

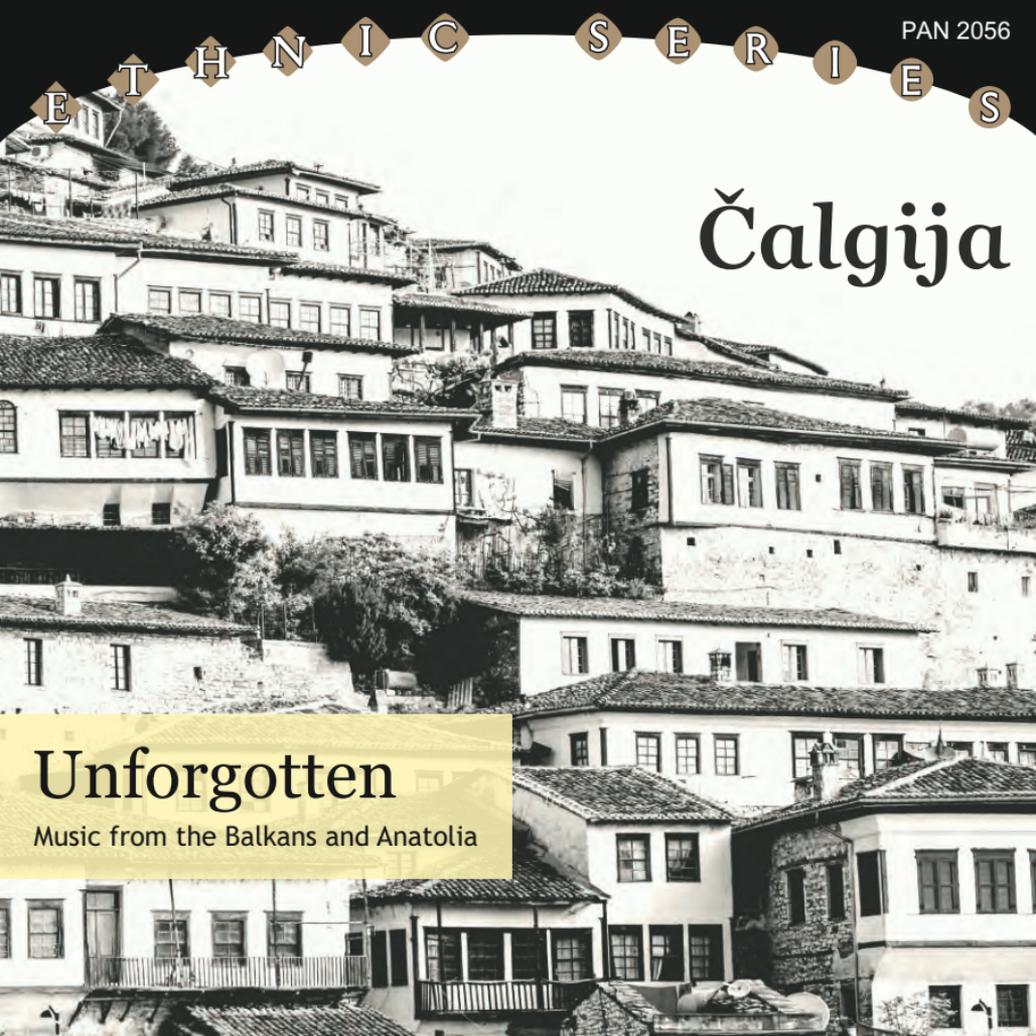
PAN 2056

E T H N I C S E R I E S

Čalgija

Unforgotten

Music from the Balkans and Anatolia



About this album

Čalgija was a Dutch ensemble that existed from 1969 till 1995¹, led by the late Wouter Swets (1930-2016), who aimed to perform ethnomusicologically sound arrangements of traditional music from the Balkans and Anatolia. The underlying assumption was that this music had suffered from westernisation since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, and in his arrangements Swets set out to restore pieces into more pristine states. This might suggest that Čalgija's music was cerebral and intellectual, but it is quite the opposite: their arrangements, instrumentations, overall sound and approach in general were quite unique.

There is of course no way to know to whether Ottoman Greeks, Slavs, Albanians, Vlachs or Turks would have accepted Čalgija's recordings and performances as valid renditions of their music. I'd say probably not: it is already difficult enough to bridge large geographical distances culturally, let alone distances in space *and* time. But Swets actually referred to his orchestra's style as *neo-Ottoman*, so maybe it is more accurate to think of his work as a thought experiment rather than a restoration effort. How might music from the Balkans and Anatolia have evolved if the large, polyethnic Ottoman Empire had not collapsed? What if the relationships between peoples that once lived together under its rule had never become burdened by nationalist politicians creating forced identities for their brand-new nation states? And what if the search for these identities had never been accompanied by denying others theirs? What if the music would still be shared between peoples, rather than becoming a point of dispute between states that all bear ancient names, but are younger than Australia?

