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The muzykant *as a product of nature and of culture*

ABSTRACT: The article considers of the relations between nature and culture in reference to the traditional (folk) musician ('muzykant'). His functions went beyond the strictly musical. Historical and ethnographical sources mention his supernatural abilities, his sacred and magical activities. He has been ascribed magical power, allowing him to influence the forces of nature and people's health. The powers of him were believed to derive from his metaphysical practices and connection to nature. Some times he was accused of having links with demonic creatures. His ritual function, possibly taken over from the priests or shamans of pagan cults, endured in folk rites.

In the rites of passage (during some family and annual ceremonies), in times of transition, places of crossing, traditional (folk) musician can take part in making a ritual din, believed as an effective manner against to demonic powers. It was a music awry, parody of music, even its inversion – a sort of 'anti-music', performed on 'anti-instruments', or on simple instruments.

KEYWORDS: music, folklore, folk music, traditional musician, folk musician, traditional rites, folk rites, nature, culture, magic

The present text, at least according to the author's intentions, considers of some of the relations between nature and culture in reference to the *muzykant*. The term *muzykant* [pl. *muzykanci*, tr.] is understood as defining an instrument player belonging to the traditional current of unwritten musical culture disseminated through direct transmission, the last representatives of which were, and partly remain today, folk musicians. This text will be confined to Polish culture, within the nearest European context, which at times even dominates, due to the dearth of adequate Polish historical sources.

The *muzykant* always belonged to both the world of nature and the world of culture, although the place he occupied between these fundamental determinants of his musical status quo were various and changeable in time and space. This correlation manifested itself in the two orders that organised traditional communities: human life and the calendar, encompassing the two main groups of rituals known in ethnography as family and annual rituals. Among the former are rites and customs performed during baptisms, weddings and funerals. The latter were cultivated during Advent, at Christmas,

between Christmas and Epiphany, at Shrovetide and Easter, on Midsummer Night, at Whitsun, during harvesting, at harvest festivals and on All Souls' Day. The *muzykant* took part in them all, albeit in different ways.

In traditional cultures, the functions of the *muzykant* went beyond the strictly musical. Historical sources of various kinds – chronicles, court records from the trials of persons accused of practising black magic, iconographic sources, bourgeois-picaresque literature, folk tales – mention their supernatural abilities, their sacred and magical activities. The ritual function of the *muzykant*, possibly taken over from the priests or shamans of pagan cults, endured in folk rites. However, by the time folklore studies became established as an academic discipline, little of this remained. Researchers noted its manifestations above all in the culturally more conservative parts of southern, eastern and northern Europe: in Balkan lands, eastern Slavic lands and Scandinavia. The insufficient documentation of these phenomena by nineteenth-century scholarship means that we know little about this subject, as in the case of the more distant past. By the second half of the twentieth century, when scholars began to take an interest also in extra-musical aspects of the *muzykant*'s activities, only faint traces of their ritual behaviour remained – the fossilised records of past times.

When writing of the 'Slavic *guślarze*' of old, Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki was referring to musicians who played the bagpipes (*dudy*), *kobza*, *bandura* or hurdy-gurdy (*lira korbowa*), traversing the extensive lands of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. In a still Romantic spirit, he emphasised that it was to them that 'we owe the safeguarding of the oldest and most beautiful poetry', as 'they were true apostles, who went from village to village, from manor to town, teaching songs and music'.[1] It should be remembered, however, that those itinerant singers and *muzykanci*, often belonging to the caste of '*dziady*', were ascribed supernatural abilities. This applied especially to blind men, who, it was believed, had the gift of the spiritual seeing of things and events, of cognition unlimited in time and space. They belonged to the uppermost stratum in the diverse milieu of beggars – a distinction they undoubtedly deserved. These extraordinary figures knew a lot about the world, taught and moralised, knew events past and present and legends. They sometimes even executed a variety of overt or covert (e.g. intelligence or political) missions. They were also regarded as people acquainted with holy things, 'effective' prayers and magic spells, able to cure and to prepare healing concoctions (chiefly from herbs).

In the second half of the twentieth century, some settled urban *muzykanci* were still known as '*guślarze*', such as the violinist Jan Tersa on the border-

[1] Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, *Stare gawędy i obrazy* [Old tales and pictures], vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1840), 228.

land between the Radom and Opoczno regions, the folk accordionist Leopold Talarowski in the Łowicz region,[2] and the bagpipers Gładyś and Napierała, accused of collusion with evil forces in the area around Kościan, in the Wielkopolska region. In Franciszek Kotula's book *Muzykanty* (1979), we find many examples of alleged magical activities on the part of *muzykanci*, affecting people (especially rivals in the musical trade) and animals (in particular dangerous beasts, such as wolves). This was also mentioned, although reluctantly and 'to one side', by old *muzykanci* questioned during field research conducted during the final decade of the last century.

