❖ 7 ❖

Bulgarian Ethnopop along the Old *Via Militaris:* Ottomanism, Orientalism, or Balkan Cosmopolitanism?

Donna A. Buchanan

From antiquity forward the Balkan peoples have been profoundly interconnected economically, politically and culturally.[1] To give but two examples, during the fifth century the Romans established a network of roads linking the major cities of their far-flung empire; this included the *Via Militaris*, which shot across present-day Bulgaria diagonally, joining Constantinople, Edirne, Plovdiv, Sofia, and Belgrade in one continuous sweep. Much later, at various points in the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries, a Balkan Federation or Balkan Alliance was proposed by Bulgarian leaders, but always without success. Most importantly for this study, recent years have witnessed the cautious establishment of joint regional and international economic, military, and political projects whose inter-alliances may eventually transcend the often polarized ethnic nationalisms that have characterized the region since 1989, if only because most local powers seek NATO and EU membership, which is contingent upon, in part, peaceful relations with one's neighbors. In 1998 alone, some

Table 7.1: Selected Joint Southeast European Initiatives since 1989

Economic Development

- ***Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)***, concerned with commerce, enterprise, border crossings, and energy projects

- ***Central European Free Trade Agreement***, joined by Bulgaria in 1999

Education

- ***Bulgarian-Turkish Education Commission***, est. in 1999 to review the accuracy of history textbooks in both countries

Energy

- ***Trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline***, to range from Burgas (Bulgaria) through Macedonia, Albania (Vlora), and into western Europe, under the direction of **AMBO**, the Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil Corporation

- ***Multiple other energy routes***, to be constructed linking Bulgaria with oil/gas resources in the Caspian basin

Military/Security

- ***Southeastern European Defense Ministerial***, concerned with regional defense issues

- ***Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe***, deployed under NATO command, a regional defense network (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey) est. in 1998 and based in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

- ***All-Balkan rapid reaction force***, concerned with regional defense (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey)

- ***Balkan Stability Pact***, concerned with regional defense (Bulgaria, Romania)

- ***Signed agreement***, coordinating efforts against smuggling, illegal immigration, money laundering, and financial scams (Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania)

Continued on next page

Table 7.1—Continued

- ***Action Plan for Southeast Europe***, est. by former President Clinton to battle organized crime and further conflict resolution, economic and political reform, and political, military, and law-enforcement cooperation between the US and Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Slovenia

- ***NATO's Partnership for Peace program*** (inclusive of region, although not Balkan-specific), in association with which Bulgaria hosted international joint military exercises in September 2001

- ***Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*** (inclusive of region, although not Balkan-specific)

Transportation

- ***South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI)***, directed at upgrading and consolidating regional transportation systems

- ***Trans-Balkan Highway***, to link Durres, Albania with Burgas, Bulgaria

- ***International highway***, to link Burgas, Bulgaria with Ormenion, Greece

- ***International highway***, to link Sofia (Bulgaria) and Niš (Serbia)

- ***Second bridge over Danube River*** linking Bulgaria with Romania

Sources: Baumgartner 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Buechsenschuetz 2005; Fuller 1998a, 1998b; Shafir 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1998f, 1998g, 1998h, 1998i, 1998k, 1998l, 1998n; and Vakareliyska 1998.

of the projects under discussion included the South Balkan Development Initiative (SBDI), which seeks to upgrade and consolidate regional transportation systems; the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), concerned with commerce and enterprise, border crossings, and energy projects; the Southeastern European Defense Ministerial, which hosts an annual meeting on regional defense issues; and the creation of a multinational regional peace keeping force deployed under NATO command (see Table 7.1 for a more complete list). As my Bulgarian colleague, the ethnomusicologist Tsenka Iordanova, insisted in summer 1996, when Sofia hosted an international conference concerned with regional issues, it was time that the Balkans' citizens be allowed to tender

Balkan solutions for Balkan problems. Only they—not the West—knew what was best for the region.

In this article I assess the extent to which music has further contributed to the construction of Balkan identity from a Bulgarian perspective during the 1990s and first years of the new millennium. As a growing body of recent literature demonstrates, music can tell us something about the making and marking of place.[2] One's sense of emplacement is conceptual; it is cognitively organized in relation to deeply embodied and overlapping multidimensional grids of spatial and temporal orientation. For Edward S. Casey, time and space "come together" in and even "arise from the experience" of place (1996:36–38). They do so through the "gathered" configurations of geographies, historicities, events, and experiences that are a function of any individual's knowledge and that, once imparted, afford place a "cultural character" (1996:24, 34). The perception of place is a dialectical process intricately bound up with senses of self: in Casey's words, "To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (1996:18–19). Or, as the ethnomusicologist Steven Feld poetically remarks, "as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place" (Feld 1996:91, quoted in Casey 1996:19). The selection and enactment of particular elements of musical style—choice of a certain percussion pattern, instrument or combination of instruments, scale, ornamentation technique, or performance costume, for example—thus both depends upon and can conjure simultaneously specific moments, sites, events, and experiences that locate, and indeed animate musicians and listeners within matrices of human relations inscribed in memory and evocative of place. Moreover, the act of musical performance can powerfully generate meanings and sentiments that do not just reflect, but reinforce, manipulate, satirize, transform, or transcend the social orders and boundaries borne by the conjured phenomena (Stokes 1994:4).

With this preamble in mind, I wish to examine how the Balkans have been imagined or represented sonicly through recent popular culture and how these musical imaginaries have contributed to Bulgarian "senses of place" within Europe, southeastern Europe, and the Balkans themselves, in the post-state socialist era (Feld and Basso 1996). My focus is ultimately transregional or "interlocal" rather than transnational; although the genres I consider draw upon an array of international sources, sometimes in international contexts with global implications, my research suggests that their significance relates largely to domestic and regional issues of place, power, and production.

Bulgarian Ethnopop and the Oriental

The contents of this volume amply illustrate that several contemporary Balkan popular musics display remarkable similarities which, like the regional initiatives noted above, indicate the presence of a growing Balkan geopolity and concomitantly, an emergent popular music circuit extending from southeastern Europe through Greece and Turkey (and perhaps even into the Arab Mediterranean). I see Bulgaria's position within this larger circuit as associated with two discourses: 1) a musical discourse of Arabo-Turkish instrumentation, vocal delivery, melodic constructs, rhythm, and choreography, often filtered through Romani performance practice; and/or 2) a metaphorical discourse of Ottomanism and orientalism exhibited through the imagery of attendant music videos and marketing materials. To demonstrate how these discourses intersect I will examine two Bulgarian music trends popular since about 1990: the amorphous ethnopop category dubbed loosely as *pop-folk*, and within this, the controversial Bulgarian-Romani-Turkish dance music genre called *chalga* with which it was nearly synonymous during the years pertinent to my study; and secondly, recordings by professional women's folk choirs marketed by Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch and Jaro Records as *Le mystère des voix bulgares*.[3] My analysis will show that these two trends exist in a complex inversional relationship that pivots around orientalist representations of gender and voice. Said differently, in regard to gender and voice, we might regard these two trends as representing flip sides of the same orientalist coin.

Defining Bulgarian Ethnopop

Ethnopop represents only one part of a diverse Bulgarian popular music scene that also includes Euro-American style rock and pop by foreign and domestic bands, some of which contains politically sensitive texts that speak to social issues related to the transition's agonies; and imported ethnopop from Bosnia, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia (hereafter "Macedonia"), Serbia, and Turkey (see Table 7.2). Its contents are quite complex, embracing the jazz-oriented wedding music made famous internationally by Ivo Papazov and his wedding orchestra in the 1980s, and various styles of popular music that incorporate elements of *narodna muzika* [folk, traditional, or "people's" music] to varying degrees.

Table 7.2: The Bulgarian Commercial Music Scene, 1990–2000

- **Classical Music**
  - Bulgarian
  - Euro-American
- **Orthodox Religious Music**
- **Folk Ensemble Repertory**
  - Large professional ensembles
  - "Le mystère des voix bulgares" choirs, derived from professional ensemble personnel
  - Small folk music groups, like Bŭlgari, derived from professional ensemble personnel
- **Popular Music**
  - **Euro-American Rock/Pop/Rap**
    - Foreign bands
    - Bulgarian bands
  - **Imported Ethnopop from Other Balkan Locales**
    - **Greek *laika***
    - **(Yugoslav NCFM; Bulg. *"Yugo-folk"*)**
      - Bosnia
      - Macedonia
      - Serbia
      - **Turkish *arabesk***
  - **Euro/American Pop Music Using Bulgarian Musical Elements**
    - Kate Bush
  - **Bulgarian Ethnopop**
    - **Rock songs with ethnic styling**
      - Use of indigenous instruments, musical gestures, as color
      - Pop/rock rooted in traditional music *gestalt*
    - **Pop, disco, and techno remakes of earlier folk ensemble repertory**
      - Performed almost exclusively by former professional folk ensemble artists
    - **Wedding music (*Svatbarska muzika*)**

Continues next page

- ***Pop-folk***
  - ***Chalga* (Bulgarian-Romani-Turkish ethnopop; *"Kristal," "Folk"*)**
  - **"Authored Macedonian songs"** or **"Pirin folk songs"**

Domestic rock bands began utilizing indigenous instruments and vocal polyphony in the late 1980s to imbue their otherwise universal pop sound with a distinctive Bulgarian edge. In their 1994 release *Zhivot sled smŭrtta* [Life after death], for instance, the group Atlas interweaves the *gaida* [bagpipe] playing of Nikola Atanasov, who was employed by the folk orchestra of Bulgarian National Radio for many years, into an otherwise conventional rock ballad (CD 7.1).[4] Other artists, such as Nona Iotova and Ivan Lechev, have produced newly composed pop songs rooted in a *narodna muzika* gestalt and which sometimes also use traditional texts or tunes. *Mitana,* a cut from their mid-1990s album *Omana,* is sung by Iotova in the style of a typical, slow-moving, unpulsed ballad from the Rhodope ethnographic region of southern Bulgaria (CD 7.2). Its heterophonic, multi-track, studio-manipulated electric guitar accompaniment is meant to emulate, according to the cassette's liner notes, the unique ensemble of one hundred large Rhodope bagpipes (*kaba gaidi*) that first performed at the regional folk festival "Rozhen Sings" (*Rozhen Pee*) in 1961.

Pop, disco, and techno remakes of well-known arrangements previously popularized by state-sponsored folk ensembles constitute a third ethnopop category. In some cases, leading pop artists such as Georgi Hristov have adopted favorite songs like *Devoiko, mome hubavo* [Girl, beautiful girl], originally scored by composer Philip Kutev and performed by the folk choir of his National Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances, to more contemporary accompaniments (see also Buchanan 2006a). On his recent album *Karuzo* [Caruso], Hristov sings this Rhodope song in a traditional manner, decorating the melody with numerous stylistically appropriate ornaments, but substitutes electric organ for the more customary bagpipe (*kaba gaida*) accompaniment. Despite this innovation, the general aesthetic preference for a dense, droning, diaphonic sound indicative of much Bulgarian traditional music is still apparent.