¹) There was a prior Čalgija ensemble led by Wouter Swets which existed from 1962 till 1967. An EP they recorded in the mid-1960s has been reissued in 2017 (*Balkan Orchestra Čalgija - Vintage Recordings (1964-1966)* Directed and Produced by Wouter Swets, Toumilou #2, EAN 714835122241)

Maybe the question should not be whether Čalgija's music could have meant something in the past, but whether it is meaningful today. The ensemble played a pivotal role in introducing Dutch audiences to music from the Balkans and Anatolia. Musically, perhaps their most important contribution was to set a very high standard. During their existence, and until at least 15 years after they broke up, no other Dutch group in the genre really matched Čalgija's level of interpretation and playing². Most of them never got beyond exploiting the catchiness of certain Balkan rhythms and 'scales', sampling rather than exploring tradition the way Swets did.

Pioneering work

Was introducing Dutch audiences to this music relevant? Of course it was. People from Turkey and various Balkan countries have been migrating to the Netherlands since the 1960s, and so have people from Morocco, where musical traditions are found that have much in common with those from the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. It would be naive to say that familiarity with their music made for a warm welcome to these new residents of the Netherlands, where in fact their integration was and still can be difficult in many ways. But at least music gave people of good will a means to communicate and interact. This also included dancing. In the 1960s, folkdance became quite popular in the Netherlands. There were many folkdance groups that typically had a rather eclectic repertoire with a strong emphasis on Balkan dances, because these were rhythmically interesting and challenging. To Čalgija and ensembles alike, folkdance made for a considerably larger following than concert audiences alone.

The members of Čalgija and the people they initially inspired to enjoy or play the music from the Balkans and Anatolia are now in their 60s and 70s. They were part of the 1960s and 70s counterculture, to whom enjoying different, exciting mu-

²) With Al Farabi, Čalgija's successor ensemble, Wouter Swets shifted his focus to modal music traditions and changed the line up accordingly (without the Balkan folk instruments).

sic—whether it be unsettling Western rock or exotic Eastern folk tunes—was to a varying degree an expression of rebellion and generational conflict. To their children and grandchildren, who are now roughly in their forties and teens, respectively, all of that music has been a part of their upbringing. Some actually enjoyed Balkan and Anatolian music—not as previously for its exoticism but as something natural, in a process similar to the Rolling Stones becoming transformed from a threat to society into an institution. This actually creates better conditions to interact through music, in ways that just didn't happen earlier when Balkan music and folkdance groups



1. Čalgija in its 1960s line-up performing amidst dancers in Amsterdam (1962/63). Musicians (L-R): Pedro van Meurs, Albert van der Meulen, Wouter Swets. Not shown is the ensemble's 4th member Rob van Altena.

consisted almost entirely of Dutch men and women trying to break with conventions. So gradually, Dutch familiarity with Eastern musical idioms, set off by Čalgija, started to pay off. Spearheaded by amongst others Codarts in Rotterdam, Dutch stages and tribunes are now being shared by people of different cultural backgrounds, even people who'd have been unlikely to interact in their regions of origin.

So, was Čalgija authentic? None of its members except one, Nahim Avci (around 1990), was born into the traditions Čalgija drew from, so they couldn't represent those traditions in the ways people do to whom the music was handed by their forebears. And, frankly, if these people now choose to harmonise, jazzify, rockify or otherwise modernise their music, that's entirely up to them. The music is theirs and the future will separate out whimsy from true progress. So, with respect to their music's roots, Čalgija is not, and cannot be, authentic. But the orchestra was authentic—very much so—in the literal sense: true to itself.

Čalgija's 'mystery album'

I have been playing with Čalgija veterans for many years, but it was only recently that I learned that Čalgija recorded an album in 1981 that was never released. I only knew their LP *Music from the Balkans and Anatolia #1* (Münich MU7425, 1978) and their CD *Music from the Balkans and Anatolia #2* (Pan 2007CD, 1991). My curiosity was aroused. After a few phone calls, several emails and a number of dead ends two Ampex tapes turned up from the archives of Bernard Kleikamp of Pan Records. They were marked *Čalgija, A-side* and *Čalgija, B-side*, but were undated and had no metadata other than the tape speed and recorder used.

The tapes had been sold to Kleikamp by Wouter Swets for the production of what was to become Čalgija's '91 CD. The liner notes of that album mention that eight of its tracks were recorded between December 1983 and May 1984, and mixed in '85. From a hand-written note that came with the tapes, I learned that five more tracks were recorded during that session that were never released. So, even though I



2. Wil Hesen listening to the 38-year old 'mystery tapes' at Farmsound Studio, Heelsum, The Netherlands (04/2019).

hadn't found the '81 'Mystery Album', I was very curious to hear this extra material and establish whether it was release-worthy. This of course also depended on the condition of the 34-year old tapes.