We know little about the extra-musical functions of Polish *dudziarze* (bagpipers), whose practices date back to the Middle Ages. They are most likely to have discharged such functions, as would appear to be indicated by the broader semantic field of the term '*dudziarze*' (and related terms). Still today, each member of the traditional two-man bagpipe-violin bands in the Silesian Beskid Mountains is called *gajdosz*, the Silesian word for *dudziarz* (bagpiper). This includes the violinist, whom old highlanders also refer to as *muzykant* (unless he is playing with the bagpiper). This sort of distinction had a wider scope. Into the first decades of the twentieth century, it perdured in eastern Slavic lands, particularly in Hutsulshchyna[3] or indeed in Ukraine in general, where, according to Klyment Kvitka, the word *muzyka* referred, among other things, to violin playing (solo or in a band) and to the violinist himself. It did not cover, meanwhile, *muzykanci* and music performed on the bagpipes, *kobza*, hurdy-gurdy, end-blown flutes or *trombita*. In spite of this, only the *kobza* and hurdy-gurdy players, and to a certain extent also the *dudziarze*, were fully professional *muzykanci* in Ukraine.[4] Paradoxically, this most probably had something to do with their extra-musical functions.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, in the lands of the old Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, the ritual significance of the *muzykanci* gradually diminished; they became 'ordinary' musicians playing for entertainment, for dancing. Nevertheless, some of them retained their social position. This applies particularly to the *dudziarze*, who still had a lofty status, and not infrequently that of the only professional musicians connected with traditional musical practice. This was true not only in ethnically Polish lands, but also, for example, in Belarus, where guilds federating these musicians were in existence as early as the sixteenth century.[5] In Wielkopolska or Carpa-

[2] Andrzej Bieńkowski, *Ostatni wiejscy muzykanci. Ludzie, obyczaje, muzyka* [The last rural musicians. People, customs and music] (Warsaw, 2001), 22, 32, 34.

[3] Włodzimierz Szuchiewicz, *Huculszczyzna*, vol. 2 (Kraków, 1902), 83.

[4] Klyment Kvitka, *Izbranniye trudi* [Selected works], vol. 2 (Moscow, 1973), 258, 262.

[5] Anatoly Gritskevich, *Chastnovladelcheskiye goroda Belorusiy v XVI–XVII v. (sotsyalno-ekonomicheskoye isledovaniye istori gorodov)* [Private towns in Belarus during

thian regions (with the exception of Podhale), bagpipers did remain the chief folk music instrumentalists, but they now shared their once dominant position in the musical tradition with violinists.

The reasons for becoming a *muzykant* were generally both natural and cultural. Among the former was obviously a fondness for music and musical ability manifest already in childhood. This induced children to make primitive instruments and try playing them. If a young would-be musician (actually his parents) could afford a teacher, which cost quite a lot, then the teacher, fearing future competition, generally acquainted the child only with the existing repertoire; he did not introduce him to the most crucial skill in folk music: into the secrets of performance style, the skill of the creative interpretation of musical motifs.

The cultural reason for choosing the profession of *muzykant* might have been the social position, the prestige and the good earnings. However, these attributes were characterised by a great variability, a dependence on the place and time of the musical practice. In general terms, one can say that the closer to our times, the lower the standing of the *muzykanci*. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, they were still singing an 'old ditty':

> Graj skrzypasiu, będziesz w niebie,
> a dudaszek koło ciebie.[6]
> (Play fiddler, play, you'll be in heaven,
> with the piper by your side.)

or:

> Skrzypicielu, będziesz w niebie,
> I basista koło ciebie;
> Cymbalista jeszcze daléj,
> Bo w cymbały dobrze wali.[7]
> (Fiddler, you'll be in heaven,
> with the bass player by your side;
> the dulcimer player even further,
> As he whacks his dulcimer so well.)

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the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (a socio-economic study of the history of towns) (Minsk, 1975), 66; Pavel Sheyn, *Materialy dla izucheniya byta i yazyka naseleniya Severo-Zapadnogo Kraya* [Material for research into the everyday life and the language of the population of the North-western Land], vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 1887), 530.

[6] Anon., 'Ułamek o muzyce wielkopolskiéj' [Short piece on the music of Wielkopolska], *Przyjaciel Ludu*, 4/23 (1837), 177–181, at 181.

[7] Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, *Pieśni ludu Białochrobatów, Mazurów i Rusi znad Bugu* [Folk songs of the Bialochrobaci, Masurs and Bug Valley Rus], 2 vols., eds. Helena Kapełuś and Ryszard Wojciechowski, vol. 2 (1836; Wrocław, Warsaw, Kraków and Gdańsk, 1976), 361.

During the twentieth century, parents not infrequently forbade their children from learning music, as 'no musician makes a farmer, and "fiddlers are all muddlers" and they also have truck with the devil'.[8] People were sometimes confirmed in such opinions by priests. The *muzykant* and painter Franciszek Frączek, of Żołynia, in the Rzeszów region, related thus:

> One parish priest, a dean even – I heard it myself – well, now, when was it? I might have been eight, perhaps ten. Rumiński his name was, I remember how he shouted and hammered on the pulpit such that the embroidered cloth shook:
>
> – Not one *muzykant* will make a fortune, not one will go to heaven! Why? Because the devil helps them play for dancing and with music it is easiest to tempt people into even the worst sins![9]
>
> In spite of the preacher's fervent cautions, as Frączek relates further: 'when it came to inviting musicians to a wedding, it always turned out that they invited those with devils. Because when they invited the others, then something always happened [...]. And when one accused of being in league with the devil played, nothing bad occurred, even if the wedding lasted for three days'.[10]

Since the earliest times, *muzykanci* and music have been ascribed magical power, allowing musicians to influence the forces of nature and people's health. According to a chronicle mention from 1395, three Lusatian *muzykanci* playing on bagpipes and violin supposedly practised cloudbusting. Unfortunately, doubtless during one such attempt, they died from lightning in Kamjenc (Kamenz), Saxony.[11] The most famous of the Czech *dudziarze* of past centuries (albeit only legendary), one Švanda, was led to the scaffold and then asked for his final request, which was to play the bagpipe. When he was granted this wish, he 'enchanted' with his playing not only the assembled gawkers, but also his judges, and even the executioner with his menials – they all began to dance and could not stop, which saved Švanda from the noose.[12] In the Radom region, in our own times, a tale was told of a case involving a similar method, although less dramatic, at a wedding in Potworów, when

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[8] Bieńkowski, *Ostatni wiejscy muzykanci*, 22.

