

INSTITUTE OF ART STUDIES, BAS



DZANA VIDEVA IVANOVA

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THE BULGARIAN *ESTRADA* SONG UNTIL
THE LATE 1980s — ASPECTS OF THE
INFLUENCE**

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OF DISSERTATION FOR AWARDING THE EDUCATIONAL
AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE *DOCTOR*

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IN SCIENTIFIC SPECIALITY
MUSICOLOGY AND MUSICAL ART, 8.3.**

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The dissertation was discussed and directed for public defense at a meeting of the music Department of the Institute of Art Studies, held on 18 November 2022.

The dissertation consists of 260 pages, of which 143 pages of the main text (foreword, 3 chapters and conclusion), as well as 117 pages of appendices and bibliography, including 99 titles in Cyrillic and 26 titles in Latin.

The public defense will be held on May 25th, 2023 at 11 a.m. in Hall 1 of IAS at an open meeting of the scientific commission, composed of: chairperson and author of opinion, Prof. DSc Elisaveta Valchinova-Chendova, Institute of Art Studies, Prof. DSc Ventsislav Dimov, Institute of Art Studies, reviewer, Prof. DSc Rosemary Statelova, reviewer, Prof. PhD Ivanka Vlaeva, South-West University, opinion, Prof. PhD Momchil Georgiev, National musical academy, opinion.

The materials on the defense are available to interested parties at the Department of Administrative Services of the Institute of Art Studies at 21 Krakra Str.

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PUBLICATIONS ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

INTRODUCTION

The topic of the current dissertation possesses a rich potential for the development of divergent opinions and comments, refracted through the prism of the time and the different points of view of the researchers of the processes in the field of popular music. It provoked me into doing an in-depth study of the issue because of my affinity for Italian popular music and the fact that conceptualising its influence in Bulgaria has not yet been the subject of *separate scientific research*. The expectation of *scientific novelty* is also based on the sustained interest on the part of the public and music specialists in the manifestations and channels of the impact of the Italian author's song and the performing practice related to it. As early as the period between the two world wars *Musica leggera* was prominent as a significant phenomenon in European popular culture. After the creation of the "Sanremo" festival in 1951 it gained even wider fame and samples sung on its emblematic stage entered in the repertoire of world celebrities such as Tom Jones, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, etc.

In parallel with this, in the 1950s the so-called "estrada-dance song"¹ appeared, which experienced various influences, including the melodic Italian song, which sought to meet the new needs of the public. The topic has been commented on in numerous publications by leading Bulgarian authors – musicologists, journalists, specialists in the field of culture and media, etc., which gives a good starting point for the study and testifies that it is significant and relevant as a scientific and scientific – applied problem. On the other hand, since the issue of Italian influences on popular music in our country has not been specifically developed, the rich contemporary literature in Italian and English dedicated to the essence of *Musica Leggera* has not yet been introduced into our musicological practice. Consequently, the dissertation highlights the interpretations of Ventsislav Dimov, Gencho Gaitandjiev, Zdravko Petrov, Claire Levi,

¹ **Statelova**, Rosemary. Main moments in the development of the new Bulgarian musical *estrada* and jazz (1944 – 1984). – In: Bulgarian musicology, 1984, № 4, p. 71.

Lubomir Kavaldjiev, Milyo Bassan, Rosemary Statelova, as well as the analyses of Carlo Bianchi, Felice Liperi, Pippo Barzizza, Renzo Ruggieri, Roberto Agostini, Roberto Caselli, Serena Facci and Paolo Soddu (with Matteo Piloni) plus the encyclopedic data of Dario Salvatori, Pino Casamassima, Stefano Fares and Luca Pollini.

Purpose, tasks and expected results of the dissertation work

The subject of research comprises the various aspects of the influence of the Italian *Musica Leggera* on the development of the Bulgarian *estrada* song from the middle of the century to the 1980s. The use of the term *estrada* rather than *pop music* in this case is deliberate; it emphasizes the socio-historical parameters of the phenomenon and in terms of approaching historiographical descriptivity and periodicity, carried out in the work. As it is known, in Bulgaria and the other socialist countries during the period examined it is precisely this definition that is imposed, behind which are not only the currently criticized ideologized notions about the role of popular music, but also purely functional characteristics, as far as *estrada* means a “podium”, or “stage”, on which entertainment programs are performed. And **the time frame** of the study is limited to the late 1980s, when *estrada* music activity itself, as well as its reception changed significantly as a result of the economic, social and political changes that occurred in Bulgarian society.

Seen through the eyes of anthropologists, historians, sociologists, philosophers and musicologists, the cultural processes nowadays are extremely dynamic. In the conditions of intensive media exchange there are almost no closed practices anymore, but on the contrary – the various layers and forms of culture are constantly interacting and actively changing as a result. In this context, the problem of influences is very important, as far as it affects the cultural identification of society and the shaping of tastes and receptions on the side of the public. It also turns out to be fundamental for the understanding and interpretation of phenomena in the field of popular music, especially from the second half of the last

century onward – a period, notable for a wealth of forms and patterns that mix and modify in an ever-changing musical environment.

On the other hand, the question of the influences on Bulgarian popular music and in particular the Bulgarian *estrada* song is relatively rarely articulated as an independent research task, probably because of the danger of being reduced to the description of specific borrowings. However, it would be helpful to do an in-depth study into the interactions that occurred during the specified period, to trace the transmissions of song patterns, which make foreign samples accessible to a wider range of listeners, as well as their role as an impulse to change and intensify the processes in the musical culture of a given community.

In the dissertation work, I chose to trace the impact of Italian music rather than another musical-cultural practice for several reasons. Generally, the concept of the popular music of the 1950s – the beginning of the 1960s is globally associated with a variety of musical genres such as rock, country, and jazz. The mix of Anglo-American popular forms also reflected on the Italian public, who intensified their interest in genres and styles, characterized by energy, emotionality, and danceability. However, the contribution of the Italians to music is a distinctive feature of their national identity, and *Musica Leggera* affirms itself as an important layer with persistent characteristics regardless of the interactions experienced.

Of course, when we talk about the Italian influence, we should also mention the innovations in the theory of music notation, the characteristic sound of Italian instrumental music and the opera, the practice of *bel canto*, and the wide spectrum of traditional music from the different regions. The rich history of this culture has invariably inspired musicians and audiences in our country throughout the entire period of our new musical history and in this sense, the present study on the influence of popular genres from the Apennines does not venture into an empty field. Rather, it draws upon *bel canto* and operetta repertoire elements already assimilated into our musical culture and the urban schlager, which probably gives us an explanation about the strong impact on the formation

of popular musical taste in the middle and the second half of the 20th century. Then, regardless of certain restrictions in comparison to other manifestations of the world pop culture, Italian “light” music is well-liked in Bulgaria, and the unforgettable hits from the Apennines occupy a permanent place in the hearts of both music lovers and professional musicians.

Structure and methodology of the work

The existing literature on the subject under consideration to a large extent determined the structure of the dissertation work. Its first chapter fulfills the task of presenting the specificity of the phenomenon and introducing the bibliography, dedicated to *Musica Leggera*, while the referenced literature about Bulgarian *estrada* is integrated into the following two chapters, which trace the individual stages in its development and their interactions. In these two chapters the following aspects of the Italian impact have been outlined in more detail: (1) the interpretation (way of singing, performing manner, stage behaviour); (2) the repertoire and its public reception; (3) the dynamics of the performing ensembles; (4) some characteristics of the song (melodic-harmonic features, rhythm, arrangement etc.). The main research approaches used are: the periodization and musical-historiographic in tracing the influences, the systematization and analysis of the repertoire, and the musical-cultural interpretation of the event.

