



# DANCE CULTURE AND MUSIC IN BALKANS



## Music history

Music is an art and a cultural activity consisting of **combining sounds and silences over time**. The main ingredients are **rhythm** (how to combine sounds in time), **pitch** (how to combine in frequencies), **nuances** and **timbre**.

Ethymology: From Latin "musica"; Greek, derived from "Muse", Greek mythology where the muse was a woman who inspired the poet, the artist.

The Greek term is first of all a feminine adjective; it is the art of the Muses.

Music is the art of combining sounds according to certain rules. Music is considered a **major art**

Music has existed for a very long time **since prehistoric times** (songs, hand clapping, clashes of stones or wood), but the history of "known" music only really begins with the birth of music notation (beginning of solfège), in the Middle Ages in Europe (Occidental, western music).

The set of types of music that use "western" solfeggio (scores, scales, chords... characteristics) is called (in the broadest sense) **classical music**

Parallel to scholarly music have evolved in the West music that is strongly linked or associated with **folklore**, a national or religious culture, or even a geographical area.

They also have a history with origins and evolution also described in the part of the ethnomusicology devoted to them.





A **playful activity** for a single person or several partners, consisting of a sequence of steps, body movements and rhythmic attitudes, most often to the sound of instrumental or vocal music. The dance is inspired by the **art of the Muses**. The word dance was choros. This one comes from chora which means joy. In Greek, dance is divine because it gives joy and the gods taught dance to mortals to honour and rejoice. We can find the root Chor in choreographer and choreography.

In Latin, the etymology of the word is more appropriate to a **gesture**. It comes from "anteire" which means to advance, to go forward. To this verb, in the infinitive, was added the prefix of which has an intensive value, giving "denteire" to make a forward movement. In Sanskrit, the word "tanz", comes from "tan" meaning tension. This is why we speak of intensity in the dance. Note that the German language has kept the tanz root. From the 12th century, the verb danser had two spellings dancier or dencier, it is at the origin of the words meaning to dance in other languages.

In Spanish (danzar, bailar), in Italian (danzare), in Portuguese (dançar), in Danish (to dance), in German (tanzen), in English (to dance).

All these words in different languages converge in a signifier that comes from our distant past.

Dance began very early in history, from **prehistory** with religious dances, then in antiquity where dance was important in ancient Egypt to work on body balance, then in Greece where this art developed with lyrical dances, collective dances, dances during religious rituals. Then came **the medieval dances** in the Middle Ages, then the appearance of ballet in the modern era, then the styles of dances have particularly developed in the **contemporary** era



## Music in Balkans

Balkan music is often described as music with **complex rhythms**.

There is typically as everywhere **traditional music and urban music**.

**Traditional music** Narodna muzika (Народна музика) also called Folk musica includes an old and a recent aspect with recently composed **folk music**.

Since the eighteenth century, under the Ottoman influence, Čalgija is a Macedonian and Bulgarian music genre, which also is a subgenre of the **old urban traditional folk music** to which the clarinet and violin are added as in all Eastern music. There are more or less modern varieties, of which Tale Ognenovski and String Forces seem to be the best known performers.

As for folk music ensembles, they use **Western instruments** in an orchestration typical of Eastern countries: clarinet, saxophone, drums, bass, accordion, guitar and synthesizer; the accordionists Skender Ameti and Milan Zafkov and the clarinetist Miroslav Businovski are virtuosos of this style.

In rural areas, the gajda bagpipe is the king instrument with the famous Pece Atanasovski, leader of the Ansambl na Narodni Instrumenti ensemble of Radio Skopje and the Pece Atanasovski Ensemble.

Others are more inclined towards modernity.





## Current Music

**pop music**, a combination of rock and jazz fusion, has been represented since the 1960s and 1970s by Leb i Sol Bisbez, Pu, Ilinden 903, Den za Den and Leva patika. .

Other well-known artists include: Toše Proeski, Karolina Gočeva, Kaliopi, Elena Risteska, Tamara Todevska, ...

From 1980 to 2000, a **punk movement** was represented by the bands Fol jazik, Saraceni, Badmingtons, Aleksandar Makedonski, Superhiks...

a new Yugoslavian musical wave was represented by Cilindar, Triangl, Usta na usta and Tokmu taka, and metal by the bands Karamela, Concorde, Venko...

**Alternative rock** is represented by Suns, Last Expedition, sidewalk, Fluks, Bumbiks...

**Rock** is respresented by Bijelo Dugme, Crvena jabuka, Memorija band

**Electronic music** is represented by Kiril Džajkovski, PMG Collective, Robotek, Gotra and hip-hop by Sakam Afro Frizura.

**Jazz** is represented by Duško Gojković in Serbia, and Milcho Levie in Bulgaria and guitarist Toni Kitanovski, .





## Dance in Balkans

Bulgarian folk dances are intimately related to the music of Bulgaria. This distinctive feature of Balkan folk music is the **asymmetrical meter**, built up around various combinations of 'quick' and 'slow' beats. Many Bulgarian dances are **line dances**, in which the dancers dance in a **straight or curved line, holding hands**.

The best-known dance in the Balkans is undoubtedly "**Oro**". The name "Oro" comes from the dialectal form of the Serbian word "Orao", meaning "eagle", in reference to the way the dance is performed to resemble the movements of an eagle. In Herzegovina, the dance is known as "**Proleta**", which means "flight" in Serbian, also referring to the style of dance.

It's a **traditional collective dance**. It is a round, which can however open and advance online, which brings together the whole assembly. The dancers **hold hands**, take **steps diagonally**, either forward or backward, while **rotating the circle**, in principle clockwise. The participants sing all the lyrics of the song, accompanied by the musicians.

In Macedonia, **Paidusko dance** (ie "piano dance") is a Macedonian **folk dance** in 5 bars, divided into 2 + 3 ("fast-slow"). Traditionally, this is a male dance, but more recently women also play it. The dance begins by going to the right, in four steps by lifting the foot, then to the left: the right foot jumps to the left and the weight shifts to the right foot, while the left moves to the right. The dancers then move backwards in four steps.

There is also **Тешкото dance**, which is considered one of the most beautiful and heaviest Macedonian dances. He is very much written and talked about because it is an important work of Macedonian music folklore.

Contrary to other countries and cultures, (Latin dances in South America, flamenco in Germany, ballet in Italy, Tango in Argentina, French Cancan in France...)

Balkan dances are mainly practiced in groups and are of folkloric type.

For many people, dance and music is a very important art.  
Through these dances and music we can share joyful moments and discover each culture through it.

Some quotes to finish...



*"Dance is one of the most perfect forms of communication with infinite intelligence."*

*- Paulo Coelho*

*"Let us read, and let us dance; these two amusements will never harm the world."*

*- Voltaire*

*"Music and dance are two arts that have a close connection with each other."*

*- Molière*

*"Children: they dance before they learn there's nothing that isn't music."*

*- William Stafford*

*"From the love of dancing to the love of love there's only one step."*

*- Jane Austen*

*"You can dance anywhere, and that's the beauty of it."*

*- Hervé Koubi*



*Iade Belrepayre*