There was only one way to find out. I took the tapes to Farmsound Studio in Heelsum to play and digitise them, where they turned out to be a production-ready LP master. Eight out of thirteen tracks were indeed identical to those of the '91 CD, apart from the fact that they sounded different, had probably been remixed and were certainly remastered to achieve consistency with the material recorded later. Five tracks had not been used: Kōşkūm var, Naz bar and To aidhoni were re-recorded in '90, and Cheimariotikos and Tronkata were discarded altogether. So the tapes were of the recordings made in '83/84, but I did not know that they had been as close to being released as an LP as they now prove to have been. I never actually managed to find the '81 recordings, and based on what I heard we must assume that they are lost. The recordings that did turn up revealed that there had been not one but two stalled album projects in the 1980s, and this raises a new question: why?

In search of a new voice

I have heard three reasons as to why the '81 album was not released. One is that Wouter Swets was unable to finish the liner notes. This might well have been the case, because he wanted such notes to be nothing less than a musicological treatise, and was notoriously perfectionistic. The second was a lingering business dispute concerning the debut LP, the details of which remain somewhat unclear other than that it was settled around '83. The third is that Swets was dissatisfied with the results, and wanted to give it another try. So he did, but the results were shelved until 1990.

The most likely root cause is dissatisfaction. After all, the business dispute was settled, the liner notes were eventually finished, and pieces were redone for a reason. So, what could Swets have been dissatisfied with? The music offers some clues. One piece that didn't make it to the '91 CD, *Cheimariotiko*, is basically a respectful rendition of the piece as it is traditionally played. The instrumentation is a bit unusual; a Greek recording would probably not have had accordion and a soprano recorder, but other than that Čalgija did not add much. The same goes for *Tronkata*, even though it has a stronger Čalgija signature. So Swets basically discarded the two least ambitious pieces of the mid-80s sessions and did not record them again.

The replacement versions of *Naz Bar* and *Köşküm Var* have instrumentations that are basically less Balkan and more Anatolian. This is not surprising. Over his career Wouter Swets inevitably gravitated towards Istanbul, the former cultural epicentre of the south-east European music traditions he studied. He presented a radio lecture series on traditional Turkish art music in 1981, and published a book (in the Dutch language) on the topic in 1983. In this, he was basically running ahead of his fellow musicians in Čalgija. The way I heard them play Kemal Batanay's *Nikriz Peşrev* in a live recording made in 1983, for example, was not entirely convincing as a rendition of Turkish art music, and the piece was a bit of an outlier in Čalgija's folk repertoire. But Swets eventually took part of his ensemble along on his eastward musical journey.

To aidhoni was replaced by a version in which Wouter Swets played the synthesizer he started using in the late 1980s. He was originally trained as a classical organ player and switched to accordion to play Balkan music, but felt increasingly limited by the inability of that instrument to produce the microtonal intervals that are used in Turkish music as well in the Balkans before westernisation struck and music started to become harmonised and tempered. He therefore started playing the kanun in the 1970s, but never at the high level of playing he had reached as an accordionist. He also experimented with a microtonally tuned accordion, the ‘Swetsophone’ that features on track 5 of the ’91 CD, but in the late 1980s he turned to a Yamaha synthesiser, which he had programmed to be as tonally versatile as the kanun, but much easier for him to play.

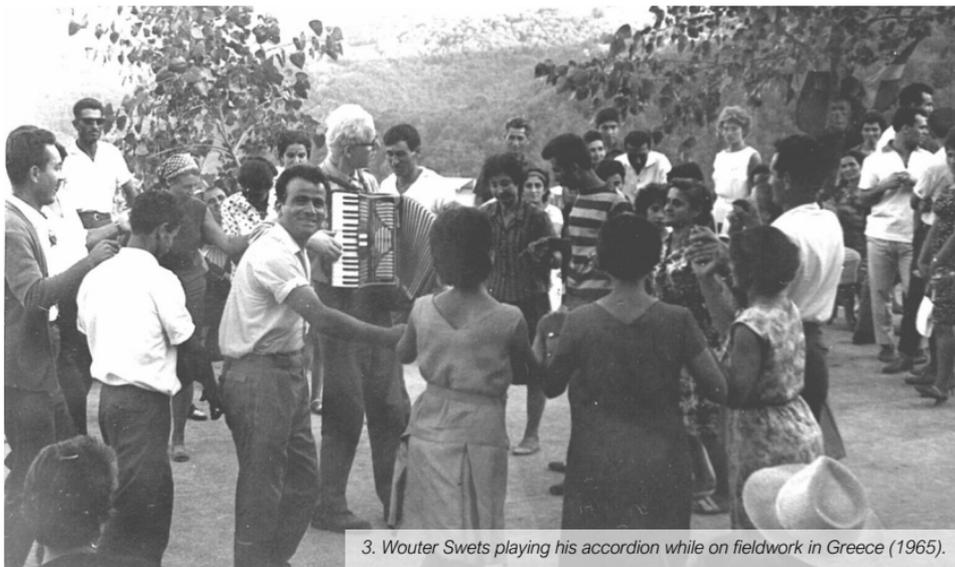
Swets initially used a santouri virtual instrument, but at that time digital technology still presented serious limitations to sound quality and, unsurprisingly, the synthesiser simply didn’t blend well with the traditional instruments that the other musicians used. In fact, Čalgija lost fans who couldn’t agree with an instrument that they considered an insult to traditionality. Swets, never a crowd pleaser, did not care much. He abandoned his accordion, the instrument that had given him musical access to the Balkans, using it only once in the ’90s sessions. The synthesizer, the instrument that had set him free by fully opening up the world of modal music, would eventually become his main instrument.