The search, description and systematization of data on the huge number of Italian songs that were performed on the Bulgarian *estrada* podium turned out to be productive in making sense of the respective processes and revealing the influences at work. Some of them are known to specialists, but during my work on the dissertation, I have endeavoured to collect accurate information on a maximum number of Bulgarian versions, which I present in Appendix № 1. These data form the basis from which the analysis proceeds. They will probably be of interest for other researchers as well as for the general public, who used to know and

love the interpretations of Italian melodies on the Bulgarian scene in the second half of the 20th century.

For clarifying the dissertation terminology, authoritative dictionaries and encyclopedias (describing concepts of pop, popular, *estrada*, and *Musica Leggera*) have been used. Particular attention has been paid to various historical-theoretical studies, supporting the analysis and revealing details about the phenomenon that captivated both Bulgarian performers and audiences in the second half of the last century. And in order to reveal as thoroughly as possible the attitude of music specialists themselves to the Italian singing models, to the transfer of repertoire and the changes in the taste and the perception of the public, during the preliminary work a series of interviews with popular musicians were conducted. These conversations have also been included as appendices to the dissertation and represent an inseparable part of interpreting the complex issue of the interactions between Italian music and the Bulgarian *estrada* song.

CHAPTER 1. *Musica Leggera* and its meaning

The proposed research, motivated by the desire for a deeper insight into the musical-cultural heritage of the 20th century and in particular of the processes in the Bulgarian popular culture, will begin with the terminological study of the concept of *Musica Leggera* – how it is defined in musical encyclopedias and dictionaries, in the Bulgarian and foreign language musicological practice, in comparison with other designations in contemporary musicology and popular culture, describing the practice of popular music to understand the reason for the acceptance of this term in Italy in contrast to “popular music”, spread widely in other European countries, as well as to reveal the origin and historical evolution of *Musica Leggera*. This will help us to get to the core of its essence and elucidate the impact on the musical culture of other peoples. On the other hand, “since in a functional aspect music today is a part of the media spaces, it

should be studied as media music; the lens of cultural anthropology is particularly suitable for such research“².

1. The term *Musica Leggera* and similar terms

For the purposes of the analysis of the dissertation work an attempt was made to clarify the concept *Musica Leggera* in comparison to the definitions of popular music, pop music, schlager, *estrada* music, which are distinctive for the second half of the 20th century, as well as in relation to the definitions for *musica popolare* and *fok* in Italy.

Musica Leggera is a “musical production for consumption“³, which “traditionally opposing *musica cd. colta* (so-called *academic, serious music*), undergoes the influences of the melodrama, then of the swing, tango and the ethnic music, often mixed with the music of cantautori (songwriters), of the rock and the electronics“⁴, but maintains a high aesthetic criterion, trying at the same time to respond to a more mass taste.

2. *Musica Leggera* – origin, essence, mediatization

The “light” music in question is a set of musical trends, that arose and began their development in Europe as early as the 19th century. An important role for its affirmation have the newly formed orchestras, performing arrangements of popular melodies and the venues for musical and variety shows. These are „Les cafés-chantants“ (lit. “singing cafes“) in Paris, “Music Hall“ (“music hall”) in Great Britain, the stages, on which “the musical” is performed in USA. In Italy during the Romantic period, dances such as the waltz, polka, and mazurka were disseminated. The romance was especially popular – a melodic and sentimental song,

² **Dimov**, Ventislav 2012. On a necessary anthropology of the media music. – Art readings. Reports from the tenth scientific conference of the Institute of Art history. Sofia: Institute of Art studies, p. 14.

³ **Treccani** 1996. L'Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti. [online]. [viewed 26 august 2020]. Available from: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/musica-leggera/http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/musica-leggera/> The translation from Italian language from Italian encyclopedias and of the music researchers, cited later in Chapter 1 is mine.

⁴ Ibid.

peculiar “cross” between a popular song and an opera aria, the origins of which can be found in the nineteenth-century Neapolitan song. Thus, gradually crystallized the characteristics of a song culture – lively, highly attractive, intensely melodious and ease to express, which at the beginning of the 20th century would already receive worldwide recognition under the name of *Musica Leggera*.

Musica Leggera refers to a type of music, whose main purpose is to amuse and entertain and which sounds in everyday life, e.g. dance music, lyrical and humorous songs etc. The Italian song distinguishes itself with the simplicity of its form. Very often it is one-part (strophic) or two-parts (verse-chorus) form⁵ with an introduction and coda and an opportunity for an improvisational instrumental interlude in the closing phase. The rhythmicity is simple, the melodic line wide-ranging and shaped by the articulation of the text (easy to understand, usually sentimental or amorous) – often inspired by popular themes and dances. Undoubtedly the vocal melody is “the greatest focus of identification”⁶ in the Italian *Musica Leggera* and is considered its most important characteristic – the song is always very singable, pleasant and cheerful, sometimes playful, but always masterfully constructed, arousing associations with the *bel canto* vocal school.

As it is well known, the development of music printing and the opportunity for more families to purchase musical instruments changed the role of music in 19th-century industrial societies. Revisions of orchestral and opera works are published for amateur performance, the teaching of singing and music is encouraged. With the advent of the phonograph and record player, as well as a result of the widespread introduction and dissemination of radio receivers in the 1920s, listening to music of all styles became more and more accessible. The major record companies and radio broadcasts were established and connections

⁵ In Italian language *monopartita/strofica* и *bipartita /strofa e ritornello*.

⁶ **Agostini**, Roberto 2007. The Italian Canzone and the Sanremo Festival: change and continuity in Italian mainstream pop of the 1960s. [online]. [viewed 28 June 2021]. In: *Popular Music*, Oct., 2007, Vol. 26, No. 3, Special Issue on Italian Popular Music (Oct., 2007), p. 394. Published by: Cambridge University Press Available from: <http://www/jstor.org>

between “light” music and advertisement were made. After the Second World War, thanks not only to the radio, but also on TV broadcasting and the sound cinema, the promotion process of many singers was intensified. When tracing the birth and the evolution of *Musica Leggera* as a peculiar form of interaction between musical art and technology, it is clearly observed how the role of the media intensified the accessibility of the form, created ever greater prerequisites for production, distribution and advertising and along with **that imposed the standard of melodicity** as a specific mark of a mass musical culture, that never neglected the requirements of high professionalism as a condition for its success.

Despite the influence of American song and jazz, the Italian song retained its identity, and its importance and dissemination in the 1950s and 1960s. It was also strengthened by the characteristic Italian festival form of cultural exchange, which can also be defined as a kind of continuation of the ancient Roman traditions of entertainment – the Saturnalia and the Capitol games.

3. The role of the festival in Sanremo and the record companies

In 1951 the first edition of the largest and the oldest popular song festival in the world was held at the initiative of RAI radio and the Sanremo Municipal casino⁷. The song “Thank You for the Flowers”, presented by Nilla Pizzi – “the queen of the sentimental melodic song“⁸, won the first prize, setting a prestigious music event start. In 1958 the singer Domenico Modugno with “Nel blu dipinto di blu” (“In the Blue of the Sky“, 1958) triumphed in Sanremo, paving the way to a new generation of songwriters (Giorgio Gaber, Luigi Tenco, Fabrizio De André, Gino Paoli), who renewed the content of the Italian song. Undoubtedly, one of the components that has made the festival in Sanremo one of the most successful music competitions in the world since

⁷See more **Petrov**, Zdravko 2011. The Sanremo phenomenon – formerly and now: the ninth of September begins with two hours of Italian music from the festival. <https://bnr.bg/hristobotev/post/100081713/fenomenyt-sanremo-predi-i-sega-deveti-septemvri-zapochva-s-dva-chasa-italianska-muzika-ot-festivala>

⁸ **Liperi**, Felice 2016. Storia della canzone italiana. Roma: Rai Eri, p. 146.

its first editions is the presence of a well-considered mix of music veterans and rising young performers on the Italian scene, the fact that some Italian performers have participated repeatedly, and for many of them it turned out to be a springboard to their global career. The festival is 71 years old now and through it we can trace the development of the Italian popular song and the changes in public reception.