In other cases these covers are performed by artists currently or formerly associated with professional folk ensembles, frequently in a disco folk or techno folk style that lays the often unmodified traditional melody over a synthesized, electronic percussion track. In 1991, Traki, a trio of

musicians then employed by the Bulgarian Radio's folk orchestra, produced an instrumental version of *Devoiko, mome hubavo* in disco format (Buchanan 2006a). Numerous other ensemble personnel released similar arrangements in the 1990s, including Yana Minkova, Tanya Velichkova, Daniel Spasov, Vladimir Kuzov, and Snezhana Borisova.[5] This particular fad, which began in the late 1980s among members of the Bulgarian Radio's folk ensemble, originally represented their attempt to win young listeners away from contemporary wedding music, which then enthralled the public (cf. Buchanan 1995, 2006a; Rice 1994). Its continuation and expansion in the 1990s exemplify a similar effort by professional ensemble performers to carve out an ethnopop niche for themselves that might compete with *pop-folk*. In the newly privatized music industry, it is those performers of neo-traditional pop, never formally trained within the state system of folk music education, who have earned public acclaim and financial profit. By contrast, professional folk ensemble personnel are engaged in an expressive form that holds less appeal for the general public and is comparatively poorly funded. These artists have therefore looked for new creative ventures beyond the ensemble sphere to supplement their incomes and professional aspirations.

Within the *pop-folk* category, the newly composed songs of Pirin-Macedonia (southwestern Bulgaria), known formally as "authored Macedonian songs" and more colloquially as "Pirin songs" or "Pirin folk songs," arose in the early 1990s in conjunction with two regional festivals called Pirin Fest and Pirin Folk. The stylistic range of such songs is broad; in general, however, they may be defined as light pop songs about love, family, emigration, and the landscape of the Macedonian region, both in southwestern Bulgaria (Pirin) and the Republic of Macedonia.[6] They are often sung in parallel thirds or sixths to lyrical melodies, some of which make use of scale types, melodic gestures, and meters or rhythmic patterns indicative of the Macedonian region and Turkey, and others which recall the ballroom-dance culture of early twentieth-century urban life. Accompaniments feature symphonic instruments (clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, and sweetly bowed strings), accordion, indigenous Macedonian instruments (*tambura, tarambuka, tŭpan*), synthesizers, electronic drums, electric guitar, and electric bass in a wide variety of combinations. While I discern relationships between each of the genres described thus far, in this article I will address only the historical and stylistic junctions between *chalga*; Balkan Romani musicianship; Yugoslav NCFM, or what some Bulgarians call *Yugo-folk*; its Serbian successor, *turbo folk*; and Turkish *arabesk*, focusing especially on the years 1990–2000.

From *Kristal* to *Chalga*

When it emerged ca. 1992–93, the genre referred to now (2005) as *pop-folk* or *chalga* by the Bulgarian public lacked a single label. A few friends in Sofia initially termed it *kristal* in relation to two popular bands: Orchestra Kristal, from Yambol, and Orchestra Kristali, based in Montana (formerly the city of Mihailovgrad). Orchestra Kristal's director, Krasimir Hristov, produced every aspect of the band's recordings in his own studio, which may also account for how its name came to signify the genre (Dimov 1995:16). These two bands helped inspire the formation of myriad other groups whose recordings, like those of Kristal and Kristali themselves, incline toward a regionally amalgamated sound, thus defying easy categorization. In the mid 1990s, Bulgarian friends, scholars, musicians, and the press described them according to a range of factors, including performance context ("pub" or "tavern music"), ethnicity ("Romani folklore"), mass-mediated mode of dissemination and commercial popularity ("top folk," "folk hits"), era ("contemporary folklore"), style ("oriental music"), and place ("all-round Balkan music" and "Balkan folklore") (Table 7.3). The large-scale, diffuse nature of these labels, which also subsumed some types of *Pirin folk* song, reveals the emergent nature of Bulgarian ethnopop at this time.

Even at this early stage, when asked to define this emergent ethnopop style, musicians and non-musical friends alike pointed to its relationships with other regional trends. In particular, they insisted that it derived primarily from Serbian ethnopop prototypes, where "Serbian" functioned as a gloss for the larger spectrum of Yugoslav NCFM and later, for its edgier, more electrified, 1990s Serbian derivative, *turbo folk*.[7] They never spoke of Bosnian or Croatian NCFM in this context, although this, too, existed at the time, perhaps because in the 1980s Serbia produced the majority of NCFM recordings, regardless of the music's point of origin (Ceribašić 1995:94). Because most Bulgarians understand Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language and many consider Serbs their "brothers," to quote one musician, it was hardly surprising that *Yugo-folk*'s star performers became Bulgarian favorites during these years. Although closed in September 1998 on charges of CD piracy, the Sofia-based SMC recording company was licensed exclusively to produce Serbian music (Shafir 1998j). A friend stressed that people preferred Serbian ethnopop because it was simultaneously "more Western" than anything produced locally, and yet, "closer to home." Moreover, the lyrics were better. "They are real," she said; "they can touch you—they aren't false" or "mechani-

cally done" like the arrangements performed by folk ensembles. In fact, Bulgarians embraced Serbian music to such an extent that, according to Ljerka Vidić Rasmussen, Bulgarian bands from Vidin and Sofia began performing *Yugo-folk* for Serbian audiences in Serbia during the early 1990s with good success, as well as in Bulgarian venues (1995:247, p.c., October and December 1998).

Although Bulgarian *pop-folk* performers may not be formally trained in the terminologies and principles of Turkish or Arab music theory, they are adept at employing some of its constructs. Like contemporary *Yugo-folk*, *pop-folk* combines synthesizers and drum machines with a collage of Mediterranean elements: Turkish scale types (*makamlar*; sing. *makam*) and melodic motifs, characteristic rhythmic cycles (*usulleri*; sing. *usûl*) or patterns, and ornamentation. Like many Arab musicians, a few bands simulate the timbres of indigenous Middle Eastern instruments electronically (cf. A. Rasmussen 1996). Wailing, virtuosic, solo instrumental introductions and interludes, usually played by reeds or synthesizer, recall both Middle Eastern improvisations (*taksim*-s) and to a lesser extent, solo moments in Bulgarian wedding music. Interestingly, electric guitar, such an icon of Euro-American pop, does not seem to figure prominently as a

Table 7.3: *Pop-folk* Idioms

Classifier	Bulgarian Description	English Translation
Performance Context	*Krŭchmarska muzika*	Pub/Tavern music
	Kafanska muzika	Café music
Ethnicity	*Rom folklor*	Romani folklore
	Chalga	*Chalga*
Mass-Mediated Dissemination	*Top folk*	Top folk
	Folk hitove	Folk hits
	Pop folk; Pop-folk	Folk pop
Era	*Sŭvremenen folklor*	Contemporary folklore
Musical Style	*Orientalna muzika*	Oriental music
Dance Style	*Kyuchek, Čoček*	*Kyuchek, Čoček*
Place	*Obshta balkanska muzika*	All-round Balkan music
	Balkanski folklor	Balkan folklore
	Orientalna muzika	Oriental music

solo instrument in either *Yugo-folk* or *pop-folk*, although bass lines are common, whether performed on electric bass or synthesizer (L. Rasmussen, p.c., 11 October 1998).[8] Thus while use of Western music technology may signify modernity or the embrace of generic pop culture attributes, in this case they have been given a Balkan stamp. The songs' texts, which principally address romantic relationships, are in Bulgarian or Romani.

Bulgaria's proximity to the Mediterranean and *Yugo-folk*'s popularity may well account for *pop-folk*'s Middle Eastern elements. In addition, Greek pop and *arabesk* have been openly sold in Bulgaria since at least 1992, providing easy access to other Mediterranean styles. The advent of satellite TV in urban centers, at least, in the late 1990s also brought Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) music programs directly into Bulgarian living rooms. Yet as the introduction to this volume details, a strong historical precedent for Ottoman-inspired syncretic urban musics performed with mixed indigenous, Middle Eastern, and West European instrumentation exists in the Balkans. Romani music professionals, who have popularized numerous local styles and tunes—including Turkish-derived repertory—throughout the area since at least the 1800s, whether in restaurant bands or contemporary wedding orchestras, represent another crucial avenue of circulation, leading Bulgarian ethnomusicologist Ventsislav Dimov (1995:14) to consider them the "original intermediary, translator, and integrator between the Balkan's separate musical languages." Likewise, Svanibor Pettan (1996b:35) describes Romani musicians as the primary contributors to the formation of a "Balkan *Musikschatz*," or music vocabulary resulting from decades of influence and counter-influence amongst the Balkan peoples, which includes an array of similar ensembles and a corpus of shared tunes, albeit performed in regionally specific styles and with locally specific significances.

An advertisement published in the magazine *Folk Panair* (Vol. 4, 1994:43) for a new, annual juried festival called *Trakiya folk* [Thrace folk], held in Dimitrovgrad, 7–10 September 1994, reveals what the label "Balkan folklore" denotes from a Bulgarian perspective. Interested musicians, including foreigners, were invited to contend in either of two categories for prizes ranging from 10,000 to 50,000 *leva* (see Dimov 1994b:6): "Thracian folkore," for those groups whose composed repertory was based on styles from Bulgaria's Thracian ethnographic region; and "Balkan folklore," for those whose repertories derived from "music and songs of the Balkan peoples, including composed repertory built on Greek, Macedonian, Turkish, Serbian, and Gypsy melodies and rhythms." The two categories were deemed mutually exclusive; performers could compete in both, but had to prepare two completely different programs.

Similarly, on its "Folk-Top-Shop" ratings page (a "top ten" forum akin to contemporaneous "Top [Fashion] Model" competitions), *Folk Panair* listed "Balkan Folklore" (*Balkanski folklor*) as a category embracing Serbian, Greek, Macedonian, and Turkish music, including leading *arabesk* artists such as İbrahim Tatl ses, among others.[9]

Like the members of Orchestra Kristali, many performers of *pop-folk*—Bulgaria's contribution to the new "Balkan folklore"—are Roma, while others are of Slavic or Turkish extraction. In fact, *pop-folk*'s popularity accompanied a post-1989 upsurge in the overall visibility of Bulgarian Romani music and culture characterized by formal attention to Romani politics, several Romani music festivals, Romani social affairs such as balls, several audio and video recordings of Romani rap, popular songs, and brass band music, and the return of Romani bear and monkey trainers to city streets (Plate 7.1).[10] At the same time, *pop-folk*'s stylistic compass broadened to embrace songs, instrumentals, and dance tunes associated more and more directly with Romani-Turkish genres such as the *kyuchek* and *çiftetelli* (Bulg. *chiftetelli*), to which I return below. Other European Romani influences, such as the pseudo-*flamenco* style indicative of the Gipsy Kings, as well as occasional Greek flavoring, also became apparent (see also Kurkela, this volume). By the late 1990s, the definitive role played by Romani musicians, genres, and dance styles in shaping Bulgarian ethnopop prompted audiences to dub the genre *"chalga,"* a tangled term whose lengthy history is steeped in associations with Romani-Turkish culture.