Altogether the material recorded in ’90 was more modal, rhythmically complex and thoroughly analysed and re-arranged, and in that sense the ’91 CD was more ambitious than the LP they could have released in ’85. Retrospectively, Wouter Swets used the 1980s to complete a transition from the Balkan folk musician he was in the 1960s—the man shown on the facing page—to the modal musician he would become in the 1990s. In 1995, he changed the name of Čalgija into Ensemble Al Farabi, producing one last album that explores the relationship between Turkish and Gregorian hymns.

Anyway, after the success of their first album, Čalgija fans had to wait until 1991 for a successor, and in the meantime they were denied an album that I personally find just as impressive as their great debut LP. This is why we decided to release it in its entirety, despite the overlap with *Music from the Balkans and Anatolia* #2. We also decided to complement the album with live tracks from roughly the same period, which represent the ensemble in its heyday.

Unforgotten—the uneasy roots of Čalgija’s music

The notes below are partly based on Wouter Swets’ notes to *Music from the Balkans and Anatolia* #2. One of the things that struck me when I first read these, at around



3. Wouter Swets playing his accordion while on fieldwork in Greece (1965).

the age of 22, is that Swets was very critical of his peers: first of certain Greek musicologists to whom he refers as poorly trained and xenophobic (see his notes to *Aide mor' milia*), then of a Serbian one who delivered a poor analysis of a poorly performed Macedonian song (*Dali znaeš pomniš li*), of Turkish ones for their inability to analyse songs from Balkan Turks correctly (*Köşküm var*), as well as of just about every ensemble from which he used source material. I decided to discard such comments for two reasons. First, they concern either largely forgotten scientific disputes among musicologists that have passed away since, or recordings that will have been forgotten if they were as bad as Swets considered them to be—and if not, maintain a



4. Bulgarian muslims emigrating to the shrinking Ottoman Empire (1912).

relevance to people I do not want to judge or offend. But more importantly, I prefer to let music speak for itself. I think that the works of Wouter Swets stand on their own, there is no need to highlight their value by rejecting the work of others.

Beyond the idiosyncrasy, there is a more fundamental aspect to Swets' criticism that deserves attention without being tainted by scientific pettiness. Why did the analysis of the music from the Balkans, Anatolia and peripheral regions result in such controversy? One problem that clearly shines through Swets' notes is displacement. A Macedonian song in a Turkish form. Songs of stateless Vlachs. A dance danced in Greece, Albania and Macedonia whose title refers, in each language, to a town that is now Albanian but used to be inhabited by all of these people. Bulgarian songs originating in Macedonia. Turkish songs originating outside present-day Turkey. Armenian songs aspiring to be non-oriental for obvious reasons. Songs that bear witness of a joint past that people have chosen to forget.

Wouter Swets was harsh on colleagues who clearly had difficulties in incorporating an uneasy past in their analyses at that time, let alone reconciling themselves to it. In doing so, Swets was—quite authentically—a Dutch Calvinist, adhering to a straightforwardness and directness that is quite incompatible with Eastern values and manners. But this uneasy past gave me a second reason to name this album *Unforgotten*; a better one than the mere fact that its recordings were forgotten and then recovered. Music doesn't lie, let it tell its own tale about its origins.

Michiel van der Meulen
Bunnik, May 2019

Track notes

Musicians are indicated with their initials. WS: Wouter Swets (kanun, accordion, tapan) / JH: Jan Hofmeijer (clarinet, santur, tanbur) / RS: Roel Sluis (vocals, soprano recorder, kaval) / TH: Tjarko ten Have (santur, bağlama saz, kaval, gajda, tapan) / FL: Frank Leenhouts (oud, laouto, tambura, divan saz) / RR: Roelof Rosendal (darbuka, def, tapan) / ML: Monique Lansdorp (violin, gādulka) / RB: Remco Busink (tambura) / CO: Crispijn Oomes (gādulka) / TM: Thijs de Melker (tambura).

All material is traditional, and has been analysed and arranged by Wouter Swets.