However, to be understood what the international recognition of the “Sanremo” phenomenon is due to, it is important to take into account the musical substance of the song. For this purpose in the survey I introduce and comment on the analyzes of some leading Italian researchers of *Musica Leggera* and the festival. The melody and the rhythm are looked at through the eyes of **Roberto Caselli** in his fundamental study on the development of the popular music “Storia della canzone italiana” (“History of the Italian song“) where the author defines the melody as “the cross and the delight of the Italian song“⁹. **Roberto Agostini** identifies the form and the sound in his essay in English “The Italian Canzone and the Sanremo Festival: change and continuity in the Italian mainstream pop of the 1960s”. **Serena Facci and Paolo Soddu with Matteo Piloni** report in their study that the composers’ approaches to the song forms used as the structural basis of the “Sanremo” festival songs have undergone some development over the years. In the book “The Festival in Sanremo. Words and Sounds Tell the Nation“ they comment on various examples, among which the arrangement of “Grazie dei fiori” (the song ranked first at the “Sanremo” Festival in 1951, performed by Nilla Pizzi) and the fact that it “manages to enhance the most poignant elements contained in the melody (the initial descending triton and the passage on the minor second, harmonized with the Neapolitan sixth), to create an effect of profound sadness“¹⁰. The song is a bright example of how as early as the first festival year American rhythms were giving way to the rise of a melody, reminiscent of the Neapolitan song and *bel canto*,

⁹ **Caselli** , Roberto 2018. Storia della canzone italiana, p. X.

¹⁰ **Facci**, Soddu con Matteo Piloni 2011. Il Festival di Sanremo. Parole e suoni raccontano la nazione, p. 63.

capable of captivating listeners thanks to Pizzi's powerful voice and heartfelt performance, and last but not least, good harmonization and arrangement. "The Modern Orchestration of Musica Leggera. ABC of the Arranger." (**Pippo Barzizza**) and "Introduction to the Harmony and Composition in Popular music" (**Renzo Ruggieri**) give us some basic theoretical knowledge of the compositional specifics of *Musica Leggera* songs. What is revealed by getting acquainted with Ruggieri and Barzizza lyrics and looking carefully into the numerous musical examples is that the tunes of these "light", easy to sing songs often feature complex harmonies, requiring a great deal of creativity and extremely serious musical training on the part of both composers and arrangers.

In line with the peculiarities of the musical language of the songs from Sanremo, Italian researchers also comment on the social position of the festival, the acceptance of its production in the socio-cultural processes of the time. For example **Carlo Bianchi** in "Canzoni italiane 1968-1978. Storia e antropologia" gives an example with the case of Gigliola Cinquetti, who "in 1964, singing *Non ho l'età*, surreptitiously invoked ideals for women's emancipation precisely to suffocate them", as well as with Adriano Celentano, who after the protests and the strikes in 1968 sang "*Chi non lavora non fa l'amore*" ("Who does not work, does not make love").

"Sanremo" has established itself over the years thanks to the interpretations of melodious songs, that impact the audience with the creative and varied compositional techniques and the well-constructed harmonic patterns. The festival, which started with melodramatic, lyrical samples in the style of the Neapolitan song tradition and with cheerful melodies with rhythm close to folk dances and expressing brightly feelings, over the time became a symbol of the contemporary Italian song.

4. The success of the Italian *urlatori* – symbol of youth emancipation and economic growth in the late 50s and early 60s of the 20th century

The successes of the festival and the songs from Sanremo are related to the establishment of a new vocal style. In the late 1950s and early 1960s a group of young performers, who shaped the singing trend of the “shouters” (*urlatori* – from Italian *urlare* – I shout, I scream) made their way in the history of Italian popular music. Their appearance is an expression of the changing tastes of the public. The different singing technique with high-pitched tones displaced “the sentimental” tones of the lyrical singers with explosive vocal power. Following the example of rock and roll, which in the social life expresses a rebellious attitude to various events and phenomena, “the shouters” changed the perception of the Italian tuneful song. “The shouted” refrain in Tony Dallara’s “Come prima”, the distorted movements, the feeling, the rhythm and the emotions in “24 mila baci” by Adriano Celentano, the singing skills of Mina, Betty Curtis and the rest of the “screaming” singers caused a triumph, breaking the stereotypes. The appearance of the “shout” renewed the Italian song – a sign of modernization and emergence of a new song with a different technique of singing that “was catapulted into the sleepy Italian landscape; *il terzinato*¹¹ led almost automatically to lengthening of the rhymes: *volare...oo, coo...me prima, più di prima ti ameròoo, etc.*”¹². With “Nel blu dipinto di blu”, better known as “Volare”, Modugno completely broke with the clichés, with which the Sanremo songs were usually characterized.

It is undeniable that the new phenomenon of “the shouters” carries strong emotional intensity. Usually “shouting” is analyzed as a way of singing, opposed to Italian song traditions and customs – more akin to “youth” music, adopted the American style of rock and roll, rather than representative of Italian popular musical tastes, adhering to a melodic style. Voices, capable of incredible tonal changes, stage behaviour following the new rhythm – it is obvious that this appealed to the young

¹¹ Un ritmo terzinato – triplet rhythm.

¹² **Liperi**, Felice 2016. *Storia della canzone italiana*. Roma: Rai Eri, p. 171.

with a free spirit. The curiosity of the new generations is always attracted to new emotions, and “the shouters” offer them a variety of tunes with a different style of interpretation.

5. Conclusion

Musica Leggera is narrowly included in the world trade chain and distributes itself through all media: records, video, festivals, concerts-performances, Internet, TV, and the popular songs sound from gramophone records, audio and video cassettes, CDs and DVDs. The general availability, thanks to the mass media in the 20th century, contributes to the wide recognition of the performers and their works in the circles of the musical industry and beyond. The space of the radio, the television and Internet are shown as a means for dissemination of *Musica Leggera* in the conditions of the contemporary media industry, but they also represent an integral part of the essence of this phenomenon, which possesses specific artistic merits and aesthetic functions.

CHAPTER 2. Influence of Musica Leggera on Bulgarian estrada in the 50s – 60s of the 20th century

Before I parse out in depth the influences of *Musica Leggera* on the development of the Bulgarian *estrada*, it is necessary to discuss the concept *estrada* itself as part of musical and cultural development of Bulgaria in the period after the Second world war. On the other hand, the very emergence of this phenomenon rests on the previous development of musical phenomena of a popular and entertaining nature – something on which I will dwell briefly.

Development of Estrada Music in Bulgaria

In the middle of the 20th century the Bulgarian public felt the need for a new song, that would develop the lyrical-romantic thematic line of the old urban romance, simultaneously moving away from the marching and lyrical mass song of the ‘40s and ‘50s both in its brighter melodic

invention and foregrounded rhythm, as well as in its more deployed form with dynamic and timbral contrast between the partitions. As a result of different, overlaid intonation and interpretation influences, among which in present text we will trace in particular the role of the Italian “light” music, the layer of the Bulgarian *estrada* emerges and confirms itself.

The dynamic, distinctive for the beginning of this new practice, has been described and commented on by a number of music journalists as well as leading researchers of the popular culture. In the dissertation are quoted the opinions of Vladimir Gadjev, Ivan Georgiev, Petar Stupel, Rosemary Statelova, reflecting the specifics of the *estrada* music with the emphasized interest in the new, the current, the modern, combined with the availability of an accessible musical language.

Like most manifestations of the popular music, the *estrada* art is characterized by its accessibility, ease of the perception and mass distributions through the mass media channels. However, its artistic-aesthetic functions, the social commitment predetermine striving for high product quality. We will trace some main impacts due to which a product, characterized by a simple melodic line, well-composed harmonies, well-crafted rhythmic arrangement, plus bringing of a singing soloist with an individualized stage behaviour to the fore contributed to reaching the senses and consciousness of the mass audience. Regardless of whether the newly created Bulgarian song be with old-fashioned sentimental melodiousness or with technics, borrowed from jazz, folk or “serious” music, the desire is to achieve persuasiveness, emotional effect and to avoid banality.