[9] Franciszek Kotula, *Muzykanty*, ed. Józef Burszta and Jadwiga Sobieska (Warsaw, 1979), 61–62.

[10] Ibid., 62–63.

[11] Jan Raupp, *Sorbische Volksmusikanten und Musikinstrumente* (Bautzen, 1963), 58.

[12] Čeněk Zíbrt, *Jak se kdy v Čechách tancovalo. Déjiny tance v Čechách, na Moravě, ve Slezsku a na Slovensku od nejstarši doby až do konce 19. století se zvláštním zřetelem k dějinam tance vůbec* [How people once danced in Bohemia. A history of dance in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia from the earliest times to the end of the nineteenth century, with special consideration of the history of dance in general] (1895; Prague, 1960), 208.

one of the violinists from the well-known Jaźwiec family of *muzykanci* from Ossa, wishing to 'render harmless' an importunate guest, made him, with his playing, whirl around dancing without end.[13] According to folk tales, *muzykanci* could also halt motion, for instance influencing, in some mysterious way, horses pulling a carriage or cart, so that they stopped and refused to go on, despite being 'persuaded' by their drivers with a whip. *Muzykanci* who were born during a fire were ascribed a power over flames; they only had to keep with them, at all times, salt blessed on St Agatha's Day. About one of them, Jontek Maziarz of Maziarnia, in Sandomierz Forest, it was related that when a stable and barn caught fire in that village:

> Jontek stood close to the flames, just where there was an outlet onto the pasture. He threw something into the flames and began to play. But so mournfully and oddly that some began to feel goose pimples. A moment later... the crowd were struck dumb: the flames suddenly turned in the direction of the player, such that he had to jump quite some way off. They proceeded smoothly to the pasture like ducks to water. And then the fire clearly began to die. The cottage and the barn were saved. The other little buildings as well. In the crowd that had gathered, eyes began to seek Jontek. But he had vanished somewhere. And no one had seen him enter the cottage.[14]

A particularly frequent motif in the tales of old *muzykanci* is that of instruments playing themselves at the behest of *guślarze*: bagpipes, violins, basses and drums.

The powers of the *muzykanci* were believed to derive from their metaphysical practices. They were accused of having links with demonic creatures, to which they supposedly played during hellish feasts and amusements, including the orgiastic sabbath capers of witches and devils. In 1681, for example, in Zbąszyń, a mass trial of 'witches' (and 'warlocks') was held. Among the accusations levelled against them were intimate relations with devils and dancing and feasting on Łysa Góra [Bare Mountain] to the music of bagpipes or other 'curious' instruments.[15] The records of a 1667 Racibórz trial against 'witches' relate that during nocturnal trysts, 'orgies were held to the sound of flute and bagpipe, and dressed-up men pretended to be fiends'.[16] So some even wanted to be seen as demons, or at least made such an impression. In our own times, highlanders from the Silesian Beskid Mountains would say:

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[13] Bieńkowski, *Ostatni wiejscy muzykanci*, 33.

[14] Kotula, *Muzykanty*, 141–142.

[15] Leon Adamczyk, 'Procesy czarownic w Zbąszyniu' [Witch trials in Zbąszyń], *Szkice Zbąszyńskie* 3 (1989), 23–27, at 24.

[16] Augustin Weltzel, *Geschichte der Stadt und Herrschaft Ratibor* (1861; Ratibor 1881), 220; Stanislaw Karwowski, 'Gniezno', *Roczniki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk Poznańskiego* 19 (1892), 75–545, at 200.

'The *muzykant*, *gajdosz*, is a trade for the night. "They keep with the devil at night; they are lucky that demons do not always lead them to their cottages"'.[17]

Józef Kasiak, from the Kajocy microregion in the Radom area, when asked why *muzykanci* dabbled in spells, replied in surprise at the question:

> 'What do you mean why? To give themselves airs. For that, they were stood vodka at the tavern and invited to weddings, they could earn more.' From his account, we learn that *muzykanci*, 'the greatest experts on black magic', had secret books which they read at midnight and from which they drew knowledge about 'sorcery'. When they read, evil forces surrounded the whole house, such that no one could approach it (if someone tried, pieces of straw would come loose from the thatch and fly like bullets towards the intruder). Such a *muzykant* could accept engagements from several weddings and play at them simultaneously.[18]

It was important to know how to protect oneself against the 'spells' of one's rivals. It was believed that this was unfailingly achieved by the head of a Jew buried beneath the threshold of one's home. This method also helped facilitate playing. An extraordinarily beautiful playing characterised violinists, even beginners, who placed a dried bat's wing under the violin's sound post or who had a magic box with secret contents.[19] Józef Zieliński, a *muzykant* from Cmolas, a village near Kolbuszowa in the region inhabited by the Lasowiacy, learned from one drunk old violinist that he had in his box 'sand from some holy place, chalk blessed in seven churches, similarly blessed rosin [...], wax from a candle, the one that stands on the altar in the church for the Lord's Resurrection on Easter Sunday, with the five wounds of the Lord Jesus; a little wax scraped from each of the nails'.[20] Violins brought from Germany were supposed to play virtually by themselves; these could be purchased, for example, from Gdańsk, whither *muzykanci* travelled sometimes with rafters.[21] Meanwhile, so as not to lose the musical qualities of their instruments, they avoided playing on bridges, as the water flowing underneath might 'take away the voice'. In the metaphysical domain of *muzykant* practice, an old maxim applied: 'the candle for the Lord God and the candle-end for the devil'.