Chalga: Bulgaria's Musical Orient

The Bulgarian terms *chalga* and *chalgiya*, which during my fieldwork in the late 1980s and early 1990s were employed more or less as synonyms, derive from the Turkish *çalg* , meaning musical instrument and instrumental music. Both are related to similar terms used by neighboring populations, such as *çallgi*, found among North Albanians residing in the former Yugoslavia, and č*algija* (identical to *chalgiya*, but transliterated differently), found among Macedonians and Kosovo Roma (Pettan 1996b; Rice 2000:979; Sugarman 2000:997).[11] Historically, *çallgi* and č*algija* referred to urban ensembles of mixed Turkish and symphonic (clarinet, violin, accordion) instrumentation that arose in the late Ottoman period and flourished through the WWII era. The instrumentalists in such groups were largely Romani professionals, and their repertories included Ottoman

light classical repertory and local genres of song and dance, including Turkish folk tunes, performed in the languages of the many ethnic groups found in the surrounding area. These were rendered in a manner that reflected the Romani emphasis on continual innovation: heterophonically, with much individual variation within each melodic phrase and between repetitions of the same phrase, a trait perhaps adopted from the Ottoman Turks or Mediterranean region at large; virtuosically, with the stylistic fluidity and technical fluency born of performing music professionally day in and day out for years on end; and extemporaneously, incorporating metric and non-metric solo improvisations resembling, if not de facto, the *taksim*-s of Turkish musical practice. Č*algija* musicians embellished melodies extensively with ornaments also derived largely from Turkish idioms, including pitch bending, glissandi, mordents, grace notes, timbral nuances, and turns, among others. Such groups played for family celebrations (weddings, circumcisions) and in the numerous *kafana*-s (cafés) central to town social life. Thus through the performance practice of č*algija* ensembles, musical notions of Romani-ness, Turkishness, and urbanity became conceptually, and to a large extent, aesthetically fused.

While it is not clear if Bulgarians used the term *chalgiya* to indicate a similar ensemble, by the late 1800s they did employ the term *chalgadzhiya* (pl. *chalagadzhii*; derived from the Turkish *çalg c* , or instrumentalist) to denote a similar class of urban semi-professional musicians who performed village and urban songs or dances of Bulgarian Slavs, local ethnic minorities, neighboring Balkan peoples, and even Western European ballroom dances at all manner of celebrations.[12] As elsewhere, many of these instrumentalists were Roma, whose eclectic repertory was facilitated by their interaction with other small bands of foreign musicians from Serbia, Romania, Turkey, and Macedonia also active in Bulgarian towns during this time. Both types of ensembles were frequently hired to provide nightly entertainment in pubs, taverns, restaurants, cinemas, and other commercial venues between the World Wars, when they became known as salon orchestras—key players in what socialist academics would later call "tavern folklore" or "urban folklore." With the advent of radio in the 1930s such groups gave rise to two other small formations: trios and quartets of indigenous instruments (early "folk orchestras"), and similarly sized groups of Western European instruments, often clarinet, accordion, violin, and bass, called "modern orchestras." Both eventually performed for state-sponsored folkloric productions as well as at local celebrations and restaurants; they were featured frequently on radio broacasts and also appear on numerous early recordings issued by Western European and Bulgarian labels (Brody 1998:1). Under

socialism, those modern orchestras that played at taverns and eateries, especially, were dubbed "restaurant bands" and represent a direct extension of the earlier salon orchestras.

Throughout this period of development the term *chalga* remained associated with urban professional instrumentalists of minority extraction, and with the virtuosic, improvisatory, soloistic or heterophonic playing style that often characterized their musicianship. In the 1980s, however, *chalga* gained further significance in the context of a new grassroots tradition called wedding music (*svatbarska muzika*) whose performers—predominantly Roma and ethnic Turks—banded together in small "wedding orchestras" (*svatbarski orkestri*). Such groups, which represent a late twentieth-century transmutation of modern orchestras, restaurant bands, and their *chalgadzhii* predecessors, were initially decried by the socialist government because they operated outside the sanctioned, institutionalized channels of state folklore and blended Bulgarian tunes with aspects of other Balkan musics and Western popular culture in a manner administrators and scholars feared would sully the alleged "purity" of Bulgarian tradition. Nevertheless, by the mid 1980s wedding orchestras had gained tremendous public popularity, eventually winning governmental support with the advance of political transition.

Wedding orchestra instrumentation was, like that of earlier urban groups, eclectic and variable, but typically combined clarinet and/or saxophone, accordion and/or synthesizer, electric bass, electronic drums, and a vocalist. Other bands incorporated violin and even indigenous instruments such as *kaval* or *gŭdulka*. Such orchestras performed lengthy renditions or medleys of Bulgarian, Romani, Serbian, Turkish, and other Balkan songs and dance tunes at weddings (hence their name) and other social gatherings. Importantly, improvisation was a key component of such performances; wedding musicians were technical virtuosos whose jazzy settings of horos, executed at blistering tempos and, in contradistinction to early twentieth-century practices, in a precise rhythmic unison extraordinary in its attention to the smallest ornamentational detail, also featured solo improvisations by all band members rendered in a range of styles, from non-metric, modal *taksim*-s to highly measured, heavily arpeggiated passages cycled through complex progressions of chromatic harmonies.

Because of wedding music's association with minority culture, the transnational nature of its repertory and instrumentation, and the nature of its performance practice, in everyday conversation *chalga* came to signify Romani-Turkish musicianship generally, the wedding music genre specifically, and especially, the latter's improvisational passages. For

academics and administrators concerned with wedding music's impact on the remnants of village-style music-making, it was also, in the words of one friend, "a coarse, ugly word" with racial implications connected to the rejection of Muslim, Turkish, and Romani influences in Bulgarian Slavic culture by socialist state institutions. For wedding music fans, the genre represented a home-grown form of Bulgarian popular music that contrasted sharply with state-sponsored traditions in almost every way imaginable. For the State, however, it alluded to a Turkish Orient whose legacy in Bulgarian culture was, at the very least, aesthetically problematic.

Given this historical background, it is not difficult to understand how *chalga* came to signify Bulgarian ethnopop of the 1990s; during this time the genre was often performed by Romani and ethnic Turkish musicians, and even when Bulgarian Slavs were involved, the predominant performance style was Romani-Turkish.[13] As noted above, *chalga*'s stylistic palette encompasses dance rhythms rooted in Romani and/or Turkish precedents. The most prevalent of these is *kyuchek*, with which 1990s *chalga* became nearly synonymous.

Kyuchek

Kyuchek (Serbian, Croatian, and Macedonian *čoček*, among other variants) derives from the Turkish *köçek* (pl. *köçekler*), which referred to a professional male entertainer predominantly of Jewish, Armenian, or Greek, but also of Romani heritage, who danced to accompanying music called *köçekce* for imperial celebrations at the Ottoman court (Feldman 2002:115; Popescu-Judetz 1982:46; Seeman 2002:138). Such dancers, which were one of several classes of entertainers organized into guilds during the Ottoman period, usually performed outside with an "outdoor ensemble" (*mehter-i birûn*) of mixed instrumentation (*zurna*, panpipes, *santur*, *daire*, small kettledrums) whose repertory was based in the *makam* system. *Köçekler* were also cross-dressers who adopted "long hair, jewelry, and women's clothes," and occasionally engaged in prostitution (And 1976:136, 139; Feldman 2000:7–21, 2002:116; Öztürkmen 2002: 812).[14]

The female equivalents of the *köçekler* were the *çengîler* (sing. *çengî*), professional dancers who performed at the court as well as inside aristocratic Ottoman homes as early as the 1500s, and who were associated with harems (Feldman 2002:115; Öztürkmen 2002:812). Their name derives from the *çeng*, a harp that originally accompanied their dancing, but which became extinct by the late 1600s (Feldman 2002:115).[15] The

ethnicity of those *çengiler* employed by the court prior to the nineteenth century is disputed; they may have included Romani women, but they may also have been largely Circassian or Georgian (Seeman 2002:139–43). Those working outside the court guilds at this time almost certainly included Roma. Although scholars disagree about the exact nature of *çengî* and *köçek* choreography, it is likely that their dances involved artful, delicate undulations of the upper body, extended arms, and hands requiring muscular flexibility and control, self-accompanied with finger cymbals, wooden clappers, or frame drum—a predecessor of the contemporary "bellydance" (cf. And 1976:139–46; Feldman 2002:115; Öztürkmen 2002:812; Sugarman 2003:92).

As a consequence of various social and economic changes, the Ottoman state eventually banned both the *köçekler* and *çengîler* in the mid 1800s, and local Romani musicians soon filled the niche vacated by these entertainers (And 1976:141; Feldman 2002:116). Although Walter Feldman (2002:116) maintains that these Roma created "new, mainly improvisational music and choreography" that became popularized amongst the lower classes of all Ottoman religious communities, in Macedonia it seems that Roma embraced some form of the older dance genres as their own; there *čoček* signified a similar dance, but one performed primarily by Romani women for their own entertainment at gender-segregated community celebrations (weddings, circumcisions, christenings). In fact, according to the ethnochoreologist Elsie Dunin (1971:324, 1973:193, 195), until the 1970s Macedonian Roma considered it poor taste for women to dance *čoček* publicly, or in gender-integrated groups (see also Silverman 2003:122–25). Although young Romani girls locally called *čočeci* were occasionally employed by *kafana*-s to dance for non-Romani, primarily male audiences, this was not the norm.

By the 1990s Romani women danced *čoček* much more publicly and with fewer gender segregation restrictions (2003:128). One reason for this change might be that by the late 1980s, an increasingly erotic and sinuous rendition of *čoček* was becoming a central component of both *Yugo-folk* and Bulgarian wedding music repertories, musically and choreographically. At the national wedding music festival held in Stambolovo in 1988, for example, I saw police caution audience members against dancing *kyuchek* while listening to a concert by Ivo Papazov's band, Trakiya, at that time the leading exponent of the wedding music style. Those attempting to dance were forced to sit down. Importantly, through these two popular music genres *čoček*/*kyuchek* dancing was embraced, and to some extent practiced, by local Slavic populations, as well as minority groups.

Both in Macedonia and Bulgaria Roma have typically danced čoček/*kyuchek* to melodies and *taksim*-like solo improvisations (called *mane* in Macedonia) that are rooted in the pitch content and stock motives of a particular *makam*, over rhythmic ostinati characterized by a variety of meters or rhythmic modes. Amongst Macedonian Roma, 9/8 (subdivided 2–2–2–3), 7/8 (3–2–2), and 8/8 (3–3–2) prevail, while Bulgarian Roma typically utilize 8/8 (3–3–2), a pattern they identify as *Turksi kyuchek* [Turkish *kyuchek*], and 9/8 (2–2–2–3), which they call *Tsiganski kyuchek* [Gypsy *kyuchek*] (Silverman 2000b:282).[16] In *Yugo-folk* repertory one encounters songs with a čoček groove based in any of the three Macedonian meters, generally enhanced by at least one *taksim*-like improvisation (an instrumental "break") between verses. Bulgarian *chalga* of the 1990s features similar dance songs with similar *taksim* breaks, but also lengthy instrumental improvisations utilizing the meters of "Turkish" and "Gypsy" *kyuchek*, performed largely by electronic instruments (CD 7.3).[17] Moreover, in my experience, Bulgarian *chalga* pieces identified as *kyuchek* may use still other Middle Eastern rhythmic cycles, such as the Arab *iqa' ayy*ūb, whose duple-meter framework works well in a pop music context (Fig. 7.1).[18] In other words, in an ethnopop context *kyuchek* as musical genre seems as much about the accompanying dance as the underlying rhythm, although syncopation seems to be a significant feature of the *kyuchek* groove, whichever rhythmic mode is employed. Bulgarian ethnomusicologists Lozanka Peicheva and Ventsislav Dimov (2002:136) summarize this relationship succinctly, observing simply that "*chalga* is danced as *kyuchek*."

