art as well.

Another characteristic of folklore is repetition. The artistic phenomenon of repetition is very important. A song, a rhapsody or even a fairy tale has repetitive elements in it, which on the one hand give the piece a very popular feature, a style very close to the taste of the people, but also aids to creation are technical tools that make the rhythm or singer better remember what he is performing. In this creation verses (different forms of chorus, etc.) can be repeated in a storytelling song or in a tale of whole moments of action (repetitio epica - epic repetition),



stanzas with only minor changes (one word, a comparison etc) and then we have iterative stanzas etc. Forms of repetition are endings and alliterations, forms of vocal harmonies, etc. Repetitions are tools that in turn facilitate the work of the popular creator that in the song or in the story, he, by repeating a few verses or a particular moment, has time to digest what comes next. One form of repetition are the formulations, the introductions and closures of a fairy tale, the introductions and closings of a rhapsody, the same repetitions that are repeated for a character within a given setting.

An important feature of folklore is its syncretistic character. A folk creation, such as a lyrical song, is the result of the union of several constituent elements: the result of the union of text, melody, and in some cases choreography. In short, one can come to the definition that a folklore creation gives its full aesthetic value only when executed together with all its constituent parts. A popular provincial polyphonic song that has been sung over the centuries has become known and loved by the whole society not only with words but with words and melody together. It is, first and foremost, a musical creation and then a poetic creation. The relation between the word and the melody is very important here, they are linked together, and they have done their best to make this song come out. For this reason, words that are only recited would have little or no artistic, exciting value, take on immense artistic and thrilling power overlaid with the cloak of melody.

Now, not only in the artistic community but also in the academic area, a folk song is only appreciated artistically if it is executed as a text, as a melody and as a dance, otherwise it does not impress you. This happens with all the folk dances. Thus in a lab dance, words are valued not only by the melody but also by the movement of the foot, hand, or the whole body of the dancer; In this way, some repetitions that are stripped of melodic-choreographic components, intertwined with the clash of the foot, assume true artistic value and turn themselves into epic, lyrical or even dramatic emotional motifs in whatever context, background or era. Only in this way will everyone have a more objective judgment in assessing the commonality and particularity of the artistic word.

Folklore is usually said to have an anonymous character. Opinions are divided into two opposing ways. A proven truth is that no one knows the creator or creators of a folk creation. Their names even if ever known have now been lost. In addition, often a song, a rhapsody, a tale is the fruit of the creative work of some authors who with their improvisation skills have contributed either at the same time together (singer groups at weddings or occasions of joy), or at different times when they have executed that creation by removing or adding something of their own. Here the anonymous character of folklore is related to its collective character, however, the word collective here should not be understood as the

creation of a folk work (song, rhythm, dance, melody) as the whole interpretive group, and at the same time listeners or also the crusts etc. The collective word here is to be understood only in that one creation is attended by some people even at different times, in different generations, who thus adapt their creation to their taste.

On the other side, the anonymous character is not entirely true, and this is because every folk creation has one or a group of creators in its origin, only that the general public may not know their names. But this is implied, as it is known that at the core of every creation there is an author or a group of talented authors who are capable of creating, improvising with their talent, inspiration and fantasy their art, which over time brings the public to know the true authors of this spiritual heritage as well.

Folk creation is just like any other phenomenon associated with time, so it has a certain age. For this reason, when we come across a popular creation and want to study for it, we must firstly determine (approximately or even precisely) the basis of facts and all source data of its age and the period when it was created. Under this logic, as well as for other reasons related to and in regard to this purpose, it is necessary to determine the age of folklore. Even many interpretive artists, in addition to voices, use the same musical instruments to perform a song of the past centuries as trumpets, culates, tunes, etc., with the idea of recreating that aura and emotional rhythm of the past.

## **Albanian polyphony, values and characteristics**

To determine the age of a creation, many elements must be considered and studied such as historical factors, environmental factors, peoples 'movements, creators' acquaintances with creators of other nations and nations, musical elements, choreographic elements, etc. Only by this method will we be able to determine the origin, age, and characteristic of a folk creation.

Albanian iso-polyphony is characterized by songs consisting of two solo parts, a melody and a countermelody with a choral drone. The structure of the solo parts varies according to the different ways of performing the drone, which has a great variety of structures, especially in the popular style adopted by all groups performing this music.