The remarkable capabilities of *muzykanci* were also supposedly influenced by their connection to nature, which was particularly strong when they earned a living from herding. *Muzykanci*-shepherds were sometimes healers,

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[17] Małgorzata Kiereś, 'Okruchy beskidzkiego muzykowania. O góralskich nutkach' [Remnants of music-making in the Beskid Mountains], *Tydzień Kultury Beskidzkiej*, supplement to *Gazeta Wyborcza* 179 (1997) 6–7, at 6.

[18] Bieńkowski, *Ostatni wiejscy muzykanci*, 32.

[19] Ibid., 33–34.

[20] Kotula, *Muzykanty*, 313.

[21] Ibid., 70.

bonesetters and once perhaps shamans, leading magic rituals, similarly to the senior shepherd (*baca*) on mountain pastures or the chief of a bands of robbers (*harnaś*).[22] In our own times, the setting of the bones of humans and animals was a chief claim to fame in the native region of the *muzykant* and instrument maker Jan Kawulok, of Istebna. A contemporary reflection of ecological ties would appear to be Jan Sikora of Koniaków. This 'talented *muzykant*, gifted with an exceptional sensitivity, lives alone, but contentedly, in symbiosis with nature. – The hay smells, the wind heals pain, God keeps watch – he often repeats'. He lives on the patrimony, on a 'Little Lea'. 'Here on the peak one is always closer to the Lord God – he says with joy'. He is a bagpiper, violinist and accordionist, 'he treats his musicianship as the substance of life, as something important, sacred. – The violin always has one place, it's in the heart – he adds with pride. – And the bagpipes also give beautiful music. It pierces the bones; if you've got some pain then listen to their beautiful playing and the pain is gone, as if some hand had removed it – he insists'.[23] Józef Broda, a well-known animator of folk tradition from Iztebna Zaolzie, has made the link between nature and culture the subject of his educational work with children.[24]

Figure 1. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Dancing Mania. Pilgrimage of the Epileptics to the Church at Molenbeek*, 1564, drawing, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna[25]

[22] Anna Kowalska-Lewicka, *Hodowla i pasterstwo w Beskidzie Sądeckim* [Husbandry and herding in the Sądecki Beskid Mountains] (Wrocław, Warsaw, Kraków and Gdańsk, 1980), 126–143; Urszula Janicka-Krzywda, *Niespokojne Karpaty czyli rzecz o zbójnictwie* [The restless Carpathians, or On robbery] (Warsaw and Kraków, 1986), 23.

[23] Kiereś, 'Okruchy beskidzkiego muzykowania', 6.

[24] Violetta Przerembska, 'Musical Folklore in the Environmental Education', in *Ecology and Foclore*, ed. Violetta Krawczyk-Wasilewska, vol. 2 (Łódź, 1994), 35–39, at 36–38.

[25] Zíbrt, *Jak se kdy v Čechách tancovalo*, 66.

Already during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scholars were drawing attention to people's conviction, dating back to ancient or mediaeval times, of the magical, healing power of music and dance, capable of defeating various kinds of ailment, even madness, and also helpful against the effects of snake bites.[26] One manifestation of this faith was St Vitus' dance, considered during the Middle Ages as a panacea for the epidemics of contagious diseases that were sweeping across Europe. Out of the numerous mediaeval and modern-day written and iconographic sources depicting this sort of 'therapy', one might invoke, for example, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Dancing Mania*, from 1564, showing dancing women seemingly 'possessed' by the magic of the music played by a duo of bagpipers (Figure 1). In our own times, in central Poland, particularly in the areas around Kielce and Radom, the specific performance style and repertoire, the spontaneity and exuberance of playing, not infrequently caused both the *muzykanci* and those dancing to their music to fall into a trance. This was presumably brought about, in part, by the regular, motoric pulsation of the motion and rhythm of the triple-time whirling obereks and the circularity of the dance movements performed at a quick tempo.[27] The best *muzykanci* aroused with their playing very strong emotional reactions – from weeping and wailing to joyful laughter. Józef Kędzierski, perhaps the best violinist in the Kajocki microregion (Radom region), used to say that 'the music should rise up to heaven'.[28] Jadwiga Sobieska was inclined to seek the reasons for the 'magical' effects on people of the playing of *muzykanci* in features of a psychic and artistic nature:

> Not without peculiar [...] emotion, as a first-year musicology student of Poznań University, did I enter, in Jutrosin, near Rawicz [...] the farmyard of the *dudziarz*-sorceror, Franciszek Błochowiak. At that time a stocky fifty-year-old man, with black eyes and black hair, he was distinctly different from the anthropological type characteristic of the region. Sharp-witted, forthright and energetic, he came across as a strong and suggestive personality, capable of dominating those around him. He played like the devil, proficiently, convincingly; he captivated the listener with his spontaneous music-making. Quite simply, this was a man of unusual individu-

[26] Johan, Wilhelm Albrecht, *Tractatus physic. de effectibus musices in corpus animale* (Leipzig, 1734); Joseph Bernt, *Monographia choreae sancti Viti* (Prague, 1810), 47, 104–105; Carl Meyer, *Aberglaube des Mittelalters und Nächstfolgenden Jahrhunderte* (Basel 1884), 108–109, 294; Zíbrt, *Jak se kdy v Čechách tancovalo*, 64.