The 50s and 60s of the 20th century were a period of difficult transition of the *estrada* genre to a modern sounding, in which tango, foxtrots, rumbas, waltzes, such as those composed by the talented creator Yosif Tsankov are no longer sufficiently actual among the young generation. At the same time, it is obvious that the Bulgarian performers of the *old city songs* genre (often also referred to as schlagers), with easiness handle with the foreign language repertoire, that predisposes the perception of the *Musica Leggera* song samples, prevailing on national

air, as well as of Russian romances and French chansons. At this moment the melodic pourability of the Italian songs fill the gap between the mass interest and the production, the Bulgarian public likes it and it finds a cordial admission in the repertoire of the singers.

2. Influence of Musica Leggera on the repertoire of the Bulgarian Estrada performers

In view of the tasks of the research I will describe and comment on in more detail the concert practice of those of our performers, who were directly influenced by the style of the Italian light music and played a leading role for the transfer of the new Italian repertoire. Therefore I will start exposure with **Dimitar Yosifov** – the most eager promoter of the Italian *Musica Leggera* of the 20th century. The researchers of the processes in our *estrada* music from the period define him as “the main culprit for the spread of Italian music in Bulgaria”¹³, “its most zealous ambassador”¹⁴. Among the first Italian hits, which conquered the Bulgarian public as well, performed by Dimitar Yosifov are: “Nel blu dipinto di blu” (“In the blue of the sky“), “Piove”(“It’s raining“), “Come prima“ (“As before“), “Marina“, “24 mila baci” (“24 thousand kisses“), “Tintarella di luna” (“Blackened by the moon“), “Uno tranquillo” (“A hundred million or a levche“), “Zum, zum, zum” (“Zoom, zoom, zoom“), “Guarda che luna” (“Look what a moon“), “Giovane giovane”.

The diverse repertoire of Dimitar Yosifov introduces us to the Italian popular song culture, preserved the folk melodic traditions. In the musical language of big part of the performed by him Modugno’s songs such as “Piove” (Ciao, ciao bambina) and “Nel blu dipinto di blu” (“Volare”) the ballad-romantic, the lyrical and the dramatic prevail. The skillfully presented texts with a beautiful poetical statement or with a social theme also stand out. Rocco Granata’s “Marina“ is in the typical

¹³ See interview with Zdravko Petrov – **Ivanova**, Dzana 2021. The Sanremo Festival and the influence of the Italian melodic song. – In: Art Platform, Institute of art studies, BAS, 19.03.2021. <http://artstudies.bg/platforma/category/%d0%bc%d0%bd%d0%b5%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%8f>

¹⁴ **Slavchev**, Dobromir 2019. To love Willy Kazasian. Sofia: Ciela Norma AD, p. 391.

Italian schlager style, and the Celentano's song "24 mila baci" is in the modern in the 50's rock and roll style, far from the Romantism of the previous songs, revealing a new musical world.

After Dimitar Yosifov's contribution to the introduction of the rich Italian repertoire in our country, I will trace the role of the Italian singing models in shaping **Lili Ivanova's** style. Her repertoire at the beginning of her career includes Italian hit songs with an impressive expressiveness of the musical language and impact on the audience: "Amore twist" ("Love twist"), "Come te non c'è nessuno", ("There's no one like you"), "Vola da me", ("Fly to me"), "Vorrei sapere perché", ("I want to know why"), "Nessuno al mondo", ("No one in the world"), "Non siamo piu insieme", ("We are not together anymore"), "Ciao Ragazzi Ciao" ("Goodbye boys"), "Cuore matto" ("Restless heart"), "L'immensità" ("In infinity"), "Non ho l'età (per amarti)" ("I am small (to love you)") и др. In general the Italian songs, with which Lili Ivanova began her career, possess an expressive melodic line, a rich compositional palette, they are saturated with emotion and a bright expression of feeling and provide inexhaustible opportunities for the beginning singer to reveal her singing skills and to captivate the audience.

At the beginning of the 60s, however, Lili Ivanova and Emil Dimitrov were still establishing themselves as performers, while the role of "first violin" on the *estrada* podium performed – according to Ivan Georgiev – the singer **Maria Koseva**¹⁵. In the given exposure I present her after Lili Ivanova due to the fact that she interrupted her activity early to devote herself to her family. Among the most famous Italian songs, interpreted by Koseva are: "Pasqualino the Maharadja", "The blue canaries" and "The clock". A prima with an individual style, image and behaviour, her name remain in the history of the *estrada*.

Maria Koseva hands to the young talent **Emil Dimitrov**, with whom they are soloists of the popular accompanying orchestra "Melodi". In 1961 on tour in Russia both performed Italian music as "Emil sang

¹⁵Georgiev, Ivan 2009. Fates on 33 rpm. Estrada stars from the 60s. Sofia: Millennium, p. 80.

songs by Domenico Modugno¹⁶. Recorded Mina's song "Un anno d'amore" ("One year of love"). In his book "Volare. Sofia – San Remo" Dimitar Yosifov also testifies to Emil Dimitrov's lasting interest in Italian music: "At the beginning of his brilliant career as an author and performer Emil sang a lot of Italian songs such as "Melancholy in September" (he recorded it under the name "You left in September"), "Tintarella di luna" and others. Emil had the chance to break into Europe and South America with the song "Monica" (to the tune of "My country"). The song was recorded in French, Italian, Spanish¹⁷. Mitko Shterev adds to these titles: "A "Guarda de luna" and "O, o, Rosy" are Emil Dimitrov's favourites – both by Rocco Granata¹⁸. On the Internet are available video records of the Bulgarian singer of "Selene" – an energetic song, created by Migliacci and Modugno in 1962 and sang by Modugno in the euphoric moment of twist dissemination. Dimitrov performs it in the same style under the name "Selena". The songs listed testify not only to our performer's apparent interest in European repertoire (as we know he has an affinity and for the French chanson), but also emphasize the melodic flair in the selection of songs, to evince the talent and the emotionality in recreating the "character" of the melody (author's and foreign) with its nuances. Longing, moods, feelings, textual ideas and messages – Emil Dimitrov reveals different human states and impresses listeners with his penetrating masterful interpretation, which has left a bright trace in the development of the Bulgarian popular music.

No less popular than Emi Dimitrov with his expressive stage presence and musical talent is another emblematic personality of our *estrada* – **Georgi Cordov**. He is considered for the equivalent of Claudio Villa (one of the most inspired interpreters of the Italian song and canzonet). We reckon Cordov to the singers who shaped the appearance of the Bulgarian *estrada* in the 60s "with a beautiful baritone voice and

¹⁶Ibid, p.82.

¹⁷Yosifov, Dimitar. Volare. Sofia – San Remo. Sofia, 2014, p. 76.

¹⁸Shterev, Mitko 2010. I forgot my clock on the piano. Sofia: Press, p. 63.

restrained behaviour from the early years of the Bulgarian estrada¹⁹, left “a bright mark on the culture with his voice projection, the internal logic in grasping and creating musical imagery, which were incorporated in the songs he performed and the natural stage behaviour he possessed [...] Can anyone forget “Fair tale“ by Yosif Tsankov, “Evening song“ by Emil Georgiev, “The birches and the girl“ by Angel Zaberski, “Farewell” by Domenico Modugno, “Don’t leave me” by Jacques Brel, “Pinocchio” by Pallavicini and many others!“²⁰ Cordov studied classical singing. The influence of *bel canto* undoubtedly leads to maximum mastery of his singing technique and voice command. In 1962 he recorded “I Love Life“, and in 1968 “When I fall in love“ – cover version of Rocco Montana’s “Inventiamo la vita” from Sanremo 1962 and “Quando m’innamoro”, presented in 1967 in Sanremo by Anna Identici and the English band.