[1] Cheimariotikos | Χειμαριώτικος

Instrumentation: clarinet (JH), violin (ML), soprano recorder (RS), accordion (WS), santur (TH), laouto (FL), def (RR). *Meter:* 7/8 (3 + 2 + 2), kalamatiano. *Mode:* predominantly a folkloristic, tempered form of makam Nikriz.

Wouter Swets became interested in music from the Balkans and Anatolia in the 1950s because he discovered in it a liveliness that had become lost in the West. In a newspaper interview he gave in 1963 Swets argued that “*even though musical notation came with certain specific advantages, it primarily resulted in a tragic mortification. Musicians are visibly bored while performing concerts, and so are their audiences because this mortification has destroyed the music’s experience.*” Swets transcribed the music he studied meticulously, but he preferred his musicians to not use his scores onstage. He wanted his music to be performed freely, with energy and excitement, lushly and heterophonically embellished. Čalgija’s rendering of this well-known Greek dance tune from Chimarra (Χειμάρρα, now Himarë, Albania) is a clear example of that: a studio recording with a live feeling.

[2] **Krivo horo** | Криво хоро

Instrumentation: clarinet (JH), violin (ML), kaval (RS), accordion (WS), tambura (FL), tapan (TH). *Meter:* 22/16 (2 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 3 + 2 + 2). *Mode:* elementary folkloristic forms of makams Hüseynî, Hicâz and Karşığâr in equal temperament.

This folk dance from Northern Thrace (Bulgaria) begins and ends with an instrumental version of the Thracian folk song ‘Djado si Djalba Deleše’ (Дядо си Дялба Делеше). The two phrases prior to the recurrence of that melody at the end of the piece were composed by Wouter Swets in Thracian style.

[3] **Da li znaeš pomniš li** | Дали знаеш помниш ли

Instrumentation: voice (RS), clarinet (JH, violin (ML), accordion (WS), bağlama saz (TH), oud (FL). *Meter:* 5/4 (2 + 3). *Mode:* tempered folkloristic form of makam Kürdîli Hicâzkâr.

Song contents: ‘Do you remember when we were young? We sat in the rose garden under a rosebush. The rosebush dripped onto the both of us. We caught the drops and rubbed our faces with them.’

Lazeropole, where this song comes from, used to be a poor Macedonian mountain village that many young men would leave shortly after their wedding to earn money elsewhere. Melodies they had learned during lengthy stays faraway would be integrated in the local folkloristic repertoire on their return home, where they would gradually lose their original characteristics. This particular love song is most likely based on or inspired by a şarkı (secular vocal form in Turkish art music) in makam Kürdîli Hicâzkâr. Wouter Swets restored the melodic progression (seyir) of this makam accordingly, and added a ritornello (aranağme). This song is one of my favorite Čalgija tracks. I recorded a more Eastern version in 2019 (*Kairos Collective - Európe*, Toumilou #3, EAN 714835 130574), with Čalgija’s original singer Roel Sluis as a guest musician.

[4] Baş bar

Instrumentation: gajda (TH), clarinet (JH), tapan (WS). *Mode:* mainly folkloristic forms of makams Hüseyinî and Gülizâr. *Meter:* 9/8 (2 + 2 + 2 + 3), evfer.

Folk dance melody from Erzurum, East Anatolia. The gajda was used to approximate the sound of the zurna (shawm) that is traditionally used to play this piece.

[5] Razložko kalajdzijsko horo | Разложко калајджийско хоро

Instrumentation: gajda (TH), kaval (RS), gādulka (ML), santur (JH), kanun (WS), tambura (FL), darbuka (RR). *Meter:* 5/8 (2 + 3), slow pajduško. *Mode:* to some extent a tempered form of makam Muhayyer.

A tinkers' dance from Razlog, Pirin-Macedonia, South-West Bulgaria. In the nineteenth century, Macedonian craftsmen and merchants were organised in guilds. These would have their own dances incorporating characteristic movements from their particular trade. On this particular gajda, from North Macedonia, one hears the normal chanter together with a drone pipe in F sharp. This unusual combination was invented by Čalgija and is a quintessential part of their signature sound.

[6] Acem kızi

Instrumentation: voice (RS), kanun (WS), bağlama saz (TH), divan saz, (FL) clarinet (JH), def (RR), darbuka (RR). *Meter:* 15/8 (2 + 3 + 3) + (2 + 2 + 3). *Mode:* folkloristic form of makam Acem-Kürdî.

Song contents: 'Swinging his hips he ascends to Şanova and says, stay there, Persian girl, and laugh because there is a young man who loves you!'

The characteristic meter of this beautiful song from Kirşehir, Central Anatolia, appears mostly in the provinces of Sivas and Adana.

[7] **To aidhoni** | Το αηδόνη

Instrumentation: clarinet (JH), soprano recorder (RS), violin (ML), accordion (WS), santur (TH), laouto (FL), def (RR). *Meter:* 21/16 (2 + 3) + (3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 3 + 2 + 2). *Scale:* predominantly pentatonic la.