[27] Ewa Dahlig, *Ludowa gra skrzypcowa w Kieleckiem* [Folk violin playing in the Kielce region] (Kraków, 1991), 19–23, 43–56, 68–69.

[28] Andrzej Bieńkowski, 'Muzykanci radomscy' [*Muzykanci* of the Radom region], *Polska Sztuka Ludowa. Konteksty* 2 (1993), 65–67, at 67; Andrzej Bieńkowski, 'Muzykanci, z Andrzejem Bieńkowskim rozmawia Aleksander Jackowski' [*Muzykanci*. Andrzej Bieńkowski talks with Aleksander Jackowski], *Polska Sztuka Ludowa. Konteksty* 2 (1993), 56–64, at 56–57.

ality and a great musician. Quizzed on the subject of magical activities, he stepped back and fell silent. Eventually, he looked sharply and with a harsh voice replied: 'If others played like I play, then people would also say that they had the devil in them'.[29]

Józef Ryś of Łąka, near Rzeszów, a celebrated *muzykant*, folk artist and storyteller, seems to confirm this opinion, relating: 'It was not a devilish violin that was playing, but the *muzykant*'s soul'.[30]

Figure 2. *Processional dance of the Scandinavians*, woodcut, in Olaus Magnus *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, 1550)[31]

Processional dances are linked with a variety of ceremonies. They have been associated, for instance, with narrational songs. According to Čeněk Zíbrt,[32] such a ritual situation is shown by a woodcut reproduced in the work of the Swedish historian and geographer Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*. We see here a closed procession of dancers and *muzykanci* playing for them on bagpipe and fiddle (Figure 2). This famous work – published in Rome in 1555, reprinted many times and translated into other languages – contains information from the domains of geography, economics, history, natural history and ethnology referring chiefly to Scandinavian lands,

[29] Kotula, *Muzykanty*, 380–381.
[30] Ibid., 134.
[31] Ibid., 17.
[32] Zíbrt, *Jak se kdy v Čechách tancovalo*, 18.

but also to Lithuania and Russia.[33] In southern and eastern Europe, *muzykanci* placed themselves in the middle or at the head of a procession in later times, too, during the performance of early ritual dances (Figures 3 and 4). This position attests their ritual or symbolic significance. In traditional cultures (of Europe and beyond), one of the basic functions of music (and dance) was to reinforce social structures and their hierarchy.[34] This placement of the *muzykanci* also made it easier for them to conduct the dance movement by means of facial expressions, gestures and their manner of performance.[35]

Figure 3. Felix Kanic, *Horo*, print after his own photograph, Bulgaria, second half of the nineteenth century[36]

In the third volume of his work *Neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1791. 92. und 93. durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nördlichen Karpathen*, Belsasar Hacquet, professor of natural history at the university in Lviv (1788–1810), describes a dance performed at a Hutsul wedding, remarking that a violinist or bagpiper stood in the middle of the dance

[33] Ursula Mende, *Westeuropäische Bildzeugnisse zu Rußland und Polen bis 1700. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Bildkunde* (Bamberg, 1968), 15.

[34] Anna Czekanowska, *Kultury tradycyjne wobec współczesności. Muzyka, poezja, taniec* [Traditional cultures and the contemporary world. Music, poetry and dance] (Warsaw, 2008), 38.

[35] Franjo Ksaver Kuhač, 'Prilog za poviest glasbe južnoslovjenske. Kulturno-historijska studija' [On the history of music among the southern Slavs. A cultural-historical study], *Rad jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 50 (1879), 1–95, at 53–54.

[36] Vergilij Atanassov, 'Gaida (Dudelsack)', *The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments. Bulletin* 6/1–2 (1976), 37–46, at 45.

circle.[37] In Estonia, at least from the seventeenth century, *dudziarze* led old ceremonial dances, such as the round dance (*Voortants*) and tail dance (*Sabatants*), and stood at the head of wedding processions, leading their participants to the strains of suitable melodies: marches or tunes corresponding to the Polish *wsiadany* or *podróżny*.[38]

Figure 4. Pierre Augustin Guys, copperplate, in *Voyage littéraire de la Grèce, ou Lettres sur les Grecs anciens et modernes* (Paris, 1776)[39]

We know more about the extra-musical activities of *muzykanci* in connection with wedding solemnities. In eastern Slavic lands, up until the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scholars discerned traces of the cultural

[37] Belsasar Hacquet, *Neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1791. 1792. und 93. durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nördlichen Karpathen*, vol. 3 (Nuremberg, 1794), 34.

[38] Igor Tonurist, 'The Estonian Bagpipe', *The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments. Bulletin* 1–2 (1976), 47–54, at 50.

[39] Walter Salmen, *Tanz im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, in *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, eds. Max Schneider and Werner Bachmann, vol. 4, pt. 4 (Leipzig, 1988), 39, 82-83.

significance of the *dudziarz*. As Klyment Kvitka writes,[40] the Ukrainian people did not regard them as 'ordinary' *muzykanci*. It was believed that thanks to their supernatural abilities they were able, through their playing or in some other way, to influence the happiness of newly-weds. Hence the *dudziarz* was a ritually important figure at a wedding. At the same time, it was feared that if he was not invited or not treated with sufficient respect, he could contribute to the couple's misfortune. Interestingly, it was believed that similar abilities were possessed not only by instrumentalists belonging to the old strand of tradition, the bagpipers and violinists, but also by musical 'neophytes', such as folk accordionists. One of them, the above-mentioned Leopold Talarowski of the Łowicz region, not invited to a wedding, may have 'spoilt' it with his mysterious powers.[41]