Georgi Cordov performed the mellifluous Italian songs with a remarkable sense of artistic measure and expressiveness of the vocal interpretation. The overall impactful effect of his interpretations is emphasized by the rich orchestration of the accompanying orchestra. Lyrical songs with a ballad flavor stand out as a particularly characteristic of his creative specificity.

Last but not least, we will mention **Pasha (Parashkeva) Hristova**. Pasha Hristova is an universal singer who experiments with quite a few songs by foreign authors, among which “Canzone per te” (“Songs from you”) by Sergio Endrigo, “Un anno d’amore“ by Mina (“One year of love” is very popular in her performance, as I have already mentioned and Emil Dimitrov), “I, you and the roses”, Bulgarian text Milcho Spasov (“Io tu e le rose” by Orietta Berti). Hristova is unforgettable performer with a charming and captivating voice with a wide range. She possesses a unique talent that allows her to master any style with ease. Hard to reproduce stylistics such as bossa-nova reveal her mastery of interpretation. She captivates the audience not only with the hits “One Bulgarian rose” and “

¹⁹**Georgiev**, Ivan 2009. Fates on 33 rpm. Estrada star of the 60s. Sofia: Millenium, p. 273.

²⁰**Yanev**, Emil 1984. H.A. GEORGI KORDOV AT 50 YEARS OLD. – In: Musical horizons 1984, №.7 p. 139-140.

Puff, wind”, but also with the improvisational skills when interpreting foreign melodies.

The palette of the Italian songs, that entered the repertoire of the Bulgarian performers, is multifaceted and colourful. We also find repertoire borrowings from Italian hits in other of our *estrada* singers at the beginning of their careers. Among the more familiar names today are: Boyan Ivanov, Boris Gudjunov, Borislav Gruncharov, Margarita Radinska, Mihail Belchev, Hristo Kidikov and others. But here it is important to note that many singers who are unknown today to a large part of the younger generation, also reveal interest in the Italian song: Emiliya Markova, Danail Nikolov, Krasimira Mineva, Konstantin Kazanski, Mariya Mitseva, Nina Svetoslavova, Rossitsa Nikolova, Hristo Paskalev-Paskal and others. Their vocal qualities and artistry exerted their influence on shaping the appearance of the Bulgarian amusing song in the 60s of the 20th century.

3. Influence of Musica Leggera on the performing manner/style and the stage behavior

Comparing the performance manners of Italian and Bulgarian singers poses a challenge, particularly prior to the establishment of BNT in December 1959, as there were no appearances of Bulgarian performers available for observation. However, in the videorecords from the 1960s, it became apparent that our singers were striving to adhere to a sense of proportion and develop their artistic taste on stage.

When we analyze the stage behavior during the performance of the Italian repertoire, which enters in the Bulgarian sound space, we cannot dwell again on the names of two of the brightest personalities on the *estrada* podium – Georgi Cordov and Lili Ivanova. The exquisite and elegant style of clothing, as well as the Italians’ way of singing are benchmark what a singer should strive for when building his/her stage image. Following this pattern, Ivanova and Cordov manage to form and perfect an individual, distinctive performing manner, which defines the appearance of two of the dazzling individualities in our *estrada* music. In

the brilliant interpretation of the songs “Quando quando quando” and “La partita di Pallone” we observe reticence and moderate stage gestures. And at the same time their performances exude confidence of the musical expressiveness. Comparing the performances of Tony Renis in youtube, recorded by the Italian TV channels RAI UNO and RAI TRE with Georgi Cordov’s interpretaion of “Quando quando quando”²¹ on BNT, we can conclude that the Bulgarian singer fully manages to convey the emotion of the Italian song with its characteristic bossa nova style sound. “The different rhythm“, “the new excitement“, “the new feeling“ seem to give Cordov a softer, more exquisite sound, characteristic of his singing manner and he showcases again his vocal skills in a more lyrical (enhanced by the sounding flute) and moderate style, with a flair for quality intonation and a sense of rhythm. Lili Ivanova’s performance in Italian of “La partita di Pallone” is also captivating. The interpreting of hit songs exert influence on forming the personal style of the young Bulgarian singer and shows that she possesses the necessary vocal range, pure intonation and singing diction/articulation in order to reach in her creative path to a height of singing and interpretation mastery, that fascinate the audience.

4. Musica Leggera and the newly created state institutions in our country

Against the backdrop of changes in the repertoire, the performing manner and the stage behavior of the Bulgarian singers we have described, a number of state institutions were created to support the development of the popular music in our country. Their activity was partially commented on, but should be presented separately, bearing in mind its leading importance for the development of the genre.

The broadcasts of Bulgarian radio and Bulgarian National Television, as well as the newly formed institutions in the 60s as a recording company “Balkanton”, “State Estrada-jazz orchestra“, Concert directorate, the Big Band on the Bulgarian radio, the BDK Estrada

²¹“Golden fund”: 84 years since the birth of Georgi Cordov. <https://bnt.bg/bg/a/zlaten-fond-84-godini-ot-rozhdenieto-na-georgi-kordov>
Cordov recorded the song under the name “I still remember to this day“.

department, the International festival “Golden Orpheus“, the directorate general “Bulgarian music” and others contribute to unfold and fully function the sphere of the *estrada* art, stimulating the professional growth of the musicians and the popularization of their creativity.

Fun and dance music is increasingly presents in the concert halls and entertainment venues – hits like “Marina” by Rocco Granata are constantly playing, and the songs by Adriano Celentano and Claudio Villa are often heard on the radio. Some of the most popular Italian performers toured on the Bulgarian stage during this period: Claudio Villa, Marino Marini, Arturo Testa etc. In connection with their visits Vladimir Gadjev commented that the initial editions of the festival in Sanremo, imposed the names of Nilla Pizzi, Claudio Villa etc. “until the appearance of the so-called urlatore (shouters), marked the transition to a new vocal style with greater emotional expressiveness. For purely ideological reasons the communist doctrinaires, who had already comprehended the inevitability of overall international contacts, accepted the Italian example as the lesser evil. Thus a visit of Claudio Villa in Bulgaria accomplished and on the quiet an aesthetic and performing model established, that marked the first steps of the contemporary pop music in our country“²².

All these facts show that the Bulgarian public in the 50s and 60s was “opened” to the perception of Western musical samples in the field of popular music, it does not allow closure to the national-specific.

In the 60s “Balkanton“ released on small records (33 rpm) the performances of Robertino Loreti (VTM 5699 – “Tango of the rose“, “Foreign land“, “Liliana“, “The memories for Chopin“), by Nicola di Bari (VTM 5766 – “Don’t make me cry no more“, “I will cry“, “The compassion“, “Embrace me“), by Claudio Villa (VTM 5770 – “I am looking for“, “When you were with me“, “Silent sea“, “Song for slaves“), songs from the “Sanremo” festival 1966 г. (VTM 5805 – I), and the songs

²² Gadjev, Vladimir 2011. The Seven Delights of the Golden Orpheus, p. 48-49.

of Gianni Morandi, Mauro and other Italian popular performers sounded in compilation LPs.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion we can generalize that the influence of the Italian singing models during the considered period is palpable, strong. At the beginning of their career a large part of the Bulgarian singers not only interpret foreign repertoire, but also adhere to the elegant appearance and stage behavior of the Italian performers. With the passage of the time the artistic maturation exerts its influence – the Bulgarian *estrada* practice gradually frees itself from the initial influence, acquires its own manner and emotional characteristic. The imitation overcomes also with the accumulation of Bulgarian repertoire with specific intonation, melodic-harmonic peculiarities, rhythm and arrangement. As a result of their striving to improve and upgrade their professionalism, the big names of the Bulgarian *estrada*, who started their career in the 50s and 60s of the 20th century, retain a bright presence on the concert podium for decades, and the samples of *Musica Leggera* performed by them – in an original or with an adapted Bulgarian text, leave a noticeable trace in the repertoire renewal and development of the Bulgarian popular music.