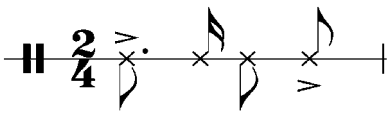

Figure 7.1: The *ayy*ūb rhythmic mode

For example, in an additional link with Turkish culture, Bulgarian *chalga* artists sometimes employ the rhythmic pattern *çiftetelli* (Fig. 7.2), whether beneath a *taksim* between verses of a song or as an entire instrumental composition (CD 7.4). Like *kyuchek*, the *çiftetelli* is a Turkish dance performed by individuals with arms outstretched at chest or shoulder height; its choreography may entail spinning slowly in place with upturned head and eyes partially closed, shifting body weight from one

foot to another, and shaking or gyrating the shoulders, upper body, and hips (Stokes 1992a:197, 202). Whether in the context of contemporary Turkish *arabesk* or Bulgarian *chalga*, *çiftetelli* performance, like that of *kyuchek,* may take on an erotic character not unrelated to the orientalist stereotypes surrounding bellydance.

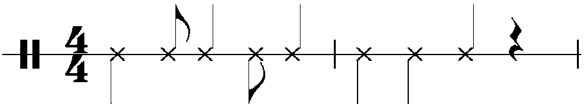

Figure 7.2: The *çiftetelli* rhythmic mode

Arabesk *and Other Turkish Influences*

From *makam* to *taksim* to rhythmic modes, to dance styles, Bulgarian *chalga* performers have clearly cultivated relationships with Turkish musical culture, whether resulting from direct contact with Turkish musicians and styles like *arabesk,* or more oblique influence attributable to Romani performance practice, wedding music, or *Yugo-folk*. Yet another connection can be found in song lyrics which, although written in Bulgarian and/or Romani, may incorporate Turkish words. While most address romance or contemporary social issues, a few, like Ivo Barev's *Akh, badzhanak, badzhanak* [Och, brother-in-law, brother-in-law], also treat Turkish topics (Fig. 7.3).

Akh, badzhanak, badzhanak,[19]	Och, brother-in-law, brother-in-law,
vtasakhme ya s tebe pak.	now we're in for it again, you and I.
Za tozh chuden Istanbul,	About this miraculous Istanbul,
po dobre da ne byakh chul.	better that I never heard of it.
Uzh doidokhme na pazar,	We were to go to the market,
a stanakhme darmadar[20]	but became completely ruined instead.
Istanbul—Abanas Sokak,[21]	Istanbul—Ebony Street,
badzhanak, vtasakhme ya pak.	brother-in-law, now we're in for it again.
S pŭlni chanti s bagazh,	With bags filled with luggage,
s doichimarki za kurazh,	with deutschemarks for courage,

Za tozh chuden Istanbul, etc.	About this miraculous Istanbul, etc.
S kadŭnki hubavi,[22]	With beautiful Turkish women,
uzh zhivyakhme dva, tri dni.	we lived two, three days.
Za tozh chuden Istanbul, etc.	About this miraculous Istanbul, etc.
Akh, badzhanak, badzhanak,	Och, brother-in-law, brother-in-law,
kak shte se pribirem pak?	How will we go home again?
Akh, badzhanak, pomisli,	Och, brother-in-law, brother-in-law,
kak shte lŭzhem tez zheni?	How will we lie to these women (wives)?
Za tozh chuden Istanbul, etc.	About this miraculous Istanbul, etc.

Figure 7.3: *Akh, badzhanak, badzhanak.* Composed, sung, and arranged by Ivo Barev. From *Ivo Barev: S Imeto na Bog* [With the name of God]. Unison Stars and Vega-M, n.d.

Other artists perform covers of Turkish, Serbian, Albanian, or Greek songs, adding new Bulgarian or Romani texts. For example, in 1993 the Bulgarian Romani band Dzhipsi Aver [Gypsy Friend] produced a new rendition of the song Čaje šukarije (here *Chshae shukarie*; Beautiful girl) on their *Dzhipsi Rap* release. Initially made famous by the Macedonian Romani vocalist Esma Redžepova, the song was also recorded by the Albanian singer Merita Halili.[23] Like the original, Dzhipsi Aver's version is sung in Romani, but interpolates an innovative barrage of rap text against a stylistic backdrop displaying the influences of rock, rap, wedding music, and Romani-Turkish clarinet playing (CD 7.5).

Likewise, in 1994 vocalist Mustafa Chaushev (Plate 7.2) released *S Pesenta v Sŭrtseto* [With song in the heart], an album of pop songs that put new Bulgarian lyrics to melodies derived from Turkish *halk* and *arabesk* pieces. Some, such as the text of *Sam li si* (Are you alone?; Fig. 7.4; CD 7.6), capture the wistful yearning and melancholic sense of fate typical of their *arabesk* counterparts (cf. Dimov 1994a:31, 1995:14; Stokes 1992a:133–62). In addition, this arrangement utilizes synthesizer and violin skillfully to supply dialogue-like interjections reminiscent of the modified string choruses that frequently back *arabesk* hits (see Stokes 1992a:168). The song's underlying rhythmic basis is also Middle Eastern, a variant of the rhythmic mode known as *baladī* among Arab musicians, which becomes especially apparent during the refrain.

Sam li si—pita pogled nyam,	Are you alone—asks a silent glance,
pita i razglezhda me bez sram.	it inquires and regards me without shame.
Sam li si—vzirat se ochi,	Are you alone—eyes stare,
nyakoi plache v men, no az mŭlcha.	something cries in me, but I am silent.
Sam li si—toz vŭpros kŭm men,	Are you alone—was the question [posed] to me
orkestŭrŭt—povtarya v refren.	the orchestra—continues in refrain.
Sam li si—skrit v oblak dim,	Are you alone—hidden in a smoky cloud,
mnogo bikh zhelal da pomŭlchim.	I'd really like us to be silent.
Dori i sam mislya si za neya,	Even though I'm alone I think about her,
vizhdam ya na masata do men.	I see her at the table next to me.
Te chuvstvata ne mogat da iztleyat,	These feelings can't rot away,
makar da sŭm samoten i srazen.	although I'm lonely and crushed.
Chorus	**Chorus**
Vino mi nalei—i sedni do men,	Pour me some wine—and sit next to me,
da pochuvstvam zhazhda za nastŭpvashtiya den.	so I feel thirst for the coming day.
Vino mi nalei—duma mi kazhi,	Pour me some wine—speak to me,
vsyaka spodelena grizha pomalko tezhi.	every shared care weighs less heavily.

Figure 7.4: *Sam li si* [Are you alone?]. Composed by Ufuk Yildirim; new Bulgarian text by Zhivka Kyuldzhieva. Performed by Mustafa Chaushev. *S Pesenta v Sŭrtseto*. Riva Sound RS0162, 1994.

Chalga's *Marketplace*

Pop-folk has received considerable press coverage, including regular TV and radio broadcasts, periodical rubrics, and top ten charts (see Dimov 1996a:35). It is supported by a labyrinthine cassette and more recently, videocassette, CD, VCD, and DVD industry so rife with piracy during the

1990s that in 1995, the Recording Industry Association of America, in cooperation with the International Intellectual Property Alliance, named Bulgaria one of the most serious infringers of global copyright stipulations (Anonymous 1990; Holland 1995). Even in November 1998, US trade representatives still considered Bulgaria on their piracy "watch list" (Shafir 1998m), while in May 2000, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry told Reuters that the country's market was dominated by pirate CDs flooding across the borders from Ukraine, Russia, and Montenegro (Shafir 2000c).[24]

By the late 1990s *chalga* had gained tremendous public support; ethnopop discothèques were established, periodicals featured gossip columns directed at ethnopop stars, and local satellite television promoted ethnopop channels featuring music videos of the sort discussed by Kurkela in chapter four of this volume. Payner Records, one of the chief producers of *pop-folk* as well as other genres, established its own TV channel on which it broadcasts, and hence advertises and popularizes, its latest video recordings. The following vignettes further illustrate *chalga*'s impact. In spring 1998 my colleague Lauren Brody reported that Neshko Neshev, the superb keyboardist who performed with Ivo Papazov's acclaimed wedding band, lost his job as a restaurant musician after just two weeks because "no one wanted to listen to the [more traditionally-oriented wedding] music he was playing" (Brody, p. c., 5 April 1998).[25] Very little older traditional music was being performed in Bulgaria anywhere; rather, people preferred *chalga*. I did not find this surprising, because two years earlier, when I asked *gŭdular* Dimitŭr Lavchev what was then happening with the wedding music scene, he responded that the trend had "already become a classic"—in other words, a bit old-fashioned—replaced by styles like *chalga*. When we spoke again in May 1999 he indicated that the market for *chalga* had grown so large that it eclipsed even Euro-American-style pop music in popularity. "Everyone is recording it," he said, "those who have the ability, and those who don't."

Similarly, Georgi Zhelyazkov, a professional folk musician and my *kaval* teacher, told me that when asked by some European visitors to select some cassettes of traditional music for them at a nearby market during summer 1998, he couldn't find anything performed on indigenous instruments. "I knew exactly what they wanted," he told me. "They wanted authentic material—without clarinet, accordion or other modern instruments." But the only thing available, he emphasized, was *"orientalna muzika."*

Nor has this situation improved recently for consumers seeking older musical styles. When my student Vladka Shikova returned to Champaign-Urbana, Illinois after visiting her parents in Varna, Bulgaria, during January 2000 she reported that stands selling *chalga* could be found "every ten meters" on the city's streets. She searched high and low for a recording of older traditional music to bring me; "I couldn't find folk music (*narodna muzika*) anywhere except the airport souvenir shop!" she exclaimed. This signifies that the indigenous music of Bulgaria's past, rooted in rural musical culture of the late 1800s and transformed, under socialism, into a venerated symbol of the nation through the performances of professional and amateur folk ensembles, was now directed solely at foreign tourists, while marketers considered *chalga* the indigenous music of choice for domestic consumers. For this reason the folk music group Bŭlgari, which toured the US during spring 2001 in conjunction with the fall concert series of New York City's World Music Institute, and whose members are all former or current stars of the professional folk ensemble circuit, has seen absolutely no financial gain within Bulgaria from their two recent CDs (*Bŭlgari: Bulgarian Folk Music* and *Bŭlgari: Bulgarian Rhapsody*), both released in the US. In fact, Bulgarian producers told Bŭlgari that their music did not interest them in the least and that the group should "do something with more market appeal"—in other words, a folk-pop crossover.

Chalga*'s Orientalist Imagery*

This situation represents a complete turn-around from the 1980s, when folk ensemble music was part of the everyday soundscape and when *Yugo-folk* faced strong opposition from Bulgarian authorities, who sought to ban it—like wedding music—for the sullying potential of its inherent links to Turkish and other Balkan musicianship. As Croatian essayist Dubravka Ugrešić (1995:125–26) has observed, *Yugo-folk*'s top performers became gendered, stereotyped idols associated with a commercial, materialistic, romanticized lifestyle: "the gods and goddesses of Yugo-mass culture." In her words, male performers sported "open collars, gold chains round their necks and thick gold signet rings on their fingers," a description that reminded me strongly of the *nouveaux riches* who began frequenting Sofia's many new cafes and pastry shops in the mid 1990s, cell phones in tow (1995:125). Similarly, for her, female vocalists appeared as alluring "Yugo-Barbie-Dolls, with . . . tight skirts, cleavages, and high-heeled shoes."