Polyphony is stronger in the transmission of voices, as do the receivers and transmitters themselves in a voice recitation. The chorus that takes strong dramatic forms accompanies a prolonged "e-ejee" without stopping the first and second voices, or the four main voices that enliven the polyphonic song. Binaural polyphony is considered the primary variant of this genre of folk art. The receiver

and the host in the voice recitation harmonize the short and simple text, so as to be remembered by the first-time listener. Three-sided and four-sided polyphony is one of the art-turned forms in many parts of Southern Albania. Although the receiver and the host play the key role in the vivid recitation of the communicative vivacity and harmony, the iso is the structural element that decides the longevity of the polyphony itself in this case. Studies show that quadruple is the supreme development of the Albanian iso-polyphony. The castor is added to the receiver, transducer and choir structure for the first time. The four-voice singing process complements the echo of the song. The thriller vibrantly and harmoniously manages to convey with a higher vocal record the repetition of the words of the song, making a kind of echo in the space of polyphony. It is clear that the harmony of voices as in a sound trunk originates in the ability to sing outside the pentagram. Using a quasi-primitive musically chorus, the receiver, the songwriter, the receptionist, the waiter for the words of the first, the chorus echoing the famous “*e-ejee*” and the thrower as the voice-over narrator in space, are neither more nor less the witnesses of the history of Albanians. The magic of polyphony is marked by the lack of musical instruments and their replacement with biological “instruments” of the human body, such as voice cords, lungs, nerve, sensitivity, etc. who more fully express the performer’s emotions, features, sensitivity, and culture. In the opinion of researcher Asqeri Petani “polyphonic song is truly magical, and its magic seems to come from both its mysticism, interpretation, diversity and harmony of voices, as well as the strength and clarity of its lyrics. The lyrics of the song are compact, with implications, symbols, and pictures from its land, written by authors who know it well. And this is a feature and priority in relation to the cultivated song, since here the motif is taken from the land and conceived and interpreted by the people of the same land. Shouts, tweets, ripples, etc. have been present since the creation of society and may not have influenced and encouraged the spirit of those who created and fashioned their own song. Consequently, the inclusion of these factors in explaining the structure of polyphony seems naturally acceptable. It is plausible to say that polyphony has arrived in our day without substantial structural changes. It is preserved in its original form in the remote Albanian areas, also because in those areas the locals have remained more within themselves in many respects. In the case of the song, staying away from neighbors has had a positive effect on maintaining its original form.”<sup>3</sup>

Among other things, what is striking not only from foreign scholars but also from local scholars relates to the idea created through facts and source data but also to studies carried out at different periods of the archival fund that Albania compared to other countries. others in which polyphonic creativity and

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<sup>3</sup> Gazeta Dita Asqeri Petani “Magjia e këngës polifonike” 2 shtator 2017, publikuar më 11:26

interpretation are inherited, that is musically distinguished for a rich tradition in vocal polyphony. Generally, this type of polyphonic melody is most often sung by two, three or four voices, followed by a men's choir or a women's choir, without instrumental accompaniment. Not to mention that in this rich potential we also come across melodies sung by interwoven voices, which, although an integral part of the tradition of the past centuries, gained further development after the Second World War in Albania. Throughout the centuries from which it has been cultivated to this day intact and in its most original form, vocal polyphony takes its place and extends in the Mediterranean part of Albania from the Shkumbin River to the Chameria. We think it is worth noting that this area is then divided into two polyphonic systems. The Lab system covering the districts of Tepelena, Vlora, Gjirokastra and part of Saranda, and the Tosk system that runs from the Vjosa River to the Shkumbini River affecting the suburbs of Struga, Ohrid, and up to Prespa in North Macedonia.

If in the Laberia's system stand out for the profound difference between voices, the Tosk's system nonetheless features a freer pace and a progression of voices with more distinctive musical interval and accompaniment-enriching tunes. Their repertoire is mostly made up of historical song with a strong nationalist character and songs of peasant origin for love or lullaby. Referring to an article written by academician Vasil S. Tole, titled "On the Origin of Albanian Popular Polyphony, New Evidence on this World's Spiritual Culture", is empathized the fact that various traditions of the mythology of Ilirians' music have been made known to us since antiquity. According to Tole, one of these traditions is the one related to the death of Great Pan. Referring to Plutarch, a ship announced the Pan's death near Pelod Lake (Lake of Butrint) and thereafter a group of lamentations were heard in chorus, as if many being mourned together. We still do not know why tradition refers into Butrint's Lake, but it is thought that polyphonic crying is the most completed requisite in deaths and very prominent.