ГЛАВА 3. Influence of Musica Leggera on the Bulgarian Estrada in the 70s – 80s of the 20th century

And in the following two decades the influence of the Italian *Musica Leggera* on the Bulgarian fun song continues to be significant. A generous source and a kind of “intonational dictionary“ of both sentimenta-lyrical and cheerful tuneful songs, the festival “Golden Orpheus” and the “Balkanton” record label promote hit products of the Italian musical industry.

1. Italian performers with recitals of the “Golden Orpheus“

One of the most qualitative performers and ensembles of the Apennines are guests of the International festival “Golden Orpheus“.

Among them are Ornella Vanoni, Iva Zanicchi, Gianni Morandi, Sergio Endrigo, Riccardo del Turco, Riccardo Fogli, Fabio Trioli, Paolo Mangoni, “Matia Bazar“ and others. The Bulgarian public cannot remain indifferent to the songs sung by the Italians, who shaped the face of the world popular music²³. The spectators of the festival feel the mood of the performers and empathize with them the emotion of the songs. The different musical nuances have a different influence on the mood, but the singers from the Apennines are inheritors of a centuries old vocal tradition and know how to attract the attention of the audience with their craftsmanship. In the dissertation work details are presented regarding the songs, with which the Italian guests of the festivals captivate the audience of their recitals, among which we can also point out: Lara Saint Paul, “Ricchi e Poveri“, Al Bano and Romina Power. Their stage manifestations, charged with a special emotional charge, remain unforgettable for our audience.

“The Golden Orpheus“ is simultaneously a stage for performance and a benchmark for the mastery of the future performers of fun music and undoubtedly has an effect of strengthening the already formed predisposition of the Bulgarian public towards melodic, “beautiful” music. And although the “Golden Orpheus” phenomenon as a whole provoked and some highly ideological, as well as some strongly critical opinions, we can summarize that the inclusion of recitals and in general the unfolding of the appearance of the recital section played an important role for the formation and development of the taste of the Bulgarian public.

2. The role of “Balkanton” manufactured production, influenced by Musica Leggera

As one of the most renowned European music festivals and an event of great importance for the Bulgarian culture, during the second and the third decades of its existence “Golden Orpheus“ functions in

²³ See more Petrov, Zdravko: The Italians shaped the face of pop music worldwide throughout the 50s, 60s, 70s of the 20th century.
<https://bnr.bg/horizont/post/101599397/zdravko-petrov-italiancite-opredelat-oblika-na-svetovnata-pop-muzika-prez-50-te-60-te-70-te-godini-na-20-vek>

cooperations with the record company “Balkanton“, whose team approaches the selection and release of festival songs with great care. Gramophone records with Italian songs, sounded at the “Sanremo” and “Golden Orpheus” festivals, are released, as well as compilation records with popular music, which often feature songs by Italian performers. Without claiming to be exhaustive in the dissertation examples are given for the “Balkanton” edited record, featuring songs by Italian performers.

Through sound recordings and festivals Bulgarian listeners and viewers perceive the music sounding of a country like Italy, which is a sample of world musical mastery. The question of whether this further shapes “good taste“ to quality songs and performance brings back to the fore the subject of “estrada music” with its conflicting aesthetic concepts.

3. Views on *estrada* music in the 70s and 80s of the 20th century

But does the notion of the *estrada* really change during this period and if so-how? The answer is certainly not unambiguous. The genre has already assimilated cover versions of hit songs in the past. Characteristic rhythm intonations from our popular and foreign popular song invade people’s consciousness but the melodic-lyrical beginning remains at the center of the composer’s creativity. Above all, the accessibility in harmonic and orchestral development of the vocal and instrumental chorus is brought out, in order to achieve simplicity as a way to express emotions, as direct contact with the audience, penetration into the story told through the language of music.

Here we will focus on the points of view of Gencho Gaitandjiev, Mitko Shterev and Rozmary Stelova, who comment on the extent to which imitation is a thing of the past as well as on the Bulgarian dimensions of the *estrada* sound. In the process of building their individual style, the composers and the performers can follow well-known foreign models, as well as to use elements of folk-song traditions; however what is important in this case is to achieve that creative individuality, which in turn fed the song tradition and style. Such as the example with the song “Lado le“ by the composer Stefan Dimitrov. In a

remarkable way the composer uses melodic material, to which he adds modern rhythm and arrangement.

During the period of the 70s and 80s in the comments of practicing musicians and musicologists we still find many ideological ratiocinations on the aesthetic role of the *estrada* music, but at the same time an aspiration to analyze and distinguish the phenomenon both from the manifestations of the urban song culture that preceded it, as well as from the world samples (mostly English speaking). The musical imagery and the intonation of the newly created songs is valued more flexibly, as well as the singer's performing skills, which continue to be refined to meet the growing criteria of the time and the audience.

4. Solo performers and performing ensembles, influenced by Musica Leggera in the period of the 70s – 80s of the 20th century

And yet, following the model of the singers of the 60s, many of the performers in the following two decades also began their creative path with Italian songs, that began to sing with original or with Bulgarian text and arrangement. In the course of their professional career, however, they have the opportunity to interpret successful new, Bulgarian author's songs, in which perhaps only the melodiousness remains a remnant of a rich musical culture like the Italian one, laid its foundations on the *bel canto*.

The Italian repertoire at the beginning of the career of our greatest performers during the period is strong. I will start my analysis with **Yordanka Hristova** – a significant name in the Bulgarian *estrada* – she possess a bright performing style, that allows her to recreate with great success many melodies of different character, among which are the Italian songs: "Forget" (Pintucci, b.t. B. Gudev), "I love" (Pieretti, b.t. B. Gudev, accomp.voc. gr. "Studio V"), "Dark-red rose" (Albertelli, b.t. Zh. Kyuldzhieva, accomp. EO, cond. Hr. Platov), "Pinocchio", "Nina Nana". One of the first Italian melodies, which she sang is "Sabato notte" of her beloved singer Mina, about which we learn from an interview with Mrs. Hristova, taken especially for the dissertation and added as an appendix.

We can calmly point out here that the Bulgarian singer interpreted with great ease and powerful impact the Italian songs with saturated emotionality and expression.

Another singer with brilliant musical abilities, who interpreted some of the most beautiful melodic songs in the Bulgarian *estrada* stage is **Margarita Hranova**. The performer received compliments from the star pop group “Matia Bazar“ for the performance of their song “Brivido caldo” (lit.“Hot thrill“) with Bulgarian title “Prayer for light“. Mrs. Hranova also shared in an interview, conducted for the purposes of the dissertation and also added as an appendix, that among her favourite songs is “L’immensità”, and the Italian songs “they approach very close to our performance, our naturel, to our staging“.

One of the most emblematic voices of the Bulgarian *estrada*, who also has a successful career as an opera singer, is **Orlin Goranov**. As a solo performer Goranov includes in his repertoire “To a woman“ – a Bulgarian version of the Italian song “Ancora”. At the beginning of his career in parallel with his first hits, together with Kristina Dimitrova create a duet based on the success formula of the popular Italian duo Al Bano and Romina Power. Their world famous songs “Felicità”and “Libertà” were sung by Goranov and Dimitrova under the names “Who’s happy“and “Without a trace“. The songs “If you are in love”, “I and you” and “One among many others” became especially popular – cover interpretations respectively of “Se m’innamoro”, “Cosa sei” and “Mamma Maria” of “Ricchi e Poveri“, as well as “Even without words“ of “Mediterranea”. **Kristina Dimitrova** also sang Italian songs, among which “May be“ – Bulgarian version of the song “Voulez vous danser“ by “Ricchi e Poveri“.