West Thessaly (northern Greece), from where this Vlach sygkathistos folk dance originates, belongs partly to the pentatonic musical zone of which South Albania and Epirus form the centre. Swets' arrangement consists of the addition of a ritornello by which he wanted to create a contrasting effect.

[8] **Naz bar**

Instrumentation: kaval (RS), violin (ML), accordion (WS), oud (FL), tapan (RR). *Meter:* 10/16 (3 + 2 + 2 + 3), çurçuna. *Mode:* muğam Hümeyun, with a modulation to muğam Bayatı-Şiraz on the 4th degree. *Composer:* A. Alexandrian.

In this recording one can hear two melodies composed in urban folk style for the traditional dance Naz bar (a flirtation dance), which Čalgija combined into an A-B-A form. Armenian folk music belongs stylistically to the same family as the folk music of East Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and West Iran—regions where Armenians lived or still live. The Transcaucasian muğam Bayatı-Şiraz much resembles the Turkish makams Nihâvend.

[9] **Alexandra** | Αλεξάντρα

Instrumentation: voice (RS), clarinet (JH), violin (ML), kaval (TH), accordion (WS), laouto (FL), def (RR). *Meter:* 18/16 (3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2). *Scale:* predominantly pentatonic sol.

Song contents: ‘Why are you standing there crying, Alexandra, why do you look so ill? Is it because of the damp western winds or because of the cold? It is not the wind and it is not the cold, but the thoughts of you toiling in some faraway land. It drives me crazy to think that you are the one who is reproaching me for it!’

Greek folk dance melody from south Albania. This region—called North Epirus by the Greeks—harbours a Greek minority. It was only after World War II that a part of this minority fled to Greek South Epirus, while most of the Albanian minority of Greek South Epirus left for Albania. It is therefore not surprising that the folk music of South Albania and Greek Epirus are strongly related. Nowadays, the folk dance Alexandria is usually played in a 5/4 meter in Greece, but this rendering is based on a recording from North Epirus in 18/16 meter. On the face of it there seems to be a big difference between 5/4 and 18/16 meters, but if one considers the 5/4 as 20/16, subdivided as (4 + 2 + 2) + (4 + 4 + 2 + 2), the 18/16 pattern (3 + 2 + 2) + (4 + 3 + 2 + 2) makes for only a slight difference, which reflects the way the dancers feel the rhythm.

[10] Tronkata | Тронката

Instrumentation: kaval (RS), clarinet (JH), violin (ML), accordion (WS), tambura (FL), bağlama saz (TH), tapan (RR). *Meter:* 2/4 (2 triplets), pravo. *Mode:* Folkloristic forms of makams Kürdî, Rast and Hüseynî in equal temperament.

After World War I, Bulgaria had to cede Western Thrace to the Entente, which passed the region on to Greece. A (non-compulsory) population exchange followed between Greece and Bulgaria, one of several that occurred in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, when monoethnic nation states were built from polyethnic Ottoman regions. This pravo dance migrated north along with the Bulgarians that once lived in what would become Greek Western Thrace.

[11] Ispajče | Испайче

Instrumentation: gajda (TH), kaval (RS), accordion (WS), santur (JH), tambura (FL), tapan (RR). *Meter:* From 14/16 (4 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 3) via 13/16 (3 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 3) and 12/16 (3 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3) to 11/16 (3 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2). *Mode:* predominantly a folkloristic tempered form of makam Hicâz and in the concluding of makam Karcığar.

A folk dance from Petrič, Pirin-Macedonia (Bulgaria), brought there from Kumanovo, Vardar-Macedonia (North Macedonia). The piece gains speed in two ways. Other than increasing the tempo, metrical shortening can be heard, which is achieved by diminishing the number of beats per meter from 14 to 11.

[12] Köşküm var

Instrumentation: voice (RS), violin (ML), kaval (TH), santur (JH), kanun (WS), tanbur (JH), tapan (RR). *Meter:* 11/4 (3 + 4 + 4). *Mode:* makam Hüseyinî.

Song contents: ‘I have a house by the sea. My tears constantly flow. Everything begins with longing for love. A heart does exist, oh, look around you. Come and tell me (if it’s not true)!’

As the Ottoman Empire grew, Turkish populations established themselves in Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. And as the empire subsequently shrank and fell, many Turks migrated out of lost territory, moving to what they considered their Anatolian protective motherland, along with Greek, Albanian, Slavic and Circassian Muslims, fleeing harassment, persecution, war or outright ethnic cleansing. This migration took place from the late 18th century, peaked in the late 19th to early 20th centuries and actually persists today, having involved an estimated number of 10 million people so far, from whom between a quarter and one third of the population of modern Turkey are descendants.