A very important clue to the finding of polyphonic singing in southern Albania, is given by Evliya Çelebi Sejahtnamesi in his 1660-1664 manuscripts. He writes that "... the Gjirokastra have another strange habit: mourning people who died until seven or eighty years ago. Every Sunday the whole tribe of the deceased gather in a house and weep for the deceased to gather their wailing mourners who weep and mourn with great pain, with mournful and sorrowful voice streaming down their tears. On this day in the city one cannot stand the roar of the noise of the mourning. I baptized Gjirokastra "the city of lamentation". From Albanian authors we mention the fresco painted by painter David Selenicasi around 1715, found in the monastery of "Laura the Great, the virgin Kukuzelisa's hat" on Mount Athos. The fresco depicts four women dancing accompanied by a toolbox consisting of two aerophone and two chordophone tools. According to F. Garry,

in this paper, the vital treatment of figures is observed, “violating” dogmas dictated by Byzantine canons<sup>4</sup>. According to German sociologist and philosopher Theodore Adorno: “Music is like a language.” Later, Umberto Eco writes: “Music had a syntactic dimension, but not a semantic dimension”. Not at all adhering to Umberto Eco’s theory: “The syntax of Albanian music is the totality of ways of uniting words (introverted and extroverted musical signs) of the language of Albanian music according to the meaning and “grammatical” nature of the music, together with the relationships established between the musical sentences (units) formed by them, (in iso-polyphonic receiver, transmitter and thrower, in cab and jar, (questions and responds (musical sentences) with relevant musical regularities (mass, time, height and color of sound, modes, tonality, harmony), to express thoughts and concepts and “musical lyrics” and to make them known and understandable to others.

The first written document is the Baptize Formula of the year 1462. In 1908, the Congress of Manastir adopted the Latin alphabet. The Greeks, North Macedonians and Montenegrins are considered as ethnic minorities in Albania, whereas the Roma and Aromanians as linguistic minorities.

The richness of Albanian oral and musical folklore is unusual; it goes beyond the national boundaries. It is a world richness, part and parcel of the universal heritage of humanity, acknowledged by UNESCO as well; the latter has defined the Albanian Polyphony as such.

In different times, different studies have been carried out about his phenomenon with ever-different original perspectives. According to them, it became clear that many centuries ago in the territory of Laberia –apart from monophony- a new form of artistic consciousness was being crystallized: Polyphony.

The term “polyphony”, as it is known and accepted by all researchers, comes from Greek. <poly »- many, « phony »- sound, sound, many voices, many sounds, many melodies. Until the middle of the twentieth century, it symbolized the performance, if not the sole, of the musical life of this province.

It is noticed that in the Balkan Peninsula, polyphonic song appears as a characteristic music culture for Albanian, Greek; aroma, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Bosnian, Serbian. Among them, Albanians, Greeks, Aromanians, recognizing the typical three- and four-voice singing while professional Bulgarians, North Macedonians, Bosnia, Serbs sing with two voices. Based on a musical point of view, one of the most beloved polyphonic songs in the Balkan is the Albanian polyphony. Ethnomusicologists have noticed that a various different area of singing with *more polyphonic voices and regional styles* are founded in Slovakia, southern Poland, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Georgia, the Baltic countries, Italy.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. As. Dr. Vasil Tole “Mbi origjinën e polifonisë popullore shqiptare, dëshmi të reja mbi këtë pasuri të kulturës shpirtërore botërore” në Shpirti i Shqiptarit, Alba Soul, Albasoul.com 1998-2007

According to the most widespread view of science, the polyphonic song of the Balkan peoples represents an early musical culture, pre-Byzantine. Even the Albanian polyphonic song has a distant appearance in relation to the Byzantine song, it was born and created on a separate land, nurtured for centuries by a healthy indigenous tradition, thus gaining original salient features.