Even today Orlin Goranov is still one of the brightest voices of the Bulgarian *estrada* music with a warm, pleasant timbre. Recreates numerous Italian songs with a captivating depth of feeling. And Kristina Dimitrova’s stage charisma to a great extent is due to her repertoire, in which cheerful songs often prevail, which she performs with her characteristic highly emotional performing style.

In 1971 the name of **Donika Venkova** appeared on Bulgarian stage, who easily performs songs by the Italian singer, guested at the “Golden Orpheus“ Iva Zanicchi, as well as Gigliola Cinquetti and Lara Saint Paul. Some of them were recorded on “Balkanton” records, such as: “Like no one else“ (1976, b.t. Dimitar Tsenov, ar. Maurice Alajem) – “Balkanton“ VTA 1935, “Tango Memory“ (1977, b.t. B.Gudev, ar. M. Alajem) and “Returning to home“ (1977, M. Testa, T.D. Tsenov, ar. I. Traikov) – “Balkanton“ VTK 3355, as well as “Where the seagulls fly“ (1973, b.t. D. Tsenov, ar. Venko Zahariev) – TV Lens “Balkanton“ VTM 6440).

Dozens of exciting Italian melodies entered in our sound space and enrich it emotionally and thematically. Through their performance the singers develop their vocal-interpretation skills, build their own style in the process of their career, perfected their creative spirit and stage behavior and gradually changed their creative attitudes until the end of the 80s of the 20th century. In parallel with their individual engagements many of them start singing in groups.

A significant new phenomenon in the Bulgarian popular music in the 70s – 80s of the 20th century was the appearance of a number of musical ensembles, that following the example of the solo performers, began their careers by performing numerous foreign covers. For their part, the arrangers when harmonizing author’s songs for groups, also often adhere to the Italian model of song structuring. But the most important thing is that the aspiration is to build the songs professionally and regardless of the fact that they pass through a phase of the assimilation of foreign models, in time their authors can with conviction and responsibly state: “We can proudly say that we are not imitators. We experienced this in the very beginning, as did many other Bulgarian singers. And this is very wonderful to be said that **we are not imitators**. The songs we created 40 years ago, some of them continue to be sung“²⁴. Among the musicians and music creators, who played a major role in the formation

²⁴ The quote is from an interview with Stefan Diomov, taken specially for the dissertation work and added as an appendix.

and establishment of the groups is the author of the above quote – Stefan Diomov, the composer of “**Tonika**” – the ensembles that are mainly presented in the development are inspired by “Ricchi e Poveri“, but acquired a shape of their own in the 70s-80s of the 20th century. Diomov shares in the mentioned interview that “thanks to the Italian melodic songs I became a musician“, and his songs are also pleasant, sonorous, in which the composers strives for a repertoire and stylistic variety, in which the vocal characteristic stands out.

Stefan Diomov’s groups definitely exert influence on the taste of the public, which began with more and more increasing interest to follow the development of the duets and other music ensembles, that conquered the *estrada* podium in the 80s. Among them we will mention “**Tram number 5**“. “Sharazan“ was recorded in Bulgarian in “Champions“ of “Balkanton“ VTA 11041. The group also sang Toni Esposito’s most famous hit “Kalimba de luna“ under the name “Verse of a song“. The combination between the melodiousness of the songs and the attractive stage presence cause a standing ovations and definitely impact the audience, assuring the group’s success.

5. Some trends in the activity of the composers and the arrangers, related to the influence of Musica Leggera

As a result of their meeting with famous performers, audience is more and more demanding, and the increasing number of consumption channels, related to the growth of the role of the mass communication means require highly trained composers, arrangers, conductors and shapers of the musical product.

The period is also characterized by a change in some of the technical parameters in sound recording and in the retransmission of sound, which gradually brings to the fore the role of the sound engineer and the music shaper. In the conditions of change requirements and more and more forms of mediating music in the second half of the 20th century, the work of the Bulgarian authors in the field of popular music is a sample

for skillful conducting of the melody, professional attitude to the harmonization and structuring of the work.

Making a skillful arrangements of the song so that “it can sound modern“, in the words of the performers themselves in the person of Margarita Hranova, is also important for the singers, as far as “song is clothed in one garment, i.e. the arrangement”²⁵. Thanks to the intoned intonations and diverse rhythmic organisation, achieved with the help of famous arrangers, specialized in the peculiarities of the *estrada* genre in the 60s – Ivan Staykov, Nikolay Arabadzhiev, Nikolay Kuymdzhiev, Decho Taralezhkov and others, the Bulgarian performers develop their singing and interpretation abilities. Here I briefly present their style and creativity. The mastery accumulated over the years contributes to the creation during these decades of a fascinating production that attracts the audience.

In the 70s – 80s some of our most prominent composers with their own handwriting also develop activity as arrangers. In order to present a finished musical product on the concert podium, the interaction between the author of the melody and the author of the arrangement is also of essential importance in the creative process, and very often the two activities are combined by one musician. Among them are not only the names of the musicians mentioned above, who were engaged in a wide range of activities as composers and as arrangers since the 60s of the 20th century. But also to many others, including **Aleksander Brazytsov and Razvigor Popov**. In my conversation with Razvigor Popov, the composer fascinatingly talks about his work as a staff arranger of the “Golden Orpheus”. At the same time he played and contacted Enzo Guzman from Malta, Salvatore Margalio and Antonio Furnari, Robertino Loreti and other guest performance singers from Italy during their appearances not only on the festival stage, but also during concert tours in the country. The description of Popov’s collaboration with Robertino Loreti shows the way in which the arrangements were made.

²⁵ The quote is from the mentioned interview with Margarita Hranova.

Aleksander Brazytsov and Razvigor Popov are a bright sample how the pursuit of masterful interpretation of the musical works gives an impetus to the development of the arrangement as an integral part of the composition and contributes to revealing the diversity of the creative intentions of the composers to “adjust” the tune to the audience’s taste.

In the 80s the composers and arrangers, who gained more experience, began to rely more and more on their intuition and rich common culture. The musicians were driven to improve the quality of each subsequent song. The sweeping melodic lines with beautiful string sonority and rich arrangement and orchestration gave the singers the opportunity to show their vocal qualities even more brightly.

6. Conclusion

In the 70s under the lasting influence of European styles – of Italian, French music, as well as the strong impact of the disco, dance or progressive music – the Bulgarian composers created their own songs. However, thanks to their great creative potential quite a few samples featured again with outstanding melodiousness. Arrangers unfolded their imagination even more brightly, added string sections, often inserted electronic instruments in place of the acoustic ones, so that the arrangement could “breathe” life into the melody.

By the end of the 80s the cultural phenomena in the field of the popular music had acquired higher value dimensions against the background of the noteworthy Italian influence. In the 80s the “Golden Orpheus” festival began to exhaust its potential, the widespread dissemination of sound production technology in people’s home was changing consumer’s criteria. The stratification of the public as a result of the huge interest in rock and disco (also popularized through the means of mass communication) reveals to us a picture of diverse consumer desires in the entertainment genre. For this reason of particular importance is the role of Bulgarian music creators – dedicated to the music and to the stage composers, arrangers, sound engineers and performers who strove towards

idea-saturated content of the musical product, musical and artistic expression with pure sound, broad-range melodiousness and a rich harmonic palette. Original songs were created, that were by no means inferior in their quality and richness of expressive means to the Italian samples of *Musica Leggera*.

CONCLUSION

The interactions between the musical culture, as well as between the dynamics of the musical creation, performance, and the attitudes of the various social groups represent an invariable, important part of the development of modern culture and society. Music is “unthinkable outside the processes of social life”²⁶ – it is “social, concrete, influencing society, but in fact how it exerts its influence and what we can do with it can only be established after the action – after the process of influence”²⁷. The influx of mellifluous intonations from a variety of cultures, each one with its own specific tunes, makes us get into the feelings of people with different mentalities and sense their emotions.