The *dudziarz* also fulfilled a ritual, or at least prominent, function during traditional weddings in the Vitsyebsk region. Nikolai Nikiforovsky even called him the 'wedding host', as he led the ceremony, intoning the melodies of songs and ditties appropriate to the particular stage in the ceremony, which were then taken up by the violinist and sung by the guests.[42] We can observe manifestations of such activities on the part of bagpipe bands in the lands of the Balkan Peninsula still today, including in cases where the old music and dance repertoire is staged. In Ukraine and Belarus, the *dudziarz* exercised a ritual care over the bride, especially if she was an orphan.[43] It is also worth noting that towards the end of a Ukrainian wedding the women (most often) led the guests from behind the table in a processional dance, singing to the *dudziarz* a ritual song with incipit 'Didu miy, dudaryku'.[44] The traditional importance of the *dudziarz*, as well as other *muzykanci*, especially violinists, at a Belarusian wedding can be gauged from the fact that one of the ritual companions (usually a relation) of the groom was called a 'musician', even if he was unable to play any instrument.[45] Also in Poland, one could observe the

[40] Klyment Kvitka, *Profesionalni narodni spivci i muzykanty na Ukraiyni. Prohrama dla doslidu ikh diyalnosty i pobutu* [Professional folk singers and instrumentalists in Ukraine: a programme for the study of their activities and everyday life] (Kiev, 1924), 92–93.

[41] Bieńkowski, *Ostatni wiejscy muzykanci*, 32.

[42] Nikolai Nikiforovsky, 'Ocherki Vityebskoy Belorusi' [Sketches of Vitsyebsk Belarus], *Etnograficheskoye Obozreniye* 2–3 (1892), 170–202, at 181.

[43] Alexander Rypiński, *Białoruś. Kilka słów o poezii prostego ludu téj naszéj polskiéj prowincii; o jego muzyce, śpiéwie, tańcach, etc.* [Belarus. A few words about the poetry of the simple folk of this Polish province; on its music, song and dances, etc.] (Paris, 1840), 218–221; Kvitka, *Profesionalni narodni spivci*, 92–93.

[44] Bohdan Łukaniuk, '"Dudaryk" M. D. Leontowycza' [M. D. Leontovich's *Dudaryk*], *Narodna Tvorchist' ta Etnohrafiya* 1 (1978), 58–65, at 58–64.

[45] Anon., 'Obrzędy weselne ludu wieyskiego w gubernii mińskiey, w powiecie borysowskim w parafii haieńskiey, obserwowane w latach 1800, 1szym i 2gim, z niektóremi

influence of *muzykanci* on the course of rituals or simple dance amusements. In villages in the Silesian Beskid Mountains, 'it was traditionally the *gajdosz* and violinist who were the authors of more than one wedding scenario, music in the tavern. They dictated its course and imparted the tempo [...]. They were important and respected'.[46]

In annual observances, a ritually and sacredly important function was held by *muzykanci* during the '*gody*', as the period between the Christian feasts of Christmas and Epiphany was called. This is the period following the winter solstice, when since pagan times the *dziady* rite, devoted to the souls of the dead, was celebrated. In Poland, this rite was eradicated by the Catholic clergy, and so survived only in relict form, fragmented and transformed into rituals of the *Wigilia* celebration on Christmas Eve.[47] In eastern and southern Slavic lands, meanwhile, it was cultivated almost to contemporary times, with the acceptance of the Orthodox Church. In Belarus, from at least the late Middle Ages until the nineteenth century, the *guślarze* leading the All Souls' Day *dziady* rite played on various old instruments, especially *gusli* or *dudy* (bagpipe).[48]

The period of *gody*, as well as Easter, Whitsun and Midsummer Night, is interpreted in ethnology and cultural anthropology as a time of transition, characterised by a growing threat from evil forces, particularly active in places of crossing (local boundaries, crossroads, wildernesses, cemeteries, hills, large trees, etc) and 'transitional' times of the day (midday, midnight). James George Frazer drew attention to the fact that in Central Europe witches were often driven away on Walpurgis Night, the eve of 1 May, when these demonic creatures are supposedly at the height of their powers.[49] In this temporal and spatial location, attempts were made to counteract the danger. From ancient times to modern, all across Europe it was believed that an effective way of repelling demonic powers, blamed for all misfortune and illness, was to make

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piosnkami i ich zwyczayną nótą' [Wedding ceremonies among country folk in the parish of Hajna, Borysaw district, Minsk province, observed in the years 1800, 1801 and 1802, with some songs and their usual tune], *Tygodnik Wileński* 132 (1819), 81–104, at 90.

[46] Kiereś, 'Okruchy beskidzkiego muzykowania', 6.

[47] Jadwiga Klimaszewska, 'Doroczne obrzędy ludowe' [Annual folk rites], in *Etnografia Polski. Przemiany kultury ludowej* [The ethnography of Poland. Changes in folk culture], eds. Maria Biernacka et al., vol. 2 (Wroclaw, Warsaw, Kraków, Gdańsk and Łódź, 1981), 127–153, at 132.

[48] I. Orlovsky, *Kratkaya geografiya Smolenskoy guberni* [Short geography of Smolensk province] (Smolensk, 1907), 25–26; Inna Nazina, *Belaruskiye narodniye muzikalniye instrumenti: samozvuchashchiye, udarniye, dukhoviye* [Belarusian folk instruments: idiophones, percussion and wind instruments] (Minsk, 1979), 117; Albina Skorabagatchanka, *Belaruskiya narodniya muzychniya instrumenty XX stagoddja* [Belarusian folk musical instruments of the twentieth century] (Minsk, 2001), 34.