Musicologist Loro Sata in the article “Polyphony and Albanian masterpieces, iso, yesterday and always”, published in the newspaper “Mapo” on May 14, 2015 writes that: “ISO in Albanian polyphonic song, with dialect labe and tosk, subdialects styles has had, has actually have and will eternally have the aim to: provide, guarantee the logic of modal support of the musical lines of the vocal group, the polyphonic band - the harmonious rationality - of the contrapuntal polyphony; a persistent and determined rhythm; the vocal interpretation of the song always in the high register of sound; particularly the infinite, transcendent space of that nature and of such a spontaneous, improvisational character of the first voice; of possessing a fantasy, so strikingly “astonishing” and equally masterful, enriched by an exquisite filigree weave of Skrapar’s polyphonic style.”

In this context, musicologist Loro Sata also in the article “Polyphony and the Albanian masterpiece, iso, yesterday and always”, published in the newspaper “Mapo” on May 14, 2015 writes: “Here are some of the characteristics of the Tepelena style: You must master the breath wide and deep of the recipient’s melody; The active counterpoint that the second voice carries and brings; Mixed and rich musical rhythm; Dynamic wealth accompanied by the prosperity of its agogic transformations. While passing on the interpretation of the tragic-style labyrinth-Vlore song, the spoken, recitative melody is dominated by content with pronounced epic expressions; Highly accented rhythm; Dexterous dynamics; Central sound recorder; Sound Harmony - the modes on which the melody develops, belong to the folk typical; Compressed voice control, etc. Other features and features unfold the Piluri style - of Vlora, which stands out in common with the first and second voices of the Tepelena style; for the truly characteristic and vibrant color of the third sound; mastering a modality, consistent harmony, of the third, as well as the fourth, iso voice.”

It is noteworthy that Ramadan Sokoli was the first who establish the importance of Iso in the nature of popular polyphony at: “Albanian Folk Music Morphology”, Tirana 1965, where he wrote: ... where the dialect is spoken we have homophonic music, and below this river where is the rotation of the consonant in, or other diphthong ua the phonetic features of the toast there and the iso together with the other polyphonic features. “

In the past, lab polyphonic music culture, like all Albanian folk music, was created, performed and lived mainly in tight, purely family settings. It began to emerge from such environments only after the second half of the twentieth

century. Label polyphonic music culture has always been remarkable for its vibrancy and density. Lab polyphony lives in the southwestern part of Albania, being partially or fully sown by the population of the districts: Vlora, Tepelena, Gjirokastra, Saranda, Përmet, Fier. It constitutes one of the four main dialects of Albanian popular polyphony, besides the mysic, tosky, cameo. On the other hand, these dialects are also divided into a variety of musical styles. Speaking of our popular sound music, it is worth noting that while in the northern and middle part of the country it is generally a homophonic voice, in the southern part it is generally more vocal, polyphonic. The main ethnographic areas that make up Labrina are Kurvelesh, Mesapliku, Drashovica, Topalltia, Treblova, Gorishti, Kudhëzi, Loperi, Kardhiqi, Rrëzoma, Coast, Dukati. Labce is also sung in Zagorie, Lunxeri, Maleshovo, Rrëza e Tepelena, Dragot, Kras, Izvor, Buz, Mallakastra, areas that we can consider as suburbs of Laberia.

The popular, polyphonic song is the strongest evidence that a people spend eternity singing, while a people who forget their song are doomed to death. The “code” and the techniques of transmitting voices and words are simple and understandable, “word of mouth” and from generation to generation. The secret is found in the interpretive individualities of polyphonic bands as well known throughout the country as: Arjan Shehu, Golik Jaupi, Nazif Cela, Brothers Cenko, Paro Ziflaj, Mehmet Vishe, Neil Ruci, Hasim Meli, etc., etc., who still maintain intact its form of authenticity from.

From the point of view of the researcher Spiro Shituni the question of the origin, timing, age of the lab polyphony, as well as of the whole Albanian folk polyphony, in terms of the lack of historical documents, is quite complicated. Some of our ethnomusicologists have dealt with it. Meanwhile, many foreign scholars, as the case may be, to a greater or lesser extent, directly or indirectly, have also addressed the beginnings of popular polyphony in general and polyphony of the respective countries in particular. In addition to trying to discover the basic distinctive features of polyphonic song, issues that have been the subject of study in such cases have been: the space within which popular polyphony revives, the time of birth of popular polyphony, the relationship between folk song and Byzantine church song.