It was exactly *Yugo-folk*'s erotic and stylistically syncretic qualities that attracted Bulgarian listeners. As my colleague Tsenka Iordanova told me, in sharp contrast to Bulgarian *narodna muzika* [folk music] with its institutionally cultivated connotations of hallowed purity, Serbs freely combined stylistic elements from the cultures around them. They took from everywhere, she explained, including Bulgaria, translating borrowed traits into their own musical language, such that the results sounded "Serbianized." They were not afraid to borrow; culture was a market from which they could select whatever they wished. Therefore, Serbian music sounded freer, more appealing, more innovative, containing "more interesting moves." It was "full of the melismas, orientalisms, and sexual lethargy" indicative of music for the Serbian *kafana*, itself a vestige of the former Ottoman presence. I experienced this for myself in winter 1990, during an evening out at one of the then newly established cooperative restaurants—jointly owned by the government and a private entrepreneur—located in the foothills outside Sofia. Four televisions mounted in the dining room's corners played *Yugo-folk* music videos at high volume, whose performers exhibited exaggerated *čoček*-like dance moves as they sang. Other patrons danced along to these videos on the restaurant's small dance floor throughout the evening.[26]

As the cassette covers on the accompanying CD-ROM illustrate, Bulgarian *chalga* performers emulate the *Yugo-folk* model. For instance, Sashka Vaseva (Plate 7.3), an ethnopop star so popular that her wedding to a German businessman was broadcast on Bulgarian television,[27] has been likened to *Yugo-folk* star Lepa Brena (Delibeev 1994:16–17). Certainly, provocative women's dance and dress have long been central to Western popular culture, from go-go dancers in hot pants to Madonna. But some *chalga* performers have added a revealing Middle Eastern twist to their presentations. With names like Orkestŭr Orient and recording titles such as "The dream of the sheik" (*Mechtata na Sheiha*, by Marin Dzhambazov with Orkestŭr Knezha [Prince]; Plate 7.4), a handful of groups identify themselves directly with Near Eastern stereotypes. More common, however, are the numerous cassettes and videos whose packaging utilizes bellydance erotica or nudity. These include recordings of Romani songs, such as Orkestŭr Kozari's *Yana Bibiyana* (Plate 7.5, Ibro Lolov's "Gypsy varieties" (*Tsiganski Variete*; Plate 7.6), and the first Romani music festival (*Pŭrvi Romski Festival '93: Stara Zagora*; Plate 7.7); Ivo Barev's "With the name of God" (*S Imeto na Bog*; Plate 7.8), the album on which "Och, brother-in-law, brother-in-law" appears; Belite Shisharki's "Forgive me" (*Prosti Mi*; Plate 7.9); and Valentin Valdes's

"Thought of a woman" (*Misŭl za Zhena*; Plate 7.10), "Balkan soul" (*Balkanska Dusha*; see Kurkela 1996, 1997:188), and "Bad company" (*Losha Kompaniya*; Plate 7.11).[28]

In a recent publication (2006a:437), I recount an incident in which my friend Vasilka, anxious that I fully comprehend what, from her perspective, was the kitschy nature of this music, invited me for dinner and to view music videos of Orchestra Kristal. My fieldnotes describe one, in particular, in which a bevy of women wearing garish, revealing bellydance outfits twirled provocatively around a turbaned male singer seated on the floor. In that production, called *Dai mi, dai mi zlaten prŭsten* [Give me, give me, a gold ring], the synthetic fabric, neon colors, and trim of the women's outfits graphically outlined their breasts and pelvic areas, heightening the video's association with an orientalized musical eroticism.

Some months later, Carol Silverman drew my attention to a second song by Orchestra Kristal, *Az sŭm vesela i peya* [I am joyful and sing], recorded on their 1994 album, *Mili Moi* [My dear], which employs similar imagery. The instrumental introduction and refrains are replete with musical allusions to the Middle East, while the lyrics, which comprise a dialogue between a sheik and an unwilling addition to his harem, recall *Dai mi*'s seraglio symbolism (Fig. 7.5; CD 7.7). During the *Dai mi* video, in sharp contrast to the women, whose entire bodies shimmied as they danced, the male musicians stood completely still while they played their synthesizers. Likewise, in "I am joyful" the "sultan"'s voice is flat and colorless—devoid of orientalisms—while those of the female leads, who duet largely in parallel thirds (possibly one singer overdubbed), contain characteristic embellishments here and there, and are enhanced with artificial reverberation.

Woman	**Woman**
Az sŭm vesela i peya,	I'm joyful and sing,
Za edna lyubov kopneya,	Of a love I'm longing for,
I daryavam samo toplina.	And to bestow only warmth.
Sultan	**Sultan**
Imam mila mnogo zlato,	I have, my dear, lots of gold,
zlato i srebro—	gold and silver—
S biseri az shte posipya	I'll strew your bed with pearls.
tvoyeto leglo	

Woman (Chorus)	**Woman (Chorus)**
Ah, zlato i srebro ne iskam— *mladostta e tŭi beztsenna.* *No edva li ti shte razbiresh.*	Ah, I don't want gold and silver— youth is utterly priceless. But you'd hardly understand that.
Bikh zhelala da ostana, *vse tŭi mlada i zasmyana,* *i da nyamam grizhi nikakvi.*	I'd like to remain, always young and smiling, and not to have any cares.
Sultan	**Sultan**
V saraiiya ti shte bŭdesh, slŭntse i luna. *Vsichki shte ti bŭdat robi—* *samo s men ila.*	In the seraglio you'll be the sun and moon. Everyone will be your slave— just come with me.
Woman	**Woman**
(Chorus)	(Chorus)
Instrumental break	Instrumental break
Woman	**Woman**
S bogatstvoto nesmetno *lyubovta ne se kupuva—* *tya e chast ot moyata dusha.*	With incalculable wealth love isn't bought— it's a part of my soul.
Sultan	**Sultan**
Ti si hubava i mila; *dai mi lyubovta.* *Ti si nezhna i krasiva;* *stani mi zhena.*	You're attractive and kind; give me love. You're tender and beautiful; be my wife (or woman).
Woman	**Woman**
(Chorus)	(Chorus)

Figure 7.5: *Az sŭm vesela i peya,* performed by Orkestŭr Kristal. *Mili Moi,* 1994.

To be sure, not every *chalga* song or music video is so blatantly orientalist. As I have indicated elsewhere (Buchanan 2006a:437), Orchestra *Kristal* may have actually intended "I am joyful and sing" as a parody of such imagery, especially given that Croatian, Bosnian, and Serbian performers produced just such spoofs of *Yugo-folk* culture from time to time (L. Rasmussen, p.c., 11 July 1999). Yet these gendered contrasts point to at least three ways in which the Ottoman past has been interpreted, accommodated, manipulated, and commercially recast by both Balkan musicians and producers and Western recording companies, their promoters, and consumers. First, although by 2000 the phenomenon had become a basic feature of most *pop-folk*, the initial adoption of bellydance by *chalga* artists during the 1990s was particularly apparent in Romani bands, and may be related to general perceptions of things Romani as oriental. According to Carol Silverman (p.c., 1998, 2003:129), Bulgarian Romani music festivals of the 1990s regularly awarded cash prizes to the best bellydancers, but because it is considered improper for Romani women to dance with bared midriffs or for men with whom they are unacquainted, otherwise Romani bands hired Bulgarian Slavic women as dancers. Importantly, Silverman's work documents that this *pop-folk* bellydancing represented a frequently garish, exaggerated, and contorted rendition of in-group Romani *kyuchek*, whose moves, by contrast, are much more subtle, executed from the stomach rather than the hips, and danced fully clothed. Thus by showcasing such bellydancing—even when performed by non-Roma—Silverman suggests that *chalga* groups were presenting (or perhaps selling) a stereotype about who the Roma are, one that they have internalized as representing the non-Romani perception of their identity (2003:130, 139). This may well be true, especially given the lengthy historical association of urban Romani popular culture with Turkish musicianship and dance. My own sense, however, is that the bellydance fad is not just about redefining *Romani* identity through orientalized expressive culture, but that of Bulgarians and even the Balkans generally. While Westerners and Bulgarian Slavs may in fact typecast Roma as more Eastern, exotic, and hence oriental, specific knowledge of Romani-Turkish cultural connections seems more a Balkan than Western phenomenon. In *chalga* performance the erotic dance stereotype has been transferred to and adopted by Slavic women, it has been similarly exploited (through čoček) in *Yugo-folk* and *turbo folk* videos (whose performers include both Slavs and Muslims), and in neither Bulgaria nor the former Yugoslav republics was or is the intended audience of these genres Western.

Secondly, the gender differences described earlier (men in Western suits, gold jewelry, not moving, flat voice; the women in bellydance attire, shimmying, singing in embellished voice) have an important historical precedent in the so-called "Turkish" operas of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Vienna, which frequently utilized the harem as their paradigmatic setting. In productions such as Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio,* for example, where the two female lead characters were abducted and held prisoner in a harem, the fact that their jailer, the Pasha, never sings, but only speaks, and rarely appears in the drama highlights both his noble bearing and simultaneously, despotic, absolute political power (Hunter 1998:55–58, 63–64). Other operas of this type exhibit similar stereotypes. In both today's Balkan pop and these earlier operas, then, men and women are marked such that orientalism as otherness is bound up with the sensuality of the feminine, on the one hand, and a dominating hypermasculinity, on the other (cf. Todorova 1997:13). This may be, in fact, one overriding Euro-American stereotype of the Mediterranean in general—a stereotype that this video plays into.

Taking this one step further, Finnish ethnomusicologist Vesa Kurkela (1996:46 and this volume) insightfully proposes that the "sexist softporn" and "macho mentality" exhibited by *chalga* point to a "modern exoticism" that is the contemporary analogue of "classic orientalism," where the country's new mafia is, for instance, today's personification of sheiks and sultans. Yet I see little real difference between this "neo-orientalism," as he describes it (1997:187–88), and its precedents elsewhere, particularly in the extent to which it traffics in objectified images of female bodies and conversely (flipping over my theoretical coin), the depersonalized, disembodied female voices of the *Le mystère des voix bulgares* recordings produced by Nonesuch and Jaro Records, to which I turn below.

This antithetical relationship leads me to my third point: the orientalization of Balkan music, from *chalga,* to *Yugo-folk,* to *Le mystère des voix bulgares,* is partially about foregrounding the voice as sensual, a quality also characteristic of Turkish *arabesk,* which may have provided one impetus for this trend. For example, during cadential moments of some *Yugo-folk* and *arabesk* songs, particularly Arab-sounding melismatic vocal passages are set apart from previous material. They may be enhanced with reverb and are either accompanied by a sudden drone or stripped of instrumental accompaniment altogether (cf. L. Rasmussen 1995:247–48, 1996b:107). The resulting sound calls to mind a host of Arabo-Turkish genres, from the call to prayer to *layālī* to *uzun hava* to the

taksim, further framing these moments—and the voice itself—as orientally marked.

"Le Mystère" and the Oriental

The "Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices" recordings provide another illustration of the voice as sensual, albeit produced differently. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Buchanan 1996a, 1997, 2006a:360–71), one reason for the choirs' unparalleled success was that their promotional materials drew together the female and the vocal as sensual together in a single package whose wrapper of New Age spiritualism merged the Bulgarian, oriental, mystical, archaic, and exotic as synonymous. It is noteworthy that the earliest "Mystery" recordings left the singers' physical identities to the listener's fancy, for this focused attention on female voices divorced from human shape, thus firing the Western imagination in a manner analogous to the veiled women of some Islamic societies. As Silverman (2004:222) beautifully expresses it:

> The transformation of these socialist singer/workers into ethereal, exotic, "ancient" voices was artfully orchestrated by promoters, who submerged the women themselves and emphasized the female sound aspect of the music, devoid of text and context. Gender surfaced in female voices, not in real people.