This migration brought music to modern Turkey that had developed outside its territory for many centuries. In that category, this beautiful song belongs to the Rumeli türküleri repertoire, i.e., music of Balkan Turks. It bears witness to a strong influence of Turkish art music, which Swets emphasised by making a fuller use of the typical modulations of makam Hüseyinî than heard in common renditions of the song.

[13] Beratçe | Μπεράτι | Беранче

Musicians: clarinet (JH), violin (ML), kaval (RS), accordion (WS), laouto (FL), def (RR). *Meter:* 31/16 (3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 3) + (3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2) via 30/16 (3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2) + (3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2) to 29/16 (3 + 2 + 2) + (2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2) + (3 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2). *Scale:* Predominantly pentatonic sol.

This majestic dance exists, with variations, in Northern Epirus in southern Albania, in southern Epirus in northwestern Greece and in western North Macedonia. The above meter description, which shows metrical shortening as described in the notes to Ispajče [11], clearly illustrates Wouter Swets' precision in capturing what basically are subtle trends in the duration of key steps in the dance pattern. This occurs in an intimate interaction between dancers and musicians in a tradition that is transmitted orally, and in which actually counting beats per meter doesn't play any role whatsoever.

Swets was one of the few musicologists in this genre who was this precise and analytical when transcribing music. Scores produced in the region, if any, are quite often written in sort of a musical shorthand as a mnemonic for people who are already familiar with the music. Berat, nicknamed 'the city of thousand windows' is shown on the front cover of this album and booklet.

[14] Nevenstinsko oro | Невестинско оро | Live recording, 1983

Instrumentation: solo gajda (RR). *Meter:* 11/8 (3 + 2 + 2), lesnoto. *Mode:* elementary folkloristic form of makam Uşşak.

Amplification has made musicians almost completely independent of the setting of their performances. Soft instruments like the tanbur and the ney can now easily be played for hundreds of people. Even so, the instrumentation of folk music often still reflects past limitations that have long been overcome. This bride's dance is played by a solo gajda (Macedonian bagpipe), one of those outdoor instruments par excellence, used at noisy weddings and other parties, or even to wage war. The

piece, a Macedonian wedding dance, begins a-metrically, and develops slowly towards a 'dragging' 7/8.

[15] Kırım'dan gelirim | Live recording, 1983

Instrumentation: voice (RS), clarinet (JH), kanun (WS), bağlama saz (TH), divan saz (FL), def (RR). *Meter:* 7/8 (3 + 2 + 2), devr-i hîndî. *Mode:* makam Gerdâniye.

Song contents: 'I come from the Crimea, my name is Sinan; the sap of my sword is the sap of my love, even though blood and smoke are all around me. I come from the Crimea, my horse is from Arabia; show your faces Austrians, here is Sinan, so here is the battlefield.'

Just as Kôşküm var [12], this is a song from Ottoman Turks living outside of the later Republic of Turkey. The still popular song describes how Sinan from Crimea proudly responded to a call to arms to fight the Austrians during one of the frequent conflicts between the neighbouring Ottoman and Habsburg empires.

[16] Mădro horo | Мъдро хорo | Live recording, 1978 (mono)

Musicians: gajda (JH, TH), kaval (RS), gădulka (CO), accordion (WS), tambura (RB, TM), tapan (RR). *Meter:* 7/8 (3 + 2 + 2), răčenica. *Mode:* mainly folkloristic tempered forms of makams Hicâz and Kürdî.

This dance from the town of Kotel (Котел) in Central Bulgaria was danced by shepherds' wives when their men returned from winter herding grounds further to the east. In order to not arouse the shepherds too much after months of abstention, the dance is slow, which is unusual for a răčenica.

[17] Schoon lief | Live recording, 1983

Musicians: voice (RS, JH), gajda (TH), clarinet (JH), sopranino recorder (RS), accordion (WL), oud (RR), tambura (FL). *Meter:* 18/8 (3 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2). *Scale:* Aeolian.

Song contents: ‘Fair love, lying here sleeping, in your first dreams, would you wake and accept this May branch, which tree is standing here so beautifully? / I wouldn’t rise for a May branch, wouldn’t open my window, you plant it wherever you like, plant it anywhere outside. / Where would I plant it? It’s tree already grows right here along the road. The winter nights are cold and long, it would stop blossoming. / Fair love, and should it stop blossoming, we’ll bury it, at the cemetery near the eglantine, its grave will bear roses. / Fair love, and around those roses, the nightingale will hop, and sing for us every May, its most beautiful songs.’



5. Čalgija in its late 1970s lineup. Front row (LR): Remco Busink, Wouter Swets, Thijs de Melker, Jan Hofmeijer; back row (LR): Roel Sluis, Tjarko ten Have, Crispijn Oomes, Roelof Rosendal.



6. Čalgija around 1987. Front row (LR): Jan van Eekeren, Wouter Swets, Frank Leenhouts; back row (LR): Monique Lansdorp, Jan Hofmeijer, Roel Sluis, Tjarko ten Have.