“Albanians, hating the Muslim slave, did not bring with them the musical trends of Constantinople, nor the knowledgeable and clever art “ – asserts Lorenzo Tardo- but a regional provincial and archaic tradition, a tradition that was held in the 400’s and 500’s, but which actually goes farther back, in the time of the Basils, and probably even earlier. It seems that, the Byzantine song has failed to exert influence on the secular polyphonic song.

Iso-polyphony is a great value of Albanian folklore. Iso-polyphony is the basic musical phenomenon in Southern Albania, which is considered a unique

spiritual phenomenon of the inhabitants of Southern Albania. We have the Iso-polyphonic *tosk* and *iso labe*. Iso-polyphonic Albanian is really one of the super villains of Albanian folklore and of the world folk tradition in general genetic variants such as homophony (with one voice) gege direct expression of the genetic unity of the species. From hundreds of centuries of practice, formulas have been built that express essentially the structure of the popular Iso-polyphony.

In line with the general study idea, we adhere to the thesis that the antiquity of lab polyphony, in the absence of historical documents, can be illuminated, first and foremost, through the study of live music. Since its beginnings are of an ancient age, this is clearly demonstrated by, among other things, the main individual traits themselves, interior design, and so on. So does the affinity that exists between the intonations of the lab polyphonic song and those of human speech. It is also meaningful that its intonations, as we shall see, from time to time; give us associations of livestock life, such as typical shepherd calls, etc. Antiquity also means the pentatonic modo-tonal construction of this musical culture - it is known that pentatonic modes are the earliest in the history of folk music. Hershmeri also undoubtedly shows the conception of the labyrinthine polyphonic song, in essence, by contrasting intrinsic, modal, harmonic ratios; rhythmic between different musical lines. Antiquity also implies its purely *za-noare* nature, etc.; However, the origins and timing of polyphony remain an open scientific issue.

Polyphonic music culture of Laberia exists in three main types or groups: two-tone or two-tone polyphonic, three-tone polyphonic or rhymed, four-tone or four-tone polyphony. The polyphony with two voices is mainly composed of women from the city of Gjirokastra, women from some villages of the Gorishti area, from the village of Kanine, men from the village of Duka etc. Whereas polyphony with three and four voices, where less and more is heard all over the villages and suburbs of Laberia.

If, for the past ten years, there has been more widespread polyphony, nowadays, the most use is earning the quadruple polyphony. The first soloist is called *marrës* (taker), the second is a *kthyes* (replier), and the third soloist is called *hedhës* (thrower).and the fourth - "iso". The latter, in contrast to others, is sung by many. The singer's name expresses a well-defined rapport, it starts from a content, internal and organic connection that exists between them. In this way, the names: "taker", "replier", "thrower", "iso" imply different roles, contradictions and unity between them, and ultimately, each other.

But in the opinion of Albanian researcher Spiro Shituni, the overall image of lab polyphony is closely linked to the impact that in social and economic conditions have historically exerted on it. Over the course of hundreds of years, it has attempted to crystallize basic substantive and formal features



under the influence of a number of objectives, subjective factors. First of all, the operation of economic factors remains important. In the past, had little to do with agriculture. Meanwhile, for their own convenient environment, they cultivated a lot of livestock. It is interesting to note that, in addition to mother-in-law, lamentation, cheerfulness, etc., livestock life has exerted a significant influence especially on the polyphonic lab song. It is by no means the case that the foundational issues of this song relate, above all, to exactly such a life. She sings songs especially for cows and cows, sheep and goats, sheep and goats, bells and cobblestones. So, within the multi-label lab song, livestock life is also reflected musically. Among other things, this is best felt in the numerous recitations calls of key soloists - receivers, returners, throwers. In many ways, they give us examples of the typical shepherds' screams. Moreover, the entire return line gives the impression of a true pastoral nuance. Sensitive recessive moments should then be considered for all types of cadets, whether incoming, internal or closing, etc. Without this call, the general and emotional atmosphere of the lab song, however, is incomplete, it cannot even be understood if they are missing. Since the 1930s, professor Egerem Cabej observed, "... we hit the core of this song better by calling it shepherd's song ... The acoustic impression created by lab songs can be compared to the sound of cattle trumpets." The impact of livestock life is also clearly evident in popular lab instructor music.