The contribution of Italian musicians to the development of musical culture worldwide is indisputable. It is a well-known fact that they have proved their unique skills to create masterpieces in the field of so-called high/serious music and the *bel canto* style has established itself as a vocal benchmark. The emphasis of the current work, however, is the quality of *Musica Leggera*, which captures the attention of the general public and specialists all over the world, thanks again to the Italians, who have demonstrated their professionalism yet again, this time in the “light” genre. The growing number of technologies and media forms (record companies, radio, television, etc.) affects audiences’ reception and moods ranging from melancholy to elevation.

As I have already mentioned, the fact that the aspects of influence of the Italian *Musica Leggera* are not sufficiently explored, as well as my personal interest in Italian popular music, led me to the present

²⁶ **Shushulova – Pavlova**, Milena 2015 г. Music and audiences. New concepts of openness. Sofia: NBU, p. 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

problematics. During the research, in the process of analyzing and commenting on the dissertation work, I reached the following **meaningful conclusions**:

1. **Influence on the repertoire and the performing practice:** In the period from the 1950s to the late 1980s *Musica Leggera* is a general source of a cheerful and sentimental lyric-song intonations. A huge number of Italian songs were sung on the Bulgarian podium by well-established Italian and aspiring young Bulgarian singers, exerting a productive influence on the practice of Bulgarian *estrada* – both in a performing aspect as an impulse for new creativity in the best traditions of melodious song writing. *Musica Leggera* is influential precisely in the moments of formation and dynamic growth of this practice, characterized by immediacy and insight into musical performance. Also, the refined stage behaviour of the established Italian singers became a kind of model from which the Bulgarian singers could learn in the process of building their professional career.

2. **Influence on the creation and shaping of an author's musical product:** The described period is quite prolific in terms of creativity. The incoming sound parameters inspired and provoked the musicians' creativity leading to diverse authorial production in terms of rhythms and texts. The works were characterized by saturated arrangement texture, but they always had a melody making Bulgarian songs easy to sing and to remember. The instances provided with the names of some of our most renowned composers and arrangers are a bright example of how the Italian melody has left its mark on crafting melodious musical phrases with distinctive sound quality.

3. **Influence on the audience reception:** The establishment of the “Golden Orpheus” International Festival and the increased output of the “Balkanton” record label gave listeners the opportunity to come into contact with a multitude of undisputed musical examples. Despite the fact that during the period they were evaluated by critics mainly from an aesthetic viewpoint, the audience also perceived them as a sound

background for an emotional unfolding of one's thoughts, feelings, experiences, i.e. as a basis of relaxation, and with that their impact (albeit somewhat imperceptibly) also increases. Thus the importance of *Musica Leggera* for the processes in Bulgarian popular practice remained indisputable until the social changes occurring at the end of the studied period, which strongly influenced the attitudes of Bulgarian creators, performing practices, and audiences.

As a result of the conclusions drawn, **the main contributions** of the dissertation work can be summarized in several main directions:

1. Since so far in our musicological practice there has not been an attempt at a separate study of the ways in which Italian popular culture has influenced the Bulgarian *estrada* song, the dissertation work appears to be the first scientific work on this topic. The research and systematization of popular music interactions with the brightest examples of the "Sanremo" festival and the Italian music podium in general help us to broaden our concepts about the processes in Bulgarian popular music culture. More specifically, it reveals distinct elements from the not so smooth process of recognition, through which our *estrada* song passes in the period from the 1950s to the late 1980s.

2. In Chapter 1 the specificity of *Musica Leggera* is studied as the essence of the concept is revealed in comparison with other terms in the field of popular music. The origin, historical evolutions and dissemination factors have been commented on. Thanks to them we can understand and appreciate in depth the significance and impact of the phenomenon on the musical culture of various peoples, as well as why the term *Musica Leggera* has been established. Updated scientific texts and encyclopedias by leading Italian musical researchers that have not yet been cited and commented on in our musicological literature are introduced here as important sources of information.

3. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 outline the periods (decade by decade), in which the processes of introduction and assimilation of Italian musical trends in popular music are particularly dynamic. The specifics of their impact on the repertoire, stage behaviour and interpretation qualities of

our most famous performers have been analyzed. The mechanisms of making Bulgarian *estrada* songs arrangements, influenced by Italian melodiousness have been commented on. The dynamics of establishing duets and ensembles in the 70s and 80s who also learned from the tuneful model, have also been traced.

4. Data has been collected for Bulgarian cover versions, most often performed on the Bulgarian *estrada* podium and/or recorded by BNR and “Balkanton” during the period under study. The data for the 144 Italian melodies discovered in the research process and their Bulgarian versions are presented in Appendix № 1. The selection due to its systematicity can be defined as a separate, scientifically applied contribution of the dissertation text. The songs have been presented in alphabetical order in a table.

5. Specifically for the purposes of the dissertation, interviews have been conducted with Bulgarian music specialists with affinity for Italian “light” music who shared their opinions on its various aspects and talked about how their repertoires were influenced by Italian melodicity. Among these were: the composers Razvigor Popov and Stefan Diomov, the singers Dimitar Yosifov, Yordanka Hristova, Margarita Hranova, the music editor of BNR Zdravko Petrov. A conversation was also held with the composer Angel Zaberski-son of the singer Margarita Radinska and the composer Angel Zaberski. I express my sincere gratitude to all of them. In a sense, these interviews presented in appendices № 3-№ 9 are part of the results in the current dissertation work. As a consequence, important comments and some of the conclusions have been made about the impact of the numerous *Musica Leggera* samples (recorded in our country) on the repertoire of Bulgarian singers and authorial *estrada* songs in the style of the Italian mellifluousness.

6. The main thesis of the work, namely that the Italian *Musica Leggera* with its characteristic melodiousness, expressiveness and creative originality had an influence on the development of the Bulgarian *estrada* song, has been defended. From the 1950s to the late 1980s it often served as an aesthetic and performing model, which Bulgarian *estrada* singers

and composers alike adopted at the beginning of their careers, but in the process of their creative and professional growth reshaped and upgraded them in line with their own inventive creativity. This is how original songs with an authentic Bulgarian sound appeared, in which it is only the melodiousness that is left of the Italian song tradition.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE THEME OF THE DISSERTATION

- 1. Ivanova, Dzana 2021.** The Italian *Musica Leggera* – meaning and associations with the media industry. – In: Young Scientific Music and Dance Forum. Conference with international participation, p. 177-188. Sofia: Publishing house of New Bulgarian University. ISSN 1313-342X.
- 2. Ivanova, Dzana 2021.** The Bulgarian *Estrada Music* – Modern Genre in the Popular Music During the 1960s. – In: Art and context. Collection with Reports from VII Youth Scientific Conference 3-4- June, 2021, p. 319-328. Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2021.
- 3. Ivanova, Dzana 2021.** Al Bano and Romina Power: the vocal duet as a creative wholeness. – In: Art readings. Thematic Peer-reviewed Art Studies Annual, Volumes I–II 2021. II. New Art. Personalia, p. 636-641. Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2022.
- 4. Ivanova, Dzana 2022.** The influence of the Italian *Musica Leggera* on the Shaping of the Repertoire and Performing Manner of the Bulgarian Estrada Singers in the 50s and the 60s of the 20th Century. – In: Bulgarian Musicology, № 2, p. 83-99.
- 5. Ivanova, Dzana 2022.** The Italian popular song in “Sanremo style” at the sight of the musical criticism (approaches to the form and reception). – In: Young Scientific Music and Dance Forum. Conference with international participation. Sofia: Publishing house of New Bulgarian University. (to be printed)
- 6. Ivanova, Dzana 2022.** The success of the Italian *urlatori*: symbol of youth emancipation and economic prosperity in the late 50s and early 60s of the 20th century. – In: Art readings. Thematic Peer-reviewed Art Studies Annual, Volumes I–II 2022.II. New Art. Art and society, p. 433- 438. Sofia: Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2023.