In both local and Western orientalized productions of Bulgarian music, then, a configuration of economic and political motivations is at play whose complexity embodies, but also transcends historical links between current and earlier stereotyping of the East (Table 7.4). On the one hand, democracy and market capitalism have meant an explosion of permissive behavior throughout eastern Europe: drinking, drugs, smuggling, business scams, conspicuous consumption, prostitution rings, female sex slavery, and pornography.[29] Many young Bulgarians aspire to a high-life culture of easy money, easy women, flashy clothes, fast food, faster cars, and high-tech gadgets.[30] For instance, the lyrics of one 1996 *chalga* hit applaud the lifestyle of a *"barovets"* (Fig. 7.6). This slang term, which under socialism signified a man with an easy life and many political connections, now essentially means "barfly," but specifically denotes a member of the *nouveaux riches* who subscribes to a lifestyle of flashy materialism and nightclub activities (Karen Peters, p.c., 20 May 1999; cf. Dimov 2001:142).

Diskoteki, i restoranti skitam nosht i den,	I gallivant through discothèques and restaurants night and day,
piyane, pari, i matski, vinagi sŭs men.	drinking, money, and kittens [i.e., young desirable women], always with me.
Barovets, barovets, barovets sŭm az,	A *barovets, barovets, barovets* am I,
barushki shte si zhiveya, vseki den i chas.	At the bars I'll live every day and hour.
Karam hubava kola, tova e moita strast.	I drive a beautiful car, this is my passion.
Sŭs marki, dolari i zlato, barovets sŭm az.	With deutschmarks, dollars and gold, a *barovets* am I.
Barovets, barovets, barovets sŭm az,	A *barovets, barovets, barovets* am I,
barushki shte si zhiveya, vseki den i chas.	at the bars I'll live every day and hour.

Figure 7.6: *Sofiiski barovets* (excerpt), performed by Ts. Nikolich. As heard on Radio Signal Plus, June 1996.

At the same time, political change has meant access to music from other parts of the Balkans, particularly *Yugo-folk*, which as illustrated above, cultivates similarly materialistic imagery. *Chalga*'s sexualized properties are related to both of these factors.

Impending political and economic change also facilitated the western European, North American, and Japanese enchantment with Bulgarian women's voices, which through Nonesuch's skillful marketing became orientalized objects of desire in and of themselves. This latter trend was further commercially exploited by numerous copycat recordings (see Buchanan 1997), whose most convoluted and deliberately easternized representation to date is probably the compact disc *"Fly, Fly My Sadness."*[31] This recording pairs Siberian biphonic throat singers from the Republic of Tuva with a Bulgarian women's choir formerly marketed in association with the mysterious voices fad but known, since 1995, as "The Angels" (Angelite) in arrangements by Mikhail Alperin, a Ukrainan-born Jewish Moldovan piano professor and jazz musician living in Finland. According to the liner notes, Alperin's goal was to reveal, through the metaphoric vision of a bird's flight, the shared meditative structures of

these disparate folk musics, which he believes derive from their common origin in the peoples of the East Asian Turkic-Altaic language group, which includes the Tuvans and the Bulgars.[32] The album's final cut, a piece called *Mountain Story* whose composition is credited to Alperin, combines the latter's Hohner accordion; the Tuvan two-stringed horse-head fiddle (*igil*); and several styles of Tuvan throat singing (*khoomei*), a men's tradition characterized by exceedingly low-pitched fundamental drones and whistling overtone melodies; with a Bulgarian women's chorus whose singing phases in and out of the predominantly Tuvan material. The Tuvans sing vocables, as is typical of this tradition, and the Bulgarians two virtually undecipherable repetitive texts. The focus is not the lyrics, but the unpulsed droning of the vocal interplay, whose saturated texture is echoed and intensified by the instruments' reedy quality. The resulting union brilliantly exemplifies the process of "nesting orientalisms," in which a phenomenon already typecast as Eastern or oriental assumes a relatively Western stance in juxtaposition to something else (Bakić-Hayden 1995). Thus here the implied mysticism of the angelic women's voices is further exoticized and easternized by its subordinate association with the physiologically extraordinary ability of the Siberians to produce two pitches simultaneously, a technique largely specific only to Tuvan and Mongolian nomadic herders, some Tibetan Buddhist monks, and the derivative American harmonic choirs of New Age spiritualism. Not surprisingly, Alperin's liner notes indicate that this is a composition "based in meditation." That neither Tuvan nor Bulgarian singing is in reality associated with meditation *per se* seems beside the point.

Table 7.4: Politico-Economic Factors Driving Orientalized Productions of Bulgarian Music

❖Democracy and market capitalism ➜ materialism, corruption, crime, objectification of women's bodies
❖Political transition ➜ Increased access to other Balkan ethno-pop characterized by similarly materialistic and sexualized imagery
❖Western interest in Bulgarian music, fired especially by the Nonesuch and Jaro Records tours of the Le mystère des voix bulgares choirs ➜ further commercial exploitation and objectification of women's voices

To tie all of this together in a single equation, I turn to a key observation by Carol Silverman (2004:231), which I will paraphrase and expand upon here: The former socialist east exported "disembodied females in the form of voices" to the capitalist West. At the same time, as the former socialist east imported Western capitalist principles, they became transfigured, in part, as access to goods previously limited or regulated, including objectified women's bodies, whether in the form of pin-up girl cassette cover images or prostitutes. During the transition era such objectifications, which constitute "female bodies without voices," and Bulgaria's choristers—"female voices without bodies"—were essentially mirror images: both became "gendered commodities for sale." Again, from this perspective, in regard to aspects of gender and voice, these two trends, *chalga* and mysteriously voiced female choirs, constitute flip sides of the same orientalist coin. Moreover, as I will clarify momentarily, the dialectic obtaining between these two traditions—the coin's two faces—springs from the reinterpretation of things Ottoman as emergent markers of Bulgarian modernity.

Transnational Dimensions: The Warrior Princess's Bulgarian Voice

Another gendered popular culture commodity that associated Bulgarian music with an amorphous, remote past and equally nebulous "Eastern" place was the FOX network's television show, *Xena, Warrior Princess,* which played in the mid 1990s. Filmed, in reality, in New Zealand, the show related the exploits of a tough, voluptuous, seductively clad Robin Hood-ess endowed with quick wits, courage, and supernatural powers during the age of Greco-Roman myth in an unspecified Asian locale, which the Universal Studios website describes as "on the distant frontier of known civilization."[33] The program's soundtrack implemented a grab-bag of Mediterranean and Asian musical devices marketed by Western firms in relation to Eastern mysticism or meditation, including Armenian *duduk* melodies, Tibetan Buddhist religious chant, Tuvan biphonic singing, and Chinese temple bells. Bulgarian music figured prominently within this constellation: composer Joseph LoDuca, impressed by one of the "Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices" choirs, employed similar women's singing, Bulgarian texts, traditionally inspired tunes, asymmetrical meters, and indigenous instruments to highlight moments when Xena exercises the esoteric knowledge that she acquired from her

East Asian (probably Mongolian) mentor, a nomadic, yurt-dwelling, female adept.[34] These included her "chakram toss," paralysis tricks, and jumping and fighting feats. In particular, he found that the "warlike, chilling sounds" of *gaida* [bagpipe] and overblown *kaval* [obliquely blown wooden flute], both performed by the California-based Bulgarian emigré Dimităr Konstantinov, helped to "create an atmosphere of ancient culture, even though the dialogue is contemporary."[35] The show's main title opened with a brief *gaida* solo. This was followed by a studio-enhanced women's choir—actually a handful of California-based singers boosted by the excellent vocal skills of Konstaninov's wife, Zhivka—singing a Bulgarian text to a tune metered in a seven-beat *răchenitsa* dance rhythm (7/16: 2–2–3). The audio dimension accompanied brief video clips from past episodes that presented Xena with her foes in a variety of poses, including that of a veiled *femme fatale*.

According to Suzie North, one of the vocalists who recorded parts of the show's soundtrack, LoDuca regarded Bulgarian women's singing as "an extremely powerful female sound" that he thought most appropriate for a warrior princess (North 1998).[36] His use of Bulgarian vocals was thus to some extent about female empowerment. Certainly, the script's numerous strong female characters and abundant lesbian allusions foregrounded issues of female potentiality and community. But this was an empowerment loaded with orientalist implications, one that only extended prior associations of Bulgarian women's singing with the primeval, ancient, mythical, mystical, sensual, and enigmatic transnationally. In conversation with North I learned that, once again, the actual lyrics to be sung held no real importance. When Konstantinova first read the texts at the studio, she remarked that they made no sense, and altered some of the lyrics to make them "better Bulgarian." Although Konstantinova would often exclaim "What are we singing?!", LoDuca told the women that he just wanted the words to sound "mythic," in keeping with the show's central thrust (North 1998). While this accounts for the downright weird translations of the texts in the liner notes accompanying the first *Xena* CD (see Fig. 7.7), it is also the antithesis of Bulgarian tradition, where a good singer is defined in part by how many song texts she can remember, and a good song is one with a coherent tale. As I will clarify below, one recurring criticism of *chalga* is that its texts are of remarkably poor quality.

Text in Liner Notes	**Translation in Liner Notes**
Jenata iazi samotna	The Warrior Princess rides alone
Neinoto minalo srazi ia	Her past drives her from shame.
Sreshtu voiskite ot tumen sviat	Against the forces of a dark world
Vouva za dobro tia	She fights for good, not for fame.
Rogovi zvunove idavt	Horns sound her coming, blare her name.
Napraite put na voina!	Make way the Warrior! Cheer!
Tupani biat vuv ritum	Drums beat a rhythm
Princhesata e pak tuka!	Let villains beware! The Warrior Princess is here!

Text as Heard on CD	**Translation of CD Text**
Zhenata yazdi samotna,	The woman rides alone,
Neinoto minalo srazi ya.	Her past crushes her.
Sreshtu voiskite ot tŭmen svyat,	Against the forces of a dark world,
Voiyuvat kato bratya.	They battle like brothers.
Rogovi, zvŭnove idvat.	Horns, bells come.
Napravite pŭt na voina!	Prepare a path for the warrior![37]
Tŭpani biyat vŭv ritŭm,	Drums beat in rhythm,
Printsesata e pak tuka!	The Princess is here again!

Figure 7.7: *Main Title*, composed by Joseph LoDuca, from the Fox Television program *Xena, Warrior Princess*. As heard on *Xena, Warrior Princess: Original Television Soundtrack*, Varese-Sarabande VSD-5750, 1995 [1996].

Conclusions: Balkan Cosmopolitanism?

Bulgarian *chalga*, like *Yugo-folk*, may be viewed productively as a late twentieth-century outgrowth of earlier, Ottoman-Romani-Slavic musical interfaces. Both are, as Jane Sugarman (1998) so aptly describes their Albanian correlates, "Ottoman successor musics" or, more whimsically, "Ottopop." After all, the very concept of the Balkans as a geopolitical construct is, according to the historian Maria Todorova, "the" Ottoman legacy (1997:12). Ironically, while socialist Bulgaria rejected this legacy in favor of state-mandated expressive media, musicians now draw upon its musical and visual stereotypes to create expressive modes that spurn the

socialist heritage, in turn. Yet despite their syncretic roots, *chalga* and other ethnopop genres like *Pirin folk* songs are not Serbian, Romani, Turkish, or Greek music. They are Bulgarian musics, produced by local artists for domestic consumption. But they are also Bulgarian musics that reconfigure the nation in a post-1989 *Balkan* context. This was underscored by some local scholars and early performers of the new ethnopop phenomenon, who viewed it as a resumption of late nineteenth-century trends artificially interrupted in the 1940s by socialist politics. For ethnomusicologist Ventsislav Dimov, for example, these trends, once shared widely across the Balkans, continued to develop freely and as an industry in neighboring states after their evolution in Bulgaria was halted (Dimov 1995:13; cf. Statelova 1995:110). Others perceived these trends as of Bulgarian origin, but then appropriated and popularized by neighboring countries from 1944–89. Speaking specifically about the Serbian factor apropos Bulgarian ethnopop, the celebrated Pirin song artists Sevdalina and Valentin Spasovi, in a published interview with *Folk Panair* magazine editor Petko Delibeev (1994:10), remarked:

> Sevdalina: Here, when it was unthinkable to talk about such music, then our neighbors grabbed up our musical wealth en masse.
>
> Valentin: First they took and popularized all of our Macedonian songs, which I as a child had heard from my grandfather, while by the time I was a grade-school student, in general they weren't performed among us. And when this dawned on us and we began to reconstruct them, they [the neighbors] came out with the authored music [i.e., NCFM and similar trends] and we had to catch up to them once again.