Secondly, the social factors that influenced the labels of popular folk music are, at least, of two types: matrimonial and customary in general and patriotic solidarity. In Laberia have practiced the marriage within their own villages and outside. They, as yesterday and today, also receive and give inside, as well as certain ethnographic areas. However, marriages within the villages have generally been more restricted than inclusive, and marriages within the zones have, as a rule, prevailed over inter-zonal ones. It is clear that social factors, especially customary ones, may not have influenced internally to incorporate a single, intonative -modal lab-like music culture. Therefore, within the labels of folk music, homophony and polyphony, rural and urban, women's and men's vocal and instrumental music, with all the differences they have, they vary in a range of core common intonative-modal thematic features. In Laberia they have lived and live in a land of high, rough, rocky mountains, with a marked lack of vegetation, generally mountainous climates, with cool winter harsh winters, but also Mediterranean places, where summer it is hot and dry and mild winters, limited to the west by the Ionian Sea, etc. The impact of such natural conditions is again reflected, especially, on the polyphonic lab song. Experiencing it carefully, it seems that it has somehow conceived the ideological-emotional content of the majestic attitude of the mountains, their strength, their rigor, their legendary looks, their prideful looks - perhaps for this reason a general, essential note

typical of it, appears incomparable epos. On the other hand, the labyrinthine song seems to have been influenced to some extent by the particular beauty of coastal nature - perhaps because of this certain musical styles, such as himariot, pilurian , etc., bring, above all a characteristic lyrical note, etc.

The impact of natural conditions also highlights the popular instrumental lab, homophonic and polyphonic. Its largely lyrical notes, among other things, were driven by the greatness of our nature. Flute and culdyjar as typical tools for the whole Labëria, create clear impressions and reflections of Albanian nature.

In their musical intonations one can easily see the beauty of our natural landscape, given through the shepherd's spiritual world. The influence of natural conditions is also evident in lab dances with often epic video content, vivid and vibrant movements, strong and heroic inner explosions, sensitive recitative melody, usually mixed musical rhythm, measured and pronounced. Finally, the phenomenon of the influence of the geographical environment is observed in the construction of dwellings, which are usually made of stone, high and double storeys in popular clothing similar from one ethnographic area to another; to the next; in the similar way of life; in the strong and determined character, the manly and proud temperament of the native mountaineers, etc.

Fourth, rural ethnic cleanness has had a profound effect on the individuality of lab folk music. The Leberites, in the past, developed a largely separate, closed, conservative folk artistic life relatively far away from the potential impacts of any foreign artistic culture. Such life was defined, to some extent, by natural conditions. Under these circumstances, they have been able to grow and develop an authentic folklore. "Our popular culture has existed chiefly: as a native peasant culture or a local civic culture - our researchers note. - "

## **Polyphony this phenomenon that will still continue to be studied**

The indigenous peasant culture has been largely closed for centuries and, consequently, ethnically pure, indigenous. The original ethnic features stand out most in rural culture. The native civic culture was generally distinguished from the culture of the ruling clans and foreign invaders, with the gene being more exposed than the rural culture to foreign cultural influences. When our country was included in the Byzantine Empire, traces of Byzantine culture were noted in our popular civic or reflexive culture. After the Ottoman rule oriental influences appeared on it. "Ethnic peasant purity is a factor that also influences our day in lab folk music. First, it is understood that today, just like all Albanian folk music and art, other factors act on it. not to be overlooked, such as: lively folk artistic life, intense amateur and professional artistic activities, rapid and continuous

dissemination of musical values of all kinds, etc. As scholars have argued, modern-day technical information tools are widely used in today's folklore circulation system, which have a great informational transmission efficiency over folklore users, regardless of their educational level<sup>5</sup>. " In another aspect of the general judgment on the peculiarities of Albanian music the opinion of semiologist Augusto Poncio points to the idea that: "The methodology of music semiotics is a method of listening". The methodology of listening to "Iso-Polyphonic Tuscan", Përmet Kabbalah, Shkodra song "Spring started coming" and "Jares" etc., is a method of listening and playing to reach a meaningful world for the language of music of these genres and the proof of the hypothesis of the "musical standard" of Albanian music, in addition to semiotic scientific interpretation (the theory of signs and symbols) and musicology.

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