[49] James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abr. edn (1922; Ware, 1993), 561.

a noise: a ritual din. This sort of acoustic phenomenon, completely different from that which we normally consider music, occupied an important place in traditional rituals. Kazimierz Moszyński noted:

> Among the most primitive and certainly the oldest submagical practices was [...] frightening away all evil by means of noise: the clanging of metal objects, trumpeting, ringing bells, rattling with rattles, screaming, squealing, etc. Particularly during some annual rites, especially connected with spring (Holy Week, etc.) and during the wedding ceremony, and also when repelling storm clouds or the demons bringing such clouds, magical expulsion plays a large role.[50]

Moszyński found various manifestations of acoustic practices of this kind among Slavs, Volga Ugro-Finns and Caucasian peoples.[51] Examples of the making of a ritual din by shouting, trumpeting, ringing, drumming, rattling, striking wooden and metal objects (evil spirits were supposed to fear metal), smashing dishes, cracking whips and shooting firearms in various countries and regions in Europe and beyond were given by Frazer[52] and Henryk Biegeleisen[53]. Evil forces lay in wait, especially at places of crossing, for guests on their way to a wedding or returning from the church. So the guests would ride past quickly, with song, music and yelling. Particularly susceptible to the work of demons were the newly-weds and persons discharging ritual functions in the rites of passage that were weddings. Protection was supposedly given by hand bells, harness bells and jingling objects in the bride's outfit and on the rod of the master of ceremonies. During the wedding celebration, an 'apotropaic tumult' was made,[54] with playing on trumpets (e.g. in Kashubia or Hutsulshchyna). This was also intended to protect the bride from infertility. People would wail and weep by a dying person, to prevent him or her from dying.[55] Bells were rung during funeral ceremonies, to dispel the demons lying in wait for the dead person's soul. From ancient times, bells and rattles were hung on animals (horses, cattle, sheep), worn by children around their necks and on the ceremonial attire of shamans, priests and healers fighting with the spirits of darkness and with illnesses.[56]

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[50] Kazimierz Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian* [The folk culture of the Slavs], vol. 2: *Kultura duchowa* [Spiritual culture], pt. 1 (1939; Warsaw, 1967), 272.

[51] Ibid., 272–273.

[52] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 546–561.

[53] Henryk Biegeleisen, *U kolebki. Przed ołtarzem. Nad mogiłą* [At the cradle. Before the altar. Over the grave] (Lviv, 1929), 62–73.

[54] Piotr Kowalski, *Kultura magiczna. Omen, przesąd, znaczenie* [Magic culture. Omen, superstition and meaning] (1998; Warsaw, 2007), 72.

[55] Ludwik Stomma, *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.* [Anthropology of the culture of rural Poland in the nineteenth century] (Warsaw, 1986), 168.

[56] Biegeleisen, *U kolebki*, 62, 70–71; Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian*, 351.

A separate domain of magical acoustic actions, realised chiefly by means of different-sized bells, was the prevention of unfavourable atmospheric phenomena, particularly storms and hail, which, it was believed, were summoned by demons.[57] During the pontifical ceremony of blessing the bell, the prayer recited was: 'Wherever the sound of this bell falls, may the enemy's power, the shadow of spirits, violent gales, the striking of lightning and thunder, climatic disasters and all attacks of storms stay well away from that place'.[58] In the famous *Malleus Maleficarum*, by the Dominican inquisitors Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Krämer, from 1487, translated into English by Montague Summers in 1928, we read: '[...] devils and their disciples can by witchcraft cause lightnings and hailstorms and tempests'.[59] As Piotr Kowalski writes, the sound of a bell and of other musical instruments, and also noise, 'delineates [...] the boundary in the temporal sense (the duration of a note and its ceasing) and spatial sense (how far a voice carries), and may thereby become a barrier to the working of evil powers, serving to determine the magical protection of man and his world'.[60] For it was believed that evil spirits could only remain in areas where the sound of bells was never heard.[61]

Ludwik Bielawski emphasises the distinct opposition of ritual din to the 'normal' playing of *muzykanci*, in 'normal' non-ritual time.[62] This is music awry, a parody of music, even its inversion – a sort of 'anti-music'. Indeed, *muzykanci*, particularly professionals, were not indispensable in 'anti-musical' activities; they could be replaced by other participants in the rituals. The aim of this sort of acoustic manifestation was an introduction to the ritual time and reality opposed to the normal, everyday introduction. It also served to create a ritual din with a magical function. 'Anti-music' was performed on 'anti-instruments', which in turn were the opposite of normal musical instruments, or on simple instruments. Among the former were the Kashubian 'devil's fiddle', a stick with jingling discs and untuned wire strings disguised

[57] Hubert Czachowski, 'Dzwonki loretańskie – odkrywając ślady kilku wierzeń' [Bells of Loreto, revealing traces of several beliefs], *Rocznik Muzeum Etnograficznego w Toruniu* 3 (2007), 55–74.

[58] *Pontificale Romanum. Summorum pontificum jussu editum, a Benedicto XIV. et Leone XIII. Pont. Max. recognitum et castigatum* (Regensburg, 1888), pt. 2, p. 196; Dorothea Forstner, *Die Welt der christlichen Symbole* (Innsbruck, 1977), trans. and eds. Wanda Zakrzewska, Paweł Pachciarek, Ryszard Turzyński and Tamara Łozińska as *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej* (Warsaw, 1990), 398.