Although riddled with problematic historical assumptions and ethnonationalist implications, this statement is a profound expression of the extent to which these artists feel the socialist regime cheated them of a local urban popular culture.

Yet Valentin immediately followed his remark with a comment on Bulgarian ethnopop's regionally dispersed origins. "But look," he said to Delibeev, "in Bulgaria many people have come from all over the place and each has brought something. So that now it's [only] natural that we repeat something [i.e., musical styles from elsewhere]." These sentiments were echoed by the Pirin song vocalist Lyubka Rondova in a comparable interview with the *Folk Panair* staff. "It's true," she said,

> that these songs are heavily influenced by our neighbors, but they are Bulgarian—Bulgarian language, rhythms, [and] motives comprise them. But it's impossible for there not to be influence—we are from a single Balkan singing region. And if we learn from our neighbors now, this is because they began to make this kind of music forty years ago (*Folk Panair* 1994a:6).

In a similar statement, Mustafa Chaushev, defending *pop-folk* against its academic critics, emphasized its Balkan nature as appropriate to Bulgarian modernity:

> What is this "kitsch"? In the face of such a boom, such that folklore is making now in Bulgaria . . . it is natural for there to be weak things, because everything is being born now. Yes, there are mediocre songs, there are dreamed-up singers, but the general line [of stylistic development] is correct for our country. Or else what? Everywhere we're distracted by Anglo-American music and I ask myself, are we in Bulgaria? This is disgusting! I travel around the Balkan countries—nowhere else is there such nihilism. And for this they too are guilty, those who impose the ethics [of] 'kitsch' . . . . The people wanted to listen to table songs [i.e., restaurant songs, drinking songs, popular songs to accompany convivial occasions], but they forbid Serbian music—[Was this] for political reasons? Ethical reasons? For songs there are no borders, especially among us, in the Balkans (Dimov 1994a).

Such commentary signifies a conceptual move beyond syncretism to a new cultural position in which the Bulgarian as Balkan (and probably the Balkan as European) is being privileged in musical practice, self-identification, and international alliances (cf. Turino 2000:6). My thesis is that those expressive stereotypes once formerly identified with a despised political hegemony have become a distinctive, yet natural part of the compositional vocabulary of the average Bulgarian ethnopop musician. This is not to say that the links between such features and minority groups, in particular, have been completely defused, but for today's ethnopop artists, they seem to represent the reemergence of a Balkan music *gestalt* with a Bulgarian face—a "Bulgofolk" alternative to *Yugo-folk* that, directly or indirectly, reinterprets the cosmopolitanism of the old Ottoman ecumene in a contemporary Balkan frame (cf. Dimov 1995:15–16; Petkov 1994:21; Sugarman, this volume).

To tease out the complex implications of this thesis I turn to a theory of cosmopolitanism advanced by my colleague Thomas Turino (2000) in

relation to his recent work with musicians in Zimbabwe. Turino identifies cosmopolitanism as a process in which aspects of a previously foreign disposition, such as the effects of colonization, become so constitutive of local lifeways that they are no longer thought of as alien or alternative by their actors, but as a natural, even vital part of their sensibilities. This is not a matter of mere influence, or to put this in musical terms, of indigenous artists strategically imitating or incorporating an atypical instrument, chord progression, or rhythmic pattern in order to appeal to those holding the economic or political reins of power. Rather, it is about the internalization of the foreign to the point of self-recognition, self-identification, and self-expression. Cosmopolitanism is therefore inherently international in purview, and here Turino's use of the term jives with its mainstream connotation of being "of the world," sophisticated in one's appreciation and cultivation of translocal phenomena (Turino 2000:7). But the shapes that cosmopolitan forms take are completely local; their international point of origin may be forgotten or discarded as beside the point, and the forms or features themselves invested with new meaning and value *vis-à-vis* contemporary needs and views.

I see this process happening in regard to the ethnopop genres described here. Perhaps we can think of them as illustrations of an emergent Balkan cosmopolitanism, where the Ottoman Empire's musical legacy has become part and parcel of the local grassroots creative lexicon, which in turn coexists with myriad newly established intraregional political and economic ties that recall the Roman trade routes—the *Via Militaris* and its counterparts—interlacing this area in centuries past.[38] As we have seen, even though devices iconic of Western pop, like synthesizers, are utilized by Balkan musicians, they are employed in locally specific ways that impart a sense of identity at once European and Mediterranean, or in a transcendant, cosmopolitan sense, Balkan. *Chalga*, wedding music, *Pirin folk* songs, *Yugo-folk*, Greek *laika*, and Turkish *arabesk* are all manifestations of this emergent cosmopolitanism, but each genre holds a different meaning for the local community in which it is practiced. Moreover, these genres must be interpreted as in an intense dialogue with one another (by virtue of mass mediated intraregional circulation and Romani crosscurrents), and in tension with both older layers of cosmopolitanism resulting from European socialism, and competing visions of modernity.

Importantly, as the rubric *orientalna muzika* indicates, many of my well-educated professional folk musician acquaintances envision these pop music genres as problematically "Eastern" at the same time that they

recognize their broad popularity and even consume them themselves (cf. Sugarman, this volume). These professionals represent an older stratum of cosmopolitanism, socialized as they were in the communist aesthetics of a Western European-style staged folkore that monumentalized expressions of the *narod* [people, nation, folk] as culturally and ethnically pure, and thus as symbols of the Bulgarian will to withstand Ottoman oppression (cf. Turino 2000:10). They view the new, amalgamated ethnopop, performed largely by amateurs, as substandard.

Radostina Kŭneva, a professional vocalist who helped me translate some of the lyrics presented in this article, noted that most ethnopop songs contain texts of low quality: unlike the ideal folk song, they lack a coherent narrative, feature thematically unconnected words and lines, employ ungrammatical verb forms and erroneous declensions of personal pronouns and adjectives, or as she put it, are just plain stupid. At the same time, she and her colleagues from Bŭlgari, in the midst of their 1998 tour of the American Midwest—remarked that absolutely everyone listens to this music. The group's *gaidar,* Georgi Doichev, explained this by proposing that in the wake of the hardships presented by the political transition people wanted something lighter to listen to, so as not to have to think about life's difficulties. *Pop-folk* provided one such outlet.

But Georgi Andreev, a *gŭdular* and composer of some of the group's material, speaking to the overwhelming popularity of Serbian *Yugo-folk*, the orientalesque character of *chalga,* and the dearth of support for folk ensembles, added that while it was true that his compatriots found their neighbors' music "fresher and more honest, closer to the soul," this liking actually stemmed from an inferiority complex. Most Bulgarians are ashamed to be Bulgarian, he explained, and are ashamed of things Bulgarian, so they do not want to acknowledge their own folk traditions, let alone listen to them, because they are something which people connect intellectually and emotionally, if not experientially, with archaic village life. Such music may be quintessentially Bulgarian, but it is hardly the height of modernity for the contemporary consumer. Rather, to a certain extent, Bulgarian modernity is about being Balkan.

In creating distinctively Bulgarian types of Balkan ethnopop musicians seem driven by a similar sense of inferiority that compels them to catch up with Greece and Serbia, whose political systems did not derail their urban music scenes to the extent experienced in Bulgaria. Thus in a 1994 magazine interview, Kiril Ivanov, director of the ethnopop band "Roden Kŭt" and composer of some of Sashka Vaseva's repertory, observed,

> Personally, it was painful to me that such music was founded there, but here there were complicated brakes. And in my opinion they [Greece, Yugoslavia] are far ahead in this development [i.e., the development of ethnopop], as they have their own [musical] physiognomy—Serbian is one, Greek is another. And the tragedy is this, that we don't have our [own] Bulgarian [style] and listen to their songs [instead] (*Folk Panair* 1994b:16–17).

While it may appear from this quotation that *chalga* and related genres, in answering the need for Bulgarian ethnopop, simply emulate Serbian, Greek, or Turkish trends, I believe the reality is more complicated. It is not the model's point of origin that is of primary importance, but the internalization by Bulgarian musicians and consumers of a particular set of ideas pertaining to the oriental as Balkan. Thus Mustafa Chaushev, after asserting "For songs there are no borders, especially among us, in the Balkans," reinforced his point by rhetorically inquiring, "I mean, what do we really know about Turkish music?" With this he responded obliquely to those cultural administrators of the socialist past who had forbidden local musicians from performing neighboring styles or newer, hybrid Balkan popular musics, for in Zhivkov's Bulgaria, with its ideology of monoethnism, this was considered inappropriate and even dangerous. From Chaushev's perspective, however, given that local musicians possessed only a Bulgarian perspective on anything Turkish, this hysteria was ridiculous. Their music would always be Bulgarian, no matter its stylistic mix.

In a similar fashion, Silverman (p.c., 1998) told me that the Bulgarian Romani bands who employ bellydancers do so because they are aware that oriental dancing goes on in Turkey, even if they have never actually witnessed it themselves. Indeed, one acquaintance, a professional folk instrumentalist, upon returning from a concert tour in Istanbul, expressed great surprise that throughout his time there, and despite expectations to the contrary, he saw absolutely no one dancing *kyuchek*, which was in his mind the quintessential contemporary Turkish dance genre. Here again cosmopolitanism comes into play. For Bulgarian musicians the actual nature of Turkish art or indigenous music, how bellydance is really practiced in Turkey, and whether or not it once served as entertainment at the sultan's court is irrelevant. Rather, *chalga* and related genres are Bulgarian spins on orientalism as a central Balkan sensibility. They are cosmopolitan manifestations of interiorized representations of the Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish nation, Bulgarian in form but Balkan in content.

Here I must digress momentarily to point out that in comparison with other southeast Europeans, Bulgarians have enfolded "Balkan" the most deeply into their psyches. Beyond its application to the region's geography, it is very nearly synonymous with Bulgarian. The term itself is the Ottoman Turkish designation for Bulgaria's magnificent Balkan Mountain range, which the Byzantines and medieval geographers called Haemus, and which effectively bisects the country (see Todorova 1997:26). As Todorova (1997:56) succinctly observes:

> Geography is an important element of the school curriculum, and the 1994 seventh-grade textbook features three parts: Europe, the Balkan Peninsula, and Bulgaria. Bulgaria is a country whose airlines are called "Balkan," whose tourist agencies are "Balkantourist" and "Balkan holidays," whose record-making industry is "Balkanton," whose most fashionable hotel in the center of Sofia is "Sheraton-Balkan," whose third largest bank is "Balkanbank," and which has thousands of citizens with the family name "Balkanski."

Unfortunately, in international forums balkanization denotes not summer vacations, but the militant fracturing of nation-states along ethnic, religious, and linguistic divides. Thus from Todorova's perspective (1997:57), while only Bulgarians seriously consider a Balkan identity, "even among them it is ambiguous and subordinated to their claim of Europeanness."