On the album *Sabâ Kâr-ı Nâtk, İlâhîler, Gregorian Hymns* by Ensemble Al Farabi (the successor of Čalgija), Wouter Swets explored the relationships between Islamic and Christian chant. He employed his reconstruction abilities to arrive at versions of Gregorian hymns that should resemble early Christian music. For that purpose he interpreted the hymns microtonally and metrically. Gregorian hymns are currently chanted in a free-flowing form with no fixed meter. Given the structure of the text, Swets hypothesised that they actually had complex metric structures sup-

porting prosody just like the ilâhîler, their Islamic counterparts. In previous years, he occasionally arranged Dutch folk songs in alternative meters in order to improve the flow and prosody. This romantic 16th-century Dutch May song—a genre that celebrates spring, when nature and love revive—is a nice example, in which one can also hear Swets indulging in harmony.

When comparing the lyrics of Schoon lief with those of all other songs on this album, you'll observe a striking difference in text length. While Dutch songs typically put a syllable on each note, Greek and Turkish songs have words and exclamations such as 'aman' (meaning something like 'ah') spread over extensive phrases. In this aspect, the prosody of the lyrics reflects the prosody of the language—Dutch is generally perceived as choppy rather than lyrical. Beyond the musical aesthetics, lyrics with fewer words are perhaps inevitably more poetic than wordy songs. Schoon lief is very romantic but its text is factual and descriptive, not leaving much room for interpretation. Greek and Turkish lyrics, and Eastern lyrics in general, are more implicit, relying on symbolism and archetypes that are sometimes hard to understand for Westerners. The aim is not to tell the listener a specific story, but to trigger feelings and images that could fit many stories in a universal and timeless way.

[18] Damian-Vojvodovo horo | Дамјан-Войводово хоро | Live recording, 1983

Musicians: clarinet (JH), sopranino recorder (RS), violin (ML), accordion (WS), tambura (FL), tapan (RR). *Meter:* 18/8 (2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 3 + 2 + 2). *Scale:* Aeolian, Locrian, Mixolydian.

The only other known recording of this piece is one by the famous Bulgarian accordionist Kosta Kolev, which originally appeared on the LP *Народни хора* (Narodni hora, Balkanton 5692, release date unknown, probably 1960s). This is almost certainly the version that Wouter Swets transcribed. Since the late 1950s he had been scavenging for all of the records released by Balkan and Turkish labels

he could lay his hands on for repertoire and research. The sleeve and label of the album offer no information on the music beyond track titles. The song seems to have become forgotten in Bulgaria, but by a quirk of history it has been preserved on the setlist of a Dutch group: a case of un-forgetfulness that very much fits the present album.

I have no doubt that Wouter Swets would have considered this particular Balkanton recording an unfortunate and unjustifiable case of gentrification. He roughened up Kolev's arrangement considerably, skipping the intro, discarding the orchestration, and cranking up both tempo and intensity.

[19] Proviknal si e Nikola | Провикнал си е Никола | Live recording, 1983

Musicians: voice (RS), accordion (WS). *Meter:* a-metric. *Mode:* makam Kürdili Hicâzkâr.

Song contents: 'Nikola shouted out, from the peaks of Stara planina, from Iglíkova lawn: Gana, let out the cattle, your cattle, our cattle, my uncle's water buffalos. I will go to sell them, to try to buy your heart. Gana told Nikola: my dear Nikola, I will not sell my herd for money, I will exchange it for your heart!'

While Wouter Swets dedicated much of his life to finding and restoring the modal roots of his repertoire, he was well-trained in harmonisation and developed his very own style in it. It is very easy to create cheesy versions of this beautiful Macedonian song, but Swets' accompaniment—which he had reportedly based on Georgian polyphony—really elevates the melody.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Michiel van der Meulen and Bernard Kleikamp thank Roel Sluis, Roland van Abel, Martine van der Meulen, Crispijn Oomes, Frank Leenhouts and Monique Lansdorp for providing information, comments and contributions, Dominy Clements and Magnus Robb for correcting the English, and Roland van Abel for supporting the production financially with a grant from the estate of Wouter Swets.

ARTWORK CREDITS

Sleeve – Front cover image: Berat, Albania (photo Olena Kachmar, reproduced under a 123RF Ltd Standard License) / Inner sleeve, left: fragment of Matthaeus Seutter, 1727: *Magni Turcarum Dominatoris Imperium per Europam, Asiam, et Africam se extendens Regiones tam proprias, quam tributarias et clientelares ut et omnes Beglerbegatus sive Praefecturae Generales oculis sistens accuratissima cura delineatum* (photo Geograficus (NY), reproduced under a CC Public Domain Mark 1.0 License) / Inner sleeve, right: Mastertape of Čalgija's 'Mystery Album' (photo Michiel van der Meulen, 2019).

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