[59] *The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger*, trans. Revd Montague Summers (1928; Dover, 1971), 147.

[60] Kowalski, *Kultura magiczna*, 121.

[61] Jan Witort, 'Filozofia pierwotna (Animizm)' [Primitive philosophy (Animism)], *Lud* 6 (1900), 321–340, at 333.

[62] Ludwik Bielawski, *Tradycje ludowe w kulturze muzycznej* [Folk traditions in musical culture] (Warsaw, 1999), 106–107.

as a violin, and the *burczybas*, usually a pot or cask with a membrane stretched over it, sewn through with horsehair, simulating a drum. Simple instruments were trumpets and horns, of which Moszyński wrote:

> 'No instrument has such an important significance in the extra-musical life of the populace as the trumpet. Passing over its use for signalling, etc, I would emphasise only its extensive use in family, annual and occasional ceremonies and in magical practices.

This scholar pointed to the extensive range of this sort of use, encompassing Slavic lands, areas along the Volga inhabited by Ugro-Finns, Baltic lands, Scandinavia, Scotland, the Pyrenees and the Alps.[63]

The sounds of trumpets and horns have frightened off demons in various parts of Europe. In Poland, scholars have noted this custom in Pomerania, Podlasie and Podkarpacie. In Mazovia, these instruments were played at sunrise on Christmas Day.[64] The circumstances and functional conditions, including magical-protective functions, of the playing of *ligawki* in Mazovia and Podlasie have been presented at length by Piotr Dahlig.[65] In highland regions, on feast days, the highlanders would go onto mountain tops, where, turned towards the east, at dawn they would kick up an almighty din.[66] In Kashubia, ritual requisites and instruments were used outside a village, at crossroads and on hills, making a ritual din, not only to scare away evil powers, but also to see the old year out and the new year in.[67] This peculiar sort of music-making, especially on the *burczybas*, could also serve fertility spells and stirring plants' vegetation, as in the case of other rubbed drums from other parts of the world. The activation of the vital force of nature was also served by a ritual din initiated with the first thunderclap of spring, and so it is highly characteristic of spring rites.[68] Ludwik Stomma, considering the opposition between silence and noise in 'folk ken', indicates the following sequence of relationships: 'noise – life – spring – fertility – brightness – silence – death – cold – infertility – darkness – eastern direction – top (hilltops) – western direction – bottom'.[69]

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[63] Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian* [The folk culture of the Slavs], vol. 2: *Kultura duchowa* [Spiritual culture], pt. 2 (1939; Warsaw 1968), 588.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Piotr Dahlig, *Muzyka Adwentu. Mazowiecko-podlaska tradycja gry na ligawce* [The music of Advent. The Mazovia-Podlasie tradition of playing] (Warsaw, 2003), 69–84.

[66] Stomma, *Antropologia kultury*, 168.

[67] Paweł Szefka, *Narzędzia i instrumenty muzyczne z Kaszub i Kociewia* [Musical tools and instruments from Kashubia and Kociewie] (Wejherowo, 1982), 55.

[68] Kowalski, *Kultura magiczna*, 71.

[69] Stomma, *Antropologia kultury*, 168–169.

In times of transition, the suspension of the 'normal' order of the world was symbolised, not only by 'anti-music', but also by its performers, particularly carollers, regarded as visitors from 'another' world, since their requisites were 'anti-instruments', as well as trumpets and horns. In Kashubia, they wandered around from Advent, through the Christmas period and the New Year, until Epiphany with 'devil's fiddles' and *burczybas*, visiting farm houses, reciting wishes and singing well-wishing carols. Also in the Żywiec area, ritual groups of dressed-up carollers went around the villages with a band and the local variety of 'devil's fiddle', known as the *wakat*, during the Christmas period, on New Year's Eve and at Shrovetide. In Holy Week, Kashubian shepherds would blow into *bazuny* while walking through a village, and farmer's wives would bring them out offerings (bread, meat). In Masuria, wooden trumpets were played during a walkabout after Easter Monday. Róża Godula notes:

> 'While wandering around the village and appearing in front of a particular homestead, groups in fancy dress would make an almighty noise: they shouted, rang bells, whistled, cracked whips, crunched straw and haulm, rattled chains, hit fences, the walls of the house, trees and windows with a *loga* or stick, danced, sang a carol and pronounced greetings'.[70]

At the same time, at certain times in the calendar cycle, there were bans on 'normal' playing. This concerns not only the familiar Advent or Lent taboo regarding the organising of weddings and parties with music, permitting only the playing of end-blown flutes without lateral fingerholes, known consequently as 'Lenten' pipes, among other things. Jan Hulbój, alias Duda Kulaśniak, a *dudziarz* from Koszarawa, related that in the hamlets of the Żywiec Beskid Mountains people did not let *dudziarze* play for spring, be it on the fields or in the home, as it was supposed to cause hailstorms.

Musical or extra-musical means were just part of the arsenal of various ways of influencing the unearthly powers on which, so it was believed, the fate of people and their belongings depended. In their activities in which they made use of sounds, music and 'anti-music', *muzykanci* (or those replacing them in rituals) discharged ritual functions dating back to pre-Christian times. Activities of this kind, the cultural subordination to the forces of nature, and also, to a greater or lesser extent, the whole musical status quo of the traditional *muzykant*, was a sort of product of nature and culture.

Translated by John Comber

[70] Róża Godula, *Od Mikołaja do Trzech Króli. O roli daru w obrzędzie* [From St Nicholas's Day to Epiphany. On the role of the offering in ceremony] (Kraków, 1994), 41–42.