My sense is that the current ethnopop scene transcends the dichotomies inherent in the name "Balkan" (East vs. West, oriental vs. European, irrational and warring vs. civilized). The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1987:7, 1997:158) has long shown convincingly how Greek citizens regularly and strategically invoke one facet or another of an identically polarized continuum in the practice of their everyday lives. I make the same argument here for Bulgaria's ethnopop musicians, whose products aesthetically embrace aspects of both the European and the oriental as positive qualities of being Balkan in a Bulgarian way. In the process, they have created new genres that resonate within the region, but which have a huge domestic listenership that supersedes divisions of class and ethnicity, despite the ethnic identity of their performers or the ethnically eclectic origins of the music. What seems to matter most is that Bulgaria now has its own version of "Ottopop," one which represents Bulgaria's Orient in the social poetics of Balkan cosmopolitanism.

Notes

1. This article originated as a paper, "Ottoman Images and Oriental Imaginings in Bulgarian Popular Culture: Ethnopop, Mysterious Voices, and *Xena, Warrior Princess*," read at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Bloomington, IN, 1998, and in an expanded version, "Orientalism or Balkan Cosmopolitanism? Bulgarian Ethnopop and the Ottoman Episteme," for the University of Wisconsin at Madison's Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia Colloquium Series. Since I completed the article manuscript in 1999–2000, a wealth of excellent new publications have appeared both in the US and abroad that treat various aspects of Bulgarian and Balkan popular culture. While I have tried to update my article to reflect at least some of the contributions of this burgeoning literature, for further information I direct the interested reader to, in particular, Dimov 2001; Levy 2005; Peicheva and Dimov 2002; Rasmussen 2002; Rice 2002; Silverman 2003, 2004; Sugarman 2003; and van de Port 1998.

2. See, for example, Diehl 2002; Feld 1996; Lee 1999; Qureshi 1997; Rice 2002; Solomon 2000, 2005; and Stokes, ed. 1994, among others.

3. On *chalga*, cf. Kurkela, this volume. The term "ethnopop," by which I mean hybridic styles of popular music combining aspects of local ethnic, folk, or traditional musics with those of Western popular culture, has been incorporated into the local musicological lexicon (Bulg. *etnopop*) by native scholars such as Ventsislav Dimov to refer to this relatively new category of Bulgarian music.

4. See Atlas, *Ne se Predavai!*

5. See recordings listed in the accompanying Discography. Borisova is also one of the Bulgarian vocalists who sang on Sezen Aksu's *Düğün ve Cenaze* album; see Stokes, this volume.

6. For further information on contemporary Pirin songs and their relationship to Macedonian culture see Buchanan 2006a and Peters 2000.

7. On NCFM see esp. L. Rasmussen 2002; on *turbo folk* see Gordy 1999:114n26, 133–64; Kronja 2004; Longinović 2000; and Rasmussen, this volume.

8. However, electric guitar has found a new role in *turbo folk;* see Rasmussen, this volume.

9. By contrast, *Folk Panair*'s other categories include "folklore - singers" (solo artists of the professional ensemble network), "folklore - groups" (wedding orchestras and chamber groups derived from professional ensembles), and "eternal folk songs" (old urban songs, early twentieth-century village music, and classic, well-known folk ensemble arrangements).

10. The first two Romani music festivals were held in Stara Zagora in 1993 and 1994. See, for example, *Pŭrvi Romski Festival '93, Stara Zagora* (Payner Records, 1993). A selection of audio and video recordings featuring Romani music from the early to mid 1990s includes *Dzhipsi Aver: Dzhipsi Rap* (Unison Records, 1993); *Dzhipsi Aver: Imam li Dobŭr Kismet?* (Video Total - OOD), "*Ot*

Kalkuta do Viena": Romski Duhov Orkestŭr YaG (Unison Stars, n.d., but probably 1994); *Ibro Lolov: Tsiganski Hitove*, *Chast 1* and *Chast 2* (Video Total); and *Ibro Lolov: Tsigansko Variete* (Video Total). On bear and monkey trainers see Silverman 2000b:280–83.

11. Similar ensembles called *saze* (from the Turkish, meaning "instruments") existed in towns throughout Albania (Sugarman 2000:993, 997).

12. Whether or not Bulgarians used *"chalgiya"* to denote a Romani-Turkish style ensemble like those found in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania is a question demanding further research. Although like the latter, the Bulgarian groups did usually feature violin, clarinet, and indigenous percussion (*daire, tarambuka,* or *tŭpan*), they more rarely contained the Turkish instruments, such as the *'ud* or *cümbüş*, that were common in the contemporaneous bands of their neighbors. In Bulgaria the *chalgadzhii* also went by numerous other names, including *svirdzhii* (sing. *svirdzhiya,* from the Bulgarian *svirya*; to play music), *bandi* (bands), and *muziki* (musicians, with a Western European connotation). See Buchanan 2006a and especially Vŭlchinova-Chendova 2000 for a lengthier discussion.

13. Cf. Rice 2003:172, who defines *chalga* as "Bulgarianized 'Gypsy' music" and "a kind of pan-Balkan, Rom-influenced popular music, commonly interpreted, both by its proponents and opponents, as a symbol of Bulgaria's areal location in the Balkans."

14. Throughout this discussion, see also Popescu-Judetz 1982, who draws largely upon And 1976 and sources common to both publications; and Sugarman 2003, who provides a marvelous historical overview of *čoček* and its more contemporary corollaries among Albanians.

15. For an excellent discussion of the confusion surrounding the etymological derivation of the term *çengi* and its meaning, see Seeman 2002:138–41.

16. The 8/8 (3–3–2) pattern is closely related to the Arab rhythmic mode *Malfūf* and the underlying swing of the Greek *syrtos/ballos*. It likely represents yet another Turkish influence in Bulgarian and Macedonian culture.

17. Such *taksim* breaks represent an important commonality between Turkish *arabesk*, Bulgarian "authored Macedonian songs," and *chalga*. In all three genres such solos frequently appear roughly midway through a song, between two verses (cf. Stokes 1992a:195–97). Where wedding music is concerned, whether played or sung, the main melodic material frequently frames one or more internal improvisations, some *taksim*-like and others less so, over ostinati.

18. Indeed, Peicheva and Dimov (2002:134) suggest that among professional Romani *zurna* players of southwestern Bulgaria, *kyuchek* as a musical category is broken down into an even more complicated array of types than has been suggested here. Their interlocutors identified Arab, oriental, old, and free *kyuchek* in addition to the Turkish and Romani varieties, and pointed to the locus of bodily movement (head, hands, shoulders, abdomen, bust, pelvis) as well as tempo as being two of the differentiating characteristics.

19. *Badzhanak* – a kin term with no good English equivalent: the husbands of two women who are first cousins.

20. *Darmadar* – dialect; from Bulg. *darmadan* [ruined, down and out; dissolute] and Turk. *darmadan* and *darmadağan*.

21. *Sokak* – dialect; from Turk. *sokağı*.

22. *Kadŭnka* (pl. *kadŭnki*) - from Bulg. *kadŭna*: Turkish woman, lady.

23. Redžepova's version may be heard on *Songs of a Macedonian Gypsy*.

24. The best Western-language discussion of piracy and the Bulgarian recording industry to date is Kurkela 1997.

25. Neshev can be heard on both of Papazov's Hannibal Records releases, *Balkanology* and *Orpheus Ascending*.

26. Rice (2002:32) describes a similar experience. Residents of a village that he often visited in the 1980s, located in the mountains north of Sofia, not far from the Serbian border, set their radios to pick up Serbian broadcasts featuring NCFM, rather than Bulgarian State Radio.

27. One might draw a comparison here with the 1995 wedding of *turbo folk* singing star Svetlana Veličković-Ceca to the Serbian paramilitary leader and mafia boss Željko Ražnatović-Arkan, which was an even more flamboyant public spectacle. See Gordy 1999:136–38.

28. All of these recordings date from the mid 1990s except *Losha Kompaniya*, which appeared in 2002. In recent years the marketing image adopted by *pop-folk* artists has begun to change, but erotic posturing and oriental dance have remained central themes of self-presentation (see Buchanan 2006b and Kurkela, this volume).

29. In 1994, while waiting for Vasilka at a bus stop on Lenin Boulevard near the County Hospital, I counted no less than eight different prominently arrayed pornographic magazines featuring exclusively female full frontal nudity in various poses at a newsstand. The stand's display was a statement on the new Bulgaria and its inherent contradictions: these periodicals were tucked between several publications about guns (another formerly forbidden item), two Harlequin romances translated into Bulgarian, the *Vestnik za Zhenata* [Newspaper for women], an English language text, a computer magazine, sports magazines, and a variety of political newspapers. I also noticed pornographic posters (again, only picturing women) sold in parks, displayed in buses, and on the walls of people's homes. Even the Musicology Institute had a pin-up calendar on the wall, albeit only a woman clad in a wet T-shirt. While I suppose all of this could be interpreted as a celebration of the female physique in a market economy, the concomitant increase in prostitution and female slavery here and elsewhere in eastern Europe leads me to believe that this is not the case. Rather, the new objectification is as restrictive for women as older cultural codes. Silverman (2004:227) writes that some "up-scale secretarial jobs require sexual services." Along the same line, in August 1998 a Bulgarian NGO reported that more than 10,000 local women and girls, many under the age of 18, were "enslaved in the west European sex industry" (Shafir 1998h). Promised marriage to a foreigner, or highly paid employment as dancers, models, personal assistants, or store clerks, they arrived in western Europe only to find themselves forced into prostitution after their passports had been confiscated by their new employers. In April 2000

the International Organization for Migration, which launched a campaign against such practices, added that women were lured into such situations by newspaper ads. In some instances, girls as young as 14 residing in small villages were kidnapped and smuggled across borders (Shafir 2000a, 2000b).

30. See also Rice 2002:34–36 and Dimov 2001; for a *turbo folk* parallel see Gordy 1999:133–35.

31. For further analysis of this recording, whose liner notes abound in the steretypes of orientalism and New Age spiritualism, see Silverman 2004:224–25.

32. The Bulgars were a Turkic group from East Asia who migrated into the Balkan peninsula and merged with the Slavic population already residing there, giving rise to the Bulgarians.

33. See www.universalstudios.com/tv/xena/overview.html.

34. In an interview with LoDuca published at the Universal Studios website (www.universalstudios.com/tv/loduca/interview.html) he credits producer Rob Tapert with initially suggesting Bulgarian women's singing for the show. LoDuca then contacted Timothy Rice, an ethnomusicology professor at UCLA and a leading Bulgarian music specialist, for help in locating appropriate vocalists who could participate in the Los Angeles recording sessions (Rice 2002:34, 2003:171).

35. From "Meet Joseph LoDuca: Composer for Hercules and Xena," at www.universalstudios.com/tv/loduca/interview.html.

36. See also Rice 2002:34. According to North, other vocalists providing music for the *Xena* soundtracks with whom she worked include Dee Ann Hendricks, Trudi Israel, and Janis McGlaze. She identified Zhivka Konstantinova as the real "powerhouse" amongst the vocalists.

37. Depending on the original Cyrillic spelling, which is not available in the liner notes, this line could also translate as "Prepare a path to war!"

38. Cf. Andreas 2004:3, and Hozić (2004), who investigates contemporary cigarette smuggling and other illicit trafficking activities across the Balkans in the historical context of older, Ottoman-era trade routes and practices.